

From protest to survival: the Bertrand Russell Peace Lectures

by *E. P. Thompson*

LECTURE I. THE THREAT OF WAR

IT IS A very great privilege and a very great honour to be asked to deliver the first of your Bertrand Russell Peace Lectures, and I congratulate the University on its initiative, on its extremely careful and expert handling of the Russell Archives, and on its initiative in forming the President's Committee on the Study of Peace. I cannot claim any direct association with Bertrand Russell, apart from attending meetings which he addressed. I think I may have once sat down in Whitehall or Trafalgar Square along with Bertrand Russell, but there were a good many thousands of us doing it, and when you get to these things, the recollections of us old codgers are really very unreliable. I have an indirect association with Russell in the sense that when the European Nuclear Disarmament "Appeal"¹ was drafted (which I myself did) and then revised by many hands and issued over many thousands of signatures, mainly European, but also North American, in early 1980, this was done under the organizing auspices of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, which also was the publisher of my pamphlet *Protest and Survive*. Indeed, the END "Appeal" is still known in many parts of Europe as the "Russell Appeal".

Are we now simply doing no more than rephrase what Russell was saying thirty years ago? This morning I was privileged to look into the Archives, and I selected a file concerning the formation of the Pugwash Conferences. From this leapt out a paper in which Russell was writing:

¹ "Appeal for European Nuclear Disarmament", in E.P. Thompson and Dan Smith, eds., *Protest and Survive* (Harmondsworth, Mddx.: Penguin Books, 1980); rev. ed. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1981).

It is difficult for me to find words with which to express the depth of my outrage at the obscurity of our creative efforts being employed for purposes of global butchery.... They have covered our planet with rocket bases, and have placed these bases on a hair trigger. The radar which they employ is incapable of distinguishing a goose from a Senator.... I, for one, am not prepared to place the fate of human civilization in the hands of semi-literate paranoids.²

Sadly, the discussions in these papers in 1955 to 1957 turned upon the outrageously radical proposal to ban the testing of all nuclear weapons, and now, thirty years on, public opinion throughout the world is still demanding this. The leaders of the non-aligned states have written to Mr. Gorbachev and President Reagan making an identical demand, and yet the rocket-bases that Russell referred to have multiplied.

Russell was an absolutist. He was, if you like, an abolitionist. And absolutism and abolitionism have not yet worked. Through all the local politics of our work, he was concerned, as we still are, with the raising of consciousness. We're told often by critics who are cautious adherents of deterrence that deterrence after all has "worked". There may be, at some times and on some occasions, historical validation for that argument. But less often mentioned is the other half of the reason that nuclear weapons have not been used—which is, at each moment when the statesmen of the world have considered the possibility of using it, they face the knowledge that this would outrage opinion in every part of the world, and that the true deterrence against the use of "the deterrent" has been precisely the alert state of public opinion. Therefore, in this sense, the peace movement has to be renewed again and again as the only true deterrent against the use of nuclear weapons. Russell said in 1957 that nuclear war was a matter of statistical near-certainty. Notwithstanding which, for thirty years, this statistical juncture has not yet been reached. Yet I would echo this: I feel that unless some dramatic resolution of the world's predicament is found, it is scarcely likely that that statistical juncture will not be reached in the next thirty years.

When I called these two lectures together "From Protest to Survival", please understand I did not mean to imply that protest is no longer needed. I also did not mean to imply that protest had been a futile activity and had achieved nothing. It has had this effect: the world-wide movements of the last five years may not yet have succeeded in achieving any diminution in the mounting nuclear arms of both sides, but it has made for a watching presence surrounding the actions

of all nuclear-owning statesmen and states. The superpowers today are acting out their diplomatic drama before an alert audience throughout the world. This is world opinion. The other achievement of the last five years has been the way in which peace movements have found each other out, and there has been a regeneration of internationalism. Yet if we are to move from protest to survival we must address, not only the question of weapons, but the *political* conditions preparing World War III. I'm not going to waste your time persuading you that nuclear weapons are ugly. I want to follow a different course in these two lectures. In this one I want to examine some of the causes of war in general and of World War III in particular.

Let us commence, since I am a historian, with a view of this question of war from a historical perspective. There are very few generalizations which would be universally assented to about warfare, and those that would be are commonplaces. First, war is normal. It punctuates the written historical record as commas, colons, and periods punctuate a page. Warfare has established markers between clans, tribes, peoples, city-states, nation-states, markers of territory, tribute, prestige, hegemony, empire. We can't prescribe that warfare is dysfunctional, a sort of short-circuit in the social system, an abnormality. On the contrary, the characteristic social formation of modern times, the nation-state, was formed in war, and the state assumes the preparation and performance of war as a major activity. And this has had profound effects upon the character of society and economy, the hierarchy of authority, the modus of taxation, internal security, war, information control, the legitimation of authority. Take war, take the threat of war away, and there would follow far-reaching consequences in domestic organization. There is nothing in the historical record, nothing in the record of the twentieth century, to give grounds for optimism that warfare between states is coming to its historical term.

Indeed, for this to happen, the nature of the most powerful states would have to change first. And the available evidence goes in the other direction. It's the very normality of war that is the strongest argument on the side of those who uphold the virtues of nuclear deterrence. Is it likely that a major activity of organized society since records began—and the earliest records, the epics and sagas, the first great histories, Thucydides, Szuma Chien, are records of rulers and warfare—should abruptly cease in 1986 because liberal thinkers dislike it? It's not. And, therefore, it's argued that the only inhibitor strong enough to repress an activity endemic to the human record must be the realization that, in nuclear times, war can only conclude for all parties in a terminal spasm. This is a strong argument. Russell and many others have offered

² "Statement for Future Use by S.O.S." (RA 625, Printed Material), p. 1.

reasons to show that the theory of deterrence lacks historical realism and is flawed. But we shouldn't pucker up our noses at it, as if it was only a bad moral smell. It is an argument which persons who profoundly desire peace can honestly hold.

The second commonplace is that warfare is not a natural form of behaviour, it is highly artificial. Put in the simplest way, no "bare-forked creature" or natural unsocialized man could endure for a moment the artificial violence of a battlefield. I myself have seen in the final battle of Cassino dogs flee in terror from the field, donkeys hurl themselves into hedges, and birds, dazed by the gunfire, fly into walls and trees like moths into a lighted window. You may point out that it wasn't their battle, they were innocent neutrals. Yet among the human combatants, the shell-shocked or the bomb-happy, sobbing and shivering in holes or under blankets, were those who reverted to what you might call "natural" reflexes of self-preservation. Whereas the most battle-hardened and disciplined troops, such as the German elite forces surviving in the pulverized rubble of Cassino town—that is, those who were most socialized in the artifice of war—were those who endured as effective fighting units.

Perhaps some in the generation which has happily not experienced war have formed an abstract and moralistic notion of the phenomenon. In supposing warfare to be unnatural, they may suppose it to be possible to end it by some moral enlightenment of our fellows. I share their antipathy, yet we will not end it unless we understand it as it is, as highly civilized conduct which today commands the most advanced technologies, the most task-specific socialization and the most elaborately structured organizations ever known.

Warfare is not a reversion by masses to a more primitive level of aggression of human nature. The violence of war is not interpersonal but interstate, and in modern warfare very little fighting is face to face. There's nothing personal about modern warfare. The MX and the SS-20 have no faces. And there was in World War I and World War II more "aggro" in the popular press at home than among the combatant forces.

Warfare doesn't so much legitimate violence as enforce violent behaviour in organized and even ritualized forms against designated targets or enemies. The rules of war are usually thought of as those limited conventions which prescribe, for example, how prisoners of war shall be treated. But one can quickly discern more imperative, if sometimes invisible, unwritten rules which govern this form of civilized conduct. The rules lie half hidden within everyday terminology, whose very aim is to depersonalize the engagement. "Target", "objective",

"mission", or in today's sanitized, acronymic vocabulary, "take out", "counterforce", or "NUTS".

I slipped, you may have noticed, in describing the outlawing of the taking of human life as a civilized taboo. That was an improper normative intrusion. For the artificial rules of war have an equal claim to being artifacts of civilization. (If Rambo had been under military orders he would have been a very cultured man, a very "parfait gentle knight".) Unless we understand that war is an elaborated code and discipline of civilized conduct, we can't bring our disciplines to bear on it. Those, like absolute pacifists, who reject this conduct usually place themselves in opposition to the state and to authorized notions of civil society. What warfare doesn't need is a surplus of undirected aggression. (Rambo will never get to being a general.) Maybe warfare never did. Even the object of the ferocious Aztec warriors was not immediate bloodshed but the capture of prisoners for ritual sacrifice. And for this object they were elaborately motivated and trained from the moment of birth. Today's wars require calm under fire, precision and, within prescribed parameters, initiative. The disciplined aggro of the military combatant is light-years away from the more spontaneous aggressions of civil life.

