

IN THESE TIMES

Editorial

Orange light for neutron bomb

President Carter's shifting position on the neutron bomb reflects the fierce debate within senior policy-making circles in the U.S. and in Western Europe. It is over the capitalist states' global strategy in relation to Soviet power and revolutionary movements.

The strains of detente, Eurocommunism, OPEC, and revolutionary successes in parts of Asia and Africa, have intensified western leaders' anxieties about western unity and the staying power of their social order. The almost hysterical tone of the attacks on Carter for hesitations about the neutron bomb indicate that something deeper is involved than differences over a particular weapon. Sharp though it was, the B-1 debate remained positively genteel by comparison. The present debate touches, rather, upon the search for an equivalent—however ghastly and immoral—for the cold war unity of yesteryear.

The pro-neutron bombers, who apparently include some of Carter's top civilian foreign policy advisers, are promoting the weapon as a multiple problem-solver. In countering superior Warsaw pact ground forces it would, they think, restore NATO military and political cohesion and help head off growing western European socialist initiatives toward dissolving the east/west division of Europe. In offering a nuclear terror weapon that is "labor-intensive" and "capital-saving" in destructive power, it would intimidate revolutionary movements in the developing world and deter the Soviet Union from undertaking an effective response in aid of such movements. (See Daniel Ellsberg's analysis, *ITT*, Mar. 1.)

The neutron bomb, in this view, symbolizes recovery of western capitalist unity and global strategic supremacy.

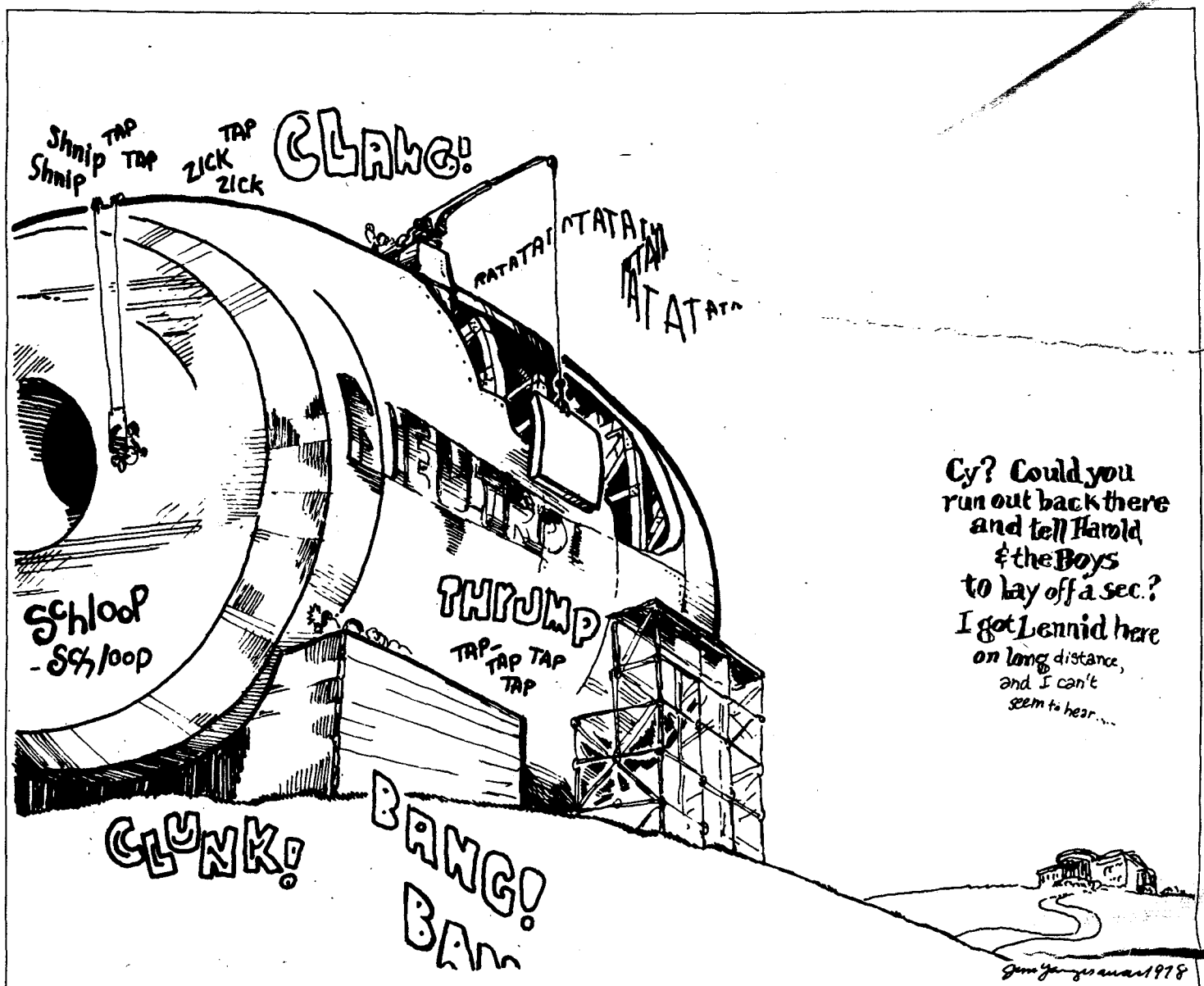
Those in policy-making circles resisting or at least not ardently embracing the Higher Radiation point out that no single weapon—as the history of the battleship, air power, and atomic bomb show—can assure strategic supremacy. Pentagon officials advise that western European military security would be little affected by not deploying the neutron weapon, as existing laser-guided "smart" bombs and guided missiles are effective weapons against tank and other ground forces. (In fact, in leaving nuclear-armed tanks and artillery intact, and in not instantly killing the soldiers, the neutron weapon is less effective than the other "conventional" weapons.)

