

How the Peace Movement Should be Preparing for Nuclear War

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The risk of nuclear war

Unless nuclear weapons are totally eliminated, it is a virtual certainty that nuclear war will occur eventually. The likelihood of war in any given year may be small, but the cumulative effect of small probabilities can approach certainty. The likelihood is definitely not zero. For example, it is known that US policy-makers have seriously considered using nuclear weapons unilaterally on a number of occasions.

Two developments have increased the risk of nuclear war in recent years. First is the deployment of highly accurate strategic missile systems in the US and the Soviet Union, plus developments in anti-submarine warfare and communications and control systems. This is increasing the chance that one of the super-powers will launch a 'first strike' in an attempt to destroy the opponent's nuclear inventory. Second is the spread of the capability to make nuclear weapons to more and more countries, fostered by the expansion of the nuclear power industry. It seems likely that this nuclear proliferation will be aided at some stage by laser enrichment of uranium, a technique which will dramatically reduce the obstacles to obtaining nuclear weapons. The question in such circumstances is not if nuclear war will occur, but when, what kind, and on what scale.

The risk of nuclear war could be removed if all nuclear weapons were eliminated: total nuclear disarmament. How could this happen? I have argued elsewhere that convincing decision-makers or mobilising public opinion to

influence decision-makers is insufficient, and that what is required is grassroots initiatives mobilising large numbers of people in activities that challenge or transform warlinked institutions and which create new institutions.¹

The chance that the people struggling for fundamental institutional change will succeed worldwide in 20, 50 or 100 years is much less than certainty. Indeed, any realistic assessment of the strength of the present peace movement, in terms of its ability to fundamentally affect arms races and their institutional bases, would have to admit its extreme weakness. The peace movement seems highly unlikely to bring about nuclear disarmament within the next few years, and hence it should be prepared for the possibility of nuclear war. Whether a nuclear war is limited or global, available evidence suggests that a large fraction of the world's population may be unaffected physically.² A long term strategy for peace must provide the basis for transforming the war system both before and after nuclear war or nuclear wars, and at the same time minimise the chance of nuclear war occurring in the first place.

In addition to the important physical effects of nuclear war there would be important indirect political effects. It seems very likely that there would be strong moves to maintain or establish authoritarian rule as a response to crises preceding or following nuclear war. Ever since Hiroshima, the threat of nuclear destruction has been used to prop up repressive institutions, under the pretext of defending

against the 'enemy'.³ The actuality of nuclear war could easily result in the culmination of this trend. Large segments of the population could be manipulated to support a repressive regime under the necessity to defend against further threats or to obtain revenge.

A limited nuclear war might kill some hundreds of thousands or tens of millions of people, surely a major tragedy. But another tragedy could also result: the establishment, possibly for decades, of repressive civilian or military rule in countries such as Italy, Australia and the US, even if they were not directly involved in the war. The possibility of grassroots mobilisation for disarmament and peace would be greatly reduced even from its present levels. For such developments the people and the peace movements of the world are largely unprepared.

Preparedness for crisis situations

As well as encouraging moves towards repressive rule, the political and social upheaval resulting from nuclear war could also provide major opportunities for rapid social change in progressive directions. Several factors would operate here.

(a) There would be worldwide anguish and outrage at any significant use of nuclear weapons against populations. This emotion could easily turn against established institutions.

(b) A nuclear war involving the US, Soviet Union and Europe would weaken or destroy the bases for imperialism and neocolonialism in poor countries, and stimulate widespread revolutionary action that could not be contained by local elites left without rich country support.

(c) In areas directly affected by nuclear attack, the destruction of established institutions would allow the creation of new structures.

Historically, periods of economic or military crisis often have preceded revolutionary change, though not always with desirable results. Crises provide opportunities for groups which are organised and able to take advantage of them. In the case of nuclear war, present governments have made some arrangements to

preserve their type of rule after a nuclear war.⁴ By contrast, the peace movement is almost completely unprepared to respond to a crisis engendered by nuclear war.

The primary objective of national security bureaucracies in the event of nuclear war is survival of the state apparatus. This has two components: continued defence against the outside enemy, and defence against challenges raised by the native population. The health and welfare of the general population is a secondary consideration, mainly important in its effects on the two primary goals. This emphasis is reflected in preparations for the survival of key officials, for continuity of official decision-making apparatuses and communications, and for quelling 'civil disturbances'.

