

# NUCLEAR WAR

THE FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW –

AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP PREVENT IT.

Nuclear war is not just possible or even probable but, on present trends, is becoming inevitable. This leaflet tells how and why it might start, why Britain is almost certain to be involved and its likely effects on us. Much of the information is terrifying but survival depends upon our knowing it and doing something about it. You can play a vital role in helping to achieve East-West nuclear disarmament. This leaflet tells you how.

It comes from Ecoropa: a trans-European, non-political, non-profit organisation. Ecoropa is funded only by its supporters: people, from cabinet-makers to Cabinet Ministers, who care about Survival - our own and that of all natural systems on which our life ultimately depends. We intend to get this leaflet into every household in Western Europe.

We are not alarmists nor dupes of Moscow. We gain nothing - except perhaps our lives - from publishing this leaflet. We are convinced that the government, itself misled (by the warped logic of arms escalation, by the military 'hawks', by US pressure and the vast interests profiting from arms sales) is misleading us by persuading us that we might survive a nuclear war.

Statements in this leaflet echo eminent men such as Lord Mountbatten, President Kennedy and Pope John-Paul but it is completely up-to-date, based on a Report commissioned from the staff at the School of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford. This was published (October '81) entitled AS LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER and the bracketed numbers refer to its page numbers (see end of leaflet for further details).

*'And when it is all over what will the world be like? ...The thousands of years it took to develop our civilisation will have been in vain. Our works of art will be lost. Radio, television, newspapers will disappear. There will be no means of transport. There will be no hospitals. No help can be expected .... to be sent from a neighbouring town; there will be no neighbouring towns left, no neighbours, there will be no help, there will be no hope'.*

*Lord Louis Mountbatten speaking in 1979  
on nuclear war.*



**Q.1. Haven't we only just enough weapons to stop the Soviet Union from attacking us?**

A. No. The United States alone has about 3000 more large long-range (strategic) nuclear weapons than the Soviet Union. Each is much larger than the atomic bombs which devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. COMBINED, THERE ARE PERHAPS 20 TIMES MORE WEAPONS THAN ARE NEEDED FOR DETERRENCE. Moreover approximately 40,000 smaller, shorter-range ('theatre' or 'tactical') nuclear weapons are ready for use, mainly by the Superpowers, some of which are still 30 times larger than the Hiroshima bomb. These include bombs, depth charges, mines, artillery shells and air-to-air missiles. The explosive power of all existing nuclear weapons AVERAGES 4 TONS OF TNT PER PERSON ON EARTH — yet over 5000 more weapons are planned within 5 years. (23-46)

*'It would be our policy to use nuclear weapons wherever we felt it necessary to protect our forces and achieve our objective.'*

*Robert McNamara when US Secretary of Defence*

**Q.2. Compared to the USA and USSR, Britain's nuclear weapons must be insignificant?**

A. Untrue. Britain possesses a large nuclear arsenal, AND THIS ENCOURAGES OTHER MEDIUM-SIZED POWERS TO DO LIKEWISE. Our Polaris missile submarines alone constitute an effective deterrent, yet the proposed Trident system will, at vast cost, increase the Navy's fire-power by AT LEAST 14 times. What is the point? The Sea Harrier jump-jet can deliver free-fall atom bombs, and the Navy even has 60 helicopters capable of carrying nuclear bombs. The RAF has over 200 aircraft which can deliver nuclear weapons. The Army has Lance tactical missiles and two types of long-range howitzer able to fire nuclear-tipped shells. We are up to our necks in the nuclear arms race, and are able, alone, to devastate the Soviet Union. (49-64)

**Q.3. Have other countries got nuclear weapons?**

A. YES, AND MORE WILL GET THEM SOON. France and China are busy developing large nuclear arsenals. The French are now completing their sixth missile-carrying submarine and replacing single with multiple warhead submarine-launched missiles. China is producing an Inter-continental Ballistic Missile able to reach all of the Soviet Union, Europe or the United States. India has exploded an atom bomb and Israel is reliably reported to have 20-30 nuclear warheads, with the capacity to deliver them. Furthermore, South Africa either has nuclear weapons or could quickly produce them and many other countries, like Iraq, Pakistan, Brazil, Argentina, Libya, Egypt, Taiwan, South Korea, are near to possessing them. A NUCLEAR WAR STARTING IN THE THIRD WORLD IS LIKELY BEFORE LONG. (66-81)

