

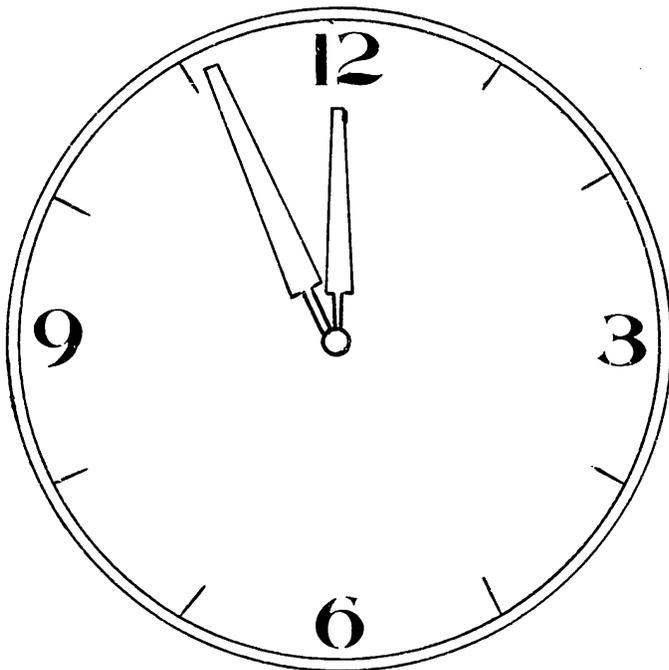
HOW DOES CHINA VIEW THE PACIFIST MOVEMENT?

by Victor Hammert

Throughout the summer and fall of 1981 an avalanche of people choked the streets of European cities to protest the deployment of new medium-range nuclear missiles on their continent. In October more than a million men, women and children participated in the peaceful demonstrations. 300,000 people in Bonn and 250,000 in London made these gatherings unprecedented in history.

In Brussels 200,000 turned out for the largest demonstration in post-war Belgium while thousands of frustrated participants jammed railroad stations around the nation because they were unable to reach the capital. In Rome 300,000 marched past the American and Soviet embassies to protest the arms race.

Two simple questions are raised in this brief article: i) How does China look upon the pacifist movement? ii) Are the civil and religious leaders of the People's Republic willing to join the growing number of scientists, doctors, religious leaders and burgeoning millions who express



*Twelve Midnight
Is The Time Of
Nuclear Destruction.*

their fears over the threat of a nuclear holocaust? This fear that the civilization which has been built up over centuries could be destroyed in hours is not new and Chinese leaders have referred to the threat frequently.

The second question is to be further narrowed to a condemnation of nuclear weapons. Would the Chinese religious leaders be willing to evaluate and perhaps join the Japanese bishops who have publicly denounced the nuclear arms race and requested that money spent on such devices be used constructively? Certain religious leaders in the West have spoken in strident terms on the nuclear issue. Catholic bishops in the United States have denounced the spiral of nuclear weapons as grossly immoral. The mere possession of arms which can destroy entire cities "is a crime against humanity" and these ethical indictments have enabled church leaders to advise people in drastic terms. If one disagrees in conscience with nuclear weapons, it is a weighty consideration to refuse cooperation in any form with the manufacture or deployment of such ghastly armaments.

COULD THE SOVIET UNION BE SO EFFECTIVE?

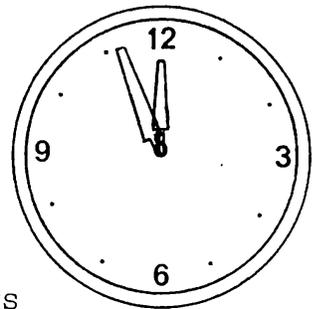
Diplomatic ties between China and the United States are seriously jeopardized over the Reagan administration's plan to sell arms to Taiwan. The brief period of normal relations between the two countries could be strained by the undefined foreign policy and unchecked appetite of the United States to sell weapons regardless of political ramifications.