In the absence of any significant counter-vailing force, a nuclear war will not be the end of war but the beginning of the age of many nuclear wars. Although nuclear war may lead to mass revulsion, there will also be strong government and citizen pressures for retaliation, revenge, efforts to 'do better next time' and not to be caught unprepared. The rise of Nazism after World War I should point to the danger. Scenarios for World Wars IV, V, VI and so forth may be repulsive, but cannot be discounted solely for that reason.

During World War II, several key groups in the US developed plans for the post-war world.⁵ More generally, post-war political and economic considerations played a large role in many decisions, military and otherwise, during the war. The same pattern is being and will be replayed prior to and during a nuclear war. It is not for lack of anything better to do that nuclear strategists have elaborated numerous scenarios for nuclear war, recovery and future wars. During and after a nuclear crisis or war, powerful interest groups will attempt to sway developments through management of the news, mobilisation of sympathetic groups, creating scapegoats, suppressing dissent, and using many other mechanisms familiar to us today. If these developments are to be opposed, peace activists need to be prepared to act during nuclear crisis and nuclear war and afterwards.

Preparation for nuclear war by the peace movement could increase the chances of success in struggles for social justice, especially in the poor countries, during a period of chaos in the rich countries resulting from nuclear war or nuclear crisis.

Implications for the present

But these possibilities provide relatively little consolation for the human disaster of nuclear war, and certainly would not justify any policy which significantly increased the risk of nuclear war. It is in their implications for the present that peace movement activities relating to nuclear war must be assessed.

It is my belief that preparation for nuclear war by the peace movement would reduce the chance of nuclear war by providing a visible threat to the otherwise unchallenged continuance of existing political institutions. National decision-makers may wish to avoid nuclear war to save their own lives, but they have demonstrated a continued willingness to risk nuclear war, both in crises and confrontations and through the very existence of nuclear arsenals, through the policies they have promoted and the institutions they have constructed and supported. This institutionalised risk of nuclear war will seem less acceptable if one consequence of continued preparations for war were a major challenge to the complete system of political and economic power and privilege.

Nuclear weapons states have refrained from nuclear war thus far not primarily because of their perception of the human disaster of nuclear war but because of the possible political consequences. A prepared peace movement would ensure that such political consequences are as serious as possible.

There are a number of principles which seem appropriate for peace movement planning for nuclear crisis, nuclear war and its aftermath. Peace movement planning has to be based on an open rather than a hidden agenda. A full peace movement strategy must take into account supporters and sympathisers as well as opponents in working out how to take full advantage of the crisis. But most important is the task of developing strategies, methods and

organisational forms which are relevant both in the nuclear crisis, nuclear war and its aftermath, and for ongoing activities today. Just as peace group organisational structures should be designed to handle infiltrators, so these structures – and other aspects of efforts for peace – should be designed to operate in the event of nuclear war.

And, vice versa, the type of preparations for nuclear war decided upon should be compatible with current effectiveness. Only if the threat of institutional revolution in the event of nuclear war is also raised in the present is it likely that disarmament as a reform will seem to power-holders as the lesser of two evils.

In spite of the attention I am giving here to preparing for nuclear war, and in spite of the optimism of some non-militarists for developments in the wake of massive social disaster or breakdown,⁶ the prospects for a post-nuclear war world seem rather dismal to me. Aside from the massive loss of life and continuing human suffering caused by nuclear war, moral barriers against the future use of nuclear weapons in war would be greatly reduced. We need only remember the world outrage at terrorist bombings of civilian targets during the Spanish Civil War by Germany and Italy. Not long after, such bombing became standard policy for the 'enlightened democracies'. This points to the need to be prepared to fully utilise the outrage and disruption of the *first* nuclear war.

Strategies for the peace movement

It seems likely that the human spirit will not be crushed even by widespread nuclear war. But preparation for survival of nuclear war should not be an end in itself, but rather the stimulus to more effective efforts at prevention. It is in this light that the following suggestions should be considered.

(a) *Resistance against repressive measures by the state.* As mentioned earlier, one likely consequence of nuclear war, or even the threat of it, is declaration of states of emergency by national governments, detention of 'subversives' (trade union leaders, leaders of opposition parties, leaders of leftist groups, ethnic

groups, feminists, etc.), and perhaps formal military rule. Plans, infrastructure and methods for such repressive measures already exist in many countries, having been developed to defend the status quo against various citizen-based initiatives.⁷ Furthermore, many plans for government action in the event of nuclear war seem specifically oriented to perpetuate the state structure rather than to defend people.

