

## THE BRITISH PEACE MOVEMENT AND SOCIALIST CHANGE\*

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In the post-war period the largest, and arguably the most significant, mobilisation of radical forces in Britain has taken place around the issue of nuclear disarmament. From the late-1950s to the mid-1960s, and again from the late-1970s to the time of writing, the peace movement has been a dominant force and has succeeded in bringing together a diverse coalition in opposition to British possession of nuclear weapons.

This paper has two primary purposes: first, to examine the politics of the peace movement of 1958 to 1965 and to analyse the reasons for its ultimate failure; second, to argue, on the basis of the experience of that period, that for the peace movement to succeed in the future there must be a linkage at a number of levels between the movement for peace and the movement for specifically socialist change. The focus is thus upon the various political strategies adopted by the earlier movement, but always within the context of the implications this experience has for the contemporary movement.

The persistent and fundamental problem of the movement since its inception has been its inability to translate its undoubted popular appeal into real, tangible achievement. Although the movement has had a very considerable impact upon public opinion, and thus, arguably, indirectly upon formal political structures and policies, it is quite clear that its central objectives have not been achieved. Moreover, the deterioration of the Cold War climate in the 1980s and the increasing escalation of the arms race both testify to the movement's lack of success. The problem then is essentially political: how to articulate with effect the peace movement's dynamism and strength. The inability to find a solution to this problem was one of the central reasons for the movement's decline and disintegration from the mid-1960s and threatens again to undermine the strength, growth and self-confidence of the movement in the 1980s, both in Britain and elsewhere.

Various 'strategies for advance' have been advocated within the peace movement. In the nature of such movements there is an overlapping and even a confusion among differing groupings and ideological positions.

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Nevertheless, four main strategies within the 1958 to 1965 period can be identified—and these have influenced considerably the contemporary movement's political profile. These can be described as: the single issue, **moral/apolitical**; the labourist; the direct actionist; and the New Left.

*The single issue, moral/apolitical strategy*

Many activists in the earlier movement rejected any political dimension to the movement's aims.' And there can be no doubt that much of the movement's appeal rested on entirely moral and humanistic motivations. Those in the CND leadership (and to some extent in the Direct Action Committee (DAC) and the Committee of 100) who accepted the need for political action did so only on the assumption that the essentials of CND's case remained on the moral plane. Moreover, for many, like Canon Collins, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of CND, the task facing CND was confined to the single, central issue of unilateral nuclear disarmament. For the 'moral protester' the movement's strategy was, like the issue itself, a straightforward, simple matter. Protest should be on the moral plane, because the objections to nuclear weapons were fundamentally moral in character, not political. Inasmuch as 'strategy' was important it was assumed that CND policies could be put into effect via the existing political parties with no major implications for other political developments. The 'moral strategy' was simple and direct—and assumed a single-issue orientation. Faced with the enormity of nuclear weapons and their effects, the emotive response was to call for a moral campaign couched in apolitical absolutes.

This was a wholly mistaken perspective. It is true that without this initial moral dynamism the movement would never have arisen. Moreover, that there was an essential moral dimension at the heart of the movement, none (not even the most politically oriented) would deny. However, the *exclusivity* of this moral approach on the part of many supporters, and their refusal to engage in political or strategic planning or action of any sort beyond moral exhortation, was a major contributory factor to the movement's failure. Furthermore, however necessary the moral impetus may have been at the outset of the movement, its continuing dominance rendered the movement static and virtually powerless in the face of the repeated political defeats suffered.

The movement entailed a *new* politics, over and above the specific 'moral lead' argument involved in the central CND case. For the policy of unilateralism to have any real long-term impact it had to be allied to a political programme of commitment which would involve withdrawal from NATO, a commitment *against* both major power blocs and the ideological systems which underpinned them, and a commitment *to* a policy of positive neutralism. A necessary extension of these commitments was the espousal of a radicalised ideological framework: the point here is

not to discuss which framework was 'correct', but rather to emphasise that some radical reorientation was a necessary part, by extension, of the unilateralist commitment.

Thus the changes entailed in the unilateralist commitment were so large and so central that it was highly unlikely that the existing governing class<sup>2</sup> would have acquiesced through moral pressure alone, however widely and vociferously articulated. Moreover, the whole historical experience indicates that the governing class in Britain, as elsewhere, responds predominantly to material forces. It is no doubt regrettable, but it remains the fact, that morality has not been a major force in Western politics, and the disarmament movement was unable to make it so. Those pursuing the 'moral' strategy appeared not to have realised the nature of the problem they confronted: there was little if any strategic discussion of how the movement could persuade politicians to take note of the moral-force arguments. It may be argued that this underrates the potential power of 'public opinion', which can be important at crucial times of national crisis and which does manifest itself in primarily moral and emotional terms. The undoubtedly large measure of support given by 'the public' in Britain to the Falklands War in 1982 might be held to be just such a case.

This would appear a mistaken argument on at least three counts, however. First, the vested interests, both material and ideological, of the governing class are very strong indeed, as are their reserves of ideological and political power. If the issue is considered important enough, this power will be exercised to whatever degree necessary (vide President Allende in Chile). Second, and related to this, the informed and astute political machine can manipulate 'public opinion' (as was the case, quite blatantly, over UN resolution 502 in the Falklands war); moreover, protest based on 'morality' alone can be overcome easily in public debate by seemingly more realistic and sophisticated argument. Emotive 'public opinion' has effect, generally, only when this opinion is being voiced in support of the policies of the governing class (as was the case in the Falklands war). Third, the exclusivist moral campaign allows no political compromise, and has no flexibility in making alliances, deals etc. in order to push forward the movement. In that sense such campaigns are sectarian and static, and take no account of the real world in which they operate. More often than not their own 'purity' becomes as important as the cause for which they are campaigning, and the movement becomes increasingly inward-looking and divorced from reality. Paradoxically, therefore, the very universality implied in the moralistic campaign is itself the cause of both narrowness and inflexibility. At the practical common-sense level, it has to be realised too that political change of this radical type can come only through political action. There can be no hope of success for any political movement which does not tap some source of potential political

power, as Canon Collins and others in the early CND leadership realised both at the time and subsequently. A political strategy was thus essential if the movement were to become more than what Ian Mikardo has described as 'an annual orgasm every Easter'.<sup>3</sup>

It was within the ideological and political contexts that the real significance of the movement lay. The exclusively 'moral' protesters, necessary and legitimate though their perspective was as a basis for the movement, were ultimately divorced from the real struggle. Their strategy, although it certainly raised the general level of public awareness about nuclear dangers, had no chance of success without embracing a wider political commitment. It is thus within the context of the directly political strategies that the movement must be analysed.

