

Ground Zero Gazette

Frontline reports from the war on war • produced by It's About Times • August 1981



The mushroom cloud may be making a comeback. Born-again hawk Jimmy Carter and Geritol gunslinger Ronald Reagan have been steadily turning up the barrage of annihilation machinery. Weapons like Cruise missiles in Europe, the neutron bomb, MX, the Trident submarine and laser battle stations in space are being prepared to serve policies like the Carter doctrine, counterforce and -- at least as a threat -- first strike.

In the midst of this madness it is not surprising that disarmament movements have sprung up around the world. In Britain and West Germany the fight for a nuclear-free Europe is drawing tens of thousands of previously uninvolved people and generating real excitement and

debate. But thus far in the US, the opposition has remained more limited and inbred.

In the interests of opening a debate on its problems as well as its successes, its limitations as well as its inspirations, It's About Times has assembled these articles on the state of the disarmament movement. We take a look at various disarmament strategies and the experiences of antiwar activists in the US as well as in West Germany, Japan and the Pacific.

[This graphic was sent to us from the Philippines, where it is on sale to American sailors and Marines near the Subic Bay naval base.]

Raising the stakes

The demand for complete nuclear and conventional disarmament is a much more direct challenge to ruling institutions than most other reforms. Because the power of every political and economic elite ultimately depends on the force of arms, the demand for disarmament calls into question the existence of the nation-state itself. This implies looking at the need for radically different forms of social and economic organization.

This is not to say that all strategies for ending the arms race that fall short of social revolution are worthless, but rather that the disarmament movement must find a politics sufficient to the logic of its own demand -- not an easy task. Unfortunately, a strange combination of pragmatism and desperation often leads the disarmament movement to embrace the most moderate and simplistic solutions.

There's a political aspect to arms control that warrants careful consideration: The state offers the prospect of arms control to disarmament movements in order to weaken them, confuse them and shut them up. The US recently conceded to hold arms control talks with the Soviets, for example, but only after European governments repeatedly insisted that the negotiations were necessary in order to sell the new weapons to their openly skeptical populations.

It's a good bet that a powerful movement that unequivocally demanded total disarmament would elicit plenty of compromise proposals from the ruling elites themselves. These proposals would be made to seem "reasonable" and "practical" and might reduce the number of warheads, but they wouldn't seriously reduce the threat of mass destruction.

In its attempts to appeal to everybody without offending anybody, the disarmament movement also plays the game of reasonableness and moderation. The "respectability" insisted on especially by the church- and pacifist-influenced wings of the disarmament movement is supposed to avoid alienating and frightening the many people who have never been politically involved. But the real divisions in society -- for example, between those who fight the wars and those who start them -- are politely ignored. A movement too timid to confront these divisions may well wind up preserving them. A movement afraid of open opposition won't be effective in the long run.

The recent efforts on the part of American disarmament activists to try new and different approaches are heartening. But for the most part they all stay within a framework of cultural assumptions that may be part of the problem. The movement will never overcome its current insularity unless it becomes *culturally* open to many different kinds of people. The granola-and-limp-rock image that caricaturizes the antinuclear power movement, for example,

has smothered its vitality and crimped its ability to draw in people whose lives aren't so "simple" and "natural."

The disarmament movement, rather than appealing to intelligence, self-initiative and inclinations to raise hell, spends itself on herding the masses around from ballot box to boring rally to Bomb therapy group. This thoroughly run-of-the-mill institutional approach may be well meaning, but it's unlikely to generate any excitement and is almost sure to drain the life out of any spontaneous resistance to militarism. The Organizers may elect a Congressperson here and there but disarmament will remain one of those beautiful impractical dreams -- like clean air and a cancer-free old age. Or even an old age.

When the disarmament movement does turn on the hard sell, it resorts to horrifying its audiences with the gory effects of nuclear holocaust. It believes that by violating the taboos against thinking and talking about nuclear disaster it can break the barriers of denial and "psychic numbing." But because it does not incite anger at the perpetrators and planners of mass destruction and avoids "politics" and hard analysis of the *social* roots of war, horror-mongering can backfire. It can induce an undifferentiated terror -- the Bomb becomes supernatural and inevitable rather than a consciously manufactured instrument of social control.

Dr. Helen Caldicott, for instance, has adopted nuclear hysteria as an organizing tool. But is war primarily a medical and psychological problem, as Caldicott claims? Doesn't the shock treatment tend to inhibit rational consideration of the

issues? Following the doctor's orders may be a first step in the wrong direction.

In their search for credibility, many disarmament activists accept and promote the idea of "legitimate national security." This rhetoric relegitimizes the nation and nationalism, the very concepts that have always served to promote universal identification with the interests of the ruling elites and to justify war. The national "we" is a deadly pronoun.

To oppose resurgent militarism with pandering appeals to national security is playing with fire. The managers of consciousness manipulate patriotism to their own advantage, as the sudden remission of the "Vietnam Syndrome" after the dose of American nationalism surrounding the events in Iran showed.

Pressure groups or popular movements?

A successful disarmament movement must defend its autonomy and refuse to be sucked into the kind of politicking that converts radical dissidents into reasonable constituencies. To be effective, it will have to change the definition of what is reasonable.

Short-term goals must be chosen so as to encourage radical perceptions and actions, not reliance on a political process that, by absorbing and diffusing opposition, functions as a key part of the apparatus of social control. Immediate demands should be grounded in a critique of the class relations underlying war and empire. Then we could at least imagine a disarmament campaign growing into a movement capable of confronting the roots of war.

In contrast to these sorts of demands, consider the Nuclear Weapons Freeze. The Freeze is a product of desperation on the part of disarmament activists over destabilizing weapons like the MX, the Trident and the Cruise missile and destabilizing policies like counterforce.

Advocates of the Freeze, which is presented as bilateral, simply assume that the USSR would accept it. This assumption, which appears highly dubious to many Americans, refuses to acknowledge the existence of groups within Soviet society that promote and benefit from militarism.

Public pressure is suggested as the means of forcing the US ruling elites to accept the Freeze, but no mechanism is proposed for convincing or coercing Soviet leaders to agree to it.

Even if the Freeze was implemented, it would do little to alter the structure of international power. The ability of the superpowers to wage war would not be seriously impaired. Thirty thousand strategic warheads on "our" side -- and a comparable number of Russian nukes -- are plenty. Interventions in any country that didn't have its own nuclear arsenal could still be undertaken with relative impunity.

Clearly we don't yet have the collective power to successfully demand a Freeze, so the strategy must be evaluated first of all in terms of the basis of the deeper political education it will provide and the kind of movement that will be encouraged by its promotion.

The Freeze, like many other disarmament strategies, is based on the political theory that the most successful demands are those that appeal to the lowest common denominator. It's obvious that the disarmament movement must reach much greater numbers of people, but the Freeze seems to share the assumption that inoffensiveness is the best selling point. It is possible that focusing the movement on a *limiting* demand like the Freeze will tend to eclipse more radical, more inspiring, more substantial responses to our collective predicament.

The power of the disarmament movement will stem from its ability to disturb, paralyze and delegitimize important social institutions, for example through protests and worker and student strikes. Its resources are its commitment to the widest possible democracy in decision making, unlimited and public discussion, and an aggressive pursuit of its aims, rather than the acceptance of symbolic stop-gaps.

Disarmament will remain an impossible demand as long as the movement is kept on a leash, nationalism is masqueraded as opposition to war and the frank discussion of the real causes of war is suppressed.

-- Tom Athanasiou, James Brook, Marcy Darnovsky and Steve Stallone

Thanks to Louis Michaelson, and Bob Van Scoy



Ground Zero Gazette

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Single weapon strategies: sharp focus or tunnel vision?

Expensive, outlandish and exotic weapons systems are occasionally dragged into the limelight by campaigns to defeat them. But such notoriety and public controversies over items in the Department of Defense budget are rare.

Since our task here is to examine strategies that will ultimately reverse the arms race altogether, we should look more closely at efforts to stop a single new weapon. When does it make sense to build a whole campaign around a new plane or missile? How do these campaigns move us toward disarmament and what are the drawbacks?

