

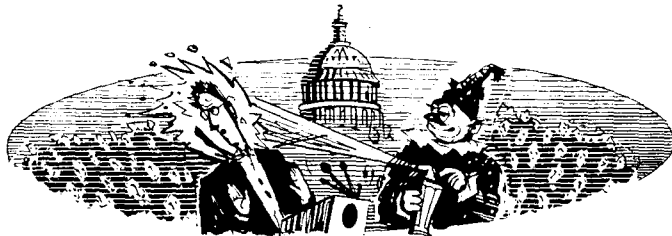
tenacy middle-class professionals . . . when asked to devise ways of improving the condition of lower-class groups would come up with schemes of which the first effect would be

to improve the condition of middle-class professionals and the second effect might or might not be that of improving the condition of the poor."

The humbug of last month has been going on for years. It has led to enormous deficits and dreadful inflation. Inflation gnaws at everyone's income, but it is most ruinous to

those who have least. If gypsy moths and the other blights upon our budgetary process really want to help the poor they will slay inflation. They will live by last summer's ceilings. □

C A P I T O L I D E A S



ARCHAIC NOTIONS

by Tom Bethell

I recently received a letter from my left-wing, *Guardian*-reading sister in England, and enclosed with it was a newspaper article by a certain Professor E.P. Thompson, clipped from said *Guardian*.

"I suspect it will be anathema to your pro-Reaganist views but I ask you to give it more than a casual glance over," my sister wrote. "You will probably say the positive ideas it contains are unattainable dreams but I say that peace through Reagan's insane arms escalation is even more a hopeless cause because it is not really a cause at all.

"I have recently been banging on doors in Whitworth [Lancashire] collecting signatures for the World Disarmament Campaign (yes, even Whitworth has a flourishing peace group). The thing that has stunned me most has been to find that there is widespread fear—not of the Russians walking in but of American aggression. This comes not just from the younger people but from the old people who are trusting enough to leave their front doors ajar so that I knock and walk right into their front rooms. They talk about war and wars, particularly the First World War, and American aggression in the same breath.

"Most sign, those that don't frequently say that they agree with what we are trying to do but it is hopeless anyway. One old gentleman

refused to sign and then called up the street, 'I'm with you all the way, I hope you get that paper filled up!' It is these people the peace groups are beginning to reach. CND [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament] is losing its off-beat image and is becoming respectable. Politicians are beginning to take note.

"The churches except the Quakers and Methodists are being typically and disappointingly cautious and 'unChristian' in their lack of willingness to take any initiative. I find this very chilling and depressing though at least my own priest who is not very inspiring on most matters has come

down firmly on the side of disarmament, no less."

She concluded by saying that she would be joining the CND march on London at the end of October, with 100,000 marchers hoped for. Their guru, Professor Thompson, would be marching bravely at the head of the column, risking the wrath of London bobbies, Coldstream guardsmen, and other such resolute defenders of the existing order.

I thought I might reply to this letter pointing out that in my youth, some twenty years ago, I too used to wend

my way to London on CND marches, which in those days began at Aldermaston. Their main appeal, as far as I was concerned, was the motley array of New Orleans-style brass bands which would add a sprightly beat to the march. The disheveled Cockneys from the East End of London who somehow made their way to Aldermaston never seemed to mind particularly if they were joined by one or two equally disheveled undergraduates, trumpets and clarinets in hand: That was the only way I could ever get to play with the Londoners, who were all far more proficient on their instruments than I was.

Oh well, those distant days of the Aldermaston lark seem innocent by comparison with today's determined neutralists. I suppose that's what my sister meant when she said that CND "is losing its off-beat image." (Bearded trumpeters in duffel coats.)

"Twenty years on," a recent article in the (London) *Observer* noted, "the predominantly middle-class character of the movement still remains. Just as the media caricature of the early CNDER was of a bearded, pipe-smoking, tweed-suited, sandals, free-thinking vegetarian, nowadays the corresponding image might be of a thirtyish, non-smoking, university educated, professionally employed person [notice how deferentially the writer draws the modern stereotype] . . . The contemporary movement differs from its predecessor in having a much greater involvement of women. In part this is just a reflection of the growth of feminism and of the politicization of successive generations of young women." —



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I have been trying to figure out why the nuclear disarmament movement has suddenly flared up again with such virulence after so many years' remission. After all, atomic weapons on both sides of the Iron Curtain have been unceasingly with us in the interim. Almost certainly the election of Ronald Reagan and the renewed American resolve has got a great deal to do with it. For more than a decade we had the Vietnam quagmire and defeat, Pentagon Papers, Watergate, assault on the CIA, Jimmy Carter in the White House (planting the kiss of peace on Brezhnev's cheek). In short, everything was going badly for America, which of course was intensely satisfying to the international Left. No need to agitate or take to the streets while America was doing the Left's dirty work of its own accord.