The peace movement as well as the general population are not prepared for these contingencies, partly because nuclear war is seen as 'the end'. Yet if significant segments of the population were able to resist repression, to push for democratic initiatives and establish an alternative voice to that of the state in a nuclear emergency, the government and military would be much more reluctant to risk the occurrence of nuclear war. When the population is prepared, a nuclear war becomes a threat to the government itself as well as to the population.

Resistance to repression is important now as well as in a nuclear emergency, and hence preparation, training and strategising with this aim in mind serves a double purpose, and also links peace movement activities with other social movements.

Resistance to repression is an enormous topic, and only a few ideas are offered here. Important principles include nonviolence, local autonomy, non-hierarchical structure, popular understanding and involvement, training, provision of infrastructure and use of methods for resistance as part of a wider programme for social change.

The reasons for non-violence are many, and include the futility of armed struggle in modern industrial society,⁸ the broader base of support obtained through non-violent struggle, the lower level of suffering, the opportunity for everyone to participate, the reduction of secrecy and of centralised control of activities, and the provision of a basis for a non-violent society.

Non-violent means of resistance include strikes, work-ins, sit-ins, rallies, boycotts, refusals to obey orders, going slow on the job, migration and many others. Non-violent resistance must be more than a collection of

techniques, however, and should be part of a wider strategy and unified around aims such as defending civil liberties.⁹ Much of the literature on social defence can be used in planning to resist repression, by shifting the usual focus on national defence by non-military means to community defence. Non-military methods have been demonstrated in resistance to military coups in a number of well documented examples.¹⁰

Local autonomy in resistance to repression is essential in the actual event of nuclear war because it is likely that many surviving communities will be physically isolated, communications networks destroyed and many official 'leaders' of the resistance either killed in the war or arrested. Even in a nuclear crisis without nuclear war, local autonomy in resistance is desirable because dominant communications channels are likely to be controlled by the state and official resistance leaders are likely to be either arrested, coopted, or infiltrated and subverted. Local autonomy in resistance to repression also can be linked with local structures for self-sufficiency and self-government.

Non-hierarchical structures are essential to resistance to repression for similar reasons to those for local autonomy: if 'leaders' are arrested, incapacitated or killed, others will be able to take their place with relatively little loss of effectiveness. Hierarchical structures are prime targets for infiltration or for destruction through arrest of leaders. Non-hierarchical structures are also compatible with initiatives for self-managed economic and political structures.

Local autonomy and non-hierarchical structures must be coupled with popular understanding and involvement in the plans for resistance. A significant fraction of the population needs to understand the reasons for resisting, to be ready to take the responsibility to act, and to grasp the essentials of non-military methods and their relation to the goals to be obtained. They also need to be involved in decision-making in all these matters. This need not mean a large organisation specifically geared for resistance to repression. More reasonably, it will involve active interest and

involvement by a few individuals who introduce the ideas and methods in groups in which they are already involved, such as unions, workplaces, schools, churches and local communities.

A minimal level of formal organisation plus a maximum level of popular involvement in resistance activities are also desirable to prevent the resistance becoming too cautious or dogmatic by being dependent on particular leaders or experts. This is especially the case in preparing for nuclear war, in which flexibility and spontaneity by informed and aware groups of people are at a premium, since the experts are likely to be wrong and the long-standing leaders out of touch.

Beyond understanding strategies and methods for resistance against repression, it is important to train for resistance. For example, factory workers can practise disabling their equipment with minimal damage and responding to occupation, radio station employees can stage simulated 'resistance broadcasts', computer operators and programmers can practise disabling or reprogramming computer systems, community groups can practise removing street signs and house numbers and hiding 'dissidents', organising food distribution and so forth. In many cases such training can be part of a current social action campaign; in all cases issues of wider strategy should be kept in mind. For such exercises there is a growing body of experienced people and literature on non-violent action training.¹¹

Along with training, preparation for resistance against repression would desirably include a minimal infrastructure, such as broadcasting and receiving equipment not dependent on central electricity supplies, typing and duplicating facilities, and inventories of vital facilities in local communities such as supplies of food and clothing. For example, it would be useful to have plans for an 'underground' press producing newsletters and leaflets and for distributing them. Initially this might be no more than an inventory of manual typewriters and manual printing equipment. The infrastructure for resistance against repression should be planned in conjunction with the wider strategy

for resistance. For example, the underground press might be designed as a backup or supplement to the established press, which in some cases would be part of the resistance, or would only cooperate under duress (and, if prepared, inefficiently) with a repressive regime.