Ideologically speaking, the leaders in the United States and China are on different planets. Both however, regard the Soviet Union as a common enemy. Chinese and American leaders are particularly anxious about Soviet expansionism and regard the possession of nuclear weapons as the only feasible means of deterring Russian hegemony. Just how many weapons is enough? What is the likelihood of an accidental outbreak of nuclear warfare? Such questions must be dealt with.

President Reagan intends to outspend the Soviet Union. His policy is tantamount to "disarmament through accelerating the arms race." In this century not even the advanced nations can afford the arms race. It is to the benefit of all countries to halt this descent into a nuclear abyss quickly.

Those who participated in the massive demonstrations of 1981 are motivated by a fear that could be captured in one banner - NO EUROSHIMA. If the leaders of the world do not condemn and control the nuclear arms race, then the people will have to do so for them.

In addition to their mutual fear of a common enemy, Chinese leaders and president Reagan view the pacifist movement of 1981 as the orchestration of the Soviet Union. One day in November 400,000 people were demonstrating in Amsterdam. This peaceful protest against nuclear weapons was dismissed by China as "hollanditis."



Reagan persists in the view that the huge gatherings in Europe were sponsored by the World Peace Council which is "bought and paid for by the Soviet Union." Columnist James Reston (no stranger to China) wrote that secretary of state, Alexander Haig and White House chief of staff, James Baker, have been trying to convince the president that "these demonstrations are not a passing conspiracy financed by Moscow, but a spiritual revulsion in the Churches and universities which needs to be addressed and explained in both military and moral terms."(1) (NEW YORK TIMES SERVICE, 27th December 1981).

Observers in China, the United States and elsewhere who credit the Kremlin strategists with the planning of these happenings have yet to document just how the Soviet Union has triggered and funded such a tumultuous reaction throughout Europe. Could it be that flippant talk from Washington and the Pentagon on the topic of "limited nuclear war" contributed more to the turn-out of anxious Europeans?

René Coste is a French theologian at the Catholic institute in Toulouse who provides a different perspective on the pacifist movement in Europe. Coste acknowledges that the Communist parties were instrumental in the early stages of the anti-nuclear movement, but at present, they have become a minority as the impetus is provided by scientists, doctors, environmentalists and women's groups who have joined the protest. Young Europeans who have no recollections of a war which ended in 1945 also add their pressure upon world leaders to come to their senses and assure all of us of a future.

PACIFISM OR PUBLIC OUTRAGE?

Chinese leaders have viewed the disarmament talks between the two nuclear superpowers with scepticism. "China does not oppose these talks, but they seem to be proceeding with great difficulty, without solving any problems and without easing the international situation."(2) (PEKING REVIEW, 1 March, 1982) This disenchantment over arms limitations talks is justified and such indignation is a factor in the massive protests.

The nuclear arms race is a \$100 thousand million fraction in an

annual \$550 thousand million armaments burden to the world. The nuclear spiral has the suicidal element while the arms race in general is detrimental to genuine human development. Society now invests an average of \$16,000 per year on the preparation of a soldier for war. In the same period a pittance of \$250 is spent on the education of a child. It can safely be assumed that "public indifference is turning into public outrage."(3) (WORLD MILITARY AND SOCIAL EXPENDITURES 1979, p. 5)

The pacifism in Europe is specifically directed against the planned deployment of more nuclear warheads in a small geographical area which already bristles with 7000 missiles. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany asks the advisers in NATO and the Pentagon: "If the state of Oregon was to be the site for hundreds of nuclear missiles, would you not have a powerful movement on your hands?"

