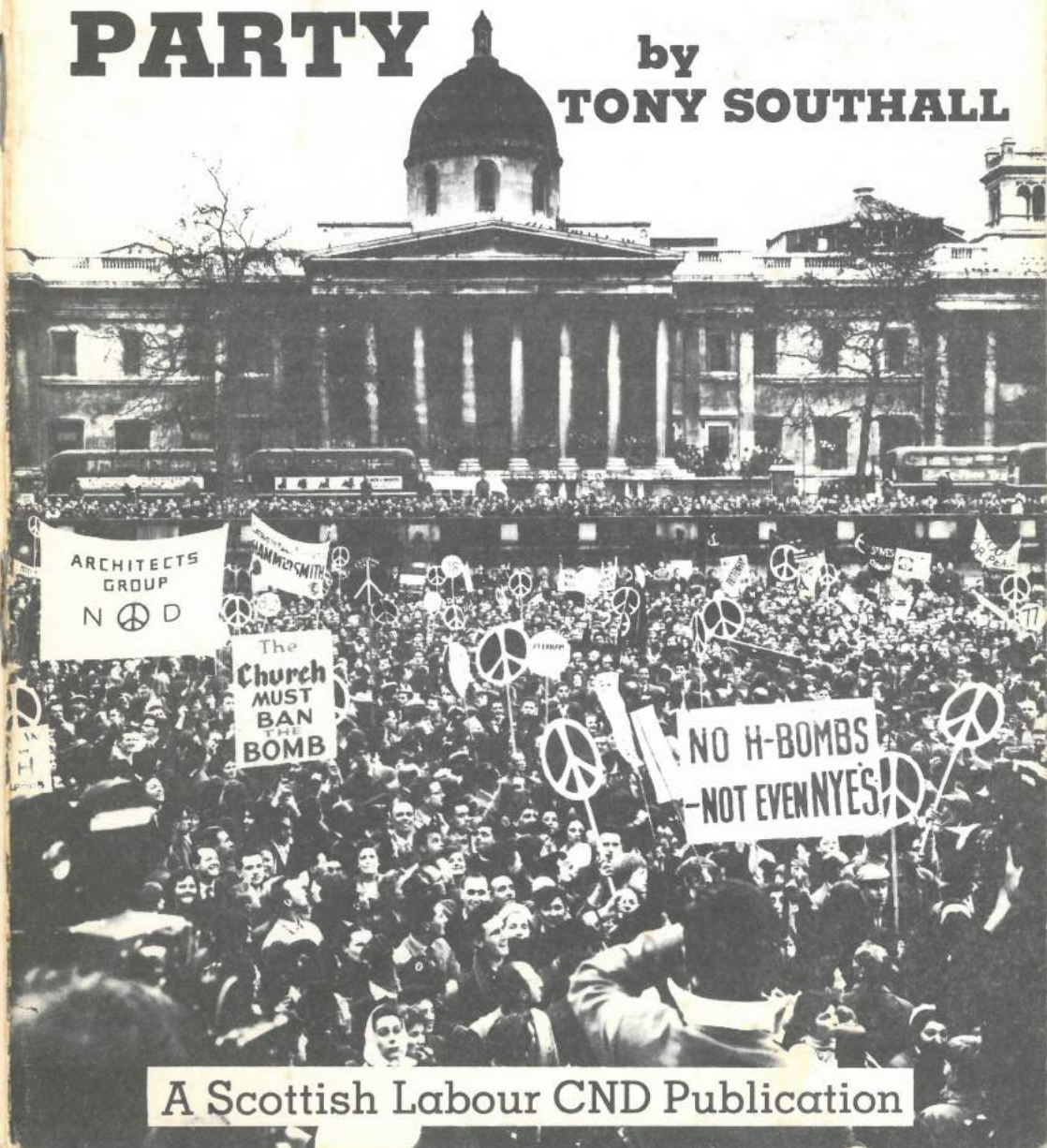


NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT & THE LABOUR PARTY

by
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A Scottish Labour CND Publication

Labour CND is one of a number of specialist sections that work to take the movement's case into particular areas. Its aim is to win the Party as a whole to the programme of British unilateral nuclear disarmament and an end to all nuclear bases and alliances. An associated goal is to win Party support for each and every initiative taken by CND towards its goals. Labour CND has been influential in securing the passage of disarmament resolutions at successive conferences where it has also organised regular demonstrations, meetings and bulletins. It has regional organisations in a number of areas. These hold meetings, conferences, publish pamphlets and bulletins and try to co-ordinate the development of networks of supporters right through the base of the Party.