### *The labourist strategy*

Of the explicitly political strategies in the movement there is no doubt that the most orthodox, and probably the most pervasive, has held to the view that success can be achieved only through the labour movement. The strong tradition of 'peace politics', stretching back to the First World War and beyond, made the peace movement inherently appealing to those active on the Labour Left. A labour movement led from the Left, but holding absolutely to both the ideology and practice of democratic, parliamentary socialism would be committed genuinely to the moral and political principles of the peace movement *and* to the wider reform of capitalism. It was only within this latter context, it was argued, that the moral basis of the peace movement could find its real expression. The abolition of nuclear weapons, initially by Britain alone, was seen as a part of the wider moral re-ordering of society that would emanate from a Labour government led from the Left.

Without such a Labour Left leadership, however, the party and the labour movement would continue to be dominated by the pro-Bomb, essentially pro-capitalist right wing (*vide* Gaitskell in the late 1950s). On the other hand, to attempt fundamental change of this type via some formation or coalition *outside* the organised working-class movement was, it was argued, thoroughly unsocialist, and certain to fail. Such a movement, unconnected to the organised working class, would tend towards bourgeois dilettantism or would fade away. In terms of *power* there is, on this argument, no alternative to working in and through the labour movement.

It is thus important to discuss in a little more detail the ways in which such changes—the winning over of the labour movement by the Left and hence the possibility of achieving the peace movement's objectives—might have been accomplished in the 1958 to 1965 period. There were two ways in which the Labour Left saw the struggle for Left power in the labour movement being pushed forward, both in general terms and in the specific

case of CND: through winning over major trade unions to Left policies, and through building a strong alternative leadership in the PLP. On the trade-union front there was, superficially, considerable early success—culminating in the 1960 Labour Conference victory, when broadly unilateralist resolutions proposed by the AEU and the TGWU, were carried, against the explicit wishes of Gaitskell and the PLP leadership. But this victory was both misleading and short-lived, representing a combination of artificial bloc vote manoeuvring by some of the major trade-union leaders, and a moral, and emotive, rather than a *political*, commitment to unilateralism by the trade-union activists. Thus trade-union support for 'CND style' motions in the 1960s was not the result of a deep understanding of and commitment to the policies of unilateralism and neutralism, but was rather a gesture indicative of the generalised concern of a substantial proportion of trade-union opinion over the whole problem of nuclear armaments, the dangers of nuclear war, and the *immorality* involved in the possession and possible use of genocidal weapons.<sup>4</sup> The 1960 victory did not result in closer liaison between the trade-unions and CND: Gaitskell's notorious smear, that CND consisted of pacifists, neutralists and fellow-travellers, touched the trade-union leaders, always sensitive to accusations of fellow-travelling, on a raw nerve. Moreover, from late-1960 onwards, trade-union leaders were even more than usually susceptible to leadership appeals for party unity and loyalty to the leadership, in view of the perceived dangers of the party splitting irrevocably following the 1960 decision. Given these circumstances, and the ambivalence of CND itself about its involvement in Labour politics, it was not surprising that Gaitskell and the Campaign for Democratic Socialism were able to reverse the decision at the 1961 Conference. The involvement of the higher reaches of the trade-union movement in the unilateralist movement had been a very transitory and almost artificial affair.

Related to this failure within the trade-union section of the labour movement was the nuclear disarmament movement's inability to attract significant levels of working-class support from among the population as a whole. It never managed to attract the support of substantial numbers of ordinary working-class, Labour supporters, let alone the apolitical or Conservative sections of the working class. Paradoxically, such working-class support as there was for the movement tended to be couched in the moral/apolitical perspective. And yet, as has been argued, this was a wholly inadequate vehicle for achieving the movement's objectives. One of the primary objectives, strategically, of the movement should thus have been to devise ways of raising working-class consciousness and of making real links with the industrial labour movement and the wider working class. This would have been a difficult task, but it was an essential one if the movement was to have achieved any long-term success.

There were thus several reasons for the failure of the movement to win

over the industrial labour movement on any permanent, genuine basis. But what of the political Labour Left—ground on which the early CND was far more at home and had firm allies? Surely a mass movement led by an elite of predominantly Labourist persuasions would provide exactly the vehicle for the Labour Left to pursue, legitimately, its desire for a change in the leadership and the direction of the party. And, looking at it in reverse, surely the Labour Left offered the movement an ideal opportunity to translate its mass power into political action. Here was a situation where both the interests and the commitment to the single central issue of the two groups coincided. The prospects of this alliance were, of course, considerably enhanced by the Labour Party's third successive General Election defeat in **1959**, under Hugh Gaitskell's explicitly right-wing leadership: by late **1959** the unity of the party was looking very precarious indeed. Given all this, how was it that the CND/Labour Left alliance failed to take the Labour Party by storm and sweep away the Gaitskellite leadership?

We need here to look at both the movement and the Labour Left, and analyse their strengths and weaknesses. Although the movement was led by a group that had predominantly Labour sympathies this was by no means true of the whole Executive. The leaders of CND did not see the movement as political in this conventional Labour sense and did not wish to compromise the moral drive and 'purity' of the movement by entanglement in party politics. There was also the disquiet expressed by many, in both leadership and rank-and-file, about close association with what was seen as the committed, politically motivated, socialist Left of the Labour Party. Construing the movement as a moral crusade, they were hostile to, or at best wary of, the 'Labour connection.', as was a substantial section of the rank-and-file. However, even for those in the leadership who believed that the only practical way to achieve the objectives of the movement was to work through the Labour Party, there was a less than wholehearted commitment to the Labour Left. The key person here was Canon Collins. There were those on the Executive who were wholly committed to the Labour Left argument—principally Kingsley Martin and Michael Foot—but it was Collins who led the movement and who represented the dominant view of the Executive during the crucial **1959-61** years. And Collins was never wholly committed to the Labour Party, still less to the Labour Left, although he was an astute political operator. Even after the **1960** Conference, many CND activists were unwilling to devote their campaigning energies to securing their position within the Labour Party. Many of them were not politically committed at all, whilst some, like Jacquetta Hawkes, hardly realised the significance of the **1960** Conference.' Of those who were politically committed, many feared, with good reason, that an abrupt move to bring the whole movement into the Labour Party would have alienated a large degree of support. Even for

those who were ready to undertake this agitation within the Labour Party, the tactics and procedures to adopt were far from clear. All this stood in some contrast to the small, but coherent, cohesive and well financed, Gaitskellite campaign which worked, through **1961**, to ensure the reversal of the decision. From the time of the **1960/1** reversal onwards the CND leadership was floundering, strategically speaking. The strategy of winning over the Labour Party via Labour Left and trade-union backing had rather unexpectedly come good in **1960**. But the reversal in **1961** and the subsequent burying of the issue in **1962** and the years following, leading up to the election-induced unity under Wilson in **1963-4**, left the movement high and dry. Popular support grew dramatically through **1961** and continued strong through **1962** and **1963**, but the leadership had nothing else to offer except the now discredited, and increasingly unrealistic, Labour Party strategy. As the years passed so disillusionment with this perspective deepened, and the divisions and cynicism within the movement grew.<sup>6</sup> It was thus unlikely that the leadership of CND could have brought the whole of CND (let alone the DAC and the Committee of 100)<sup>7</sup> into the labour-movement struggle. However, as many realised at the time, as this was the strategy adopted for good or ill by the leadership, it was essential to try to implement it at the most favourable opportunity—that is, following the **1960** Conference victory. The failure to do this was in part the responsibility of the CND leadership, as has been indicated. But it was also due to the inherent weakness of the Labour Left.