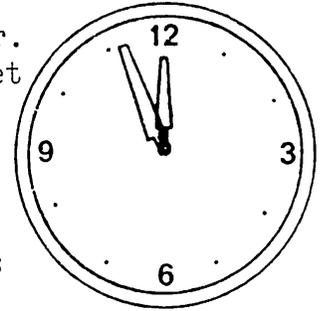
Rather than describe the European movement as anti-nuclear, could it not be aptly defined as a PRO-FUTURE MOVEMENT? Over an 18-month period, the United States nuclear warning system produced 147 false indications of Soviet missile attacks. The war between the two nuclear superpowers would incinerate Europe. The decision, whether in response to a false alert or a planned first-strike, to kill tens of millions is within the power vested in one person. Do we want a future or do we not? The answer is linked to our ability to regain POLITICAL control of the nuclear arms race.

SUPERIORITY OR PARITY SHROUDED IN DUPLICITY

Chinese observers caution that the arms limitations gestures or words from the Soviet Union and the United States have never been realized by the actual destruction of one nuclear weapon. Neither of these two nations will accept parity or an inferior position. Consequently, the verbiage about arms control is not to be taken seriously as both parties proceed with the manufacture of nuclear warheads.

"The Soviet Union has again mounted another 'peace offensive' like it did ten years ago, and wants to enter into a dialogue with the West on 'disarmament'. But developments in the 70's are still too fresh in people's mind for many to be deceived by this new 'peace offensive'. Now, does the Soviet Union really intend to stop at a military 'equilibrium' or is it out to gain absolute military superiority? The answer is clearly 'out to gain absolute military superiority', if one looks back at earlier Soviet 'peace offensives'".(4) (PEKING REVIEW, April 27, 1981)

China's attitude toward disarmament is quite clear. As a late-comer (October 1964) to the nuclear club (Soviet Union, the United States, England, France, China and India), China insists that the United States and Russia take the first step in reduction of nuclear arms. These two superpowers maintain a monopoly in the global village and "that is why we demand that the United States and the Soviet Union should be the first to reduce their armaments."(5) (PEKING REVIEW, July 20, 1981) China doubts the sincerity of both nations but places a heavier blame upon the Soviet Union in the uncontrolled arms spiral. If nuclear powers give up the first-strike option in the nuclear age, the world would be threatened by the Russians.



"The plain truth is that the proposal (renounce first-strike) would enable it (USSR) to carry out blackmail and expand its sphere of influence by relying on its superiority in conventional weapons."(6) (PEKING REVIEW, November 9, 1981)

The respected Stockholm Institute of Peace Research (SIPRI) would not absolve the United States so quickly as the specialists there note how American weapons have become more accurate and sophisticated. In the Carter administration, the passage of presidential directive #59 (PD #59) was a shift from deterrence to first-strike policies.

Among the ten major world events of 1981, China listed the massive peace marches in western Europe. The opening of arms reductions talks between the United States and the Soviet Union was not singled out by the PEKING REVIEW; the seizure of a Soviet submarine in Swedish waters was considered a major world event.(7) (PEKING REVIEW #1, January 4th, 1982) The pessimism of China on the topic of arms reductions continues in 1982:

"How then are the two superpowers to comply with the demand that they eliminate the threat of nuclear war? They have no alternative but to unconditionally undertake the obligation of not being the first to use nuclear weapons and then to work for the gradual and complete destruction of nuclear weapons through genuine negotiations. Otherwise, negotiations and agreements are useless."(8) (PEKING REVIEW, January 25, 1982)

In a violent world where foreign policies are buttressed by the threat of using nuclear weapons, why should the pronouncements of China be so sanctimonious? Until the long-awaited moment when one of the nuclear powers takes the dramatic move of destroying a weapon, none of them are to be trusted. In the closing decades of the 20th century, China is hope-

lessly behind in the nuclear arms race. Would it not be conceivable for the Chinese leaders to jar the stalemate between the superpowers by making the first concrete move towards disarmament by destroying a weapon before the eyes of the world? A simple symbolic gesture of this nature would not be a strategic threat to China's security. It might prod the other nuclear powers to link actions with endless, and to the present, meaningless words.

