

UNITED STATES PACIFIST PARTY REPORT

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WHY PROMOTE THE UNITED STATES PACIFIST PARTY?

Promoting a third party in the United States may be criticized as an exercise in futility. In this century, no third party has won a national election. In the last Presidential election, no third party won as much as 15% of the vote in any state. Under these circumstances, third party candidates would seem unable to gain office, and the parties they represent can have no decisive influence.

Another criticism of third parties is that people who work and vote for third party candidates are unable to support the candidates of the major parties. Therefore, it can be argued that third parties simply weaken major party candidates. Under some circumstances, a third party candidate might keep a "good" major party candidate from being elected.

These criticisms involve assumptions that can be questioned. One assumption is that third parties can't grow to become majority parties. Another is that on all issues, there are significant differences between the major party candidates.

The USPP questions both of these assumptions. The ability of any party to become a major party and win Presidential elections depends ultimately on the arguments it uses to promote its platform. If the public finds these arguments "reasonable", it ultimately will adopt the platform they support. If it finds them unreasonable, the party won't grow much beyond the foundation established by its original constituencies.

In general, third party rationales are weak because the third party advocates aren't sufficiently critical of their own assumptions. They believe, incorrectly, that what's obvious to them also is obvious to the public.

The USPP is in the unique position of being able to avoid this pitfall of other third parties. Although it begins with a

GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER: A STRATEGY FOR THE PEACE MOVEMENT

Transportation of cruise missiles to England, and the vote by the West German Parliament to permit the installation of Pershing II missiles in West Germany, should give the anti-war movement cause for thought. If a primary objective of the movement has been to prevent the installation of these missiles, then the movement hasn't been as successful as it had hoped. This means both that the movement hasn't convinced enough people in Western Europe and the United States that the missiles shouldn't be installed, and it hasn't given the political leaders of these countries serious doubts about the wisdom of installing the missiles. Why has the movement failed in these respects?

Probably because the movement hasn't addressed the main reason why people and their governments support the installation of these weapons. The missiles are being installed mainly because governments and most people believe that deterrence will work. Everyone will grant that the arms race is dangerous, even that there may be an accidental launch of a nuclear weapon. But, in the end, people see no reason why a deliberate strategic attack should be launched by any government, as long as what are called "stable" arsenals are in place.

Innumerable editorials and articles that appear in "main line" publications, and official reaction to the television film "The Day After", support this interpretation. Every statement supporting the installation of the missiles says that they are necessary for "deterrence." Every member of the panel of "experts" who discussed the film after it had been shown agreed that deterrence was necessary for peace. They disagreed only on the size and configuration of the weapons systems. "The Day After" was valuable in that it drove in the point that nuclear wars leave no

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