

**DON'T
DIE
FOR
THATCHER**

HOW TO STOP CRUISE MISSILES

by Redmond O'Neill

A Socialist Challenge Pamphlet

20p

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Introduction

AMONG the first things that Margaret Thatcher did on becoming Prime Minister was to visit the underground 'war room' in Whitehall to learn how to order the firing of Britain's nuclear weapons. This was to prove characteristic. With no qualms she rapidly led the new government in deciding to spend £5,000 million on the Trident nuclear submarine system and in allowing NATO to site American-controlled Cruise missiles in Britain.

In recent years people have felt inclined to be complacent about the threat of nuclear world war, but the actions of this Tory government, coupled with the massive programme of nuclear rearmament in the United States, have decisively shaken this attitude. When the government of the United States is simultaneously earmarking billions of dollars for a new generation of nuclear weapons, campaigning to reintroduce the draft, and speaking of 'winning' a nuclear war, no one can deny that the threat is real!

The US military planners may be able to see some favourable situation for themselves arising out of the ashes of a nuclear holocaust, but millions of men and women across the world know who would lose! We reject all claims that a more free and just society can be built among radioactive ruins. In any nuclear confrontation we can only see losers, thus as socialists our aim has to be to prevent it.

This is our aim, but to achieve it first we have to understand the nature of the present war hysteria and to identify its causes. This alone can lay the basis for effective action.

Nearly 150 years ago, in *The Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx explained: '*The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.*' This is just as true today. The military-minded may see war as an end in itself — as a game — but properly understood war is no more than the continuation of politics by violent means. The threat of war in the 1980s can only be understood, and fought against, on the basis of understanding its roots in the international struggle of social classes.

This approach sets us apart from many of those who are nonetheless our allies in the movement against Thatcher's nuclear rearmament plans. In particular we reject the ideas of the European Nuclear Disarmament Campaign (END), and its spokesperson, EP Thompson, who claim the arms race and nuclear weapons have a logic of their own, their own internal dynamic towards war, separate and apart from the development of the international class struggle and the foreign policy of states.

This pamphlet, in seeking to explain the development of the international class struggle today, points towards the kind of campaign

that can stop Thatcher's rearmament plans and take us a few steps nearer to the final end of war — a campaign of action that bases itself on the power of the labour movement in this country, linking itself with the exploited and oppressed all over the world.

The New Arms Race — Who is to Blame?

THE Fleet Street press has been Margaret Thatcher's most faithful mouthpiece in her campaign to persuade people in this country that £5,000 million should be spent on the Trident missile system rather than on schools, hospitals and jobs for young people. The case for Cruise and Trident has centred on the necessity of combating 'Soviet expansionism' and countering the risk of the USSR achieving nuclear superiority over the West.

For the European Nuclear Disarmament Campaign the increasing threat of nuclear annihilation is the result of the logic of the arms race itself:

'As each side tries to prove its readiness to use nuclear weapons, in order to prevent their use by the other side, new and more usable nuclear weapons are designed and the idea of limited nuclear war is made to sound more and more plausible. So much so that this paradoxical process can logically only lead to the actual use of nuclear weapons.'

END stresses the joint responsibility of the USA and the USSR for this situation:

'We do not wish to apportion guilt between the political and military leaders of East and West. Guilt lies squarely with both parties. Both parties have adopted menacing postures and committed aggressive actions in different parts of the world.'

Rather than END's 'paradoxical process' leading 'logically to the actual use of nuclear weapons' we would argue that the arms race has no logic of its own. But before tackling this question let's look at the facts and figures of the arms race itself.

Since the USA destroyed the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atom bombs in 1945 it has set the pace in the nuclear arms race. It's clear object has been to maintain a decisive military and nuclear superiority over the USSR.