If resistance to repression were only seen as something that might be needed in the event of a nuclear war, it would not have much appeal and would be a rather negative exercise. Therefore it is important to integrate planning and training for such resistance with current campaigns against repression or for social reform, when possible. Because the principles underlying social action campaigns and preparation against repression are similar, this should not be too difficult. Again, integrating these activities as part of a wider vision and programme for social change is important.

(b) *Survival and self-reliance.* In the event of nuclear war, it is important to know how to and be ready to take simple steps to increase one's chance of survival. At the same time, personal survival should not become a preoccupation which reduces efforts to remove the sources of war.

The chance of personal survival can be increased by such things as sheltering in strong building (basements if possible), evacuation of likely target areas and lying down if one is outside. These matters are dealt with in a number of publications.¹²

The amount of emphasis to be put on survival should be decided on the basis of a close political analysis. In capitalist society with its high degree of individualism, many people will think only of themselves, and for example build personal fallout shelters. Governments, if they raise the issue of nuclear attack at all, prefer to focus on protection, since this diverts attention from collective challenges to the institutional roots of war, in which governments are closely entwined. Hence it is undoubtedly correct for people to challenge this emphasis and to make efforts to increase their chances of survival by prevention rather than protection. Indeed, E.P. Thompson says that 'Protest is the only realistic form of civil defence'.¹³

Yet some minimal understanding and preparation for survival should not be rejected outright, for three reasons. First, considering that so many people *are* concerned about personal survival, peace activists can usefully link advice about protection with campaigns of protest and building of alternatives. This will be especially effective when the best protection is evacuation – as it is in many cases – but authorities counsel staying at home.

Second, knowledge of the effects of nuclear war and protection against them is vital to activists who are prepared to take political action at the time of a nuclear emergency, whether or not nuclear war actually eventuates. If unrealistic ideas and vague fears abound, the chances of maintaining peace campaigns or countering repression will be greatly reduced.

Third, while protest is surely necessary and proper, it may not be enough. Nuclear war may come despite the best efforts of all opposed to it. To ignore this possibility and not prepare for it is to ignore the realities of history. For European Jews in the 1920s and much of the 1930s, a slogan of ‘protest and survive’ might have been appropriate, perhaps even after the Nazi policy of extermination commenced in 1941. But depending on one’s circumstances, some coordinated preparation and alternative to simple protest may have been called for. Were Danish Jews wrong to evacuate rather than stay and protest?

Another aspect of personal survival is health care. It would be advisable for the general population, and peace activists in particular, to have a general understanding of the health effects of the blast, heat and radiation from nuclear weapons, and knowledge of simple ways of treating the injured.

A number of medical professionals opposed to nuclear war have made statements to the effect that the medical problems created by nuclear war are untreatable, and hence nuclear war must be prevented. The conclusion is admirable, but the argument is more dubious. Health professionals assume that only *professionals* will be treating the ill in the event of nuclear war, clearly an impossible task even before allowing for the doctors killed or in-

capacitated in the nuclear attack itself. But health care need not be monopolised by professionals.¹⁴ Non-professionals who understand the basics of first aid and hygiene can accomplish much in an emergency situation, indeed often as much as professionals who do not have access to sophisticated medical technology.

By understanding the basic physical dangers of nuclear attacks and knowing simple measures to reduce them, and understanding the basics of first aid and hygiene, people are in a better position to take positive moves – to struggle for peace and against repression – in a nuclear crisis. In other words, by knowing what to do if it is necessary to protect and survive, people are in a better position to protest.

In the longer term aftermath of nuclear war – after the first few weeks and months – survival may still be difficult due to disease or lack of food or shelter, for example. Because breakdown of central services – electricity, fuel, transport, water – may persist in many areas, it may be desirable to plan for some degree of local self-sufficiency. This means such things as collecting water, growing food and making clothing.