Scottish Labour CND is one of the specialist sections of Scottish CND. Membership is open to members of the Labour Party who are also members of Scottish CND; but Scottish Labour CND had no formal connection with the Labour Party.

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Scottish Labour CND.

This pamphlet is published by **Scottish Labour CND**. We hope it will play a small part in winning support for our aims in the Labour Party and winning Party support for CND in the critical period that lies ahead.

Introduction

This pamphlet has been produced after discussion with a large number of members and supporters of **Labour CND**. It doesn't attempt to put the detailed case for CND policy. That can best be read in a range of CND's own periodical and pamphlet publications. Nor does it try to make any general political argument about why it's particularly relevant for Labour supporters to back CND – "socialism = peace" etc.

It has much more limited aims. Ones which are however very urgent right now. Firstly it tries to chart some of the problems advocates of nuclear disarmament have confronted in the Labour Party over the years. For obvious reasons it concentrates on the problems faced around the 1983 election. It's hoped thereby to clarify some of the issues facing peace campaigners in the Party. Hopefully that will help us consolidate our position and particularly to ensure we go into any future election with a clear-cut and unchallengeable line for nuclear disarmament.

Secondly the pamphlet is designed to ensure that in the immediate future as the arrival of Cruise missiles, implementation of the Trident programme and new Civil Defence regulations present CND with new challenges and opportunities, the Party plays a leading role in facing these. The election did not give Thatcher a mandate for any of these developments. On the contrary a majority of the British population have been consistently opposed to them. CND can still, together with its allies in the Labour party and Trades Unions and elsewhere, defeat these moves and make that a springboard for further steps towards disarmament.

Labour in Government

1945–51 For CND supporters the history of Labour in government makes sorry reading. Critically of course Labour was in power at the time when the war-time alliance of Soviet Union, USA, UK and France was broken up and replaced in the West by the NATO nuclear alliance. Practically all informed commentary on that period acknowledged the key role played by the British government, and especially Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, in backing every move to that end. It is also nearly unanimous in agreeing that all the running in the arms race and the associated hardening of Cold War blocs was made by the Western Powers.

Key for us is that it was a Labour government that had absolutely no hesitation in offering Britain as the main launching pad for the US nuclear armoury that was stationed here from 1948 onwards. And it was the same government, or rather its 'inner cabinet' that took the decision in January 1947 to begin manufacture of a British Atom Bomb. Setting a precedent for all subsequent governments' handling of important and controversial military decisions, this was not reported to the House of Commons until May 1948. Finally it should be noted that in this period the British government unhesitatingly supported all US initiatives aimed at the "stabilisation" of crucial areas of the world. In the case of Greece and Korea that involved the use of British armed force on the side of "freedom".

the 1945–51 government is often quoted by Party leaders and members as a highpoint in Labour's history that needs to be defended as a model for the future. It is salutary to remember that **the advent of the National Health Service and Welfare State, nationalisation of basic industries, extension of education etc. were accompanied by a consistent programme of re-armament that laid the basis for the nuclear arms race.** It was an ironic foretaste of things to come that, before its fall in 1951, the government first introduced health service charges (on prescriptions) to raise money for the Korean War.

1964–70 The two subsequent periods of Labour government saw no change in this pro-Nato, pro-nuclear stance.

The Wilson government, 1964–70 came to power not long after the effective end of the first big wave of CND. A hangover from that was that the Party's manifesto in the 1964 election did indirectly suggest that Britain's independent nuclear deterrent should be abandoned. It referred to this as a "costly . . . nuclear presence", stated "**we are against the development of national nuclear deterrents**" and called for a renegotiation of the Nassau agreement which covered supply of the missiles for Britain's Polaris submarines.

But the achievements of the government in this field were nil. Great claims were made for the fact that economies were made in defence spending: one aspect of these was cancelling the last of the five Polaris. But no attempt was made to argue that spending had not got anywhere near the manifesto's target and the much quoted calls, in the election campaign, for new negotiated reductions, were soon forgotten. The Wilson government in fact became best known in its later years for its slavish support for the American war in Vietnam. That was at one with its unquestioning support for the NATO alliance.

