

THE PEACE MOVEMENT IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

Policies, Forms of Action, Impact

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Like other West European countries, the Nordic nations have over the past two or three years witnessed an amazing and unprecedented growth of the peace movement. In the NATO countries Denmark and Norway, entirely new movements or organisations have developed – originally in reaction to the NATO plans for deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe, and in reaction to the ongoing production and deployment of SS-20s in the Soviet Union. In non-aligned Sweden and neutral Finland, as well as in the NATO country Iceland, the “new peace movement” is to a much larger extent rooted in the already established peace organisations. But institutional innovation – not only political revitalisation – has also taken place in these countries.

Policies and Priorities

Although nuclear weapons are not deployed in any of the Nordic countries (options for their use on or from Danish and Norwegian territory have existed for years), the new consciousness of the threat inherent in the nuclear arms race, and the growing awareness of Europe's position as a hostage of the superpowers, have made nuclear disarmament a prime priority of the major peace movements also in the Nordic region. The long-term aim of a nuclear-weapon-free Europe – originally launched by the appeal of European Nuclear Disarmament (END) on 26 April 1980 – has become a powerful political vision and a guiding idea. A nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) in the North – a campaigning priority of all leading Nordic peace movements – is seen as a step towards this aim. Another priority in Denmark and Norway is campaigning against Danish and Norwegian support to deployment of new intermediate-range missiles in Europe. In Iceland priority has been given to the demands for a demilitarised Iceland (referendum on closing down of US military bases) and withdrawal from NATO. In autumn 1980, a main focus in Norway was the issue of pre-positioning of heavy US military material.

Although priority has been given to the nuclear issues, in most Nordic countries there are debates (and to some extent campaign projects) on a number of non-nuclear issues. Such issues include alternative concepts of defence (and security policy), spendings on conventional arms, alternative concepts of conscription and national service (and legislation on conscientious objection), more openness about defence matters, and peace and disarmament education.

Some political characteristics of the major movements would be: rejection of the crude numbers games, a critical view of traditional arms control negotiations, a call for unilateral or independent initiatives.

A NWFZ in the North

In spring 1981, the question of a NWFZ in the North became an issue in all Nordic countries.

In 1961, the Swedish Foreign Minister, Unden, proposed the creation of a “club” of states obliged not to acquire or accept deployment of nuclear weapons on their territories. In 1963, this idea was specifically adapted to the Nordic region by President Kekkonen of Finland, and the proposal was repeated and to some extent developed by the Finnish Government and its President throughout the 1960s and 70s. Norwegian and Danish official reactions were negative, Swedish reactions less negative. These governments all pointed to the Soviet deployment of (tactical) nuclear weapons at the Kola Peninsula and the Baltic region.

Information Secretary, *Nei til atomvåpen* (No to Nuclear Weapons), Youngsgt. 7, Oslo 1, Norway.

However, in spring 1981 there was a new surge of interest in the zone issue in all Nordic countries, precipitated by a programme declaration of the governing Labour Party in Norway: “The Labour Party will work for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Nordic area as an element in the work to reduce nuclear weaponry in a larger European context.”

Because of the new interest in a Nordic NWFZ, because of the vagueness of some government statements on the zone proposal, and because of the need for practical initiatives, not only statements, independent though to some extent coordinated campaigns for a NWFZ, were launched in Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden. By June 1982, more than two and a half million signatures had been collected (Finland: 1,200,000, Sweden: 750,000, Norway: 540,000, Denmark: 260,000). During the UN Disarmament Week in October 1981, demonstrations organised simultaneously in 54 cities and towns in Finland for a Nordic NWFZ and a nuclear-free Europe, gathered about 130,000 participants – probably the largest demonstrations in the Nordic region in the post WW II era. In May 1982, a rally in Gothenburg, Sweden, under the same slogans had a turn-out of about 75,000 people. In Norway, opinion polls have repeatedly shown that a majority of the population support the proposal for a Nordic NWFZ (August 1981: 53 per cent in favour, 28 per cent against).