The implication here is not to encourage a migration to self-sufficient rural cooperatives. Rather it is to build stronger links between those in what might be called the oppositional peace movement – those who lobby, protest and otherwise struggle against the arms race and its underpinnings – and those involved in ‘alternative life styles’ which are built around local self-reliance, sharing of skills and communal life.

Each group has things to offer to and learn from the other. ‘Alternative life styles’ provide an alternative to present society which avoids the narrow professional roles, hierarchical organisations and centralised power of existing society which plays such a large part in the war system. By adopting some of these focusses, the peace movement not only gains some preparation for surviving nuclear war but more importantly can build a broader foundation for an alternative to war. But ‘alternative life

styles' by themselves can provide an excuse for dropping out of conventional society and avoiding constantly confronting and challenging it. Social activists in the peace movement and elsewhere, by linking with those building the 'alternative society', can help make its vision more politically effective.

To illustrate the links possible here, consider the area of transport. After a nuclear war, it will be vitally important for physically separated groups to contact each other. A form of transport is needed that is resilient against central physical destruction and against social breakdown. Bicycles and foot (and possibly horse) are candidates. It so happens that these are the modes already favoured by environmentally conscious people. In other words, present day environmental/life-style campaigns for redesign of cities for transport by bicycle and foot point to the direction for resilient transport in a post-nuclear war world. This provides a basis for collaboration in current campaigns and planning.

Similarly, the problem of post-nuclear war networking – putting separated groups in contact by local radio, couriers, via trade, etc. – has much in common with the present problem of linking locally autonomous social action groups.

In most cases, the form of social organisation most resilient to nuclear attack – decentralised, locally self-reliant, deprofessionalised – is also most desirable even in times of peace. This convergence provides a basis for extending the social base and avenues for action of those working for peace.

(c) *Moral dilemmas.* In the event of a nuclear war or even of a nuclear crisis, many people will have to make difficult moral decisions. For example, how much time and effort should be spent trying to save the injured or relieving the pain of the terminally ill? Should euthanasia be considered for those certain to die? What priority should be put on saving one's own life? What should be done about refugees or marauders who descend on a self-reliant community? Should one evacuate to relative security? What actions should be taken to oppose repression? How should decisions be

made about allocating scarce supplies of food, or places in fallout shelters? The answers to such questions are not easy. In the urgency and pressure of crisis, actions may be taken for wrong reasons: moral principles and sound political strategy may be overwhelmed by emotional impulses. Hence it is important to think through possible moral dilemmas, to work out the ethics of a post-war situation, beforehand.

Not only will such preparation be important in the event of a crisis, but it will help to test and clarify present-day campaigns and priorities for their ethical soundness and consistency, including stances towards issues such as abortion, revolutionary violence, revolutionary non-violence, pacifism, and starvation in the poor countries.¹⁵

(d) *The holocaust and peace activism.* 'A second lesson to be learned from the anti-nuclear power movement is to focus more on alternatives to nuclear weapons and less on the generalized danger of world holocaust. While the threat of all-out nuclear war is real, it tends to freeze the public into hopeless inaction. The peace movement has been more effective when it emphasized peace conversion, a strategy which shows how a shift from military to social spending could produce more jobs and increase human welfare locally' – Pamela Haines and William Moyer.¹⁶

I have dealt with this point at length in another paper.¹⁷

(e) *Militarism and repression, and struggles for justice.* There are very strong links between militarism and repression¹⁸: hierarchical, centralised bureaucratic structures underlie and thrive on each of them. Any fundamental challenge to war must challenge these structures as well. A nuclear emergency would greatly intensify the pressures both for military intervention in civil affairs and for state-sponsored repression. This points to the need to build very strong links between peace activists and those who are struggling against state power, such as groups opposing political police, civil liberties groups, groups defending the rights of racial minorities, women, homosexuals and prisoners, and groups sup-

porting freedom of information and other checks on bureaucracies.

Also important are strong links – as already exist in many cases – between peace groups and Third World groups struggling for justice and equality. Exploitation of people, especially in poor countries, is a major feature of the institutions which spawn the threat of nuclear war. Third World justice struggles are a continuing threat to these institutions. In a nuclear crisis or nuclear war, there would be strong pressures from exploiting groups to continue or expand repression and exploitation, for example to provide for recovery from nuclear attack. If opposition groups in exploited countries were prepared to push their claims harder and oppose repression in a nuclear crisis, this could both reduce the risk of nuclear war and lay the basis for ever stronger challenges to the institutions underpinning war. This will be especially effective if opposition groups in both power blocs – for example both eastern Europe and Latin America – increase their efforts in tandem.

