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that might contribute
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or understanding of
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"The question is: Can we make the world safe for people? I think the answer must be yes -- but the answer has to be accompanied by a qualification that *if* we are going to make the world safe for people we shall have to make fundamental changes in our ways of thought and action.

"It means that we have to adopt a program of rational use rather than reckless appropriation. And then the question becomes: How do you bring about a moral and intellectual revolution? I think that it can't be done by scaring people. It's useful to scare people, in order to get their attention, perhaps -- but any long-term program that rests on the notion that people are going to stay frightened fails because they don't."

— Robert M. Hutchins

(From Court of Reason. by Frank K. Kelly, The Free Press: Div. of Macmillan Publishing Co., New York, N.Y., 1981. p.406)

A Call to the Conscience of the University Community

by John Ernest

What are the universities doing and what can they do to arrest our relentless drive toward cultural suicide? I am reluctant to use a phrase as melodramatic as "cultural suicide." But even a relatively superficial review of the facts will indicate that it is both appropriate and accurate. Human society has developed and stockpiled nuclear weapons adequate to insure its own demise. We feel apprehensive and helpless in the face of that stark reality, just as we would if we knew a close friend had stored up an excessive amount of barbiturates.

Graduation exhortations often characterize the university's mission as consisting of two complementary components: contributing to our culture (research in its broadest sense) and transmitting this culture to future generations (education in its broadest sense). Most of us already feel humbled by such grandiose expectations. But scientific discoveries and technological developments of the last forty years have introduced still another component of the academic mission: not only must we expand and transmit our culture, we must also take some responsibility to prevent its demise as the result of a thermonuclear war.

I formulate this question in terms of "cultural" survival rather than "human" survival because there is little disagreement that our culture *is* at stake if the awesome power of existing nuclear arsenals is unleashed. The long-term ecological effects of a nuclear war on the biosphere are difficult to project, but most studies indicate that even the worst of our current weapons are not yet capable of destroying the conditions for some form of life on the planet.[1]

EDITOR'S NOTE: *John Ernest, Professor of Mathematics at the University of California at Santa Barbara, wrote this appeal as an open letter addressed to faculty members of the University of California. In the original draft, he called it "half an essay," intended to convince the reader that the question of the survival of human culture is both real and urgent, but leaving aside discussion of the specific long-term research projects that would be suitable for a university effort in the matter. In that early draft, Professor Ernest called for reader response regarding (1) relevant research already underway both in and outside the university setting; and (2) how readers' professional interests might be brought to bear on the global issues he raises. Since the essay speaks to researchers, teachers, and administrators not just in the University of California but in all universities, and indeed to anyone willing to turn his or her thoughts toward the question of cultural survival, we pass his request on to readers of* The Center Magazine, *in care of which you may reply to Professor Ernest.*

[1] For a review of the literature up to 1977, see the report *Weapons of Mass Destruction and the Environment*, published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Crane, Russak & Co., Inc., New York, 1977).

Human culture and civilization, evolved over thousands of years, can be plunged into darkness in a single day by a thermonuclear war.

Somewhat less certain, of course, is the continued viability of the species *Homo sapiens.* Still, while there are many imponderables associated with long-term effects of interdependent variables (e.g., ozone layer, food supply, weather, radiation, disease, and genetic change), most experts remain optimistic that human life will persist in some form, particularly in the southern hemisphere. This appraisal can easily change as technological developments, stockpiling, and proliferation continue. Seven years ago the president of the National Academy of Sciences, Philip Handler, summarized the National Research Council report, "Long-Term Worldwide Effects of Multiple Nuclear Weapons Detonations," as follows:

"Thus, although the principal findings of this report are encouraging in the sense that they indicate that *Homo sapiens* — but not necessarily his civilization — would survive a major nuclear exchange, this report further underscores the urgency of halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons and, as soon as possible, reducing the world's nuclear arsenal."

Such an assessment must be periodically reexamined as military technology in nuclear, biological, chemical, and environmental warfare continues to be developed, mostly in secret, by many scientifically sophisticated nations. At present, most experts agree that an all-out nuclear war could extinguish the cultural lamp which has been entrusted to the university. John Kenneth Galbraith has put it quite eloquently: "There will be no education; the cultural heritage of one thousand years will be gone. Let this be a thought every time you pass a university, enter an art gallery or a museum."[2]

