

1980**Missile Madness: The New Weapons Systems and
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Summary:

Socialist Workers Party pamphlet arguing that the current nuclear arms threat is much more serious than in the past due to the development of new cruise missiles. It calls for people to stand up against the missiles and recognize nuclear weapons as a class issue integrated with the wider Socialist Workers Party platform.

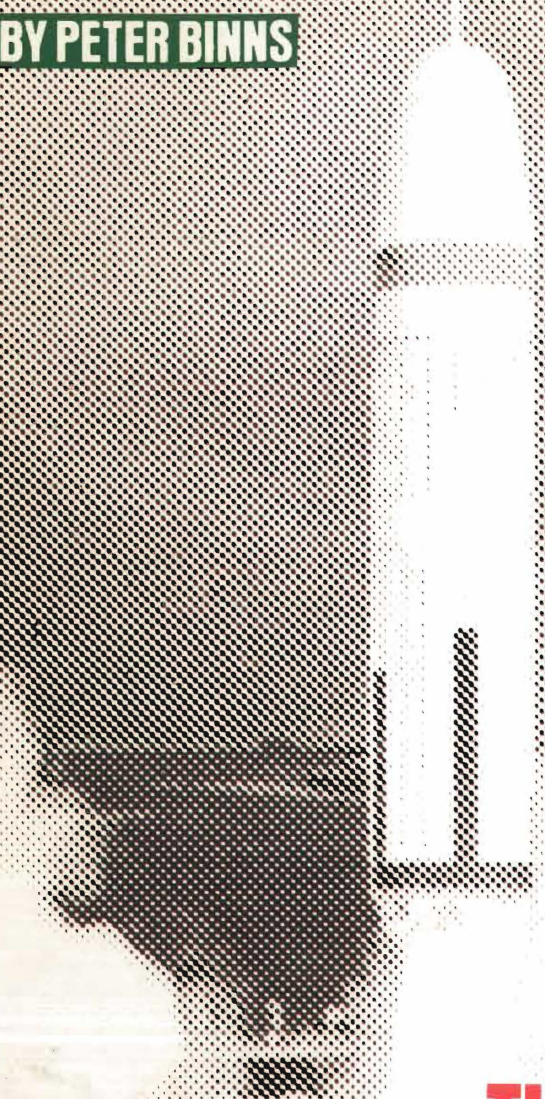
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BY PETER BINNS
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**THE NEW
WEAPONS SYSTEMS
& HOW THEY THREATEN YOUR LIFE**

**THE NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS
& HOW THEY THREATEN YOUR LIFE**

**MISSILE
MADNESS**

BY PETER BINNS


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The next war won't decide what's right, but what's left

UNDER THE SHADOW OF NAGASAKI



FIVE-YEAR-OLD Fujio Tsujimoto and his grandmother were lucky enough to be the first off the Yamazto school playground into the deep shelter just before the atom bomb dropped on Nagasaki. They emerged to find the playground full of the screams of the dying. *"My brother and sisters didn't get to the shelter in time, so they were burnt and crying. Half an hour later, my mother appeared. She was covered with blood. She had been making lunch at home when the bomb was dropped . . . My younger sisters died the next day. My mother—she also died the next day. And then my older brother died . . .*

The survivors made a pile of wood on the playground and began to cremate the corpses. My brother was burned. Mother also was burned and quickly turned to white bones which dropped down among the live coals. I cried as I looked on the scene. Grandmother was also watching, praying with a rosary . . . I am now in the fourth grade at Yamazato Primary School. That playground of terrible memories is now completely cleared and many friends play there happily. I play with my friends there too, but sometimes I suddenly remember that awful day. When I do, I squat down on the spot where we cremated our mother and touch the earth with my fingers. When I dig deep in the ground with a piece of bamboo, several pieces of charcoal appear. Looking at the spot for a while, I can dimly see my mother's image in the earth. So when I see someone else walking on that place, it makes me very angry."

For more than thirty years we have all lived under the shadow of the weapon that caused this. A shadow which grows ever longer because today the nuclear arsenals of NATO and the Warsaw Pact contain the equivalent of *one million* Nagasaki bombs.

Even official government estimates talk of ten to twenty million dead in Britain from the immediate effects of a nuclear war. Many—perhaps most—of the survivors would suffer a worse fate: slow and agonising deaths from lethal doses of radiation and diseases that follow from this, in particular leukemia and other cancers and diseases of the nervous system.

That is a pattern that could be repeated throughout the globe. And so long as the weapons systems exist then the chances multiply that it will be. The American countdown has already started on a number of occasions, to be stopped in the last minutes only by the President's recall. In recent months NATO has issued several nuclear alerts, including two within one week. A freak electrical storm, a fault in the satellite monitoring system, even a chance formation of Newfoundland geese, all can—and indeed already have—put East and West on immediate nuclear war footing.

Not only do nuclear weapons place humanity on the constant brink of destruction. They also squander a vast amount of humanity's resources in order to do so. In a world where every year millions starve to death just one missile system—the American MX—is costing no less than *one hundred thousand million dollars*.

Yet despite all this, after the mid-sixties many people became resigned to living under the shadow of the bomb. There was detente between East and West. There were talks of arms limitation. The argument that a 'balance of terror' prevented a major war began to appear plausible.

Today the detente atmosphere seems definitely over. The new agreement on arms limitations—SALT 2—has not been ratified. East and West, more money is being spent on more and 'better' ways of killing us all. Why is the situation today so much more menacing?



'Can you hear the H-Bombs thunder'

THE NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS



THE 'NUCLEAR BALANCE' has *always* been unstable. But several quite new factors have dramatically and qualitatively worsened it. There is as we have mentioned the collapse of detente and the new Cold War; the economic crisis with the bitter international competition that has come with it. Finally there are the new weapons themselves. Let us begin here, for the consequences that follow from them are far reaching indeed.

Nuclear weapons, in the first period of the Cold War, the 1950s, were principally free falling bombs delivered by long range, sub-sonic, 'strategic' bombers. In a very short period of time both the superpowers had sufficient bombers and weapons to kill each other (and indeed the rest of the world) several times over. Although each were vulnerable to the other's anti-aircraft defences, it was generally assumed that their 'overkill' capacity was so great that neither side could plausibly win an all-out nuclear contest: the 'balance of terror' had arrived.

During the 1960s the strategic bombers were supplemented, and to a certain extent replaced, by ballistic missiles. Entering from space at several thousand miles per hour, these were—and indeed still are—virtually invulnerable to the home defences. Yet they remained fairly crude weapons, accurate enough to destroy a large object like a city, but of no real use where more accuracy was needed. And this limited the strategy available to the superpowers. Each could threaten the other's cities, but there was no way either could wipe out the other's missiles,

which were located in reinforced, underground 'silos'.