There is a sometimes creative tension between a radical challenge to the logic of the arms race and the institutions behind it, and concrete actions and short-term objectives. Focusing on a single weapon can be a useful and significant tactic if the weapon itself represents a new and greater danger, and if the campaign against it is able to link it with broader issues and involve important new groups of people. On the other hand, a single weapon approach often tends to narrow the political focus and lends itself to acceptance of compromises, such as military alternatives to the targetted system.

The campaign to stop the MX has made this new missile system one of the most visible and controversial items in the Reagan rearmament budget. Originally it was proposed for Nebraska, but local opposition quickly forced it out. In the Great Basin of Utah and Nevada, its current proposed basing site, the opposition has also mobilized.

This highly visible local protest has helped to expose a lack of consensus about the military build-up. Even among Reagan's strongest supporters, some are opposed to the MX.

Unfortunately, much of the debate centers on how and where to base the new missile, not whether or not to deploy it. A decision to cancel the Nevada-Utah basing plan in favor of placing the MX in submarines or existing fixed silos would be a "local

rights" and environmental victory, but not so clearly a victory against the arms race.

Many powerful military, strategic and economic interests have worked hard for the Great Basin MX plan and, especially in an arena where victories are rare, nothing is as energizing as winning — even partial victories. But stopping one system leaves dozens of others on the drawing boards and launch pads.

The outrageous nature of the MX has motivated many people not usually involved in the anti-weapons movement to act in some way. Ranchers, environmentalists, Indians, conservatives and peace groups have managed to work together against a common foe, despite long-standing differences. One rancher recently admitted that "the problem with these environmentalist types is that when I get together with them, I like 'em."

Any coalition this diverse rests on a delicate balance between the need for cooperation and vastly differing perspectives. The MX is variously opposed as a local threat to livelihoods and lifestyle, as the latest attack on Indian treaty rights, out of concern for the environmental threat and from fear of deploying the most lethal missile in history. The new alliance may melt away if the MX is defeated. But giving each group the distance and independence to raise its own particular concerns helps to keep the coalition together.

While it would be nonsense to suggest that most of the Utahans and Nevadans opposed to the MX are the latest recruits to the peace movement, some significant changes have occurred. The Mormon Church took an unprecedented step in calling not just for the cancellation of the MX in Nevada and Utah, but in warning of the dangers of nuclear war and the stockpiling of nuclear weapons. It is fair to say that the MX missile and the nuclear weapons testing program have caused deep changes in the way many residents of the Great Basin think about the military.



This graphic is on sale outside the Subic Bay naval base in the Philippines.

At this stage in the MX campaign pressure is intently focused on the Reagan administration's next move. Attempts to influence the President or a protracted Congressional battle are likely to be extremely discouraging and disempowering, but they are almost inevitable in fights against a single weapon system. Pressure to narrow the focus and accept political compromises, such as military alternatives to the targetted system is also common. Some in the "Stop MX" campaign feel that endorsing a different basing mode would enhance the credibility of the movement.

Sometime this summer Reagan is expected to announce his choice of a

basing mode for MX. Until then it is difficult to predict what course the strategy to stop MX will take. Whenever possible though, it is important for the campaign to keep its momentum and to take the initiative away from the military and the government.

For the residents of the Great Basin the decision to fight the MX is not a theoretical consideration of disarmament strategies. The MX is a very real, immediate and enormous threat. Ultimately, the arms race will be increasingly challenged only as more and more people begin to see that it directly undermines their security and lives.

—Martha Henderson

Neighborhood nukes and backyard bombs

One of the main obstacles to disarmament is the creation of mental barriers, a sort of "psychic numbing," which prevents consideration of the horrors of nuclear war. Many disarmament groups have tried to break through these barriers by publicizing the nuclear weapons in our backyards and linking these tools of destruction in our communities to the global threat.

Organizing around nuclear weapons facilities has its roots in the work of two groups focusing on the Rocky Flats Facility in Colorado, where the triggers for nuclear weapons are made, and the

Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos Labs, where nuclear warheads are designed. At the first national Mobilization for Survival Conference in 1977, the idea of creating a Nuclear Weapons Facility Task Force was endorsed. Soon after, many projects around the country began to spring up to focus on facilities that either design, manufacture or deploy nuclear weapons. Recently, the storage and transportation of the finished products have been added to the list of targets.

In California, a group opposed to the nuclear weapons stored at the Seal

Beach Naval Weapons Station near Long Beach has been able to pull together large demonstrations after going door-to-door with information about these weapons and photographs of their shipment through the community. Following their example, the Mt. Diablo Peace Center in Walnut Creek has been focusing on the Concord Naval Weapons Station. In our door-to-door efforts, we asked people if their were aware that there are nuclear weapons at the facility. Though the majority knew about the nukes, most said that they were not worried.

The dangers of putting these weapons so close to populated areas has been largely ignored until recently. But with the airing last year of the public television documentary "Broken Arrow" (produced by San Francisco KQED) and the resurgence of organizing around the Concord Naval Weapons Station, it has become much harder for people in the area to ignore the local hazards posed by the facility.

Our group has emphasized the number of accidents involving nuclear weapons, and the fact that their presence makes us a prime target in the event of a nuclear confrontation. We have convinced the local Board of Supervisors to start monitoring the level of radiation outside the facility, and, like the Seal Beach group, we have photographed and documented the transportation of weapons through the community and have sponsored a fairly large demonstration. Although public officials have been willing to express concern about emergency preparedness,

they have done nothing toward getting rid of the threat.

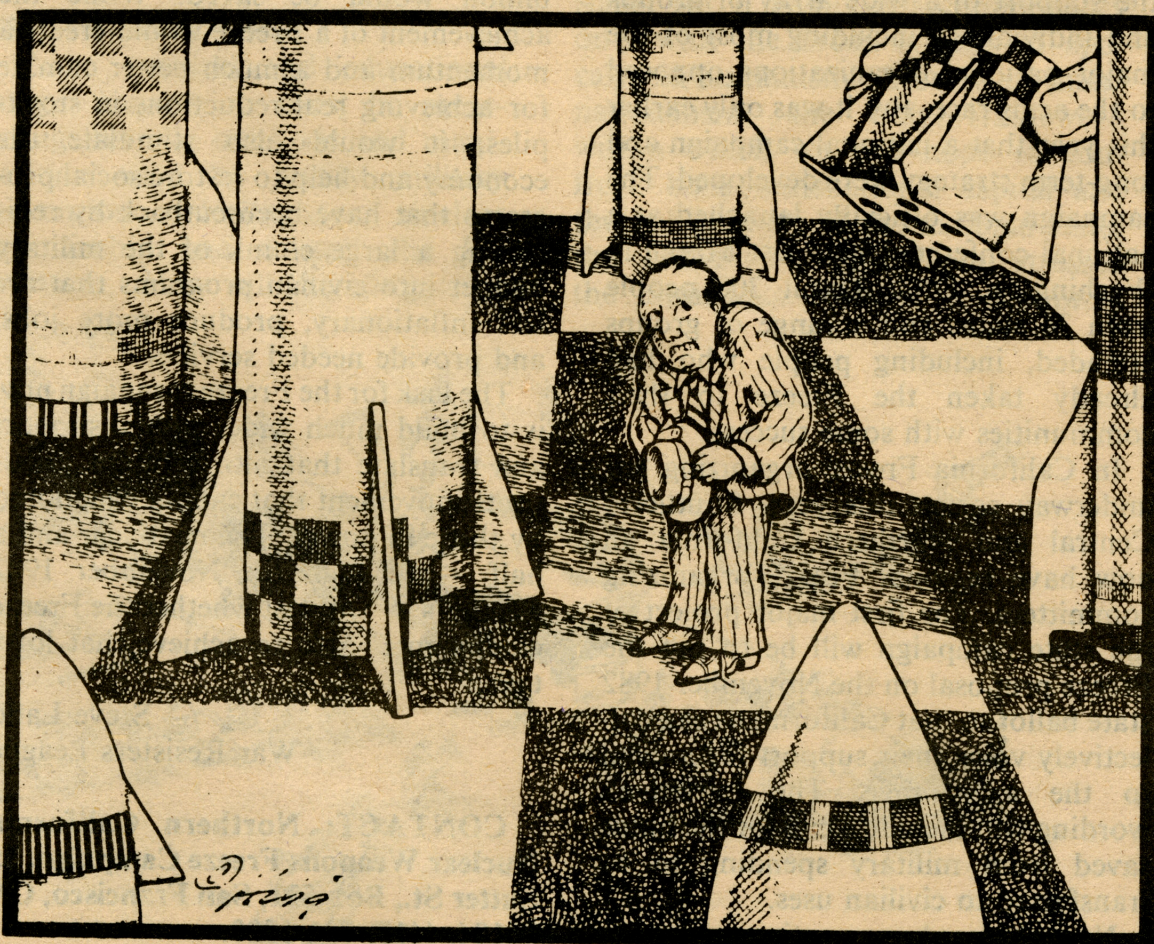
When we call for the removal of nuclear weapons, we elicit the question of where do we put them. In order to get nuclear weapons out of our backyards we must face the larger question, do we need these weapons? When we answer no, we must present a credible program for disarmament.