About forty years ago, before most of today's students were born, a unique event occurred: matter was transformed into energy by human design. The subsequent and unprecedented destruction of Nagasaki and Hiroshima in August, 1945, made clear that this new scientific capability is far more than a fascinating physical principle. It represents a fundamental discontinuity in human history, comparable only to the stage when our species first mastered chemical energy in the form of fire. While our understanding of chemical energy evolved over thousands of years, the sophisticated technology of nuclear destruction has been achieved in our lifetime, and has developed more rapidly than our political, social, and legal institutions can adapt to it. A few years after fabricating fission reactors and fission explosives, we were able to simulate the energy mechanisms of the sun on our own planet, in the form of a hydrogen bomb. With both fission and fusion fueling our destructive devices, we began measuring the yield of our bombs in megatons of TNT. (To see the quantum jump in destructiveness as we go from chemical to nuclear sources of energy, note that one megaton is equivalent to one million tons of the chemical explosive TNT.) While a fifty-megaton bomb has been tested, apparently most operational superbombs are in the one- to ten-megaton range.[3] (For comparison, the fission bomb that destroyed Hiroshima had a yield of thirteen kilotons, and the one dropped on Nagasaki had a yield of twenty-one kilotons.[4] Thus, current bombs are about one thousand times as powerful as those first atomic bombs.) Further, in the last thirty-five years, the technology of delivery systems has matured rapidly. The landing of two men on the moon and their safe return is a demonstration of the so-

[2] John Kenneth Galbraith, "The Economics of the Arms Race and After," remarks from the symposium in Seattle, Washington, on the medical consequences of nuclear weapons and nuclear war organized by the Council for a Livable World and the Physicians for Social Responsibility. June/July, 1981, edition of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* pp. 13-16.

[3] S. Glasstone, editor, *Effects of Nuclear Weapons,* revised edition, 1964, U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, pp. 730 ff.

[4] W. G. Penney, D. E. J. Samuels, and G. C. Scorgie, "Nuclear Explosive Yields at Hiroshima and Nagasaki," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London,* Series A, 266 (1970), pp. 357-424.

phistication of that technology. It is hard to grasp all the changes that have occurred in our lifetime, but it is more difficult — perhaps impossible — to imagine the havoc and devastation that may yet greet us.

Our social structure, agriculture, economy, medicine, and industry are now so complex and interdependent that it is impossible to envision with any kind of certainty the ultimate effect of a nuclear exchange. Nor is it possible reasonably to estimate the probability of such a conflagration occurring. That probability involves many known and unknown parameters that are extremely difficult to quantify. For a recent analysis of this danger, I refer the reader to the book *Apocalypse: Nuclear Catastrophe in World Politics,* by Louis Rene Beres. Professor Beres identifies and analyzes three interdependent sources of danger. The first is a direct military confrontation between the superpowers — the United States and Russia. The second is the proliferation of atomic capabilities throughout the world, a process that appears as uncontrollable as it is perilous. The third source of danger is perhaps the most frightening: the potential use of atomic devices by terrorist groups.[5] Every year, the mechanisms of destruction are amplified and refined, while proliferation and terrorism go unchecked.

An anthropologist from another planet might well be mystified by our earth culture. Why does human society so quickly and fervently appropriate its scientific and technological skill for its own ghastly self-destruction? Why does the intellectual community appear so complacent in the face of the steadily mounting peril? What ideological differences among groupings of people can be so crucial and unresolvable as to justify devastation of whole social systems?

I do not pretend to be telling you anything of which you are not already well aware. But if you are like me, you feel your intellectual tools are neither appropriate nor sufficient for tackling such a grandiose and perplexing problem. Even in this elementary essay I feel uncomfortable attempting to formulate remarks about such a formidable subject. The serious and meticulous scholar naturally shies away from such an amorphous and unmanageable topic. It is also a frightening, emotionally unpleasant, and aesthetically repulsive area of study. As John Kenneth Galbraith points out, "The mind resists involvement with horror as, in a normal person, it resists preoccupation with death. And in consequence we leave the issue of nuclear arms, their control and

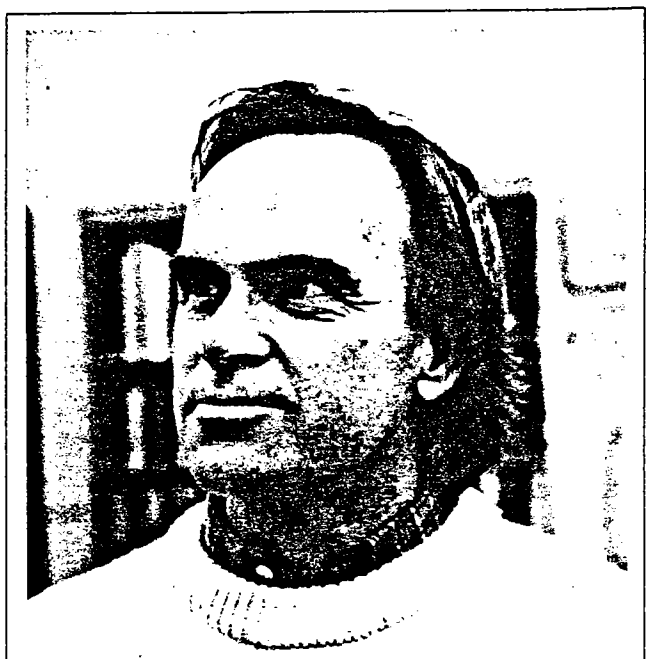

PHOTO: KIMBERLEY KAVISH

John Ernest

their consequences, to the men who make horror their everyday occupation. It is reckless, even fatal, delegation of power" (see footnote 3).