Now these negative commonplaces enable us to set on one side the pursuit of universal explanations as to *the* cause of war, explanations which arise with great persistence. One such universal is the suggestion that human nature is somehow programmed as warlike, hence war must be ineradicable. This is either a truism, for everything that has ever happened at any time in history or prehistory must perforce belong to the possibilities of human nature, or a pessimistic cop-out. We should recall that warfare's programming lies not in nature but in nurture, that it is an elaborate function of civilized states, that within those societies human aggression has been so reprogrammed by socialization, by education, by institutions, that sanctions against violence normally operate with fair success inside the nation-state. And that therefore our inquiry should be directed not towards some suppositious biological archetype, but towards the behaviour of states.

This universal has regained currency today in the modified proposition that the ultimate cause of war is to be found in masculine human nature, that warfare is a function of male aggression. This view is held, with greater or less sophistication, by a good many of my fellow peace-campaigners of both genders in Europe. Since I respect them and their actions, I must attend to their views with respect. Yet in my alternative identity as a social historian, I find the proposition only a little less unconvincing than the truism about all human nature. If taken literally,

it is scarcely less pessimistic, since it would suggest that the human record could only have been reformed by writing one gender out of it—a counterfactual proposition of the kind that makes historians impatient—and that the necessary precondition for world peace must be either the elimination from public life of one gender, or the redirection of its instinctual aggressive drives by some miraculous conversion.

Now this proposition has value as a spur to inquiry if we turn it around, if we reformulate it in terms of consequence rather than cause. Modern warfare has normally been pursued through gender segregation. This doesn't, by the way, mean that the men have been warlike while the women have been peacemakers. It's usually meant the segregation into distinct roles, both of which have been war-directed, in so far as the state could ensure. But the combatant role of men has strengthened male authority in some privileged political roles and privileged social areas. The most militarized societies have often been those with the strongest, male-dominated hierarchies of authority and supposedly masculine inflections of value—of honour, valour, macho or, today, male-dominated technology with its phallic emblems of guns and missiles. War-directed states reinforce already existent masculine-dominant modes. Or rather, they reward and honour the macho and the aggressive male propensities, and they devalue the peaceable, the nurturing, and creative propensities of unaggressive men. What they seek to do is to impose a military definition as to what *is* "manhood"—a definition, one should say, that's often, in history, approved also within the feminine culture, and is even rewarded in the admiring mirror of the women's sexual favours in times of war.

Gender segregation of roles within a war-directed state has very rarely taken the form of militarist versus pacific tendencies but may be seen more in terms of cultural antiphony or reciprocity. Most military states have fostered strongly supportive feminine cultures, endorsing and furthering military and imperial values. And this can be read through in the high history of European imperialisms, British imperialism, the role of the officer's wife, the female community in the Indian Raj or in the history of Nazism, and so on. You find this attempt to engender these two reciprocal cultures. Indeed the incapacity to take the role of combatant has sometimes been seen as the crowning indignity of gender discrimination. "Oh if the Queen were a man," Queen Victoria wrote to her Prime Minister, Disraeli, during the Eastern Question crisis of the late 1870s, "she would like to go and give those Russians such a beating. We shall never be friends again until we have it out!"

Yet it remains true that male military elites grow fat on war like

succubae. In consequence, the dominance, not of males but that kind of approved male character-type, is extended forward into times of peace. It's also true—and much is written valuably about this now—that there has been a small space within feminine culture which has protected alternative symbols of nurture and of survival. These symbols are a resource upon which today's peace movements rightly draw. And it's a proper concern of our disciplines to explore the gender-inflected resources of alternative peaceable paradigms.

There are other, more local generalizations offered as universals for our own times, which bear up less well and which I think less productive. It was thought by the enlightened in the eighteenth century that all wars were caused by princes, and it was widely argued after World War I that modern wars were caused by military elites and ruling classes indifferent to the pacific dispositions of the peoples. Alack, it has turned out that war in times of domestic tension can play to rapturous full houses. Nazi and Fascist parties found ways to seize power, sometimes displacing traditional ruling groups, by raising to near hysteria the long-inculcated nationalist dispositions of a part of the public, including many unemployed youth, who would be the first to go the front. We sensed for a few weeks the stirring of this hysteria in Britain during the Falklands War, just as you may have noted it across the border during the Iranian hostage crisis or at the time of Grenada.

Then it was supposed quite widely that the cause of modern war was capitalism *tout court*. But alack once more, we've discovered that states which style themselves as socialist have not concurred in this analysis. They have proved to be quite capable of engaging in postures and acts of war, not only with capitalist, or pre-capitalist states, but also with their own categorical kin. The extraordinary warrening of the cities of China with tunnels during Mao's last years testify to the fact that one socialist state supposed that a nuclear attack upon it by another was not categorically incredible.

More favoured today as a generalization of a universal for our times, and for the foreseeable future (until that future ends), is that warfare is grounded not in human nature but in the very nature of the nation-state. War, or the preparation of war, is the very condition of its existence, whether the state be capitalist or communist. This underpins the argument of sober advocates of deterrence. It's more descriptive than analytical in its force, which may be why it's favoured by empirically minded British academics like Professor Michael Howard, who concludes in *The Causes of Wars* that war is inherent in the very structure

of the state.³ The causes of war, he continues, remain rooted in perceptions by statesmen of the growth of hostile power and the fears for the restriction, if not the extinction, of their own. The fears and perceptions of statesmen should be seen, he argues, as being within their own terms rational, and wars begin with the conscious and reasoned decision, based on the calculation made by both parties, that they can achieve more by going to war than by remaining at peace, even if the outcome of war falsifies those expectations. Indeed, the institution of the nation-state predicates a tendency towards warfare since the centripetal forces which make for national cohesion are liable to generate centrifugal nationalist pressures towards other states. In Howard's words, "Self-identification as a nation implies, almost by definition, alienation from other communities." We are now in an area which certainly does merit investigation, yet does Professor Howard finally persuade us? Many of his examples are drawn from nineteenth-century inter-European warfare—the British, French, Germans, Russians, the Austro-Hapsburg Empire. If World War I was based on rational and calculated acts, then it was a spectacular miscalculation by all parties, whose causes, in turn, leave something to be explained. As analysis, this scarcely has a vocabulary for European wars of conquest against weaker peoples in Asia and Africa, nor does it diagnose the cultural traumas of a surfeited and also stifled imperialism in Europe itself. I should say one side surfeited, like Britain, France, Portugal; one side stifled, like Germany. Nor, in my view, can a vocabulary of rationality and calculation begin to measure the exalted Nazi economy and culture of aggression which led to World War II.

What seems to rise from around the edges of Howard's display of unsentimental realism is a miasma of unexplained motivations excluded from his vocabulary. For the causes of war are rooted, we remember, less in the structure of the states than in the perceptions and fears of statesmen, and there's plenty of room for emotional and ideological forces to get in among those roots. If we speak of calculation and rationality, we are speaking of proximate causes and not ulterior ones, and of rationality within the self-estimation of statesmen socialized within a given culture-power, with its sanctioned reasons of state. These reasons are very much those which that eminent authority in strategic studies, Gulliver, once explained so patiently to his Houyhnhnm master:

³ Howard, *The Causes of War and Other Essays*, 2nd ed. (London: Temple Smith, 1983; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1984), p. 12.

Sometimes one prince quarrelleth with another, for fear the other should quarrel with him. Sometimes a war is entered upon, because the enemy is too *strong*, and sometimes because he is too *weak*. Sometimes our neighbours *want* the *things* which we have, or *have* the things which we *want*.... If a prince send forces into a nation, where the people are poor and ignorant, he may lawfully put half of them to death, and make slaves of the rest in order to civilize and reduce them from their barbarous way of living.... For these reasons, the trade of a *soldier* is held the most honourable of all others: because a *soldier* is a Yahoo hired to kill in cold blood as many of his own species, who have never offended him, as possibly he can.

Yet his master, when listening to Gulliver's self-congratulatory catalogue of these means of reason—"cannons, culverins, muskets, carabines, pistols, bullets, powder, swords, bayonets, battles, sieges, retreats, attacks, undermines, countermines, bombardments, sea-fights; ships sunk with a thousand men; 20,000 killed on each side; dying groans, limbs flying in the air, smoke, noise, confusion, trampling to death under horses' feet: flight, pursuit, victory: fields strewed with carcasses left for food to dogs, and wolves, and birds of prey; plundering, stripping, ravishing, burning and destroying" (very elementary and unmodernized means of reason in those days)—his master could only neigh in abhorrence when a creature pretending to reason could be capable of such enormities. He dreaded lest the corruption of that faculty might be worse than brutality itself.

This is a dilemma of our own discourse. Is Professor Howard describing rational acts, or the corruption of reason? From a Houyhnhnm perspective of rationality, all war is brutish and irrational, as that Houyhnhnm, William Blake, saw it, "The soldier arm'd with Sword & Gun/Palsied strikes the summer's sun." Yet given the real historical context of nation-states, the immediate causes of war have sometimes appeared to be so rational as to compel the assent of all but the absolute pacifists. To say that all war has been irrational, is to refuse also the role and central values of all nation-states, including those which achieved their independence through war or liberation struggles, and it is to conclude, as I can't conclude, that nothing of significance has ever been decided by war. I'm a nuclear pacifist, but I remain an unrepentant veteran of World War II. Our problem today is to engineer a gradient to carry civilization from its yahoo past and its yahoo present to a houyhnhnm future.