**Q.4. Nuclear weapons have prevented war since 1945!**



A. But is over 100 wars since 1945 (many with the Superpowers fighting by proxy) and millions dead, peace? Circumstances are changing rapidly. Technological development in missile accuracy is leading the Superpowers to think in terms of a 'first strike' capability. So the whole basis of deterrence - 'mutual assured destruction', i.e. the existence of an effective retaliatory force, disappears. The temptation to strike first will lead to a 'launch-on-warning' system where missiles would automatically be released if an enemy missile launch was detected. This, together with the spread of nuclear weapons, growing hostility between the Superpowers and the increasing number of 'near-miss' accidents (147 false alarms in 18 months) MAKES NUCLEAR WAR ONLY A MATTER OF TIME - IF WE DO NOT REVERSE THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE. (87-104)

**Q.5. Even supposing localised nuclear war breaks out somewhere, why should Britain become involved?**

A. A local nuclear war would almost certainly escalate into a general nuclear exchange. In a nuclear attack effective control of nuclear-armed forces would be improbable. Anyway, both West (NATO) and East (Warsaw Pact forces) have a clearly stated military policy to use nuclear weapons as soon as needed. It is totally unrealistic to imagine that either side would accept defeat whilst possessing unused nuclear weapons. IF NUCLEAR WAR OCCURS IN EUROPE, BRITAIN, THE WORLD'S MOST CONCENTRATED TARGET, MUST EXPECT IMMEDIATE AND DEVASTATING NUCLEAR ATTACKS. (110-115)

*'I do not think it at all likely that a limited nuclear exchange would remain limited.'*

*Harold Brown, US Secretary of Defence speaking in 1977*

**Q.6. If this happens what, in Britain, would be targeted?**

A. Our own and American nuclear bases and numerous command and communication centres would be priority targets. Industrial complexes, oil refineries, nuclear power stations and nuclear waste stores would be attacked. As the 'off-shore aircraft carrier' of NATO, BRITAIN RISKS TOTAL RUINATION OF VIRTUALLY THE WHOLE COUNTRY. (119-126)

*'We fought World War I in Europe, we fought World War II in Europe and if you dummies will let us, we will fight World War III in Europe.'*

*Admiral Gene Le Rocque, former US Strategic Planner*

**Q.7. Yet Germany recovered from devastation in World War II...**

A. This shows a total misunderstanding of the nature of nuclear war. Atomic bombs are thousands of times more powerful than conventional bombs; thermo-nuclear bombs can be MILLIONS of times more powerful. MANY MODERN NUCLEAR WEAPONS INDIVIDUALLY POSSESS MORE EXPLOSIVE POWER THAN ALL THE



**Q.23. What do you want our government to do?**

A. There are many options: these are amongst the most important: Stop the escalation of British nuclear weapons. Refuse to allow US Cruise missiles in Britain. Cancel Trident. Refuse the neutron bomb. Press for a comprehensive nuclear test-ban. Create a disarmament package to promote disarmament negotiations. Negotiate firmly but reasonably with the USSR for parity (not superiority) at decreasing levels. Work out effective alternative defence policies. Heed the arguments of the electorate - both unilateralist and multilateralist.

*'I think that people want peace so much that one of these days, governments had better get out of their way and let them have it.'*  
Dwight D Eisenhower, 1959

**Q.24 What can I do in the cause of peace - and survival?**

A. The first need is to share your concern with your family, friends and neighbours. Join others in working for nuclear disarmament (send s.a.e. for free list) through church groups, professional organisations, trades unions or local authorities (is yours one of the 100 plus which has declared its area a nuclear-free zone?) AS LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER lists organisations and publications. Make sure your MP is aware of your views. Don't get disheartened: more and more millions of people throughout the world are determined to stop this insanity.

*'Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little.'*  
Edmund Burke

Each leaflet we distribute has been paid for by someone like you. If you feel this information is relevant to our survival, please join the CAMPAIGN FOR SURVIVAL now, while you are thinking about it. We ask for £3.50. In return we shall send you, post free, 100 copies of this leaflet for distribution and a copy of AS LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER (published by Arrow Books @ £1.75). If you prefer we shall send 200 leaflets and no book, post free. If you can spare more than £3.50 it will help us to send leaflets to those who cannot afford them. If you wish to support the Campaign but are unable to distribute the leaflets, these can be given to others. PLEASE ACT NOW.