I would like to ask my fellow academics to overcome their natural annoyance and disdain for such a broad question; and their understandable revulsion to contemplating the consequences of nuclear war, to think for a few moments about the relevance of their expertise and research to this issue. I would also like them to consider the possible role the great universities could play in developing serious and systematic educational and research programs which would have a constructive impact on our predicament. What aspects of our physical and social sciences, of our literature and arts, can contribute to a new, less dangerous direction in international development?

An assessment of the role of the university in ad-

[5] Recently it was reported that a former Central Intelligence Agency agent was able to have twenty tons of plastic explosives surreptitiously manufactured in this country, and then shipped, disguised as oil drums, to Libya for use by terrorists. (*The New York Times* news service article by Phillip Taubman, August 30, 1981.) In a recent speech marking the twelfth anniversary of his rule, the Libyan leader, Colonel Moammar Khadafy, threatened: "If the United States attacks us in the Gulf of Sidra, we will attack their rockets and nuclear bases, even if that caused a nuclear catastrophe – and the Americans will be responsible for that" (United Press International article, September 2, 1981). How will Khadafy behave if and when he acquires a primitive fission bomb? He has made no secret of his attempts to secure nuclear weapons. See "A Nuclear Bomb for Libya?" by Joseph V. R. Micallef, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* August/September, 1981 (Vol. 37, No. 7), pp. 14-15.

vancing world peace is long overdue. Many serious scholars, among them David Saxon, George Kennan and Andrei Sakharov, are expressing grave concern over the lack of systematic and imaginative programs to understand and prevent the coming holocaust. Nine years after Hiroshima, Albert Einstein still had not seen the focusing of intellectual resources in response to this new reality. In 1954 he said, "The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe."[6] More recently, in 1975, the Russian nuclear physicist Andrei Sakharov wrote in *My Country and the World*, "The unchecked growth of thermonuclear arsenals and the buildup toward confrontation threaten mankind with the death of civilization and physical annihilation. The elimination of that threat takes unquestionable priority over all other problems in international relations." Still more recently, in May, 1981, the scholar and diplomat George Kennan pleaded that we ". . . neglect nothing — no effort, no unpleasantness, no controversy, no sacrifice — which could conceivably help to preserve us from committing this supreme and final folly."[7] Kennan, after reviewing the various warnings, from Einstein to Dwight Eisenhower, describes our drift toward catastrophe as follows:

"Look at the record. Over all these years the competition in the development of nuclear weaponry has proceeded steadily, relentlessly, without the faintest regard for all these warning voices. We have gone on piling weapon upon weapon, missile upon missile, new levels of destructiveness upon old ones. We have done this helplessly, almost involuntarily: like the victims of some sort of hypnotism, like men in a dream, like lemmings heading for the sea" (see footnote 7).

Society is beginning to look to the university for some guidance out of our predicament. In a letter to University of California President David Saxon, dated June 15, 1981, California's Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., wrote:

"The most constant and immediate threat that confronts us is the ever-present danger of nuclear war.

"The intellectual and moral strengths for our institutions of higher learning must be brought to bear directly on these matters. . . . The university should devote at least a small portion of its considerable resources to this crucial research. Specifically, this great university should make a tangible commitment to investigate ways to reduce the absolute numbers of nuclear weapons in the world and to decrease the risk of nuclear war. Research conducted in the crucible of the university can provide new approaches to the problems of conflict among nations and unmet basic human needs."

The purpose of Governor Brown's letter was to submit to President Saxon a draft proposal for a University of California Center for Global Security and Cooperation, which would incorporate both teaching and research. An evaluation of the feasibility of that proposal should involve a review of the current interests and activities on each campus, as well as an analysis of what specific types of research programs are most likely to be productive. While the current deliberations will involve choosing an appropriate campus for establishing such a Center for Global Security and Cooperation, we will need a full network of researchers and scholars throughout the University of California system — and beyond — to bring sufficient intellectual power to bear on this intractable problem. I hope the debate on this center will lead to useful contact between concerned scientists and scholars, both in and out of the university. The first critical stage will require posing the question in an objective, nondogmatic, nonpolitical, concrete formulation suitable for a university research effort. Furthermore we must be careful not to allow that formulation to incorporate a narrow paradigm, for the university must be free to examine the situation afresh, from a broad global and historical perspective, free of political rhetoric, unexamined assumptions, or personal preconceptions.

The scientific mission of the university is intrinsically international in scope, and an emphasis on this global perspective may itself be a significant dynamic in the building of a stable peace. Progress in arms control measures may depend on substantial increases in international communication, cooperation, and trust, which might require additional carefully negotiated economic, scientific, and cultural treaties, as well as other less formal peace-keeping mechanisms.