By 1945 Japan had lost control of the Pacific Ocean and was already a defeated power. There was no military reason for the use of the A-bomb by the USA. In fact 250,000 people died when the cities of

Nagasaki and Hiroshima were destroyed simply to show the world that the United States' rulers not only *possessed* the most terrifying weapon in human history, but that they were also prepared to *use* it. That demonstration was directed in particular at the USSR. Since then almost every major step in accelerating the arms race has been taken by the USA.

At no time has this been more true than today. The USA has almost twice as many nuclear war heads stockpiled as the USSR, and the combined missile systems of the USA, Britain and France easily outnumber those of the Soviet Union. The aim of the US in developing a new generation of nuclear weapons is not to 'deter' the growing Soviet military threat. The US deterrent force is already more than sufficient, as President Carter explained in a recent speech:

'Our deterrent is overwhelming, just one of our relatively invulnerable Poseidon submarines — comprising less than two per cent of our total nuclear force — carries enough warheads to destroy every large and medium-size city in the Soviet Union.'

The American government plans spending 100 billion dollars building the new MX missile system precisely in order to break out of the logic of deterrence (you destroy us — we'll destroy you). The aim is to achieve a 'first strike capacity' — the ability to destroy the Soviet missiles before they leave the ground. 460 new Cruise missiles are to be sited in Europe. They are not covered by the arms limitation treaties



because they do not have the range to hit the USSR from the USA. However, whereas the Soviet equivalent, the SS20, cannot reach the USA from its bases in Southern Russia, Cruise will be able to destroy much of Russia from its European base.

The American objective in developing the Cruise and MX systems was summed up by the head of the National Security Agency of the US, Brzezinski:

'I am saying that the United States, in order to maintain effective deterrence has to have choices that give us a wider range of options than either a spasmodic nuclear exchange or limited conventional warfare.'

In other words deterrence no longer means preventing nuclear war, but rather winning a 'limited nuclear war', quite possibly in the European 'theatre'.

Behind the Arms Race: A War Drive

SINCE it cannot be seriously maintained that the USA is in danger of lagging behind the USSR in nuclear weaponry, perhaps there is more truth in the claim that 'soviet expansionism' threatens 'Western interests'.

When American defence strategists speak of expansionism they generally refer to the threat to Middle East oil, to America's 'vital interests' in Central America, or to 'the advance of communism in South East Asia'.

Undoubtedly the Vietnamese revolution has shaken American control of the Pacific Ocean. Certainly the fall of the Shah, who was armed to the teeth by America and Britain, has introduced increasing 'instability' in the oil-rich Middle East.

No objective observer can deny that South Africa — that bulwark of anti-communism and 'the West' — is today increasingly threatened by the struggle of black people from Zimbabwe to Namibia against their racist oppressors. And it is certainly true that on America's very doorstep, in Central America, every right-wing military dictatorship fears that their own workers and peasants will draw encouragement from the Nicaraguan revolution and Cuba's aid to it.

If these revolutions were the result of the activity of 'Russian spies' or even Soviet diplomacy, then we would have to admit that the Soviet rulers do indeed have powers of thought control far exceeding America's military might. But for our part we see both these revolutions, and the hostility of the American and British ruling classes towards them, as explicable in much more mundane terms — in a word 'money'!

In the world today 65 per cent of the population live in underdeveloped countries, yet these countries account for no more than two per cent of the world's industrial production. 450 million people in the underdeveloped world suffer from malnutrition. 900 million people were illiterate in 1979. Per capita income in the advanced capitalist countries, like the USA and Britain, is, on average, fourteen times that in the underdeveloped world.

These *facts* are a thousand times more convincing as explanations of the wave of revolutions in the Third World since 1945 than any 'Soviet conspiracy'. They also indicate the reasons for America's alarm. This massive inequality in the world's wealth and resources is the product of economic domination and exploitation of the Third World — as a source of cheap labour and raw materials — by the ruling classes of a small number of imperialist countries.