Others among the unpersuaded argue that before deploying it, the bomb should be used as a "bargaining chip" with the Russians. They also argue that the weapon would discredit the U.S. in the eyes of the people of developing countries who anticipate its use against them. And they point out that its deployment would lead only to further escalation of the nuclear arms race and make use of nuclear weapons more likely even in "small" wars.

But cogent as their arguments may be, the doubters are at a disadvantage in the debate because they lack the symbolic force—however utterly delusory—of their opponents' pleadings.

President Carter at first gave the green light to the neutron bomb when Congress last summer appropriated \$14 million, "thanks to the efforts of the late Sen. Hubert Humphrey and other influential liberals" (*Newsweek*, April 17). Reports of Carter's switching to a red light were apparently erroneous—possibly leaked as "disinformation" by pro-bombers to preempt counterpressures on the President. If he has switched at all, it is to orange.

Western European governments, faced with popular hostility and powerful socialist and left opposition to the weapon, prefer to avoid the political risk of overt-



ly "asking" for its deployment in their own countries. They want President Carter to make the decision for them and absorb all the risk.

Even should he do so, there is no guarantee that those governments would ultimately consent to deployment. Bonn has gone no further in public than to state that Germany would deploy the weapon if NATO approved it and another western European government would also deploy it. That still leaves Carter out on a limb and with the prospect of the weapon standing exposed as directed primarily against peoples of the developing countries. It leaves him on the verge of appearing to violate—on his own initiative rather than in an "unavoidable" response to circumstances—his repeated pledges to reverse the nuclear arms race.

It also leaves him looking indecisive in providing American leadership toward putting the humpty-dumpty of western unity back together again. It is in this respect that Carter is particularly vulnerable to the powerful and highly orchestrated pressures of the pro-bombers.

The neutron bomb is no real deterrent to conventional or nuclear attack in Europe; nor is the Soviet attack it supposedly would deter any more a plausible danger now than it was in the past since the end of World War II. But it is a deterrent to slowing down, no less ending, the nuclear arms race, to dissolving the division of Europe into hostile blocs, and to the U.S. refraining from intervening against revolutions in other countries.

The neutron bomb should be recognized for what it is: It is part of a larger

global imperial strategy. As a weapon it is no less a species of biological warfare than poison gas or germs (see analysis by Peter Bloch, U. of Pa. associate professor of radiological science, *ITT*, Oct. 5, 1977). Like gas and germ warfare, it should be outlawed by international convention. As a strategic gambit or symbol it is no more a guarantee of peace, security, or western unity than "massive deterrence" or the old cold war anti-communism.

