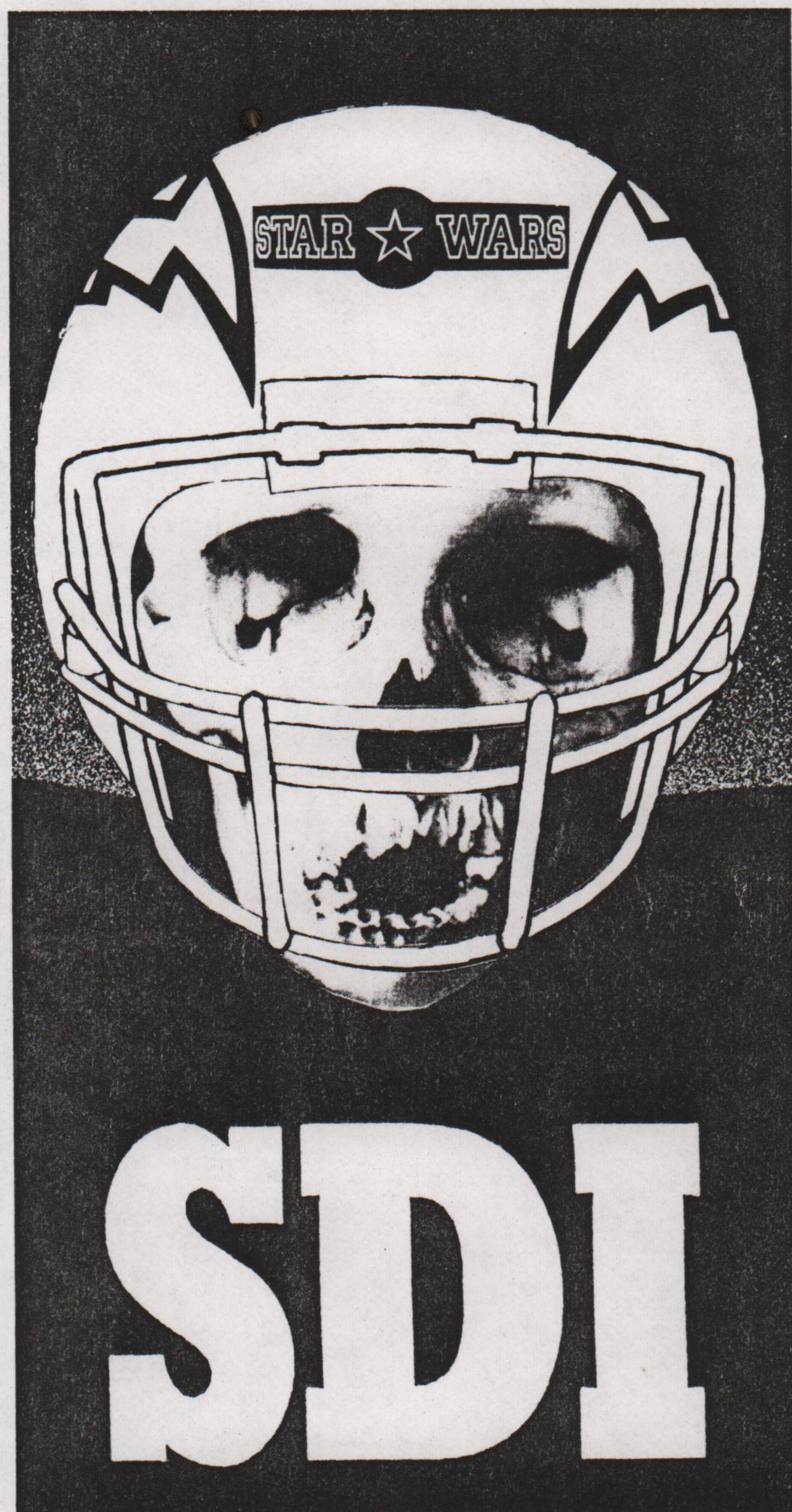


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TRADE UNION



REPORT
OF
PROCEEDINGS

CONFERENCE

This is a report of the speeches and of the workshops which took place at the conference on SDI on the 30th of July this year. It consists of :-

- 1) Peter Heathfeild's speech opening the conference
- 2) Lynn Taylor's speech. Lyn Taylor is a trade union activist who has been involved in the campaign against the SDI programme in the United States.
- 3) J Barnes' speech. J Barnes is the secretary of Trade Union CND.
- 4) Workshop report backs.
 - i:- SDI and the Disarmament process
 - ii:- Secrecy and research
 - iii:- SDI, Trade Unions and the peace movement

The conference was organised under the auspices of a number of unions including - ASLEF, ACTT, AUT, BF&AWU, CATU, FBU, MSF, NALGO, NAPO, NCU, NGA, NUM, NUPE, NUR, STE, T&GWU, and USDAW.

