

## Peace and Populism | Josef Joffe

### Why the European Anti-Nuclear Movement Failed

At the threshold of the 1980s, an old specter returned to haunt Europe—the specter of neutralism and nuclear pacifism. Notably in the Continent's northern, Protestant parts, a thriving peace movement, flanked by the churches and the Socialist parties, set out to batter the foundations of established security policy. In terms of noise and numbers, the domestic war over the "Euromissiles" was the most spectacular upheaval in postwar European history, and in this generation, no conflict has torn at NATO's social fabric as fiercely as its 1979 decision to station some 500 cruise and Pershing II missiles on European soil. Millions of demonstrators massed in the towns and cities of Western Europe to block their deployment. The battle pitted old against young, Right against Left, leaders against led. From the Netherlands to Norway, from Great Britain to Germany, the Brussels Decision would drive center-left parties toward the outer fringes of the political spectrum. At least one government, Helmut Schmidt's in Bonn, fell largely because the Chancellor could not stem his own cohorts' revolt against nuclear weapons. It was the most impressive display of populist muscle in the postwar era.<sup>1</sup>

Though the immediate targets were the accoutrements of extended deterrence, the attack would soon transcend "neutron bombs" and nuclear mis-

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1. The terms "populist" and "populism" as used in this article should not be confused with the specific meaning that is normally assigned to them in the context of American history—where "Populist" denotes a member of the American People's Party (1891–1904), which advocated the free coinage of gold and silver, the public ownership of utilities, and government support for agriculture. As used here, these terms carry a more general meaning, taken from their Latin root ("people"). They denote the pursuit of political goals outside—and against—the institutions of representative government by self-selected bodies seeking to pressure the political system with the instruments of grassroots and protest politics: demonstrations, mass marches, blockades, etc.—in short "mobilization from below."

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siles. Suddenly, Western Europe seemed poised at a historical double-divide. One was a crisis of belief which found its outlet in the impulse of neutralism—the temptation to opt out, to refuse moral and political choice, and to ignore the reality of power in international affairs. Not policies hung in the balance but their premises: the bond between Western Europe and the United States, the commitment to self-defense, indeed, the very idea of alliance as a freely chosen political community.

The other divide was marked by a crisis of political institutions. Observers were quick to surmise that the antinuclear movement of the 1980s presaged something more fundamental than yet another cycle of nuclear anxiety, akin to its forebear in the late 1950s. Or as one British commentator put it: "Pandora's Box has been opened. For good or ill, nuclear strategy in Europe has been a 'leadership decision,' taken by an informed few—a tiny nuclear elite—on behalf of an only-intermittently-interested many. . . . That no longer applies to Western Europe. The Pandora's Box of the nuclear age is public participation in nuclear policy-making; and the true message of the protest movement . . . is that the lid has opened."<sup>2</sup>

In other words, by the beginning of the 1980s, Western Europe was allegedly caught in the midst of a true sea change, and the new nuclear politics, far from merely echoing the revolt of the late 1950s, in fact betrayed a secular transformation that was here to stay. According to this widespread view, Western elites had finally lost their authority over national security policy, the last bastion of a disembodied *raison d'état*. The ramparts of the last arcanum had apparently crumbled before the onslaught of democracy's triumphant forward march. And the people, spearheaded by a militant protest movement, were about to outflank the institutional routines of representative government and to gain a permanent veto power over their nations' security policy.

Yet during the last days of 1983, the first missiles arrived on schedule in Britain and West Germany. Compared to the din of the demonstrations, the installation of these missiles lacked even the minimal punch of a decent anticlimax. It was almost a non-event which stood in bizarre contrast to firmly embedded expectations. Had not the more venturesome spokesmen of the German peace movement promised to make the country "ungovernable"?

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2. John Barry, "Just Who Is Deterred by the Deterrent?," *The Times* (London), August 18, 1981, p. 12.

What about those resolute women who had ringed the British cruise missile base at Greenham Commons with their bodies? Why did democratic governments coldly ignore a clamorous *vox populi* as well as the pollsters who had regularly reported hefty majorities against the deployment?

This article has a threefold purpose. First, it will seek to explain why the peace movements of Western Europe failed in their announced goal, which was to block the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) in the five host countries—Britain, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Second, it will address a larger question: did the rise of the peace movement truly signal a shift in the nature of West European politics? Was it merely another “cyclical burst”—or in fact a “secular break” with the traditional routines of governance? Have Western Europe’s leadership elites lost their sway over the making of national security policy? Finally, what are the implications for the future of the Alliance? Does the protest movement of the 1980s presage the severance of those ligaments that have held the transatlantic compact together for decades, or was the revolt inspired by more limited objectives? In other words, was the target of discontent nuclear weapons or, more profoundly, NATO itself and the tie to the United States?

In answering these questions, this article argues in favor of the “cyclical” over the “secular.” It tries to delineate the specific historical conditions that spawn and undermine movements of protest. In the process, it makes the case for continuity rather than transformation. Though the “counter-elites” assembled in the peace movements tried to outflank or intimidate the traditional national security elites, the issues they sought to manipulate proved too weak to mobilize the masses or to determine electoral choice. As to the causes of protest, this article argues that neither age, religion (“Protestantism”), geography (the “Northern Tier”), nor the facts of nuclear possession (like the French *force de frappe*) can adequately explain the peculiar distribution of protest throughout Western Europe. Instead, the key factor seems to have been the “usual suspect,” i.e., party affiliation. Hence, a crucial weight is assigned to the role (and choice) of Western Europe’s Socialist/Social Democratic parties and to the reasons that did, or did not, lead them to take up the antinuclear cause. Where the Socialists, as in France and Italy, remained passive, the movement remained insignificant. Where they took to the vanguard, as in the “Northern Tier,” the forces of protest flourished. These arguments are buttressed by an analysis of the available public opinion evidence.

*Public Opinion and Public Policy*

During the denouement of the Euromissile crisis in November 1983, as the West German parliament delivered a solid vote in favor of the government's nuclear choice, only a few hundred demonstrators had gathered to mount a last-minute vigil around the Bundestag. It was a far cry from the hundred thousands who had beleaguered Bonn in the fall of 1981 and the summer of 1982. Powerless to affect the vote inside, the protestors managed to score but one noisy point when, in desperation, they set off an air-raid siren somewhere in the neighborhood. Unwittingly though, the helpless screech of the siren did make a point about the nature of Western politics that was all too often forgotten during the headier days of the peace movement: the distinction between moods and majorities, between the "input" of populist politics and the "output" of representative government.

Though shaken and occasionally demoralized, the established political institutions of Western Europe would hold their own because they were facing populist movements, not popular majorities. That many thoughtful observers would equate one with the other and proceed to write the obituaries for representative government highlights a unique (and deceptive) advantage of modern protest movements. Their best allies are not the masses but the ersatz forces of mass participation—opinion research and television. Opinion polls tend to eclipse the classic mediating institutions, television magnifies the drama of dissent, and both—the great accelerators of contemporary politics—have given rise to the beguiling impression that the traditional democratic process has been replaced by a *plébiscite de tous les jours*. Yet while the demonstrators habitually dominated the headlines and the television screens, their compatriots looked elsewhere during election time. In the crucial contests of 1983, in the Federal Republic in March and in Britain in June, it was Helmut Kohl and Margaret Thatcher who won at the polling booths, and not their peaceminded rivals on the left who had gambled on the antinuclear and anti-American sentiments of their electorates. Nor were the voters confronted with fuzzy choices. Germany's Christian Democrats and Britain's Conservatives had openly campaigned on a pro-missile platform. And the Socialists on either side of the Channel had left little doubt that they were out to derail the deployment.

The verdict of the ballot box should not have surprised anybody—least of all the professional pulse-takers who had little trouble in extracting anti-missile pluralities, if not majorities, from their quarry. In Britain half of those

polled were against the "government's decision to allow the American government to base cruise missiles on British soil." In West Germany the margin was 39 to 29 percent. In Belgium, 42 percent opposed and 26 percent supported "the installation of American missiles on its territory." In the Netherlands, the opposition added up to a strong majority, with 68 percent rejecting and only 28 percent affirming the siting of cruise missiles in their country.<sup>3</sup>

Yet here again, the most hackneyed truth about polling reemerged with remarkable consistency: the answer is shaped by the question. Strong resistance against the missiles was registered only when the respondents were confronted with a crude yes/no alternative. Nor is this a startling outcome, since nobody, European or American, looks forward to receiving new nuclear weapons on his soil. Indeed, when the question is posed in such bald terms, opposition turns into a veritable avalanche. A West German sample was asked: "Assume new missiles were to be stationed *in your area*. Would you agree, or not?" Eight out of ten did not.<sup>4</sup>

Once the question becomes more complicated, once the respondent is allowed to "cue" on other items than just missiles, there is an almost total reversal of sentiments. In 1983, a European-wide poll posed the following query: "The countries of Western Europe and NATO are generally on the right course now, trying to negotiate arms reduction in Geneva, but also planning to deploy Pershing IIs and cruise missiles if the USSR does not reduce its own nuclear threat." Predictably, six out of ten Britons, almost 70 percent of West Germans, one-half of the French, 57 percent of the Italians, six out of ten Dutch, and 66 percent of the Belgians opted for "agree."<sup>5</sup>

Did they do so because the wording was so suggestive? Perhaps. But there were two other twists to the question that were at least as crucial. First, the respondents were not herded into a crude choice between "yes" or "no" to new missiles, let alone to nuclear weapons in their own backyard. Second, the query was placed in a wider political context. When missiles are linked to such "good" things as "NATO" and "negotiated reduction" and to such

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3. Kenneth Adler and Douglas Wertman, "Is NATO in Trouble? A Survey of European Attitudes." *Public Opinion*. August/September 1981. (Quotation marks refer to the actual wording of the question.)

4. In a poll taken in the summer of 1983, as cited by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann of the Institut für Demoskopie in Allensbach, "Drei Viertel gegen die Raketenstationierung?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 16, 1983, p. 11. (Emphasis added.)

5. Poll conducted by SCOPE of Lucerne, Switzerland and commissioned by *Time Magazine*. Published in *Time*, October 31, 1983, p. 49.

"bad" things as "Soviet nuclear threat," nuclear weapons become part of a larger web of interests which reveal weights and priorities—and thus a more complex picture of attitudes.