I turned to the *Guardian* article, in which this Professor Thompson had written: "... these are dangerous people: Caspar Weinberger, Richard Allen, Lawrence Eagleburger, and all those advisors now grouped around President Reagan—men with minds like delivery systems, whose knowledge of Europe is minimal, who are too busy to read what Europeans have to say, and who have time only to scan a page or two of briefing as they fly from one planning meeting to the next. . . . These people need the cold war and they are determined to soup it up. They are determined to get their new hardware down: cruise

missiles, the neutron bomb, nerve gas, the MX. There are only Two Camps: the USA, sometimes known, for some archaic reason, as 'the Free World,' versus Communist terrorism. Anyone who resists their objectives must be neutralist, and neutralists must be pro-Soviet."

The professor was a tiny bit careless there, letting his Communist sympathies show incautiously, when he used the phrase "for some archaic reason." Of course the point is that the U.S. and Western Europe still do enjoy freedom, while all Communist countries are unfree, as is strikingly demonstrated by the high walls and barbed wire encircling them lest their inhabitants run away.

For some extraordinary reason, which I have never quite been able to grasp, liberty is an utterly trivial thing to left-wing intellectuals. One could perhaps respect this outlook if such lefties were themselves prepared to forego their own liberty by emigrating to the Soviet Union, to help Build a New Society, to assist in the construction of New Soviet Man, and so on. But somehow it turns out that these people never have the courage of their convictions. On the contrary, they partake of freedom to its fullest, noisily asserting their right to march and demonstrate. But one can't help notice that they confine themselves to demonstrating against the demonstrably harmless—Americans, Her Majesty's Government. (The Russians, on the other hand, are rather more formidable and might conceivably take a swipe at those

who hoist a placard against them.)

My own impression is that leftists actually rather despise liberty and believe that societies from which it has been excluded are morally superior to those in which it lingers on. (For goodness sake, how can anything be *planned* if people are allowed to go about making things without permission?) Thus Professor Thompson and his ilk can adopt a pose of "neutrality" between East and West, between slavery and freedom, knowing full well that such a posture—in its refusal to condemn coercion or even draw attention to it—unobtrusively denigrates the cause of liberty.

I called my sister. She was looking forward to the march, and the opportunity "to bring people's attention to the fact that we are heading straight for World War III." The immediate object of the exercise, she said, was to get rid of Pershing II and Cruise missiles. Then America "would no longer be able to use us as a giant aircraft carrier, for the sake of belief in American freedom."

Freedom, in fact, seemed to occupy a rather lowly place in her system of values. "When you look at our Western way of life there isn't much to defend," she went on. "It's pretty sickening, isn't it?"

In what way? I inquired.

"We're overrun with evils ourselves," she said. "Corrupt politicians. The consumer society. Wasteful energy consumption." And so on.

It was her contention that if Western Europe disarmed itself, the Soviet Union in fact would refrain from launching a Hitler-style attack on the West. This may well be true, but of course the point is that they would not have to. This is because the Kremlin ultimately seeks to achieve an ideological rather than a territorial victory. Various European countries have already demonstrated the point that once military defenses against Communism are abandoned, then the nation in question becomes simultaneously defenseless against the ideas of Communism, which invade it and infect it like a plague. Holland comes to mind. And others seem likely to follow. Such countries then are ruled by people who are ideologically compatible with Moscow; at which point military invasion by the Soviets becomes utterly superfluous. (Mitterrand of France seems to disprove this thesis at present; I predict, however, that his anomalous position will soon disappear, when he abandons either the pretense of socialism or anti-Sovietism.)

Countries that abandon resistance to the Soviet Union sooner or later find themselves playing host to a microbial army of occupation, the microbes being ideas. That is the point. It is of course a delightful prospect to people (such as Professor Thompson) who never did think there was much wrong with Communism to begin with. And as my sister made clear, if you don't particularly admire your own system to begin with, why risk nuclear war to defend it? I suspect that she is typical of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people in Western Europe (and the United States, too, I should guess).

Well, the march was a great success, apparently. The Labour Party leadership showed up and addressed the crowd, which was numbered at 150,000 by police (and a quarter of a million by organizers). The defecting peer Wedgwood Anthony ("call me Tony") Benn said: "The Poles stood up to the Kremlin. It's time we stood up to the Pentagon and closed the U.S. bases in Britain." I asked my sister if anyone she had spoken to in the course of the march had said anything to suggest that the Soviet Union was a threat to peace. No no, not a word, she said. Readers, be warned: It is WE, the United States, who are the enemy—never mind the foundering boatloads of refugees sailing to our shores.

I gather that a Soviet camera crew filmed the final stages of the disarmament march. One imagines that the resulting footage was marked "rush" and mailed to Moscow. □





Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr.