Just over 90 people attended the conference from a wide range of organisations including peace groups, unions at a national regional and branch level and from Trades Councils.

This conference was a part of a continuing campaign against SDI coordinated by Trade Union CND. It was organised in order to assess how the campaign should develop. For further information on SDI and the campaign against it contact:-

J Barnes
22-24 Underwood St
London N1 7JG

PETER HEATHFIELD

I welcome the opportunity to participate in today's TU CND Conference on Star Wars.

For almost 30 years our lives have been dominated by two overpowering questions. Firstly, a runaway arms race that has been impossible to restrain, leading to a vast waste of resources in both East and West. And secondly, directly related to the first question, a dramatic increase in unemployment especially in the developed world. In the West, the adoption of monetarist policies has brought about economic recession resulting in severe structural decline, in turn promoting grave social tensions.

1987 marked the first step towards disarmament, which initially was taken by Michael Gorbachev. That step, duly signed by Reagan and Gorbachev in Moscow this year with the agreement in principle to remove intermediate nuclear forces from deployment in Europe and Asia. That agreement has brought hope to humanity, hope that the arms race can be reversed. It represents but a small step in relation to the nuclear arsenals that are available to the super powers, but a major step in relation to advancing the cause of disarmament and hopefully the channelling of resources to more socially desirable areas of civil expenditure. It also presents an opportunity to restructure power relations between N/S/E & W hopefully enabling development especially in the third world.

The Star Wars project represents a major hurdle to achieving those objectives. That concept (SDI) in the USA still feeds the military industrial complex in that country and poses a threat to peaceful development throughout the world.

My theme is on the need to offset militarism and monetarism by new policies devoted to disarmament and development and opposition to 'Star Wars' constitutes an important step in that direction.

Michael Dukakis, who is a leading contender for the Presidency of the United States was recently reported as saying that SDI, the Star Wars programme, is a 'fantasy and a fraud'. I'm not naive enough to assume that he's ready to support total nuclear disarmament - but it's obvious that Dukakis is reflecting a growing concern in the US.

This concern is that SDI - as envisaged and encouraged by the Reagan administration - is a dangerous and costly mistake. Take, for example the report issued only three months ago by the US Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, the O.T.A., as it's called, has spent TWO YEARS examining the technological basis for SDI - or, to give it its full name, the Strategic Defence Initiative.

The report concludes:

"In O.T.A.'s judgement, there would be a significant probability that the first (and presumably only) time the ballistic missile defence system was used in a real war, it would suffer a catastrophic failure."

Other speakers here today at this very important conference will examine the technical details of the SDI, or Star Wars system. What I would like to do in my opening this morning is to concentrate on the political implications of SDI - and that includes the direct implications of the programme for the British economy and our society.

On the surface, the direct involvement of British industry in SDI has not been great, even though the Tory Government has taken on extra staff in its campaign to persuade British companies to bid for contracts. Despite all the effort and hype however, the Tories have managed to secure for British firms only 60% of their target figure of \$100million. This means that only roughly £32million worth of SDI contract work has been secured by British companies. In national and international defence terms, that is a very small amount indeed. Furthermore, it involves only a handful of British-based companies, with Plessey, UKAEA and Shorts in Belfast being the only 'substantial' firms involved.

But we mustn't be fooled or misled by this relatively tiny direct involvement in SDI. The effect of Star Wars on the British industrial scene will be far greater than a few pounds' worth of dubious research. The Pentagon has a system for controlling ANY TECHNOLOGY WHICH IS DEVELOPED FOR USE IN THE UNITED STATES. This system is called the 'Military Critical Technology List.'

In the United States itself, there are very few companies which are neither involved in government orders, or in receipt of government grants. The way in which the Military Critical Technology List operates ensures that contracts for US government work will touch all the other activities of a particular company.

This is true for government research grants as well, and thus involves Universities and Educational Institutions as well as business enterprises. In the case of universities contracted to do government research, there is a direct control by government over the activities of university staff. Furthermore, government research grants come with strings attached to other research projects - just as the government contracts will touch all commercial activities of a company.

We are talking about a network of control which is all-embracing and as deadly as a spider's web.

Think back across the past decade. When the Soviet Union moved troops into Afghanistan, the United States issued specific threats to British companies which had secured orders for work on the gas pipelines between West Germany and the Soviet Union. The United States threatened that if Britain did not renege on its pipeline contracts, then Britain would be denied access to US markets! At that time however, such blackmail was too much for even the British government to swallow, and the US was told where to get off!

Overwhelmingly though, our economy has been exploited by the US government. When Britain agreed to buy the Trident system from the United States, part of the agreement was that British companies would be allowed to compete on an equal basis with American firms for contracts. In the event, only a tiny number of orders with British firms has resulted, and the overall picture indicates that this has had nothing to do with the commercial viability of British production.