1974–79

The Wilson–Callaghan governments of these years were equally notable for their support for the US and inaction on even their meagre manifesto commitments on disarmament. In the January 1974 Manifesto two specific steps were proposed: "reducing the burden of Britain's defence spending to bring our costs into line with those carried by our main European allies" and "the removal of American Polaris bases from Britain". These were essentially gestures towards the unilateralist resolution that had been carried at 1973's Party conference. In practice the new government maintained the proportionate level of expenditure and never questioned the presence of the Holy Loch Polaris base. It continued a long-established practice by secretly diverting funds to the Chevaline project updating Britain's own Polaris. Finally, as was revealed in a series of disclosures during the 1983 election campaign, it was certainly engaged before its resignation in discussions about the stationing of Cruise missiles in Europe. The least that can be said about this is, that **the fact this was never revealed at the time to Parliament and public, carried on the traditional lack of democracy that surrounds the whole issue of nuclear weapons deployment.**

The record of Labour in government then is hardly one that can evoke confidence in the Party as the party of peace. In particular in both 1964 and 1974 Labour did not fulfil even the extremely limited commitments made in its election manifestos. These experiences reinforced the position of CND that **whatever the result of the 1983 election** significant steps towards peace would depend on the continuation and escalation of our own independent campaign. They also further strengthen the argument of CND supporters in the Party, that it is essential to continue an unceasing campaign within the Party to ensure our objectives become an inseparable and unchallengeable part of its everyday policies and activity.

Labour in Opposition

Unfortunately there has been little discussion of nuclear policy within the Party when Labour has been in office. The issue has more usually come to the fore during periods of opposition – notably between 1957 and 1964 and from 1970 onwards. Key in both cases were developments in the arms race and the associated growth of CND as an independent mass movement.

During the early 1950s Labour's discussion of nuclear questions was limited. **Indeed the Party backed the British weapons testing at Christmas Island in 1954 which attracted considerable international opposition.** In 1955 the Parliamentary Party accepted plans to manufacture a British H Bomb, although 60 members abstained on the issue because a 'no first use' pledge would not be given. By now a combination of developments in the arms race itself and in scientific knowledge of the effects of the bomb were fuelling increasing public unease. Informed opinion was questioning the effects of continued atmospheric testing on the human body. In 1957 the launch of the first 'Sputnik', the Soviet earth satellite, heralded the era of the Inter Continental Ballistic Missile. The NATO response in 1958 was to station Thor intermediate range missiles with nuclear warheads in East Anglia from where they could reach western parts of the Soviet Union.

1957 saw the founding of the National Council Against Nuclear Weapons Testing and also the first substantial debate at Party conference around nuclear weapons. The oft-quoted speech of Aneurin Bevan referring to the need not to send a Foreign Secretary "**naked into the conference chamber**" helped turn the vote overwhelmingly against the disarmers. Yet the 700,000 votes recorded for the unilateralist resolution were a harbinger of greater things to come.

CND AND THE LABOUR PARTY

At a mass meeting in Central Hall, Westminster, February 1958 and called by the NCANWT, CND was launched. Its impact was immediate. Its activities – the Aldermaston marches, sit-downs of the Committee of 100 etc – were regular headline news for the next four years.

Withing the Party there was a small advance in the vote against the bomb in 1958. 1959 saw an October election and therefore no conference. By 1960 the swing was on in the unions particularly. That was helped by the cancellation, in April of that year, of the Blue Streak project for an 'independent' locally manufactured British missile. But without doubt the most important reason for these advances in the Party was the impact of the growing mass movement.

In 1960 the Scarborough Conference, preceded by a CND march of thousands, voted by a narrow majority for the unilateralist T&GWU

resolution proposed by Frank Cousins. Gaitskell as leader responded demagogically with his pledge to "**fight, fight and fight again to save the Party we love**".

The battle in the Party after Scarborough was much fiercer than before. Gaitskell's supporters immediately organised the **Campaign for Democratic Socialism**. Its secretary was Bill Rodgers and its title showed that its aim was to present CND, by contrast, as implicitly 'communist'. Unfortunately the response of CND supporters was by no means as decisive. This is partly explained by CND's then relatively weak base in the CLPs. Two-thirds of these had voted with Gaitskell. Unfortunately it also reflected a failure to fight consistently for CND policies and principles. Only 5 MPs carried out Conference policy by voting against the 1961 Defence Estimates. They immediately had the Whip withdrawn. Meantime **Dick Crossman and Walter Padley of USDAW** had cobbled together a "compromise" around which they claimed the Party could be re-united. It called for the establishment of a **Central European nuclear free zone** (taking up the Polish government's 'Rapacki Plan'), for a **no first use declaration by NATO** and **rejection of the British independent deterrent**.