Within the wider fabric, such strands as "Soviet threat" and "alliance" regularly dwarf the more ambivalent thread of aversion to (new) nuclear weapons. Throughout Western Europe, the attachment to NATO remained as strong as ever during the battle over the Euromissiles. Even in the supposedly most antinuclear country, the nation that had its name taken to designate the dread disease of neutralist pacifism as "Hollanditis," an average three-quarters of the population preferred NATO membership to withdrawal. The number of those who affirmed the need for America's participation in Europe's defenses even increased slightly, to 62 percent in 1982. Nothing could dramatize the resilience of the Alliance fabric more vividly than another Dutch poll which, in 1982, revealed that less than three out of ten would advocate leaving NATO even if the Alliance "holds on to nuclear weapons." Finally, nuclear pacifism, no matter how strident, was tempered by a strong dose of Calvinist realism. Thus six out of ten Dutch attributed Europe's peace in part or *in toto* to the existence of nuclear weapons, and more than half believed that, come what may, "we shall have to learn to live with nuclear weapons."<sup>6</sup>

The peace movement failed to convert moods into majorities because antinuclear sentiment, no matter how widespread in countries like Holland or Norway, was but one among many in the cluster of attitudes people bring to bear on foreign policy and defense, and then it was by no means the decisive one. Yet there was a more profound reason at work which would ultimately stultify the antinuclear rebels. It is hard to harness the tide of popular disaffection if the masses do not care. Though seemingly the very epitome of brooding terror, nuclear weapons apparently do not terrorize enough to rouse the populace from its habitual lassitude in matters of defense and security policy. The public opinion experts label this phenomenon "low

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6. For all Dutch data cited in this paragraph, see David Capitanchik and Richard C. Eichenberg, *Defense and Public Opinion*, Chatham House Papers No. 20 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), chapter 4, "The Netherlands," pp. 31, 33. Hereinafter cited as *Defense and Public Opinion*, this book is a very useful brief overview of public opinion data in Western Europe. For the most exhaustive, most recent, and most carefully analyzed survey of Western European opinion, see Gregory Flynn and Hans Rattinger, eds., *The Public and Atlantic Defense* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1985), hereinafter cited as *The Public and Atlantic Defense*. It covers Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United States.

issue salience" which, in turn, breaks down into the triptych of indifference, ignorance, and immunity.

In the fall of 1981, a West German sample was asked to respond to NATO's "two-track" approach which foresaw negotiated reductions but also Western deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles if arms control talks failed. About four out of ten were favorably disposed, and about 20 percent were against NATO's two-track strategy. The most striking figures emerged from the rest of the sample, revealing a solid block of ignorance and indifference. Exactly 40 percent admitted that they either "did not know" or "did not care."<sup>7</sup>

The next fifteen months witnessed the grand flowering of the West German peace movement. According to the spokesmen of the Krefeld Appeal, a loosely bound umbrella organization of ecologist, church, and antinuclear groups, several million signatures were amassed against NATO's missile plans. In the fall of 1981 and the summer of 1982, hundreds of thousands marched on Bonn to protest the deployment. Prominent figures of political and moral authority like former chancellor Willy Brandt and many Protestant theologians added their voices to the growing chorus of resentment. Key segments of the German media, both print and electronic, provided an ever-increasing barrage of antinuclear fire, lavishly interspersed with nationalist and anti-American codewords. And in 1983, the West Germans were asked

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7. Poll commissioned by *Der Spiegel*, executed by EMNID, and cited in *Der Spiegel*, February 2, 1983. The exact wording of the question was not revealed. The interviewer explained the substance of the "two-track" approach and then confronted the respondents with four alternatives. The exact breakdown is as follows:

—in favor	36 percent
—against	21 percent
—does not interest me	12 percent
—have not made up my mind yet	30 percent

Apparently, the wording matters a great deal because various Allensbach polls have revealed much more powerful support for NATO's Brussels Decision. Respondents were asked: "The so-called NATO double-decision has been around for a while. With that decision the NATO countries agreed, on the one hand, to counter the Soviet intermediate-range missiles with comparative missiles of their own in Central Europe, on the other, to launch disarmament negotiations with the Soviet Union. On the whole, is this double-decision a good thing or a bad thing?"

	May 1981	January 1982	December 1982	August 1983
good thing	53%	52%	51%	49%
bad thing	20%	22%	25%	23%
undecided	27%	26%	24%	28%

Source: Noelle-Neumann, "Drei Viertel gegen die Raketenstationierung?," p. 11.

once more to respond to the same question about the two-track decision, phrased as in 1981. The average voter was not impressed. He responded virtually as he had two years earlier, give or take a couple of percentage points. In other words, one and a half years of militant, nationwide agitation had done nothing to change the attitudes of the populace at large. Four out of ten still displayed either ignorance or indifference, signaling an astounding degree of immunity to the passions of the self-selected few.<sup>8</sup>

While concerns about nuclear weapons rose dramatically throughout Western Europe in the early 1980s (when measured in isolation from other worries), they remained too weak to galvanize a truly mass-based revolt. Perhaps the most fascinating evidence for the low salience of nuclear weapons emerges from a poll taken in an obscure town tucked away in the southwest corner of the Federal Republic. In the fall of 1983, pollsters descended on Schwäbisch-Gmünd to plumb the community's nuclear *angst*. The town was chosen for good reasons. It shares the neighborhood with an American army base which, at that point, was being readied to receive a detachment of Pershing II missiles. The German peace movement and Soviet public diplomacy had targeted the Pershing as a particularly lethal affront to the Russian homeland and hence as a prime target for Soviet nuclear strikes. Predictably, close to 60 percent of the town's inhabitants opposed the deployment. But then the field workers asked another question. Would they—the presumptive victims—also “actively support” the peace movement. Only 15 percent replied that they would.<sup>9</sup>

The low import of nuclear weapons characterized the pattern throughout Western Europe. In the ranking of concerns, unemployment ran far ahead of any other worry, listed by six to almost eight out of ten respondents. Conversely, nuclear weapons were relegated to fifth place in France and Italy and to fourth place in Britain. Only in Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway did nuclear weapons edge up to second place. Yet even there, they were separated by a gulf of 21 (Holland) to 35 (Germany) percentage points from the overarching issue of unemployment.<sup>10</sup>

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8. Responses in favor of the two-track decision even rose by two percentage points to 38 percent. Opposition increased from 21 to 22 percent, 11 percent were “not interested,” and 28 percent were undecided. As cited in *Der Spiegel*, February 2, 1983, p. 90.

9. Infas, “Die politische Stimmung in Schwäbisch-Gmünd in September 1983” (Bad Godesberg, 1983), as cited in *Der Spiegel*, No. 42 (1983), p. 59.

10. *Security and the Industrial Democracies: A Comparative Opinion Poll* (Paris: Atlantic Institute—Lou Harris, 1983).



More significantly, the rank order of concerns reveals a striking reversal when respondents are asked to list their worries as *factors of voting behavior*. Invited to relate sentiments to political choice, the supposedly "Hollanditis"-infected Dutch dropped "new nuclear weapons in the Netherlands" to fourth place—after unemployment, social security, and crime.<sup>11</sup> These responses dovetailed nicely with the outcome of the 1982 election. The spearhead of the Dutch antinuclear revolt, the Inter-Church Peace Council (IKV) had urged the populace to treat nuclear weapons as the supreme issue of the campaign and to vote for the parties of the Left. Yet it was the Christian Democrats and the right-of-center Liberals (VVD) who garnered a majority in the Second Chamber. The West German pattern was no different. Prior to the 1983 federal election, four issues emerged as the decisive ones: unemployment, social security, inflation, and the national debt. Conversely, foreign policy had sunk to the bottom of the agenda.<sup>12</sup> And the Social Democrats, after a hapless campaign of antinuclear and nationalist shibboleths, were left with their worst result since 1961 when the polls closed on March 6, 1983.

In short, nuclear weapons were not a winning issue in Western Europe. At worst, they actually paved the road to electoral defeat, as in Britain where Labour emerged from the 1983 contest with its worst showing (in terms of ballots) since 1918. Old-time partisans, who deserted Labour in droves, were more likely to mention defense as a crucial issue than Labour loyalists. They were also much more supportive of cruise missiles and the British national deterrent than the stalwarts who voted their party affiliation. In other words, "those sticking with Labour did so despite Labour's defense policy; those deserting Labour did so, at least partly, because of the policy."<sup>13</sup>

#### *The Correlates of Crisis*

The Great Atlantic Crisis of the 1980s was neither a crisis of public opinion nor of democratic governance. Public opinion, though distinctly shaken by nuclear weapons and visions of war, did not rally around the banners of the militant few. Nor did the institutions of representative government, though rattled, succumb to the clamor of the streets. On its own, the peace move-

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11. *The Public and Atlantic Defense*, p. 231, Table 6.10.

12. "Polit-Barometer," as broadcast by Second German Television (ZDF), December 7, 1983.

13. Ivor Crewe, "Britain: Two and a Half Cheers for the Atlantic Alliance," in *The Public and Atlantic Defense*, pp. 25–26.

ment could not even hope to translate noise into the necessary numbers. And where its voice was amplified by the traditional parties of the democratic Left, as in the inverted Arc of *Angst* that stretched from Britain via the Low Countries and Germany into Scandinavia, the offensive ground to an abrupt halt at the polling booths. At the end of the day, every Labour (or Liberal) party that had sought to absorb or outflank the protest movement ended up not in power but on the opposition benches.

The foundation did not crumble, and the consensus did not truly unravel. Mass opinion veered neither toward neutralism nor pacifism. As measured on a "better-red-than-dead" scale, the West Europeans turned out to be only slightly less defense-minded than the United States. Vast majorities continued to favor resistance over surrender in Britain, Holland, and West Germany—precisely those countries thought to be most thoroughly infected by the bacillus of Protestant *angst*. To round out the surprise among the large countries, moral lassitude seemed to have spread farthest in France—the least "civilian" and most Catholic of the Continental powers. (See Table 1.)

Nor were the correlates of crisis adequately captured by such labels as "neutralism" or "anti-Americanism." Large majorities continued to favor membership in NATO, and the strength of devotion was again highest in the Arc of *Angst* where "Hollanditis" had allegedly taken its largest toll: in Norway, the Netherlands, and West Germany.<sup>14</sup> As to the United States, offering a vexing image of weakness and willfulness to the world at the turn of the decade, there was some decline in sympathies. Still, favorable opinion of the United States held at a high level, again highest in West Germany (73 percent) where the foundations of Atlanticist orthodoxy were seen to be shifting more rapidly than anywhere else. Conversely, favorable opinion of the Soviet Union ranged from 11 percent in Belgium to 20 percent in the Federal Republic.<sup>15</sup>

In other words, anti-Alliance, pacifist, or pro-Soviet sentiments were not the correlates, let alone the causes of the malaise. Was it then just a tempest in a transnational teapot? While there was less than met the eye (and the

14. For Norway (72 percent in favor of membership), see *The Public and Atlantic Defense*, p. 309, Table 7.12; for the Netherlands (72 percent in favor), see *ibid.*, p. 267, Table 6.42; and for the Federal Republic (78 percent in favor), see *Defense and Public Opinion*, p. 65, Table 9.

15. See Gallup Poll of March 1982, as summarized in *Newsweek* (European Edition), March 15, 1982, p. 13.

**Table 1. Resist or Surrender?**

*Question:* "Some people say that war is now so horrible that it is better to accept Russian dominance than to risk war. Others say that it would be better to fight in defense of [name and country] than to accept Russian domination. Which option is closer to your own?"