This meant that whoever launched the first strike could still expect to be on the receiving end of a fairly massive second strike from the other side, however obliterated its cities might already be.

The development of submarine based ballistic missile systems in the 1960s increased this 'second strike' capacity.

Until the new generation of weapons appeared, therefore, although there were great dangers of accidental warfare, the weapons themselves could be regarded—not completely falsely—as fall back weapons of last resort rather than as detonators of a general conflict.

It is this that has been completely transformed by the new weapons systems. Let us look at them each in turn.

At the NATO summit meeting in December 1979 a decision was taken to re-equip NATO forces with the Cruise and the Pershing 2 missiles. Both missiles are very accurate weapons. While the missiles of the 1960s could only be guaranteed to get within 1,000 feet or so of the target, the Cruise has an accuracy of a mere 30 feet. It uses a computerised guidance system based on data from aerial and satellite photographs, allowing it to home-in on its target at near ground level, making detection and interception very difficult indeed.

The ones that are being installed in Britain (and elsewhere in Europe if NATO has its way), have a range of about 2,000 miles—enough to hit Moscow and other major targets. Yet it is important to note that it is not Moscow that they will be aimed at. For a policy of counter-terror against cities one needs a sledgehammer not a rapier. A small number of high-yield bombs exploded at an altitude of several thousand feet can destroy a city. For this the Cruise's pin-point accuracy is redundant; furthermore its limitation to a one and a half megaton warhead and its ground-hugging flightpath are a positive disadvantage here.

What is more, NATO already has enough weapons and delivery systems to obliterate the major Russian cities many times over, and has had for nearly 30 years.

So it would be absurd to suppose that the USA has developed the Cruise as yet another weapon of counter-terror against the cities.

No, the Cruise missile has one purpose and one only: to take out Russia's principal *military* targets—above all its missile silos. These are protected by steel and reinforced concrete, which are estimated to give protection against bomb blast pressures of up to a quarter of a ton to a square inch.

An accuracy to within 300 feet would be needed to destroy them. The first generation of missiles—in spite of some large warheads—were not able to meet this demand, and this is the reason why silo-based missiles were generally recognised as a credible 'second strike weapon' by the strategists on both sides at the time. *All* of the new generation nuclear weapons make the silo-based systems vulnerable to destruction.

This is particularly the case with the Cruise. But it is also true for America's Trident and MX systems and the Russian's Backfire bomber and SS-20 missile. The Trident—which Thatcher intends buying for Britain's new generation of missile submarines—has a much longer range than the old Polaris. It carries as many as eight independently targetable warheads and is easily able to take out any known silo-based missile system. The MX, which the Americans are to deploy on mobile carriers inside labyrinthine covered-over and vastly reinforced trenches in Utah, Nevada and elsewhere is even more accurate with an even greater range and a vast panoply of electronic guidance and anti-defence systems. The Russian SS-20 also has multiple independently targetable warheads and is assumed to be highly accurate. And the Russian Backfire bomber, which can almost match the Cruise in its ground hugging capacity, has very sophisticated avionics and a very long range. It could penetrate Western Europe's defences from the less-guarded Atlantic side, and attack with a variety of the new generation of deadly accurate free-fall and stand-off bombs.

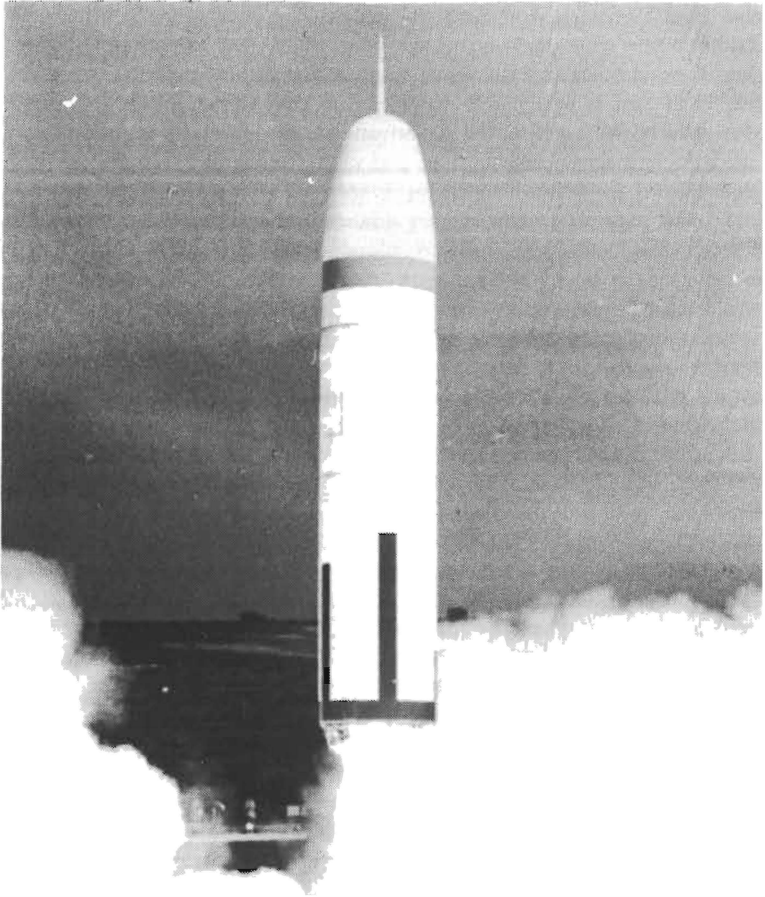
The new weapons systems are primarily directed against the enemy's military installations rather than the cities. The strategists in the Pentagon (and no doubt in the Kremlin too) have therefore almost completely changed their views—and even their terminology on nuclear war. Once upon a time they talked about a balance of terror, about how each could inflict so many megadeaths on the other that the use of nuclear weapons would be *unthinkable*. (Indeed a prominent American strategist of the early 1960s, Herman Kahn, wrote the classic textbook for the period under the appropriate title of *Thinking about the unthinkable*.)

Now it is all quite different. US Defence Secretary Brzezinski, for instance, argued in March 1980 America had to have the ability to wage a 'limited' nuclear war 'to give us a wider range of options than either a spasmodic nuclear exchange or a limited conventional war'. Precisely because the old strategy of mutual nuclear annihilation was 'unthinkable', it was not a credible threat either. What the Pentagon now considers to be thinkable—and therefore credible—is a nuclear confrontation which would exclude the more major cities and industrial locations of both sides, and be restricted to a particular 'theatre' (eg Europe, the Middle East, China/eastern Siberia).