Important contributions to the Nordic debate are, among others, a draft “Treaty for the Establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in Europe” by Ambassador Jens Evensen, the initiator of the new debate in Norway, Allan Rosas’ “Declaration on Nuclear Weapons,” and a preliminary study presented by the Norwegian movement No to Nuclear Weapons in April 1982.

The major non-aligned disarmament movements in the Nordic countries are now preparing a joint report or statement on a Nordic NWFZ, to be released by May 1983. Participating in this work are the Campaign Against Military Bases (Iceland), the Peace Union of Finland, the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, No to Nuclear Weapons (Denmark), and No to Nuclear Weapons (Norway).

A Nordic NWFZ is seen primarily as a contribution to detente – a confidence-building measure which may pave the way for further confidence-building measures. In the NATO countries, a NWFZ would halt and eliminate a number of preparations for nuclear war. Nuclear systems outside the zone and targeted specifically on the zone countries would have to be removed, e.g. Soviet systems on the Kola Peninsula and in Leningrad military district. Collateral agreements might place limitations on weapons systems outside the zone, but not seen as especially menacing by the zone states (e.g. US air-launched and sea-launched cruise missiles to be deployed, presumably, in international waters off the Norwegian coast). Collateral agreements might also place restrictions on facilities inside the zone which, though not containing nuclear explosives, nevertheless are of importance in waging nuclear war. A NWFZ should be open-ended and designed to permit extension to neighbouring areas.

A NWFZ in the North would also give encouragement and support to disarmament forces in other regions of Europe, e.g. in the heavily nuclearised Central Europe (where emphasis is placed on “significant first steps” – halting deployment of new theatre nuclear weapons) as well as in the Balkans (where the question of nuclear-free zones has recently been raised again).

Fighting INF – West and East

The NATO plans for deployment of new intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe were an immediate cause of the new peace movement in Norway and Denmark. The Norwegian campaign No to Nuclear Weapons, launched as a spontaneous protest in October 1979, was one of the very first and most powerful campaigns in Europe to attack the NATO plans for cruise and Pershing II missiles, and the deployment of Soviet SS-20s. The Danish campaign No to Nuclear

Weapons was founded in January 1980, partly as the result of Danish protests against the NATO plans, and as an alternative to the Danish Cooperation Committee for Peace and Freedom, associated with the World Peace Council.

To some extent the Norwegian Campaign Against the Neutron Bomb, initiated by the Norwegian Peace Council in January 1978 (a cooperation committee of the "old" peace organisations in Norway, affiliated with IPB, the International Peace Bureau, Geneva), was a precursor of the Norwegian No to Nuclear Weapons. The Campaign Against the Neutron Bomb, which may have been conducive to the Norwegian Government's criticism of Enhanced Radiation Weapons in April 1978, was the first successful disarmament campaign in Norway for years, and revealed a potential in the Norwegian population for a broadly-based resistance against nuclear policies in general.

Resistance against the euro-missiles has been strong both in Norway and Denmark, though probably more efficiently organised in Norway. Although the "grass roots" lost the battle of Brussels in 1979 (the Norwegian and Danish governments supported the NATO Council decision), they won the battle of public opinion. In Norway, 11 out of 18 county councils of the governing Labour Party passed resolutions against the NATO plans, only one county board supported the plans. Seven major trade union federations opposed the plans, as did the Committee on Socio-Ethical Issues of the Norwegian Church. 44 per cent of the Norwegian population opposed the "dual track" decision, 37 per cent were favourable, 19 per cent undecided. Resistance has grown since 1979. A public opinion survey conducted in August 1981 indicated that 71 per cent were opposed to deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles, 21 per cent in favour, 8 per cent undecided.

This autumn, No to Nuclear Weapons (Norway) has been campaigning against Norwegian financial participation in bases and facilities for cruise and Pershing II. A petition issued by the movement in mid-September, signed by the chairmen of 11 major trade union federations, was instrumental in persuading the opposition Labour Party to oppose any government spendings on missile bases in the present situation. The Danish Labour Party followed suit a couple of weeks later. Over the past three years, several demonstrations against new intermediate-range missiles have been staged in Denmark and Norway. The largest one so far took place in Copenhagen in December 1981 and was joined by some 50,000 people.