But we must remember that in the Britain of today, in an atmosphere of extreme shortage of funding for research and development work, whether it be in industry or in our universities and polytechnics, in such an atmosphere, even the relatively tiny amount of money awarded to our institutions for work on SDI takes on a great significance because of the strings attached by the Pentagon.

By the same token, the overall effect of Star Wars upon our economic, political and social life will be much greater than is obvious or even visible. This is a vitally important fact for us to recognise, because we must take that into account in developing an effective campaign against the further development of SDI.

It is perfectly clear that the US government is exploiting our nation today in much the same way that the forefathers of today's Congressmen and women and Pentagon bosses dealt with the native American people who were so savagely dispossessed from the 17th. century onward.

Not only does the Pentagon's strategy and its systems depend on exploitation of our resources. A key side effect of programmes such as SDI is inevitably the steady leeching of trained British personnel away from any chance of work that might be of real use to our nation and our people. This seems to me inevitable in a society such as ours, wherein scientists and technicians, whatever their field of work, are increasingly frustrated and handicapped by lack of resources at home.

Day-to-day contact with US companies and research organisations based in Britain to oversee British involvement with SDI is bound to intensify the so-called 'brain-drain'. A problem like this has serious political and social overtones. The control of technology is a highly political matter. The mechanism used by the Pentagon to control technology is secrecy.

My claiming that key technology has a military significance and therefore must be 'classified', these masters of War, while on the one hand exploiting our human and technological skills, deny the possibility of using those skills for social and human good, and for genuine commercial benefit to our society.

There are also other openly political problems which we must be aware of. The first concerns the arms race. The sponsors of SDI, that is the military/economic/political complex based in the Pentagon, are pushing the concept of Star Wars as fiercely as possible in the belief that intensifying the arms race is the best way to deal with the Soviet Union. This is, of course, nothing new. We can trace the outlines of this tactic back, for example, to the first 6 months of the Kennedy administration in 1961. At that time, over a quarter of a century ago, the United States held a 3-to-1 advantage in missiles and a 10-to-1 advantage in heavy bombers over the Soviet Union. But the government headed by John F. Kennedy set about deliberately lengthening that advantage. It added 10 Polaris submarines to an existing order for 19. It also added 150 ICBMs and 90 mobile Minute-Man missiles to an entire range of other deadly weapons in the US arsenal. On top of that, it doubled the United States' capacity to produce such weapons, thus ensuring that they could be manufactured more quickly than before.

The Kennedy administration was thus responsible for a massive leap in the arms race, and its obsession with the Cold War has cost the entire world very dearly ever since.

Any nation finding itself in potential military conflict with the US would have to face massive defence preparations, at a cost which would destabilise the domestic programmes of any nation!

The cost has been high for US 'Allies' as well as potential adversaries. In Britain it has meant the steady asset-stripping of our economy, as resources have gone to pay our government's on-going part in this deadly game, and to meet the cost for our place under the US nuclear 'umbrella'.

On the other hand, it has cost the nations of the third world aid which has been 'required' in the West for arms expansion. Let us never forget that most of this 'aid' is in reality compensation for several centuries of exploitation and economic piracy against the people of Africa, Asia, or Central and Latin America.

Furthermore, the philosophy behind the US build-up has directly cost millions of lives in gruesome carnage of wars from Vietnam through the Middle East to Nicaragua.

Now, finally, the true cost of that build-up, of providing the nuclear umbrella has come home to the United States economy, which is today facing crisis on a number of fronts, Within the Pentagon and in Congress, there is now a great outcry - not a cry against the terrible military plans themselves - but a demand that the rest of Europe should take a far greater share of the horrendous costs!

What this means is that Britain, among others, will be asked to cough up still more resources and funds for the 'privilege' of huddling under that US nuclear umbrella.

There should be no confusion about either the purpose or the role of that deadly umbrella. In real terms it has nothing to do with preventing a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. Its real purpose is to force the Soviet Union to divert its own technological resources AWAY FROM domestic social purposes, and switch them instead to defence spending.

Amidst all the massive propaganda and hype that we've seen and heard about SDI, the Reagan administration has kept insisting that it's really nothing more than a defence.

It's nothing of the sort. But, whether we regard it as offensive or defensive, the problem it poses for the Soviet Union, and for the rest of the world, remains the same. Nations of all sizes and all strengths are faced with the pressure of being drawn into Star Wars 'Battle' - of being forced to develop or secure access to the technology to cope with it.

Whether SDI is viewed as preventive, as first-strike or as retaliatory, it adds enormously to the numbers-game calculations which - and this is the supreme irony - the tremendously important disarmament talks between the US and the Soviet Union have sought to defuse.