One other universal for our time requires close attention: the view that wars were caused by the arms manufacturers—Krupps, Thyssen, Vickers-Armstrong and others—and are now prepared by the even

more formidable military-industrial-academic complex. This is not, of course, proposed as a historical universal. It's not suggested that in ancient times wars were caused by those who had a corner in flint arrowheads or by the Guild of Fletchers and Bowyers. It's a statement about the nature of advanced industrial societies, the changing balance of interest groups within them, their influence on political life and public opinion. It comes directly within the purview of academic disciplines represented in this university.

We can certainly discern a plausible causative factor here. Let me give you a very blunt example. The independent United States Council for Economic Priorities has recently pointed out that the major beneficiaries of prime contracts for Star Wars research are also the great contractors, such as Rockwell International, Boeing, Lockheed, AVCO, T.R.W., L.T.V., Litton, Martin Marietta, who are the major beneficiaries under state tender for the current round of modernization of United States' nuclear weaponry. The same giants contracted the MX, the B-1 bomber, cruise missiles, the Pershing II and the Trident D5. To make modern weaponry requires longer lead times than to make jeans or automobiles. Hence the contractors must show prescience in looking for forward markets. They may indeed need to manufacture the market itself, that is, the future demand which they can then prepare to supply. And this is a big mouthful to chew over. What one's saying is that when current orders for the MX and the B-1 are fulfilled, which will be in the very early 'nineties, the order-books will be half empty.

But while forward research will continue among those whom Lord Zuckerman once called "the alchemists of the laboratories", so long as Federal funding can be found, the forward market is insecure for the neat new modernizations which they offer. This is for political, not for technological or economic, reasons. The public is jaded. Even the United States Congress is becoming awkward, as it was over the MX missile. I've been told that shortly before President Reagan launched the Star Wars speech in March 1983, he had a meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who said, "Look, we've got to find another way." (I wasn't there, so I can't give the exact words.) "We've got to find another way. Congress is no longer going to buy endless more upward modernization. There's this terrible Freeze movement. We have to sell the product in some other way."

Thus it is becoming more and more difficult to sell each new, brave invention. Futures are becoming unstable—not futures of the people, please understand, which have been hideously unstable for decades, but the future of making excess profits from guaranteed markets for

the next 50,000 warheads to be set on top of the existing 50,000. It is not only the rising profile of peace movements but even a sort of diffused "ah-shucksism" amongst the electorate that's making the cause of the endless modernization and multiplication of nukes unpopular.

So the giants have been set this problem—to fill the order-books in 1995 they must create a market in 1985. But there can no longer be just a market for new models of the same product. I mean they can't just do it by adjusting the windscreens and the internal heating, and adding new bumper-bars to the nukes. They must imagine a new product, and they must bully the state into funding its research ten years before it has even been invented. This really is a colossal problem and a new one even in the innovative history of American capitalism. Because the market, or the demand, has to be inside people's heads urgently, now, in advance of the product. The market is a certain state of political anxiety. The demand must arise from the fear of the enemy and the expectation that the threat is growing worse. So to market the product in 1995, you have to have people absolutely terrified about the Russians in 1985.

Please note that we have now got outside the normal demarcations of economic discipline. The laws of supply and demand are going cross-eyed. Politics, or a political psycho-drama, must now provide the lead time for material production. The crazy superstructure of hypotheses must tower above the infrastructure. We have to persuade the public to imagine "it" before we can "fix it". Above all, it is necessary that the public should imagine that the threat of war must be very much worse in ten or fifteen years' time, in order to terrify the taxpayer today into meeting that future expectation, with the means to ensure that his worst fears are inexorably brought about.

Well, they did it. The answer was Star Wars. The military assault on space justified the strategy of anti-nuclear defence. Not just a new model but a quite new product promises to fill the order-books until the 1990s and beyond. It's a simple question of corporate foresight. It can be shown that certain of the giants had this prescience, that they and the alchemists of the Lawrence Livermore and the Los Alamos laboratories, together with selected political interest groups deeply experienced in lobbying on the Hill, with close links with Pentagon personnel, have engineered the lift-off into Star Wars. God knows what these billions of dollars of researchers may discover, although it will not be a leak-proof Astrodome over the US of A. Most probably it will be neat new instruments of lethality, such as death-rays in several forms, which will be found by subsequent generations of politicians and military to have even neater uses on the ground than those of zap-

ping elusive missiles in space. But what matter? Certain zones of California, Arizona, Washington and Texas will have been kept in a permanent state of affluent economic erection.

The Strategic Defence Initiative may never shoot down a single missile, but it is already proving to be a success in shooting down any hope of agreement between the superpowers for disarmament. Yet the limits of this explanation also have to be noted. War is normally between two parties. NATO's military-industrial complex does not confront, in this respect, a symmetrical antagonist. There's certainly a formidable military-industrial complex in the Soviet Union which is bringing forward its own ASATs, particle-beams and the rest. But the Soviet complex's mode of operation and its goals are different from those of private capital. Ideology and bureaucratic interest perform in the USSR the role of hungering order-books ahead. So we have identified a unilateral cause of the dynamics of the arms race in the United States—giant space contractors—but not the final cause of the next war, unless we are to say that the arms race itself is the cause.

Moreover, to state that the military-industrial complex can prescribe courses which have profound political, diplomatic, economic and social consequences—perhaps even terminal consequences for the host society—is to make a very large proposition about society in general. It's to say that one federally subsidized growth sector of the United States' economy, with its allies and agents, has been able to capture the state itself, and, in doing so, it has pushed aside all other interests—farming, civil transportation, civil construction, most manufacturing, much finance, service industries, education, health, what have you—in order to engage in a gigantic rip-off which brings all citizens into danger. It's to say that American society, as a whole, is subordinated to this complex, in terms of power and economic priorities, which like a giant fly-wheel drives the whole machine, including the President and the Congress, through their rotations.

If the proposition be shown true, if the military-industrial complex has now displaced the American political process, it still doesn't follow that it will have an easy ride. Apart from the fact that the public one day might cease to be indifferent, and might ask questions about the rip-off, there is another difficulty. For there is another old model pushed along the rhetorical road, with suppositious historical warranty but with no engine under the bonnet, which is that the nations always victorious in war are those with the most advanced technological development. As a matter of common knowledge, this model crashed in the paddy fields of Vietnam, and ought never to have been revived. There are fascinating equations between technology, warfare and society. But

these are very rarely simple equations. It's been argued that the powerful and deadly ancient Chinese crossbow inhibited the full development of slavery in China, since any slaves who got hold of it could shoot through the lightly padded armour of their masters. Obviously the musket and rifle's firepower was decisive against the native American peoples on this continent. A similar story can be read in a thousand encounters between small European contingents and numerous but ill-armed forces in India and Africa. ("Whatever happens we have got/The Maxim gun which they have not.") But the fall of the Roman Empire, despite its best endeavours, before hard-living, well-horsed barbarians is an example on the other side, and there are plenty of other examples. The defect of advanced military technology is to overarm, while those within the galleons or the missile silos grow soft on fine wines or pot. This overarming has been described in our times as the "baroque arsenal", although "rococo" might express it better. The tendency to develop ever more elaborate, all-singing, all-dancing, all-praying machines at inconceivable costs which can fail at the drop of a microchip: in this perspective, the strategic defence initiative is the rococo epiphany. There can be no doubt that it's a commie plot somehow smuggled into the White House by way of Livermore Laboratory, whose true object is to collapse the United States' economy.

The central problem requiring our examination, in my view, is that of national identity or self-image, as it is defined in relation to the enemy-Other. This takes us back to Michael Howard's valid observation, "Self-identification of a nation implies, almost by definition, alienation from other communities." This is something more than national self-image versus enemy image. It proposes that every nation needs an enemy, or an idea of one, to bind itself together in its own identity. To that degree "the Other" is a projection of its own need. When I follow this argument through—please don't think that I'm not saying that there are no real clashes of interest, no real clashes of ideology—I am following a different line of examination, which I hope you'll find is valid. If groups need out-groups, if herds need scapegoats, if conformists need delinquents to beat the boundaries of norms and identities, then nations need "the Other" most of all, and they need it especially when their own self-identity is blurred or insecure, or when they fear internal disturbance. The question then is, must "the Other" perforce be the enemy? Must this always enforce the reasons of the yahoo? This is *the* question at the close of the twentieth century. While a hundred nationalisms now appear to grow in rancour, it's a question which must be posed with particular urgency now to American and to Soviet reality. In the bipolar confrontation, which makes captive the

entire globe, is there something other than conflicts of interest and of ideologies which perpetuates this confrontation? Is there some special need for each nation to have each other as the enemy today, for reasons of internal bonding and self-identity?