CND'S FIRST SETBACK

Many erstwhile leaders of CND in the Party backed the new line. They argued that although it wasn't full CND policy it represented a "**step along the road**" to that. A further sign of a similar mood was the backing given by most of the 'left' to Harold Wilson's standing against Gaitskell for leader. Wilson combined a verbal commitment to respecting the supremacy of conference with declared opposition to unilateralism. This led to the dropping of Tony Greenwood who was a unilateralist as the main challenger to Gaitskell. It marked the beginning of Wilson's rise to becoming the ultimately victorious candidate after Gaitskell's death in 1962 – relying on the 'left' vote to defeat George Brown.

Meantime the "**compromise**" line on defence had been adopted by a number of unions. Then, as it became clear it would be defeated at the 1961 Blackpool conference, leaderships that had never been unilateralist themselves, dropped it in favour of the nearest thing – support for Gaitskell. **CND's first brief-lived victory in the Party was duly overturned.**

One important effect of the new events in 1960–1 was that a whole generation of CND activists shunned the Party. They were repulsed by the unprincipled manoeuvring that was apparently not confined only to the Gaitskellites. But the most important effect was to pave the way for the Wilson ascendancy and the complete disappearance of any significant disarmament measures by the 1964–70 governments.

Some lessons from this period are still relevant for CND supporters in the Party in the 1980s. They show firstly that making compromises on our programme that can at first be seen as "steps forward" have historically prepared the way for defeat. They also show the importance of getting CND's aims firmly into the base of Labour Party and Unions so that our policy gains cannot be easily challenged.

1979-83

The first wave of CND and its first victories in the Party were associated with a significant escalation of the arms race. That experience is duplicated today. The late 70s and early 80s saw the advent of a new generation of weaponry – the Cruise missile, neutron bomb, MX missile system etc – a big increase in the real level of defence spending and a new wave of clashes of interest between the two power blocs in various areas of the globe. Just as before the result is a massive growth of CND. Similarly again, the **spin off is a huge movement in favour of disarmament inside the Party.**

The differences this time round are however all in the favour of peace advocates.

1. The new movement is genuinely **international**. Its actions have spread right across Western Europe. They've had similar effects in sister parties like the German SPD.
2. The new movement is significantly **larger**. In Britain we have now had several demonstrations bringing together at least a quarter of a million people. On the continent many have been even bigger.
3. The **effect** in the Party has been much more **thorough going**. In the sole year of victory before (1960), the explicitly unilateralist resolution of the T&GWU was passed by a mere 43,000 votes. By contrast the years from 1980 to 1982 have seen steadily growing majorities for our motions. This culminated in 1982 in our gaining a magnificent 72% of the votes at Blackpool for Composite resolution 51. In addition we should not that our victories now have a much firmer base amongst activists in the Party. In 1960 two thirds of the Constituency Parties voted with Gaitskell. Now, by contrast, the overwhelming majority of them support CND.

When all these factors are taken along with the fact that, far from diminishing, the war drive led by Thatcher and Reagan, is still growing, we can be certain that the 1980s will bring the peace movement both a deeper and more lasting implantation and a much greater possibility of success.

AFTER THE 1983 LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

The victory at Blackpool was immediately followed by a period in which questions connected with the coming General Election dominated every aspect of Labour politics. It immediately became apparent that influential **sections of the leadership did not intend to allow unilateralism to become a key theme of our campaign.** A united leadership that really wanted to implement Composite 51 would have immediately issued a call to all sections of the Party to get actively involved in all the ongoing campaigns of the peace movement. It would have sought actively to **identify** the Party with the campaign. Such a line would have meant leading Labour Party women into the massive blockade of Greenham Common on 12 December 1982. It's true that numerous women's sections around the country did mobilise for that event. It's also true that Michael Foot did visit Greenham on several occasions. But where was the NEC's call to implement 51's pledge to active collaboration within the movement? Why did Michael Foot himself consistently dodge Sanity's invitation to an interview that he could have used to make plain the Party's commitment to CND's aims?

Further indications of unwillingness to act on Composite 51 were given by the leadership's failure to respond to the call to mobilise through the Socialist International for a Europe-wide demonstration on Hiroshima Day. CND Conference at the end of November enthusiastically embraced that call which had also been made by the TUC. Whatever the problems of timing connected with an August action, it would have been important to take this up in some form to pledge the Party's commitment to a serious **fight** against the bomb. Another opportunity for Labour to become identified as the Party of peace was lost.