The only conclusion to be drawn from this situation is that the SDI programme is part and parcel of the traditional arms race, and at a time when the world has had such high hopes for co-operation between the 'super-powers'.

Meanwhile, the people of the United States, of Britain, of the Soviet Union, of Angola or throughout South-East Asia and Central America - all will be pressured to divert resources away from providing better standards of living for their people, and towards a warfare in which there can be no winners.

What happens next? The experts are now telling us, in loud voices, that for TECHNICAL reasons SDI is not feasible. The computer programmes are now being shown as unrealistic; the idea of huge outer space battle stations are not feasible. But, regardless of these warnings and the facts, there is a terrible political dynamic at work in the Pentagon and in the White House. This dynamic is determined that SDI will go ahead IN SOME FORM whatever the outcome of this year's Presidential election.

In looking at all the different aspects of the SDI programme we see clearly why we must defeat it, why we must plan and CARRY THROUGH a campaign to stop it, just as Cruise was blocked by the activities of the Peace Movement, including the forces of the Trade Union movement.

SDI must be stopped because:

- 1) It removes from us our research and development facilities at a time when those facilities are already crippled by lack of resources.
- 2) It is part of a political/economic/military machinery which controls and hides away technology that should be used to benefit humanity.
- 3) It threatens the disarmament process which has given so much hope to the world.
- 4) It is built on an obscene lie about the world we live in - a lie based on perpetual hate and mistrust. SDI is designed to perpetuate that lie.

The campaign against SDI must be based on the demand that research should be undertaken for social and environmental need. not for purposes of mass destruction.

This must also be a campaign against military secrecy, and against that bondage to the United States in which the British government, indeed successive British governments have chosen to place our nation.

Above all, we must use and develop all our own resources and information networks to awaken the British public, and effectively challenge not only the growing militarisation of our economy, but the ideology of hate which has been used to justify it.

LYNN TAYLOR

Total US military expenditures for 1945-1980 were one trillion dollars. The total US military budget under Reagan for 1980-1985 was 1.5 trillion dollars. The estimated cost of Star Wars alone is from ½ billion to 2 trillion dollars. By far the most expensive weapons program in all history - and the majority of the scientific community believe that it won't work anyhow!

In the 1984 Presidential campaign, the democratic candidate Walter Mondale was explicitly opposed to SDI and made it an issue. We all know what happened to him.

In 1988 the progressive candidacy of Jesse Jackson for the Presidential nominee of the Democratic party called for a 5 year freeze of the current military budget with inflation being the reduction. At the Democratic party convention the proposal put forward by Jackson for a no-first strike clause in the party platform was rejected. Now we have Michael Dukakis and Lloyd Benson as the Democratic party candidates. Dukakis is calling for a build-up of conventional forces to replace the reduction of nuclear weapons as a result of the recent INF treaty. Lloyd Benson is a rich Texan who has been the swing vote for Reagan in the Senate. He has voted for all major military expenditure including the ill-fated B-1 bomber, the MX missile system, the stealth bomber and continued Contra-aid in Nicaragua. His nomination can only mean a sharp turn to the right.

Organised labor's strategy was to send as many delegates to the convention as possible. And they did. Over 200 of the delegates were from labor. And you see what they got. A normally 50,000 word platform reduced to 5000 words saying essentially nothing. And Lloyd Benson. Some plan! Already the unions are gearing up under a 'defeat Bush at any cost' program, when we'll get nothing in return. Labor's legislative victories have been few and far between. The workers continue to pay for the budget deficit with lowered wages and reduced services. Workers are living on 1973 standards!

Let's look at organised labor in the US.

Only 17% of the US work force is unionised - mostly manufacturing, 50% of the public sector workers and a declining share of the transport industries. The highest % was 34% in 1954.

There is no major organising in banking, insurance and the financial industries.

There are 115 international unions with 35 internationals on the AFL-CIO executive board. Mostly white males with a few - very few - females and blacks.

The teamsters Union which was expelled in 1957 for criminal corruption returned to the fold in 1987 with no questions asked. Its top officers were under indictment for criminal activities and some were known FBI informants. The Teamsters have supported Reagan in 1980 and 1984. AFSCME had been the largest union in the AFL-CIO with 1.2 million members. Now it's the Teamsters with 1.7 million members. This can only mean a move to the right.

Foreign policy concerns.

Lane Kirkland, the current president of the AFL-CIO continues in the Meany tradition to support hard line cold war foreign and military policies. He and many of his top staffers maintain close ties with the State department and many of us suspect the CIA too.