This is not the place to enter into the complex (and contentious) debate over the nature and viability of the Labour Left.<sup>8</sup> It must, however, be noted that not only has the Labour Left in *practice* been persistently weak, it has also been bedevilled by all the standard problems of reformism.<sup>9</sup>

The fact that the Labour Left has generally been allied, uneasily and always as the weaker partner, with the Centre and the Right of the party, has greatly exacerbated the problem. This general pattern was certainly confirmed by the political situation in which the Labour Left found itself in the **1958** to **1965** period. By the time of the birth of CND, Aneurin Bevan, the acknowledged leader of the Labour Left, had come out unequivocally against unilateralism and, in the hope of attaining office as a future Labour Foreign Secretary, had reached an 'accommodation' with Gaitskell and the parliamentary leadership. The Left was thus in a very weak position inside the PLP at the time of CND's rise to prominence. Mikardo has summed up the Labour Left view succinctly. 'There wasn't really much hope once Nye had gone.'<sup>10</sup>

In the specific context of the **1958** to **1965** period, then, the Labour Left's ability to achieve power, and bring about the unilateralist objectives of the movement, was severely limited. And yet there can be no doubt

that there were socialist dimensions to the movement's demands. There is a strong case<sup>1</sup> for arguing that there have been fundamental connections between the dominant financial and international interests of British capitalism, with its insistence upon sterling as an international currency, and the preoccupation of the governing class, post-1945, with the preservation of Britain's role as an international power, symbolised above all by the independent nuclear deterrent. To achieve unilateral nuclear disarmament, especially in the 1958 to 1965 period, would thus have required a fundamental shift in *economic*, as well as political, position. However, it could be argued that such changes were not necessarily *socialist* in character. A Labour Left government, for example, giving priority to rebuilding the manufacturing base of the British economy and using protectionist measures to ensure that investment was channelled into the domestic economy, could combine unilateralism within an overall programme of a reformed *industrial* capitalism.

Such arguments, however, omit the more fundamental political objectives of the peace movement. For unilateralism to have any real meaning it had to be linked, as CND at leadership level realised,<sup>12</sup> to a commitment to withdrawal from NATO, and to the closure of American bases. The separation of Britain from the Western alliance entails a policy of positive neutralism. Such a change in foreign and defence policy would be unprecedented in twentieth-century British history. However, this again cannot be viewed wholly in policy or ideological terms. Positive neutralism entails not only the development of a distinct and innovative ideological position but also the placing of the whole unilateralist initiative in a progressive *socialist* context. If unilateralism is bound up with the move away from capitalism towards not a communist, totalitarian system, but a distinctive *neutralist* position, then this has implications both for the overall social structure and for the network of international political and economic relationships. The nature of these implications is discussed below in the context of the New Left. Here, it need be noted only that although there is no *necessary* connection between positive neutralism and socialism, the strong implication of the positive neutralist position is the espousal of an ideology which affirms a belief in humanistic socialism. Thus, at this level too, unilateralism has ultimately socialist as well as radical dimensions.

Finally, in a very different sense, unilateralism entails a radical change in attitude, a demand for a change in basic cultural structure. Unilateralism is a symbol, for the whole movement, of deeply felt revulsion against the perceived immorality and insanity of nuclear weapons. It is thus a *rejection, a priori*, of some of the most central of the cultural assumptions and determinants of modern capitalist society—a rejection of violence as a legitimate force in the nuclear age, and of the cluster of concepts ('deterrence', 'defence', 'civil defence' *et al.*) which constitute the military and

political establishment orthodoxy.

Given the weaknesses of the Labour Left, as discussed above, and the essentially 'integrated' nature of the Labour Left's ideology and political programme, it is thus unlikely that such major and radical changes in defence and foreign policy could have been instigated—at least in the **1958 to 1965** period—from within a Labour Party led from the Left. And yet, as has been argued, some means of achieving such radical and essentially socialist changes was necessary if the peace movement's objectives were to be attained.

It is thus appropriate at this stage to consider whether there were other, more radical, perspectives in the movement better able than the Labour Left to articulate the political demands and achieve the stated objectives of the movement. The central perspectives to be considered here must be those of the direct actionists and the New Left,<sup>13</sup> both of which, in their different ways, operated on the central assumption that the movement was concerned not with a single issue but with a much wider, more fundamental, and far reaching political struggle.

#### *The direct action strategy*

Those within the movement who supported a direct action strategy were in many ways sharply divergent from the orthodox socialist Left—whether mainstream social democratic or **Marxian** socialist. For the direct actionists the movement for peace was not a part of the wider struggle to achieve a socialist society (still less was it seen as involved with the 'parochial' struggles within the Labour Party). On the contrary, the real struggle was located, so it was argued, within the parameters of the 'warfare state' itself. It was this 'warfare state' and the ideology of violence which underpinned it, which had produced the horrific insanity of nuclear weapons. It was against the **military/industrial complex**, which was held to dominate the 'warfare state', that the direct actionists directed their protests. Moreover, the orthodox institutions of parliamentary democracy were regarded with suspicion, as an integrated and therefore tainted part of that **system**—at best, of marginal relevance, and at worst, a snare and delusion which could emasculate the movement. The real struggle, for the direct actionists, lay in the mobilisation of mass, extra-parliamentary, non-violent direct action to immobilise and ultimately to overthrow, the 'warfare state'.

The direct actionists within the movement enjoyed considerable support, articulated at first through the Direct Action Committee from its formation in **1957**, and later through the Committee of **100** which was created in late **1960**, and into which the DAC merged in **1961**. There was a general cynicism and lack of interest in the potential of the Labour Party as an agency for the sort of changes that were desired.<sup>14</sup> Many of the activists who supported the DAC and the Committee of **100** voted Labour, but there was no real involvement or conviction. Moreover, the repeated

attempts at mounting alternative electoral outlets—'Voters' Veto', INDEC<sup>15</sup>—testified to the continuing desire to create an alternative formation to the Labour Party, and probably to parliamentary politics per se.