Whether Carter will turn from orange to red or green light, will depend on the force of popular opposition to the neutron bomb in the U.S. as well as in Europe and elsewhere. That popular force will have to be much greater than it now is in the U.S. if the Strangeloves of the Higher Radiation are not to prevail. ■

Dems ape Nixon on press freedom

A favorite defense of former President Nixon's abuses of power is that they were not peculiar to him: Democratic administrations had played dirty too. Now, two Democrats close to President Carter seem intent to prove this Nixon defense true, if not about past Democrats then about those coming after Nixon.

In tones reminiscent of the Nixon administration, former budget chief Bert Lance and Attorney General Griffin Bell attacked the press at the American Society of Newspaper Editors convention the day after President Carter addressed it on the inflation issue.

Complaining that "muckrakers" outnumbered "muckmakers," Lance warned that newspapers face censorship if they persist in printing controversial investigative reporting such as that which preceded his resignation. He said that "irresponsible journalism is just as repugnant as censorship," and would lead to the press losing "one of its most cherished privileges, the right to monitor itself."

Bell was less direct but his threat against the press for printing "false or inaccurate information" was no less ominous for being veiled—especially in light of growing calls for press censorship by corporate executives and policy-making mandarins.

As guaranteed by the First Amendment, freedom of the press means that government officials as citizens have the right to criticize anything they like, including the press. It means that accurate information is best assured by free and open debate and publication unhindered by government intervention. It means that the most dangerous threat to democracy is government presumption to determine what is "accurate" or "responsible" utterance. It means that freedom from press censorship is not a mere privilege but an inviolable right.

And it means that "irresponsible journalism" cannot be regarded as "just as repugnant" as press censorship. To accept that seemingly "balanced" view is to take a long step toward the destruc-

tion of freedom of speech.

These propositions are as valid for a socialist as for a capitalist society. Democracy is in relatively better shape when the "muckrakers" outnumber and inconvenience the "muckmakers." In asserting an excess of "muckrakers" Lance's own accuracy is open to question but he is free to submit his views to the public.

Lance is known for believing in minimal government intervention when it comes to the economy. But when it comes to the "marketplace of ideas"—matters of conscience—he and other Democrats, like their Republican counterparts, are all for Big Government paternalism.

We have our quarrels with the way the dominant press, in our view, irresponsibly and inaccurately conveys much of the news. But we say to the Nixons and the Lances and the Bells: The people exercising freedom of speech, not government officials, must be the arbiter of what is true or false, responsible or irresponsible, if democracy is to prevail. ■

Jack Clark

A Philadelphia organization is leading the movement for jobs

Before the great upsurge of the CIO, the great accomplishment of the 1930s left—both Socialist and Communist—was the organizing of the unemployed. Whether they called them unemployed councils or workers' alliances, the organizers of these movements faced momentous obstacles. Even in the catastrophe of the Great Depression, the myth hung on that people were out of work and poor and hungry because the poor themselves were less than virtuous, not because the social system was chaotic and anti-social.

Then as now, the unemployed were dispersed and demoralized. Our socialist predecessors overcame all that, however, and created large movements in many cities. They forced condescending welfare officials to treat recipients with a modicum of respect; their mobilizations forced cities and states to liberalize requirements for receiving home relief and other income supports. The organizations of unemployed provided a training ground for radicals who went on to become CIO militants, and in some places the organized unemployed provided direct support to the industrial union organizing committees. Militant direct action in working class neighborhoods saved thousands of the unemployed from evictions. (In the film *Union Maids*, Kate reminisces about facing down gun-wielding police on the door step of an unemployed Chicago family; she was at the time an organizer for the Communist unemployed council.)