The new weapons systems are the centerpiece of this scenario. They are talked of *not* as part of the strategy of deterrence, but as *counter-force* weapons. They are not to be held back as the ultimate guarantor of world peace, as an unused *threat*, but are there to be *used*.

All these new weapons systems are designed to be used *first* on the battlefield. It only begins to make sense to develop missiles of such pinpoint accuracy if the target is a hardened missile silo—they are quite unnecessary for anything else. And since there is no point at all in

Trident



striking a silo after its missile has been fired, again we can only draw the conclusion that they are intended to be used *preemptively*, as part of a surprise attack right at the beginning of hostilities.

Of no weapon is this more true than the Cruise missile: the ultimate anti silo-based missile weapon. Yet in spite of the explicit statements by Pentagon strategists that it is a *counterforce* weapon directed at military targets rather than a *deterrence* weapon directed against cities, the Tories, and defence secretary Pym in particular, have spoken of it as simply a more effective replacement for the 'British deterrent' in the form of the old Vulcan bombers.

This is complete nonsense. For a start American F-111 and Tornado manned aircraft have already been ordered to replace the Vulcans. Are they now to be cancelled? Not at all, they will simply be freed for other targets and other weapons systems. The Cruise missile therefore *adds to* the delivery systems based in Britain. It also changes the character of the systems, which will henceforth be geared primarily to *striking the first blow*.

Since the Cruise missile is only of use as a first strike weapon, its installation will, far from deterring Russia from striking first, positively invite it to loose off its missiles at us before they are destroyed in the ground. Against this background it is either completely dishonest or criminally stupid of Pym to claim that 'Because Cruise missiles would be scattered it would be an impossible task in the foreseeable future for the Russians to knock them out'. This is part of the merit of these particular weapons.

Given the fact that the Cruise missile is such a totally offensive weapon, the very arming of them—let alone their deployment—would be highly likely to induce the Russians to destroy them preemptively. A massive strike could easily destroy all the deployment areas in a small island like Britain with impunity.

Whichever way you look at it the new weapons systems will massively destabilise the precarious balance between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and make war more likely. And the new weapons are being introduced just as other factors push in the same direction.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons and their integration into 'conventional' military forces

IT IS NOT just the new weapons that give cause for alarm but also the rapid increase in the numbers and the spread of all nuclear weapons.

Proliferation has come mainly from the stockpiling that has continued irrespective of the Strategic Arms Limitation Agreement between East and West (SALT 1) operative in the mid-1970s.

But on top of this there has been the spread of nuclear weapons to more and more states—from the USA to the USSR to Britain to France

and to China, and probably to Israel, South Africa, Pakistan, India and others.

Furthermore such proliferation is very likely to reach epidemic proportions in the 1980s and early 1990s (assuming we ever reach it) as the massive export drive on the part of the nuclear power industry in Britain, France, the USA, and Germany supply dangerous and unnecessary reactors to other countries, and with them a plentiful supply of fissile material from which bombs can be made with the greatest of ease.

As if this were not enough, changes in military strategy have gradually whittled away the gap between nuclear and conventional weapons. Once upon a time all nuclear weapons were strategic. They were not there to be used on the battlefield, but solely as a last-resort deterrent for the cities. Now this is no longer true. Tactical devices, designed to break up major conventional forces before they can assemble, are now an integral part of NATO's armoury in Europe. A good proportion of its surface-to-surface missiles and strike aircraft are devoted to this task.

They are designed to be used tactically—on the battlefield—but they will also be used irrespective of whether the Warsaw Pact has used them first or not. NATO in fact has no other means of preventing the assembly of massed conventional forces, nor any modern Maginot line which would permit them to ignore it. NATO, in other words, has chosen a military profile in which a purely conventional response to a major conventional attack in the European theatre has already been ruled out: it would automatically escalate to the nuclear level.

On top of that a new boost to the escalation of tactical nuclear weapons has come with the French decision to go ahead with the neutron bomb. This will put immediate pressure on the Russians—and thereby on the Americans too—to follow suit.

So far both have committed themselves against the weapon—but that was before the French decision. But already in October 1978 Carter gave the go-ahead for 'modernising' the Lance—the US's battlefield surface-to-surface missile—and the 8-inch howitzer shell warheads so that they would be able to be converted to take the neutron bomb. And at the same time he ordered the production of all the bomb's components. In other words the US is practically there already. The French decision leaves little doubt therefore that America will go ahead too.

Euphemistically called an 'enhanced radiation device' or even a 'limited blast device' by its supporters, the neutron bomb is a specially vicious weapon. Two principle effects of a nuclear explosion are the explosion itself (blast), and radiation from the sub-atomic particles and the rays emitted. The neutron bomb has a reduced blast but lets off much more in the way of lethal radiation.

So instead of killing people instantaneously, the bomb's victims will die many hours, days, weeks later—and in particularly agonising ways.

Property, on the other hand, will remain relatively undamaged—a fact that would no doubt strongly encourage NATO use of it on its home territory.

And even as regards blast this is no small weapon. Each device could release a blast as big as the one that devastated Hiroshima. And they would not be single isolated blasts: the American plan is to use them in salvos of *at least* 40 at a time, with perhaps 200 loosed off at one time in the case of a major conflict in Europe.

In other words, the scale of the operation is already so big that hopes of confining it to a single limited military theatre seem pretty remote. The employment of 'tactical' and 'theatre' nuclear weapons would almost certainly unleash an all-out world war. Yet such employment is what our rulers are planning.

IS THERE A RUSSIAN THREAT?



IN THE WEST the excuse for the new weapons systems, for the huge increases in 'defence' expenditure while education, health and social services are cut back to the bone, is the military threat that Russia is supposed to present. Is there any truth in this?

Over strategic nuclear weapons it is universally admitted by all reputable academic and other sources that the USA has a continuing superiority. It may not be quite as overwhelming as it was 25 years ago, but it is still real enough. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has, for instance, estimated the number of US strategic bombs and missiles to be about the same as Russia's. But the American weapons are not only in all probability much more accurate, but they contain

many missiles with multiple independently targetable warheads. Taking this into account, the USA comes out with more than twice as many warheads as the USSR (8,870 to 3,810). Not that these differences are of any very great significance, for each side has more than enough weapons and delivery systems to obliterate the other several times over; but they certainly do show that the 'threat' cannot be seen to come exclusively from the USSR as our rulers in Britain and the US would like us to believe.

