

Cruise will be sited within the next 12 months — unless we can stop it

Jon Bloomfield
Year of Decision



Quaker protester at Greenham Common

Since 1980 the peace movement has blossomed in many parts of Western Europe. Its opposition to the introduction of further new nuclear weapons has received widespread support and given expression to the deep public concern about the nuclear arms race. In Britain the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament has been the country's fastest-growing, most dynamic popular movement.

Initially, the most common response of the political and military establishment was to minimise and marginalise these movements. Sometimes spokesmen like Lord Carrington would patronise the peace movement as being well-meaning but misguided, but there was little initial fear that they posed

a substantial challenge to the military policies of NATO and its member governments.

The co-ordinated series of anti-nuclear demonstrations in autumn 1981 shifted that perception. By the middle of 1982 the response had definitely altered. Reagan's visit to West Europe last June signalled that a counter-offensive was underway in earnest. As the date for the installation of Cruise and Pershing II missiles has drawn nearer, opponents of the NATO decision to deploy this new category of weapons have stepped up their campaigning and in turn have come under renewed attack.

To date the peace movements in Britain and Western Europe have sustained and extended their momentum. Their most

notable success has been in making the nuclear arms race a central issue of political debate. In itself this represents quite a remarkable achievement. The questions these movements now face is whether in the coming twelve to eighteen months they can achieve a favourable outcome to that debate. Preventing the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles is the crucial issue. For the movement in Britain, success would put the question of the removal of US nuclear bases and withdrawal from NATO onto the agenda.

For the British people this coming period is doubly vital since the forthcoming general election will also determine whether the plans to modernise Britain's nuclear arsenal

with the purchase of Trident submarines will proceed or be cancelled. As the peace movement enters this new phase of its campaign, how can it meet the challenge of its opponents and build a mass, popular movement with the strength to win its immediate demands? It is these issues that provide the main focus of this article.

The European Theatre

The new upsurge in the peace movements is intimately connected with a series of US military decisions and statements in the mid/late 1970s. Among the most significant were the decision to produce the neutron bomb; the succession of statements from pentagon officials on waging and winning limited nuclear war; and the NATO plans to deploy Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe. It was argued that these missiles merely 'modernised' NATO's nuclear arsenal and enabled it to continue the strategy of 'flexible response.' However, the 108 Pershing II and 464 Cruise missiles would give the United States government an unprecedented capacity to attack the Soviet Union from European soil.

Their deployment is one component of a general rearmament drive being undertaken by the Reagan administration. Already towards the end of the Carter administration it was evident that the prevailing view in political and military circles in Washington was to reassert American power. Under Reagan, these forces have become predominant. Their intention is to ensure that the US regains its position as the world's premier military power. A vast conventional rearmament programme, the new Rapid Deployment Force, sharp rises in defence budgets and the construction of the inter-continental MX missiles are among the package of measures underway. Cruise and Pershing missiles will express this new military capacity in Europe.

Aware of the public anxiety in Western Europe on the weapons issue, US politicians and generals have sought to gain acceptance for their European military policy by promoting the 'zero option'. Under this the US, would cancel the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles provided the Soviet Union dismantles all its equivalent land-based weapons, the approximately 600 SS4s, SS5s and SS20s. Since the bulk of Soviet weapons in this range are land-based, while US and NATO weapons are predominantly air and submarine launched — F1-11s, Poseidon submarines etc — this offer represents an unequal exchange. As the US also refuses to consider British and French nuclear weapons in the European balance, the bias in its proposals

becomes overwhelming. The 'Zero Option' represents a negotiating position which if accepted would tilt the nuclear advantage in Europe decisively to the United States.

Not surprisingly the Soviet government has given the Zero Option a frosty reception. Under the new Andropov leadership it has given renewed attention and impetus to its disarmament diplomacy. In the European sphere it has made two substantial proposals: firstly to create a military corridor 300 miles wide on Europe's East-West frontier where no battlefield nuclear weapons would be kept; secondly, to retain in Europe only as many missiles as are kept by Britain and France. In discussion with the German SPD leader Vogel in January, it was confirmed that this proposal would involve the scrapping of some SS20s and not just their transference beyond the Urals.

The initial response of the US, British and French governments has been negative. Mr. Cheysson's visit to Moscow in February seemed to herald no shift in the stance of the French government. Normally, this would be a scenario for deadlock or a compromise arms control agreement that resulted in the deployment of more weapons, as has been the case with previous such agreements. On this occasion however, an alternative outcome is possible. Can the mass peace movements and electorates of Western Europe secure a disarmament option?