	Better to fight	Better to accept domination	Don't know
United States	83%	6%	11%
Switzerland	77%	8%	15%
Great Britain	75%	12%	13%
Germany	74%	19%	7%
Netherlands	73%	18%	12%
France	57%	13%	30%
Denmark	51%	17%	32%
Belgium	45%	14%	41%

*Sources:* *Gallup Political Index*, No. 259, March 1982. Data for Netherlands gathered by United States International Communications Agency (USICA) in October 1981; question referred to a hypothetical Soviet attack on Holland and posed the alternative between "resistance" and "non-resistance."

headlines), these data merely limn the *limits*, albeit sturdy ones, of crisis. The significant indices of trouble lay elsewhere, and they were more specific. First, aversion centered not on the Alliance but on its nuclear wherewithals. Second, the target was not the United States as source of fear and loathing ("anti-Americanism") but American policies which, as Cold War II unfolded, would batter the tranquility of the *détente* decade Europeans had come to accept as a permanent fixture of their lives. Hence the third area of *angst* was defined by ballooning visions of war as the West Europeans reacted anxiously to the rumble of great power conflict.

#### NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Western Europe has lived with the accoutrements of extended deterrence since the late 1950s when the first generation of intermediate-range missiles (Thor and Jupiter) and tactical nuclear weapons arrived by the thousands. Their installation on West European soil triggered the first antinuclear movement. After they were safely ensconced, the "*Kampf dem Atomtod*" (Fight

Nuclear Death) and the "Ban the Bomb" movement in Germany and Britain evaporated with nary a trace. Public anxiety dwindled, and for almost a generation, nuclear strategy receded into the inner sancta of a small transatlantic coterie of experts and officials. That phenomenon recalls an old adage of the economists: "Old taxes are good taxes." Once nuclear weapons are psychologically absorbed, once they are hidden in remote silos or isolated bases, they become "good," that is, non-oppressive, weapons.

A quarter century later, a new generation of nuclear weapons—"neutron bombs," Pershing II, and cruise missiles—forced itself once more into the collective conscious of the West, and suddenly Western publics were again confronted with the murderous premises of their security. Nor was Western Europe the only victim of nuclear *angst*. European anxieties were loudly echoed by the citizens of Utah and Nevada, staunchly conservative and defense-minded all, when they were asked to accept MX missiles on their soil. And thus Jimmy Carter's favorite basing scheme (200 MX missiles shuttling back and forth among 2400 launch points) foundered largely against the fears of those who lived among the potential targets of Soviet saturation bombing. The moral of this transnational tale need not be belabored. Nobody likes nuclear weapons, least of all when they are about to transform his own habitat into a magnet for nuclear strikes. And nobody likes to be reminded of the fact that his security rests on weapons that might obliterate his society and person in a matter of days, if not hours.

Hence, it was not NATO that drew hostility but its nuclear weapons; not the arsenals of yore but its latter-day descendants in the guise of Pershing II and cruise missiles. (Indeed, had the cause of rebellion been nuclear weapons *per se*, NATO's "old" 6000 tactical nuclear weapons would have made a far more appropriate target of attack because they are destined to explode not in the distant reaches of the Warsaw Pact but on or over densely populated home ground.) Public opinion data tend to confirm what plausibility suggests. While faith in nuclear deterrence remained high<sup>16</sup> and pressures for unilateral removal remained low,<sup>17</sup> hostility to nuclear weapons rose sharply whenever the question cued on the twin-stimulus "new missiles" and "your neighborhood." When the issue was posed thus, eight out of ten West

16. More than five out of ten West Germans agreed with the proposition that "an attack by the East can best be prevented by deterrence." Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Ein grosser Teil der Bevölkerung bleibt standfest," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 30, 1981, p. 11, Table 2.

17. Almost six out of ten Dutch (58 to 38 percent) opposed the unilateral removal of nuclear weapons from their territory in 1981. *The Public and Atlantic Defense*, p. 253, Table 6.30.

Germans opposed deployment—the largest anti-INF majority ever registered in Western Europe.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, on a “better-red-than-dead” scale, the will to resist dropped dramatically whenever nuclear weapons were factored into the query. In the Netherlands, willingness to fight fell by 17 points, from 73 to 56 percent.<sup>19</sup> In the Federal Republic, the plunge was even more drastic. If almost three-quarters of the population would choose defense rather than Soviet domination when no nuclear cue is given, there was a striking reversal when *nuclear war* was posed as the price of freedom. In the shadow of the atom, only 30 percent would “defend democracy” while 45 percent would “above all avoid nuclear war.”<sup>20</sup> Finally, there was a distinct increase in unconditional hostility to nuclear weapons in the wake of NATO’s Euro-missile decision. In 1972, only 36 percent of a Dutch sample had agreed completely with the statement: “The use of nuclear weapons is not acceptable under any circumstances, not even if we are attacked with nuclear weapons ourselves.” By 1983, that proportion had grown to 45 percent.<sup>21</sup>

#### “ANTI-AMERICANISM”

While the penchant for “equidistance” between the superpowers increased during the early 1980s, it was not the United States as such that fell into disrepute. Nor was the Soviet Union suddenly viewed as a benign denizen of the Continent; indeed, threat perceptions were generally on the rise. Least of all was there any readiness to dispense with the United States as a security lender of the last resort. The measure of disaffection was at once more subtle and dramatic, centering on Western Europe’s refusal to accept American policies as ultimate repository of wisdom and prudence.

The deterioration of the United States’ image proved most drastic among its British cousins, tacit or formal comrades-in-arms since the War of 1812. If expressions of confidence in American “ability to deal wisely with present world problems” and the lack thereof were about evenly balanced in 1977, the gap had grown to an astounding 46 percentage points by 1983.<sup>22</sup> In the

18. The question was formulated as follows: “Assume new missiles were to be stationed here in your area. Would you agree or not?” Poll conducted by Second German Television (ZDF), as cited in Noelle-Neumann, “Drei Viertel gegen die Raketenstationierung?,” p. 11.

19. *The Public and Atlantic Defense*, p. 234, Table 6.14.

20. Noelle-Neumann, “Ein grosser Teil der Bevölkerung bleibt standfest,” p. 11, Table 4.

21. *The Public and Atlantic Defense*, p. 235, Table 6.15.

22. Twenty-four percent expressed confidence (“very great” or “considerable”); 70 percent had “little,” “very little,” or “no” confidence. Norman L. Webb and Robert J. Wybrow, “Friendly Persuasion: Advice from Britain,” *Public Opinion*, February/March 1983, p. 13, Figure 1.

Netherlands, distrust of American ability to deal responsibly with the world increased in 1981 from 37 to 50 percent.<sup>23</sup> After a massive survey of available West European data, a recent Atlantic Institute study concludes: "There exists a profound concern about the United States, and levels of trust seem to have dropped to the lowest point since the Second World War."<sup>24</sup>

#### THE FEAR OF WAR

Waning faith in American judgment and leadership correlated well with another significant index of anxiety: the increasing fear of war. In Britain, concern about a future troubled by global conflict shot upward by 24 percentage points right after the invasion of Afghanistan, driving popular pessimism to the record level of 69 percent. As compared to 1963, the expectation of *nuclear* war would soar by 33 points. In the spring of 1980, 75 percent of the French opined that "the present international situation carries the risk of a world war." In West Germany, almost seven out of ten thought in 1981 that peace in Europe had become "less secure"; in the Netherlands as many people felt in the same year that the danger of war had increased over the last decade.<sup>25</sup>

Together, the "three fears"—of new nuclear weapons, American policy, and war—provided a fertile substratum for the peace movement of the 1980s. Each in its own way, these anxieties reflected the same message, and one that was not without irony. The pillars of certainty—nuclear deterrence and alliance with America—had suddenly revealed their dark side which spelled not reassurance and stability but dependence and danger.

The impending arrival of a new generation of land-based missiles thrust to the forefront of the collective psyche the irreducible dilemma of contemporary defense. Nuclear weapons not only buttress deterrence; they also drive home the fatal consequences of its failure. "Old" nuclear weapons, half-forgotten, suggest a sturdy shelter; "new" nuclear weapons remind their beneficiaries that they are also the potential victims and that the shelter may

23. *The Public and Atlantic Defense*, p. 263. See also data published in *De Volkskrant*, March 6, 1982, which indicated that 55 percent of the respondents had become more critical of the United States than a few years ago.

24. As a cautionary note, the editors add: "Unfortunately, this is another case in which earlier data are sparse, and it is impossible to know whether the figures are really more dramatic, or whether it just seems as if they must be. What one can say, however, is that this time, it is less U.S. reliability and more U.S. political judgement that is being called into question." *The Public and Atlantic Defense*, p. 376.

25. Figures taken from *The Public and Atlantic Defense*, p. 22, Table 2.6; p. 23, Table 2.7; p. 77; p. 123, Table 4.11; p. 229.

double as target of deadly attack. Nor is it an accident that democracies like the end (deterrence) and loathe the means (nuclear weapons). Democracies, as the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment and their 19th-century *sociologue* heirs had dimly foreseen, are indeed pacific in their fundamental disposition. Martial virtues and a high level of societal mobilization, meaning the subordination of the self for the sake of the collective, do not flourish among principles that sanctify life, liberty, and the pursuit of (individual) happiness. Security-through-deterrence may thus be ideally suited to the democratic ethos. Based on machines rather than men, on weapons that are distant, silent, and ostensibly unusable, deterrence promises safety without blood, sweat, and tears. That promise is brutally shaken when new weapons intrude on the mind, cutting through the seemingly impenetrable barrier between "deterrence" and "warfighting," driving home that we might use what must never be unsheathed.

To make matters worse, these weapons were not even the object of sovereign choice, and thus anxieties about nuclear weapons were compounded by anxieties about their provider. As with the *ultima ratio*, the West Europeans had come to view the United States as silent and undemanding guarantor of their blessed state. Dependence, though existential, did not grate as long as the patron power remained modest in his claims for tribute. That would change with a vengeance when Jimmy Carter II turned against Jimmy Carter I after the invasion of Afghanistan and when Ronald Reagan came to power in 1981 by repudiating both. Protection, seemingly extended *gratis*, suddenly exacted a nasty price as the United States sought to drag Western Europe into a conflict with the Soviet Union they were loath to accept as their own. Every token of fealty the United States demanded seemed calculated to increase the risk of war. The politics of denial—embargoes, credit cut-offs, and diplomatic boycotts—threatened to rob the West Europeans of the civilian means by which they had hoped to domesticate Soviet military might. The rhetoric of confrontation and the reality of rearmament (especially via European-based nuclear forces) would slice into the tranquility of the Continent from an opposite direction—by provoking the Soviet Union. That the Europeans would blame the United States (as evidenced by the dramatic drop of confidence in its "ability to deal wisely with present world problems") rather than react to the relentless buildup of Soviet power in the previous decade is again hardly surprising.

Nations that depend for their security on others want the best of all possible worlds. The Europeans want full protection but minimal risks; they will the end, which is the credibility of American power, but not necessarily the

means, which entail the reassertion of American power—be it in form of Euromissiles or confrontationist policies toward the Soviet Union. Both fueled tensions, and these not only punctured the quiescence the Europeans had come to take for granted during the 1970s but also accentuated dependence on a suddenly unpredictable ally whose moves they could not control.