Nor do Russia's conventional arms represent any escalating threat. It is certainly true that Russia has a big army, with around two million soldiers—rather more than the Americans. But so too do the Russians face a hostile army themselves—the Chinese to the East—which is also distinctly larger than themselves. And that is before one even begins to consider NATO in the west with its massed armies and enormous fire power.

As a result of the Chinese threat, the involvement in Afghanistan and so on, there are now only twenty or so Russian divisions ready for action on the central European front. When one considers the fact that Russia needed some four hundred divisions to defeat a much smaller enemy—Nazi Germany—which was also fighting a war on two fronts, it is obviously ludicrous to suppose that Russia, even with its depth of reserves, could plausibly overrun and subjugate Western Europe on that basis.

This much is obvious enough to the Western military's experts too, and they admit it in their own specialist press. For instance in the June 1980 issue of *Nato Review*, Colonel Jonathan Alford, the Deputy Director of the International Institute of Strategic Studies, admitted: *'Frightening though the twenty ready divisions of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany (GSFG) may appear to us, I find it hard to believe that such a force would appear to them to be anything like sufficient to secure Western Europe or even West Germany . . . On the other hand it is clearly enough to strike out at the West if the West appeared to be preparing for war . . . When one adds the continuing Soviet need to subjugate the countries of Eastern Europe by force in order to stifle dissent, the rationale for GSFG is sufficiently defined and its size and shape adequately explained'*.

Colonel Alford is quite right about the Russian army. It is there basically to subjugate Eastern Europe as in 1956 in Hungary, 1968 in Czechoslovakia, and possibly again soon in Poland or even in Russia itself. It is also there to prevent NATO stealing Russia's pitch in Eastern Europe. But it is *not* there to blitzkrieg its way to the Atlantic. Any suggestion that it is, is simply a lie to legitimate an even more offensive posture on the part of NATO.

Russia and the Warsaw Pact are definitely *not* the innocent victims of Washington's warmongers. The proportion of their economies devoted

to nuclear war is even higher than the West's. But this does not mean either they spend more on arms or that they are more powerful militarily. For what Russia devotes to arms is a higher *proportion* of a *much smaller* economy than the US's. Attempts to prove that the USSR spend more as a total than the US are based upon cheap statistical tricks.

Pentagon leader James Schlesinger and the CIA have made such a claim: But they base their calculations on working out how much it would cost the US to replicate Russia's armed forces in the US at American prices. But prices in Russia are quite different to those in the US, with technology being relatively more expensive and labour (for manning Russia's large army) much cheaper. US Congressman Les Aspin proved how phoney the method of calculation was by applying it in reverse: He was able to show that for Russia to replicate the US armed forces inside the USSR at Russian prices would cost a much greater sum than the Russians actually spend on their armed forces.

But the figures alone do not tell half the story. For Russia and the East European countries are more backward technologically than the Western states. For instance, although they have more tanks than the West, these are generally ancient and inferior to those of the West. The fact is that the present level of militarisation is straining the Eastern bloc economies to the limit. It is one of the reasons for the shortages of food and consumer goods that have provoked strikes in Poland and in Russia's giant car plants. The Eastern bloc states are, quite simply, not strong enough to be able to match their counterparts in the West weapon for weapon without jeopardising their whole economies.

The best and most reasonable guess is that there is very approximate equality between the USA and the USSR, but that NATO plus China together are probably somewhat stronger than the combined forces of the Warsaw Pact. Even so, none of these differences are qualitative, and neither the Warsaw Pact nor NATO—with or without China—could be reasonably assured of even a partial victory in even a limited war.

The 'Russian menace' is therefore just a crude device to gain support for NATO's highly dangerous military escalation. It should be rejected totally. And it can and should be totally rejected without in any way exonerating or defending Moscow vis-a-vis Washington.

'But', a clever right-wing politician will throw in at this point in any argument, *'The reason there is no Russian threat is precisely because we in the West have continually updated our armies. If we followed your advice and got rid of nuclear weapons, there soon would be a very real Russian threat.'*

This counter-argument fails on at least three counts. First, there is no evidence that the Russians want to march down our streets tomorrow. This is not because the men in the Kremlin are peaceloving philanthropists. When easy opportunities have arisen they have seized control of

neighbouring countries—from the partition of Poland with Hitler in 1939 through the takeover of Eastern Europe after World War Two to the present adventure in Afghanistan. But they **have only done this when it has been easy**. Today they are finding it more and more difficult to control the empire they already have, with continued dissent in Czechoslovakia, the movement for independent trade unions in Poland and strikes in Russia itself. The more advanced economically are the countries they try to control, the more difficulty they have keeping the local population, especially the workers, from rebelling. And this is despite the fact that the Western powers have repeatedly promised the Kremlin that none of the monstrous weaponry of the West will be used to assist rebellious movements in the East. It is not likely that the Russian rulers want to create still more difficulties for themselves by taking over countries that are even more industrially advanced, with populations even less easy to cow into submission. They have their hands full with Prague and Budapest and Warsaw. Do they really want to add Paris and Frankfurt and Milan and London to the list?

This leads straight into the second count. Even if by some outside chance the Russian leaders were to decide to take over Germany or France or Britain, that would *not* be the worst possible thing to happen. People used to fantasise about Russian rule producing a 1984 world of complete thought control, in which no form of fight back against oppression would be possible, in which society would be one huge concentration camp. They insisted it would be better to be 'Dead' than 'Red' in this sense. The reality of Eastern Europe over the last 25 years has proved such fantasies to be quite false. It is true that there is censorship, denial of the right to protest and to form independent trade unions, that society is dominated by bureaucrats who try ruthlessly to crush all opposition. But it is also true that again and again the efforts of the ruling group have failed, that there have been strikes and uprisings and movements in which people have seized for themselves freedom to speak and organise and protest. At their high points—for instance in the revolutionary days in Budapest in November 1956—these ideas have even infected some sections of the armed forces sent to suppress them. Occupation by the Russian armed forces is not pleasant. But it is not death either. It involves forms of oppression and exploitation against which people can and do fight back, with the ultimate hope of overthrowing the Russian empire from within. That is why if you ask the most courageous of the dissidents in Russia and Eastern Europe whether they would swap their present oppression for nuclear annihilation, they will answer with an emphatic 'No'. If you're 'dead', you cannot do anything. If you are alive and occupied by Russia you can fight back, with the hope of creating a future much better than the present.

In a sanely organised society we might decide in advance that we

would not simply sit back and wait for a Russian—or any other—takeover. We might choose to prepare for resistance in advance, on such a scale as to deter them from ever sending their troops in. But in that case we would not choose weapons that could only destroy ourselves as well as millions of oppressed and exploited people already controlled by our opponents. Instead we would be talking about weaponry to stop forces of occupation moving freely through the country—a high precision rifle for every citizen, an anti-tank missile for every workplace.