Significant arms reduction will require the

[6] Albert Einstein made this oft-quoted statement toward the end of his lifetime. It is so important that I feel it cannot be overquoted.

[7] Speech at the Albert Einstein Award Ceremony in Washington, D.C., May 19, 1981 (Washington *Post*, p. C-3, May 24, 1981).

strengthening of the global fabric woven from such threads as trade, news media networks, multinational corporations, telecommunications, airlines, science, art, tourism, religious and other nongovernmental international organizations, the World Bank, the United Nations, and agricultural, technological, and energy interdependence. Global problems such as hunger, poverty, resource depletion, overpopulation, and pollution place stress on the global fabric. When the fabric is examined systematically, we may find weak spots that are likely to rend. We also may be able to suggest some threads that will strengthen the fabric and help mend those tears. Indeed, the very process of working on specific global problems such as hunger or pollution has, as a secondary benefit, the creation of new transnational threads. If we can avoid disaster while this global fabric is being woven, eventually it will become sufficiently strong that nations will no longer need to rely on arms for their economic and political security. At that critical point enormous resources will be released for solving real global problems, and we can face the future with some optimism.[8]

The Nobel laureate, Andrei Sakharov, claims that increased international communication and travel is an important precondition for peace. In an appeal published widely in this country, he stated: "The equivalent of thirteen million tons of TNT concentrated into forty to fifty thousand thermonuclear and nuclear charges threatens the very existence of mankind, or at least of civilization."[9] Sakharov then proceeds to describe his own proposals.

"The government of the USA, the government of the USSR, and all members of the UN ought to undertake a wide-ranging joint program to peaceably combat the economic and social problems of the Third World countries, taking into account their specific character and their national traditions; and this should be done for the sake of peace on earth and not for influence, profit, or cheap raw materials. . . . This proposal, one of many possible, is only an example of an exceedingly serious, common problem. The most important conditions for international trust and security are the openness of society, the observation of the civil and political rights of man — freedom of information, freedom of religion, freedom to choose one's country of residence (that is, to emigrate and return freely), freedom to travel abroad, and freedom to choose one's residence within the country."

If further analysis confirms the importance of open communication and travel, then treaties (and subsidies) designed to foster such interchange should be given higher priority. As Sakharov points out, "the number of tourists from the USSR going abroad is less than that of little Denmark and, like our tourists abroad, foreigners here are deprived of the opportunity to speak freely with people" (see footnote 9). Facilitating educational, cultural, and artistic exchange is an appropriate function of an academic institution. Indeed, the university should be a model of international cooperation, in which science, the arts, and the humanities contribute to a growing planetary culture which itself may be the most critical ingredient of international stability.

To give a specific example, I would suggest that we devise a major ongoing seminar or other forum involving both American and Russian faculty and students, and other international figures as required, that would employ the latest technology of satellite telecommunications (as well as actual interchange whenever possible). Such direct or "horizontal" communication would be an exciting and innovative way of getting at the basis of the fears and disagreements among nations that appear important enough to justify a dangerous and costly arms race. Agreements should be negotiated to insure that large numbers of students from all participating countries would be given an opportunity to see and hear these discussions. Whenever possible, debates on specific issues could be televised to a broader audience. Although I recognize the difficulties are enormous, I would like to see the University of California develop such a cooperative venture with the University of Moscow. Experts in the area of languages, literature, communication, and international education could help in devising a feasible proposal. I do not know if financial support could be found for such a major educational project.

Another Russian Nobel laureate, Peter Kapitza, has considered cooperative efforts to solve global problems in his book, *Experiment, Theory, Practice:*

"There is no doubt that the need to solve global problems on an international scale will assist in

[8] This paragraph was added to my first draft after stimulating discussions with the futurist and Center Fellow John Platt. He has convinced me of the importance of multinational corporations and nongovernmental international organizations in peace-keeping mechanisms. I am to blame, however, for the threadbare metaphor of "fabric."

[9] Andrei Sakharov, "How to Preserve World Peace," *Parade Magazine*, August 16, 1981.

finding ways for peaceful coexistence and disarmament. When a shortage of energy and raw materials emerges on a global scale and begins to exact an adverse effect on the living standards of mankind, there is no choice but to disarm, because the risk of death from aggression becomes less real than the danger associated with a shortage of material resources. And since the solution of global problems requires an atmosphere of close international cooperation, all people will find themselves as neighbors facing a common enemy — the impending global crisis, which makes them forget all quarrels and join forces for a common struggle."