Moreover, there was a conspicuous difference between Cold War II and its predecessor in the 1940s and 1950s. In those days, an expansionist Soviet *Westpolitik*, though conducted from a position of military inferiority, translated into fear, anti-Communism, and Alliance cohesion. The reverse was true of the 1970s and beyond. Although European public opinion took due notice of the impressive growth of Soviet military might, that perception simply did not engender a sharpened sense of physical threat because the Soviet Union took care to flex its muscles softly, if at all, while operating on the European chessboard. It was the United States that manifestly attacked the status quo as it sought to reverse its long decline from power in the 1970s. And the Soviet Union, having reaped the fruits of détente precisely because it had dispensed with the cruder means of pressure, could pose as the defender of the status quo and innocent victim of the American call to arms.

#### *Theories of Revolt*

Many theories have been advanced to explain the purported “collapse of the defense consensus,” the sudden specter of “Atlantis lost,” and the apparent “democratization of national security policy.” The previous analysis suggests a sense of caution. Anxieties about nuclear weapons, American intentions, and the danger of violent conflict certainly enriched the soil where insurrection flourished. Yet the consensus frayed at best at the edges only, and revolt did not spread beyond the militant few. The puzzle in need of solution is not a genuine mass movement; nor did the revolt sweep the entire length and breadth of the half-Continent. The problem is a more limited one, and it consists of two parts. *Geographically*, the assault on orthodoxy acquired its strongest momentum in the Arc of *Angst* linking Britain, the Low Countries, West Germany, and Scandinavia. By contrast, it proved weak in Italy and impotent in France. *Politically*, the rise of the peace movement posed a serious challenge only where its cudgel was taken up by the established parties of the democratic Left. This raises the question of geography in another guise: why did Labour in Britain, the SPD in Germany, or the PvdA in Holland



turn the cause of the peace movement into its own; why did the Socialist parties of France and Italy coldly ignore the temptations of pacifism, neutralism, and anti-Americanism?

In noting the geographical impact of the peace movement and the stark differences between the Protestant North and the Catholic South, it is tempting to assign a key causal role to religion. Indeed, in the Netherlands and the Federal Republic, the Protestant churches have been in the vanguard of the protest movement, and in Germany in particular, prominent Protestant theologians have been eager to lend the cachet of religious authority to the political cause. On the basis of these facts, it seems fitting to conclude that Protestant political culture has served as the motor of revolt, specifically, guilt unrelieved by confession and penance, the precedence of conscience over authority, a critical stance vis-à-vis the demands of the political order, and what Max Weber calls the "ethics of pure conviction" (*Gesinnungsethik*).<sup>26</sup>

Yet the religious factor raises too many questions to serve as the answer. It does not explain why there is a strong link between Protestantism, Church activism, and the peace movement in Holland while the Churches (Low and High) have virtually stayed out of the fray in Protestant Britain. It does not explain why the American Bishops, rather than the spiritual leaders of the Protestant majority, have become the fiercest critics of nuclear orthodoxy in the United States. Nor does the recourse to religion shed much light on Belgium, a country with a tiny Protestant minority, where protest activity was not only high but apparently so effective as to stalemate a succession of governments on the INF issue. In Scandinavia, the bastion of Lutheranism, the Church was hardly in attendance wherever the antinuclear faith was preached, and in Denmark in particular, the most spectacular actions of the movement were spearheaded by women's groups. In West Germany, almost evenly divided between Catholics and Lutherans, Protestant churchmen and theologians played a prominent role in the peace movement, but the connection between Protestantism and protest is by no means clear. The pious, in fact, tend to be quite heretic when contemplating the antinuclear catechism. With respect to the correlates of crisis (e.g., support for the peace

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26. It should be noted, however, that Lutheranism, the overwhelming majority denomination of Protestantism in West Germany, looks back at an ancient tradition of "render-unto-Caesar" submission to the claims of the state. The antiauthoritarian politics of "pure conviction" is, historically, not a distinctive trait of German Lutheranism. Like the Vatican, the Lutheran Church concluded an early peace with the Hitler regime, and today many pastors in the peace movement present that dark chapter as reason or rationalization of their contemporary activism.

movement or hostility to nuclear weapons), the most religious tend to be least infected by the spirit of protest. Among regular churchgoers, only 36 percent view the peace movement as "necessary"; among those who attend "seldom or never," sympathy leaps to 54 percent. The rejection of nuclear weapons is similarly skewed: 39 versus 57 percent.<sup>27</sup> Finally, the most vivid message of skepticism emerges from the Netherlands, the country that serves as the paradigm of the Protestantism/protest hypothesis. It turns out that it was *not* the Roman Catholic population that was most critical of the Inter-Church Peace Council, the avant garde of the Dutch peace movement, but the Calvinists whom Max Weber portrayed as the very embodiment of the Protestant ethic.<sup>28</sup>

The Protestant Connection frays even more when placed in a wider context. In terms of public opinion, ironically, the "Protestant Paradigm" fits the Catholic South more closely in many respects than it does the North. Pacifist sentiments, as measured on a "better-red-than-dead" scale, are significantly higher in France and Italy than in Germany, Great Britain, and Holland.<sup>29</sup> Nuclear pacifism, i.e., the readiness to relinquish nuclear weapons unilaterally, grips Italy much more tightly than Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway, and it reaches record levels in Spain, the most Catholic country of them all.<sup>30</sup> In 1981, at the height of the war scare, many more Italians (55 percent) than Dutch (36 percent) were categorically opposed to the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>31</sup> Again in Italy, the unconditional refusal of INF was

27. *The Public and Atlantic Defense*, p. 159, Table 4.36; p. 163, Table 4.38. As a note of caution, it should be added that these figures do not distinguish between Catholics and Protestants. Since Catholics attend church far more frequently than Protestants, the sample might be biased in favor of Catholics who also tend to be more conservative and authority-prone than their Lutheran brethren.

28. Thirty percent of Dutch Catholics disagreed with the IKV, but so did 53 percent of the Calvinists. See Table 3.6 in Jan Siccama, "The Netherlands Depillarized: Security Policy in a New Domestic Context," in Gregory Flynn, ed., *Overlooked Allies: The Northern Periphery of NATO* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1985).

29. Seventy-five percent in Britain, 74 percent in West Germany, and 73 percent in the Netherlands would prefer armed resistance to peace and Soviet domination; in France only 57 percent, in Italy only 48 percent would so choose. *Gallup Political Index*, No. 259, March 1982. Dutch data: USICA survey, October 1981.

30. Attitudes were measured by asking respondents to choose among various statements about nuclear weapons. The strongest antinuclear statement—"Give up all nuclear weapons regardless of whether the Soviet Union does"—was chosen by 35 percent of Italians and 55 percent of Spaniards. The percentages for West Germany, Britain, Netherlands, and Norway were: 23, 17, 25, and 15, respectively. *Security and the Industrial Democracies*, 1983.

31. *The Public and Atlantic Defense*, p. 95, Table 3.20; p. 235, Table 6.15. These polls were conducted on a national level only and thus not identically worded.

significantly higher than in the Netherlands.<sup>32</sup> And neutralist temptations flourished most strongly in France rather than in the Arc of *Angst*.<sup>33</sup>

Yet France and Italy, where popular sentiments are measurably more "Protestant" than in the Protestant countries, happened to be the strongholds of Atlantic orthodoxy. In Italy, antinuclear protest remained too fitful to amount to a real campaign, in France it was barely audible, and in both countries Socialist (or Socialist-led) governments acted as sturdy guardians of NATO's missile plans. This double-paradox—the gap between Catholic faith and "Protestant" beliefs, and between popular opinion and governmental behavior—must detract even further from the theory that would equate denomination with destiny.

Nor do other macrosociological explanations, such as age, fare much better. It is undeniably true that protesters tend to be young, but it is not true that the young are protesters. Where generational data exist, they rarely distinguish the old from the young. In West Germany, for instance, opposition to "new missiles" is practically identical across the full spectrum of age groups. A similar pattern holds true for the other correlates of crisis: defense spending, the "importance of [maintaining] good relations with the East," perceptions of the Soviet military threat, the necessity of NATO, and (with a bit more variation) the fear of war.<sup>34</sup> In Britain, attachment to NATO varies only by decimal points between the ages, and so does the desire for "greater accommodation with the USSR."<sup>35</sup> The young score higher on the correlates of crisis only where a third factor intervenes: a high level of education. That link, however, is neither new nor specific to the situation of the 1980s. As a

32. In early 1981, 54 percent of Italians were unconditionally opposed to INF deployment, even though the question merely referred to *Europe* as locus of deployment. At the same time, only 46 percent of Dutch were thus opposed, even though the questions specifically cued on "deployment in the Netherlands." Since hostility to INF rises in response to the stimulus of geography ("in *your* country/area"), the Italian poll probably underestimates the level of anti-INF attitudes. For the Italian data, see *ibid.*, p. 1923, Table 5.16. For the Dutch figures, see *Haagsche Courant*, April 26, 1981.

33. In March 1981, USICA tried to measure neutralism by posing the following question: ". . . do you think it is better for our country to be part of NATO . . . , or would it be better for us to get out of NATO and become a neutral country?" Large majorities in the Protestant tier opted for alliance. In France, however, opinion was almost evenly divided between alliance (45 percent) and neutrality (40 percent). Kenneth Adler and Douglas Wertman, "Is NATO in Trouble? A Survey of European Attitudes," *Public Opinion*, August/September 1981, p. 10.

34. *The Public and Atlantic Defense*, p. 164, Table 4.39; p. 159, Table 4.36; p. 157, Table 4.34; p. 166, Table 4.40.

35. Tables 4.4 and 4.5 in a chapter appropriately titled "Great Britain: Generational Continuity" by Peter Fotheringham in Stephen F. Szabo, ed., *The Successor Generation: International Perspectives of Postwar Europeans* (London: Butterworth, 1983), p. 95.

student of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), the British peace movement of the 1950s, puts it: "Higher education has something of a radicalization effect on those who experience it," and "young CND supporters [are] characterized by their success in the educational system."<sup>36</sup> Higher education also yields a crucial permissive condition of activism: ample discretionary time which distinguishes students from those who are fettered by the responsibilities of work and family.

Nor is it clear whether nuclear weapons are a unique cause of youthful disaffection. Successive generations of West European university students have taken to the streets for a succession of causes: nuclear weapons in the 1950s, the Vietnam War in the 1960s, civilian nuclear power in the 1970s, again nuclear weapons in the early 1980s, once more nuclear plants in the mid-1980s. And throughout the 1980s, protest has fastened onto a variety of less portentous issues: Palestinian rights, American "imperialism in Central America," or acid rain. In West Germany, those who fought pitched battles against nuclear power plants and airport runways redeployed in the early 1980s to march against Pershing missiles and in the mid-1980s to defend the nation's forests against the *Waldsterben*, literally, the "dying of the woods." Perhaps, then, the true message of the antinuclear revolt is *not* that the "Pandora's Box" of populism has been cracked open for good. Instead, there may exist a permanent, free-floating protest potential that will attach itself to issues as they come and go.