The path of resistance to Russia preached by the adherents of missile madness is one that in reality threatens to take away from the mass of ordinary people the very things we would be afraid of losing if we were, by some chance, subject to Russian rule—our right to free speech, to express ourselves in print, to form independent trade unions, to oppose those who would love to dictate our thoughts and actions. The *New Statesman* published on 20 September 1980 a few of the highly secret plans top generals and civil servants have drawn up for dealing with the situation in which they decide Cruise missiles are to be used.

It revealed that they would then effectively replace ‘democratic’ government and the various rights we have with their own dictatorial rule.

‘A five tier hierarchical network of protected bunkers now covers the entire country. The system is closely coupled to military arrangements and provides for an army major general to be appointed as Regional Military Commander in each of the 12 regions of Britain . . . Most of the civil administration is carried out from lower echelon Sub Regional Headquarters each housing about 200 people. They are entirely staffed by civil servants, with some assistance from selected industrialists and bodies such as the BBC and the Post Office . . . Below these are county and district council war HQs, which will be run by the chief executive of each local authority. They are designated ‘local controllers’ and may if the need be rule with absolute power and with the assurance of retrospective legitimation of any of their actions . . .’

All the ‘rights’ we are supposed to be defending against the Russians—the right to free speech, to a free press, to strike—will disappear as an immense military and police operation is staged to stop people fleeing the threat of nuclear annihilation in the cities impeding the movements of troops and missiles, and to stop any but the selected groups of top people enjoying the haven of the deep shelters. A prime task of the police and the military will be to stop anyone protesting at what is happening.

The secret ‘Police Manual for Home Defence’ tells police forces to be ready for ‘controlling the movement of subversive or potentially subversive persons’—in other words, of anyone who might object to the

use of nuclear weapons or to the way in which selected top people will be protected in their network of bunkers from the effects.

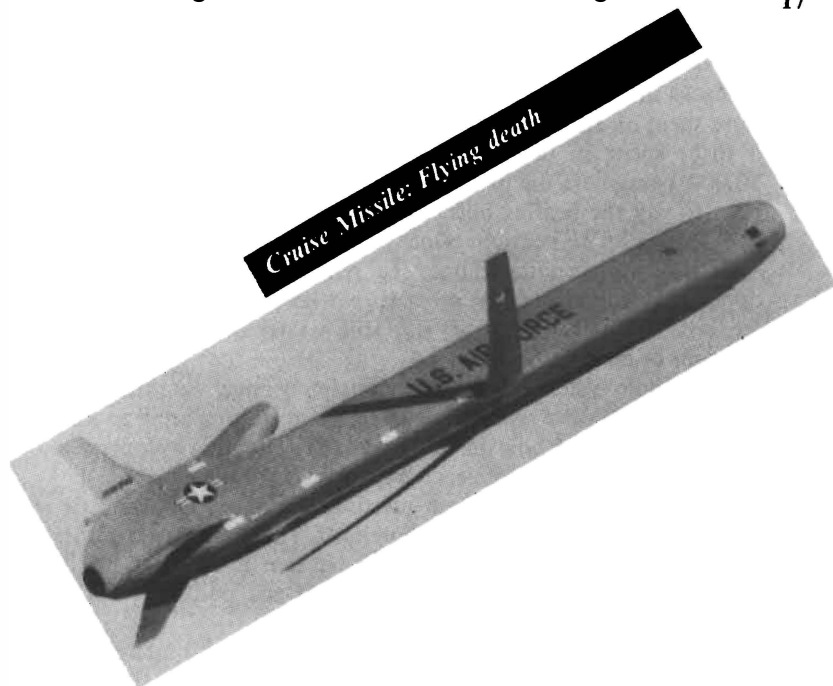
In the military exercise 'Scrum Half' in 1978 every military and police unit involved was issued with hundreds of CS gas munitions to keep order. And in the 1980 'Square Leg' exercise 6,500 troops were deployed to deal with 'defence against sabotage, espionage and subversive groups'.

If the decision to use the Cruise missiles were taken, we would very quickly find ourselves in a society in which not only would there be—if we are lucky—some 20 odd million people killed through nuclear war, but in which the rest of us would be subjected to all the regimentation and bureaucracy that characterises the Eastern bloc. Those of us who would not be 'dead' would not be 'Red'—but we would be condemned to dictatorial rule by a self-appointed military-industrial elite hardly distinguishable in most respects from the people who rule Russia.

This brings out a very important point, to which we will return later. Despite all the rhetoric about 'defending freedom', the people who dominate industry, the military and the government bureaucracy in countries like Britain share one great characteristic with the 'enemy' who rule Russia: they regard 'democracy', 'freedom of speech' and especially the freedom to form independent trade unions as things that must, if necessary, be 'sacrificed' to defend their control over society. So, when the coup in Chile took place, it was lauded in the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*. And when the generals took over in Turkey, censoring the press, destroying the right to strike, arresting those who protested, even the *Guardian* let loose a cheer.

Part of the justification in the case of Turkey was that 'social tensions' (in everyday language, the insistence of people on campaigning for decent conditions and against the violence of fascist bands) were making it 'difficult' for the Turkish army to play its role in NATO. So in order to strengthen the 'defence of the West', the Turkish generals were given a carte blanche to abrogate all those freedoms that politicians usually claim distinguish 'the West' from 'the East'.

If anyone does seriously want to defend the 'rights' that people in this country enjoy, then you cannot defend them by lining up with those who would obliterate those rights if the prerequisites of missile warfare against the Russians demanded it. You cannot defend them by backing programmes of nuclear armament that have as their essential corollary a militarisation of society that destroys such rights. That is a path to creating a 'totalitarianism' in this country, like the dictatorships of Chile and Turkey and symmetrical to the totalitarianism of Russia.



WHY NUCLEAR WEAPONS?

THE AMERICAN WEAPONS programme in the early 1980s will cost a trillion (that's right, a trillion—a *million million*) dollars. Russia too is spending comparable sums. Most other countries—poor and rich—are also similarly involved.

This is happening when more than sixty million people are dying every year from a shortage of food, and more than half a billion suffer from chronic malnutrition. The money spent on the US weapons programme alone is enough to eliminate this altogether throughout the whole world.

What is more, just at the same point that our rulers are making sharp cutbacks in health, education and so on, they are rapidly escalating the sums spent on armaments. In Britain for instance an extra £5,000 million is to be spent on the Trident missile system, while at the same time 50,000 pensioners die of hypothermia each year because they are too poor to pay the heating bills. The Trident money is enough to pay for free heating for *all* pensioners many times over.