OPPOSITION BY SHADOW CABINET

While the leadership fiddled others were more explicit. Within hours of the Blackpool decision, Roy Hattersley was on TV assuring viewers that Conference resolutions were not binding on the NEC. James Callaghan, who was to make a similar statement that drew wide attention in the middle of the election campaign, was quite explicit in a speech to Cardiff Fabians published in The Guardian on 19th November. **"There is no case for scrapping Polaris unilaterally, nor should a British government refuse to store Cruise missiles or order the closure of American bases in Britain".**

How could all this happen? The main reason is of course that, while we had secured an overwhelming majority for unilateralism in the Party, we remained saddled with a leadership in both NEC and Parliamentary Party in its majority hostile to our policy. Only 5 out of 18 Shadow Cabinet members were unilateralist. That reflected the composition of

the Parliamentary Party, only a third of whom were members of its CND group. Only a narrow majority existed for policy in the NEC. It was this above all which prevented Labour going all out for Composite 51, ensured the latter would be fudged and that we would not go into the election on a clear unilateralist programme.

THE CAMPAIGN DOCUMENT

That no clear lead would be given immediately, was quickly evident when a six-person drafting sub-committee of the NEC was given the task of hammering out the policy that would form the basis of the manifesto. The inordinate amount of time taken (six months) before production of a final draft was excused by the supposed complexity of the task. In reality the only problems arising were because a section of the leadership, as Hattersley and Callaghan had already made plain, were bent on sabotaging important policy commitments. That concessions were to be made was already clearly apparent by January when Michael Foot stressed, in a Channel 4 broadcast, that **"unilateral disarmament is not counter-posed to multilateral disarmament"**. As a bland statement this is of course perfectly acceptable to CND supporters. We've always argued a key purpose of British unilateralism is to set off a chain reaction that will force others to take disarmament seriously. But there was another way in which Foot's statement could be interpreted and it became clear when Brian Walden interviewed Denis Healey on Weekend World in February. "It would be stupid", Healey said, "for Britain to abandon Polaris unilaterally. Rather the weapons should be used as a means by which we would gain access to the Geneva talks where they would, if possible, be negotiated away".

THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

By now it was becoming plain for all to see that Labour's Manifesto was likely to fall far short of the commitments contained in Composite 51. It was also not in the least bit difficult to predict that the contradictions this would involve would be mercilessly exposed by a hostile press and political opponents. Labour CND saw this and, unfortunately in vain, tried to reverse the trend. We secured more than 160 signatures on our roll call of candidates who pledged themselves **"to fight the General Election on clear unilateralist policies in accordance with Composite 51"**. Meetings were held of the Labour Disarmament Liaison Committee at which our fears of the effects of a fudge were made plain to the leadership.

Unfortunately the document that emerged at the end of April confirmed our worst fears. While there was a clear commitment to rejection of the new generation of nuclear weapons, 'No Cruise, No

Trident', the key questions of Polaris and the US bases were blurred over in such a way that it was possible for a wide variety of interpretations to be placed on them.

FUDGING ON UNILATERALISM

The overall framework of the section on defence was a marriage of unilateralism and multilateralism in a manner that drained the former of its essential content. Composite 51 said "unilateral disarmament by Britain will be a vital initiative leading towards multilateral disarmament world-wide". As we've already explained, that's CND's position too; it sees British action as 'breaking the logjam' internationally. It's justified by the fact that not once in 35 years have international negotiations led to any significant halt in the escalation of the nuclear arms race. But that is in marked contrast to the new document's statement that was apparently designed to accommodate virtually any compromise: "unilateralism and multi-lateralism must go hand in hand" and the let-out clause "all this cannot be done at once, and the way we do it must be designed to assist in the task to which we are committed – securing nuclear disarmament agreements with other countries and maintaining co-operation with our allies".

The General Election 1983

With the rapid advent of the election in June, all these contradictions came to the fore. In particular **the differences over Polaris** surfaced in a way that was certainly damaging to the Party's vote. The fact, revealed by opinion polls, was that scrapping this supposedly independent deterrent was the least popular of the four main commitments in Composite 51. At first sight that is rather amazing since the weapon is, in any case, due to be replaced by Trident and that attracted the opposition of a clear majority. It is at the end of its useful life. It is also the case that at least phasing it out had been a more or less consistent part of Labour's policy since 1960. Yet it was the 'independent' weapon which was revealed as the weakest link in Labour's programme.