The long term commitments of the direct actionists—centrally, to the wholesale transformation, through non-violent revolution, of the 'warfare state'—were broadly adhered to by all those on the direct action wing of the movement. However, the way in which these generalised objectives were brought together varied considerably in the Committee of 100, whilst the more homogeneous DAC always lacked a mass base. Neither organisation had a clear and coherent programme of objectives over and above the central demands of unilateralism and the rest of the CND official policy package.

The DAC, to be sure, had a highly ambitious policy programme which included unilateralism for the West as a whole. But there was no attempt to come to terms with the real nature of the power structure, national or international, or the real possibilities for political change. Indeed, the policy of the DAC was unrealistic at a number of levels. First, it was politically unrealistic, although morally and ideologically consistent with pacifist principles, to call for immediate unilateral nuclear disarmament by both the USA and the USSR. Second, it was strategically unrealistic because its very ambitious policy proposals were wholly out of proportion to its minuscule size and strength. Third, it was ideologically unrealistic because it failed to appreciate the importance of linking-in to the organised working-class movement at both the direct political level, and the more generalised cultural and ideological levels. It made no serious attempt to link its own politics into the more substantial constituencies of radical and socialist opinion that did exist in Britain. Finally, it was psychologically unrealistic in advocating wholesale and immediate changes in the views of the mass of the ordinary people towards war, violence and conflict, with few, if any, intermediate steps.

The DAC's programme was in fact, and despite its genuine radicalism, couched in the traditions of the somewhat esoteric British pacifist movement, whose underlying conceptions had been individualist, almost salvationist, and much opposed to collectivist socialism. The DAC 'purists' did try to change the predominantly individualist ethos of this pacifist tradition, and certainly its Gandhian-influenced, socially oriented pacifism **was** very different. But it produced no central conceptions, in either theoretical or organisational terms, to replace the old individualist creed of pacifism. There was no concerted attempt to bring together the new Gandhian-oriented thinking to create the ideology and the politics of the non-violent society. As Hugh Brock and April Carter, in their different ways the two most important 'Gandhian influences' on the direct action movement, have both testified,<sup>16</sup> no coherent or substantial 'politics of

non-violence' was ever evolved by the DAC.

The strategic and ideological perspective of the insurrectionary militants in the Committee of 100 (of whom Ralph Schoenman was the most prominent) was potentially violent, and arguably more unrealistic. However rosy the prospects for the Committee of 100 may have seemed in late 1961 following the mass civil disobedience demonstrations in London and at Holy Loch, there was little, if any, possibility of the insurrectionary scenario envisaged by Schoenman actually developing. It is of course easy to make such judgments with the knowledge of the subsequent historical events. Yet, as Michael Randle and numerous other activists of the time have recalled,<sup>17</sup> the Committee was never in a position to act as the catalyst for a *levée en masse*: it represented a small minority of the population, and, more importantly, had little or no industrial or political power.

Thus, despite its major impact in 1961, the insurrectionary aspirations were never a major threat to the state, whose forces were able to cope with the civil disobedience demonstrations with relative ease. After the September 1961 demonstrations, the peak of the Committee's achievements, the state brought into play its legal and coercive power, and effectively crushed the militant wing of the movement.<sup>18</sup> It seems reasonable to concur with the conclusion of George Clark, who has subsequently argued that this was not really serious politics at any level, but represented rather political 'adventurism'.<sup>19</sup>

The strategy of the libertarian socialists in the Committee—the community-oriented decentralists—was in most cases more realistic. Whilst they placed great emphasis on 'movement power', and the need for control to be firmly in the hands of the movement, they had for the most part no illusions about the enormous problems facing the movement in both its immediate and its long-term objectives. Rejecting both the orthodox anarchist and the orthodox socialist conceptions, assumptions and models, most activists of this tendency concentrated their attention on the immediate task of building a bigger and more radically oriented peace movement. From this involvement in radical peace politics would emerge, they hoped, a more politically conscious and aware movement. Their more long-term objectives and strategies were, however, vague and undefined. Most, in the end, opted for variants of George Clark's community politics—populist, decentralised and radical, with an individualist and 'small group', rather than collectivist, orientation.

Overall, this direct action perspective commanded considerable support in its various guises, within the movement, as has been noted. It is the contention here, however, that such a perspective contained insuperable problems. These were fundamentally twofold: the direct actionists had no coherent and realistic strategy for attaining their objectives (either short- or long-term); equally important, and intimately linked to this, they had

no worked-through analysis within which to interpret their involvement in the movement and their more long-term objectives.

There was thus little if any prospect of the direct actionists bringing about either the short-term policy objectives they were aiming for, or the long-term radicalisation which was implicit in their actions. Such a key figure as Michael Randle, chairman of the DAC and secretary of the Committee of 100, has confirmed this, to all intents and purposes. Looking back twenty years to the direct action campaign of the Committee of 100 in 1961, he recalled that when at its height the civil disobedience movement was not within sight of creating a 'revolutionary situation': to achieve this would have required millions rather than thousands of active supporters. The most that could be hoped for, even at this high point in 1961, was to involve direct actionists in ways 'which directly affected the government's ability to carry out the programme of preparation for nuclear war. . .<sup>20</sup> To claim even that for the direct actionists proved, in the long term, too optimistic. As far as the more ambitious long-term objectives were concerned, these were always unrealistic because of both the essentially weak political position of the DAC and the Committee of 100, and the marginality and incoherence of the direct action position. As noted above, this 'strategic' weakness was linked to political and analytical deficiencies at the very core of the direct actionists' framework. How was the politics of the non-violent society to be defined, let alone achieved? What were the relationships between the direct action perspective and other, arguably wider, frameworks of belief, such as anarchism, libertarian socialism, liberal democracy, etc? These and other central questions remained unanswered: the direct actionists had no coherently articulated overall political framework.

Thus, despite their dramatic early successes the DAC and the Committee of 100 did not offer the prospect of advance towards a structural transformation of society, which would have provided the context for the realisation of unilateralist and wider peace movement objectives. It thus remains, in this section of the analysis, to examine the claims of the New Left to represent some potential agency for both the realisation of unilateralist aims, and a linked but wider socialist restructuring.

### ***The New Left strategy\****

Neither the Labour Left nor the direct action perspectives therefore offered the movement a viable strategy for advance. Both contained elements which were essential if the movement was to succeed. But both were also characterised by inherent and fundamental flaws which

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\*The connections between the New Left and the peace movement have been analysed earlier by Nigel Young in *An Infantile Disorder? The Crisis and Decline of the New Left*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977) although the conclusions drawn here are somewhat different.

rendered them ultimately inadequate, as has been argued.