The success of the unemployed organizations in the first half of the '30s helped set the political tone of the decade. In our own time, the relative quiescence of the unemployed and virtually everyone else on the issue of unemployment has helped to set the conservative tone of the 1970s. On this as on all issues, politicians,

pundits and most ordinary people seem to think that the momentum and the protest comes from the right. It is more important to most politicians, even those who regard themselves as liberal and socially concerned, to hold down taxes, avoid new programs and keep the business community happy than it is to reduce the toll of unemployment. After all, if taxes are raised or limits are set on the freedom of business (to bully its employees, to move a plant, to pollute the air), protests will be heard. As it is, who's complaining about unemployment and what it does to the jobless and to the society as a whole?

The Philadelphia solution.

In Philadelphia, the unemployed themselves are increasingly heard from. Organized into the Philadelphia Unemployment Project, the unemployed in Philadelphia have protested and lobbied on everything from foodstamps to federal job creation. And unlike projects launched in some other cities by would-be vanguards, PUP has sought and won the broad support of the Philadelphia area unions, churches and community groups. It functions effectively in settling the immediate grievances of unemployed individuals dealing with state, city and federal bureaucracies at the same time that it organizes the jobless politically to demand that the society create enough useful, well-paying work for all.

Mass jobs lobby in D.C. April 26.

In line with that broad, political effort, PUP has formed a Philadelphia Coalition for Jobs and issued a call for a mass jobs lobby in Washington on April 26. According to PUP organizer John Dodds, the Philadelphia group has tried similar mobilizations before. On two occasions

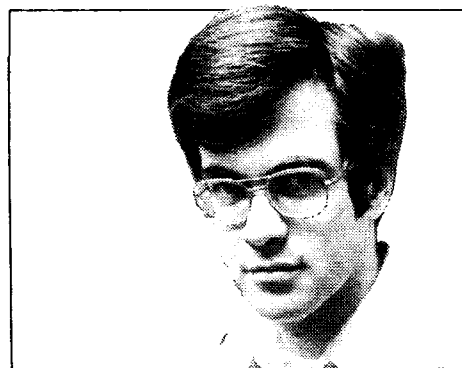
last year, more than 300 people from Philadelphia converged on Washington to meet with members of the House and with Pennsylvania Sen. John Heinz. While they did not succeed in stopping the cutbacks of unemployment benefits from 52 to 39 weeks, the mobilizations did move the Pennsylvania delegation to lead the opposition to the cuts. Perhaps just as important, the experience of traveling to Washington and working together to convince political leaders to respond to them built a sense of confidence and *esprit* among those who went.

Now PUP wants to send a strong delegation to convince Congress that it must use its budget power to create more jobs. Specifically the mobilization is putting forth three demands:

1) Support the AFL-CIO's call for a \$13 billion program to create four million new jobs this year and continue creating four million jobs a year for the next four years. This is an excellent, politically realizable economic program to begin putting people to work immediately meeting urgent needs rebuilding the cities, repairing the railroads, employing jobless young people and meeting other needs. Anyone interested in a copy of the program can get it by writing me, in care of *IN THESE TIMES*.

2) A major increase in public service (CETA) jobs. PUP wants the number of CETA slots doubled so that 1.4 million would be employed under this program. To avoid the use of the program to divide the public employee work force, PUP and the jobs coalition demands that CETA workers be paid prevailing wages (rather than minimum wages, as proposed in Carter's welfare plan) and that CETA workers be granted full collective bargaining rights.

3) Passage of Humphrey-Hawkins to



guarantee Federal planning for full employment.

The program advanced by the Philadelphia Coalition for Jobs is far in advance of anything currently being pushed by the administration or the congressional leadership. If it were to pass, all the progressive constituencies from the black movement to the unions to the women's movement to the environmentalist and community organizers would be strengthened in day-to-day political work.

What's more important in this case than the program itself, which is excellent in any case, is the movement being created. A constituency, the unemployed, that is widely perceived to be apathetic is in motion.

The chief problem Dodds and the other Philadelphia organizers face is lack of support from other cities. Bus loads of the unemployed pouring in from Ohio, New York, Illinois and other areas with severe unemployment could make a crucial difference. "The experience of unemployed people traveling together and working together through this day of activity might be just the spark needed to get an organization of the unemployed started," Dodds says.

And such a mobilization could begin to refute the myth that political momentum rests only with the right.