Talk of foreign policy and weapons programs seems overwhelming and raises longstanding fears about the Soviet Union and national security as well as the psychic barriers to thinking about nuclear war. But rallying people against backyard facilities can start to break these barriers.

There are about 400 nuclear weapons facilities in the US. Opening them up to public scrutiny, documenting the impact of nuclear weapons on local communities and stimulating debate over weapons policies can bring these questions to the general public. A nationwide debate offers the best hope of preventing the holocaust now in the making.

There are a number of individuals interested in organizing around the many nuclear weapons facilities in California, such as the Alameda Naval Air Station in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Naval Air Station at North Island near San Diego. For more information contact the Mt. Diablo Peace Center, 65 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek, CA 94596, (415) 933-7850.

—Gary McGehee Dobson
Mt. Diablo Peace Center



Taking the initiative against Trident

In the spring of 1980 Santa Cruz County voted on a ballot initiative on nuclear weapons. Had it passed, Measure A would have made the production and testing of parts for nuclear weapons illegal in the county and established an "industrial use commission" to guide local weapons-related firms to peacetime modes of production.

The organizers of Measure A conceived it as an educational tool and seldom indulged in the hope that it might actually pass. It did get 37% of the vote, and became a central issue in the campaigns of all the local candidates. More votes were cast for Measure A than on any other issue or candidate in the election.

The main force behind the initiative was People for a Nuclear Free Future (PNFF), the Santa Cruz affiliate of the Abalone Alliance. Its primary nemesis was a local Lockheed facility which builds and tests components for the weapons carried by Trident nuclear submarines. The initiative was prompted by the county approving a five-year plan permitting Lockheed to double its manufacturing capacity.

Bridging pains

Measure A was a political experiment, an attempt to bridge conventional dichotomies between those who forswear direct action for the sake of pursuing electoral strategies and advocates of direct action who consider electoral politics too reformist, too gradual, or too indirect. PNFF consciously sought to pursue the ballot measure while simultaneously continuing direct action, including civil disobedience.

But there was a tendency for this strategy to collapse during the campaign. Several of those most

involved in the electioneering began to view direct action at Lockheed as a threat to Measure A. Instead of the complementary and cooperative approach they had envisioned at the outset of the campaign, Measure A activists fell into an "either/or" kind of stance.

The conversion argument built into Measure A offered the chance for outreach to new constituencies, and some local unions supported it. PNFF argued that Santa Cruz is better able to undertake conversion than neighboring areas like the "Silicon Valley" of Santa Clara, where the stranglehold of the military-industrial complex on the local economy is much tighter. At the Santa Cruz Lockheed facility, only 300

about \$2.50 per registered voter. Most of it went for sophisticated opinion polls and market research to determine that the measure didn't have a chance of passing. Lockheed then laid back and pursued a low-key and low-visibility direct mail campaign targeting specific constituencies with tailor made arguments.

While Measure A supporters raised nearly \$40,000, significantly more than has been spent for any comparable ballot issue in the county's history, they could not begin to counter the economic threats that Lockheed waved before the voters, or to match the financial resources that Lockheed was able to muster. Lockheed's "No on A" literature didn't even include infor-

mation on how to contribute to the campaign -- the company bankrolled the entire operation. It is mind-boggling to think of the financial resources Lockheed could have marshalled had they thought the measure might win.

Events outside our control also had a significant impact on Measure A. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, for example, caused a definite public cooling. The measure was also vulnerable to arguments that it would have been federally preempted or thrown out in the courts in the face of a legal onslaught by Lockheed.

Internal frictions

To its organizers, the demands of Measure A were devastating. PNFF had set up another organiza-

tion to pursue the campaign, but the crush of events on time and resources created many unhealthy dynamics within that group. There was a tendency to treat campaign volunteers as resources to be exploited, leading to frequent burn-out and occasional resentment. The campaign resorted too readily to the pace, style, tone and techniques of conventional electoral campaigns. It was extremely difficult to find the time or energy to involve people in an empowering way. Some felt the failure to set up affinity group structures for campaign workers was a major failing. Others resented the distraction of attention from equally pressing issues such as Diablo Canyon.

Nonetheless, there was a certain genius about Measure A. It succeeded in raising the issue of nuclear war in a local context. It gave people a chance to make a statement: within the city of Santa Cruz, for example, the measure actually passed by a narrow margin. It also inspired several other citizen initiatives dealing with local manifestations of the arms race. And it brought people into the issue who had not earlier felt the need or seen the opportunity to become active. Most importantly, it sowed the seeds for future activity in the county.

During the campaign, a local activist ran into some Brown administration officials at a party. One of them, from the Energy Commission, was enthusiastically supportive of PNFF's efforts against nuclear power. But the atmosphere chilled when Measure A was mentioned. In sober, almost parental tones, the official told the Measure A people to stay away from the issue of nuclear weapons. "You're going too far," he warned.

-- Scott Kennedy

Lockheed threatened to leave the county if Measure A passed.

workers are involved. But to most people conversion apparently sounded far-fetched, although Lockheed would have been given five years to convert to other production -- longer than the anticipated Trident contracts would have run.

Threats from Lockheed

Even though proponents never felt Measure A had a chance of winning, Lockheed fought it with a vengeance, apparently so accustomed to having its own way that it couldn't tolerate even the smallest provocation. The company threatened to leave the county if the measure passed, taking with it an \$11 million payroll that makes it one of the largest employers in the area.

The Lockheed political action committee spent nearly a quarter of a million dollars on the campaign, or

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The Nuclear Weapons Freeze



'Good heavens! He's catching up with me!'

A major new national effort, known as the Nuclear Weapons Freeze, has recently begun with the goal of halting and reversing the nuclear arms race. This campaign is based on the simple yet far-reaching proposal that the US and the USSR should mutually halt the testing, production and deployment of new nuclear weapons systems as an essential first step towards lessening the risk of nuclear war and reducing the current nuclear arsenals.

The Freeze proposal, also known as the Call to Halt the Nuclear Arms Race, has been circulating for a couple of years, during which time it has gained the support of a wide array of groups and individuals, including most of the major national organizations opposed to the arms race. But it was only earlier this year that a national campaign and long-term strategy were developed. The campaign was officially launched at a national conference held last March in Washington, D.C. About 300 people from 34 states and a range of groups attended, including people who had already taken the Freeze to their communities with some success.

In California Freeze organizing got underway earlier this year. Southern, Central and Northern California all now have regional Freeze organizing committees. The first major project of the state campaign will be to put the Freeze proposal on the November 1982 state ballot so that Californians can collectively voice their support for an end to the arms race. The initiative's wording will include a call for the funds saved from military spending to be transferred to civilian uses.

Never before has an entire generation

of multi-billion dollar nuclear weapons been stopped before they were deployed. A Freeze, if implemented soon enough, would halt the MX, the Trident, Cruise, Pershing, a new strategic bomber, and improved ICBM's on the U.S. side, while halting a number of ICBM's, medium range missiles, submarine missiles, and a strategic bomber on the Soviet side. Nuclear testing on both sides would be halted also. On the US side alone, 12,000 new strategic nuclear warheads — 3,000 more than in our current strategic arsenal — would not go into production or be deployed, and \$150 billion would be saved. While the achievement of a Freeze would create a momentum and a much better climate for achieving real reductions in stockpiles, it would also stimulate the economy and help to restore social programs that have been cutback by redirecting a large chunk of the military budget into civilian programs that are less inflationary, produce more jobs, and provide needed services.