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION AND THE COMMON DEFENSE

Moving toward assured survival.

The election of 1980 represented a mandate for change both in domestic economic policy and in foreign policy and defense. The coalition that elected President Reagan encompassed not only those who saw the need for substantial shift in economic policy with reduced governmental regulation, but also those who viewed the world of the 1980s as containing dangers making necessary a greater effort on behalf of the common defense. By 1980 it was widely acknowledged that the Soviet Union had been engaged in a vast strategic-military buildup during the SALT decade. It was unaffected in any readily discernible way by the efforts of the United States, under Democratic or Republican presidents, to devise an adequate framework for détente and for the limitation of strategic armaments, first in the SALT I Accords of the Nixon administration and subsequently in the Carter administration's emphasis both on the SALT II Treaty and arms control by example—the exercise of unilateral restraint by the cancellation of programs such as the B-1 and delays in the deployment of other new generation weapons systems.

Numerous official and non-governmental studies have provided somber analyses of trends in Soviet military spending. In the report of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on U.S. military posture for fiscal year 1982, General David D. Jones listed the factors that, in his view, have transformed the international security environment:

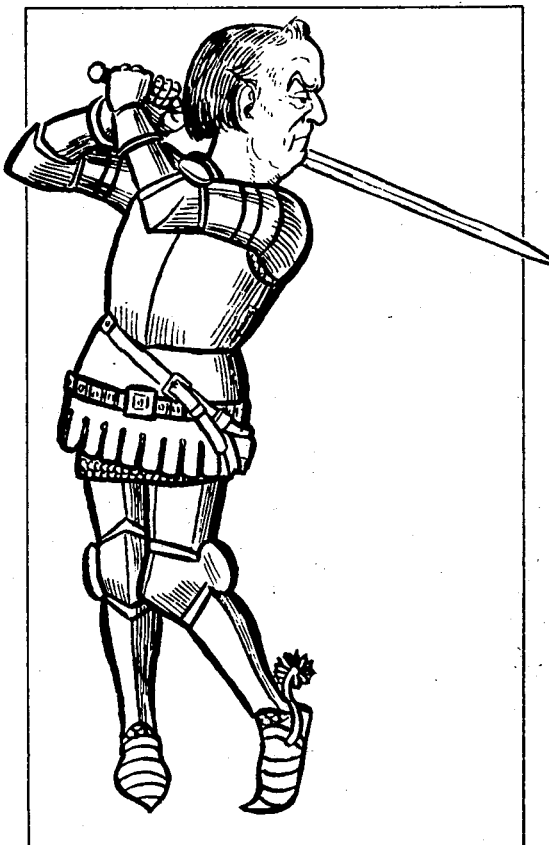
The loss of U.S. strategic superiority, extensive

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modernization of Soviet ground, sea, and air forces, sustained improvements in Soviet force projection capability, Soviet use of proxy forces to support revolutionary factions around the world, increased turbulence in areas of vital economic importance to the industrial democracies—these and other developments have transformed the character of the world and of our strategic requirements without a corresponding transformation in our strategy and the forces needed to carry it out.

In late September the Reagan administration, in an apparent effort to broaden public understanding in the United States and among its allies, published an assessment based in part on hitherto classified information about Soviet capabilities. In the preface, Secretary of Defense Weinberger noted that

In the past quarter century, we have witnessed the continuing growth of Soviet military power



at a pace that shows no signs of slackening in the future. All elements of the Soviet Armed Forces—the Strategic Rocket Forces, the Ground Forces of the Army, the Air Forces, the Navy and the Air Defense Forces—continue to modernize with an unending flow of new weapons systems, tanks, missiles, ships, artillery and aircraft.

Critics were quick to suggest that the report failed to compare Soviet and American capabilities. Such a comparative analysis, of course, together with an assessment of respective strategies and foreign policy goals, is indispensable for informed decisions about future weapons programs. But the fact remains that in most indicators of military power the Soviet Union has either surpassed the United States, or threatens to do so. This state of affairs will remain unchanged unless U.S. programs now contemplated or actually underway reach fruition. With few exceptions, this will not take place until at least the end of this decade.

The Reagan administration assumed office committed to the restoration of a "margin of safety" to U.S. military capabilities, both at the strategic-nuclear level and in general purpose forces. The administration added substantial new funding to a defense budget that had been increased in the last year of President Carter's tenure in response to the deteriorating U.S.-Soviet relationship, particularly after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December 1979. The incoming Reagan administration concluded properly that the United States faced a period of heightened vulnerability for which the appropriate remedy lay in simultaneous efforts in strategic force modernization, strengthening the U.S. Navy, building more adequate ground forces, and acquiring other power projection capabilities.

The decisions a government faces are usually more complex than the solutions espoused by candidates for office. Never-