Instead of spending money to *relieve* death and suffering, the opposite is happening: the services that keep people alive and healthy are savagely cut so as to pay for still greater increases in our rulers' weapons of mass destruction.

The whole system is obviously completely crazy. So little is spent on keeping people alive while so much is spent on preparing to kill them. Why is this so, and how on earth did such a situation ever come about? And why have things taken such a sharp turn for the worse?

To find the answers to these questions, we have to look a little wider than at the weaponry of destruction itself. The weaponry is constructed and grows in size and awesomeness because it suits the interests of groups of people with immense economic and political power within the rival blocs for this to happen.

Who are these people? And why do they have this interest in taking steps that can only lead to world destruction?

Two basic sets of facts have to be grasped if we are to understand anything about the modern world.

The first is that real power in all major countries lies in the hands of very small and very privileged groups of people: in the West the directors of the huge corporations, in the East the top party officials who control the economy and the state.

Each of these ruling groups, West or East, sees the key to its survival as being through expanding its economic wealth at the expense of other ruling groups. The directors of General Motors are continually obsessed with expanding their share of the car market by squeezing that of Ford, Chrysler and the Japanese car firms. The rulers of West Germany **are increasingly worried** about the need to expand the markets for their goods and to stop the Japanese getting at them. And, of course, the main preoccupation of British governments for at least the last 20 years has been to build up British industry's exports at the expense of the Germans, the Japanese or the Americans.

Again, the recent events in Poland have shown things are not essentially different in the Eastern bloc. The immediate cause of the Polish strikes was food shortages as the rulers of Poland cut home consumption in order to sell more abroad.

So the whole world is dominated by rival ruling classes, who maintain powerful and privileged positions for themselves, but are at the same time involved in endless competition with each other. In every

country these rulers explain to the rest of the population that they would 'love' to increase living standards, but this is not possible because of 'competition'.

The second great feature of the modern world is that the rival ruling classes which control each country operate more and more across national boundaries. Ford operates not only in the US, but also in Britain, Germany, Belgium, Spain and a score of other countries. The 'Seven Sisters', the gigantic American, British and Dutch oil companies, run oil wells, refineries and service stations in every part of the globe. The great Japanese companies operate not only in Japan, but in Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Indonesia and sell many of their products in Europe and the US.

Key sectors of Russian industry depend for raw materials not only on what is produced inside the USSR, but also on iron from India, phosphates from Morocco, gas from Iran—as well, of course, as on coal from Poland and engineering goods from Czechoslovakia and East Germany.

The internationalisation of wealth is most marked in the case of the American, and to a lesser extent the British, economies. In the 1960s it was estimated that the total output of American firms overseas was greater than that produced by any country apart from the US itself and the USSR.

Since then there has been a huge expansion of the financial wealth held overseas by US banks, with vast loans to countries like Turkey, Brazil, Zaire, Poland. The latest figures indicate that the poorer countries of the world will owe 451 billion dollars to the Western banks by the end of this year. They will have to cough up no less than 88 billion dollars just as interest payments on that debt. The point has been reached where many poorer countries spend half or even two thirds of their export earnings in any one year on debt repayments and interest. The major part of these debt repayments go to American banks—although it should be added that the owners of Britain's banks are not missing out on anything since, through takeovers of American banks British banks like Barclays and the Midland have grown to among the largest in the world.

It is this vast proliferation of American business throughout the so-called free world which explains the way in which the rulers of America see their national interests as dependent upon a similar proliferation of their military forces. They feel that the US's real boundaries are along the frontiers of Pakistan or Saudi Arabia, around the southern tip of Latin America or along the 38th parallel in Korea, because in all these places the investments and markets of American firms are to be found. Again, similar considerations apply to British governments. When Lord Carrington goes to the slave-owning monarchies of Saudi Arabia or Oman or to the military dictatorship in Pakistan and proclaims

them new parts of the 'free world' he is really recognising the key importance to the British multinationals of the oil wells of the Middle East.

Throughout the post-war period the owners of the great firms have lived in fear of losing key parts of their overseas wealth. The fears have expanded as they have increasingly organised production on an integrated, international basis. The point has been reached where they see the loss of one quite small component of their multinational operations as threatening to damage the rest. Hence their concern over Middle East oil. Hence also their approval of the military coup in Turkey which, they hope, will make sure that Turkey's massive borrowings from the Western banks will not be endangered. The 'threat' they fear can come from three sources. It could come from revolutionary movements inside particular countries. It could come from the Eastern bloc attempting to solve some of its economic problems by moving into areas where previously Western interests dominated. And it could come from individual Western states taking actions (like the imposition of import controls) that might damage the prospects of the giant multinational firms of other countries.

The massive scale of American arms expenditure has been designed to ward off these possibilities. It has meant that when regimes have come to power which US business interests have not liked—as for instance in the Dominican republic in the mid 1960s—American troops have been able to move in (in exactly the same way as Russian troops moved into Czechoslovakia in the late 1960s). It has meant that the rulers of the US have been able to threaten nuclear annihilation against the Russians if they made intrusions into the American 'sphere of influence' (as the Kennedy government threatened nuclear annihilation in the early 1960s after Khrushchev started putting Russian missiles in Cuba). And it has meant that the Americans have been able to make sure that their allies have not taken any measures that would be damaging to the US multinationals that operate within their borders.

Such considerations enable us to understand why even today Britain, one of the weakest advanced Western economies, spends a greater proportion of its national wealth on arms than other, stronger economies like West Germany and Japan: it is not somehow that the Russian threat to 'freedom' in Britain is greater than in the other two countries, each of which has a common border with the Eastern bloc. It is that British big business still has a much greater international network of investments to protect.

None of this means that the Russians do not play a part in creating the arms race. Those who rule in the Kremlin also have *their* international economic interests—especially, but not only, in Eastern Europe. Their concern since 1945 has been that the Americans, British, West Germans or Japanese might try to seize some of these from them. So

they have continually tried to match Western military strength with military strength of their own.

Once military competition between great powers begins, there is no end to it. Each imagines new weaponry that the other side might develop—and tries to forestall it by developing such weaponry itself. So it does not matter how many warheads already exist; more have to be created in order to keep ahead in the race. Competition forces the ruling groups East and West to behave in ways that would seem completely irrational if the competition did not exist.

Hence the continual spiral of arms spending, the continual amassing of means of production, the devotion of vast sums of money that could be used to improve human life on means to destroy it, the continual exhortations to people to produce more but to live on less.





