

1. Why respond?

Is it necessary to make any "response" at all? It is objected, that the Gorbachev proposals of January 15, 1986 are to the USA, and ^{either} ignore Britain or specifically exclude British nuclear arms from proposals for reduction. We should (it is argued) comment only on matters concerning the UK, and where we have something relevant to say to HMG.

In fact, of course, the proposals do materially concern Britain, specifically at one point, but also generally, as they concern the rest of the world; but the UK in particular, as America's closest and most subservient ally. Just because the current Geneva talks (and the summit meeting which preceded their resumption) are between the Super-Powers only, it is important that CND should say something about them. British people, watching and reading about the negotiations, feel excluded and helpless: our fate is being decided elsewhere, we can do nothing about it. The mood has swung between a glimmer of hope, fostered by the media razzamatazz, when Reagan and Gorbachev actually met, and the present return to more or less hopelessness and apathy - They are bogged down again, getting nowhere, and there is nothing we can do about it; the only interest for us, as public pronouncements are made by either Super-Power, is the purely academic one of which side is to blame. There is nothing for the British Government, or the British people, to say or do.

It is precisely to counter this apathy and to show its false basis (fostered as it is by HMG) that CND exists. We are obliged to make comment on these matters of "high policy" ~~which~~ ^{which} affect everyone's future: and we believe as an essential component of our "basic case" that British actions can materially influence the world situation. We are emphatically not saying that Britain should in some way opt out of international negotiations and obligations - that in fact is what our opponents accuse us of. We are saying that by responding to the world situation and the alignment of powers in a new way, we have a chance not only of saving ourselves from destruction but of helping the rest of the world to take the same road.

2. Assessment of Super-Power motives

We aren't diplomats and don't have access (except when they are leaked) to the making of policy decisions. But we have to attempt some assessment of what the Soviet initiatives signify to the Super-Powers themselves. On the past record, and currently available evidence, they can conjecturally be summarised as follows:-

- (a) that the USSR is in earnest in seeking an end to the nuclear arms race, and that this represents a significant shift in Soviet policy. In the past Soviet military power has been predominantly defensive

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