

## THE ANTI-NUCLEAR MOVEMENT - HOW BEST TO INTERVENE

The motivation for writing these notes came out of the conference where we passed a motion on Nuclear Weapons/Power which was excellent on overall perspectives but some people felt the need for more practical thoughts on - do you get involved in CND, END, SERA, ANC or all at once, or what? and similar matters. What I write comes out of 6 months heavily involved in Nottingham for Nuclear Disarmament.

### 1. Nuclear Power or Nuclear Missiles ?

Politically we see that the two are inextricably linked - its the same production process more or less - and that's one link we're going to have to be making all the time (there are many others - see later). But in BF we start from the actual content of peoples struggles and its nuclear weapons (in Britain) that is motivating tens of thousands of people to take to the streets demonstrating, leafletting, petitioning and motivating hundreds of thousands to talk about the issue - witness some of the coverage in the popular press (it also continues to surprise me how often when I've been leafletting or whatever about something else peoples initial reaction has been 'Is it Ban the Bomb'). Recent events - Afghanistan, Iran, Reagan election Cruise Missiles have brought the threat of nuclear war much closer to reality.

In contrast the threat from nuclear power is harder to perceive and less immediate (although if a reactor actually did melt down somewhere then things would change rapidly). Also unlike France and W.Germany where massive anti-nuclear power movements have developed, Britain

- a) Has had very little development of nuclear power in recent years - it mainly occurred in the 50/60's - though The Tories are keen to change this
- b) Has a much, much smaller rural population - 2% compared 20% in Germany and 30% in France, which makes it harder to develop local oppositions to power stations and any ecological type perspective.

SO, in general in Britain it will be the weapons issue which will be the leading edge in developing a mass movement, with the issue of nuclear power being taken into that movement

Locally there will be exceptions eg around the Torness nuclear power development in areas of potential waste dumping, around the reprocessing and enrichment plants - where nuclear power and associated activities pose an immediate threat

### 2. Local or National ?

In general decision making is very local with higher regional/national bodies acting as coordinators. This is very healthy and reflects in part the influence in the movement of anarchists/pacifists/feminists/libertarians (and BF?). The Trots will pack out the appropriate conferences where they can and then wonder why the local groups don't take any notice of decisions passed.

#### The Nottingham Example

Following E.P.Thompson's speech (700 people) and the emergence of lots of people wanting to do something we quickly merged the old CND branch and the new END group to form Nottingham for Nuclear Disarmament. This operates on several different levels.

- a) The Nottingham level - monthly coordinating meetings which increasingly are going to be more educational, semi autonomous sub groups which organise events, get leaflets produced, provide educational material try to build support in specific areas - trade unions, churches we're just about to institute an overall Steering Committee but definitely with a low key coordinating role
- b) The Local Level - Neighbourhood groups which try to do regular leafletting petitioning, public meetings etc in their area. Vary tremendously in size from 2 to 30, and level of activity (some meet regularly, others come and go Also we're trying to develop workplace or trade union groups .
- c) The Regional Level \* we've developed contacts with many groups in the East Midlands - to share ideas & resources. Also we've just called a meeting of all East Midlands groups to further this process and perhaps organise a regional demo at one of the nuclear aircraft bases in the region

The other anti-nuclear groups - Safe Energy Group, Women Opposed to Nuclear Technology, link in in a way that is deliberately left undefined ie - MND has no policy on nuclear power but that doesn't stop us talking about it.

- d) The National Level - at the moment we treat CND nationally as the people who decide the dates when demonstrations will take place, and little else. This will probably need to change as the need for more militant action at nuclear sites develops. A CND national structure that is truly based in its regions and localities will need to be built - mass mobilisations of civil disobedience can't be 'decided' at conferences packed by the left.
- e) The International Level - we want to maintain this in our propoganda by stressing the need to support opposition movements in Eastern Europe eg Solidarity. But it gets a bit tenuous sometimes.

### 3. Strategy

It may be possible to stop Cruise and Trident by a single issue campaign - linked in to the return of a Labour government perhaps. But going beyond this to withdraw from NATO or dismantle the whole military/nuclear state won't be possible with single issue politics because the vested power interests are too strong.