FROM YALTA TO AFGHANISTAN

FACED WITH THE mad race towards Armageddon between the great powers, the reaction of many people is to call for peace talks and detente between the leaders of the main states.

This underlies the call of the right wing of the Labour Party for 'multi-lateral' disarmament through summit conferences, but also the arguments of some unilateralists for 'pressure' on leaders.

The historical record shows that peace talks alone will never bring peace.

The cold war itself arose precisely out of a series of summit conferences. These were held between the victorious allies at the end of World War Two. Roosevelt for the US, Churchill for Britain and Stalin

for Russia decided to protect their wartime gains by dividing up the countries of the world between them.

The spirit of this carve up is revealed in Churchill's account of an incident in October 1944:

'I wrote out on a half sheet of paper:

Romania: Russia 90% – the others 10%

Greece: Great Britain (in accord with USA) 90% – Russia 10%

Yugoslavia: 50–50%

Hungary: 50–50%

Bulgaria: Russia 75% – the others 25%

I pushed this across to Stalin, who had by then heard the translation. There was a slight pause. Then he took his blue pencil and made a large tick upon it, and passed it back to us. It was all done in no more time than it takes to set down.'

The finally agreed spheres of interest were of course a little different from this, but the fact remains that the present division of Europe came out of these *agreements* between the great powers.

When, for instance, the resistance movement that had freed Greece from the German rule tried to oppose the consequences of the carve up (which meant Greece was to be ruled by right-wing politicians who had refused to fight the Germans) it was smashed by British and American troops who could boast that they had Stalin's approval. When in 1956 the workers of Hungary staged an uprising against Russian rule, they were given not one item of material aid by the Western powers who were insistent that they had to keep to the terms of the 1944 agreement.

The carve up did not do away with the arms race or the threat of war. It merely laid down a framework in which it developed. For, in both East and West, those in power recognised that the only ultimate safeguard for the boundaries of the 'spheres of influence' laid down in 1944 was military might. And so again and again, along the borders between their respective spheres of influence, there were clashes as each tested out the real strength of the other: in Berlin in 1948, in Korea in 1950, around China's offshore island Quemoy and Matsu in 1958, over Cuba in 1962.

In the same way, the Salt One Arms Limitation Agreement of the 1970s did not stop the growth of the nuclear arsenals. It only ensured that they developed in certain directions rather than others. Indeed, it has been argued that the very terms of the agreement ensured that vast sums were spent on ways to get round its terms, producing the horrendous new array of weapons that are being installed today.

What is true is that between the Cuba crisis of the early 1960s through to the late 1970s, the immediate threat of nuclear war seemed to recede. Despite the horrendous war waged by the US against Vietnam and the Russian occupation of Czechoslovakia, the rulers of the US and

Russia seemed on almost friendly terms.

The last year has seen a regression to the hostile tones of the 1950s. The beginning of December 1979 saw the decision to deploy Cruise missiles throughout Western Europe. The end of the month saw the movement of Russian tanks into Afghanistan. Since then we have faced a succession of international crises, pressure for increased arms spending East and West, the return of the spectre of nuclear annihilation.

We cannot understand this new cold war, with its enlarged deployment of weaponry, unless we look at what has been happening to the rival economic interests this weaponry is meant to protect.

In the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s the world experienced an unprecedented economic boom (itself a product of the massive arms spending of the period). In the boom the rival ruling groups, East and West, could all see their wealth expanding without having to clash too violently with other ruling groups. Although they kept expanding their weaponry in order to protect what they had, they felt less pressure to go to war with each other to get more.

Since 1973, however, the world has moved back into the sort of economic crisis that was a regular occurrence until World War Two.

In great economic crises, rival groups of rulers find that the survival of the wealth of some of them depends upon the destruction of the wealth of others. The multinational business giants suddenly find themselves threatened either by revolts of those they exploit or by inroads from their competitors: even a General Motors or a Ford begins to have nightmares of bankruptcy. The oil giants suddenly face the prospect of losing control of some of their wells. The apparently all-powerful Russian state finds that it is not producing enough wealth to give workers the increased living standards it has promised, and is beset by strikes in its giant car plants.

Under such circumstances, each ruling group begins to work out ways to stretch out its tentacles to get at the wealth of other ruling groups; each ruling group fears that its rivals have the same intentions against it. And so where they can, they begin to build up the armed forces of the state to increase their bargaining power. This has happened before.

The world slump of the 1890s led to militarisation and a desperate competition for colonies and spheres of influence between Britain, France, the US, Germany, Japan and so on. The slump of the 1930s similarly led to militarisation in Germany and Japan, followed by Britain, France and the US. In both cases the end result was world war.

On past experience then, the present heightened military tension following on from world economic crisis should come as no surprise.

Of course, the rival ruling classes try to gain support by disguising their aims in ideological cloaks. But it is easy to see how hollow it all is. 'Socialist' China supports NATO, has friendly relations with

Pinochet's Chile and goes to war with 'socialist' Vietnam; the US aids the guerrilla forces of the ousted genocidal maniac Pol Pot and supports him at the United Nations; 'socialist' Russia and Cuba aid the Ethiopian military dictatorship against Eritrean liberation forces; and so on.

The conflicts are real enough. But they derive not from different ideologies, but from the struggle between the different national rulers of a competitive, world capitalist system.

In many ways the situation today resembles that in the run up to the First World War. Then as now there was an arms race; in place of Russia and America there was Britain and Germany; in place of ICBMs dreadnoughts; then as now each power tried to bolster its strength with a string of alliances with unstable states; then as now far-sighted people on either side tried to advise the ruling classes that the end result would be a war that no-one could gain from; then as now the ruling classes had more important things to do than listen; then as now a series of international summit conferences took place over two decades, each apparently stabilising the situation for a period, only for new tensions to arise and new threats of war.



CAN WE STOP ARMAGEDDON?



NOW WE CAN see why it is such nonsense to talk of 'multi-lateral' disarmament. The owners of General Motors are not going to see their empire collapse just because of the terms of some international agreement. The men in the Kremlin are not going to risk losing their control over what they see as 'strategic' resources because of a piece of paper they have signed. The giant 'seven sisters' of oil are not going to abandon the source of their profits because of 'international law'. Each of them knows that, in the last resort, what protects their wealth from others is the military forces they influence. You cannot

CND demonstration, London 1958



stop them driving the world towards war unless you wrench these forces from their hands.

This also explains why we cannot stop with simply aiming to get rid of a single sort of weapon; if we were successful just in persuading our rulers to abandon the Cruise, they would soon be deploying some other horrific weapon; even if they agreed to abandon all nuclear weapons, it would only be to begin deployment of some of the horrendous chemical and biological weapons they have been developing (despite international agreements not to do so).