If neither denomination nor generation can adequately account for the rich variety of reactions to nuclear weapons, could the facts of possession provide the answer? Perhaps it was not nuclear weapons *per se*, but *foreign* nuclear weapons that inflamed passions while sparing those who, like the French, harbored neither American troops nor their atomic arms. Michael Howard has written that the discontent of democracies may derive from the double-distance that separates modern European society from those who are charged with its protection. The "divorce of the bourgeoisie and their intelligentsia from the whole business of national defense" has given rise to the belief "that peace is a natural condition threatened only by those professionally involved in preparations for war." As a result, "the military become the natural target for the idealistic young. And how much more will this be the case if those military are predominantly foreign; if the decision for peace or

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36. Frank Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism: The Social Bases of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), pp. 171, 173.

war appears to lie with a group of remote and uncontrollable [American] decision-makers whose values and interests do not necessarily coincide with one's own?"<sup>37</sup>

This insight may explain why the French, blessed with a *force de frappe* (since 1960) and the absence of American troops (since 1966), have turned a deaf ear to the clamor of the peace-minded. But it does not explain why the nonnuclear Italians have generated only little protest, remaining content to shoulder the burden of additional American missiles and to act as paragon of Atlantic virtue. Nor does it account for the case of Britain, the second-oldest nuclear power in the West, where "the majority of [the peace movement's] active supporters are opposed to British possession of nuclear weapons of *any description*, whether independent or as part of Britain's NATO commitments, whether land- or sea-based."<sup>38</sup>

#### *Party and Populace*

Sociology, it appears, does not fully explain politics. Theories that would fasten on sweeping background variables such as religion, age, or (nuclear) dependence elucidate dispositions. But they obscure the *political* nature of revolt—the "intervening variables" of institutions, leadership, and, above all, political parties as the crucial nexus between opinion and policy. Protest movements do not spring fully clad from the depths of an *angst*-ridden unconscious, nor do they flourish in a political vacuum. In addition to fundamental dispositions, there has to be leadership and organization to harness psychology to power. Hence we must look at the politics behind the populism, and that question looms all the larger in view of the original puzzle: why did similar moods lead to different manifestations? Indeed, the paradox ought to be posed more sharply. Why did France and Italy remain virtually untouched by the tide of revolt although pacifist, neutralist, and antinuclear sentiments were measurably more virulent in those two countries than in the North? Conversely, why were the Northern countries, where public opinion would confound the Cassandras, swept by waves of militant protest which reached all the way into the established party system?

A fascinating clue emerges from the survey data themselves. Wherever the grand totals were disaggregated in search of links between sociological

37. Michael Howard, "Reassurance and Deterrence," *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1982/83, p. 316.

38. Crewe, "Britain: Two and a Half Cheers for the Atlantic Alliance," p. 29. (Emphasis added.)

status and political sentiment, it was not religion, age, sex, or class but *party preference* that served as best predictor of national security attitudes. In Britain, between 30 and 40 percentage points separated Conservative and Labourite responses on such items as "unilateral abandonment of all nuclear weapons," "US missile bases in Britain," or "canceling the Trident missile system."<sup>39</sup> In the Netherlands, the "removal of nuclear weapons from Dutch territory" polarized Social Democrats (PvdA) and right-of-center Liberals (VVD) by a staggering margin of 48 points.<sup>40</sup> In West Germany, almost twice as many Greens as Christian Democrats refused "new missiles in the FRG," and the gap between the latter and the Social Democrats measured 26 percentage points.<sup>41</sup> In Italy, by contrast, there is no such polarization between the democratic Left (i.e., the Socialists [PSI]) and the Christian Democrats (DC). On "confidence in the US political system," DC and PSI partisans are separated by seven percentage points only; the same slender gap obtains between the supporters of INF deployment in either camp.<sup>42</sup> Visible differentials (in the range of 20 points) emerge not between PSI and DC but between them and the Communists. A similar pattern holds true in France.<sup>43</sup>

What does this clue indicate? It establishes a powerful link between party preference and political attitudes. More concretely, it reveals that the sentiments of the faithful move in tandem with the policies and pronouncements of their parties. Where the democratic Left, as in the North, became radicalized, so did its adherents. Where the Socialists, as in France and Italy, acted as prophets of the Atlanticist creed, their followers professed opinions that were hardly distinguishable from the attitudes of the Right. Yet the numbers do not resolve the more important problem of cause and effect. Has the rank-and-file imposed its will on the parties or vice versa? Do parties react to shifting demand curves for political goods, or do they in fact create their own demand by mobilizing their partisans? In short, who leads and who follows? Is it "mobilization from below" or "mobilization from above"?

These questions do not lend themselves to rigorous proof, but a number of reasons suggest that the marketplace of political ideas is dominated by the producers rather than the consumers. In the first place, it is the very *raison d'être* of parties to stake out positions that will draw the undecided to their

39. *The Public and Atlantic Defense*, pp. 60–63, Table 2.28.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 250, Table 6.25.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 164, Table 4.39.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 210, Table 5.46; p. 207, Table 5.40.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 94, Table 3.9 (measuring attitudes on "neutralism").

cause, to create a supply that will galvanize demand. Secondly, it would be surprising to witness a reversal of this pattern, of all places, in the highly specialized sub-market of national security policy. The rank-and-file is least likely to take to the vanguard when it comes to defining new demands on such complicated arcana as nuclear strategy.<sup>44</sup> Such doubts are reinforced by a third factor—the modest salience of national security policy in the collective mind of the West European public. If the peace issue remained a distinct minority concern, too weak to throw elections or to harness a mass movement, it is difficult to see how irresistible demands from “below” would have forced the parties into a change of course. Conversely, it should be expected that the faithful look to their parties for guidance precisely on those items, like security, that they habitually ignore. Fourth, and perhaps most important, the battle over peace engulfed the leadership of key Socialist parties in the North *before* it spilled out into the public realm. Conversely, where it did not, as in Italy and France, partisan polarization and peace-minded militancy remained virtually a *quantité négligeable*.

Hence, we must look not only at the actors of the populist drama but also at the authors of the script which shaped the terms of the debate long before the play became a noisy free-for-all. In the Federal Republic, the Netherlands, and Great Britain, the established parties of the democratic Left began to push nuclear weapons toward front-stage while the activists were still demonstrating against nuclear power plants. For the German peace movement, the date of conception is probably July 17, 1977 when the SPD's Secretary-General launched his famous assault against enhanced-radiation (ER) weapons: “Is mankind turning mad? . . . Our scale of values has been turned upside down. The objective is the preservation of matter; mankind has become a secondary consideration. . . . The neutron bomb symbolizes the perversion of thinking.”<sup>45</sup> It was a deliberate call to arms, directed as much against Helmut Schmidt (Chancellor since 1974) as against Jimmy Carter, dedicated as much to détente with the Soviets as to undercutting the ascendancy of the middle-of-the-road Schmidt wing within the party. The battle against nuclear weapons—first against ER projectiles, then against INF—began as a power struggle *within* the party long before the huge peace

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44. In the Netherlands, for instance, almost half of all respondents felt that laymen were not equipped to deal with the issue of removing nuclear weapons from the country. See *The Public and Atlantic Defense*, p. 239.

45. In an article in the SPD paper, *Vorwärts*, July 17, 1977.

marches of 1981 and 1982 would converge on Bonn. It was spearheaded by those who, like Willy Brandt, Herbert Wehner, and Egon Bahr,<sup>46</sup> saw "neutron bombs," Pershing II and cruise missiles as a grievous threat to arms control, détente, and Ostpolitik. Domestically, they hoped once more to convert that banner into ballots during the 1980 election, and thus to reenact the successful strategy of 1969 and 1972. Within the party, the nuclear issue would also help to shift the balance of power toward the left around Willy Brandt who had been forced to yield the Chancellorship to Helmut Schmidt in the wake of the Guillaume spy scandal in 1974.<sup>47</sup>

The pattern that would subsequently unfold within the SPD was emblematic for its sister parties in Northwestern Europe. Played out on a populist stage, the antinuclear drama acquired its unique resonance in the Northern Tier: because it embroiled large political parties which, throughout much of the 1970s, had played leading, if not dominant, roles in government. Its protagonists were neither young nor of the grassroots, but professional politicians who sought to rouse and ride forces that promised victory in the battle for domestic power. The moral of that drama echoed what a veteran of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) had to say about the role of Labour in the first British peace movement: unilateralist sloganeering was but a "means of covering up a struggle which has very little to do with disarmament or defense and a great deal to do with an internal struggle for power."<sup>48</sup>

And so it was one peace movement later. In Britain, the standard-bearers of the Labour Left, Anthony Wedgwood-Benn and Michael Foot began to wield the antinuclear cause against the *ancien régime* of former Prime Minister James Callaghan after Labour's defeat by the Conservatives in the summer of 1979. At that point, the British peace movement was but an embryo—a loosely led band of thousands, but eagerly nourished by the Labour Left as it mustered its forces against the Callaghan wing. CND demonstrations featured prominent Labour leaders in profusion, and at the end of 1980, the veteran unilateralist Foot emerged as victor in the battle for Labour's leadership. Concomitantly, the party adopted unilateral nuclear disarmament as

46. Respectively, the chairman, parliamentary leader, and secretary-general of the SPD.

47. Günter Guillaume was an official in the Chancellor's Office when he was exposed as an agent of the East German State Security Service.

48. "The Meaning of Aldermaston," *The New Statesman*, March 31, 1961, p. 101, as cited in Leon V. Sigal, *Nuclear Forces in Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1984), p. 93.



a key platform plank. In West Germany, Helmut Schmidt fought a protracted but losing war that began in earnest in the early days of 1979, almost a year before NATO's missile decision that is widely, but inaccurately, portrayed as the fountainhead of the revolt. The contest ended with Schmidt's ouster from the Chancellorship in the fall of 1982. In early 1983, the ascendancy of the "National Left" was complete. The SPD launched an election campaign that reverberated with anti-American overtones (the key slogan was: "In the German Interest") and left no doubt that the party, if victorious, would block the deployment of INF.

It is this dynamic of large-party radicalization, absent in Italy and France, which must explain why the peace issue entered the mainstream of electoral politics in the North. Having been captured by their left wings, these parties were destined to lose their hold on power and then, freed from the responsibilities of governance, move even more rapidly toward the extremes of the political spectrum. As a result, the democratic Left legitimized and amplified fundamentalist dissent, endowing the movements of the militant few with a derivative weight they could not have mustered on their own. Nor did the peace movement even remotely approach such an exalted position in Italy and France, where the Socialist parties obeyed a very different compass.