In order to maintain this economic domination the imperialist countries must organise a system of military domination. The First and Second World Wars were fought out between the great capitalist powers to determine control of the 'colonies', and so control of the fate of the overwhelming majority of humanity.

The USA emerged from Second World War as the most powerful imperialist power on earth. But the war at the same time weakened imperialism as a whole and unleashed a wave of revolutions in the colonial countries. These revolutions were not fomented by Stalin and the Soviet rulers. In fact the opposite is true.

On the basis of the nationalistic theory of 'socialism in one country' Stalin entered into agreements with the imperialists of France, Britain and the USA — at Yalta, Potsdam and Teheran — to divide the world into 'spheres of influence'. In exchange for guarantees that the imperialists would not launch a new war to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union, Stalin agreed to oppose revolutionary developments elsewhere in the world.

However, despite Stalin's instructions, in 1949 the Chinese Communist Party led an almighty revolution which overturned capitalism in the world's most populous nation. The same happened in Yugoslavia and later in North Vietnam and Korea.

The lesson of the 1917 revolution in Russia — that only by freeing themselves from capitalism and from imperialist domination can the peoples of the colonial world free themselves from poverty — was more powerful than Stalin's policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism. It is this example of the Russian revolution, of the elimination of hunger in China, of the elimination of illiteracy in Cuba, that the American ruling classes fear, not 'Soviet aggression'.

That is why between 1949 and 1970 the USA intervened on average into one Third World country every 14 months. That is why, in order to maintain its economic dominance of the world, the USA has

450,000 troops stationed in 50 countries. That is why the USA and Britain have financed and armed some of the most brutal dictators in history from the Shah of Iran to Somoza in Nicaragua.

It is only in this light that the renewed American war drive can be understood. After the USA had lost the war in Vietnam — despite dropping more bombs there than were used in the whole of the Second World War — the American working class and youth called a halt. They made it clear that their taxes and their lives were no longer available for adventures to defend the profits of oil companies and banks. As a result the Pentagon had to watch impotently while the revolutions in Iran, Nicaragua, Angola and the Caribbean unfolded. They had to watch impotently when the USSR sent troops into Afghanistan to prevent a right-wing imperialist-backed regime coming to power on its borders.

The new war drive and rearmament is above all about launching a counter-offensive against these developments. That is why 25 billion dollars is to be spent on developing the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF). The RDF is a force of 200,000 American soldiers specially trained and equipped for mobility and available for immediate use anywhere in the world — and especially in the Middle East and Central America. Its commander, General Paul Kelley, recently explained quite openly that the RDF is not designed simply to counter 'soviet aggression':

'The force could be ordered to launch a pre-emptive strike to seize threatened ground before the Russians got there.'

What does this mean? It means that if a revolution overthrows an important US ally then, on the assumption that this is an aspect of 'Soviet aggression', US troops will rush in to defend 'democracy and freedom' with napalm and bullets, as they did in Vietnam.

Nuclear rearmament fits into this framework. If decisive nuclear superiority over the USSR can be attained, especially a 'first strike capacity' and the possibility of 'limited nuclear war', then the American ruling class can effectively deter the USSR from aiding or supporting such revolutions.

In the great revolutionary struggles of China, Yugoslavia, Vietnam and Cuba, and in the fight against racism in Southern Africa, huge inspiration has been taken from the ideas of the October 1917 Russian revolution and the existence of a workers' state outside of the control of imperialism. Simply the fact that the USSR today is ruled by a conservative, geriatric bureaucracy which, to maintain its power, crushes socialist democracy in Eastern Europe and intervenes in the most bureaucratic way possible against the landlord rebellion in Afghanistan, does not make the USSR the *same* as the USA. It does not make it 'equally responsible' for the threat of war and nuclear annihilation.

To claim that 'guilt lies squarely upon both parties,' as does END and other neutralist or pacifist groups, can only help the rulers of the United States and Britain. They seize every opportunity to employ the genuine disgust at the Soviet bureaucracy's suppression of democracy for their own ends — to gain support for new wars against colonial peoples and to add further twists to the spiral of nuclear rearmament.