There's strong reason to suppose that this is so in the case of the Soviet Union, at least in the eyes of those who regard it from outside its own ideological self-closure. It is a huge, ramshackle quasi-empire, the last of the nineteenth-century empires to go, with many national and ethnic components, overripe for modernization and democratization, attempting to escape from the stultifying, centralized controls of Stalinism and post-Stalinism, with an apathetic labour force, with an increasingly restive periphery of unhappy allies. How can its rulers bond its citizenry, hold their client-states together, exert internal social discipline and isolate dissident elements, unless by gesticulating continually at the threat of the Western Imperialist Other, which menaces (as historical memories of earlier invasions confirm) the citizenry bonded together in their own self-image as the first and foremost socialist state, which ideologically prefigures a universal socialist future? Apart from any external attempts to destabilize the regime—and such attempts are made—there are internal, self-generating forces of destabilization. If the physical and mental frontiers of the Soviet Union were to be overnight thrown open to the world, it's doubtful whether the social system could survive the apparent contrast between the Soviet deprivation and western affluence. Hence even the cautious modernizers in the Soviet bureaucracy still require the Other, and Mr. Reagan's USA which has been doing its very best to look like a plausible threat, has provided the necessary bonding which prevents the Soviet bloc from undergoing any rapid diversification, democratization and change. Not the Soviet people but the Soviet military, and the old post-Stalinist guard, need the Other very much.

But what about America? Here's another super-state, also too big for its own good, an ethnic miscellany assembled from the four corners of the globe. What provides bonding for this miscellany, what gives to Americans their special self-image and sense of national identity? There's much fine historical self-examination of American identity, but most of it is pursued introversially, as must be the case from within. Was essential Americanism the pursuit of freedom, opportunity and mobility, the newness of the new world, the frontier experience (both geographic and psychological), the melting-pot, the affront of the paradox of slavery, the tenacious coexistence of diverse ethnic traditions? Yes, it was something of all those things; but what was *outside* the frontier, what was looking in and threatening without? If these qualities

were to be American, what was the not-American, or the un-American, what was the role of the Other in forming American self-identity?

The late Warren Susman in his *Culture as History* discussed the question as to why socialism so often appears in America as a foreign ideology and commented, "One of the many paradoxes of American history is how a nation of immigrants could be at the same time a nation that could be so often roused to fear and even hysteria over ideas, movements, and people labelled foreign...."⁴ This may be paradox, yet it also is precisely the logic of bonding within a miscellaneous immigrant population that there is an even greater need of the fear of otherness to bond against. The equally paradoxical phenomenon of American psychic national insecurity has often been noted. It appears as absurd, a nation with so much going for it, with so little external threat, with so many achievements, such manifest growing power. Yet the new world was also a world many of whose people were displaced persons, and to meet their insecurity, unusual efforts, both consciously crafted and through less conscious forms of compensation, were made to construct an artificial identity of what it was to be American.

Moreover this self-image-making didn't happen only once in the 1870s and '80s, it became obsessional within American culture. It went on and on and on, and it continues today, in ways it seems to outsiders to be narcissistic, when commercialism and ideology conspire to produce each year a new model of the all-American idea, with new bumper-bars and everything: a truly fearsome, Disney-like confection, always young, sanitized, competitive, achievement-orientated, the utterly self-righteous guardian of every value known to time, conflict-free and completely characterless, and in no way like the warty and incredibly various Americans whom we outsiders know, often admire, and even love.

As Susman noted, the search for the real America could become a new kind of nationalism. The idea of an American way could reinforce conformity (it could indeed) but always in the pretence that it was not nationalism at all of the Old World kind, as indeed it was not, but was a denationalized universal, the "human future". Identity required a sort of national super-ego constructed as much from ideology, the idea of Americanism, as from history and contingency.

This ideology grew not in response to external, armed threats but out of the needs of domestic discipline. "The Other" was not yet an enemy-Other of European type, fully fleshed out with ethnic or racist

⁴ Susman, *Culture as History: the Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 77.

chauvinism common to other nationalisms, although, as America's frontier extended into a world-wide dominion of interests and alliances, the palpable abrasion with others gave to it some of these tones. This was most true of the Pacific frontier where the alien began to have an Asian colour. Yet it remained possible until well into the twentieth century to suppose that Americanism was not a true nationalism at all, but was the universal, multinational human future. When the frontier was finally reached early in the twentieth century, there was that unique formation of nationalism, isolationism, which closed the door in self-sufficiency against the world. Pearl Harbour broke that overnight, leaving its own historical legacy imprinted in the American mind, with its fear of "windows of vulnerability", just the imprinting of the Nazi invasion of 1941 is there in the collective Soviet memory.

In World War II, the United States entered deeply into the world and took over the "white man's burden" lapsing from tired European hands in many parts of the world: in Greece, Iran and the Middle East. At that point the Soviet Union and Chinese Communism provided the perfect foil, the perfect Other, their totalitarian features the foil to the idea of freedom, just as the vigorous capitalism of the United States was the foil to the Soviet vision of socialist universalism. The execution of the Rosenbergs, the witch-hunting of the Un-American Committee, marked the entry into a period which, with modifications, we still inhabit. When the Sputnik bleeped its way over the United States, it engendered near-hysteria—war had always in this century been "over there". For the first time it was possible to envisage an enemy-Other that could reach the sacred soil itself.

From this time onwards, in a locked combat with the Soviet Union, the United States leaped into a new stage of nationalism. The full assertion of American nationalism was the more brash and self-congratulatory, in that it had been so long in waiting for its historical moment. In our own time, with the brief interval for the Chinese, Soviet Communism has fulfilled the needs for domestic bonding superbly, and has repaid in full measure the debt which the Soviet rulers owe to American "imperialism" for performing the same function for them. I place "imperialism" in inverted commas, since I consider that the problem of the United States in the world today stems from nationalist forces and ideological mystifications, deliberately incited in populist ways by interested parties, and not from imperialism in the old sense, although there is also plenty of that. The approved self-image, the state-authorized identity of an American national today, is to be a super-national of a state which arrogates to itself a divine right to go any place and bust in at any door in the name of its leadership of the "Free World",

which has fallen into many good old British habits in assuming the burden of bringing light to "the lesser breeds without the law", and which is locked in messianic combat with the communist Other whose ways and wiles are sufficiently defined when they are known as "un-American".

Now this sketch of one artificially confected idea of American nationalism has been a brutal child's cartoon. I've lampooned the aggressive character of this idea. I've said nothing of its real domestic substance, the unusual capacity for assimilation of strangers and aliens within American social life. I've said nothing of powerful, alternative, internationalist traditions, to which the whole world owes a debt, particularly in terms of information. But I consider that this question of the reciprocally interacting nationalisms, both of which find a perfect foil in the "Other" is part of the problem of the world today.

Maybe American rulers need Soviet communism and would need it whether it existed or not. To say that American politicians need the Soviet threat doesn't mean that there never has been and cannot be such a threat. On the contrary, the reciprocal need of both parties to project their hatred and fear on the Other, when this need is enforced by the very material contrivances of respective military-industrial complexes, is exactly the way to exacerbate the threat and bring it into reality. It's a most menacing and most self-confirming process, and, as we know, it is already assuming ritual forms beyond the control of the actors. I just want to propose that the ultimate cause leading to World War III is ideological, and that the ideological forces, and especially the nationalist drives, in both superpowers, are in certain respects self-engendered and proceed from domestic needs.

These last five years have been very curious. The ideological motors of the cold war have been whining to a crescendo, but most of all in the two superpowers which are most distant from each other. The allies and clients who lie in between and whom one would suppose stand in the immediate shadow of threat, have learned to lie snug abed o'nights. East and West Germans amicably exchange spies and double-agents with each other in rehearsed rituals and then get round the table to explore new dimensions of trade. Europeans, East and West, show signs of being more and more anxious at the gesticulations of their own guardian superpower than at the menace of the other. What alarms West Europeans now, and also I think many Canadians, is the sense that the United States has become possessed with a new kind of super-nationalism, very much like the European nationalisms of yesteryear, but more gargantuan in its self-esteem and appetite, whose very features are defined by anti-communism, a nationalism which pretends

that it is the universal human destiny. The Soviet Union also has generated its own super-nationalism whose features are defined by anti-Western imperialism, which also offers to engross a different human destiny.

It is not easy to know which frightens us most. But in this year or two, when a new generation of Soviet leaders are slipping into power, who might at least be tested with genuine explorations in the making of peace, it is perhaps the mistiming of American truculence which alarms us most of all. We are worried, as I know that you are worried also, by the nationalist urges that are caricatured in the phenomenon of Rambo. When Mr. Weinberger attends conferences of NATO ministers, as if dressed up in combat fatigues and space-helmet and carrying an X-ray laser, like a messenger delivering a Rambogram, it's not only the peace movements which scoot for shelter. President Mitterand and Sir Geoffrey Howe dive under the nearest table, and Chancellor Kohl, like the unhappy patrolman in Buffalo recently, shoots himself in the foot.