In moving sharply leftward, the democratic Left of the Northern Tier responded to three factors. The first stems from their changing internal sociology. As the skilled workers, the traditional mainstays of Labour and Social Democratic parties, moved toward *embourgeoisement* and then out, the university-educated activists of the "Sixties Generation" moved in. They had come to political consciousness in the battle for the university and against Vietnam, and they had fought an establishment that was pro-America, pro-NATO, and pro-defense. Embarked on a "long march through the institutions,"<sup>49</sup> the heirs of 1968 would naturally turn against the icons of their elders. Nurtured on a decade of *détente*, they could easily ignore the building blocks of military power that underlies Europe's astounding postwar stability. They saw the West, and especially the United States, as instigator of international tension and the Soviet Union as hapless victim of Western encirclement. They saw alliances and nuclear weapons not as inhibitors of armed conflict but as its most likely cause. And to wrest power from the Schmidts

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49. Thus a famous slogan of the German New Left. For an elaboration of the West German case, see Josef Joffe, "Is Schmidt's Party Over?," *The New Republic*, June 2, 1982.

and Callaghans meant appealing to those who had moved from the radical university circles of the 1960s into the caucuses and convention halls of the 1970s and 1980s.

It is these sub-institutions of Labour, SPD, and PvdA that control the two main channels of advancement: elected position in the party executive and nomination for Parliament. The Dutch case is probably paradigmatic for each and all: "PvdA voters are more 'conservative' than PvdA members. . . . PvdA delegates, who decide the rank order of candidates for the Second Chamber [i.e., position on the Party's slate], want to express the more leftish view of the party's members, . . . elected PvdA parliamentarians are more to the right than PvdA Council members, and . . . PvdA ministers are further to the right than PvdA parliamentarians."<sup>50</sup> Such a setting is destined to throw up radical candidates and to force their rivals into a more extreme stance.

The peace issue, nurtured by real fears of nuclear weapons and war, thus dovetailed nicely with the ongoing passage of power from the postwar leadership to the generation of the 40-year-olds. To these two facets—the setting and the sentiments—a third should be added: the pseudo-populist flavor of the television age which tempts aspiring politicians to travel outside the institutional avenues of power and to appeal directly to the populace at large. This was the road the New Left took throughout, sometimes, as in Britain, even against their own mentors when Neil Kinnock replaced Michael Foot only three years after the septuagenarian Labour leader had routed the moderate Callaghan forces.

If the dynamics of recruitment and intra-party advancement made for radicalization, the second and third factors might explain why the process unfolded most swiftly in the area of foreign and defense policy. Why would the Northern Socialist parties commit themselves so wholeheartedly to a minority quest that proved to be a losing issue to boot? One answer is surely: *faute de mieux*. The 1970s had been the "Social Democratic Decade," in terms of both power and policy. In the Northern Tier, it was marked by the ascendancy of the democratic Left which would rule alone or in coalition for most of the decade. In terms of policy, it was characterized by the rapid expansion of the state's role in the national economy that was generally financed by either real or inflationary growth. Giving to Peter without taking from Paul, governments had seemingly resolved the ancient conflict between

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50. Siccama, "The Netherlands Depillarized," p. 137.

private prosperity and public welfare, between defense spending (which would rise) and social spending (which would rise even faster). At the threshold of the 1980s, however, that strategy had reached a double-dead end. Long-term economic decline not only reimposed the nasty choices of yore; they also robbed the democratic Left of yesterday's winning campaign issues. No longer the guarantors of seemingly endless growth, none of the Socialist parties that had presided over the onset of the worst recession in postwar history could run on its economic record, let alone against it by preaching the conservative virtues of belt-tightening and budgetary restraint. The lack of domestic campaign alternatives thus combined naturally with instinct and ideology to push the peace-cum-détente theme to the fore. By default, it was the best campaign banner available, and in times of economic contraction, such a policy had the additional advantage of circumventing the welfare/warfare state dilemma by legitimizing defense rather than domestic spending cuts.

The third factor was perhaps the profoundest of them all because it may well betray a more lasting transformation of West European domestic politics. The Cold War decades, the 1940s and 1950s, had been the age of Conservative predominance. The Center-Right's Socialist rivals had entered the corridors of power after a long and painful adjustment process that required the repression of ancient pacifist penchants and the commitment to NATO and nuclear weapons. Neither the SPD nor Labour, to name but the two most important parties, had ever been comfortable with that role. Nor had they ever forgotten a basic lesson of the Cold War—that it is Conservative parties, defense- and alliance-minded, which profit from a tense climate of East-West affairs. Détente, arms control, and East-West amity thus reflect more than natural ideological predilections; they provide the vital setting where Social Democratic parties can rise to, and continue to flourish in, tenure. Hence, the democratic Left fastened on the peace issue not only for lack of potent domestic alternatives but also for reasons of power and self-legitimization. To have sailed with the prevailing wind that, by the turn of the decade, blew cold from Washington as well as Moscow, would have meant competing on the "wrong" platform, i.e., on military strength and anti-Sovietism. These issues were triply unpromising. They would have required slicing into an already stagnating social and welfare budget; they were the natural and more credible preserve of the Right; and they would have amounted to an *ex post facto* admission that a decade of Social Democratic détente policy had failed to deliver on its lofty promises.

By the mid-1980s, the Socialist parties of the Northern Tier were again confronted with the ancient conflict between sect and church, between doctrinal purity and the messy compromises of power. Yet the return to "Bad Godesberg"<sup>51</sup> promised to be a lengthy one, given the rout of the moderates, the attempt to coopt ecologists and peace activists, and a far-from-completed recruitment process that attracts not the heirs of Gaitskell, Callaghan, and Schmidt to the fold but the youngish admirers of Brandt, Kinnock, and his German *doppelgänger*, Oscar Lafontaine.<sup>52</sup>

To describe the change in more general terms is to analyze the shifting relationship between the democratic and communist Left. During the Cold War decades, Communism marked the unbreachable limits of legitimacy, separating permissible dissent from collaboration with an inimical superpower. The success story of alliance with America and the era of Conservative ascendancy cannot be explained without recourse to the domestic impact of anti-Communism which targeted "the enemy" both within and without. That binding consensus stigmatized not only Communist parties, even large ones like the PCF and PCI, as agents of a foreign power. It also tainted those Socialist parties as handmaidens of Bolshevism who would follow their traditional instincts and plead for disengagement, neutralization, and nuclear disarmament. To unshoulder that burden and gain electoral respectability, the democratic Left had to become holier-than-thou in matters of defense and foreign policy and to eschew even the most fleeting association with Communist cohorts and causes. The obsessive fear of contamination explains, for instance, why the German Social Democrats swiftly abandoned the first peace movement (1957/58) after a short-lived attempt to turn popular revulsion against tactical nuclear weapons into a springboard for governmental power. To further objectives that were insistently pursued by the Soviet Union and its domestic surrogates were then the sure road to electoral disaster. Or as Herbert Wehner, the long-term parliamentary leader of the SPD, put it in retrospect: it was dangerous to "rouse moods and mobilize people with whom Social Democracy could not continue to make common cause after a certain point and who would obstruct even further its access to the so-called common man."<sup>53</sup>

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51. Bad Godesberg was the site of the legendary SPD convention in 1959 where the party shed its residual Marxism and moved toward the embrace of NATO and its nuclear strategy.

52. Anti-NATO and antinuclear, the young mayor of Saarbrücken is one of the key contenders for the leadership of the SPD after the end of the Brandt era.

53. As quoted in Günther Gaus, *Staatserhaltende Opposition: Gespräche mit Herbert Wehner* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1966), p. 26.

Today, after a decade of détente, both the external and internal threat have lost their sting, and anti-Communism is no longer the great polarizer (and arbiter) of West European politics. Where there were once impenetrable barriers between the democratic and communist Left, there are now regular contacts, flanked by ad hoc cooperation. Members of both sides have freely mingled in the peace movement, although neither ever managed to gain control over this many-feathered flock. The most telling transformation has occurred in the realm of policy. Previously loath to share objectives that were even remotely those of the Soviet Union, the Socialist parties of Britain, Germany, and the Scandilux countries have rallied around positions that do not echo but resemble Soviet preferences, to wit: hostility to Western INF deployment, proposals for nuclear-free zones, attachment to a no-first-use strategy, opposition to SDI, criticism of American arms control postures, the refusal to confront the Soviet Union over Afghanistan and Poland, and a general disposition to impute either benign or defensive motives to Soviet policy.

The great exceptions to this shift have been the Socialist parties of France and Italy. It is that fact rather than religion or opinion that must explain why their Socialist-led governments have ignored the temptation of populist pacifism while steering a course that either equals (as in Italy) or exceeds (as in France) the alliance-minded fervor of the moderate Right. The key differences relate to phase and position in the electoral system. Unlike their counterparts in the North, the Socialist parties of Italy and France would capture governmental leadership only at the beginning of the 1980s, when the promise of détente and East-West harmony had begun to pale and minds came to be concentrated on the rise of Soviet power, Afghanistan, Poland, and as in France, the belated discovery of the Gulag. And unlike their Northern *confrères*, they had to acquire power in a *two-sided* battle—against the bourgeois Right and the communist Left that is strong in the South but puny in the North. The twin-rivalry informed a strategy that would push the Southern Socialists inexorably toward the center where they could draw votes from the Right and deny them to the Communists by posing as the trusty guardians of political resolve and military strength.

The key to the *politics* of populism lies in the nature of the political system, the arena where parties compete for power and position. The decisive difference between the stalwart South and the arc of *angst* is the presence or absence of large but marginalized Communist parties and the impact of either on the strategy of the democratic Left. The Northern Socialists could drift leftward to absorb or coopt (and thus legitimize) the forces of protest—to

harness a "majority to the left of the CDU/CSU," as SPD Chairman Willy Brandt put it—because they did not run the risk of taint-by-association. On *their* left, there was no powerful domestic rival who would force them to demonstrate impeccable Atlanticist credentials. And once the Cold War in Europe was ostensibly over and but a troublesome obsession of Reaganite America, the Soviet Union no longer functioned as an equivalent source of discipline on the outside. Indeed, after a decade of détente which had favored the ascendancy of the Social Democratic Left, Moscow had ceased acting as a pole of repulsion; it was in fact the legitimate and indispensable partner in cooperation.

Conversely, the French and Italian Socialists could move to the right and ignore the populist road to power because their Communist adversaries were trapped in what the Italians call the "majority zone," the consensus-bound area which promised a share in power after decades of isolation. Although among the most dogmatic of Western Europe's Communist parties, the PCF had swallowed pride and principle in 1981 to gain four Cabinet posts in Mitterrand's Socialist regime. Chained to governmental discipline, the French could not, and dared not, rouse the faithful in the service of anti-Americanism and neutralism, let alone against nuclear weapons, the shiny symbol of French *gloire* and great-power status. And since the bulk of the French peace movement was virtually a sub-division of the PCF, its voice was not only timid but also discredited.

