

In Hamburg, West Germany, sometime last July, a dozen youths stood together in a square singing anti-nuclear, anti-American songs and passing pro-peace leaflets to many, many receptive passers-by.

The modest impromptu demonstration followed huge organized rallies throughout West Germany last summer — 40,000 in Bonn, the capital, over 100,000 in Hamburg, another 60,000 people in Berlin. In Canada last summer the so-called peace movement was unheard of. But in West Germany, and in Belgium and Holland and other Western European countries, in the national and international press, among students, labor unions, the churches, ecologists, and left-wing activists there was, there is, great unrest.

The immediate objects of protestors' concern are over 500 Pershing II and cruise nuclear missiles, most of them scheduled for placement on West German soil by 1983. They are the mainstay of NATO's Theater Nuclear Forces (TNF) plan, agreed upon back in 1979. The Pershing medium-range missiles would re-arm Western Europe against the onslaught of Soviet medium-range SS-20 missiles, already in place, aimed at western capitals. But, TNF was a two-track strategy: the missile program was in a large way supposed to intimidate the Soviets in arms negotiations this Fall. Re-arming and re-negotiating were seen in the original agreement as inseparable; it would have been a sound propaganda campaign, had it worked.

As evidenced by growing West European anxiety, the TNF plan didn't work. Before Ronald Reagan was elected, TNF had not been an issue; actually it had been backed fully by West Germany and other NATO members who were thinking in 1979 that Jimmy Carter was too soft on the Soviets.

Perhaps Reagan took too hard a line on the Soviets for the Western Europeans, who are often difficult to please. In any case, the USSR used the US tough stance to start building up propaganda points itself: "We are ready to sit down (on arms control) even tomorrow, if you like," said party chairman and first secretary Leonid Brezhnev last summer. With his SS-20's in place, Brezhnev certainly would have liked to have started bargaining; in Reagan's terms, he would have bargained from a position of strength. Yet East German leader Erich Honecker warned sternly against attempts to even the strength: "Deployment of Pershing II missiles would inevitably direct a retaliatory strike against Western Europe, and that means nothing more than suicide."

It was good stuff. The USSR and its Warsaw pact allies were able to react defensively to TNF, and they were making initiatives — they had offered never to use nuclear weapons against nations that renounced nuclear weapons for themselves, they had so far stayed out of Poland, and coincidentally, the international press seemed suddenly to have forgotten about Afghanistan.

The press instead concentrated on Ronald Reagan. Reagan was out of step in the propaganda war. His stridently anti-Soviet rhetoric predicting the beginning of the end of communism while the U.S. doubled its defense budget made Reagan the subject of humiliating editorial cartoons world-wide. There were new U.S. arms initiatives with China and Pakistan, which smacked of aggression on the Soviet flank,

and a bit of strong-armings of Japan to get it to increase its defense commitments. There were Reagan's chief aides — Secretary of State Alexander Haig, saying "There are most important things in the world than peace," and head of U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Eugene Rostow: arms reductions talks were not "a very practical way to spend our time." (In fact, Rostow was following the Reagan line that U.S. and NATO defense would have to be bolstered before arms talks started — to negotiate from a position of strength.)

It all added up, causing unrest among the West Germans. Disatisfied as they were with Carter, they simply distrusted and feared Ronald Reagan.

"Germans are afraid of Ronald Reagan," said Wolf Homfeld last summer, a former student activist and now a civil servant in the West German education portfolio.

"They are very afraid of a third world war," Homfeld said.

It was not just students, however, protesting. The burgeoning peace movement embraced anti-nuclear power lobbies, groups concerned with social spending, and perhaps most significantly, Homfeld said, people who still remembered the tragedies of the second world war.

Homfeld and others also said West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt would face major rifts in his Social Democratic Party over Theater Nuclear Forces if Reagan continued to ignore the negotiating half; Schmidt had put his resignation on the line over TNF approval.

Yet, make no mistake: the peace movement was not and is not a pacifist movement. West Germans know Soviet nuclear missiles are now trained on their major cities. The real issue is whether additional arming should in fact take place or if it would simply antagonize the Soviets and heighten East-West tension.

"We are squeezed between two powerful blocs and inevitably,

if these two clash the battleground will be our country," said one Munich university official in the summer.