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BOMBS USED IN WORLD WAR II. Besides massive blast damage, nuclear weapons emit intense heat, causing fires and skin-burns up to 20 miles away, and radiation, which causes sickness and death from hours to years after the explosion. Now the largest bombs are 2000 times bigger than the bomb that devastated Hiroshima. Missiles now have pinpoint accuracy. (23 & 127,128)

**Q.8. What is radiation?**

A. Nuclear explosions produce various forms of radiation such as gamma rays and neutrons which can cause changes in the atoms and molecules of materials they strike. As well as killing people directly these also result in radioactive fall-out which can spread out hundreds of miles from the explosion and remain deadly to living things for months and even years. RADIATION ALONE COULD MAKE BRITAIN UNINHABITABLE. (127-146 & 173-196)

**Q.9. But surely Civil Defence could protect us?**

A. In a nuclear war any Civil Defence measures will be largely ineffective. The options open to Civil Defence planners are very limited. Blast shelters for everyone (as in Switzerland) would be too expensive and urban evacuation (as in the Soviet Union) of limited value in a very small island. Moreover such policies assume some warning - an assumption which is highly uncertain - the flight time for an ICBM is about 30 minutes. Government policy is for us to stay at home in our cities - which are targetted - and to build our own protective shelters against radiation. But these would leave us largely unprotected from the effects of blast and fire. Either way we die. (Meanwhile those who 'press the buttons' retreat to their deep bunkers.) The government has circularised many of these fears to local authorities over the last decade, BUT THE PUBLIC HAS BEEN KEPT IN IGNORANCE. (148-171)

**Q.10. Yet the Home Office booklet PROTECT AND SURVIVE says our local authorities will help.**

A. PROTECT AND SURVIVE dangerously misleads us in playing down the likely effects - and scale - of nuclear war. Its advice is glib and questionable and acting on it requires more than most people's physical and financial resources. Indeed, insufficient materials exist, neither is there likely to be time to put them into use. At best the results would be marginally effective. The booklet says that nuclear explosions can kill people up to 5 miles away. Actually they can kill up to 20 miles away! It concludes with fatuous instructions that when the all-clear sounds we may 'resume normal activities'. Even the government's own Co-ordinator for Civil Defence Volunteers said recently that '...if there is one thing that is near as dammit certain, it is that after nuclear war we will never pass this way again.' PROTECT AND SURVIVE IS A PIECE OF CALLOUS WHITEWASH WHICH EFFECTIVELY CONDEMNS TO DEATH THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION. (148-196)

**Q.11. Even if it is true that 2 out of 3 of us will die in a**



have deliberately chosen not to. They plan for defence by conventional means, choosing very effective new weapons. Britain could adopt similar policies or could develop other approaches, such as guerilla-based defence or passive resistance. But military strategists are only concerned with existing methods and have developed no alternatives.

(264—267)

**Q.19. But any kind of nuclear disarmament will cost jobs!**

A. The nuclear armaments industry takes about TEN TIMES MORE CAPITAL PER JOB than the industrial average, thus disarmament could help provide many more jobs and, perhaps, create useful products instead of weapons of mass destruction.

**Q.20. Why would nuclear power stations be priority targets?**

A. Because even a small nuclear warhead exploding on a nuclear power station would cause the reactor to release its huge radioactive load. Britain has nuclear power stations all around the coast so that whichever way the wind was blowing MUCH OF THE COUNTRY WOULD BE CONTAMINATED.

(122, 123)

*'We must either learn to live together as brothers or we are going to perish together as fools.'*

*Martin Luther King*

**Q.21. Ordinary people can't change government policies!**

A. Nonsense! Ordinary people are changing them! Governments facing re-election are highly sensitive to public opinion. YOU CAN HELP TO ALTER OPINIONS: there is already intense concern on this issue within all the political parties.

Passive acceptance of nuclear weapons for deterrence means us taking responsibility for British preparedness to annihilate tens and even hundreds of millions of human beings. ARE YOU PREPARED TO ACCEPT THIS RESPONSIBILITY? We are freer to press for political action than most people in the Soviet Bloc. This is the basic freedom we are defending - if we value it we must use it. (269—283)

**Q.22. Please summarise your arguments.**

A. Nuclear war is now likely. Both sides have far more weapons than necessary for deterrence. Nuclear weapons for the battlefield are now integrated at all levels of the forces. The effects of a single weapon can be five times greater than all the explosives used by both sides in the last war. There are over 50,000 nuclear weapons; numbers are rapidly increasing. A few could obliterate Britain. There is no such thing as a limited nuclear war: Britain will be involved. Other countries, many with a history of unstable government, will shortly obtain nuclear weapons. Civil Defence is largely ineffective. The Home Office admits 40 of our 57 million population could die. Nuclear shelters are not feasible. There are alternatives to nuclear defence. Disarmament negotiations will only succeed with massive popular support. Without nuclear disarmament catastrophe is finally inevitable.



nuclear war at least the survivors can maintain our civilisation!