SO we need to be continually drawing as many links as possible with other aspects of the opposition to Capital. The BF conference motion is good on suggesting possible links so I'll just do this very schematically

- \* The interconnection between all aspects of nuclear technology - weapons, power, waste dumping, uranium mining - which leads us in to Namibia and SWAPO who are liberation movement there, Rio Tinto Zinc, Apartheid
- \* The transportation and production of nuclear materials leads to greater state control/policing/repression. So do civil defence measures which, when we get away from all the nonsense about hiding under tables are primarily about protecting the state from nuclear attack and the civil protest of the survivors.
- \* Which leads us in to 'terrorism' and the way too many anti-nuke people use the argument that nuclear materials are dangerous because they could fall into the hands of terrorists, as if they weren't already under the control of a conspiratorial group of power mad lunatics.
- \* Instead of this diversion of 'terrorism' we should instead be drawing the links between the desire for 'Peace' through to anti-militarism - through to anti the British armed forces - through to the highly concrete demand (have you guessed it) - Troops out of Ireland
- \* Unilateral Disarmament leads on to European Nuclear Disarmament which leads on to links between anti-nuke campaigners in Western Europe and anti-nato forces in Greece/Turkey and working class opposition in Eastern Europe So if the Russians ever invade Poland get your disarmament group to call a lightning demo calling for Russian Troops out and support for the Polish workers.
- \* **Trident costs £3,000 million - which leads in to loss of jobs, closure of hospitals, schools etc - Jobs not Bombs is the cry - which leads on to alternative employment for the armaments industry which brings us to Lucas Aerospace and alternative production plans.**
- \* Nuclear Power stations cost a lot of money too and are highly uneconomic - far more jobs could be created in energy conservation, solar power, coal mining, wind power etc
- \* The contrast between the supportative, decentralised society (and anti-nuclear movement) that we are trying to create and the centralised, militaristic, hierarchical etc etc nuclear state - also an understanding of patriarchy has perhaps more to tell us about why ageing cowboys in the White House and Kremlin actually consider using nuclear missiles than any analysis of economic class interests - what ruling class could rational! want to see 90% of its workforce and consumer market dead.

I'll stop at that - this list isn't meant to be exhaustive - just a guide to what could be done and as usual not enough people to make those links.

We need mass support, which means a lot of patient local educational work - but with a perspective of forms of direct action at the end of it - involving large numbers of people, not a small vanguard. Occupations, civil disobedience and such things will have to be part of it, but so will strike action. We need a perspective that says that organising in the workplace is important without going overboard (as the Trots sometimes do).

#### 4. Problems

The active support for nuclear disarmament is still largely 'middle class - ex-student' etc. We need to be aware of this and consciously direct our activity to breaking it down - an emphasis on building support in workplaces, council estates and giving more emphasis to the economic waste of nuclear weapons and power than has currently been the case. But I think there are more fundamental problems than the class base of CND,

##### a) Passivity

Opinion polls say that 40% of the population wants unilateral disarmament - where are they all ? We need to organise in ways that break down peoples passivity:- in small groups, on a neighbourhood basis, making events and meetings enjoyable, making arrangements for kids, educating ourselves about the issues as we go, challenging hierarchies of power and expertise in the way we organise, making people feel that they do have the power to change the world. If we haven't got something to contribute in BF on this then we might as well give up.

##### b) Russia

Try as you like you can't dodge it. Its not difficult to point out to people the dangers of nuclear war, or the economic waste of weapons spending. The support for nuclear armaments is based on the need to defend ourselves against the Russian threat. We need, in our propoganda, to tackle this head on:-

i) Explaining that the threat from Russia is nothing like as great as our press makes out, and that Western imperialism has always been in the lead in developing nuclear weaponry. But its a hard argument to make because it relies on a quite sophisticated understanding of world politics.

ii) Much simpler to say that we are for disarmament East and West, but not by government negotiation which in fact has always lead nowhere, but rather by popular power. And so we need to emphasise our support for working class opposition in Eastern Europe and Poland in particular as the example that is in peoples minds

The End for now - Ray Wilson