The task for the Freeze campaign now is to build much wider public support and translate that into a major grassroots movement that cannot be ignored by those in power. The next year and a half — through the November 1982 elections — will test whether the Freeze campaign is able to achieve that lofty task.

— Steve Ladd
War Resisters League

CONTACT: Northern California Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, 55 Sutter St., Box 521, San Francisco, CA 94104. (415) 731-1220.

Conversion: the limits of the soft sell

Proponents of conversion organizing consider it the linchpin of a political strategy that can undermine the economic attachments binding workers, especially in the defense sector, to the military/industrial state. They assert that it can "uncouple" these workers from the official version of national security, that it can undercut their personal stake in the "Soviet threat," that it can destabilize the pantheon of anxieties used to manipulate the American population.

As an organizing strategy, conversion aims to expand the anti-militarist coalition by specifically addressing "labor." It hopes someday to involve large numbers of workers in the articulation of alternative plans and the development of a political movement strong enough to make economic conversion a real option. For the present, in the absence of a workers movement interested in such esoterica, conversion activists make do by forming alliances with labor union officials and by developing alternative use plans without a great deal of rank and file involvement.

Is conversion possible?

The short term goal of many conversion activists is to form a coalition of social groups that together will wield enough political strength to force a retreat from warmongering and empire building. But the chasm between the economic alternatives and the social movement capable of forcing their implementation is wider than some realize. No simple "realignment of priorities" will bring true conversion -- it diverges too far from the heavy metal world of transnational capital. Instead we will get "reindustrialization" -- massive subsidies to sagging corporations for more of the same technologies of dependency and control, with the bill going to the workforce and the poor.

Internationalism is our only hope of confronting both transnational capital and the belligerence of the nation-state.

Instead of rebuilding the railroads, solar development and the reconstruction of the cities, we will get continued increases in military spending. And military development is intended not only to stabilize profit rates -- weapons are built to be used, and our rulers seem intent on policies that will require the massive use of force.

Against manipulation

As a political and educational strategy, conversion must be measured against the methods and manipulations used to justify military intervention, legitimate nuclear brinkmanship and control the US population. How will the struggle to

convert military industries interact with the general politicization of the American working class? How will the frustration that is sure to be experienced by workers wanting to make "socially useful" commodities be channeled into an understanding of the underlying structure of the economic system? Why will defense workers familiar with the rhetoric of conversion be any less easily manipulated by the Russian "specter?"

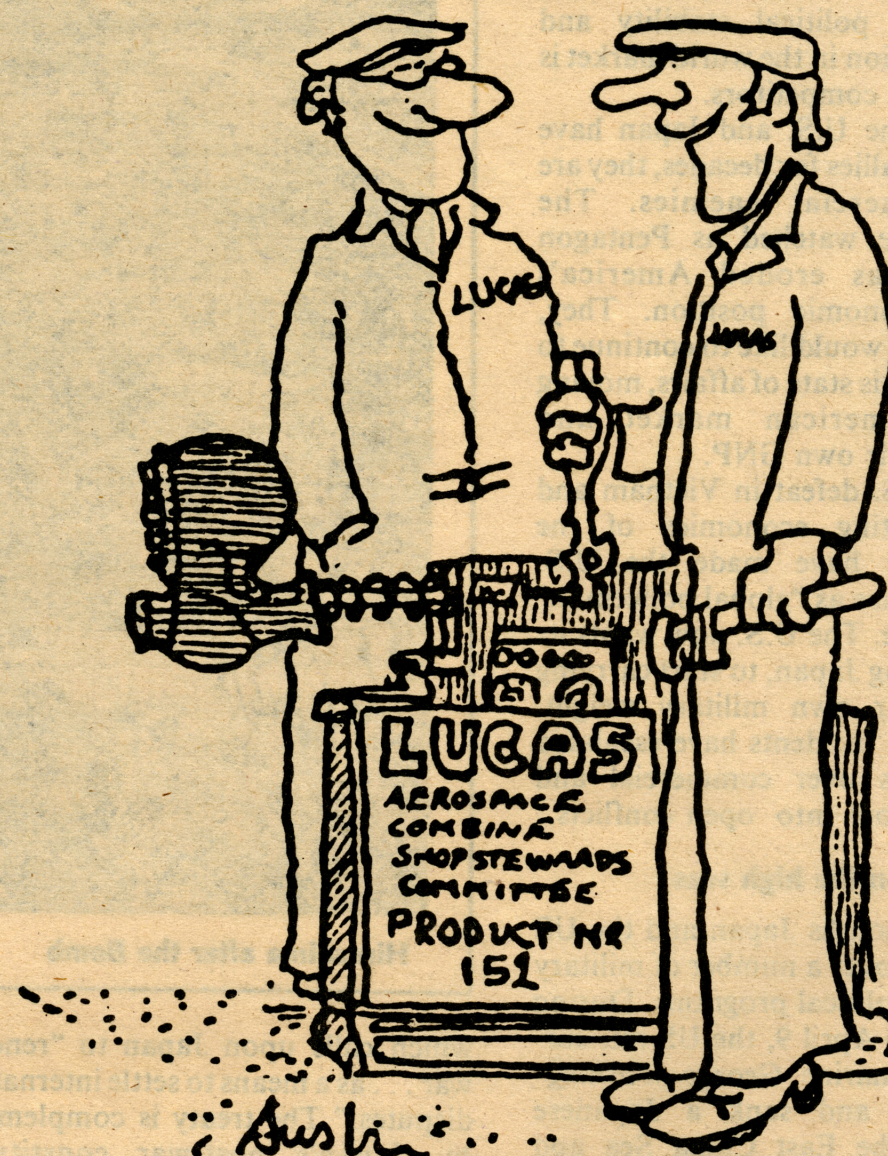
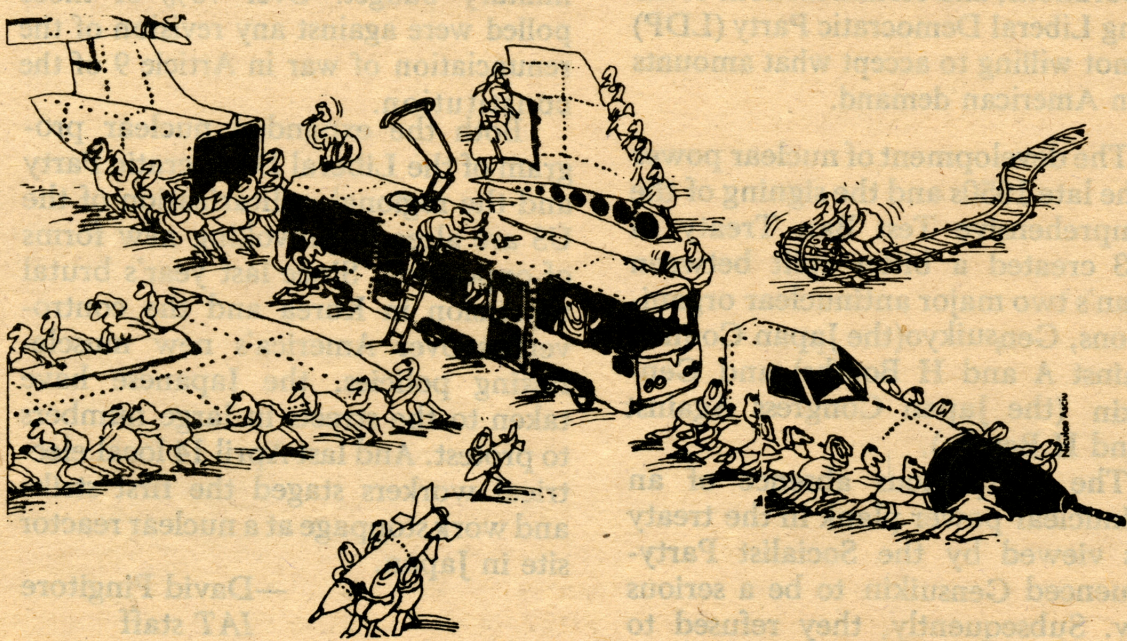
Conversion may help to undercut the economic blackmail by which military workers are kept subjugated to the needs of the corporate military complex, but economic blackmail is not the only key to the control of populations. National chauvinism and jingoistic fear are as important, and any disarmament movement that fails to confront them directly has no chance of undercutting the structure of control.