Their ability to achieve success will hinge on four factors: the maintenance and development of a social movement coalescing diverse forces; an agreement around a clear, short-term campaigning policy; a grasp of its opponents' counter-attack; and a perspective for action that can unify all the peace movements' supporters and isolate its opponents. What are the prospects for achieving this in Britain?

At the start of 1983 the disarmament movement has more broad, popular support than ever before

New features of the movement

The peace movement has already displayed an impressive capacity to draw into its ranks a wide range of people, including many without previous experience of political campaigning. The 1,000 plus local CND groups with over ¼ million members along with the many other new peace bodies in towns and villages throughout Britain give the movement an organising capacity rare in single-issue campaigns. This is enhanced by CND's national organisation with 55,000 members, numerous specialist sections, a

press and publications service and a council and executive able to co-ordinate and take initiatives. All these features help CND to give the peace movement cohesion and clear purpose and have been influential in drawing new forces into activity.

In this regard the past year has seen an impressive growth in 'institutional' support. The CND-sponsored campaign for nuclear free zones has made considerable headway with many councils giving their backing. So extensive was the boycott of the Government's civil defence exercise 'Hard Rock' that in embarrassment the Government had to cancel it. The work with councils on this issue has been an important campaigning focus and illustrates the potential for combining local and national initiatives. The authoritative material on civil defence scenarios produced by Scientists Against Nuclear Arms (SANA) was important to this campaign. More generally, the expansion of SANA and the Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons has indicated the breadth and wide-reaching impact of the peace movement.

This has also been expressed by the churches. Religious organisations have not been as prominent as in Holland and West Germany but a significant if not yet majority groundswell of opinion is evident. While the defeat of the report on *The Church and the Bomb* at the General Synod of the Church of England in February was a setback, the unprecedented interest in Synod proceedings leading up to it, indicate that the church is a relevant part of the peace movement.

Most significantly, the past twelve months has seen the emergence of the women's peace movement as a powerful, autonomous element in the campaign. The women's peace camp and action at Greenham Common has been the most dramatic, imaginative and effective intervention into the nuclear debate. The arrest and imprisonment of the women peace campaigners evoked a very deep and widespread sympathy for their cause. The unprecedented response of 30,000 women encircling the US Air Force base at Greenham Common on 12 December indicated the degree of support for the peace campers in their inspiring opposition to cruise missiles. More than any other peace event, the embrace of the base captured the public imagination and mobilised previously untapped reserves of support. Subsequent opinion polls showed an acceleration of an earlier gender trend with much stronger opposition to Cruise missiles coming from women (see Table below). Part of the appeal of the movement is that it draws on and affirms the caring aspects of women's experience — aspects

which they feel most familiar and confident in expressing and which also emphasise the common links among women. At the same time the movement is subverting the passivity and subordination traditionally associated with such a role.

In their own way, at a pace and in a style appropriate to their own organisations, peace campaigners have argued and often won the case for disarmament in trade unions, and Churches, among women's groups and professional organisations. At the start of 1983 the disarmament movement has more broad, popular support than ever before.

The broad peace coalition

It was US, British and NATO plans to deploy new nuclear weapons which sparked off the revival of the peace movements. It is also clear that this opposition to Cruise, Pershing and Trident is where popular concern is felt most acutely. Striking confirmation of this came in two opinion polls in January which both showed clear majorities opposed to the siting of Cruise missiles and the purchase of Trident. While support for Britain's total unilateral nuclear disarmament appears to range between a fifth and a quarter, there are substantial majorities for unilateral action by the British government to stop any further escalation of the arms race.

'Marplan Opinion Poll

Do you approve or disapprove of the Government's decision to allow the Americans to base Cruise missiles on British soil?

	Total	Men	Women
Base	1481	710	771
Approve	27%	39%	15%
Disapprove	61%	55%	67%
Don't know	12%	6%	17%

Do you approve or disapprove of the Government's decision to purchase at an estimated cost of £5 billion the Trident nuclear missile system?

	Total	Men	Women
Base	1481	710	771
Approve	25%	35%	16%
Disapprove	56%	55%	58%
Don't know	19%	10%	26%

Should Britain abandon nuclear weapons no matter what other countries do; or maintain our current nuclear capability or improve it by spending more money on nuclear weapons?