Just as workers will support even a hopelessly bureaucratized trade union against the bosses, because it nonetheless remains a union, so too the USSR remains a workers' state despite its bureaucratic leaders. Similarly, if the workers of the Soviet Union organized to overthrow this bureaucracy - through political revolution - then the struggles of workers worldwide would take a tremendous leap forward. As they would in Britain if Duffy and Boyd were kicked out and replaced with leaders who were really prepared to put the workers' interests first. But despite this, if the Soviet workers' state was crushed by imperialism the working class of the entire world would suffer its gravest defeat this century.

The war drive is an imperialist war drive. Understanding that fact is the key to countering it.

How to Stop the War Drive

'WE propose to make in Europe a theatre of peace. This will not, even if we succeed, remove the danger of confrontation in non-European theatres. It offers at least the small hope of European survival.'

That is how EP Thompson summed up the approach of the European Nuclear Disarmament Campaign. Its strategy is based on the assumption that 'power blocs', East and West, have been taken over by the logic of the nuclear arms race. The aim is a neutralist Europe as the first step to dissolving the 'power blocs' altogether.

But as Thompson himself points out: 'This will not remove the danger of confrontation in non-European theatres.' In fact, such confrontations are taking place every day, although not at nuclear level. For example, as we write, in El Salvador it is a US-backed dictatorship, financed by American corporations, that is gunning down 30 people a day with American rifles and helicopter gunships. America fears losing yet another area of the world from the grip of its economic domination.

Nor can the European theatre be lifted out of this world political and economic context. As the new world crisis bites deeper into the economies of the West the imperialist powers become ever more unremittingly hostile to that third of the world that has already escaped from their economic and political control. It is this permanent

hostility that drives a rift through Europe — the arms race is generated by the imperialist powers as a result of this. Europe cannot be turned into an island of peace in a world of wars and revolutions, and the western governments know it! That's why there will be 460 Cruise missiles aimed at the USSR.

Wishful thinking about a 'neutral Europe' will not be effective in countering this *real* escalation in the 'arms race'. Such an approach falls into the lap of Thatcher and Schmidt because their argument is precisely that they need Cruise in order to persuade the Soviets to disarm. By accepting the logic of 'mutual disarmament' — multilateralism — END is unable to counter Thatcher's argument that to achieve this a strong negotiating position is necessary for the West — a negotiating position backed up with Cruise missiles!



For EP Thompson it is 'unrealistic and could be divisive' to 'ground our actions on a preference for one or the other blocs'. Because: 'So long as each bloc's resistance movement can be categorised as the ally of the other, exterminism will be able to police its own territory...'

In other words, any stand other than pacifist neutralism — arguing for Europe to drop out of the class struggles and antagonism between different social systems — will be labelled in the West as 'pro-communist' and in the East as 'pro-capitalist'.

This is undoubtedly true. The Tory government, for example, will certainly label any serious movement against its war preparations as 'communist or Trotskyist inspired', just as they label any movement against their war in Ireland as 'terrorist'. In the United States the first debate in the movement against the war in Vietnam was whether to adopt the demand 'Troops out now'. Those pacifists who were against the slogan argued that the administration would call the movement 'unpatriotic', 'stabbing our boys in the back', 'communist', if the position for immediate withdrawal was adopted.

In order to create such an action campaign capable of actually putting a stop to Cruise rather than just talking about it, it is vital to understand the stakes involved for the ruling class. To renounce nuclear weapons would mean renouncing Britain's role as a world imperialist power, and so the ruling class will fight tooth and nail against it. The only force capable of taking on the ruling class on this question is the organised labour movement, and its main ally is the youth who will do the dying in future wars. To be effective the campaign against Cruise must be thoroughly rooted inside the working class.