Both the Norwegian and Danish movements have taken a critical position on the INF talks in Geneva. A statement issued by No to Nuclear Weapons (Norway) on 4 March 1982 denounces traditional arms control negotiations:

"(. . .) A number of factors have made negotiations in the past unable to promote disarmament:

- (a) While negotiations have been going on in one field, the arms race has continued unabated in other areas.
- (b) An exaggerated emphasis on "quantitative" or sector-wise balance has been an obstacle to unilateral reductions aiming at reciprocal disarmament – i.e. independent initiatives without waiting for the other side to take the first step.
- (c) Negotiations on the basis of strength – to rearm in order to force the opponent to disarm – have naturally led to further arms build-up.
- (d) When one side has been regarded as superior to the other in one field, one has levelled up to symmetry, instead of levelling down to approximate symmetry.
- (e) In several agreements there have been loopholes for "compensations" by other armament measures, so that the arms race has been able to continue unabatedly or with increased momentum.

There is great danger that the Geneva talks will follow the pattern of past negotiations. (. . .)"

A Norwegian opinion poll of June 1982 indicates that approximately 62 per cent of the population in Norway are opposed to construction of new missile bases in Europe, 33 per cent in favour.

The Icelandic Campaign Against Military Bases (founded in May 1972) has over the past eight or ten years focussed on the demands for a demilitarised Iceland. Since its Annual General Meeting of 1981, the CAMB has joined the Norwegian and Danish movements in their resistance against euro-missiles West and East, and will be active in the struggle for a NWFZ in the North.

Women for Peace – Peace Marches

Women have played a very prominent part in the new peace movement in the Nordic countries. In February 1980, in the shadow of NATO's "dual track" decision and the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan, Women For Peace was launched as a loosely structured Nordic movement based on three fundamental slogans: "Disarmament for lasting world peace! Use the military spendings for providing food! No to war!" The movement, which spread to other countries (e.g. FR Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands), collected half a million signatures in the Nordic countries for a petition addressed to the UN.

The Peace March 1981 from Copenhagen to Paris was to a great extent initiated by groups within Women For Peace, inspired among other things by the appeal of European Nuclear Disarmament for a nuclear-free Europe.

The Peace March 1982 from Stockholm to Minsk was also to a great extent an initiative by Women For Peace. The slogans were: "No to nuclear weapons in Europe – East and West! No to nuclear weapons in the world! For disarmament and peace!"

Both marches were great media events. The Peace March from Stockholm to Minsk, organised jointly with the Soviet Peace Committee, in some countries raised the question of relationships between the non-aligned and independent movements in the West and counterparts and working contacts in the East – a debate which, in the author's view, is still in its rudimentary stages, considering the emergence of "unofficial" or independent initiatives and groups in Eastern Europe (GDR, Hungary, the USSR).

On the whole, Women For Peace has played an important part in mobilising women at the grass roots. Opinion polls, e.g. in Norway, indicate that anti-militarist attitudes are more current among women than among men. (Thus, in August 1981, 79 per cent of the female respondents were against deployment of cruise and Pershing II, 63 per cent of male respondents). The politics of Women For Peace are more "expressive" than "instrumental" in a short-term perspective, though probably "instrumental" in a more long-term perspective.

Alternative Defence and Security

No to Nuclear Weapons (Norway) has strictly limited its programme to nuclear disarmament and has so far not taken a position on conventional armaments. No to Nuclear Weapons (Denmark) has a somewhat broader platform. The Campaign Against Military Bases in Iceland works for demilitarisation of Iceland and opposes proposals occasionally put forward for a "total defence system" including a conventional military component.

In most Nordic countries there are debates on military spendings and alternative concepts of defence and security. A major contribution is a proposal for a new peace policy published by the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society in February 1982 as part of the organisation's campaign against Swedish militarism (launched in 1977). (SPAAS is the largest peace organisation in Sweden. It is

affiliated with the International Peace Bureau and the War Resisters International. Founded in 1883, it is the oldest peace organisation in the world today. SPAAS played an active part in the movement against Swedish nuclear weapons 20 years ago.)