(f) *Peace conversion.* At present, campaigns for peace conversion – for transformation of military production to production for human needs – play a vital role in worldwide efforts for peace. Such campaigns focus attention on a key factor inhibiting disarmament, namely arms design and manufacture; they expose the distorted priorities inherent in spending on arms; they undercut fears about loss of jobs and other incentives to support the arms business; and they provide the planning base for the conversion that will be necessary if disarmament is ever to occur.

In the context of a nuclear emergency or nuclear war, campaigns around peace conversion assume a new role and importance. In the throes of a nuclear crisis or the aftermath of nuclear war, opportunities may arise for direct action to disarm or convert military facilities. For example, if a limited nuclear war occurred in the Middle East or Europe, the popular upsurge of opinion may support worker or citizen intervention in nuclear weapons production facilities. Or in the aftermath of a major exchange of nuclear weapons between

the US and the Soviet Union, there could still be armed nuclear submarines roaming the world's oceans, looking for a place to dock. What would be needed then would be popular support for disarming and/or disabling the submarine and its missiles, and for opposing local military elites or opportunists who might try to use the submarine's firepower for their own purposes. This means knowing how to undertake the nuts and bolts of disarmament, and having experience in approaching sympathetic workers or members of the military to gain their help in disarming or converting the facility.

Present peace conversion campaigns tend to be based on convincing decision-makers, or influencing decision-makers via public pressure, of the rationality or morality of conversion. Preparation for a nuclear crisis suggests that these campaigns should be extended by disseminating as widely as possible information about technical aspects of bombs, military bases and military organisational structures so that popular activity to disarm and convert military facilities becomes a possibility in the right circumstances. Conversely, if this sort of popular capability existed, national decision-makers would be much more reluctant to risk nuclear war.

Such preparation would require close liaison with sympathetic people within the armed forces, within military production facilities and the like. In some cases, such as Lucas Aerospace,¹⁹ internal worker support would be so great that little outside help would be needed. In other cases, such as Lawrence Livermore Laboratory,²⁰ strong community pressure and involvement in efforts for peace conversion by direct action would be essential.

Peace conversion in a nuclear crisis or war can be seen as playing a key role between resistance to repression and survival and self-reliance. Resistance to repression is essentially a defensive stance, to maintain existing freedoms, although these may be strengthened and extended in the course of struggling for them. Survival and self-reliance are required to protect life and livelihood in the face of nuclear attack; they also can lay the basis for alterna-

tive institutions built around local self-reliance, which are also the basis for organising to resist repression. Between these, peace conversion goes beyond resistance to repression to take positive actions for disarmament, and more broadly, dismantling existing political and economic institutions on which the war system is based. Peace conversion in doing this also provides breathing space for efforts at survival and self-reliance and building of alternative institutions based on decentralisation, lack of formal hierarchy, and wide participation.

After the surrender of Germany in 1945, the Allied conquerors in many cases installed Nazis in positions of power because it seemed that no one else could do the job. Unless the peace movement makes preparations, a similar train of events could eventuate after a nuclear war, with architects of nuclear arms races administering post-war recovery. Those who would oppose such a development should be involved in preparations for running the government and the economy after a nuclear war or a major nuclear crisis. In other words, preparation for peace conversion in a crisis, and present campaigns for peace conversion, should be extended to encompass institutional conversion.

As in the case of resistance to repression, and survival and self-reliance, tactics and strategies which are part of preparation for a nuclear emergency also are sound in non-crisis situations, and as well reduce the risk of nuclear war by threatening the post-war political survival of those groups which have the greatest interest in the war system. For example, plans can be made for 'ordinary people' to occupy bomb and fallout shelters which are designed or reserved for state elites. This makes sense in the actual event of nuclear war, since afterwards the elites would be no more useful to the rest of the community than anyone else, and indeed are likely to be implicated, directly or indirectly, in policies which did nothing to stop the nuclear war. For present campaigns, such plans would expose the anti-democratic basis behind war preparations and efforts to 'protect' the population. Finally, if their shelter space were jeopardised by the

'masses', elites undoubtedly would be much more reluctant to risk the possibility of nuclear war.