But this in itself will involve a struggle — the British ruling class has not been short of allies inside the labour movement in the past.

For example in 1945 the Labour Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, welcomed the use of the Bomb against Japan. A section of the Labour Party and trade union leadership have maintained a similar attitude ever since — supporting the Bomb and the British ruling class's colonial wars, from Cyprus to Ireland.

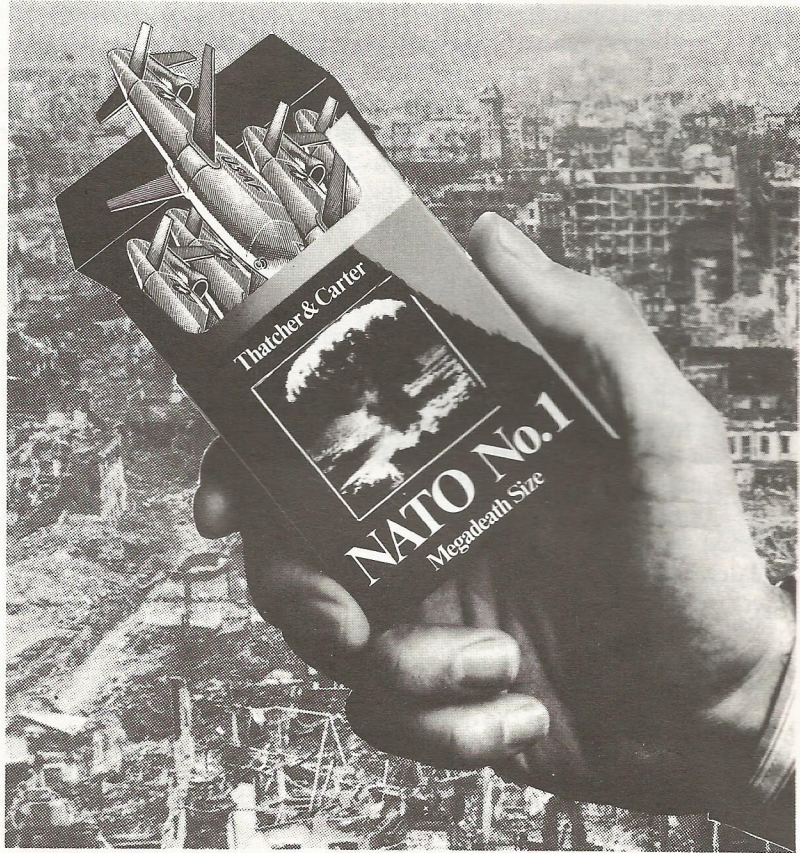
In the 1950s, with the rise of CND, a fierce debate raged inside the labour movement between 'unilateralists' (Britain should renounce all nuclear weapons unconditionally) and 'multilateralists' (Britain should only disarm, give up its A-bomb, when everyone else disarms). Thanks to the massive demonstrations organised by the CND the argument was won by the unilateralists at the Labour Party conference in 1960, but this decision horrified the British ruling class. The right wing of the Labour Party launched a massive counter-offensive, which was largely funded by big business and the CIA. At the 1961 conference the decision was overturned. The fact that Frank Cousins had moved the unilateral disarmament motion in 1960 did not stop him, four years later, from serving in the Wilson Labour government as minister with special responsibilities for the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston — though no one saw him smile when a Tory asked if he would be marching there!

It is an indication of the quality of the Labour leaders over the past fifty years that no Labour government has ever broken from the ruling class on defence policy, yet they have cut social services, restricted wages, and allowed unemployment to rocket. Nuclear weaponry above all has been sacrosanct.

And as for good old British democracy... Not even the Labour Cabinet, let alone Parliament, was informed of the decision by Callaghan, Healy, Mulley and Owen to continue with Ted Heath's 'Chevaline' programme. This involved spending £1,000 million on new warheads for the Polaris missiles.