People interested in working on the mass jobs lobby April 26 can get in touch directly with John Dodds at PUP, 1321 Arch St., Philadelphia 19107. (215) 564-3770. In the New York area, people interested in working on this can call me or Dan Goodwin at the DSOC office (212) 260-3270.

Jack Clark is National Secretary of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee.

Fellow Readers of In These Times:

If you feel that Nuclear Weapons endanger us all why not take a moment now to add your name to those of Daniel Ellsberg, Bella Abzug, and Ralph Abernathy who are among the Supporters of Individuals against the Crime of Silence which publishes a declaration which reads as follows:

A declaration to our fellow citizens, to the peoples of the world, and to future generations.

1. We can no longer be silent about the threat of NUCLEAR destruction to the human race.
2. We have seen the horrors of nuclear war at Hiroshima and Nagasaki—hundreds of thousands killed, others atrociously maimed, and unknown numbers genetically damaged.
3. We have watched with increased apprehension for the last 30 years as more and more nations engage in deadly nuclear arms competition, ever increasing the number and types of nuclear weapons.
4. We believe that national security is not served by a nuclear arms race that can only end in the destruction of the world.
5. We consider the manufacture, possession and use of nuclear weapons a crime against humanity and a crime under international law.
6. We have acquiesced to a policy that threatens all of us.

As citizens, we must now face the responsibility for our silence. We must speak out.

Therefore, we hereby place our names on record, in unity with individuals of all nations, against the use and possession of nuclear weapons.

We demand that our government, every government, and the United Nations outlaw the manufacture and possession of all nuclear weapons.

To place your name on record with the thousands who have already signed the declaration you need only write to **Individuals Against the Crime of Silence**, P.O. Box 35385, Los Angeles, CA 90035. Include your signature (printed name as well) and your address. We will send you copies of the declaration in letter form to send to your elected officials as well as the Secretary General of the U.N. we are asking for \$2.00 or more donation if you can spare it. Imagine the U.N. receiving thousands of letters during the Special Session on Disarmament!!

DIALOG

New York gays unite against "careerists"

Josh Martin's article on the New York City gay rights bill (*ITT*, Mar. 15) is correct to point out that all "leaders of this city's gay community have decided to push for prompt introduction of a gay rights bill in the City Council," but is strangely misleading in two other respects.

First, it gives the impression that the National Gay Task Force (which is not a New York group) is playing the leading role in this struggle. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The NGTF and two other conservative gay groups (the New York Political Action Council and the Study Group) have been working behind the scenes on the bill, but the real job of organizing the gay community and nongay support is being done by the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights (CLGR), put together last June following the defeat of gay rights in Miami, and representing some 35 groups (*ITT*, Jan. 18).

Second, the CLGR's position all along has been for immediate introduction and passage of the bill. We have often reaffirmed this position at community meetings. The movement has not "reversed" its position, contrary to Martin's report, but a small layer of pro-establishment gay groups, including the NGTF, have been forced to reverse

their position in favor of stalling.

Many city gay activists believe that these groups were more interested in taking the heat off Democratic party candidates in the election next fall in the event of a referendum than they were in pushing for immediate passage when the rest of the movement was in no mood to wait or compromise.

The NGTF and its associates in NY-PAC and the Study Group even went so far in mid-February as to try to destroy the CLGR by setting up a rival coalition, easier for them and their friends in government to control. This effort blew up in their faces when every single member group of the CLGR decided to stick with the coalition, despite the fact that gay politicians all the way up into the Mayor's office and the office of at least one borough president (Robert Adams of the Bronx) were busy digging up McCarthyite tactics by publicly denouncing the independent lesbian and gay movement in this city as "agents provocateurs" and "nothing but a bunch of Trotskyites" who had been "abandoned by all decent gay groups."

IN THESE TIMES does a disservice by printing misleading stories like Martin's without first checking the facts. The facts are that the movement is united on pressing for immediate passage, but only because we did not allow our movement to be stampeded into postponing our struggle as the Koch administration and its gay mouthpieces tried to get us to do. We are determined to fight for our rights, and we will not let the Democratic party, the Koch administration, or Gov. Carey decide for us when and how to do it. Nor will we let our own gay careerists rebait our movement out of existence.

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Joseph, Eleanor Cooper
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