The bipolarity of our world today seems to me to be the greatest of our dangers. We need a plural, international community once more, a polycentric diplomacy, or the furious mutual incitements of bipolar otherness will destroy us all. That's why I favour a strategy of detaching more and more nations from either superpower pole. It's in the interests of the people of both superpowers themselves. If there was a plural world of non-aligned or only half-aligned states, then these might interpose or mediate between these over-mighty Others. But it won't escape your notice that I've pleaded, as a remedy for super-nationalisms, the regeneration of recalcitrant nationalisms in the zones between the Others. Maybe the diversification and softening of otherness is the best that we can hope for. But I have rather little hope. If civilized societies do survive for more than two or three decades, it may not be through an exercise of rationality, for reason itself now seems to have entered service with the yahoos, but through the inextinguishable, human capacity for laughter. For we really have now, with Star Wars, entered full stage upon the theatre of the absurd.

LECTURE II. THE HEALING OF THE BLOCS

I WANT TO talk to you, perhaps in a more committed way, of my own perspectives within the world peace movement. Yesterday, for at least part of the time, I was aware that I was in a multidisciplinary university, and we do as academics and as scholars have the duty to develop these disciplines and these studies as a specific academic contribution.

Nothing I say in this lecture is intended to steam-roller or to over-argue the necessary exchange of minds and exchange of opinions.

Last night I was certainly not attempting to move out of the main and central concern of peace movements with weaponry, with the arms race, and with nuclear weaponry in particular. These are the real and immediate dangers leading us to World War III. But they are also, at the same time, a metaphor and a political symbol of the control of client-states. It is now—if you read the expert journals of the defence community—quite openly admitted that land-based cruise missiles, which are by any exercise of worst-case hypotheses simply sitting-ducks for counter-targeting (as opposed to seaborne cruise missiles, which are being developed in thousands instead of in hundreds), were not necessary and not even very important military instruments. But why the Euro-missile crisis from 1980 to 1983 became so intense was because the NATO military and political establishments were confronted by peace movements and parties influenced by them, in what became a tense internal domestic struggle; and it became necessary to put cruise and Pershing down, and to test cruise in Canada, as a symbol of “the unity of NATO”; and also as a symbol of United States hegemony—military hegemony—over its client NATO states.

This was instantly replied to in exactly the same vocabulary of symbolism by the deployment of SS-21s, 22s and 23s in territory which hitherto, for the official record, had not had nuclear weapons placed upon them: that is, in the GDR and Czechoslovakia. We understand, from friendly and informal sources which increasingly are communicating across the blocs, that some pressure, some arm-twisting, was brought by the Soviet Union upon both Hungary and Bulgaria for the reception of such missiles as well—but not Poland, they wouldn't dare to put anything that the Poles could carry off on Polish soil. This was resisted even by loyal Bulgaria on the grounds that they were in an advanced state of negotiation with a NATO power, Greece, and also with non-aligned Yugoslavia, with a view to developing a nuclear-free Balkan zone; and resisted also by the Hungarians, who are managing to side-step these issues and to become a mediating power in the centre of Europe.

I was directing your attention to not the weapons so much as the state of cold war out of which the weapons continually come, which breeds the new generations of weaponry; and placing this at the top of our agenda: not necessarily as the first campaigning issue but as the issue to which all who wish to see a future for civilization must apply their best thoughts and their best activity.

I ended by focusing on a prime issue, that of the mutually exacer-

bating ideologies of nationalism in the Soviet Union and in the United States. I indicated that we must find a polycentric or plural global diplomacy. The existing bipolar structure is itself part of the problem, and I would say it is unique in human history. It cannot be compared to the confrontation even of Christendom and Islam; it is structured in a quite different and quite formal way, this unique bipolar division of the world with spheres of influence in the non-aligned world, right into Latin America, Africa and Asia.

I don't wish to attempt a re-examination of the causes through which the cold war came about. At some time between 1947 and 1949, there was the glaciation, an ice-age setting in, which developed like a giant geological fault right across the centre of Europe and in other fissures across the other continents, leaving this bipolar division. It was contingency (unless one considers that there is some evil destiny) which arranged that that moment when the meeting of the western Allies and the Soviet armies came at the end of World War II should be exactly the same moment as the atomic bomb was invented and then demonstrated at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was the coincidence of the meeting of those armies and the invention of the nuclear weapons which led to this glaciation. One city in the heart of Europe, Berlin, became bisected by a wall. And thereafter the normal processes of the intellectual and social exchanges between societies and of the diplomatic resolutions of problems were glaciated also.

There is thus an extraordinary history of stationary politics, of the congealing into set forms of the societies on both sides of that geological rift. Nuclear weapons in particular became a substitute for diplomacy and for the human resolution of problems. In 1980 I proposed a terminology for this in a rash essay which was partly addressed to those over-theoretical Marxist friends of my previous years who wouldn't get off their backsides and do anything about peace.⁵ I tried to cast the problem in their framework of reference. I proposed the concept of "exterminism" as a new concept to explain this unique historical moment. I proposed that there was an inertial condition in which both superpowers and both blocs were in a state of continual reciprocal relationship in which they were exacerbating their own tendencies towards war: and that this brought with it the increasing allocation of resources

and skills in both blocs towards militarization in such a way as to determine and to modify the structure of those societies themselves. They were becoming, in the long term, more war-directed in their economies, in the priorities afforded to weaponry in those economies, in the technologies favoured and fostered by those economies, in the ideological formations fostered by this continual abrasion and confrontation between the blocs, in their security controls and management of their own citizenry and of their allies. These societies were becoming increasingly shaped by what a historian can see as a long-term historical process not willed by anyone but, as it were, self-reproducing and willing its own end, which is a terminal nuclear war.

In this sense of war-directed societies, I offered the term "exterminism". Alack, this argument, which was a tentative one, became in translation, in some other languages, a finished and highly theorized concept—*Exterminismus*, for example—and in the course of this translation there may have been a misunderstanding between the Hegelian, or indeed the Cartesian, traditions of intellectual work, and the Baconian tradition out of which I come. What is seen as the evasiveness or amateurism, or sometimes irresponsibility, of the English empirical tradition of work—a tradition in which theory tends to appear either as critique or as the formulation of hypotheses which are there for the analysis and sorting of evidence but can then be reformulated—was confused with a mode of thought in which this was an ideal paradigm expressing precise reality; and thereby producing, contrary to my intention, a pessimistic determinism. I discovered that "exterminism" has been pronounced by Professor Thompson to be the terminus of civilization, and that there is no possible way out of this inertial process.

Now it is true that my argument is determinist, in the sense in which Shakespeare would have understood it, showing the "very form and pressure of our time".⁶ This is the inertial direction in which our civilization tends. But it is not determinist in the absolute sense that no alternatives exist, because the very contradictions of this process, out of which the peace movement is one major phenomenon, may contradict this. It is still open to the choices of women and men to deflect this direction of civilization. Exterminism was a theoretical metaphor which I used to bring to the sorting and analysis of an empirically observable "deep process".

Not only some western thinkers, but some Soviet ideologists interpreted my meaning differently, and they read it as a doctrine of symmetry, or of equal responsibility. Although this doesn't belong

⁵ "Notes on Exterminism, the Last Stage of Civilization", *New Left Review*, no. 121 (May–June 1980): 3–31. Reprinted in my *Beyond the Cold War: a New Approach to the Arms Race and Nuclear Annihilation* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982). See also "Exterminism Reviewed", in my *The Heavy Dancers* (London: Merlin Press, 1985); the American edition (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985) omits this essay.

⁶ *Hamlet*, III.ii.22–3.

especially to my theory of determinism, I think I should quote a passage from the European Nuclear Disarmament “Appeal”, in which we said: “We do not wish to apportion guilt between the political and military leaders of East and West. Guilt lies squarely upon both parties. Both parties have adopted menacing postures and have committed aggressive actions in different parts of the world.”⁷ This doesn’t say that both parties are exactly the same. It doesn’t say that both parties are always equally awful in all ways. It says that both parties are awful at different times and in different ways, and this is open to our examination. There is a difference between symmetry and reciprocity. I never wished to propose that these two blocs, in their ideology, in their economies, in their domestic organization, were symmetrical partners or rivals in that sense. Emphatically they are asymmetrical. They are asymmetrical in geostrategic terms. The United States has a great deal of water all around it. The Soviet Union is mostly land-locked, which is why the Soviet Union’s ICBMs are mostly land-based, whereas the United States operates upon a triad.

They are also asymmetrical in crucial historical experiences and those which bear upon the questions of peace and war. For the United States’ historical memory, major war—apart from their own civil war, which was a heavy war—has always been “over there”, whereas the Soviet Union’s historical memory is of 20,000,000 killed, of the scorched earth, of the loss of all its major western industrial capacity and many of its villages in World War II. The superpowers are emphatically different in social system and in degrees of blame and in moments in which this blame existed. I accept the view that in general the United States has had the leading edge in the technological development of nuclear weapons and strategies from the beginning. There are one or two exceptions, particularly in the Sputnik period in space. I think there have been moments in which the Soviet Union has profoundly screwed up the situation. One of the most severe actions against the peace of Europe was the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the ending of the Prague Spring which itself might have been a healing process in the continent and hence for the world.