The same pattern obtained in Italy, even though the country was facing foreign missiles on its soil and not a national *force de frappe*. Bettino Craxi's Socialists could comfortably don the mantle of stout-minded Atlanticism because their left flank was secure against a Communist assault. Eager to break the burdensome connection to Moscow, Enrico Berlinguer's CPI had long ago embraced the Alliance, refusing to countenance "any unilateral action, whether with regard to disarmament or our stable ties to the Atlantic Pact."<sup>54</sup> Nor did the CPI dare to mobilize its considerable potential in the streets in order to shake the government's INF commitment—for fear of losing the aura of respectability it had labored long and hard to acquire. Brushing aside the call of the French Communists to join a "unified peace

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54. Romano Ledda, "Les Propositions du PCI pour la paix et pour le développement dans le monde." *Les Communistes italiens*, October 1981, as quoted in Jean-François Bureau, "La contestation des armes nucléaires et les partis politiques en Europe de l'Ouest," in Pierre Lellouche, ed., *Pacifisme et dissuasion* (Paris: IERI, 1983), p. 194.

movement," the CPI occasionally sounded more resolute than the Social Democratic parties of the North. Or as one member of the Central Committee put it: the deployment of Euromissiles was "theoretically possible," and the Party's approach to this question was based on the "necessity for a balance of forces and equal security."<sup>55</sup>

The moral of this story is the power of political structures. Indeed, it can be no other when similar societal dispositions throughout Western Europe call forth different political manifestations in different countries. When the same fears and resentments draw the established Left in the North toward the vortex of protest while pushing its Southern counterpart toward stout-minded Atlanticism, attention must perforce shift from society to the polity. Why are certain "inputs" transmitted and amplified; when are they deflected and contained? Short of a real revolution, which dispatches the problem of political structures along with the structures themselves, social minority movements depend for their growth on the political setting in which they act. Hence, we must ask why established political leaders take up certain cudgels at certain times to clobber and cow their opponents. And given the stark differences between the Southern and the Northern Tier, which cannot be explained adequately by religion or any other sociological background variable, the answer must be sought in the political milieu where elites (and counter-elites) compete for power and position.

That milieu yielded options to the democratic Left of the North which it denied to the Socialists of the South. The Social Democratic parties of the North *could* move to the left because that terrain was not contaminated by the presence of powerful Communist parties. Nor were they deterred from occupying that space, as they had been in the distant past, by the Soviet Union. After a decade of détente, contacts with Moscow no longer spelled 'the kiss of death but, to the contrary, electoral profit for those parties that sought to position themselves as trusty guardians of East-West amity in Europe. There was thus little danger in trying to outflank or absorb the forces of fundamentalist protest. Yet in the process of embracing the cause of the peace movement, the Social Democratic left ended up by enlarging it. Conversely, the nature of the party system in the South foreclosed such a strategy; in Italy and France, the Socialists were neither forced nor tempted to move left because their Communist rivals were loath to lose whatever respectability

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55. Paolo Buffalini, as quoted by John Vinocur, "Rome and Bonn Appear to Ease View on Missiles," *The New York Times*, January 16, 1983, p. A10.

they had gained in thirty years of tortuous adaptation. As a result, peace-minded agitation remained but the pale copy of the real thing in Italy and France. The moral of the story is that, in Western Europe at least, politics matters more than populism. In the North as well as in the South, the crucial issue was not peace but power, and that, in fact, is the name of the democratic game.

*Democracy and Defense: Lessons from History*

Waning by mid-decade, the peace movement of the 1980s was not a secular break but yet another cyclical burst that echoed the upheavals of the 1950s. Twice, then, in the postwar era, the politics of Western Europe were shaken by militants who sought to exorcise nuclear weapons, if not to undo the alliance that had elevated them to the *ultima ratio* of Western security. If organized disaffection recurs, it raises the question of times and circumstances. When does peace become an issue in the political marketplace? Why do peace movements arise; why do they disappear?

To begin with, there is a distinct generational flavor to antinuclear protest. While the young, as the opinion data reveal, are not protesters, the protesters tend to be young. The peace movements of the 1950s and 1980s are separated by a quarter-century, and perhaps it is no mere fluke that this period spans the normal generational cycle of 25 years. Every generation must come to grips with nuclear weapons on its own, and in each case, a new generation had to learn to live with "the bomb" that could not be banished from the earth but might one day incinerate it. To accept the terrifying paradoxes of deterrence—that more is never enough, that we must threaten to condemn the world in order to save it—goes against the very grain of a post-Enlightenment teleology that sees all problems as temporary and all evils as mere stepping stones on the path to ultimate salvation. Perhaps, then, it should come as no surprise that the more privileged, university-sheltered young, whose very life experience is progress incarnate, should regularly revolt against so powerful symbols of doom as nuclear weapons.

But moods, whether among the young or the old, do not for movements make. As in any uprising, there have to be trigger events, concrete and tangible, which convert a vaguely felt malaise into the push and pull of personal revolt. A sense of crisis must intrude before people start voting with their feet, and there were three crisis factors present at the creation of both antinuclear waves.



First, both peace movements were preceded or paralleled by momentous shifts in the nuclear balance. Soviet rocket threats against Paris and London during the Suez Crisis of 1956 were the early harbingers of a new age; one year later, the West would learn that the Russians had launched their first intercontinental ballistic missile ahead of the United States. Before 1957, "massive retaliation" had been a one-way threat only—the comfortable monopoly of the United States. Now, Western societies were suddenly brought face-to-face with their own vulnerability to the nuclear firestorm, a fact that Soviet statements and *démarches* (combined with multi-megaton weapons demonstrations) rarely failed to press home during the headier days of the "missile gap."

What Suez and Sputnik did for the first, the relentless Soviet buildup during the 1970s did for the second peace movement. Matched by the breathtaking expansion of the Soviet strategic arsenal, the three-generation jump from the half-forgotten SS-4 and SS-5 to the SS-20 missiles<sup>56</sup> in the European "theater" spelled out the dreadful message that all of Western Europe, though a serene island of seemingly permanent *détente*, was an immovable target and a hostage to Soviet nuclear might. That sense of victimhood may explain the curious psychology of displacement that informed so much of the peace movement's analysis. To imbue the Pershing II with a greater threat than the SS-20, to accuse Reagan rather than Russia, and to turn against Western "decapitation weapons" instead of their precursors in the East was not a flight of curdled fancy but an act of propitiation that took due notice of the realities of power. In years of Western neglect (the last American Euromissile, the Mace-B, had been withdrawn in 1969), the Soviets had assembled a counter-deterrence panoply in Europe that was virtually indistinguishable from a first-strike threat. In such a setting, it was rational to be irrational—to depict the West as "aggressor," to espouse the moral superiority of self-denial, and to avoid any provocation that might unleash the ire of a superior adversary.

Rapid technological change, the shift from older to newer and more "usable" weapons, yielded a second trigger event. We live most comfortably with the bomb when we are allowed to forget its existence. The less visible its means, the larger loom the benefits of deterrence. Forgetfulness and repression cease to function, however, when new weapons intrude on the

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56. The SS-4 and SS-5 were liquid-fueled, stationary, and equipped with a single warhead. The SS-20 missiles are solid-fueled, mobile, and carry a triple warhead.

mind. In the late 1950s, the deployment of American medium-range missiles (Thor and Jupiter) and thousands of tactical nuclear weapons literally brought the abstractions of deterrence down to earth. It was no accident that the first peace movement flourished most luxuriantly in West Germany. A country the size of Oregon, the Federal Republic came to host more nuclear weapons per square mile than any other nation in the world. And the bulk of these tactical weapons was short-range, hence destined to devastate the defender's, not the aggressor's land.<sup>57</sup>

Similarly, at the threshold of the 1980s, yet another generation of nuclear weapons punctured the veil of repression that is normally spread over death, taxes, and the accoutrements of "mutual assured destruction." Many of the new weapons entering the arsenals of the 1980s were smaller, more accurate, and hence ostensibly more "usable"; "warfighting" and "prevailing" suddenly seemed to edge out "deterrence" as the doctrine of the day. "Neutron bombs" and Pershing II and cruise missiles abruptly reminded the West Europeans that nuclear terror was the price of an unprecedented peace *cum* prosperity, that survival, in Churchill's legendary words, was indeed the "twin brother of annihilation." Anxieties triggered by the arrival of new weapons combined easily with fears about their purveyors, and from there it was but a short step to sheer paranoia which had it that the United States was no longer Europe's loyal guardian but in fact a co-conspirator bent on turning the Continent into the "shooting gallery of the superpowers."<sup>58</sup>

The third factor was political and perhaps the most important of them all: the breakdown of *détente*, meaning the collapse of moderation between the two superpowers and their angry turn toward confrontation. New generations of nuclear weapons terrify because they suddenly cast a glaring light on the murderous premises of our security. A surge in Soviet power awakens

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57. In the summer of 1955, 1.7 million West Germans were "killed" and 3.5 million "incapacitated" during the NATO war game *Carte Blanche* that simulated a tactical nuclear war in Central Europe. Three years later, *Carte Blanche* provided the German peace movement with one of its most powerful arguments. During the parliamentary debate on West Germany's acquisition of nuclear delivery vehicles, Helmut Schmidt used language that presaged Egon Bahr's attack on the "neutron bomb" 19 years later: "Do you remember the NATO maneuvers *Carte Blanche* and *Black Lion*? There is a new [nuclear] staff exercise going on at present—this time called *Blue Lion*. I have been told that the officers . . . were reduced to tears [while thinking about] the day-to-day consequences of the reality behind the exercise." *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages*, March 22, 1958.

58. Thus the memorable phrase by the former SPD mayor of West Berlin, Pastor Heinrich Albertz at a Bonn rally on October 11, 1981. For the entire speech, see *Frankfurter Rundschau*, October 12, 1981.

us to our ever-present vulnerability to nuclear extinction. But sharply deteriorating East–West relations add urgency to the *angst*. Rightly or wrongly, democratic societies instinctively recoil from the sound and the fury of international tension because they habitually equate the noise with the real war.

By 1957, the vaunted post-Stalin “thaw” had merged into an offensive phase of Soviet diplomacy—a policy Nikita Khrushchev’s own colleagues would condemn as “adventurist” when they toppled him in 1964. That phase began with a campaign of threats against the nuclearization of NATO, notably against the Federal Republic which was about to acquire American tactical weapons for its armed forces. It escalated in 1958 when Khrushchev flung down his Berlin ultimatum, reaching a flash point in 1961 when American and Soviet troops confronted each other across the Berlin Wall. And it culminated in the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 that pushed the two superpowers toward the brink of global war. These were the halcyon days of *Kampf dem Atomtod* (“Fight Nuclear Death”), Easter marches, and CND—and very good years for proclaiming the moral superiority of “redness” over “deadness.”

A similar chill descended at the threshold of the present decade which was ushered in by such rattling events as the Iran hostage crisis, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the war of nerves over Poland. The Euromissiles intruded on the Western psyche precisely at a time when the strategic arms control talks (SALT II) ended in frustration and the *détente* of the 1970s gave way to Cold War II. Slicing into Europe’s tranquility from many directions, these events seemed to make war more likely, inexorably deflecting attention from the obvious sturdiness of the “balance of terror” toward the unthinkable consequences of its collapse. It did not matter that nuclear weapons had kept the peace for almost 40 years. Indeed, the very success of deterrence in keeping the great powers on their best behavior now spelled its greatest dangers as many in the West succumbed to proof-by-reverse-induction: fail it must because it has endured so long.