CONTRADICTIONS ON POLARIS

It's very important for CND supporters in the Party to understand why this is so. It stems from the same source as the big support won by Thatcher for her war in the South Atlantic in 1982. It is this latent jingoism, a hangover from the days when Britain 'ruled the waves', that is one of the biggest obstacles to our winning support for peace in Britain. And it is an obstacle that we cannot dance around because it

will always be raised by our opponents. Unfortunately Labour's leadership was unwilling clearly to identify our policy as based on taking **unilateral initiatives** and consequently it never tackled this decisive question of the British weapon. Had that been done we believe it would have been **our policy** and not the interpretations of it by Heseltine on the one hand or Healey on the other, that dominated the election debate. Once the latter had explained that we wouldn't scrap Polaris unilaterally but put it into the Geneva arms control negotiations, it became easy for the former to pose the obvious question: if you're committed to ultimately abandoning Polaris anyway, how do you expect it to be taken seriously as a bargaining chip?

The possibility of such conflicting interpretations of policy was exactly what had motivated Labour CND to highlight the confusion over Polaris that was revealed from the earliest stages of the semi-public discussion around the manifesto. We're needless to say not happy that all our misgivings were fulfilled; nor that it is necessary once again to go over this ground. We do it because that experience is yet another lesson for CND supporters in the Party that they can take nothing for granted; that in future we must make double sure that our programme is there in black and white before any election.

CONFUSION ON THE BASES

Similar ambiguities surrounded the position of the bases. How could their closure be dependent on "consultation with our allies"? It was correctly argued by Labour's opponents that the United States would be not a little disturbed by the threat of the removal of its main European base that is a key link in the whole NATO structure. Who could believe "consultation" would be sufficient to get a removal by "agreement". Once again it was proven that Labour couldn't win if it tried to hide behind obviously stupid formulae. CND's unilateralism is precisely designed to ensure Britain takes an **initiative** to reverse the endless spiral of the arms race. Obviously we want to create the maximum unity around demands like No Cruise, No Trident and we would regard their cancellation as a big victory. But we also want to put the arms race into reverse gear and that means actually **dismantling** some of the already horrific stockpile of weapons. Resolution 51 called for this to happen within a full governmental term. That programme should have been clarified and argued for in an election campaign that drew out fully the logic of a non-nuclear defence policy.

NATO AND UNILATERAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

A constant refrain of opponents of unilateralism both inside and outside the Party is that we cannot take such steps without disrupting the entire NATO alliance. Supporters of resolution 51 are, it is said, covering up by not openly accepting that fact. In one sense CND is

in agreement. Since 1960 we have had opposition to nuclear alliances as part of our programme. In Britain's case that means quitting NATO which is the means of organisation for our nuclear "defence". Indeed, it is one of the foremost exposés of the farce of the so-called British 'independent' deterrent that this simply could not function without the aid of the alliance's early warning and communications systems. Nor can we be in any doubt that it is NATO's co-ordination of western military strategy that has led to the present upsurge in the arms race. To that extent getting out of NATO is indeed a necessary part of unilateralism.

That's why Labour CND has consistently sponsored motions and initiated discussions on this theme at Party gatherings. But we also understand that many supporters of initiatives by Britain to halt the arms race are not yet prepared to incorporate an exit from NATO as part of their aims. That's why it has never been included in our main resolutions. It's very simple really. CND is always prepared to unite with people are willing to take even one step down the road with us. That's why for instance we formed the tremendously successful Campaign Against Trident. That's not illogical. It's a highly rational recognition of the fact that any step that even moderates, to a small degree, the escalation of the arms race is worthwhile. And to achieve that we will work with allies from anywhere. Labour CND shares this view and participates to the full in building such fronts.

LABOUR CND'S POSITION ON NATO

But we do accept there is this contradiction. If we insist on Britain being totally non-nuclear then it is just not logical to remain part of an alliance whose entire rationale is the organisation of nuclear 'defence'. **And if we want initiatives on the bomb and the bases we also want them on the alliances.** We do believe their dismantling is more likely to come about by actions of the kind we propose. And we do think the absence of the demand to leave NATO in the Party's programme is an unnecessary weak link that enables our opponents – inside and outside – to accuse us of being illogical.

That's why Labour CND will continue to organise for the widest possible debate in the Party about NATO and to try to conclude that debate by winning the Party to CND policy.

AFTER THE ELECTION

THE LABOUR PARTY MUST BUILD CND!