The considerable new knowledge developing around the embryonic field of ecology, particularly at the University of California, is most relevant here. The ultimate environmental impact report is the one that accurately describes the impact of various possible nuclear wars on the delicate balance of our biosphere, atmosphere, and geosphere. We need considerably more accurate knowledge of the environmental effects of each new military development. Wolfgang Panofsky of Stanford University comments in his book *Arms Control and SALT II* that there is a curious inconsistency in our concern for the environment:

"Man's efforts to control and regulate the deleterious effects of technology seem to operate under contrasting standards when applied to peace versus war. When appraising the safety of commercial nuclear power reactors, for instance, risks are attacked by some as being unacceptable if the chance of a reactor accident — which might kill several thousand people — were larger than one part in a million years. To apply a similar estimate to nuclear war is clearly a hopeless task, but few would be optimistic enough to estimate that the chances of such a holocaust which might kill tens of millions rather than thousands of people would be smaller than that figure. The fallout from past nuclear weapons tests has delivered a larger integrated radiation dose to the public than the worst conceivable outcome of the Three Mile Island reactor failure in Pennsylvania could have generated."

Environmental studies and international relations are only two obvious examples of disciplines with much to contribute. Our university is more than a social science institute. Our library contains the literary expressions and the religious and philosophical insights of thousands of years of civilization. The awesome and frightening nature of this precarious moment in history cannot help but make us consider once again the nature of man and the significance (or insignificance) of this relatively short span of culture on a speck in the universe. We simply do not know whether this precious body of accumulated human consciousness is still in its infancy, or about to remove itself permanently from the planet. Further, we have no way of knowing whether we are the guardians of the only form of consciousness in the universe. This terrifying reality must have its impact on the humanities and, conversely, the accumulated wisdom of the ages surely must offer some counsel for our bewildered generation.

Can the human spirit, living daily under a Damoclean sword that at any moment could cut away its cultural heritage, find adequate ways of expressing its anguish and hope in contemporary literature, drama, art, and music? The spectrum of intellectual and creative activity at the university is broad, and yet I cannot imagine a discipline which does not have the potential of contributing to international cooperation and communication, or to a deeper understanding of the social, economic, political, cultural, historical, and psychological roots of our current predicament.

If there is a viable solution — and we have no choice but to proceed on that assumption — it will probably require unprecedented and painful revisions in our political and economic institutions, our standard of living, and in our world view and philosophical orientation. Each researcher and scholar will be able to contribute to only one component of that cultural metamorphosis. Yet the discussion of the total problem, in all its aggravating complexity and depth, must begin before the issues can be clarified and defined precisely enough to attack them in a systematic manner and to "subcontract" specific projects to particular disciplines.

One cannot help but be skeptical that a sufficiently radical transformation of the interactions of nation-states can occur. While I share some of that skepticism, I also believe that the psychological stress and pressure of the threat of cultural annihilation is a powerful catalyst for change. When the economic and social conditions are ripe, and the intellectual and political leadership is present, major institutional changes do occur. Little over two hundred years ago, thirteen small post-colonial states, having borders, standing armies, tariffs, and

different religions found that they had sufficient common interests to create a new political fabric which not only eliminated most military action among them, but produced an exemplary democratic governmental structure. And distances, measured in the time it took to communicate or travel, were larger between the colonies than they are now between nations.

I am not suggesting that we look to the federalist concepts as a model for our current task. The situations are not equivalent. My point is only that total skepticism concerning the possibility of significant structural change is unjustified and harmful. The federalists, like us, were greatly challenged by the conditions of their time, and with intelligence, imagination, and courage, they produced a remarkably successful solution. Their efforts should serve as inspiration and encouragement to begin constructive planning for a new world order. Ours, like theirs, is a time of disorder, but also of opportunity. What they did with their opportunity is now history. What we do with ours will determine whether we have a history.

Remarkable changes have occurred in our lifetime. China, with a population of almost a billion has, in a decade, changed from a major enemy of the United States (in the Korean war) to a friendly Communist country striving to improve trade and communication with the West. Germany and France, mortal enemies in the two World Wars, now find themselves together in a military/political alliance (NATO) and an economic/political alliance (the Common Market).

Given the unprecedented threat of total devastation for all participants in a nuclear exchange, significant change is not only possible but indispensable to cultural survival. But fear by itself is paralyzing. Planning and hope are also critical spurs to change. While still bound in the cocoon of an obsolete war system, we must begin to imagine and design the most magnificent future we can. If we can avoid disaster, we can anticipate an exciting metamorphosis as we enter the twenty-first century.

Will our involvement in a question as complicated and controversial as peace and disarmament once again politicize the university? Is this a purely political issue which the campus should carefully avoid? Of course the topic of security — personal, national, and international — will always be an integral part of politics. But is that a valid reason for the university not to study the most urgent problem of our time? To rely exclusively on political action is to presume that the phenomenon is well understood and a solution known. There are numerous topics such as resource and population dynamics, communication geography, human social behavior, international law, and trade which demand extensive objective investigation.

Politicians always tell the voters of their desire to work for peace, and that is undoubtedly their sincere intention. Andrei Sakharov who, as a Russian dissident, has little reason to trust either the Russian or American leaders, has recently said, "Today, both Reagan and Brezhnev, as individuals, alone with themselves, undoubtedly want peace for their peoples, their loved ones, for all the people on earth. This I sincerely believe" (see footnote 9).