(g) *Psychological responses to nuclear war.*²¹ Preparation for nuclear war includes personal psychological preparation, which includes both coming to grips with the possibility of nuclear war and personal death, and developing the ability to survive psychologically an actual nuclear war and remain an effective social change agent.

Coming to grips with the possibility of nuclear war and personal death must be developed in tandem with developing an anti-war strategy that takes into account the political reality of nuclear war, as has been discussed earlier.

Psychological preparation for a nuclear emergency involves personal and group mechanisms for responding to:

- scapegoating (blaming the war or deaths on particular groups);
- uncontrolled rumour;
- apocalyptic preoccupations (fundamentalist religious revivals, etc.);
- passive submission to determined forces, however undesirable, and to demagogues;
- reliance on 'leaders', outside orders, and one-directional communication channels.

All these things are happening today. Present methods and strategies for responding to and countering them need to be strengthened and made resilient in the face of the greatly increased pressures in a nuclear crisis.

Personal and group psychological survival in the aftermath of a nuclear war, or in any major social upheaval, depends on personal resources, feelings of intrinsic worth and other features of what people *are* rather than what they have achieved or accumulated. Psychological strength will be difficult to produce by those whose self-image is filled from television or drugs, is defined by others or is defined by bureaucratic institutions. Most people in society today fall into these or other similar categories: starting from scratch without present psychological crutches would be for many people an immense task. This is a problem that affects efforts for social change generally. Hence getting to the bottom of fears

about nuclear war and about surviving nuclear war is potentially a liberating process for present-day social change purposes.

The will to survive involves the following: establishing a goal; thinking of gradual steps to achieve it; acquiring specific skills through training; and removing fear through knowledge. In the case of nuclear war, the last step means removing the fear of radiation and nuclear war through some general understanding of their effects. Likewise, efforts to survive in present society while at the same time helping to achieve social change can benefit through understanding the individual and collective pitfalls, failures and disasters that can occur. In neither case does understanding and overcoming fear of the undesirable mean that one's opposition necessarily is compromised: rather it can be made more effective. The goal is not the mentality of 'survive but do not protest' but rather 'protest with knowledge'.

NOTES

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13. E. P. Thompson, 'Protest and Survive', in E. P. Thompson and Dan Smith (eds), *Protest and Survive*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980, p. 57.
14. Ivan Illich, *Medical Nemesis: the Expropriation of Health*. London: Calder and Boyars, 1975.
15. In thinking through moral dilemmas, one treatment which I have found very useful is Jonathan Glover, *Causing Death and Saving Lives*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977. One of the few omissions in his treatment is the comparison of alternative means for attaining revolution and resolving conflict, in particular those involving non-violent action. Also relevant here are Barrington Moore, Jr., *Reflections on the Causes of Human Misery and upon Certain Proposals to Eliminate Them*. London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1972. Peter L. Berger, *Pyramids of Sacrifice: Political Ethics and Social Change*. New York: Basic Books, 1974. Neither Moore nor Berger, however, deal with the possibility of nonviolent revolution.
16. Pamela Haines and William Moyer, ' "No Nukes" is not Enough: the Need for a New

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17. Brian Martin, 'Critique of Nuclear Extinction' (submitted for publication).
 18. Michael Randle, *Militarism and Repression*. South Boston: International Seminars on Training for Nonviolent Action, 1980.
 19. David Elliott, *The Lucas Aerospace Workers' Campaign*. London: Fabian Society, 1977.
 20. Wendy Batson, David McFadden, Diane Thomas-Glass and Jim Watson, *Shaping Alternatives at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory: a Preliminary Analysis*. San Francisco: University of California Nuclear Weapons Lab Conversions Project, 1979.
 21. Some insights about personal and community

survival of a disaster can be found in Fred Charles Iklé, *The Social Impact of Bomb Destruction*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958. Jack Hirschleifer, 'Some Thoughts on the Social Structure After a Bombing Disaster', *World Politics*, Vol. 8, January 1956, pp. 206-227. Allen H. Barton, *Communities in Disaster: a Sociological Analysis of Collective Stress Situations*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1969. Irving L. Janis, *Air War and Emotional Stress: Psychological Studies of Bombing and Civilian Defense*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951. Walo von Greyerz, *Psychology of Survival: Human Reactions to the Catastrophes of War*. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1962.