It is the contention here that the New Left politics, developing out of the new formations and ideological stances first formulated in the late 1950s, offered in 1958 to 1965, and continues to offer in the 1980s, at least the potential for the creation of a viable political strategy for advance for the peace movement. This is a large and perhaps controversial claim. It rests principally upon two interrelated arguments: first, that the New Left, because of its ideological genesis and profile, had the ability to play the crucial catalytic role, to bring together the power of the labour movement and the centrally important extra-parliamentary politics of the direct actionists; and, second, that the New Left provided a genuine link with the minority radical tradition in British politics, which has played such an important role in the development of left-wing movements in Britain since the seventeenth century.

To elaborate these arguments it is necessary briefly to discuss the specific politics of the New Left in the 1958 to 1965 period. We will then be in a position to analyse why, despite these advantages, the New Left failed to achieve success, either for itself or for the peace movement.

At the outset it is important to establish that the core of the New Left referred to here is those groups of socialists, and other radical progressives, who were gathered initially around the two journals 'New Reasoner' and 'Universities and Left Review'.

The catalysts which brought into existence these two groups were the dramatic events of 1956: the invasion of Suez and the suppression of the Hungarian uprising. The resultant upsurge of both feeling and intellect against the existing world order, communist East as much as capitalist West, was of profound importance, and had moral and humanistic, as well as political, bases. The predominantly youthful supporters of the New Left thus had in common their broadly humanistic socialist perspective and their commitment to the creation of a new ideological and political formation, distinct from existing orthodoxies. There were several important differences of orientation within the New Left, but on this fundamental approach all were agreed.

It is important to note here, too, that the New Left was an essentially eclectic and open-ended movement. Although predominantly socialist in outlook, there is no doubt that the New Left had strong libertarian sympathies, not in the sense of a formal commitment to anarchism in any form, but rather in the high priority it gave to the preservation and extension of freedom—both at the individual and the societal levels. Moreover, there was, in both theory and practice, a measure of cooperation and integration between the direct actionists and the New Left. (This was particularly the case in the early days of the movement when there was considerable New Left involvement in the 'first' Aldermaston March. Such cooperation was far less marked post 1960, when the New Left

tended to move more towards an orthodox socialist and strategic critique –*vide* Stuart Hall's 'Steps Towards Peace'—and the Committee of 100 became increasingly anarchistic in orientation.) There was a shared, and unambiguous, commitment to the **unilateralist** campaign. And there was also a common sympathy with (a broadly defined) libertarian politics. Numerous prominent individual activists spanned the two movements: George Clark and Alan **Lovell** for example. Moreover, there were links between the DAC and both the syndicalist-oriented tradition within the extra-parliamentary Left, and the ILP Left (e.g. Allen Skinner and Hugh Brock).

There were thus interconnections at a number of levels between the New Left, the direct actionists and, to an extent, the extra-parliamentary wings of the labour movement. And yet it must be emphasised that there were fundamental ideological and political differences between the New Left and the direct actionists. There was a rejection, by the direct actionists, of one of the basic tenets of Marxist socialism, that politics was at base a process of struggle between social classes whose economic and political interests were inherently different under capitalism. They thus rejected the idea that *conflict* was an inherent part of the political process: indeed, the whole strategy was geared to attaining a *consensus*, ultimately upon a moral basis, on the nuclear issue. The central, defining characteristic of the society for which the DAC was striving would be its non-violence. To be sure, the society would be *socialist* in the sense that an egalitarian and decentralised social structure was envisaged, and a greater equality of both wealth and power, within a context where the coercive power of the state was severely reduced if not abolished, was assumed. But the reference point for the direct actionists of the DAC remained the individual, not the class: and, for the more anarchistic Committee of 100 post **196112**, the analysis was couched in more conventionally anarchistic categories in which the coercive 'warfare state' was seen as the major adversary. Despite this rhetoric, the direct actionists' fundamental belief was in the *moral* conversion of as many individuals as possible to the cause of nuclear disarmament (and ultimately the wider cause of non-violent politics). Their 'socialism' was thus almost entirely at the level of an emotive commitment to socialist values, and it had little if any comprehension of socialist analysis, of either Marxist or other varieties.

It would thus be entirely misleading to think of the direct actionists and the New Left as being an integrated entity. Similarly, there were fundamental differences between the New Left and the orthodox labour movement. Not only was a substantial section of the New Left from an explicitly Marxist background (as is discussed below), the whole thrust of the New Left was towards the development of an *extra-parliamentary* politics.

What then were the advantages of the New Left strategy and perspective

for the peace movement?

The first, and in some ways the most important, advantage of the New Left lay in its absolute and genuine commitment to the cause of unilateralism, and the movement-style that accompanied it, combined with a coherent and cohesive ideological perspective. This perspective, whilst giving central priority to the peace issue, did not treat it in isolation, and made a realistic assessment of its relationship to other relevant political questions. Thus, unlike the Labour Left which tended to subordinate the unilateralist issue to the wider struggle to achieve a left-wing Labour Party leadership, and viewed the whole movement in terms of the wider struggle within the party, the whole thrust of the New Left was connected intimately with the achievement of the nuclear disarmament movement's objectives.

This is a key point, and thus worth substantiating in more detail. For the New Left, the unilateralist case was in part, but only in part, based upon the moral rejection of nuclear weapons which characterised the overwhelming majority of the movement. This was a genuinely moral commitment, emanating from a perception of the deep immorality of both Eastern and Western systems as exemplified by the events of **1956**. The threat of the use of genocidal weapons was held to be the ultimate immorality, and the New Left joined with others in the movement in rejecting this, unequivocally, on moral grounds. However, there was also, for the New Left, a critical political dimension to the movement. If unilateralism were a part of the overall process of the rejection of the values and the structures that underpinned both capitalism and communism, then it must be seen as a part, too, of the wider political attempt to formulate a new politics based upon humanistic, democratic socialist precepts. Such a politics would necessarily evolve its own democratic socialist structures and procedures, but, on the international level, it would crucially involve the adoption of a positive neutralist perspective. To achieve the objectives of international peace, and a reduction of the power of the inherently unacceptable ideological and political systems of capitalism and communism, the formation of an international neutralist movement was essential. Thus, as far as Britain was concerned in the **1958** to **1965** period, the New Left was concerned to show the necessary connections between unilateralism, withdrawal from NATO, the espousal of a foreign policy based upon positive neutralism, and the more general objective of moving towards a democratic socialist society.