4 years ago Kirkland served as an appointee to the National Bi-partisan Commission on Central America. He helped Henry Kissinger formulate proposals for expanded US aid to El Salvador and stepped up aid to the contras in Nicaragua

The 5 'free trade union' institutes set up by the AFL-CIO to fight radical led worker unions around the world in the name of anti-communism receives 40 million dollars in government funds. Collusion with corrupt governments and employers is an acceptable way to set up 'moderate' pro-US unions. Many progressive unions such as the COSATU in South Africa and the UNTS in El Salvador do not co-operate with AFL-CIO sponsored unions.

The total budget for the domestic AFL-CIO is \$39 million. The AFL-CIO trade union institutes are not responsible to the Executive Board. The AFL-CIO leadership that supports contra-aid in Nicaragua and US government policy in South Africa are the same ones formulating disarmament policies and SDI specifically.

On a progressive trade union agenda, we are aware that Central America and South Africa are directly linked to disarmament, but disarmament has not been a high priority in the labor movement because it's perceived as an issue taken up by communists in the 50s.

So labor's built-in anti-communism is aroused. Traditionally disarmament has been perceived as a single issue demand that does not address the needs of the workers. With all the current data to the contrary, (many still believe the arms race is a necessary evil which produces jobs). Unfortunately, racism and anti-communism are still part of the social psychology of the majority of the US population.

The disarmament movement in the US has generally risen in times of wars. The '82 disarmament demonstration in N.Y. had a million people with much public support and internal organising. The recent June 11 demonstration while drawing 100,000 people barely had any labor presence. Even though our city-wide union newspaper carried huge ads, there was no serious participation. I heard that a letter was sent around to progressive heads of unions, (not rank and file) that it was 'a good idea.'

Fortunately there are some breakthroughs. The overwhelming majority of the US population are against nuclear weapons and for greater social spending on the part of government.

The signing of the INF Treaty was very popular with the public and lessens rabid anti-Sovietism.

There is a growing opposition to SDI on moral but mainly budgetary concerns. The infra-structure of the US is getting ready to or is literally falling apart. Homelessness and health care concerns are raising a new consciousness.

The recent US downing of an Iranian civilian airplane was excused because the very expensive military equipment was faulty coupled with the breaking Pentagon defence contract scandal is causing the American public to be deeply sceptical of any new military hardware because it will cost too much, and won't work anyway.

Major trade unions are explicitly opposed to SDI. These are the same unions opposing the reactionary AFL-CIO leadership which has passed a resolution that rejects SDI as 'an alternate to a reduction of armaments but also declares its support for research and development and limited testing of strategic defences.' You can almost always trust the AFL-CIO to take either an open reactionary position or one so bland it hardly matters.

25 international unions support a mutual and verifiable nuclear weapons freeze.

23 international unions belong to the National Labor Committee in support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador. However, a lot of this progressive concern goes on at the top level of union leadership and often little of these good

positions put before the membership in any meaningful way. For instance, my own public sector union in NYC does a tremendous amount of very expensive printing for many progressive causes. The top leadership consider themselves democratic socialists, but do nothing to organise the rank and file around progressive issues in any regular fashion.

Of course this leaves broad openings for the rank and file to organise - and we have. District Council 37 passed one of the first union resolutions on no military aid to El Salvador in 1980. The public sector unions generally have more progressive positions on US foreign policy because they see 'defence dollars' draining money away from the services necessary to maintain their members jobs. This does not include the reactionary American Federation of Teachers.

Unfortunately the good guys 'International Presidents with good political positions' don't push the AFL-CIO too hard. The 1985 AFL-CIO convention was the first time ever that reactionary foreign policy was challenged. The union leadership is kept in line by 2 things:

- 1 internal raiding provisions of the AFL-CIO constitution
2. lack of any ideology. Of course, there are exceptions such as IAM, but basically its pragmatism - for everything good and against everything bad.

The union leadership only leads when it's forced to by rank and file pressures. Even when they recognise the danger of a quantitative and qualitative change in the arms race that SDI represents - on a national level because a lack of any political ideology they are not equipped to organise their membership.

So the rank and file progressive trade unionist sees the issues of Central America and South Africa as part of the issue of disarmament and overall US imperialism. Our issues are US out of Central America and total sanctions against South Africa, as being more immediate and achievable. A major reduction in the US military budget would not prevent the US from bullying Nicaragua and supporting the South African apartheid regime.

Change is coming but slowly and it won't be until we get rid of the AFL-CIO leadership and replace it with a class conscious leadership. We're working on it.

Labor must lead the struggle for an independent working class conscious party and leave the breast of the Democratic Party.

Economic Conversion. The idea is great - the reduction of military spending would result in progressive federal legislation which would require a plan for alternate civilian production investment for those workers and communities displaced.

Funding of this investment would depend on military funding cutbacks and matching civilian expenditures to rebuild the domestic economy.