Radicals and respectability

Panicked by the need to build a majoritarian movement, and unwilling to be red-baited into obscurity, political activists in this country have adopted a populist style which carefully avoids the jargon of a largely discredited socialist movement. But in seeking to avoid identification with the Commissars, many have traded away the most basic tenets of socialist radicalism. Instead of new communal social relations, they offer us a vague prescription called "economic democracy." Instead of learning to criticize capitalism in an attractive and modern way, they fall back on demands for increased "corporate accountability." Respectability, once a subterfuge aimed at winning access to the hearts and minds of middle America, has become a goal in itself, purchased at a very dear price.

Unfortunately, the conversion movement rarely challenges the real goals of American foreign policy or

stresses the deeper political and economic forces behind the arms race. Like the mainstream of the disarmament movement, it presents weapons systems in isolation from the calculated policy of international domination. It does little to encourage the American people to acknowledge their common interests with Europeans, Japanese, even Russians, for it paints our commonality only with the broad strokes of apocalyptic humanism. Instead of internationalism, the only framework within which we can hope to confront both transnational capital and the belligerence of the national state, the conversion movement stresses the immediate benefits of economic



"It's a socially useful device for use on the management"

Suslin / Plowshare Press

conversion.

Some of the Lucas literature recommended mass-produced "appropriate technologies" designed for export to the Third World as a means of improving England's balance of payments deficit. Seymour Melman, one of the chief spokesmen for conversion in the US, makes a blithe equation between expanded social services and the increased competitiveness that economic conversion would mean for US firms on the world market. The conversion movement sometimes stoops so low as to bemoan new military buildup because it costs too much, and thus damages "our" economy. Labor movement spokesmen go unchallenged when they argue that alternative economic development is a great way of creating and securing "American" jobs.

"No anarchy in my union"

The conversion movement began in England within the shop stewards committees at Lucas. While mostly integrated into the union hierarchy, these committees retain a shadow of the autonomy they won in the dim radical past of the British labor movement and still provide some alternative to the unions.

In the US there is no such alternative. The unions are degenerate organizations, as hierarchical as management and required by law to enforce repressive labor regulations. Even radicals within the unions are so bound up in the logic of bureaucratic control that they are incapable of supporting increased rank and file control. William Winpinger, president of the International Machinists Union and high-profile member of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, is an excel-

lent example. A few years ago when an initiative for direct election of business agents in Northern California succeeded, Winpinger lost no time in using the powers of his office to reverse the local vote. The editors of a local rank and file newsletter quoted Winpinger as commenting, "I will not tolerate anarchy in my union."

The end of the thin line

Conversion advocates walk a thin line, hoping that their strategy will help to revitalize the labor movement while they shy away from public criticism of what the unions have become. But they will not be able to avoid the problem forever if they take seriously their own intention of using conversion planning as a vehicle for democratizing the workplace.

The unions are no more eager than management to allow true shopfloor control. If conversion ever gets taken up as a union issue it is likely that alternative use plans will be developed by committees of professionals in the union internationals while the average worker is completely excluded.

There is a long and unsavory tradition in the radical movement that reduces an issue to its purely economic aspects in order to broaden its appeal. The conversion movement falls into this trap, focusing too narrowly on the economic issues which bind individuals to the military/market complex and leaving unchallenged the political and ideological underpinnings of the American way of life. When next the Soviet threat is waved before our eyes, we will not have learned to see it differently.

-- Tom Athanasiou

Japan resists US pressure to rearm

Less than four decades after the rain of destruction that brought about its World War II defeat, Japan has fashioned an "economic miracle" under the shelter of the American nuclear umbrella. Its political stability and powerful position in the world market is the envy of its competitors.

Although the U.S. and Japan have been political allies for decades, they are fierce commercial enemies. The Japanese have watched as Pentagon capitalism has eroded America's dominant economic position. They, among others, would like to continue to benefit from this state of affairs, moving into the American market and expanding their own GNP.

But the U.S. defeat in Vietnam and the deteriorating economies of the Western bloc have made the U.S. strategic posture as "global policeman" uncomfortable. The U.S. now wants its allies, including Japan, to start carrying more of their own military weight. Several recent incidents have escalated these frictions over commercial and military relations into open conflicts.

Hit-and-run on the high seas

In recent months Japan and the US have collided over a number of military actions and political programs. During maneuvers on April 9, the US nuclear-powered submarine *George Washington* rammed and sank a Japanese freighter in the East China Sea and sailed away without rescuing the crew. Two Japanese sailors drowned.

Consternation in Japan increased in May, when Prime Minister Suzuki put his signature to a communiqué with the Reagan administration that publicly acknowledged an "alliance" between the two countries. This effort by the Reagan administration to graft Japan's overall foreign policy onto the larger network of "Western democracies," invariably led by the US, was met with protest by the Japanese people and members of Suzuki's own cabinet. On May 16, Foreign Minister Masayoshi Ito resigned. During the first week of June, the opposition Socialist party and the Sohyo, its trade union arm, staged massive national protests as a warning that any further drift towards militarization in Japanese-US relations would be opposed.