In this sense, therefore, the New Left's commitment to unilateralism was both specific and politically coherent. Unlike most of the other radical groupings discussed, it had a coherent ideological stance which did not rely exclusively on emotive moralism. However, equally important was the New Left's commitment to the movement's extra-parliamentary, quasi-libertarian ethos. All the 'orthodox Left' groupings were essentially

ill at ease with the mode of extra-parliamentary politics which characterised the movement (i.e. the Labour Left, the Communist Party, and the various Trotskyist groups).

However, the whole thrust of the New Left was towards a new politics centred on the direct participation of ordinary people in the decision-making process. There was a contrast here between the exclusive concentration of the Trotskyists on the (traditionally defined) 'working class', and the New Left's more generalised appeal to 'ordinary people'. Whilst this had certain disadvantages, primarily in relation to the wider movement's lack of appreciation of the political centrality of the working class and the organised labour movement, the New Left's more eclectic appeal had the potential to bring together both working-class, labour-movement activists and the predominantly middle-class supporters of the disarmament movement. This again was indicative of the catalytic role which the New Left had the potential to play.

It was only through this process of involving ordinary people in decision-making structures, it was argued, that the dangers of an overly abstract and bureaucratic socialism could be avoided, and a genuinely humanistic, responsive, and democratic structure be built. In this sense, therefore, there was, as has been noted earlier, much in common in terms of fundamental approach between the New Left and the direct actionists.

The commitment to extra-parliamentary politics led to the second major advantage possessed by the New Left. Potentially, the New Left had a direct ideological link with the radical tradition in British politics which, it has been argued by many historians and analysts,<sup>22</sup> has been a persistent if not continuous element in British society since at least the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>23</sup> This tradition has been predominantly humanistic, libertarian and socialist in character. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it has acted as a major focus of protest, sometimes even rebellion, against the established order. This is not to deny the importance of other formations and traditions, both within the more orthodox social democratic mainstream and within the revolutionary Left, but it is to claim that at particular and critical periods there has been a mobilisation of this popular, political type which has been of central importance. From the major struggles of the trade-union and wider labour movement in the nineteenth century to the issue-based movements of the later twentieth century, this extra-parliamentary, humanistic tradition has formed an important part of the radical strata in British society. In two important ways this perspective has acted too as a link to other central aspects of radical opinion. It has brought together radical intellectual opinion with sections of the organised labour movement, and has acted as an effective counterforce to the predominant labourism and parliamentarism. Equally important, it has linked in issue-based movements to the wider radical and socialist strata of opinion, in

terms of both the labour movement and the more variegated extra-parliamentary, libertarian perspectives.

Alone of the political sections of the movement, therefore, the New Left had the ideological stance and the political position which might, in more favourable circumstances, have enabled some real advances to be made. It was not only that the *policies* that the New Left stood for combined the inherent connection between peace and socialist objectives (e.g. withdrawal from NATO, positive neutralism, etc.) it was also that its overall perspective embodied both peace and socialist conceptions (e.g. emphasis upon people making their own history, and upon the struggle for freedom being inherently linked to the struggle for socialism, etc.).

The New Left was also a rich repository of socialist creativity and intellectual ability. This intellectual power provided the bases for the New Left's creative political ideology: it enabled the New Left to produce qualitatively better—more informed, knowledgeable, and sophisticated—analyses and prescriptions than any other grouping in the movement.

Yet the New Left was fatally flawed in a number of ways. Its very intellectualism was one of the reasons for its failure. Despite all its advantages it never managed to break out of its academic, intellectually elitist constituency. Many people in the movement simply did not understand the New Left's concepts, language, and overall political position. To an extent this was inevitable, given both the strong academic, university background of the New Left's most prominent members, and the relatively low level of intellectual and political awareness in the movement as a whole in the 1958 to 1965 period. It was also the case, however, that the New Left failed to make any significant effort to extend its politics beyond its immediate student/intellectual constituency. In particular, it made very little contact with two key groups, with both of whom, it was argued above, it had considerable common ground. These groups—the direct actionists, and the organised industrial and political labour movement—probably could not have been brought together by any force other than the New Left, for both ideological and organisational reasons. And without their coming together, around both programme commitments and an extra-parliamentary strategy, the movement had little chance of advance.

The New Left's failure to attract significant support in the organised labour movement, however, was not due entirely to its failure to communicate politically. It was the result, too, of a fundamental ideological and political flaw. It was always unable to reach a clear position on its attitude to labourism and parliamentarism. This was not merely a tactical or strategic ambivalence, but was the result of a deep-seated uncertainty about revolutionism or reformism, socialist mobilisation on an extra-parliamentary basis or Left social democracy via the ballot box and the existing institutions. Because it was unable to analyse and resolve satis-

factorily these problems, the New Left got the worst of both worlds: it attracted neither the parliamentary Labour Left (which was anyway predominantly antipathetic to the New Left because of its seeming abstraction and intellectualism) nor the (potentially) extra-parliamentary Left in the industrial labour movement and the Constituency Labour Parties. And, of course, the wider socio-economic context of the period was not conducive to the development of a powerful New Left formation. Economic stability—even modest growth—had become the norm by the late 1950s. Capitalism appeared to have solved its inherent problems of instability, and 'boom and slump'. Full employment and relative industrial harmony prevailed. In this climate there was little potential for a radical middle-class movement to grow; and there was certainly a seemingly unbridgeable gulf between the predominantly middle-class New Left and the almost wholly working-class, industrial labour movement.

There was thus little likelihood of the New Left achieving its objectives, or even of its dominating the politics of the peace movement. However, the politics which it represented has subsequently been seen as a far more viable and powerful force. And, as was argued earlier, the politics of the New Left—rather than of the direct actionists or of the orthodox labourists—has formed the basis of the new, and radical, politics which has subsequently developed. In what has this politics consisted, and, more significantly, how can this claim for its importance be justified?

There are several general developments, not related specifically to the politics of the peace movement, which are of contextual importance. First and foremost has been the partial disintegration of the seemingly stable and secure Western economic system. The onset of prolonged crisis and recession in the 1970s, with its concomitant social problems (notably unemployment), has destroyed the political, as well as the economic, self-confidence that hitherto characterised post-war Europe. Within this overall era of crisis, Britain's long-term economic decline has of course been exacerbated, her world role has sharply diminished, and her dependence (economic, military and political) upon both the USA and her Western European allies has increased. Thus, not only has the City's dependence upon the international role of sterling declined, the whole notion of Britain as a 'world power' has all but disappeared. Despite the almost obsessive commitment of the Thatcher government to ever greater stocks of nuclear weapons (both British and American) it remains the case that there is considerable scepticism amongst important sections of the governing class over the viability of the independent deterrent. Prominent military men, for example, from Lord Mountbatten to Lord Carver, have expressed disquiet over British nuclear weapons. Potentially much more significant, however, is the effect of the crisis upon the stability of the socio-economic basis of British society. The material base of the 1950s

and 1960s, within which the integration of the working class has been rooted, has been significantly eroded. To date, this has resulted not in radicalisation of the traditional working class, but predominantly in a political demoralisation and disorientation. However, if the crisis persists it would seem likely that the traditional 'quietism' of the bulk of the working class—and equally important, the traditional 'moderation' and adherence to social democratic ideology of the labour movement leadership—may give way to some more radical orientation. Thus the polarisation of British politics, which has already begun in the early 1980s, is very likely to proceed apace as the decade advances. It is not clear, of course, which political *direction* will be taken by the working class in the new context of the recession. But it does seem evident that the old stability of the 1950s and 1960s has disappeared.