CND supporters in the Party were justifiably distressed that we didn't go into the election on a clear programme based on Resolution 51. Yet precisely because we didn't, we totally reject suggestions coming from certain quarters that the 1983 election proves the unpopularity of our

case and the need to dump unilateralism. Actually it's because the Party didn't fight on our programme that we can validly argue that it still awaits its first test at the ballot box.

What are the tasks now confronting us? First and most importantly we must start by asserting against the Government that **the election result was not a vote for the nuclear arms race**. And we must continually repeat to its opponents that the election result doesn't mean we can say goodbye to any hope of stopping it. We have already stressed how CND supporters in the Party have historically won victories because of the mass mobilisation of the movement outside. But it is also the case that the peace movement has itself won victories that have forced hostile governments into actions they never planned for.

In Britain our most notable achievement in that respect was to make the Tories back down from carrying out the Hard Rock Civil Defence exercise in 1982. That came directly from the decision of a series of **largely Labour local councils not to co-operate**. But at the end of the day the decisive influence was the consistent campaigning CND had done over the previous two years to expose the Civil Defence fraud.

MASS PROTEST

Still more relevant to the tasks facing us is the experience of late 1981. Reagan had come to power earlier in the year pledged not to talk with the Russians about arms until the West had righted the so-called 'strategic imbalance' in Europe. Doing that meant installing Cruise and Pershing. That stance was changed by the mass demonstrations that swept Western Europe that year. Our own **250,000 in London** was only one out of many such actions that included a demonstration of roughly **the same number in Rome**, more than **300,000 in Bonn** and at least **400,000 in Amsterdam**. It was above all these mass actions that brought about Reagan's abrupt reversal and the opening of the Intermediate Missile Control talks in Geneva January 1982.

It's true these talks have so far reached no conclusion. But that's certainly not because the **issue** has gone away. The re-opened in September. Certainly the West's intransigence has been increased by the re-election of Thatcher and Kohl earlier this year. But history suggests the decisive factor to affect the talks will be the degree of mass opposition to these new weapons the peace movement can assemble on an international scale. That international dimension is particularly important for us in Britain where the first deployment is due to start in early December at Greenham. Even if that happens, we still have the opportunity to secure their eventual withdrawal through a Europe wide campaign with our allies in the other targeted countries.

EUROPE-WIDE CAMPAIGN

Labour Party members should concentrate on two particular opportunities for such co-ordinated action. Labour CND's resolution to the 1983 conference proposes the mounting of an **international day of action** against the new missiles in collaboration with our sister parties and with the Trade Union movement. Pressure for this to be urgently organised should be mounted from now on. Secondly, the **European elections in June 1984** provide a real opportunity to mount a co-ordinated campaign against the new weapons. The Labour Party should immediately approach its allies in the Socialist International to propose **the refusal of nuclear weapons be a central part of the campaign right through Europe**. In Britain we must ensure every Party makes that the main focus of its campaign.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST CRUISE

Cruise deployment can still be stopped. If that happens the peace movement will register its first real success in turning around a new weapon. That would be the springboard for further victories over the warmongers because it would overturn the myth that they can't be stopped.

It is absolutely vital CND supporters in the Party now turn every muscle to ensuring we play a leading role in the anti-Cruise campaign. Opinion polls show we have the support of a majority of the British electorate. During the election the Party (with a few exceptions) was united against it. This needs to be taken further. One of the most visible weaknesses of the Party's policy on nuclear disarmament is that we haven't translated words into deeds often enough. Many people are now correctly claiming that one of the main reasons we lost the election was that we didn't get out in the previous four years and clearly identify with the concerns of masses of people. In relation to the peace movement that's obviously been the case. Whatever our correct paper positions, **the Party has rarely been seen as active day to day alongside CND either locally or nationally**. We have a chance to change this now by becoming identified with the life and death concern that thousands of activist feel about these new escalatory steps in the nuclear arms race. This concern extends, as opinion polls show, to a majority of the population. The Party must now get out and offer its support locally and nationally to build the anti-Cruise campaign up to and beyond the October demonstrations. The NEC must act immediately on our resolutions against the missiles in co-ordination with our allies in TUC and CND.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST TRIDENT