	Total	Men	Women
Base	1481	710	771
Abandon	21%	19%	23%
Maintain	59%	57%	60%
Improve	13%	20%	6%
Don't Know	7%	4%	11%



US Air Force personnel showing off the B-1 Bomber at the Famborough Air Show

These figures — and other evidence — suggest that the peace movement has achieved a social majority on the immediate nuclear issues. The question it now faces is turning this into a political majority. There are powerful underlying trends in Britain and Western Europe creating a more favourable terrain for the peace movement. The stronger and more cohesive the movement becomes the more likely it is to dislodge the premises on which many political parties and military and scientific personnel have based their defence policies since World War 11. The shifts which have already occurred in the Labour Party and German SPD are indicative of this trend. In this period of flux it is important that the peace movement engages with all who genuinely seek disarmament, searching for areas of agreement, while clearly expressing points of difference.

In Britain there is clearly a section of the military and scientific establishment along with centrist political forces which are opposed to plans for rearmament and a new cold war. When Field Marshal Lord Carver writes 'that the number and variety of their (ie US and Soviet) nuclear weapons systems is grossly in excess of what is needed to

provide that deterrence; and that additional independent systems are superfluous'² he is directly challenging present US and British defence policy. Similarly, Carver and Zuckermann (the former government chief scientific adviser) oppose NATO policy when they urge a no-first-use of nuclear weapons declaration by the West, combined with negotiated nuclear weapons reductions. The General Synod adopted this position as well. All political parties except the Conservatives are opposed to Trident, the Liberals are officially opposed to Cruise, as are the SNP, Plaid and the Labour Party, all of whom have broader anti-nuclear policies in addition.

Faced with a government dominated by the militarist Right, eager to rearm and to seek 'peace through strength'³ the broadest spectrum of unity is vital. Here the critical division is not between multilateralists and

¹ *Guardian* 24 Jan 1983. *Sunday Times* 23 Jan 1983 published figures of a MORI poll which echoed these results. The Marplan poll incidentally seriously underestimated the cost of the Trident programme.
² M Carver. *A Policy for Peace* (London 1982) p11.
³ N Tebbit, speech to constituents reported in *Sunday Mirror* 6 Feb 1983.

unilateralists but between rearmer and disarmers. In Britain today there does exist a potential common programme of agreement across the Centre and Left of the political spectrum. Its central theme is that the arms race must be halted and steps begun to reverse it. This entails action by the British government to refuse Cruise missiles and to cancel Trident, as well as pressurising for serious negotiations between USA and USSR to reduce nuclear stockpiles in all categories.

Here is a programme which can give expression to the enormous popular concern on the nuclear weapons issue and begin to throw the arms race into reverse. Around it a political majority can be won. The impact of the mass, popular movement has been such that Labour's Centre-Right have agreed to oppose Cruise missiles. Former ardent multilateralists like Denis Healey and Roy Hattersley have accepted the need for unilateral action.⁴ There is a need for similar concerted pressure on the Liberal Party and its prospective candidates to support their conference policy opposing Cruise. This is particularly important as it is the Liberals who occupy the more advantageous electoral position within the Alliance. It will be much more difficult to shift the SDP, for its parliamentary group represent a hard-core of

inveterate Atlanticists committed to NATO policies and wholeheartedly antagonistic to the peace movement. Generally, the more powerful the peace movement becomes and the more concentrated on the key, immediate issues, the more likely it is to impact upon the party political arena and consolidate the advances it has already made there.

The need for unilateral action

For the peace movement this policy would represent a minimum programme. Unilateral initiatives by the British Government are central to its achievement. Here there lies considerable disagreement between Centrist politicians and commentators and the peace movement⁵ for many have still to shift from their rigid and often dogmatic inflexibility on this issue. In addressing genuine multilateral disarmers, the case for unilateral

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action must be related to two distinct spheres, the arms race between the two major powers and Britain's independent deterrent. In relation to the first, the uni-

lateralist peace movements provide a vital ingredient to the disarmament process which has been absent to date. They are an autonomous popular force which intends to alter the policies of their respective governments, independent of the outcome of the Geneva talks. This is not to argue against a role for multilateral negotiation. Populist trends in the peace movement which are dismissive of 'all politicians' are unhelpful. CND and analogous movements abroad need to influence and determine the defence policies of their governments and to build up an international momentum for disarmament. Unilateral action offers a cutting edge for the disarmament movement. It makes peace an issue of mass politics and gives disarmers a trump card to play. Rather than waiting and hoping — up to now in vain — for a positive outcome at top-level talks, unilateralism gives the peace movement scope for its own independent action. At the same time it refuses the escalating logic of nuclear parity and balance of terror in an age of overkill, for it is these concepts that frequently beguile and paralyse multilateralists.