A second major development which bears upon the argument has been the rapid growth of the 'middle class' within British society in the period since the 1950s. Whilst major sectors of the class are of course opposed to radical political ideas and remain quite separate from the labour movement, it is also true that there has been a considerable expansion in the number of radical, tertiary educated, professional and intellectual employees, whose public-sector occupations and general background of 'critical thinking', have resulted in an ideological stance opposed to the market individualism of competitive capitalism.<sup>24</sup> Such a disaffected, radical middle-class fraction has of course existed throughout the twentieth century. It has been from within this constituency that most of the impetus for direct action movements in the past has stemmed. The crucial development in the 1970s, however, has been the *expansion* of this social group, as a result, primarily, of the expansion of higher education and public sector employment (and the subsequent rise in unemployment, because of the fiscal crisis of the state as the recession has deepened). There have been three major groupings involved in this radical middle-class growth: trade-union activists in the white-collar unions (white-collar union membership has grown from 1.9m in 1948, to 2.68m in 1964, and 4.26m in 1974);<sup>25</sup> new artisans ('a set of often college trained young people denied access to bureaucratic occupations because of the recession, who have turned instead. . . to petty commodity production—in wood, textiles, paint and so on—')<sup>26</sup> and welfare bureaucrats (those working in schools, hospitals, welfare agencies, etc., who, as Cotgrove and Duff have observed, have rejected, at least to an extent, the ideology and values of industrial capitalism and opted instead for 'careers outside the market place').<sup>27</sup>

What was once a 'marginal constituency' for the Left has thus become a major sub-section of the class structure of contemporary Britain. In this sense, too, therefore, the context for a New Left politics is considerably more favourable in the 1970s and 1980s than was the case in the 1958

to 1965 period. The strength of this radical middle-class Left has manifested itself in numerous ways: most notably through the growth of ecological/environmentalist politics,<sup>28</sup> and the women's movement.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, the Labour Left has itself undergone profound change since the 1960s—in part cause and in part effect of the developments already discussed. This change cannot be measured merely in terms of the adoption of more socialist policies and a more democratic organisational structure, important though these have been; still less can this change be identified with the rise to prominence of a particular individual, Tony Benn, as the media would have us believe. Rather, the change represents a qualitative move away from the exclusively parliamentarist preoccupations of orthodox labourism and has emphasised far more the concept of the wider, partially extra-parliamentary, labour movement, giving more centrality to issue-based campaigns and the need for a broad socialist alliance. All this has not signified, of course, the collapse of orthodox, parliamentarist labourism. But it has meant a real advance within the Labour Left, for the politics espoused by the New Left and its successors. Thus the specific commitments of the Labour Left, particularly on the nuclear and NATO issues, have been interpreted, at least to an extent, within the context of a New Left, extra-parliamentary and positive neutralist politics. The result of these processes has been to remove many of the barriers and impasses which existed in the 1958 to 1965 period, and strengthen the potential for creating a genuine alliance between the extra-parliamentary issue-based movements and the Labour Left.

There has thus been a resurgence of an extra-parliamentary, alternative Left culture in the 1970s and 1980s, which has been combined with a structural strengthening of the basis of the radical middle-class Left. Britain still has, of course, a profoundly conservative political culture, and a very securely based capitalist socio-economic system. Yet challenges to this structure and its ideology can and must be made. The original nuclear disarmament movement of 1958 to 1965 was a major attempt to challenge an important aspect of this structure. Its politics was deficient, however, as has been argued. Neither the 'labourists' nor the direct actionists could succeed alone: and the catalytic force which might have been provided by the New Left did not materialise. Subsequent developments have made far more favourable the prospects for a New Left politics, centred on 'Third Way' concepts of humanistic socialism. The experience of extra-parliamentary politics in the 1970s and 1980s, combined with the widespread disillusionment with parliamentarist Labour politics, has created a new and far more favourable context for the building of a viable extra-parliamentary, radical movement. Within this process the peace movement has a crucial role to play: and, equally important, without the creation of such a broader movement the objectives of the peace movement will remain unfulfilled. 'To build peace', as Raymond Williams

has written in the 1980s, 'now more than ever, it is necessary to build more than peace. To refuse nuclear weapons, we have to refuse much more than nuclear weapons. Unless the refusals can be connected with such building, unless protest can be connected with and surpassed by significant practical construction, our strength will remain insufficient.'<sup>30</sup> It is in this knowledge of the necessary link between the struggle for peace and the struggle for humanistic socialist change that the legacy of the 1958 to 1965 nuclear disarmament movement finds its central articulation.

### NOTES

1. See the survey which forms Part II of Richard Taylor and Colin Pritchard, *The Protest Makers, The British Nuclear Disarmament Movement of 1958-1965, Twenty Years on*, (Pergamon Press, 1980). Approximately one-third of the sample in this survey rejected any political dimension of the movement's activities.
2. It is not necessary here to enter into the complex debate over the definition of terms such as 'ruling elite', 'ruling class', etc. The term 'governing class' is used here to denote that cluster of individuals with especial influence over national political decision-making. This comprises chiefly senior government ministers, other leading political figures, senior civil servants and the representatives of the large corporate institutions within particular social, economic, military and industrial spheres. For further discussions of this area see Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society*, (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969) eds., John Urry and John Wakeford, *Power in Britain*, (Heinemann, 1973).
3. Ian Mikardo, in conversation with Richard Taylor, April 1978.
4. Still less was such trade-union support indicative of trade-union involvement in CND as an organisation. With some notable exceptions—John Horner of the Fire Brigades Union, for example—trade-union leaders remained purposely aloof from CND *per se*.
5. '... many of us were unaware that it (i.e. the campaign within the Labour Party in 1960) was happening. We were absolutely astonished by the 1960 Labour Conference vote.' Jacquetta Hawkes, in conversation with Richard Taylor, January 1978.
6. Significant numbers of disarmament movement supporters, who had joined the Labour Party primarily on the nuclear issue in the late 1950s and early 1960s, resigned their membership in the mid- to late-1960s. This is confirmed by the survey in Taylor and Pritchard, *op. cit.* Peggy Duff, CND's secretary and one of the most long-standing and committed Labour Party socialists in CND's leadership, resigned from the party in 1967.
7. There was much less ambivalence in relation to the Labour Party amongst the direct actionists of the DAC and the Committee of 100, most of whom, although they may have voted Labour and even in some cases been party members, had little faith in the Labour Party as the agency for achieving the movement's objectives.
8. See, for example: Ralph Miliband, *Parliamentary Socialism*, second edition, (Merlin Press, 1973); David Coates, *The Labour Party and the Struggle for Socialism*, (Cambridge University Press, 1974); David Coates, *Labour in Power? A Study of the Labour Government 1974-1979*, (Longmans, 1980); Tom Nairn, 'The Nature of the Labour Party', in eds. P. Anderson and R. Blackburn, *Towards Socialism*, (Fontana and New Left Books, 1966); David Howell, *British*