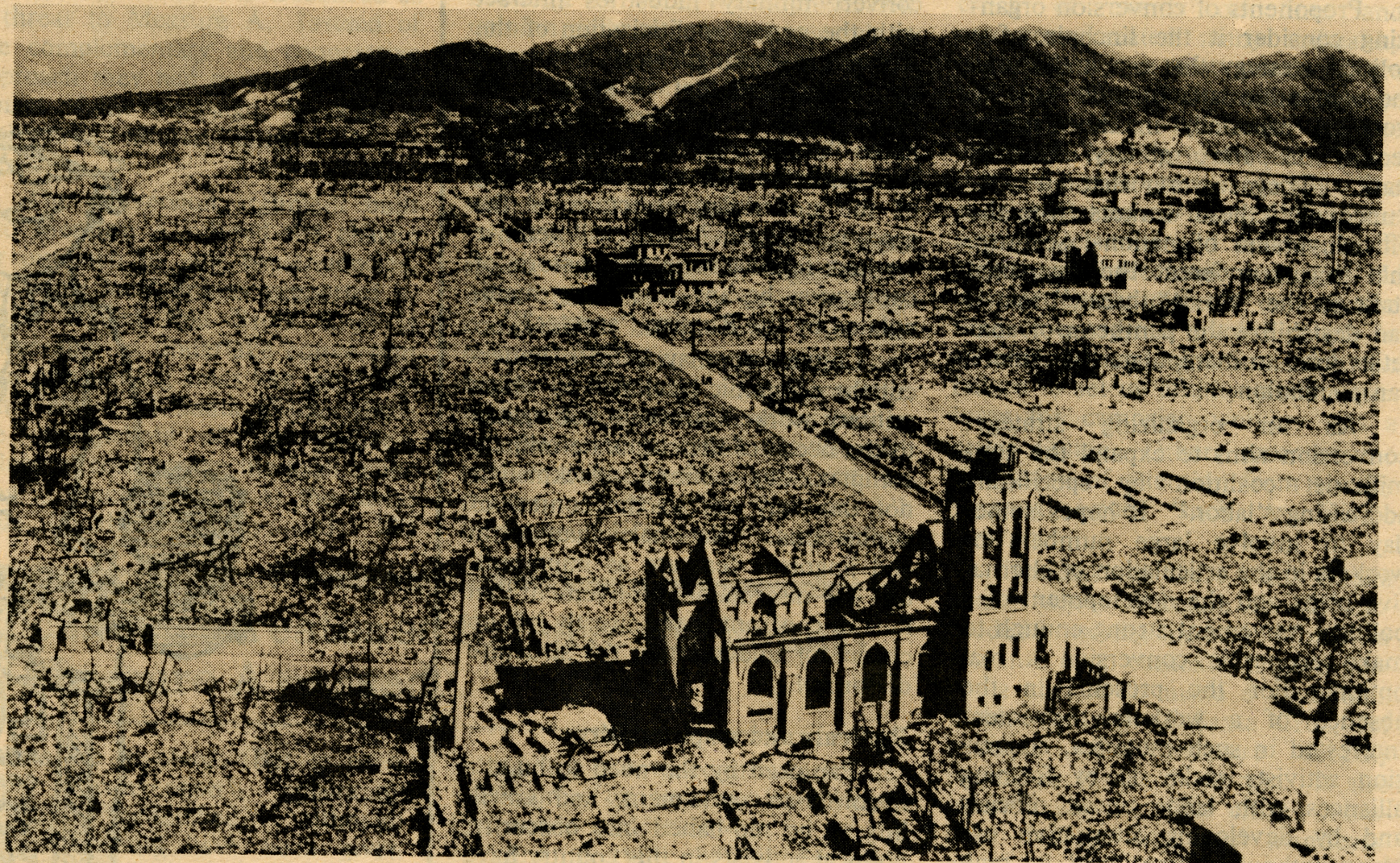
Japan in the 1980's

For the last 30 years, the basis for relations between the two countries has been the Japan-US Security Treaty, signed in San Francisco in 1951. Its most controversial principle is Article 9,

which calls upon Japan to "renounce war... as a means to settle international disputes." The treaty is complemented by Japan's post-war constitution. Framed largely by General Douglas MacArthur, it forbids the production, possession or introduction of nuclear weapons in Japan.

On May 18, just two days after the Ito resignation, former US ambassador to Japan Edwin Reischauer told the newspaper *Mainichi Shimbun* that nuclear-armed ships have routinely entered US military ports in Japan since 1960. Especially since he timed them so closely on the heels of the political turmoil surrounding the Suzuki-Reagan meeting, Reischauer must have known that his revelations of 20 years of deliberate US violations of the Japanese constitution would add to the ferment surrounding rearmament in both Japan and the US.

In this country there are growing indications that some powerful sectors of the establishment are beginning to worry about Reagan's massive rearmament campaign. The question that is emerging, of course, is not whether to maintain US supremacy, but the best means to accomplish this. US policy toward Japan is an important part of that debate.



Hiroshima after the Bomb

Japan spends less than one percent of its GNP on defense, but this amounted to about \$10 billion in 1979 and 1980, placing it seventh among the world's arms spenders. Japan doesn't have an "army," but has modernized its Self Defense Forces (SDF) over the years and has developed battle scenarios and strategic studies similar to those of other major powers.

Still, Japan is hardly a samurai state armed to the teeth. The modernization of its military forces has been a basic response to the mechanization and lightning speed of modern warfare. With Soviet divisions only a few hundred miles away on disputed Shikotan Island, its defense readiness must be measured in the minutes it takes supersonic aircraft to reach their targets. The ability of the 250,000 troops of the Self Defense Forces to carry out independent or offensive military actions against the Soviet Union, in Korea, or in response to prolonged revolts in impoverished areas of Southeast Asia is virtually nonexistent.

American forces stationed in Japan since 1945 are a major strategic feature in Asian geo-politics. The US would now like to see the Japanese Self Defense Force woven more tightly into America's plans for Asia in an auxiliary and subordinate role. A recent indication of this was Japan's limited participation in Team Spirit '81, an enormous US-South Korean training maneuver that was carried out during February and March to coincide with the Reagan-Chun Du Hwan talks.

The Japanese military and arms industry, as well as corresponding interests in the US, would like nothing better than to expand Japan's "defense" establishment. But the elements that hold decisive power in Japan — the government bureaucracy, the largest corporations, and certain factions of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) are not willing to accept what amounts to an American demand.

The development of nuclear power in the late 1950s and the signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1963 created a bitter split between Japan's two major antinuclear organizations, Gensuikyo (the Japan Council Against A and H Bombs) and Gensuikin (the Japan Congress Against A and H Bombs).

The conspicuous absence of an antinuclear plank in the treaty was viewed by the Socialist Party-influenced Gensuikin to be a serious flaw. Subsequently, they refused to

endorse it. The Communist Party-backed Gensuikyo, meanwhile, favored the treaty as a "necessary" first step toward a more comprehensive disarmament.

For nearly two decades both organizations pursued essentially separate political programs. However, given the difficulty of simultaneously opposing a substantial US military presence and the policies of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, Gensuikin and Gensuikyo regularly hold joint events.

The most visible and dramatic of these are the commemorations surrounding Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day. Disarmament marches through the length of the countryside and huge candlelight vigils along the Hiroshima waterfront have become regular, perhaps even ritualistic, political highlights.

Neither of the major antinuclear organizations seem likely to provoke a genuine social opposition. The Japanese disarmament movement reflects the rigid party structures of the Communist and Socialist Parties, which in turn seems to mirror and extend the highly structured "groupism" that characterizes Japanese society. This authoritarian organizational domination extends from the competitive school system to the factory.

In the last two years there has been movement towards reconciliation between Gensuikin and Gensuikyo. The accident at Three Mile Island has prompted Gensuikyo to re-examine the implications of nuclear power and to ask for discussions with Gensuikin.

Organized political opposition to remilitarization under the American plan persists. A recent public opinion poll by the *Yamuri Shimbun* found more than 50% opposed to a higher military budget. Over 70% of those polled were against any revision of the renunciation of war in Article 9 of the constitution.

Both the expanded nuclear program of the Liberal Democratic Party and the regional militarization of the US are already provoking new forms of opposition. Since last year's brutal repression in Korea and the controversies over America's new muscle-flexing policies, the Japanese have taken to the streets in large numbers to protest. And last April 14 local electrical workers staged the first strike and work stoppage at a nuclear reactor site in Japan.

—David Pingitore
IAT staff



An antinuclear demonstration in Japan

Germany: disquiet on the eastern front

On June 20 the Protestant "Evangelicals" of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) held their national Church Day at Hamburg. Among the featured speakers were Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and Defense Minister Hans Apel, himself a former Evangelical pastor. Also present were 100,000 uninvited guests — anti-militarist demonstrators.

Ever since early last year when Chancellor Schmidt announced his government's decision to host NATO (read US) Cruise and Pershing missiles on FRG soil, he has been facing mounting opposition. For the first time since the late sixties large numbers of West Germans are pouring into the streets to contest the authorities. Moreover, unlike those mainly student protests, the new demonstrations include small farmers, retired people, professionals and unemployed youth as well as a sprinkling of rank-and-file trade unionists. Because of this diverse and partly "respectable" composition, the reactionary bruisers of the West German mass media are finding that their customary right hook—redbaiting—is no longer a knockout punch.

For every citizen that gets active, many more are worried. Germany is in the front line of any NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation, and if "tactical" and "theater" nuclear weapons are used, the entire country will be burnt off the map of Europe.

Rise and fall of the German miracle

More than half the Germans now living can remember, if not World War II, the aftermath of "difficult times" that lasted into the mid-fifties—food and gas rationing, scarce housing and, in the cities at least, a landscape of ruins and rubble. Everyone over forty-five recalls losing fathers, brothers and uncles to the fighting and other family members to the bombing.

This experience shaped West German politics from the start. Above all, most people wanted to be left in peace—allowed to create a private haven of *gemütlichkeit* (roughly, "cosiness") amid social stability and steady economic growth. In exchange, they were willing to work hard and conform rigidly to the expectations of Authority and the norms of middle-class German culture. Dissent was easily equated with support for the even worse nightmare on the other side of the Berlin wall, the Stalinist work-camp laughingly known as the German Democratic Republic.

Here was the social foundation for the famous "German miracle." In the fifteen years after 1945 the FRG used large infusions of foreign credit to retool worn-out and devastated industrial plants with the latest technologies for its uniquely compliant and energetic workforce to operate. Soon the FRG was elbowing Britain and then France aside as the industrial leader of Western Europe. By 1970, along with Japan, it had begun to seriously challenge US domination of European and other world markets. At home wages climbed steadily and unemployment remained unimaginably low by US standards.