There are signs that genuine multilateral disarmers are reconsidering their position. As former President of the Liberal Party, Richard Holme admitted recently '30 years



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of multilateral negotiation have only produced very limited results which have done little more than orchestrate the tempo of the arms race.⁶ As already noted Labour's Centre-Right has shifted its stance on Cruise missiles. With a new generation of nuclear weaponry encouraging proposals for waging limited nuclear war, a re-evaluation by genuine multilateralists of the role of unilateral action is both urgent and overdue.

In relation to Britain there is a wider, but not universal, consensus for unilateral action, due to a number of specific factors. Primarily, these centre around the fact that we are a minor nuclear power with minimal weight on the scales of the nuclear balance at the moment. The abandonment of Britain's nuclear weapons would bring several benefits. It would release resources for alternative use. It would be a chink in the arms race, an example that the endless escalation of nuclear weaponry can be checked. Furthermore, such action would indicate a serious commitment to nuclear non-proliferation.

Public support for Britain's complete unilateral nuclear disarmament is much more limited than that registered against the new missile plans. A major factor here is the widespread misconception that unilateralism entails complete conventional disarmament and would 'leave us defenceless'. This is not the peace movement's case. There are alternative, non-nuclear foreign and defence policies which would be both more effective and more in tune with the country's economic resources. These policies require further elaboration and the parties which support the peace movement have an important responsibility here. Well-thought out policy, expressed simply and clearly, would help remove common public doubts and show that the country can be adequately defended without nuclear weapons. In this regard there are significant differences on the extent and reach of our military capacity. The Labour leadership and its shadow defence chieftain John Silkin appear to have responded to the jingoism of the Falklands War by arguing for the resources allocated to Trident to be redirected for a modernised, reinvigorated navy. This policy smacks of opportunism. An alternative defence policy should reject imperial and global pretensions and be concerned solely with the retention of military forces sufficient to ensure the security of our own nation.

The Thatcherite response

Since its election in May 1979 the Conservative government has pursued a vigorous, aggressive defence policy. The raising of military expenditure and the modernisation

of Britain's nuclear arsenal with Trident submarines are key planks in its goal of remaking 'a strong Britain.' The Falklands issue showed the Government's willingness to use force to resolve an international dispute and gave Mrs Thatcher the opportunity to project herself as a bold, fearless leader. Thatcherism is developing a distinctive content and style in defence and foreign affairs, as it had already done in economic and social policy. Some of its themes have become more evident since the turn of the year, as the Government has thrown its full weight and resources against the peace movement.

In distinctive Thatcherite style a direct challenge has been made to the peace movement. No effort has been made to appeal to those concerned about the arms race, by emphasising multilateral initiatives and the Government's support for them. In any case the Government's voting record at the UN precludes this. Instead Thatcherism applies 'the resolute approach' to the field of international relations. The Soviet Union is presented as a tyrannical, dictatorial power out to dominate the world militarily.⁷ The only way this fate can be averted is by military strength and here a picture is painted of the West's forces being seriously depleted. With typical homespun philosophy Thatcher expressed her outlook to a group of schoolchildren: 'The world is like a school playground where a bully will attack a weakling.'⁸ In this way Thatcherism seeks to deflect and transform the issue. Its focus no longer lies with the nuclear arms race; instead it is one's attitude to the Soviet Union. New nuclear weapons are justified in that context. By shifting the context of the debate and offering a stark choice the Thatcherites hope to force those millions concerned and unsure about the arms race to accept it as a present-day, perhaps unfortunate, necessity.

There is a sense of *deja vu* with this approach. The development of A and H-bombs in the 1950s was justified in this manner, as the recent documentary film *Atomic Cafe* graphically illustrated. Having scored once, the hard Right believe this approach can score again. As in the 1950s it is accompanied by a fierce ideological onslaught on the peace movement. One element here is the spotlighting of Communists in the campaign. They are accused of 'infiltration' and being the 'agents of Moscow.' In a process of guilt by association, the peace movement is accused of doing Moscow's work and of being 'unwitting dupes' of the 'Soviet propaganda machine.'⁹ A second element emphasises how dangerous the peace movement is to the country

and suggests that it is anti-patriotic. This has been given a new twist by the frequent accusation that the peace movement is guilty of appeasement.