The national interests of both the United States and Russia would be served by finding a negotiated alternative to the terrifying military buildup. Except for Central Europe, Russia and the United States will experience the greatest devastation and horror from any mistake or miscalculation. In addition, both of their economies suffer from the diversion of capital from the civilian-industrial sector to the military. We have been investing about five to eight per cent of our gross national product in military development; Japan, for example, invests less than one per cent. Ironically, Russia and the United States, the former allies, are purchasing military power at the cost of civilian economic strength, while our former enemies, Japan and Germany, continue to invest in modernizing their civilian industrial plants. We have missed our opportunity to become the world's automobile supplier, and instead have entered the business of providing high technology military hardware to Third World nations.

President Ronald Reagan called in September, 1981, for spending more than $1.6 trillion over the next five years in the largest military buildup in U.S. history. If we can imagine using such a large sum for that purpose, we can also imagine its potential uses in our civilian economy or in other programs designed to achieve international stability.[10] President Reagan and future Presidents will find it extremely difficult to maintain minimal social services

[10] We allocate enormous resources to developing and producing these terrifying weapons in the hope that they will never be used. But what are we spending to insure they will not be used? A reasonable formula might be to spend two dollars to prevent their use (by mounting a large-scale effort to build a safe and peaceful world order) for every one dollar we spend on armaments. This would involve a most unlikely change of budgetary priorities. The projected funding of $1.5 to two million dollars a year for a University of California Center for Global Security and Cooperation is but a minute fraction of the budget for the University of California Weapons Laboratories.

ILLUSTRATION: YUVAL GOLAN

and also balance the budget while continuously raising the ante in the nuclear poker game. The Russians and Eastern Europeans suffer from a weak civilian economy and an increasingly irksome shortage of food and other consumer products. The Soviet people are now girding themselves for a third straight year of grain shortages. Can anyone doubt that both the government of the USSR and the United States sincerely wish to be free of the economic and psychological burden of the arms race, provided there are adequate global mechanisms to insure the economic and political security of each nation?

However, unless such alternative methods for generating trust and resolving conflicts are developed, I doubt whether any amount of political pressure or public protest would be sufficient to make either side break out of the arms spiral. The illusion that the search for peace is a *purely* political effort should never be used as an excuse for the university to avoid its responsibility for objective, rational, and creative analysis of our society's most urgent problem. In fact, world economic conditions and pressures are such that political leaders may be more receptive than ever to imaginative, well-researched proposals for increasing global cooperation, resolving historical disagreements, creating new world legal structures, or devising new trade or communication networks.

The president of the University of California, David Saxon, has expressed his belief that the academic community can and should accept this responsibility:

"We need to look not only at the terrifying symptoms of the problem — the continuing buildup of nuclear arsenals — but at its underlying causes as well. . . . Any catalogue of the causes of the arms race would have to include such elements as the social, economic, and ideological forces that intensify competition; cultural differences and how they alter the equation; and the whole ancient, tangled, discouraging complex of circumstances that work against cooperation among nations. All of these topics demand our attention because they are directly related to our survival into the twenty-first century. It makes no difference that each has been addressed in one way or another in one forum or another. There is very little evidence, as far as I can see, that they have been considered in as interrelated and coherent a way as they need to be.

"And, I would argue, it is from this perspective

that universities have something special to offer. Universities are superbly suited to the systematic, thorough, and thoughtful examination of hard problems, particularly those problems that demand study over a span of years."[11]

I have spoken with colleagues who envision the problem narrowly and technically as "arms control." From this perspective, they see a small role, if any, for the university community. Presumably, researchers would have to have a sophisticated technical knowledge of the weaponry, the levels of stockpiling, and the plans for deployment. Very few faculty would have the interest, the appropriate security clearance, or the technical training needed to become involved. Perhaps the reason the university has not attacked the problem of cultural survival as broadly and extensively as it might is the misapprehension that the questions are primarily technical cnes concerning arms control procedures.

Careful studies of arms control proposals are needed to insure that the delicate balance of terror inherent in our current mutually assured destruction (MAD) strategy does not become dangerously unstable. Such arms control efforts buy precious time to achieve a more fundamental transformation of international society.

We are all disheartened to see the long, arduous negotiations leading to SALT II come to naught, as East-West relations once again deteriorate. We deluded ourselves in believing we could avoid "linkage" of arms control negotiations with the complex realities of the international power struggle. According to Secretary of State Alexander Haig, "linkage is a fact of life that if we overlook, we do so at our own peril." We at the university must not make the simplistic assumption that "arms control" can be a technical study isolated from the political and economic intricacies of a complicated world. The task before us is deeper, broader, and more complex than can reasonably be encompassed by one specialized discipline.