But reciprocity is not the same as symmetry, and by “reciprocity of relationship” I mean that their missiles bring forward our missiles, which bring forward theirs. This continual reciprocity and interaction happens in every field: the hawks of one side feed with morsels the hawks of the other side and make them grow fat, and they fly back with morsels to the other side. Even the doves of one side evoke

responses from the other. I am convinced that the western peace movement’s ideas have penetrated in many ways deeply into the Soviet bloc and may even be showing responses in the flexible style which has come with the new leadership in the Soviet Union. But in other ways, in the minds of young people above all: the refraction of our activity reaches through and is heard there. Communication on this much smaller, shrivelled globe is closer than ever before. Thus in weaponry, in strategy, in politics and also in ideology there is this mutual, reciprocal interaction and exacerbation. Both sides exist constantly within a common bipolar field of force. And within this, the cold war can be seen as a means of internal discipline and also of control and exercising hegemony over the rest of the world—control of clients directly, control and influence of those outside direct clientage.

The cold war legitimates, in its ideology, quite old-fashioned imperial exercises. It isn’t the first time the United States has started playing war-games in Nicaragua. They’d had that backyard long before there were any commies about. But now, when they do the old imperial thing, it’s always justified in terms of moral leadership of the free world and defence against communism and so on. Much the same is true of the operation in Afghanistan, which is again in the name of defending the socialist world. May I just say one thing about Afghanistan? I’m sometimes told even by people in the peace movement that, after all, these Afghans are terribly backward people, they are being funded and helped by the enemies of the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union is right to be helping the forces of modernization and progress. The historical parallel that always hits me straightaway is that exactly the same was said about Cromwell in Ireland in the 1640s. The Irish were a backward, traditional people with an old, traditional faith. They were illiterate. They were friends and allies of Spain and France. And Cromwell was a modernizer, and he did represent, for the English, the forces of progress. The trouble is the Irish people have never, after 300 years, forgiven Cromwell. Nor will the Afghan people quickly forgive Brezhnev. So the cold war is used as a means of internal discipline. And at times one glimpses queer moments of real complicity between the antagonists, who are both antagonists and sometimes partners in having a common desire to control and keep the world in order.

There is another perspective which we must always bear in mind if we are concerned with peace. There are two kinds of peace which could come out of this crisis, and both of them are preferable to nuclear war, but they are very different. One of them is real peace. The other is simply a “global Yalta”, that is, just as Europe was once divided, so the superpowers will sit down and decide to divide all the rest of the

⁷ *Protest and Survive* (British ed.), p. 224.

world up, as it already is partially divided up. The global Yalta is settled above our heads. In looking for such a possible solution both super-powers could act as partners or even as ideological lookalikes.

Now, the European Nuclear Disarmament Committee and many of its friends in the non-aligned movements in Europe are in most countries not affiliated to the World Peace Council (and indeed very firmly not affiliated). They are non-aligned in their politics. By this I mean the majority Norwegian movement (“No to Nuclear Weapons”), the Icelandic movement (“Campaign against Military Bases”), the majority Danish movement (“No to Nuclear Weapons”), the majority Dutch movement (particularly the Dutch Interchurch Peace Council, the IKV), the more fissionated, the more divided multiple German movements (the Social Democratic, the churches’ movement, the women’s movements, the Greens). And the British movement (CND), the majority Italian movement, the majority Spanish movement, and a section of the Greek are non-aligned; a section of the Finnish is non-aligned (not all of it); and in France there is a big split with the Mouvement de la Paix being a World Peace Council affiliate and CODENE non-aligned. So we are essentially talking about movements which by theory and experience have come to adopt a non-aligned position, which does not exclude meeting in bilateral or plural conferences with the official peace councils of Eastern Europe. It doesn’t exclude visiting and exchanges of various kinds, but it does insist upon forming policies independently and very watchfully.

A small influence in the development of this form may lie with the END “Appeal” of 1980. This may help to explain why both that particular small committee (END) and I myself have received an astonishingly bad press from both sides of the cold war. I have to read you one or two of my press notices. In 1983 General Bernard Rogers, who is the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, was giving evidence before the House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services in Washington, and he said a major argument against the freeze movement in the United States “is the support that the freeze gives to those movements in Western Europe that are counterproductive to our efforts, because they look back and they say, ‘Look at what’s going on in the United States, we’ve got support there.’ It plays right into the hands of a man named Thompson who heads the campaign.” (Really, if they think that I head the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the UK, it’s very flattering, but if General Rogers’s NATO intelligence sources can’t identify who heads CND, they aren’t going to go very far.) “A man named Thompson who has come out and said as much. Just the fact that you’re considering such a freeze, you see, plays into

his hands.”⁸ And at about the same time, Mr. Georgi Arbatov, the Director of Moscow’s Institute of United States and Canadian Studies, was going round Holland and Belgium and referred to END and myself as “affairs of the CIA”. And this became even stronger in 1984 when Mr. Yuri Zhukov, the President of the Soviet Peace Committee, explained in one of their publications that, “having made a painful reappraisal of the current situation, United States and NATO psychological warfare units are attempting to sabotage some of the anti-nuclear movements from the inside, smuggling their own instructions and ideas into them.” And I’m singled out by Mr. Zhukov as the head of one of these units.⁹ And Mr. Lokshin, the Secretary of the Soviet Peace Committee, adds the names to this of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, the British END Committee, Mr. Mient-Jan Faber, the General Secretary of the Dutch Interchurch Peace Council, and for good measure the IPCC which is (sorry about our acronyms, the peace movement is getting as bad as the war movement for acronyms) the International Peace Communications and Coordination Centre, which is an office in The Hague which brings together into regular conferences all these non-aligned movements.

I’m only pointing out that Mr. Zhukov and Mr. Lokshin unmasked a quite extraordinary conspiracy in which the most powerful European peace movements turn out to be under the control of United States and NATO psychological warfare units. Mr. Lokshin explains how this very remarkable thing took place:

In NATO’s arsenal and methods of subversion directed against the anti-war movement, an ever greater place is being given to ideological warfare. This is carried out partly with the help of various front organizations and groups that insinuate themselves into the movement. E.P. Thompson, an English historian and sociologist [not guilty], widely publicized of late, a former professor of Oxford University [not guilty], is the noisiest mouthpiece of these anti-Soviet concerns.

And so on.

What is it that arouses the extraordinary anger of these official peace diplomats? Well, Lokshin explains to his Soviet readers that Mient-Jan

⁸ Evidence before the House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services given on 25 April 1983.

⁹ Zhukov and Lokshin’s articles are in *International Life*, June 1984. For more detail, see my *Double Exposure* (London: Merlin Press, 1985; reprinted in the American edition of *The Heavy Dancers*).

Faber of Holland and I are currently preoccupying ourselves with attempts to “pull the anti-war movement into an authentic ‘crusade’ against the socialist fraternity while cynically hiding themselves behind stolen banners of peace. E. Thompson incites his listeners by saying, ‘We have to begin acting as if a unified, neutral and peaceful Europe already existed.’” What is actually being quoted here is a central phrase of the END “Appeal” of April 1980—“We must commence to act as if a united, mutual and pacific Europe already exists. We must learn to be loyal, not to ‘East’ or ‘West’, but to each other, and we must disregard the prohibitions and limitations imposed by any national state.”¹⁰

Let’s stand back from this for a moment and try to look back upon our own times, this moment of history, from an imagined future. We have to imagine that there *is* a future first. And there are three very broad scenarios you can propose. One is that things go on grumbling on as they are, or much as they are, for two or three more decades. They will in that case be getting worse. The weapons will be getting worse. They will have gone into a new dimension in space. The means of security and control (including, I think, control over academic life) will have increased on both sides, and probably we will then be in what will be a determinist pressure towards the end: i.e. terminal nuclear war. A second broad scenario is really, I think, a non-scenario, although it’s the one which is a fiction somehow in the back of people’s minds. If you ask them, “Here, how’s it all going to end?”, they say, “Well, one side or the other is going to win the cold war.” And I can see no way in which the cold war can be won, given the present military structures, without there being a nuclear war. Winning a nuclear war in the sense of the victory of one side over the other is impossible. So that we have to have a third scenario, and that is, very simply, that the cold war goes away.

The cold war is not a permanent and absolute determined fixture of national and international life. I think this is just one place where to be sixty or so is an advantage over being twenty or so. We can still remember a world—which was divided, yes, by ideologies, by nationalities, but not divided in the cold war way—in which there was still an internationalism of a different sort; whereas people who are twenty or thirty or forty have grown up habituated, as if this was part of the very firmament, to a bipolar division of this sort. It is difficult for them to imagine that this is a temporary and local moment in history which could end.

¹⁰ *Protest and Survive*, p. 225.