Beyond that there are a series of other initiatives of the peace movement with which Labour must become identified. **The Anti-Trident Convention**, now slated for February 1984 in Manchester, will try to

rally the widest possible commitment by organisations and individuals against this proposed new generation of British nuclear weaponry. It bases itself on the highly successful work that has been developed over the past couple of years by the Scottish Campaign Against Trident. The way in which that organisation has ensured in Scotland, a constant consciousness about, and majority opinion against, Trident, needs to be extended throughout Britain. **The Labour Party must play a leading role in this campaign** and by doing so force other supposed opponents like the Liberals and SDP out of the woodwork. This is very important. The Anti-Trident Campaign aims to turn the existing paper majority opposition into active opposition and Labour supporters must be prepared to work there with everyone, including Tories, who can be drawn into that single issue campaign. If by doing this we can defeat the Trident project we will take another decisive step along the road to peace.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE CIVIL DEFENCE FRAUD

One further question demands the attention of all Labour supporters of CND. The government's attempt to reverse its defeat over Hard Rock and enforce **new Civil Defence regulations** on local councils comes before Parliament on 26 October 1983. It will make it **mandatory** for them to organise this provision and **compulsory** for wide sections of local government workers to act as directed to implement the regulations. **Labour Parties should be campaigning for local councils to refuse to implement these.** NALGO has already produced material encouraging members to refuse to collaborate. Parties should co-ordinate with the local government unions and support their stand. Hard Rock showed such moves can still be blocked. Important, above all, will be that such campaigns expose the role of civil defence as a means of preparing the ground for the **militarisation of war-time society** as well as deluding the population into accepting nuclear weapons through pretending any effective defence exists against their effects.

THE LABOUR PARTY MUST LEAD

All the steps proposed here, aim to get the Labour Party actively involved in the immediate campaigns of the anti-war movement. In each of these – against Cruise, against Trident, against the Civil Defence fraud – the views of CND and the Labour Party are shared by a **majority** of the population. The Party itself is virtually unanimous in its opposition to Cruise, Trident and the new Civil Defence proposals. CND supporters in the Party must now make sure these campaigns are taken into the heart of the Party and that the Party is itself taken **into the streets, onto the doorsteps and into the workplaces at the side of the peace movement.**

In doing this Labour will be uniting with the most sizeable and significant mass movement of the past period. It will be uniting with the desires of a majority of the populace. It will be the most significant practical pledge it could make of its seriousness as the Party of Peace.

By taking this road we aim to ensure there are no more Crossmann-Padley "compromises", no more 1983 style "fudges", that the Party becomes the leader in explaining the case for complete unilateral nuclear disarmament – and that it prepares for power with peace as the centre-point in its programme.

COMPOSITE 51

This Conference records its alarm at the continuing arms race between the super-powers and the increasing threat of nuclear war within Europe, rejects the policy of the present Government in increasing its reliance on a defence policy based on nuclear weapons and recognises that unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain will be a vital initiative leading towards multilateral disarmament worldwide.

Conference re-affirms the decisions of Annual Conference in 1980 and 1981 committing the Labour Party to unilateral disarmament by:

- (a) opposing unconditionally the replacement of Polaris by Trident or any other system and the deployment of Cruise missiles, the neutron bomb and all other nuclear weapons in or by Britain;
- (b) closing down all nuclear bases, British or American on British soil or in British waters;
- (c) bringing Britain's military expenditure as a percentage of the gross national product into line with the average of our major European allies;
- (d) dismantling the defence sales office and developing with the trade union movement a detailed programme for the conversion of the relevant parts of the arms industry to the manufacture of socially useful products so that no compulsory redundancy should arise from this policy.

Conference notes the acceleration of the arms race over the past year and further calls upon the next Labour Government to oppose the deployment of chemical and biological weapons in or by Britain and to halt the supply of plutonium to the United States.

Continued overleaf

Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to:

- (i) campaign for this policy in association with the growing peace movement and those local authorities which have declared themselves nuclear free zones or opposed the Government's arms drive and the Government's civil defence programme; declares its support for the Foreign Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Bases (Prohibition) Bill sponsored by Labour Members of Parliament. It demands that the next Labour Government implement the provisions of this Bill as a matter of high priority;
- (ii) discuss Labour's policy with our sister parties of the Socialist International with a view to working with them towards the achievement of a nuclear free zone in Europe and instructs the National Executive Committee to initiate moves within the Socialist International to support with European Nuclear Disarmament a European wide demonstration on Hiroshima Day, 6th August, 1983;
- (iii) support the Greek Socialist Government in its attempt to remove nuclear missiles from Crete;
- (iv) develop the non-nuclear defence policy based on the legitimate defence interests of Britain;
- (v) ensure that the next general election manifesto contains an unequivocal, unambiguous commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament and for the Parliamentary Labour Party, including spokesmen on defence to actively campaign on this policy, in its first session in office.