Here we see how the hard Right is seeking to transform the tone and language of the nuclear debate. They intend to turn the deep public revulsion at prewar appeasement against the peace movement. Ministers have renamed unilateralism as one-sided disarmament. They even seek to appropriate the term peace for themselves and accuse CND of being the body which makes war more likely.¹⁰

This amounts to a formidable assault on the peace movement, orchestrated by ministers, amplified by sections of the media and utilising Ministry of Defence resources. Some of the associated front organisations engage in scurrilous propaganda and 'dirty tricks' operations. A careful but firm response by the peace movement is required.

It is essential that it is not deflected away from the central issue, which is nuclear weapons. Campaigners in the peace movement hold diverse views about the Soviet Union, with only a handful being completely

The Thatcherites are worried and unsettled by the peace movement

uncritical. Yet there is unanimity that nuclear war poses the main threat to Britain and Europe and that the reduction and removal of nuclear weapons from the entire continent is its main task. The movement must not be deflected from this course.

Counter attack

In this context a number of the assertions in the Thatcherite repertoire require decisive rebuttal. Firstly, the image of the West as a 'weakling' and defenceless must be refuted.

⁴ See D Healey The Case against Cruise *Observer* 13 Feb 1983, and R Hattersley in correspondence with CND group in his Sparkbrook constituency.

⁵ For example David Steel *The Times* 7 Feb 1983 and two political correspondents P Jenkins *Guardian* 8 Dec 1982 and M Rutherford *Financial Times* 17 Dec 1982.

⁶ R Holme *Guardian* 24 Jan 1983.

Examples are Winston Churchill, Birmingham 11 February in debate with Joan Ruddock, Margaret Thatcher and Lord Home addressing Young Conservatives 12 Feb and Conservative TV broadcast with Michael Heseltine 23 Feb.

⁷ *Daily Express* 16 Dec 1983.

⁸ see B Crozier *The Times* 24 Aug 1983; *The Times* editorial 29 Nov 1983; *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express* 13 Dec 1982 reporting Greenham Common.

⁹ For example Armed Forces Minister Peter Blaker: 'I never refer to the peace movement and have never used that expression because I don't think it is. It endangers peace' *Daily Mail* 14 Dec 1982.

It is the standard cry of generals through the centuries when they want new weapons. All the available, independent evidence indicates a rough nuclear parity between East and West, at massive levels of overkill. Secondly, the Thatcher/Reagan world view of Soviet intentions is rejected not only by the peace movement but by major sections of establishment opinion. The chief ideological architect of the first cold war, George Kennan, disowned this expansionist view of the Soviet Union in the 1960s. The Foreign Office does not argue that the USSR is intent on world military domination, hence their greater willingness to negotiate with it. The

sharp divergence between Pym and Thatcher in response to the Andropov proposals last December was illustrative of this. It is important that these divisions are exposed, so that the Thatcherite Right are unable to present an easy consensus around their view. Thirdly, as a democratic movement CND needs to resist McCarthyite smears on the activity and policy of Communists. The Communist Party's approach is informed by its programme *The British Road to Socialism* with its commitment to broad, popular movements. Its members participate openly, not covertly, in CND's work, seeking to develop a wide campaigning

unity. The party's balanced assessment of the socialist countries is not shared by many in the peace movement but is a carefully-thought out and independent position.

Fourthly, there is the charge of appeasement. This charge rests on two false premises: that the West is militarily weak *vis a vis* the Soviet Union and that one can make direct, simple comparisons between conventional and nuclear warfare. These are coupled with a graphic distortion of the history of the 1930s. Then the policy of the Left was for collective security against the Nazi threat. The bulk of the Tory Party and the ruling class rejected this policy, which involved



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alliance with the USSR, because their hatred of the Soviet government was so deep. Instead they preferred to appease the Nazis and turn them towards the East. This is where the *political* parallel with today still stands. Their dislike of the USSR justified appeasement in the 1930s, just as it justifies nuclear rearmament today. The only new ingredient is the stunning hypocrisy with which the 'Guilty Men' of the 1930s — the Conservatives in general, Sir Alec Douglas Home in particular, *The Times*, *The Daily Mail* — today serve up homilies on the policy they practised so well.