Not least, China does not include itself in the global analysis of the nuclear threat and the pacifist reaction. The United States manufactures an average of three nuclear weapons each day. The Soviet Union is determined to remain in the race for parity. Britain flounders in a period of economic stagnation and despite the glaring need for social expenditures, opts for the trident nuclear submarine (\$1.3 thousand million US). France continues its weapons testing in the south pacific over the demands of victimized citizens and environmentalists that the French cease such nuclear imperialism. With impunity, China tests its own missiles in the remote areas of the pacific by notifying would-be fisherfolk or sea-going vessels to vacate the designated zone. How is it possible for China to exclude itself from the nuclear network and place the reason for European pacifism on the race between western nations?

"The pacifist tide in Europe is not accidental. It results from the military arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States, conflicts between the United States and western Europe and contradictions among the West European countries themselves."(9)
(PEKING REVIEW January 4, 1982)

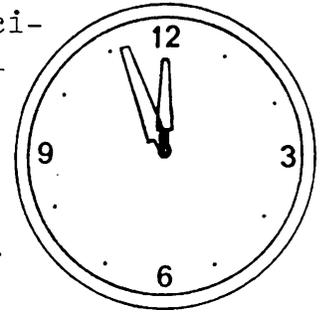
1982: THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE AND AMERICAN PACIFISM

While European leaders ponder the significance of the anti-nuclear protests which swept through their nations, preparations for the special session on disarmament are being made for June 1982. This is a sequel to the 1978 conference on disarmament held in the United Nations. There are over 140 nations in the world body which have joined together to plead with the present generation to exercise a moral responsibility leading to greater harmony and a reduction of armaments.

A coalition of Church and peace groups is planning a huge weekend demonstration for the June session and it is expected that several hundred thousand people, including representatives from Japan and Europe, will converge upon New York city to express opposition to nuclear armaments.

There will be at least four major marches for peace in the United

States in 1982. It is quite probable that many will participate for shorter distances in the lengthy walks. One will originate at the west coast base of the trident submarine (which carries over 400 warheads), will proceed across the continental United States and end in Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus Christ. One of the organizers is a Catholic priest who served as chaplain on the "Enola Gay", the B-29 bomber which devastated Hiroshima.



Critics of the pacifist movement are invited to reconsider their analysis in a realistic manner. Arthur Jones is a Catholic journalist who spent only one year away from the United States and returned to discover that the most significant change there had been "the radicalization of the American Bishops."

This sentiment is found in the secular press as well "the most vocal group (opposed to nuclear arms) has been the Bishops of the Catholic Church. They have spoken out across the country in recent weeks about the dangers."(10) (THE ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL, December 11, 1981)

It is a serious misreading of the pacifist movements in Europe and the United States for critical observers to attribute such extensive planning to the Soviet Union. It cannot be denied that the Kremlin will take advantage of the movement and encourage such happenings. It cannot be denied that the Russians will gain from the pressure upon NATO and American strategists to reduce the number of nuclear weapons.

EXISTENCE ALONGSIDE A NUCLEAR VOLCANO

History has been described as a race between education and catastrophe. The most urgent moral issue of today is to acknowledge that we all co-exist with 50,000 nuclear weapons. SIPRI estimates that there will be 75,000 warheads by 1990 and that there will be more nations joining the ranks of nuclear powers. THE BULLETIN OF ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, founded in 1945 at the dawn of the nuclear age, places a small "doomsday clock" on the cover of each issue. The time now is four minutes to midnight - 12:00 being the hour of the final conflagration.

Is it possible for Chinese observers to prescind from their pre-occupation with Soviet designs in the world to arrive at a different understanding of the pacifist movement? Furthermore, is it not an opportune time for Chinese leaders, secular and religious, to join the scholars, scientists, physicians, theologians and concerned citizens who have openly condemned the mere possession of nuclear weapons?