Looking to that future, I want to sketch an optimistic scenario—and I am now addressing myself especially to the younger people in the audience, because this is their scenario and, if it happens, it will be because they, internationally, make this scenario. It is, I think, the only scenario that they can possibly have. And it is not one scenario; it could lead in very many directions, and the way it goes will depend upon their internationalism and their ways of action. I would make a comparison with the end of European colonial empires after World War II. I happened to grow up, to my good fortune, in an anti-imperialist family. My father was a friend of the Indian Congress and worked for Indian independence. I remember his exhaustion in the late ‘thirties when he came back from a round of meetings or day schools or whatever. One of the things he used to say was, “The mere mention of the word ‘India’ is sufficient to empty the smallest hall in Oxford.” The limits of the possible had been reached. Yes, the Indian Congress was now governing more and more provinces of India, but whenever you came to the point of even dominion status, every kind of political “impossibility” was presented as a barrier. And yet because of the maturity and self-confidence of that extraordinary movement in India, in 1945 it was impossible to refuse Indian independence. And maybe to its credit, but perhaps because there was no alternative, a British Labour Government consented to the inevitable without some terrible Algerian or Indo-China war.

India opened the door. Immediately afterwards came Sri Lanka, Burma, (not without some fighting) Malaysia, then (after terrible fighting) French Indo-China, leading on of course to the second terrible confrontation in Vietnam. Colonial Asia disappeared. Then, after some episodes of war, including Kenya, with remarkable swiftness the entire British Empire in Africa (apart from Zimbabwe, which was a white colonial dominion) disappeared. By the early ‘sixties Portuguese Africa was an anachronism, which, of course, had consequences in a revolution in the metropolis itself in the end. All that process happened in less than twenty years: the disappearance of what had seemed to be the fixed world order in my parents’ generation.

I’m saying the same kind of process could happen with the cold war. It could melt like snow and give way to a different world, a more polycentric world. We could place upon the agenda as a realistic proposition the demand that by the year 2000 or the year 2005 all Soviet bases and troops should be withdrawn from Central and Eastern Europe, and all United States troops and bases should be withdrawn from Western Europe; and that all troops, of the superpowers and of their allies, should be withdrawn from any other territory whatsoever. This process

would go along with the blurring of the edges of the two blocs.

Here again is where the choices of the younger generation will influence things. This need not always lead to nice solutions. It could lead to the revival of some nationalisms that have been suppressed—the confrontation between Greece and Turkey, the confrontation (the Transylvanian question) between Hungary and Romania—all these national issues could begin to rise again. Therefore the young people must be carriers of a new kind of internationalism which will lead forward to a new kind of internationalized world. If this future is even possible—and I am arguing in directly contrary terms to all the defence community's mode of thought (which, as you know, is worst-case analysis)—it can only be by best-case analysis, and then by working to bring the best case about. That is the only way we can proceed. And if this best case is possible, then we have to start to work for that future now, systematically, actively, and also in professional and intellectual ways, choosing already between the possible futures that will come if the cold war melted away.

This is not only a possible future, but (which is a very different and a much more hopeful thing to say to you) this future is already actually present, now, as possibility; that is, the elements of this situation are already to be found in the world today. They are to be found in the standpoint, opinion, consciousness and some of the diplomacies of the non-aligned world, which, with some of the now (I think) greatly modified policies of China (which could once again come back diplomatically in some ways into the non-aligned world), represent the overwhelming majority of the world's population and the overwhelming majority of the United Nations Assembly. It is already actually present in the peace movement, and I don't mean only those who wear badges and only those who belong to this or that chapter. I mean the peace movement in the broadest sense of the concerned consciousness of those who, in some way or other, are acting for peace. It's already there in strategies for change which are being discussed in the books and journals of the world; above all, in the sense that the script according to which the statesmen of the embattled blocs are still acting out their diplomacies and their military strategies is now a totally threadbare and outworn script that was first written in the 1940s and which is now being rehearsed by rote, which no longer has life and authenticity. It is an empty rhetoric, and the inheritors and executors of that old cold war script, the political and military elites who re-enact those traumas, will either refuse to be dislodged from their positions of power and, in that case, will bring down the roof of the world on our heads; or they must give way.

Alongside the actual potential presence of an alternative world among us, are the changing realities which begin to give us purchase to find those strategies. World War II ended with manifest United States' hegemony over a whole part of the world, manifest economic domination accompanied by military superiority, with most of the nations of Europe in a state of economic collapse or extreme stringency. Now, of course, the scales have changed with the rise once again of productive capacity in Japan, Western Germany and Western Europe generally. The terms have shifted very perceptibly. United States' economic domination is now giving way to a weakening competitive position in some areas in the world markets, which, of course, is provoking the demands for protectionism and so forth. In a sense United States' hegemony is now maintained by nuclear weapons and by military sinews because it has lost some of the economic and political muscle. Whereas in the Soviet bloc, I can remember a time in the 'fifties and 'sixties when we used to think of Eastern Europe as being like a pea with six pods in it, each of them the same and called a "people's democracy". The diversification of Eastern and Central Europe is now quite extraordinary. From that curious Mafia-run place Romania, where you have to register the ownership of a typewriter like a handgun, but which nevertheless, for particular national reasons, on occasion adopts diplomatic positions critical of the Soviet Union, through loyal Bulgaria (which nevertheless is beginning to show signs of independence), through Czechoslovakia, which is essentially an occupied country (still occupied from 1968), to Poland, which is Poland and nothing else can be said about it, to Hungary, where there are all kinds of experiments in the diversification of market socialism, small-scale enterprise, co-operatives and so on and also in which there is (compared to the others) a degree of toleration, of intellectual and cultural exchange, very little direct repression, and more chances for travel. We now see quite a number of Hungarian young people, some of whom are independent peace activists of the Dialogue group, who come across to spend a couple of months in the summer in Britain and go back. This is a quite new sort of situation, and our young people go across there and immediately fall into dis-course. It's amazing to think that this is a divided world.

Other signs and signals can be seen. There is this extraordinary business of Marxism, which in the Soviet bloc has increasingly become simply an opportunistic, ritualized vocabulary into which you have to peer with magnifying glasses to see what kind of underlying messages are actually being read through it. And yet Marxism as a vital tradition has fled to the West and the developing world, taking multiple heretical forms and developing as a vital intellectual tradition, not in "actually

existing” socialist states but in the developing world or in the western world. Something of the same is happening to the rhetoric of traditional liberalism, which has become outworn and sometimes hypocritical rhetoric in the mouths of political elites in the West, but which has intense vitality if you are an intellectual in KOS, working with Solidarnosc in Poland, or if you are a Czech intellectual within the circle of the Charter 77 group.

I am convinced (one of the gains of travelling to nineteen or twenty countries in the last five years in the peace movement) that there are green shoots everywhere on both sides underneath the snows of the cold war. The ideological double-bind which held the cold war together used to be the “peace or freedom” double-bind. It was supposed that if you were for peace in the West, then you must be pro-Soviet. I am still accused of this constantly, I am sure some of you are. It’s the old double-bind that Bertrand Russell was very familiar with. No one knows where the phrase “Better Red than Dead” came from, but it’s constantly being attributed to Russell. Yet Russell wrote in *Unarmed Victory* that “Better Red than Dead” is “a slogan which has been fathered upon me, although it is not mine but a translation of the slogan of a hostile German journalist. I believe in the possibility of coexistence.”¹¹ The peace movement throughout the world is increasingly refusing the “peace or freedom” question and demanding *both*. In exactly the same way this double-bind has worked in the Soviet bloc, where every outspoken activist working for intellectual, religious, and trade-union liberties, was typed as a friend of western imperialists or as an agent of the CIA, was constricted and hemmed in as a “dissident”. That was the block that prevented change taking place in the communist world.

This, of course, was not just ideology—it was confirmed by institutions, some of which are still with us today, legacies again of the old outworn script. Our problems with the Soviet Peace Committee and the World Peace Council are precisely that these were formed in that particular moment of the first cold war. They carry on those traditions; and Mr. Zhukov, the President, is a man of seventy, deeply formed in that kind of tradition; he was a *Pravda* journalist who apologized for the Prague Spring in ’68, and he comes from that combative Stalinist tradition. Their attempt is simply the strategy of co-opting western peace movements as pliant auxiliaries to Soviet diplomacy. These are

diplomatic sub-organs who handle western peace activists, host them on conducted tours of an approved kind and also police citizen exchanges so that we can’t get through with direct citizen exchanges. But we are now succeeding in doing it. These Stalinist survivors have an absolute fury when genuine non-aligned movements appear. And on the other side, the inheritors of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and of the CIA operations are still very much at work. They’re not just imaginary fictions of Soviet ideology. Again and again, the efforts of so-called “dissident” groups working for freedom in the Warsaw bloc are screwed up because western agencies try and co-opt them, or try and play them as cold war cards.