I'm glad it's worked here but quite frankly for us it really seems a pipe dream. We support areas of the US where it's been tried and succeeded but we don't see much chance of it happening in the near future on a wide scale. Remember we don't even have national health care and New York City will probably end up a home-port for nuclear weapons-carrying ships despite some serious labor protest.

Lynn Taylor, Ex. Board Local 1930

JIM BARNES

SDI AND THE ARMS RACE

SDI is an aspect of the Arms Race. This, I think, is something which we should try and bear in mind when we are looking at SDI because it has an effect on the way that we perceive the issue.

This meeting was not called to go into technical detail about the technicalities of SDI. In preparing the speakers and the workshops etc. we did include a few references to the technical aspects of the issue but only in so far as they had a direct relevance to the type of campaign we develop around SDI. We assumed that people who would come to this conference would already know a fair amount of the hardware stories already. There already have been lots of conferences on SDI which have gone into detail about the technical reasons why SDI wouldn't work. It's quite fun to do this because the SDI programme quickly begins to look like a joke because of the patent non-feasibility of the programme."

But the SDI programme is not a joke. What Reagan and the people around him have attempted to do is to make a savage turn in the arms race as popular as Mickey Mouse by trying to represent it in a similar way, by using the same sort of mass culture to sell SDI. So it looks like a joke, but it isn't a joke. There is an ethos which produced SDI and which will remain even if and when the Star Wars programme slips out of the public eye.

Ronald Reagan will lose the presidential election. One of the things which could have saved him is if he had pressed further with the disarmament process and come up with more that was tangible in a similar vein to the INF agreement. Since he is going to lose it would have made sense, if he felt that the SDI programme was going to be scrapped by the Democrats, to have put SDI on the Negotiating Table. He might have been able to up his popularity and to salvage something of the programme in the process. But he didn't. That means that Ronald Reagan doesn't believe that Dukakis is and it also, to a certain extent, means that the SDI programme was worth losing an election to retain.

Mr Dukakis on the other hand is going to win the presidential election. He has referred to the SDI programme as a fantasy and a fraud which ought to suggest that if he had the choice the programme would be completely dismantled. However all the indications are that he will continue to fund it albeit at a reduced level.

He will probably cut the worst excesses of the military budgets. He will probably tackle some of the corruption in the Pentagon. He will also probably do some to take SDI out of the public eye. He has said however that he will continue funding although he will not make plans to have it deployed in the immediate future. There is certainly therefore the potential for the SDI programme to continue at a considerable level under the Dukakis administration.

but outside of the public eye.

This then leaves us with:-

1):- The military Critical Technologies List - which is the office in the Pentagon where all technology produced in the United States is assessed and that which is thought to be of any possible military significance is classified and its use restricted by law. There have been several attempts by the United States to extend this system to Britain where they the Pentagon would classify and restrict use of research in Britain. Remember that this system operates in an environment where there is a very very close integration between the Administration, the Military in the United States and the defence industries. This is what Eisenhower referred to as the "military industrial complex". So the theoretical military advantages of controlling the technology in the way the MCT is supposed to, will also inevitably have industrial advantages for the United States in terms of the way they relate to us. The Soviet Union is not directly an industrial competitor to the United States in the way Britain, Germany and Japan are and so this means the point of SDI relates to us as much as it does to the USSR.

2):- It leaves us with the residual problem of not being able to compete industrially because we do not have the research resources allocated to industry for it to be able to do so. We do not have tax concessions on money spent on research and we do not have direct support for research in the way that our competitors do.

3):- What also remains of SDI is a methodology to bring about the capacity to fight and 'win' a Nuclear war. That remains. \$1 billion will be going into developing a range of sophisticated weaponry with that in mind. If Dukakis is successful in tightening up the use of money by the Pentagon, there is the possibility that the programme could continue to have the same effect on a smaller budget.

All of the above have consequences for the way we in the peace movement campaign against SDI.

a) The high public profile that Reagan gave the SDI programme with the Walt Disney cartoons made vulnerable to public scrutiny. That high profile we therefore have to try and maintain as best we can. Dragging what SDI represents into the public eye is very important. One of the most significant things about the political failure of the Cruise was that the peace movement made it public and made it publicly ridiculous. This public profile was what destroyed it more than anything else; that made it essential for the United States to be doing something politically to resolve what had become the problem of Cruise.

b) This means making sure that people are aware that the SDI programme is a threat to this country industrially and a threat to the world militarily.

c) British Government support for SDI makes it possible for the United States to cling on to it and to undermine the disarmament process. If there is popular antagonism to British support it makes it all the more difficult for a programme to be used as an obstacle in this way.

d) The role of this Military Industrial Complex has to be challenged in Britain so that we can do something about the systematic asset stripping of our economy to pay for arms.