The proposal for a new Swedish peace policy comprises initiatives with regard to the East-West conflict, the North-South conflict, establishment of nuclear-free zones, demilitarised zones and transarmament zones. SPAAS proposes gradual transarmament of the Swedish military defence into a non-military defence posture (civil defence, economic defence and civilian resistance). Similar proposals, or proposals for alternative defence systems comprising some kind of defensive military preparedness as well as preparedness for civilian resistance, have been put forward also in other Nordic countries. But so far the proposals have not been supported by massive campaigns. It seems likely, however, that these proposals will become more prominent in coming years. In Denmark and Norway these questions tend to arise in the wake of the anti-nuclear-weapons movement. But in a country like Norway, for instance, it is obvious that the supporters of the movement for nuclear disarmament would be divided over the questions of defence alternatives. In Finland, a primary advocate for unilateral disarmament and preparedness for civilian resistance is the Peace Union of Finland (founded in 1907, affiliated with the International Peace Bureau). The Finnish Peace Committee (founded in 1949, affiliated with the World Peace Council) has evaded these issues.

Conscientious Objection — Alternative Concepts of National Service

Conscientious objection has for years been a well-established form of protest against military policy in the Nordic countries. The Nordic countries were also among the first ones in Europe to recognize the right of conscientious objection. Laws were passed in Denmark in 1917, Sweden in 1920, Norway in 1922 (preliminary provisions in 1902, proposal for exemption of Quakers in 1818), Finland in 1931. The number of COs is particularly high in Norway and Sweden (about 4 per cent of the annual call-up in Sweden, about 7 per cent in Norway).

In Norway, Finland and Sweden demands have been put forward for a peace building alternative service, including training in civilian resistance. In Norway an alternative concept of conscription and national service has been proposed, comprising not only the traditional military service and civil defence service, but also different types of non-military service for peace building or peace keeping. According to the proposal, the non-military peace service should have the same status as military service today, and should be an option not only for COs.

A major innovation in Norway, is the establishment of a CO school with peace education as part of its curriculum. The school is now being built (after a trial period in the early 70s), and will be ready by 1983 or 1984.

Conclusion

The peace movement is becoming a powerful political factor in several Nordic countries. New groups are getting involved. A number of professional groups have launched their own organisations or projects, most of them focusing on nuclear disarmament: Physicians (DK, N, S, SF), Teachers (DK, N, S, SF), Journalists (SF), Engineers (S), Psychologists (SF), Architects (petition S), Clergy (petition N), Artists (projects S, SF), Jurists (inceptive, DK). In a country like Norway, trade union leaders and federations have played an important part over the past three years, whereas in Denmark, for instance, they have played a far more reticent role.

Church related groups are getting involved. In 1982, the Bishops Conferences in Norway and Finland, as well as the Church Meeting in Iceland, issued

statements on peace and disarmament. The Danish Oecumenical Joint Council published a pamphlet on "Peace on Earth" in 1981, and in summer 1983 the Danish Church Days will focus on peace work. Peace services and study groups in church communities are organised in several countries. In October 1982, the churches of Sweden launched a petition campaign for peace and disarmament which will continue till April 1983. Among the demands of the campaign are a halt in development, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and a demand for a NWFZ in the North.

In Norway, 11 county councils (out of 18) and about 50 municipalities so far have passed resolutions for banning nuclear weapons from Norwegian territory in times of both peace and war. The resolutions also request the Government to make every possible effort to establish a NWFZ in the North. In Finland, some municipalities endorsed the petition for a NWFZ. In Denmark, Sweden and Iceland, local authorities up to now have not raised these questions to any significant extent.

A powerful political movement is emerging. A new political and ethical awareness, determination and creativity have developed in the shadow of the arms race, irrational military policies and superpower dominance. The first steps have been taken.

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(IPRA)

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- To advance interdisciplinary research into the conditions of peace and the causes of war and other forms of violence. To this end IPRA shall undertake measures of world-wide cooperation designed to assist the advancement of peace research, and in particular:
- To promote national and international studies and teaching related to the pursuit of world peace.
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- To encourage the international dissemination of results of research in the field and of information on significant development of peace research.

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