A. In the mad logic of nuclear war each side must smash the other's industrial base to prevent their earlier recovery. The survivors will have to cope with a situation more horrifying than their wildest nightmares: many believe that our society will never reappear as we know it. Few dare to visualise the men, women and children - including remnants of our own families - starving, maimed, stricken with grief, tortured with the knowledge and effects of terminal radiation sickness, scavenging in competition with rats for scraps of contaminated food, deprived of all services, prey to epidemics of all kinds, yet without medicine, shelter or warmth - THESE POOR CREATURES WOULD INDEED ENVY THE DEAD. There is also the possibility of irreversible ecological damage (since radiation affects all living matter) rendering large areas of the country uninhabitable. (113-114)

**Q.12. How about a nuclear shelter?**

A. A nuclear shelter is very expensive and still cannot guarantee survival, EVEN IF YOU ARE AS FAR AS 2 MILES FROM A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION. Moreover radioactive fall-out after an attack means you might have to stay in the shelter for weeks or even months. Incidentally over 90% of the nuclear shelters now on sale in Britain have filter systems which actually allow the fall-out to accumulate in the shelters. Some would be little more than ovens, to give a new and macabre meaning to the 'family roast'.

(140 & 158)

**Q.13. If we did away with nuclear weapons in Britain would we be safer?**

A. Yes, because nuclear bases in Britain are obvious targets. But we cannot pretend that we would be completely safe - there would still be some risk of attack and of radiation from nuclear war elsewhere. But a lead by Britain would significantly stimulate international moves for disarmament, THUS MAKING THE WHOLE WORLD, INCLUDING BRITAIN, SAFER. (114 & 262-264)

**Q.14. But if we are not wiped out by nuclear weapons, won't we be killed by chemical or biological ones?**

A. Possibly, even though they don't exist on the scale of nuclear weapons. Any move towards nuclear disarmament must be accompanied by action against these weapons, especially the fitting of nerve gas warheads to Cruise missiles. (262)

*'The first time one of these things is fired in anger everything is lost. The warring nations would never be able to put things back together.'*

*Leonid Brezhnev on atomic weapons at the SALT talks in 1978*

**Q.15. Yet surely it is futile to expect disarmament negotiations to succeed?**

A. The record of disarmament negotiations is not good, but some agreements have been made, and kept. One must



remember that the Partial Test Ban Treaty greatly reduced the amount of fall-out, despite France and China continuing atmospheric tests. (France is about to do so again despite world-wide opposition.) Another treaty prohibits nuclear weapons in Latin America, and has demonstrated the feasibility of nuclear-free zones. On the other hand, many countries have refused to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty because they do not see why only existing nuclear weapons countries should have nuclear weapons: many countries that have signed are profoundly disappointed that the Superpowers have not, as promised, engaged in realistic disarmament negotiations. Certainly it can be argued that the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT 1 and 11) were a sham since they allowed both Superpowers to develop their nuclear weapons systems just as planned. Perhaps the real lesson of SALT so far is that, without major public pressure, high level negotiations are unlikely to produce effective disarmament. The Kremlin rulers are ruthless but cautious, seeing themselves within the NATO-China encirclement. They face greater problems of national defence and satellite unrest than the West. They do not perceive the West as being weak. Soviet policies may be repellant but AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE WE NEED TO BE REALISTIC TOWARDS THEIR PERCEPTIONS AND THEIR FEARS.

There is some risk of disarmament talks being held just to pacify the millions who want disarmament - the actual aim being to ensure that the talks fail so that more escalation is justified. (219-247)

**Q.16. But if there were general nuclear disarmament, wouldn't the Russians have overwhelming conventional forces?**

A. NATO actually has larger forces than those of the Warsaw Pact countries and the Russians rely more heavily than does the West on inexperienced conscripts. NATO AND CHINA COMBINED ACTUALLY OUTNUMBER RUSSIA AND HER ALLIES BY TWO TO ONE.

**Q.17 But the Russians can't be trusted, and anyhow it's in their interest for us to disarm.**

A. It is ultimately in everyone's interests for everybody to disarm, otherwise we all face disaster. If the West made realistic and reasonable proposals the Russians must either respond or risk a worldwide loss of credibility. Someone has to start the process and we in Europe with our free speech, have the responsibility to make our governments give a lead. EITHER WE NEGOTIATE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT, ACCEPTING ITS ATTENDANT RISKS, OR WE FACE THE INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ARMS RACE - NUCLEAR WAR.

**Q.18. Are there any other practicable means of defending Britain?**

A. Yes, there certainly are. Countries like Sweden and Switzerland could produce their own nuclear weapons but