*Social Democracy*, (Croom Helm, 1976); eds. Cook and Taylor, *The Labour Party; an introduction to its history structure and politics*, (Longmans, 1980).

9. The problems of reformism, and the alternative socialist strategies available, are discussed in some detail in eds., David Coates and Gordon Johnston, *A Socialist Primer* Vol. 2, (Martin Robertson, 1983).
10. Mikardo, *loc. cit.*
11. This argument is pursued in depth in Stephen Blank, 'Britain: the Politics of foreign economic policy, the domestic economy, and the problem of pluralistic stagnation', *International Organization*, Vol. 31, No. 4, Autumn 1977.
12. CND adopted withdrawal from NATO as official policy in 1960. Analyses of defence matters have confirmed that it was the commitment to withdraw from the Western alliance that was the really radical policy: **unilateralism per se** was a relatively minor matter. See, for example, A.J.R. Groom, *British Thinking About Nuclear Weapons*, (Frances Pinter, 1974).
13. The Marxist/Leninist/Trotskyist formations in Britain had little influence within the movement from 1958 to 1965. The Communist Party was the only significant such organisation at the time, and its politics was in tension with that of the movement in two respects. First, it was always suspicious of the movement's neutralist and therefore anti-Soviet tendencies, and it disagreed with the emphasis that was put upon unilateralism *per se* (indeed, the CP withheld full support from CND until 1959/60 on these grounds). Second, the CP neither liked nor really understood the extra-parliamentary, libertarian ethos of the movement as a whole (and of the direct actionists in particular). The CP was thus intent upon re-directing CND *et al.* towards a more conventional labour-movement approach. CP influence in CND remained marginal until the mid 1960s, by which time the movement had ceased, temporarily, to be a major political force.

The Trotskyist groups were tiny and of marginal importance, although the Socialist Labour League (now the WRP) had some contact with the DAC over industrial direct action, and the International Socialists (now the SWP) developed important theoretical analysis of the links between capitalist economic structure and the development of nuclear weapons.

The cumulative total impact of the orthodox Marxist Left on the movement was thus minimal. In conformity with the general history of the Marxist revolutionary Left in Britain since the founding of the Communist Party in 1920, these groupings found themselves unable to mobilise mass support from within the movement, and were equally ineffective in creating any widespread **Marxian** socialist consciousness. For further analysis of the revolutionary Left in Britain, see Richard Taylor, 'To the Left of Labour: Revolutionary Politics in England, 1920-1980', in eds., Roger Fieldhouse and Richard Taylor, *Revolutionary England 1380s to the 1980s*, forthcoming.

14. However, there was considerable enthusiasm for the potential of industrial working-class action, via the labour movement, on quasi-syndicalist lines. But only in the case of Pat Arrowsmith's series of industrial campaigns was this translated into political *action*. And, however committed and innovative this campaign may have been, its net results in real terms were minimal.
15. 'Voters' Veto' was a campaign to persuade voters to withhold their votes from non-unilateralist candidates at the South-West Norfolk by-election in 1959. Both the CND leadership and those in the Labour Party (especially the PLP), who supported CND, were very opposed to this campaign, and it marked the end of any real cooperation between the DAC and the Labour Party.

The Independent Nuclear Disarmament Election Committee (INDEC) was an attempt by CND radicals (principally New Left activists, with the support

initially of Peggy Duff) to mount an independent electoral presence to challenge the Labour Party's reversal, in 1961, of the commitment to unilateralism made at the 1960 Party Conference. INDEC, which was denounced vigorously by Labour Party supporters of CND (Michael Foot referred to the proposal as 'poison'), never received the official backing of CND and by the time it was eventually established (1962) the moment for action had passed.

16. Hugh Brock and April Carter, in conversation with Richard Taylor, March and January 1978, respectively.
17. Michael Randle, George Clark and Alan Lovell, in conversation with Richard Taylor, May, January and September 1978, respectively. It is important to note here, however, that neither these activists, nor others, such as Brock and Carter, in the direct action tradition, subscribe to the analysis presented here, and the conclusions drawn.
18. Principally through the arrest of the Committee of 100's leaders prior to the demonstrations in December at Wethersfield air base and elsewhere, and their subsequent trial and imprisonment under the Official Secrets Act.
19. George Clark, in conversation with Richard Taylor, January 1978.
20. Randle, *loc. cit.*
21. The first demonstrations at Aldermaston had been organised, on a very small scale, in April 1952 by Hugh Brock and others. However, the first Aldermaston March, *from* London *to* Aldermaston, was organised by the DAC at Easter 1958.
22. Most notably, E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, (Penguin, 1963). But see also the works of numerous other historians, Eric Hobsbawm, for example.
23. See eds., Fieldhouse and Taylor, *op. cit.*
24. For further discussion, see David Coates, *An Introduction to the Economic and Social Context of British Politics*, forthcoming.
25. Coates, *op. cit.*
26. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
27. Steven Cotgrove and Andrew Duff, 'Environmentalism, Middle Class Radicalism and Politics', *Sociological Review*, Vol. 28(2), 1980.
28. See Cotgrove and Duff, *op. cit.*
29. See Sarah Perrigo, in eds., Coates and Johnston, *A Socialist Primer*, Vol. 2, (Martin Robertson, 1983); and Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal and Hilary Wainwright, *Beyond the Fragments*, (Merlin Press, 1979).
30. Raymond Williams, 'The Politics of Nuclear Disarmament', *New Left Review*, No. 124, 1981. Reprinted in Edward Thompson et al., *Exterminism and Cold War*, (Verso and New Left Books, 1982), pp. 65-85.