In 1973 the so-called Arab oil boycott caused the first falterings in this lockstep march of industrial growth and social harmony. Energy costs doubled and then tripled, all-important foreign markets stagnated. Consumer prices and lay-offs jumped. By November 1980 unemployment was 1.1 million (nearly 5%) and economic growth had slowed to a pitiful 1.8% annually. Taken along with the Pershing-Cruise decision, this situation could not fail to have serious social consequences.

Cracks in the Monolith

The FRG student revolt of the late sixties, like the US one, was success-

fully contained. Most ex-student radicals who did not simply knuckle under became low-level clerical and service workers or scraped by on welfare, doing their best to agitate around local issues like housing and pollution. A smaller number joined Marxist-Leninist sects whose frenetic, cultish energy mostly ran out by the mid-seventies. And a handful became the Red Army Fraction (RAF), better known in the US as the Baader-Meinhoff gang.

This outfit, commonly styled "anarchist" but actually hardnosed Leninist, created an effect on West German politics vastly disproportionate to its size. The RAF's series of bombings, abductions and assassinations, culminating in the 1975 kidnapping and execution of big-time industrialist and former SS-man Hans-Martin Schleyer, gave the state security apparatus a chance to grow as it had not since Adolf Hitler was elected. Worse, the very notion of opposition became criminalized. "Sympathizer" was the label pinned by the state and the media on anyone who protested the state's inroads on constitutional liberties.

Despite this the government's decision to accelerate its nuclear power program because of increased oil prices provoked instant and determined popular opposition. The "spontis" (spontaneous ones), remnants of the anti-authoritarian sixties left, had found a cause they could rally to. They were joined by many local residents around power plant sites, mostly small farmers. At Whyl, Bavaria, in 1974 this unlikely coalition of urban radicals and conservative Catholic peasants managed to occupy the still-vacant site, forcing the government to postpone construction indefinitely.

Actions at other sites where construction was more advanced were not so successful. Demonstrators were met with a police presence that equaled or surpassed them in numbers, along with water cannon, attack dogs, CS gas and a menacing display of automatic weapons. Nevertheless, the movement persisted. Since it never made a sharp distinction between military and "civilian" nukes, the anti-missile campaign can be seen as only its latest and largest phase to date.

Greens and Reds: The Disarmament Rainbow

In 1977 the ecological and anti-militarist movement mounted "Green Slates" in major municipal council elections with surprising success.

Politically, the Green coalition was bizarre—one-third conservatives dismayed by over-industrialization, one-third "progressives" disgruntled with the ruling Social Democrat's environmental insensitivity, and one-third assorted spontis, Trotskyists and other left-wing types.

This worked as long as organization was localized and loose, and as long as Green meant primarily *against*—against nukes, pollution, militarism and so forth. However, when the coalition's elements tried to combine in a party with its own positive program, the bond proved unstable. At the Green Party's founding congress in January 1980 the "true greens"—conservatives and moderates—tried to exclude the radical "red greens" by imposing a rule against dual organizational membership. However, the large number of unaffiliated spontis who slipped through this net were able to tear larger holes in it, and by the second congress in late March the party's composition was much as before January.

Meanwhile the Party achieved further electoral successes. But this good fortune did not last into the national elections. In their campaign, Schmidt and his coalition skillfully portrayed their main opponent, arch-rightist Franz-Josef Strauss, as a war-mongering lunatic. They were helped in this by Strauss' own strident anti-Soviet rhetoric. Most West Germans know that the FRG depends heavily on trade with the USSR and COMECON and the economic picture was already grim. Consequently, Schmidt and Co. not only flattened Strauss at the October polls, but managed to herd its radical and anti-militarist opposition into an anti-Strauss popular front behind them. The Greens won a mere 2% or so—not enough to earn them a single seat in parliament.

Revolt at Ground Zero

Around this time another oppositional force was on the rise. Sporadic squatters' movements had persisted throughout the seventies. Now, as a generation working-class and lower-middle-class youth found itself facing inflation and a chronic housing shortage with little prospect of stable employment, the squatters' campaign took off. So did a new, bitterly radical and anti-authoritarian youth culture, dubbed "the Chaotics" by the media.

An early sign of this came in April 1980 when thousands of squatters

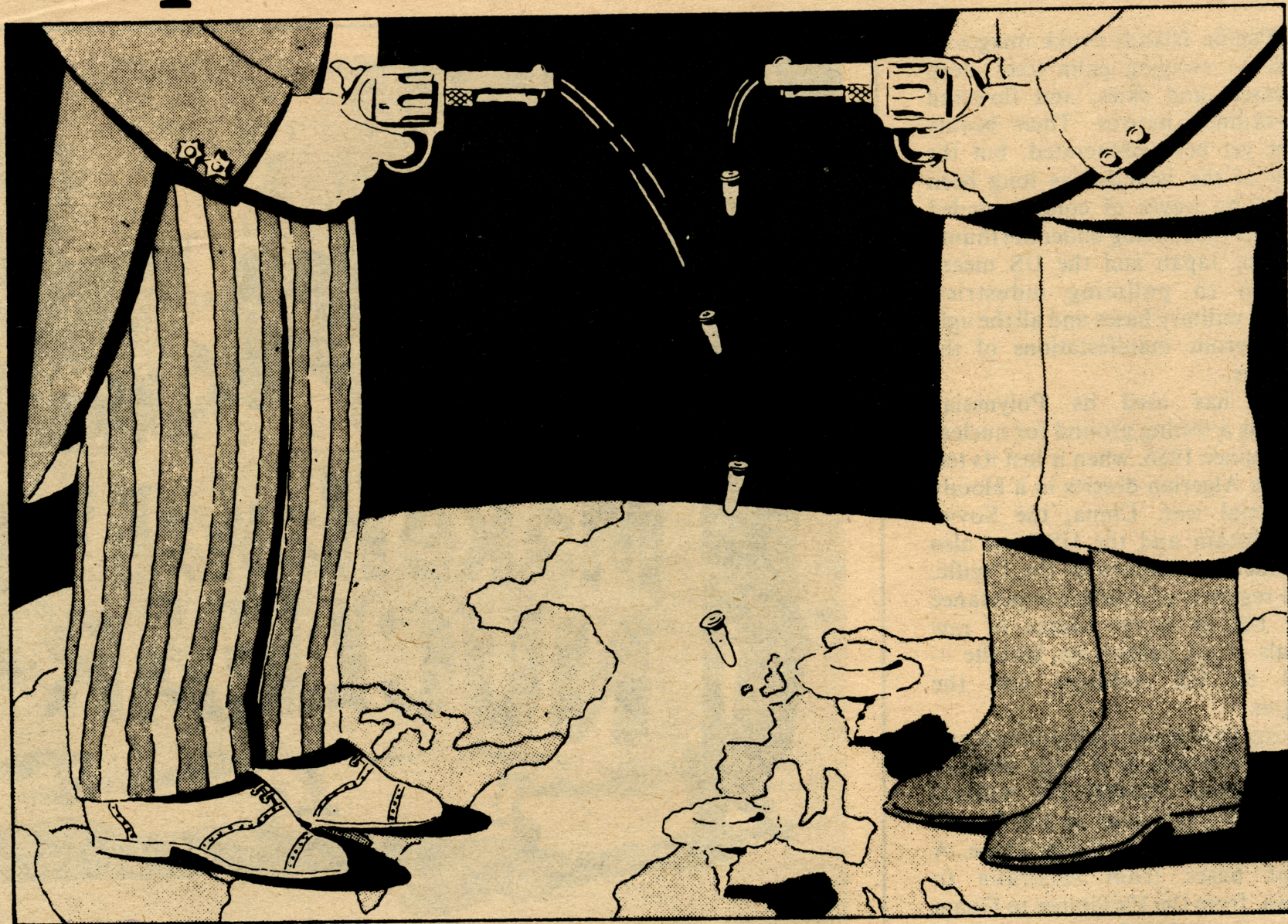
battled police in Frankfurt. A month later an even more savage fight came at a Bremen ceremony marking the 25th anniversary of FRG membership in NATO. Eight thousand young people attacked as many police and soldiers with Molotovs, rocks, bottles and iron bars, wounding 250 of them. FRG president Karsten and Defense Minister Apel had to be flown out by helicopter.