Historically, there have been only two ways in which great wars have been stopped or ended. Either one side has emerged victorious. Or the power of rulers to wage war has been forcibly taken off them by action from below.

The 1939-45 war was ended in the first of these ways with victory for the Western allies and Russia. The 1914-18 war, on the other hand, was ended in the second of these ways by workers' revolutions. First of all the Russian soldiers refused to go on dying for the Tsar, the landlords and the capitalists in 1917. Then in 1918 the German soldiers followed suit and the war was at an end.

As the crisis deepens and the world slides closer and closer to military conflict, as a new 1914 looms more threateningly ahead, the question becomes posed more sharply once again. But this time there is no alternative which would lead to victory for one or the other power bloc. There can be no repeat of 1945; once a nuclear conflict begins everyone will be obliterated. There is today only **one** road to peace and that is the revolutionary road to workers' power.

Let us be quite clear about this. We are **not** saying that without an immediate revolution there will be a world war. But what we do say is that every step that workers take in the direction of their own self-emancipation is also a step in the direction of a nuclear-free world, and that they are the *only* steps in this direction.

The magnificent achievement of the Polish workers in setting up workers' councils in Gdansk in the summer of 1980 was therefore also a crucial step away from nuclear war: it seriously limited the ability of the Warsaw Pact countries to wage it. It was more important than a thousand Helsinki agreements between the great powers.

On the other hand the coup in Turkey has had exactly the opposite result. The generals' victory had led to a strengthening of NATO's southern flank.

But these are obviously very grand and dramatic events. In Britain there will be neither a military coup nor workers' soviets set up in the coming weeks and months. What can *we* do to stop the slide toward nuclear war?

The reemergence of a nuclear disarmament campaign is a tremendously positive development and must be given every support. And

demands such as 'No Cruise missiles!' are exactly right too; not only are they highly concrete but they also reflect the qualitative escalation in the cold war by our rulers.

At the same time we need to point out that the insanity of nuclear war flows not just from the insanity of our rulers. In fact they are simply fulfilling the needs of the insane capitalist system—a system to which they owe their power and their wealth. Thatcher, Brezhnev, Carter and the class of people they represent are the beneficiaries of this system. In Britain therefore, on top of 'No Cruise missiles!' we need to say 'We won't die for Thatcher!'

We also have to remember the lessons of CND twenty years ago. Then as now it tapped the aspirations and fears of many thousands (indeed hundreds of thousands) of people, a great many of whom were entirely new to any form of politics. Then as now this debate flowed over into the Labour Party, indeed as the campaign developed, the perspective of converting the party to unilateralism emerged as *the* strategy. In 1960 at the Scarborough conference this became official party policy. We were jubilant, we thought we had won.

But Gaitskell, then leader of the Labour Party, ignored the resolution with impunity and there was nothing CND could do about it.

In later years the Labour Party conference passed other resolutions—for instance against Polaris—and still the Labour Party leadership took no notice. Indeed, many former leading CND figures like Michael Foot and Stan Orme were in the 1974-79 Labour government which presided over a secret modernisation of Britain's submarine missiles that cost £1000m.

The Labour Party leaders knew that they could ignore formal resolutions because CND's success at conferences was not matched by a similar success in involving millions of ordinary working class people in the campaign. So the union leaders who control the bulk of Labour Party conference votes could cast them for CND one year and for Gaitskell the next.

All that was left for activists in CND to do was continue with marches and demonstrations which seemed to get nowhere. By 1963 the annual march from Aldermaston was little more than a ritual. The most active fighters in CND briefly followed Bertrand Russell into the Committee of 100 which took mass, direct action against the bomb. But it too found itself cut off from any social force that could really challenge the bomb makers. It never succeeded in involving in the anti-bomb movement the strike power of millions of organised trade unionists.

Mass movements against war which have been successful—like the movements in Russia and Germany during World War One—have only enjoyed success because they have been able to connect the fight against war with the fight against the deterioration in the material conditions of those who work in factories, mines, docks and offices.

If you just talk to people about the Cruise missile or the H-bomb it can seem to them something remote about which they can do little, and which they might even support. If on the other hand you talk to them about their conditions at work, their wages, health and safety on the job, the cuts in the local health service, council rents and rates—these are all issues that often seem more immediate and about which protest action might be successful. A really powerful movement against the bombs and missiles has to connect up with the struggles that take place over these other issues.

The connections were difficult to make at the time of CND. Capitalism internationally was booming, and most workers could look



Fighting for freedom: Poland 1980



Fighting hospital closures: New York 1980

forward year after year to rising living standards.

The situation today is different. The upsurge in military spending comes as throughout the world there are cutbacks on social services and workers' living standards. The Cruise programme is being pushed through at the same time as hospital closures, anti-union laws, cuts in real wages in the public sector, the largest rise in unemployment since the 1930s.


Already millions of working class people hate the Thatcher government. Even on the relatively unsuccessful Day of Action called by the TUC on 14 May one million workers struck. One can easily foresee a mass movement developing out on this anger even more powerful than that which eventually drove from power the last Tory government in 1974.

The anti-Cruise campaign has to make itself an integral part of this wider struggle.

The connections between the missiles and the other issues are real enough. But they have to be shown to be real. This is one of the things we in the **Socialist Workers Party** try to do. We are a small party—much smaller than the Labour Party. But all the time we try to bring home to workers the connections between the different issues that worry them, to show them that if they are to fight against wage cuts and redundancies effectively, then they have also to fight against the other symptoms of a society in crisis—from the growth of racist and fascist ideas, the increased repressive powers of the police, the threat to humanity as a whole from nuclear weapons. We make great efforts to get these arguments across on every possible occasion—through regular factory leaflets, through campaigns inside individual trade unions, through participation in the anti-Nazi League and the Right to Work campaign. Above all we produce and sell our weekly paper, **Socialist Worker**, in an attempt to put all these arguments across to a working class audience.

All this is in marked contrast to the Labour Party, which only seriously attempts to communicate with working class people every four or five years when it wants their votes at elections.

In the fight against nuclear weapons we need the widest possible unity. Hopefully many, many people will be drawn into it who do not yet see things the way we do. But we are convinced that unless within that campaign there is a growing nucleus of people who understand the need to make the connections with the other issues, who see nuclear weapons as a *class* issue, then at the end of the day the movement will tragically fail as much this time as it did last. And so we urge you to combine the fight against the missiles with the fight against Thatcher and the capitalist system she represents by joining us in the **Socialist Workers Party**.



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