There are reasons why the attempt of western ideologists to use “human rights” as their strong ideological card just won’t play anymore. I’ll just indicate four of these reasons. The first is manifest. I don’t have to tell this audience of the double standards involved. If you want to know a place where the prisons are really full in Europe (and full of peace activists among other people), then look at our loyal NATO ally Turkey, funded heavily by the United States. The double standards have a blind eye to El Salvador and can only see what’s happening in Eastern Europe. That’s manifest. Secondly, and of more importance to those friends of ours who are trying to find their way on the other side, is that it is at least a thrice-called bluff that the West is anxious to aid them. This bluff brought no aid to the Hungarians in 1956, gave nothing to the Czechs in 1968 and wasn’t very effective to Poland’s Solidarnosc. In fact the western cold warriors were calling them out into an exposed position and then saying, “Well, bye-bye, we hope you’re lucky but we can’t do any more.” Thirdly, of course, the rights that western cold warriors often champion (which are sometimes very good rights) they don’t like quite so much at home. When there are huge workers’ movements which are proposing to take over the self-management and control of the whole of society, they’re marvellous in Poland; but if they’re air controllers in the United States or if they’re British mineworkers, they get a quite different reception. So that, fourthly, the even more painful recognition has developed in Eastern Europe, amongst dissidents, that their main function for western ideologists of the cold war is to suffer and to be seen to be suffering. It’s much much better if they are seen to be suffering—they are good cards to play—than if they actually win, and gain certain of those rights.

The peace movement has a totally different status. We have to be concerned with civil and religious liberties, because they are part of the necessary basis of building an international consciousness, and we can’t

¹¹ *Unarmed Victory* (Harmondsworth, Mddx.: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 9. (In searching for this quotation a different explanation of the slogan turned up in Russell’s *Has Man a Future?* [Penguin, 1961], p. 90.)

have genuine citizen exchange unless these rights are extended and established in every part of the world. But this is not a question of linkage. It is not, “If you give these people rights, then we might consider getting rid of a cruise missile.” What the peace movement says is: “We work for peace *and* freedom. There are **no** conditions. We work for them together, we extend these demands together.” And we are never going to get any human rights of any kind at all over there from a superpower on this side of the Atlantic with a Pershing II in one hand and Nicaraguan blood on the other. On the contrary, that kind of posture is precisely what hardens and closes up the societies on the other side. This is now becoming realized increasingly. It is precisely the cold war heroics of the West which result in strengthening the hawks of the East in resisting the due processes of modernization, which the citizens on that side would get on with, in their own way, if we would only lean back and stop pressing at them with military threats.

The most interesting example of this is Czechoslovakia. When we launched the END “Appeal” in the beginning of 1980, we had the idea that this is surely an appeal to civil libertarians in the East. Let’s try the place with the oldest and longest relations with West Europe and democratic traditions, Czechoslovakia. My wife and I went to Prague. Every door around Charter 77 seemed to be shut. They wanted a boycott on Soviet goods in protest about Afghanistan. Afghanistan reminded them of 1968 in Prague. They had been told by someone friendly to either the Soviet intelligence services or to the British intelligence services, that I was a professor from the World Peace Council trying to get them involved in a Soviet-inspired peace campaign. The telephone was put down; the door wasn’t answered. Since then there have been four or five years of exchange and debate. And earlier in 1985, after a series of extremely positive messages and statements from Charter 77 to the western peace movements, they came out with one of the most striking and important documents in the entire global peace movement. It is one which demands, precisely, an end to the cold war. It demands the withdrawal of Soviet and of United States forces and bases from the Continent. It demands the new kind of relationship between a plural Europe and the developing world, which puts together the cause of peace and freedom in a wholly constructive way and which insists, also, that the peace movement and the civil rights movement must be mature enough to ensure that this does not lead to destabilizing processes which one or the other great power tries to take advantage of. That is, we have to engineer a slope, which will lead us steadily, and without destabilization, from the bipolar world of the cold war to the polycentric world of the future.

I still find the odd person in the peace movement who says, “Yes, but aren’t these dissidents? We don’t want to talk to dissidents, do we?” And I say, “Do you really know who these people in Charter 77 are? Can I just tell you about a few of these people?” There’s Ladislav Lis, who was a member of the Czech Communist Party under Dubcek. When the Soviet tanks came into Prague, he convened, under the barrels of the Soviet tanks’ guns, an underground congress of the Czech Communist Party protesting at the Soviet occupation. He was then jailed for four or five years, and was jailed again two years ago for a year and a half, precisely because he was a spokesperson of Charter 77 and in communication with the western peace movement. There is Jaroslav Sabata, now ill and about seventy, another former member of the Central Committee of Dubcek’s party, a psychologist who has served seven years in prison since ’68, in one case for distributing leaflets telling people they had the right to vote “no” in a general election, on another occasion for meeting with Polish friends on the Czech-Polish border. There’s Jiri Hayek, who was foreign minister in Dubcek’s government. There is Vaclav Havel, the well-known playwright. There are Christian ministers, some of whom now tend boilers because they’ve been prevented from their own ministry. These are serious people, people with a lifetime, sometimes, of dedication to social and political or religious causes. They are not to be written off as just “dissidents”. Or read George Konrad’s recent book published in the West but, alas, not yet published in Hungary (although he is a Budapest writer) *Antipolitics*.¹² It is an extraordinary voice coming to us from Central Europe, asking for the reunification of our broken world.

This leads us to a strategy, much of which is already in hand in the peace movements, of citizen exchange, maybe twinings, maybe the kind of example that professional groups (such as the International Physicians) have already given us, of getting through sometimes to colleagues in our own professions; or with young people just putting a rucksack on their backs and going there and finding out young people to talk to. It leads to a political strategy in which we may build a second tier of relations between West Europe and Canada, on the one hand, and East and Central Europe on the other: diplomatic, trade, cultural relations: a second tier between the superpowers, which would lead on to a scenario of the “Finlandization” of Hungary or Poland and the “Swedenization” of Holland or Britain or of Canada. That is, moving into a grey area in between the black and white of the blocs.

The question of NATO seems to me to be an open option and one

¹² *Antipolitics*, trans. Richard E. Allen (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1984).

that we have to play by ear. In moving to strengthen the non-aligned area, the stages by which we detach ourselves from each pole will have to be determined by the state of play, politics, and public opinion at the time. Some of our friends in the European peace movement point out that it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that by 1990 we could have a strong anti-nuclear majority amongst the NATO powers, and that it might be possible to denuclearize NATO from within. Or if it comes to that, the majority might have to expel the United States. (This is proposed by some of our friends in Denmark and in Holland.) We are talking about Germany, Britain, possibly Italy, Spain, Greece, Canada, Holland, Norway, all adopting non-nuclear policies. That gives rise to one option. On the other hand, there is the example of New Zealand and Mr. Lange. Mr. Lange did not make great statements about ANZUS. He just said, “I don’t want your nuclear-armed warships in my ports.” The United States did all the rest. They educated the New Zealand public.

If in Britain we should get a government—and the Labour Party is completely pledged to this—which might send back cruise missiles, ask the United States to remove its nuclear bases, and stop the British Trident, that will commence a real educational process. The response of the U.S. military will be sharp, and we’re going to need the help and understanding of friends in the United States, in Canada, and in the peace movement in Western Europe. But if this should happen, I believe a peace-minded government must have an active eastwards-looking politic as well. If United States’ bases and nuclear weapons were going to be removed from a NATO nation, that government should also say, “Come on, we want to see them out of Czechoslovakia, too.” If we’re going to have American troops out of Holland or out of Britain, what about remembering that Soviet troops only came in “temporarily” in ’68 to Czechoslovakia? Because, believe me, the Dutch people or the British people might screw themselves up to the point of doing that, but they won’t hold that position unless they see some response coming from the other side. This is real politics that we will be into.

There are many other intermediate strategies that many of you must have thought about. I haven’t said anything about nuclear-free zones, a nuclear-free Pacific, Indian Ocean, the Atlantic itself, zones of peace in Central Europe; I’ve said nothing about the problem of the two Germanies—all these are the intermediate strategies which are becoming real and which, I am convinced, anyone here who is forty will live to see coming into the remit of practical politics within ten or twenty years, providing we can prevent nuclear war. This is the way out of

our dilemma. I’ve said nothing about the reactivation of the United Nations in this perspective.

There are two final points. The first is the question of destabilization. When your hand is frozen, it’s very painful when it thaws out. And when a whole geopolitical system has been frozen for forty years, the thaw is going to be painful. There will be immaturities. There will be huge movements like Solidarnosc which can’t find their way internationally, however mature they are internally. (Solidarnosc was mature in its refusal of violence inside Poland; I think it didn’t know where it was in the international world.) There is going to be a very choppy period, rapids and cross-currents, that will come in your time. That’s why you have to start thinking about them now. That’s why you have to be beginning to chart courses. That’s why you have to begin to make choices now, in advance of those emergencies beginning to arise. That is why we have to be mature as peace movements. And that is why we must expose anyone, from either side, who is an agent of the arms systems, who tries to exploit this situation to the advantage of their own side. These are the people who are even more dangerous than the makers of nuclear weapons.

And the final thing is, the people have to go ahead of the states. The armed states cannot get out of this situation. Their very *raison d’être* consists in *being* armed. So the people have to go ahead of the states and make a channel through which politics may later flow. And in this sense, intellectuals and scholars have to consider themselves to be stateless persons. We act in the interests of no armed state. We must help because our skills and privileges allow us to serve as communicators. We must open up those channels through which the currents of politics may flow to the possible future.

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