The antinuclear struggle has also been heating up. At the Brokdorf reprocessing site last April, some 3000 youth broke away from the 80,000 other demonstrators and took on the police in an attempt to seize the site. Brokdorf has been the scene of more than one violent clash in the past, but on these, as on other occasions, the police had the initiative, often attacking explicitly nonviolent demonstrations. Only in the last eighteen months have they been sometimes thrown on defensive. In fact, scarcely a month has passed this year without a pitched street battle somewhere in the FRG, usually over housing or "space"—the demand for an autonomous youth center where people can talk, dance, make music and in general exist without interference from the authorities.

The relationship of this new upsurge to the fight against NATO and its nukes is still unclear. Certainly these young people, unlike their sixties counterparts, are not naive enough to believe they can simply "drop out"—or that the revolution will come tomorrow, if ever. Rather, they seek to create a sort of *anti-culture*—physical and social zones where the authoritarian and competitive values of the existing society can be challenged and new communal values created. They also reject the authoritarian collectivism of the traditional left. More and more define themselves as anarchists.

The present anti-militarist and anti-state opposition has had an impact on West German society that goes beyond even the vital issues it confronts. It has recreated a sphere of social debate and experiment unlike any since before the Nazis took power. Perhaps an all-but-forgotten Germany—the Germany that gave birth to the utopian revolutionary artisans of the 1840s, to Marx and Rosa Luxemburg, to Expressionism and Dada, to the workers' uprisings of 1918-21—perhaps *this* Germany is coming alive again.

—Louis Michaelson



The Nuclear Free Pacific movement

The Pacific Islands evoke images of paradise — swaying palm trees, deep blue waters and skies, and flowered brown-skinned natives. Their beauty has not yet been obliterated, but the serenity of the Islands has long been shattered by waves of colony-minded nations. In 1981, living under the thumb of France, Japan and the US means subjection to polluting industries, expansive military bases and all the ugly and dangerous manifestations of the nuclear age.

France has used its Polynesian colonies as a testing ground for nuclear weapons since 1966, when it lost its test site in the Algerian deserts in a bloody anti-colonial war. China, the Soviet Union, Britain and the US have also tested nuclear weapons in the Pacific. But the region is of strategic importance to the US. It is the source of raw materials — oil, rubber, tin, bauxite — crucial to US industry and the Pentagon.

Backing up extensive US political and economic interests is a huge military presence. Over 200,000 US military personnel are stationed in the Pacific region, with 40,000 in Korea alone. A ring of bases from Australia to Okinawa, from the Philippines to Guam and Hawaii stand ready for combat and to "project" US power throughout the region. Hundreds of nuclear weapons are stored in Hawaii, Guam, the Philippines and Korea. Nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed submarines cruise the Pacific, with Pearl Harbor as home port.

The US Pacific military presence is not limited to regional objectives, but forms an integral part of US global military strategy. In a climate of "resurgent militarism," US intervention is likely in the Philippines, where a strong opposition movement threatens to dislodge the US from its key East Asian bases. As stakes and tensions have risen in the Middle East, Pacific bases have become the main U.S. "line of defense." Rapid Deployment Force units in Guam and the Philippines and supporting units in Diego Garcia, stand ready to strike a "hot spot" quickly and lethally. Crucial components of US anti-Soviet "first strike" capability depend on Pacific ports and installations. The mammoth Trident submarine, capable of such lethal firepower that its commanders have been dubbed "the most powerful men on earth," will be homeported in the Pacific.

Living under US nuclear rule in the Pacific means facing the fear of being dragged again into a world war — this time a nuclear war. It means risking intervention or blockade if democratic opposition threatens US interests. It means social or cultural disintegration as thousands of troops invade a community. It means low wages and no unions. It means wondering how much radiation lingers from past bomb tests, escapes from power plants, is dumped by submarines. It means wondering when a nuclear weapon will accidentally break open or detonate.

The Nuclear Free Pacific (NFP) movement grew out of resistance to French nuclear testing in 1971 and now

links groups in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Polynesia, France and the US. The movement operates on the premise that the root of Pacific nuclearization is foreign domination, or imperialism. "The political independence of all people is fundamental in achieving a Nuclear Free Pacific," Pacific activists stated in 1978. Beyond formal political autonomy, independence means cultural and economic self-determination and non-alignment in world politics, including withdrawal from all mutual defense alliances with nuclear powers.

By analyzing the political roots of the "nuclear menace" the NFP movement is able to unite "single issue" and superficially disparate efforts. Land rights battles by Australian Aborigines, New Zealand Maoris, Native Hawaiians, American Indians — fall under the rubric of the movement, even if these struggles are not specifically anti-nuclear. Movements against US-backed dictators, as in the Philippines, are embraced. Political independence efforts in areas like Micronesia and Polynesia, which remain colonies primarily because of their nuclear-related strategic importance, receive special support.

A political analysis also makes clear who is a potential ally. Pacific region labor unions, for example who suffer repression or job loss linked to US economic policies, are an important force in the NFP movement. Progressive Australian and Japanese unions provide funding and, with other regional unions, have formed the Pacific Trade Union Forum to support "self-determination for workers" and the push for a nuclear free Pacific.

Avoiding a theoretical split between nuclear power and weapons, the NFP movement includes fights against

uranium mining, power plants (mostly US exports) and waste dumping. Japanese and US plans to use the Pacific as a nuclear garbage dump are currently a priority target.

The NFP principles of unity encourage the formation of coalitions based on mutuality. Labor unions, for example, are not "outreached to." Instead unity comes from recognition of common cause. Political understanding, however, is uneven throughout the region and not every antinuclear group shares the analysis or has even thought about it. Some countries, like Guam, are nearly 100% dependent on US money — the military is the main employer. Even so, a group has emerged in Guam to call for the removal of the nearly 500 nuclear weapons stored on the Island. In Belau, where the US hopes to build a Trident base, an antinuclear constitution has been approved three times despite intense US pressure.

The NFP Movement is both an amalgam of the region's many local and national "nuclear fronts," and a coordinated international movement. The Pacific Concerns Resource Center keeps information and coordination flowing via a newsletter and action alerts. Decision are made at delegate conferences and by a seven-region steering committee. A field office in Vanuatu and coordinating groups in Japan, Australia and San Francisco work on the local level.

Communications across such great distances, diverse cultures, and multiple languages is difficult. Racial and cultural distrust has not been overcome. Antinuclear activists at times clash with self-determination activists over questions of emphasis. Opportunities for intervention slip by at times due to lack of information, coordination or absorption in local efforts. The ability to

choose and act on regional targets is still weak as the movement tries to avoid rigidity while moving beyond a potpourri style.

In spite of these obstacles, the NFP movement is gaining ground. New groups are emerging, connections between issues are being made, coordinated actions are more effective and links are developing with anti-intervention and disarmament activists in Europe and the US.

Eager to hook up with the US disarmament and antinuclear movement, Pacific activists have found the going rough. The dozens of US groups on the West Coast alone are not only uncoordinated, but many do not even speak to or know about each other. Parochialism is still a feature of the US movement, and even those activists who keenly appreciate the global nature of the disarmament project often look only to Europe in their search for internationalism. Others have failed to translate their Pacific awareness into local organizing efforts.

Disarmament is "pie in the sky" without an understanding of nuclear weapons as an integral part of US political, economic and military power at home and abroad. Every time that power is eroded, every time the web of nuclear dominance is broken by resistance — whether in Belau, the Philippines, Britain or Concord — we all gain a little ground in what will be a long struggle. Disarmament is an endeavor which has as object nothing less than the transformation of the whole fabric of global relations — and the US itself.

— Lyuba Zarsky
Nautilus International

For more information, contact Bay Area Coalition for a Nuclear Free Pacific, (415) 549-2360.



photo courtesy Nautilus International

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