Twice in the postwar era, peace movements were spawned by strikingly similar events—the thudding arrival of new weapons systems, the darkening shadow of Soviet power, and the deepening chill in East–West relations. History, then, suggests why protest movements are born, but why and when do they disappear?

To begin with, protest movements fail because they fail. Behind this tautology lurks a congenital problem of all anti-institutional politics. Social movements try to mobilize maximum numbers at maximum speed, and thus they become a motley crowd. Pastors and pacifists, Reds and Greens, Leninists

and idealists are factions; they do not a coalition make. For a while, they manage to submerge their ideological differences for the sake of the great single-issue: in this case, the battle against cruise and Pershing II missiles. But when that overriding objective is frustrated, as it was when the first missiles arrived at the turn of 1983/84, the problem of organization returns with a vengeance.

The first response is the communal huddle and the collective soul-searching: where did *all* of us go wrong? Not so far behind comes the intramural reckoning, the not-so-friendly squaring of accounts: who "lost" the battle? The third stage brings the bitterness and the breakup as the diverse factions, faced with their clashing needs, either retract into the intimacy of their own fold or, conversely, strike out to impose uniformity by trying to capture the entire movement.

Unlike political parties, populist groupings are not equipped to survive in the cold. Established parties are geared for a life in opposition. They have organizations that have existed since time immemorial. They have a base, and they dispense patronage and positions to their cohorts. Even after defeat in a national contest, they can seek cover in local and regional power bastions where they can regroup for a counter-attack four years hence. For entrenched political parties, defeat does not spell the end but a new beginning.

Not so for ad hoc aggregations like the peace movement. How do they inspire their supporters and gain new recruits after failure? If the call to stop the missiles did not rouse the masses yesterday, will the call to stop the next batch prove more persuasive tomorrow—especially when the television cameras, their old but fickle allies, turn relentlessly toward the next newsbreak that, once more, promises to change the course of history? The worst enemy of grassroots movements is not the Establishment but boredom. Another mortal threat emanates from precisely those political parties which try to coopt or outflank them. Parties embrace issues to win, even though they might continue to cling to them long after their sterility was revealed at the polls. Yet in the end, that grip must be loosened, for parties, unlike movements, are in the business of politics for power and not principle. In West Germany, the first peace movement was doomed when the SPD, after a disastrous defeat in the crucial regional election of North Rhine-Westphalia, forsook the antinuclear cause and embarked instead on the road to Bad Godesberg. In Britain, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament shrunk into a sect when Labour abandoned unilateralism in favor of Harold Wilson who became Prime Minister in 1964.

Such structural handicaps are compounded by external threats. Peace movements, as history also suggests, are not hardy perennials because they depend on very narrow soil and climate conditions. Around 1963, the first antinuclear wave in Europe had virtually vanished without a trace. The Cuban missile crisis in the previous year was an obvious watershed. To the rattled Western mind, the happy outcome at the brink was doubly reassuring. It revealed that statesmen laboring under the shadow of the Apocalypse do not behave as fecklessly as did their forebears in 1914. And it revealed that, in spite of Sputnik and Soviet missile threats, the nuclear balance had not tilted in favor of the Soviet Union. To those who would have yielded to Khrushchev's gamble in Cuba and Berlin for survival's sake, it demonstrated that it helps to be strong when moving toward the edge of the nuclear unknown.

With the global balance so palpably restored, the fear of nuclear weapons rapidly receded throughout the West. The new weapons became "old" weapons and were forgotten once more. But there was a third factor, perhaps more weighty, which helped to pacify ruffled sensibilities: the global *détente* that followed the reassertion of Western strength in Cuba and Berlin. In the wake of deadly confrontation, the United States and the Soviet Union took their first steps toward taming the menace of the atom by linking Washington and Moscow through the vaunted "Hotline" in 1962 and by concluding a limited test ban treaty in 1963.

Modest as they were, these steps pulled the sting out of nuclear anxiety. They symbolized the power of political action over brooding terror. If the weapons could not be banished from the earth, they might at least be rendered impotent. And the lesson transcends the events of yesteryear. Precisely because nuclear weapons cannot be exorcised, they require not only a stable balance but also a doctrine of salvation. Arms control and *détente*, no matter how sterile when measured against the enduring facts of power and conflict, have provided that doctrine—a vital myth that injects reassurance into an intractable reality. The peace movement of the 1980s could not have flourished without the decline in moderation that accompanied the frightening surge in the quantity and quality of nuclear weapons. Conversely, the movement would not have receded as quickly without the calming moderation in the tone and discourse of international politics by the mid-1980s.

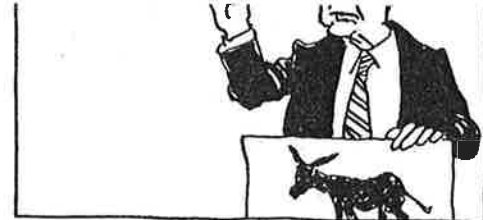
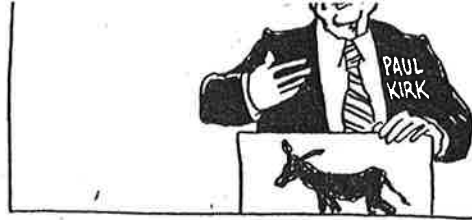
Democracies are not oblivious to the claims of a strong defense; indeed, as the experience with two peace movements shows, the faith in deterrence is as likely to wane when the West appears weak as when military plenty

becomes a purpose unto itself. Nor is it the weapons as such that make for *angst*. The first peace movement vanished precisely at a time when the United States, but also Britain and France, was in the midst of a resolute strategic buildup in the aftermath of the Cuban crisis. The implements of Armageddon were hardly being buried at this point. The "arms race" was moving along at a brisk pace in the 1960s, and the number of American warheads reached their peak in 1967. What *did* change in 1962, what *did* sap the *élan* of the first peace movement was the global political climate that suddenly spelled safety rather than terror, *détente* rather than conflict. Assurance, then, is not the enemy of arms but their vital ally. And thus, antinuclear revolts, no matter how fleeting, carry an abiding message. Democracies want their rivalry to be regulated, and they prefer big sticks that come with restrained language. They are not enamored of the drum-beat of rebellion, but in the shadow of the atom, they do like a quantum of solace.

the budget deficit and controlling inflation; a year and a half ago the Republicans had the advantage on each of these issues.

One of the Democrats' most seasoned strategists, however, has just written a memorandum to the party's leading financial activists in which he argues that at the national level Democrats are in a desperate situation. "The unpleasant truth," he writes, "is this: The party has never been weaker in our lifetime, and the array of obstacles and trends never more alarming." The doomsayer is Patrick H. Caddell, who has been a key player in more presidential campaigns—1972, 1976, 1980 and 1984—than any other living Democrat.

Caddell and his associate, Thomas Riehle, examine electoral statistics from the past five presidential elections and come up with a startling conclusion: The Democratic Party has no base in national politics. Only the District of Columbia, with three electoral votes, has voted Democratic



# American Jews Have No Need to Cringe

By JOSEF JOFFE

MUNICH—"Is it good or bad for the Jews?" After centuries of bloody persecution, when any "it" might be an excuse for a pogrom, this question has virtually become part of a Jew's genes. And so it is no wonder that the Pollard affair has rattled the collective unconscious of Jews around the world.

Many American Jews have given vent to anxieties thought to be safely buried: We've had it good in America, and now there is Jonathan Pollard (like the Rosenbergs decades ago) to provide the *goyim* with their best ammunition against us—the "dual-loyalty" smear. In Israel, on the other hand, widespread shame and anger directed at the government has been mixed with defiance, even *Schadenfreude*, toward the American Jewish community: You thought you had it good, but if America is the Promised Land, how come you are scurrying for cover just because of a little spying among friends?

Both sides are more wrong than right. American Jews should take heart in the fact that Jonathan Pollard is no Alfred Dreyfus, nor is the United States of the 1980s anything like the France of the 1890s.

Where is there a newspaper in the United States doing to Pollard (and the Jewish community) what the *Libre Parole* did to Dreyfus—first fingering him as traitor who spied for Germany while a captain on the French general staff, then whipping up anti-Jewish hysteria throughout the land? In the United States, by contrast, the press has bent backward to be fair to Pollard, while the finger-pointing and epithets have come from Jewish writers and spokesmen. In the xenophobic and chauvinistic atmosphere of the 1890s, Dreyfus' trials were conducted by kangaroo courts; it took 12 years of pressure by such luminaries as Emile Zola before Dreyfus was acquitted. Pollard, in contrast, enjoyed all the benefits of scrupulous due process.

These facts speak for a larger truth: America simply is not like the nation-states of Europe, period. Until the end of World War II, European Jews had never been allowed to become first-class citizens in their various national communities. No matter how brilliant, prosperous or patriotic, the Jew remained an enforced outsider. No matter how he might have tried to assimilate, he remained at best a French or German Jew, not a Jewish German or Frenchman.

In the United States everybody is from somewhere else, with memories or loyalties that tie him in one way or another to different political communities. To be 100% American and yet to take

an active interest in the well-being of different ethnic groups and political entities is—shall we say—as American as apple pie. It is certainly no automatic evidence of impending betrayal.

What's more, there is a crucial historical difference between the United States and Europe. In America there was a society before there was a powerful state that could claim the exclusive allegiance of its citizens. In Europe an omnipotent state built the nation, and if you spoke the wrong language or worshiped in the wrong church you could be in mortal trouble, as even the Protestant Huguenots found out in Catholic France.

America's pluralist and multi-ethnic constitution has not banished the demons of anti-Semitism, but it has made sure that Jew-hating is only one bigotry among many—not the one unifying banner that would mobilize a troubled society against the Jews, and the Jews only. If anything, the Pollard affair has proved that anti-Semitism does not "work" in contemporary America.

Instead of cringing, American Jews should draw comfort from this fact, but perhaps not too much of it. The problem is not that they will be held accountable for the stupidities of the Israeli government, which has added cowardice to *chutzpah* in the handling of Pollard and the aftermath. America is, and remains, the unique historical experiment that has allowed the Jews complete integration without demanding the loss of Jewish identity as a price.

The problem lies elsewhere. American Jews care about Israel, and many do so with a passion. Standing up for Israel remains a legitimate expression of pluralist politics in a country tied by interest and affection to the Jewish state. Yet, by using Pollard, the Israeli government has not just disinterred ancient Jewish anxieties, even feelings of panic; it has tainted what used to be above reproach: American Jewry's identification with the Zionist dream—which also happens to be the very lifeline of Israel.

Better that the choice between loyalties were never posed again. For, as columnist Michael Kinsley wrote recently: "If it came to 'betraying' America or Israel, the vast, vast majority of American Jews would betray Israel, and the Israelis know it." Turning Pollard against his own country was, as Talleyrand put it in a different context, "worse than a crime; it was a mistake"—even if Pollard had been Christian or Muslim.

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