Winning a political majority

This challenge by the militarist Right can be defeated. The Thatcherites are worried and unsettled by the peace movement. Heseltine's refusal to debate with CND expressed that uncertainty, as did the now-rescinded proposal to spend £1 million to promote the Government's policy. In the coming months it will be especially important to cement the broad peace coalition and present a cogent, clear response to the Thatcherite attack. A combination of campaigning activities is vital. Grassroots work on doorsteps, in high streets and at workplaces must blend with local and regional demonstrative actions, while there needs to be unprecedented mobilisations for the national events organised by CND. Alongside this and integrated into the campaign should go non-violent direct action at the peace camps which can give the movement dramatic appeal and effective publicity.' This mixture of activities will enable a very large number of supporters to participate in the campaign. Working class organisations must be drawn into activity much more systematically. The establishment of workplace groups, circulation of peace material in factories, collections and visits to peace camps, speakers at union meetings and selective industrial action where possible are among ideas that need urgent consideration. Pressure needs to be stepped up on the political parties and election candidates, while CND must ensure powerful, autonomous presence in the general election. 'Peace through Sense — Refuse Cruise, Cancel Trident' must be the answer to the militarists' calls for 'peace through strength'. The peace movement is most likely to achieve a favourable outcome to the general election by pursuing this broad range of activities around the main policy issues. It is vital to retain the breadth and unity of the campaign which have been its main strengths up until now. They must not be dissipated as 'crunch' times approach.

There are two basic challenges to this



Nuclear, Bacteriological and Chemical Warfare Suit, as issued to the military

view. Firstly, there are those who want to make CND an appendage of the Labour Party. Groups like the IMG have always opposed the notion of CND as a people's coalition. They have now been joined by *Tribune*. Its editorial after CND conference sneered at the 'lot of comfortable people from the Home Counties' who supported CND but voted Tory or SDP 'to preserve their comfortable life-style.' CND had to tell its members to vote Labour and that 'those who don't like the heat should leave the kitchen.' If followed, this order for CND to be confined to 'Labour voters only' would undermine the very basis on which the campaign has been so successfully built. It would split the movement, while making it easier for non-Labour politicians to evade the issues by saying CND was just a Labour front. Such a call is sectarian in the classical sense of putting the needs of a party before the needs of the movement. A party committed to nuclear disarmament should wholeheartedly involve itself in the broad movement and help to build it rather than seek to impose party slogans on the campaign. The Labour Party will attract the votes of nuclear disarmers to the degree that it involves itself in the campaign and unambiguously expresses a non-nuclear defence policy.

Secondly, there is the view that direct action at the missile bases is the way to stop their deployment.¹² The successes at

Greenham Common lend credence to this view, while the fact that they have been women's only actions has helped to avoid violent confrontations and thrown the police onto the defensive. Nevertheless, it is a serious mistake to believe that physical action and civil disobedience at Greenham will stop the missiles. That would be a dangerous course for the peace movement to follow. Why? Firstly, this approach is a short-cut which side-steps the often laborious task of winning a political majority in the country. Secondly, it is unrealistic to think that 'hundreds of thousands of women and children' will occupy Greenham Common for a long period.¹³ Thirdly, it gives priority and over-riding importance to actions eg, climbing fences, occupying silos, in which only a small minority of CND supporters can or will participate. As these actions eg, on New Years Eve and 7 February, are secret — only those 'on the grapevine' or able to leave home, children and work at short notice can take part. The danger is that they will become 'elite' actions undertaken by a 'vanguard' prepared to engage in civil disobedience. At the CND conference there was overwhelming agreement on the important, but clearly defined, role which non-violent direct action should play in the campaign. It must be an integrated component, closely linked to mass initiatives and avoiding isolation. A mixture of women's only and mixed actions can achieve this provided they are related to the overall campaign framework. This can avoid some of the pitfalls of the Committee of 100 experience and retain both the militancy and unity of the movement.

The West European peace movements face momentous times. The coming year may see significant victories, although the West German election result is a setback. As against twenty years ago the movement spreads across countries, has a broader social base and a greater political realism. In Britain a political majority is there in the making. That is why the Thatcherite Right are so worried. They are seeking to divide the potential support for the peace movement and evade the specific issues. However, they can be beaten, provided the peace movement conducts a strategy aimed at winning a social and political majority and focussed on the pressing campaign issues. Victories on these would give considerable scope for further nuclear disarmament. It would also have reverberations on much wider arenas of domestic and international politics. n

¹¹ *Tribune* editorial 3 Dec 1982.

¹² See Helen John *Sanity* October 1982.

¹³ Helen John *Marxism Today* February 1983.