Thus the West Germans seemed to think under any circumstances the U.S. should keep talking to the Soviets. That strategy had worked for the West Germans throughout the '70s. While the U.S. had reduced overall its own arms expenditures, West Germany had increased its own; while the U.S. had disbanded its conscript army, West Germany had maintained its own. Yet, West Germany had made great progress in its relations with the Soviet Union. There had been normalization of traffic and trade between East and West Germany, an unexpected emigration of ethnic Germans to West Germany from the Soviet Union, Poland, and Romania, and very recently, agreement on a massive natural gas pipeline to carry Siberian gas to Western Europe. Some observers even credit the Polish liberalization to this Western European detente. Anything that threatened this hard-fought cooperation threatened West German interests.

Ronald Reagan was perceived as such a threat. Moreover, as Reagan stirred up anxiety in Western Europe with his coldwar rhetoric, there was a feeling that the U.S. would not face down a limited Soviet invasion because all NATO had to fight with against Soviet ground forces were nuclear weapons.

"There is a deep-seated mistrust of the United States, in the sense that in the end they won't defend us. When the Communists come they will draw back across the Atlantic and then would not defend us," said the Munich university official.

Homfeld agreed. "We don't trust Ronald Reagan. There is a lack of credibility — it's a psychological problem.

Yet since the summer the

American side seems to have improved its propaganda strategy. Tempered is the anti-Communist rhetoric, given way to conciliatory letters to Moscow with Reagan initiating calls for arms negotiations "in a framework of mutual respect." In September, Alexander Haig met with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, and the two agreed to reopen negotiations November 30 on medium-range nuclear missiles (fulfilling the TNF package).

As well, other propaganda points were to be had. The U.S. was the first to state terms for the November 30 negotiations, offering its 'zero-option' in which no American Pershing IIs would be deployed if all Soviet SS-20s were dismantled. The Soviets have refused to consider that in the upcoming talks. They insist Pershing II would give the NATO alliance the military edge, in spite of the fact the SS-20s already exist and NATO has no comparable missile at present. In fact, the respected London International Institute for Strategic Studies recently confirmed that the USSR did possess medium-range nuclear superiority in Europe.

Other embarrassments to undermine the Soviet position were available in the tough French Socialist position in support of TNF, and the recent fiasco involving a Soviet nuclear submarine found lying in the rocks on the neutral Swedish coastline. Unexplained, that incident destroyed totally the credibility of the USSR's non-nuclear attack guarantees to Northern European nations offered last summer.

The total propaganda picture leaves the U.S. still behind. The neutron bomb program announcement recently precipitated enormous protest all over the world, despite the fact the bomb, which kills people but leaves inanimate objects unharmed, was conceived first, then shelved, by Jimmy Carter. The Soviets

denounced the neutron bomb, but pledged they would build one themselves. The \$180 billion U.S. defense budget — including 100 MX intercontinental missiles with 10 nuclear warheads in each, long range B-1 bombers, and NATO plans for limited nuclear engagements in the European theater all have brought Reagan's perceived militarism back into focus.

Yet as concerns specifically the Theater Nuclear Forces plan, the U.S. has in agreeing to meet the Soviets lived up to the terms of the NATO agreement. Probably the talks were a big compromise for Ronald Reagan. He would have preferred to ice the USSR as long as it took NATO, led by the U.S. to upgrade its forces — to negotiate from a position of strength. But unlike his counterparts in the Kremlin, Reagan has had to bow to the pressure of public criticism, from home and from European allies.

Last summer, Dr. Carl-Friedrich von Weizsaecker, pioneer German nuclear physicist, philosopher, and peace-thinker, said growing public opposition to Pershing II missiles would force their deployment at sea, not land — not in West German territory.

Dr. von Weizsaecker will be on campus Saturday, November 21, to receive an honorary degree from the University of Alberta. It should be interesting to hear what insights he has now, a week before the first arms control talks since Carter broke off SALT II after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

Dr. von Weizsaecker will speak at 8 p.m. in Education North, Rm 2-115, on "Questions of War and Peace." For more information, contact Dr. G. Marahrens, department of Germanic Languages, 432-3271.

Gateway editor Peter Michalyshyn spent two weeks in West Germany last June and July on an information tour courtesy the West German federal government. This is the first of two features from that trip.



by Peter Michalyshyn

EUROPE WINDS UP

Time for protest