Twenty-five years ago, following the development of the hydrogen bomb in the early nineteen-fifties, a few leading scientists saw that human society was facing the monumental task of eliminating war, and not merely controlling nuclear weapons. Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell wrote a statement, which Einstein signed just two days before he died on April 18, 1955. This manifesto was made public three months later on July 9, 1955. Nine other scientists signed it: Percy Bridgman, Hermann Muller, and Linus Pauling of the United States; Cecil Powell and Joseph Rotblat of England; Frederic Joliot-Curie of France; Leopold Infeld of Poland; Hideki Yukawa of Japan; and Max Born of Germany. All but Rotblat and Infeld were Nobel laureates. According to their view, nuclear arms control is *not* sufficient to insure survival:

"Here, then, is the problem which we present to you, stark and dreadful and inescapable: Shall we put an end to the human race, or shall mankind renounce war? People will not face this alternative because it is so difficult to abolish war.

"The abolition of war will demand distasteful limitations of national sovereignty. But what perhaps impedes understanding of the situation more than anything else is that the term "mankind" feels vague and abstract. People scarcely realize in imagination that the danger is to themselves and their children and their grandchildren, and not only to a dimly apprehended humanity. They can scarcely bring themselves to grasp that they, individually, and those whom they love are in imminent danger of perishing agonizingly. And so they hope that perhaps war may be allowed to continue provided modern weapons are prohibited.

"This hope is illusory. Whatever agreements not to use the H-bombs had been reached in time of peace, they would no longer be considered binding in time of war, and both sides would set to work to manufacture H-bombs as soon as war broke out, for, if one side manufactured the bombs and the other did not, the side that manufactured them would inevitably be victorious."[12]

Having once bitten the nuclear apple, we apparently have no way to return to a state of innocence. Our awesome knowledge about and capability for nuclear destruction will never be eliminated by a treaty. It is not just nuclear technology and military hardware but war itself that will have to be controlled.

Treaties redirect our testing, development, and production efforts. In this way, negotiations become an important part of our over-all military strategy.

[11] David Saxon, "A University Role for the Arms Race," an address given at the arms control conference at the Lawrence-Livermore Laboratory. An article based on this speech appeared in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 6, 1981.

[12] The full manifesto may be found on pp. 631-635 of *Einstein on Peace*, edited by Otto Nathan and Heinz Norden, Schocken Books, New York, 1968. This quotation is found on p. 634.

Impending arms control talks may generate more development, in order to have something to give away. Fear and suspicion of any restriction on arms may be sufficiently great that substantial other military expenditures might have to be promised to get political support for ratification of a treaty. As Wolfgang Panofsky points out in *Arms Control and SALT II:*

". . . the actual frequency of nuclear testing *increased* after the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963, and few would maintain that the evolution of nuclear weapons technology was significantly retarded by that treaty at all. . . . This example cites but one instance in which arms control efforts actually had the net effect of contributing to an increase in military technological activities."

A college plagued with football injuries may want to introduce new rules to make the game safer rather than consider eliminating football altogether. Likewise, the goal of making war less catastrophic by eliminating nuclear weapons may not be feasible or even desirable. Are the nations of the world hoping to eliminate the "doomsday" potential of modern warfare so that they can continue to employ military power to achieve their national objectives? In recent years both Russia and the United States have been frustrated by how ineffective and even counterproductive their military options have been (witness Afghanistan, Poland, Vietnam, Iran).

As tactical nuclear weapons continue to be developed, the distinction between nuclear and conventional forces becomes fuzzy. The recent U.S. decision to stockpile neutron bombs underscores the artificiality of restricting deployment of only nuclear weapons while continuing to permit conventional military action to be the arbiter of international conflicts. Neutron bombs are radiation enhanced warheads of about one kiloton (one-tenth the explosive power of the Hiroshima bomb), which have about the same radiation levels as the Hiroshima bomb and would be used in Lance battlefield missiles. The presumed purpose of such a weapon would be to halt a Soviet tank attack in central Europe.[13] Those who place their faith in the concept of mutually assured destruction as the ultimate insurance against a nuclear war may well be concerned, for our military planners clearly anticipate deploying relatively low-yield tactical nuclear weapons to counteract overwhelming conventional arms superiority in the European theater. If the United States employs low-kilotonnage nuclear weapons effectively against Russia's conventional forces, what is to keep the Russians from responding quickly with nuclear weapons of considerably higher explosive power? Certainly Europe, which suffered so in the previous World Wars, would be devastated. Any major conventional war between Russia and the United States in which either was experiencing unacceptable damage from the other would undoubtedly escalate into a nuclear exchange.

The implications of stockpiling tactical nuclear weapons corroborates the position taken by Russell and Einstein in 1955. The goal of avoiding nuclear warfare by nuclear arms control — without a radical transformation of our international order that makes conventional warfare obsolete as well — appears hopeless. The plans to incorporate the neutron bomb into our military strategy underscore the political, economic, and psychological conditions fueling the arms race. This is *not* an argument for curtailing serious arms control efforts. But in addition to ameliorating the symptoms of the disease, we must also diagnose the causes of our malady and try to develop and prescribe appropriate treatment. It is with this latter task that the university, with its full spectrum of scientific and intellectual resources, can and should play a major and perhaps even decisive role. Given the stakes, it would be irresponsible not to try.