e) Related to this is the role which research and Development plays in our economy and remember a crucial part of the SDI programme is about the control of technology. We have therefore to argue for a shift of resources away from military research and into civilian research. Our government have just revealed that they intend to cut considerably the money allocated to R&D in the 1990's. No one else in the world is doing this, the USA for instance will probably double their allocation to civilian research in the same period.

f) In doing so we also have to make sure that people directly involved in research are allowed a voice in deciding the nature of what they do and so the peace movement should work to make sure that the military industrial complex does not simply suppress what they wish.

g) The gradual and persistent militarisation of space will, if it is not checked, draw us inevitably into another ever more expensive round of the arms race. The last time that we were drawn into such a qualitative leap in the arms race was in the early 1960's with the expansion put into effect by Kennedy. Britain's industrial problems began with the financial strain the arms race put on our economy during this period, the next round of such an arms race will certainly turn us into an industrial colony of the United States. A horrible thought.

SDI is a part of the arms race. It represents an ethos which is fundamental to the arms race and so will not go away. It was made vulnerable because of Reagan's attempt to make the arms race popular. We have to use that vulnerability to ensure that there is not simply a cloth thrown over the programme but that the ethos underpinning it is itself undermined.

WORKSHOP 1

Report of Workshop on SDI and the Disarmament Process

TUCND SDI Conference 30th July 1988

Introduction by Tom Sibley MSF

SDI is a serious barrier to further disarmament begun by the INF agreement. It will almost certainly prevent an agreement on a 50% reduction in strategic nuclear weapons (START).

SDI can not be seen in isolation - it is a key part of Nato's First Strike strategy and their attempts to gain absolute military superiority over the Warsaw Pact. Nato plans to deploy new air and sea launched cruise missiles in Europe in contravention of the spirit of the INF agreement. Some 24 Trident submarines are to be deployed by the USA and the UK. The aim of SDI is to be able to mop-up any missiles missed in a First Strike by gaining military control of outer space. It is offensive not defensive and as such is a clear obstacle to any further disarmament.

Campaigning on SDI - the problems

- 1) Many people are complacent about the future of SDI because it is seen as "Reagan's Baby" and it is clear that it will not work as Reagan initially outlined. Whoever wins the US presidential elections the money for the militarisation of outer-space has been allocated and the high-profile idea of a defensive umbrella will be dropped. The USA still plan to control outer-space, thus, we should move to demanding that the ABM treaty be upheld
- 2) The campaign against SDI is primarily political. Because SDI is part of Nato's First Strike strategy, it is impossible to argue against it politically without identifying Nato as the threat to world peace and showing up the myth of the "Soviet Threat"
- 3) Explaining the threat posed by SDI to Trade Unionists at the workplace is difficult because, many are convinced that it won't work technically, SDI seen as an American project which has no relevance to Britain and many only see the research and Brain-Drain implications, important though they are, and do not see the threat it poses to further disarmament.

Suggestions for linking SDI to the disarmament process

- 1) Expose the US military penetration of the UK and our lack of control over them - Greenham, the Libyan Bombing and the new air and sea launched cruise missiles.
- 2) Focus more on the ABM treaty and that outer-space, as the sea, should belong to no one Nation.
- 3) Link SDI to the question Disarmament or Rearmament. Expose SDI as a block to further arms reduction agreements. Pose the alternative of Common Security and the role of the United Nations (expose role of USA and UK at UNSSDI).

Primarily, our role as Peace Activists and Trades Unionists is to expose our Governments active support for Nato's First Strike strategy and the pivotal role that the military control of outer-space plays in it. And to pose the alternatives of Disarmament and Common Security with the untold benefit that this could have for all of humanity.

Report by Adrienne Morgan 2/8/88

WORKSHOP 2

Notes of Workshop - Research and Secrecy

Chair - Les Allen, Professor of Physics and Pro-Rector, North East London Polytechnic

- £1.25 bn to universities and polytechnics for research
 - 50% direct funding
 - 50% from Research Councils etc.
- £4.5bn available for research overall i.e. public and private sector funded
 - bulk concentrated in aerospace, defence and nuclear energy
- Recent report of Advisory Board for Research Councils to Secretary of State for DES advised that "Government should increase investment in scientific base"
- Little visible research to date on SDI - only £34m in Spring 1988 cf £600
- £700m on direct funding of research.

Conclusions of Workshop

1. Research is concerned with openness and sharing of knowledge, whereas SDI research is closed and clouded in secrecy.
2. SDI research is leading to more U.S. control over research in other nations.
3. Need for accountability in scientific research, but how can there be accountability if we don't know what is going on.
4. Secrecy requires security and surveillance machinery, conflicting with personal freedom. Government's recent White Paper on reform of Official Secrets Act cites conduct of international relations as proposed area of secrecy.
5. Secrecy maintains inefficiency and is not cost effective.
6. Just as secrecy is the enemy of research, so secrecy is the enemy of trade unionism, which is built on principles of shared experience, co-operation and communication.