After a history like this it should come as no surprise that the present Shadow Minister of Defence, William Rodgers, had no compunction at all in publicly denouncing the 1980 Labour Party Special Conference decision to oppose the deployment of Cruise missiles in Britain.

ANTI-H.M. Government WARNING CRUISE MISSILES CAN DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH



GIVE UP NATO—YOU KNOW IT MAKES SENSE

An important element of any campaign against Cruise missiles will be dealing with these fake socialists. This underlines the need to base the campaign on active support from within the unions and the Labour Party, — to involve fellow workers in the campaign, to win these organisations to support its objectives, and to commit any Labour government to do likewise. The formation of Engineers Against the

Missiles, among AUEW members in the North-west, is exactly the type of activity that should be organised in all the main unions.

Clearly a major objective of the action campaign should be to establish clear policies in both the Labour Party and trade unions. At present the Labour Party policy continues to tend in the direction of multilateral disarmament, and, as we have seen, this means no disarmament at all! Policy passed at Labour's 1980 Special Conference speaks of fighting for peace through NATO. But this is a contradiction in terms — NATO is a *military* alliance tying Western Europe to the United States' war drive. Given the past performance of Labour on this issue only a commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament and withdrawal from NATO can even begin to tie the hands of future Labour government.

Conclusion

IN this pamphlet we have argued that the stepping up of the arms race and the war preparations of the United States government cannot be understood without also understanding the class struggles now unfolding all over the world. The success of these struggles in recent years — in Vietnam, in Southern Africa, in Iran, in Ireland and Nicaragua — leads us to express our confidence that nuclear war *can* be prevented.

Of course it is true that the imperialist governments are making increasingly desperate efforts to convince workers in the West that only foreign wars and domestic austerity can end the international economic crisis. But there is another side to this. Not only is the grip of imperialism on whole regions of the globe being seriously shaken, but at home the imperialists have been remarkably unsuccessful in whipping up a war hysteria.

Although their efforts are dangerous — and no one should underestimate the lengths to which the imperialists will go to maintain their rule — it is also the case that Carter's war drive has met disinterest and opposition inside the American working class. His recent attempt at draft registration provoked more evasions than during the entire course of the war in Vietnam! And Vietnam itself demonstrated the problems for imperialism when it is fighting an entire people and meeting mass opposition at home.

So, despite their military strength, Carter, Thatcher and Schmidt have an Achilles heel — the resistance of the working class. In the factories, offices, and schools, millions of workers will neither willingly die in foreign adventures, nor passively accept any imminent threat of nuclear war.

The rearmament plans and war preparations of Carter and Thatcher demonstrate that more than ever the working class of the West cannot defeat the ruling class offensive without an international policy of its own based on solidarity with all those fighting imperialism. Our opposition to nuclear rearmament forms part of that policy, and in the immediate future offers the best ground on which to oppose Thatcher's support for the American war drive.

The war drive and new arms race are testing every political force in society. All are having to choose sides. Already the right-wing of the Labour Party and union leaders like Duffy and Chapple have made it clear that they are the firmest advocates of nuclear rearmament.

But they face fierce opposition. The battle is on. The prospect of nuclear war is terrifying, but while we must not be complacent, it is nonetheless the case that in Britain today we have a real opportunity to strike a blow at the nuclear warriors of every stripe.

The siting of Cruise missiles is still nearly three years away. In that time mass action, based on the organised labour movement, can ensure that Cruise never arrives — and that won't just be a blow against Cruise but against the whole imperialist military policy. From fighting against Cruise and Trident we can build a movement that can finish off nuclear weapons, and the system that gives rise to them, for good. The strong beginnings of the movement give us every confidence of success.

