

Curzon Soho
Sunday 31 JULY, 12 noon

NO MORE HIROSHIMAS

On 6 August, 1945 the US dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. The bomb, called 'Little Boy' contained Uranium-235 and had the destructive power of over 15,000 tons of TNT. It killed far over 140,000 people. Three days later, on 9 August, a further atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, killing over 70,000 people. Tens of thousands more have died as a result of radiation since 1945, and the effects still have a profound impact on the area.

To commemorate the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 60 years ago, Curzon Cinemas has teamed up with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and Contemporary Films. We are pleased to present a number of rarely seen, relevant films and a panel session aimed to inform and create debate.

12 noon
BOOOM

Director: .Country, Year. 10mins.

An animated film that takes a humorous peep at a very serious subject: the giant global arms race. BOOOM is a history of aggression, and the theory that might makes right. By extension it carries us into the atomic and missile age, postulating various scenarios for planetary self-destruction, both planned and accidental. Without narration, using only sound-effects and music, the film asks the question: is this THE END?

12.15PM

THE WAR GAME

Director: Peter Watkins. Starring: Michael Aspel, Dick Graham (commentators). UK 1966. 48mins.

Intended for broadcast in 1965, writer/director Peter Watkins' nuclear war drama was withheld by the BBC - possibly as a result of political pressure - and remained untelevised for nearly twenty years, finally being transmitted on 31st July 1985.

Continuing the experiments in blending fiction and documentary techniques, Watkins presented data drawn from his detailed research - encompassing interviews, Civil Defence documents, scientific studies and accounts of the effects of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki blasts and the non-nuclear devastation of Dresden, Hamburg and other cities during World War II - in the form of charts, quotes and vox-pop style face-to-face interviews with ordinary people. These he embedded into his own imagined scenario of the impact of a blast in Kent following the escalation of an East-West conflict.

The result was a controversial and harrowing film which, after the BBC had reluctantly allowed a cinema release (distributed by the British Film Institute), garnered huge critical praise internationally, winning a number of prizes, including an Academy Award (intriguingly in the Best Documentary category). The film had a significant influence on the growing Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. (Mark Duguid, Screenonline) CND organised hundreds of screenings around the country in the 1960s and 1970s, and thousands of people were drawn into anti-nuclear campaigning as a result.

1.05PM Break

1.20PM

BLOSCH

Director: Ian Dury .Country, Year. Length.

A short, and to the point, film about the threat of nuclear war. A number of well-known personalities were asked to give their reasons for supporting the World Disarmament Campaign. The result is a powerful and comprehensive argument for disarmament. BLOSCH is Ian Dury's description of a nuclear explosion. Other interviewees include Nigel Hawthorne, Susannah York, Billie Whitelaw and Maureen Lipman.

1.30PM Panel discussion: The New Nuclear Threat

60 years after the bombing of Hiroshima, the threat of nuclear weapons being used in war is growing once again. At least eight countries possess nuclear weapons, all far more powerful than the bombs dropped in 1945.

Led by Kate Hudson of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), the panel includes Jenny Jones (Green Party) and peace activist Bruce Kent.

2.20PM Break

2.50PM

ON THE BEACH

Director: Stanley Kramer. Starring: Gregory Peck, Ava Gardner, Fred Astaire, Anthony Perkins. USA 1959. 134 mins.

Based on Nevil Shute's acclaimed novel, this end-of-the-world drama is set in Australia in 1964, after nuclear war has eliminated life in the northern hemisphere. Produced and directed by Stanley Kramer, this unremittingly bleak message film remains a powerful, well-acted, deftly photographed film in the tradition of FAIL SAFE and DR. STRANGELOVE. When the film went on public release in 1959, many CND groups leafleted outside cinemas and held public meetings to publicise the issues. Shocked by the contents of the film, many became active in CND as a result.

17.05 Ends