PETER SKYTE
Regional Officer

WORKSHOP 3

SDI Trade Unions and the Peace Movement

What turned out to be a lively discussion was introduced by Jimmy Barnes, Secretary TUCND. He suggested that SDI could be seen as the means whereby the US sought to gain control of, and subvert to its own use, the entire research and development efforts of its allies.

SDI has been presented to the world by President Reagan as the search for a 'peace shield' which could be used to protect America and all her allies from nuclear attack, but the entire programme is simply based on research and development. The idea of a protective shield has been quickly dismissed by serious scientific argument. This, however, has not deterred the US military/industrial complex. They see the programme as the key to almost limitless amounts of money. A suggested 2,000,000,000 dollars is to be made available for research and development.

If America's allies can be induced to take part in this programme then all modern and future technologies could, through a combination of centrally controlled funding and extensive use by the Pentagon of security classifications, come under tight American control.

Therefore, although SDI can be described as merely a typical part of the nuclear arms race, it is, nevertheless, directed exclusively towards those technologies which will be essential components of future successful economies. Whoever controls the research and development will inevitably control the manufacture and distribution of the high-tech, high value added products of tomorrow.

Is it possible, therefore, that through SDI's massive research and development programme, the US is attempting to secure control of the world's economy? Certainly when viewed in this light the SDI Programme begins to make sense. It would also explain why even SDI opponents, such as presidential nominee Michael Dukakis, nevertheless support the research programme. If this

analysis is correct then an examination of the political efforts of SDI becomes the key to successful campaigning against it.

Perhaps, therefore, only in so far as they undermine the popular concept of SDI and expose the real objectives behind it, do detailed technical arguments based on scientific knowledge have value. Political arguments on the other hand would need to be on a broad front with a clear and consistent political line.

On the face of it, Trade Unions would be in an ideal position to campaign against SDI. Few, if any of them, have members who are directly involved but all could see the dangers of diverting funds from research and development into civilian products to those designed for war. Most trade unionists fully understand the dangers of the arms race but many become sidetracked because of the fear of job losses. There is, however, a growing awareness that military spending rather than saving jobs destroys them.

At the same time, the Government, rocked by scandals in the Ministry of Defence where overcharging by contractors has been exposed, has been forced to squeeze the arms suppliers' profits. A switch from cost plus contracts which gave guaranteed profits to a system of tendering will force profits down and also expose military contractors to the perils of the market place.

Britain has been unique amongst its allies in that it has consistently directed the bulk of its funds for research and development into military related projects. The Trident Programme has forced cuts in conventional arms spending with a consequential drop in research and development funds; therefore the SDI proposals have been eagerly seized upon by the Government as a means of alternative funding. Perhaps we are fortunate that greed in the US has prevented more than a mere trickle of SDI funds to be available in Britain.

The ill advised policy of neglecting civil research and development has now been exposed. Britain can no longer successfully compete in world markets. As the growing trade deficit demonstrates only a decisive switch from a military based to a civil based economy will equip us for future economic expansion. Funding from the SDI Programme could prevent for all time this switch. A decisive and consistent campaign against

SDI is, therefore, vital. But this campaign must also become an integral part of a sustained effort to achieve sufficient funding for civil research and development so as to spearhead conversion programmes.

At present the Labour Party, which seems to be trying to tailor its policies to suit attitudes rather than seeking to change these attitudes, could not lead such a campaign. It, therefore, falls on Trade Unions and Peace Groups to do so. Trade Unions, perhaps, could best argue from an economic standpoint and Peace Groups from a moral one. There is, however, no logical reason why these standpoints cannot be linked. Even if armaments spending could not so easily be proved to be wasteful and even if SDI research and development did create a few jobs in Britain, trade unionists would still need to oppose both. In the West's two most prolific spenders on arms, Britain and America, as military spending increases the economic infrastructure crumbles. It is not by coincidence that inner city decay, unemployment, rising infant mortality, worsening welfare and health care go hand in hand with high military spending.

Except for the profiteers, everyone is adversely affected by military spending, even those like defence workers who may at first glance seem to benefit from it. This demonstration that there is a direct effect on all people's lives means that people from many different perspectives become opposed to the arms race. Any successful disarmament campaign, therefore, must be capable of embracing these many different perspectives and directing them towards the common goal.

Likewise, we must recognise the international dimensions of the arms race. National Trade Unions and Peace Groups need no longer stand alone. The dangers of SDI whether moral, economic or physical, create points of understanding which should be developed to create international co-operation in the campaign for peace and the transfer of resources to peaceful production.