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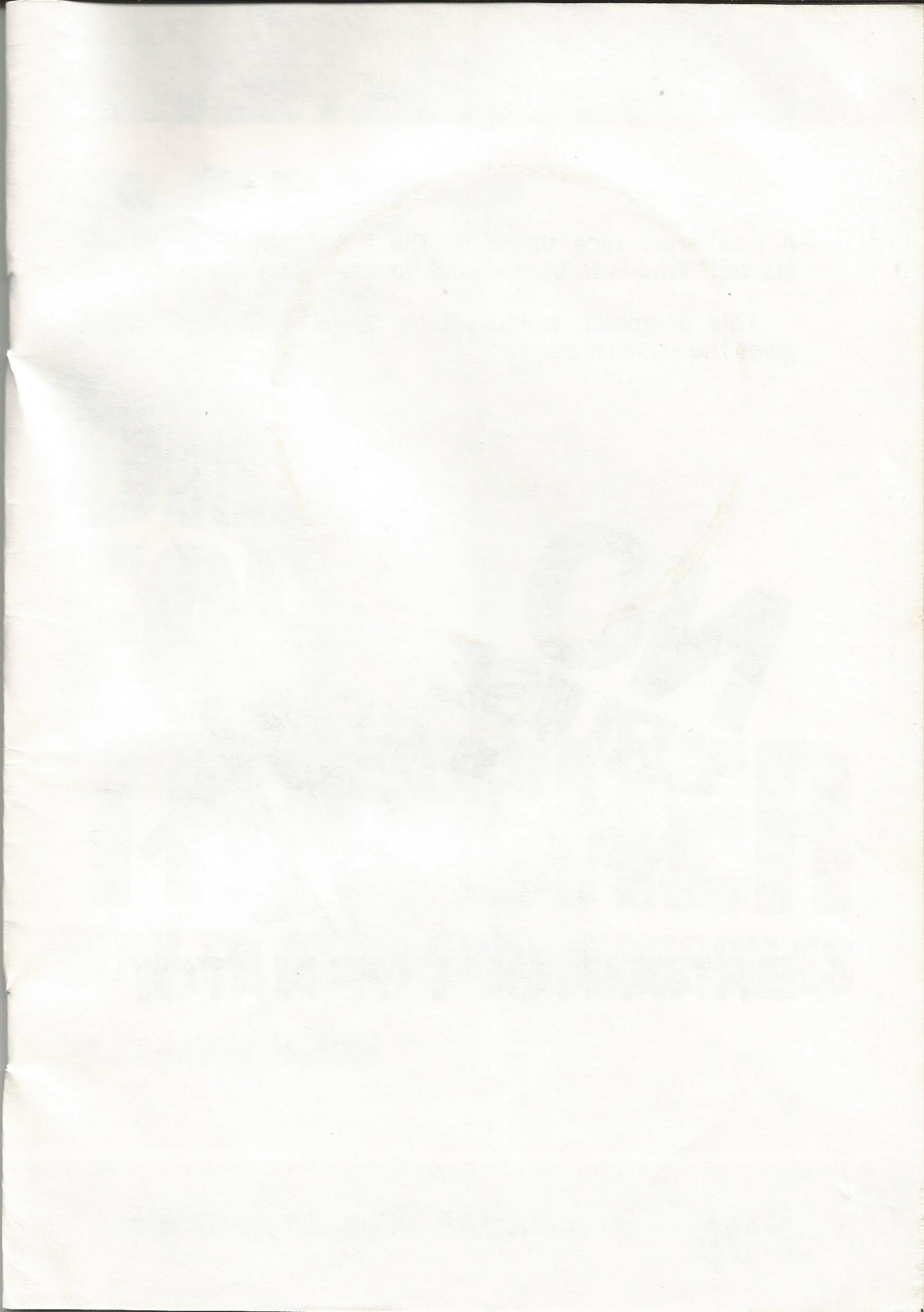
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This pamphlet, published by Socialist Challenge, gives the socialist answer.

**NO
CRUISE
MISSILES!**



BRITAIN OUT OF NATO!

20p

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