Up to this point we have considered the role of the university primarily in terms of its research and scholarship. But we also have a responsibility in the area of education. The graduates of the universities of the world will mold the future as they work in politics, trade, communications, journalism, science, and technology, or just as ordinary citizens of their countries, as they travel, speak, write, and vote. Can we honestly claim that the education we offer them will be adequate for the portentous challenge they face? Or should our texts and lecture notes carry warning labels, like cigarettes and diet drinks, that the ideas being offered may be inadequate to insure their survival? Do our graduates comprehend just how precarious their future is? Do they understand enough of the elementary facts of nuclear physics to comprehend the nature of atomic technology? Or is their knowledge based only on superficial political speeches or short newspaper

[13] For an excellent demystification of this tactical nuclear weapon, see pp. 26-36 of Panofsky's lectures in his book *Arms Control and SALT II.*

articles? Do they know more about astrology than they do about the problems of the Third World?

These are not rhetorical questions. I do not know the answers. I would like to know how well our educational system is preparing our students for coping with the increasingly dangerous world they will encounter. I would like to develop a suitably designed instrument for measuring the depth of understanding of our precarious predicament and apply it to a random sample of college seniors. The results could be very interesting and helpful in pedagogical planning at all universities.

Designing a relevant curriculum, given the complexity of the problem, will be a formidable task. We will want to nurture flexibility and imagination in adapting to the quickening pace of technological change. Most of us would agree with C. P. Snow's notion that humanists need to understand the meaning of $E = mc^2$, and our scientists and engineers need to be cognizant of issues involving values and aesthetics. On the basis of what we may uncover in the survey of college seniors mentioned above, we might wish to develop an interdisciplinary course, possibly involving a number of lecturers, to insure that the problem of cultural survival is understood. Such a course should not be a smattering of facts but a reasoned, objective, focused presentation of the many facets of our dilemma. Any single course must not be looked upon as an alternative to insuring the relevance of our entire educational program.

Granted, we have precious few solutions to offer. But if we present the facts clearly, and encourage our students to think creatively, perhaps they will be able to break out of the paradigms that have shackled our thought processes. We will need to transmit the scientific results, the lessons of history, the value systems of past cultures, the geographic, political, and economic status of the contemporary world, and what few insights we have on the nature of human behavior. Further, we must be sure that they are equipped with the best intellectual and methodological tools available — from languages to mathematics, from historical analysis to computer literacy, from laboratory and communication skills to statistics. And after we have imparted as many facts and techniques as we can, we still must find a way, somewhere in the educational process, to give them the necessary courage as well.

We might be tempted to believe that a relevant pedagogical effort will compensate for an inadequate research program. As a result of quality education, perhaps the next generation will be successful where we have not been. Unfortunately the urgency, gravity, and complexity of our predicament do not allow us the luxury of waiting. Further, without a serious long-term research effort, the educational component cannot help but be shallow. We must develop coordinated, quality programs in *both* research and teaching.

It is difficult to be optimistic about our chances. We have no assurance from history that man will refrain from perpetrating this extreme savagery. Adolf Hitler has forever dispelled any such illusions. The disheartening reality is not that a small number of sadistic psychotics can become national leaders, but rather that large numbers of apparently well-intentioned people can become accomplices in such insanity. If this ultimate disaster comes to be, the design and development of the means to achieve the obliteration of civilization will have been carried out by some of the best-trained minds in the world. It has been estimated that over half of the world's scientists and engineers work on military research and development.[14] The intellectual and technological resources being devoted to perfecting the mechanism of mass annihilation are awesome. How easy it is to destroy, and how rare and excruciatingly difficult it is to create. A Rembrandt can be defaced in seconds. The Sistine Chapel can be demolished in a minute. A human life, nurtured and matured over years, can be extinguished in an instant. And now, a civilization evolved over thousands of years can be plunged into darkness in a day.

In writing to an anguished correspondent, Albert Einstein once said: "It is characteristic of our time that you, I, and so many others view such disasters as intolerable mainly because they would also extinguish the pure voice of art."[15] We are appalled to watch Michelangelo's Pieta brutally attacked by a madman with a hammer. Yet now we must live with the agonizing awareness that Rome, Florence, Venice, Moscow, Leningrad, Paris, London, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco can all be obliterated in a single day. If this occurs, the ruins will be a monument to an aberrant misapplication of the human intellect. The Vatican has developed a shield to guard the beloved Pieta from future attacks. Can the universities marshal their resources to devise a shield capable of protecting our precious and vulnerable culture? □

[14] F. Barnaby, "World Arsenals in 1978," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, September, 1979, pp. 20-24.

[15] *Einstein on Peace*, p. 593.

Retiring Admiral Rickover predicts world will 'probably destroy' itself

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Adm. Hyman Rickover, in his swan song before Congress, said the Defense Department should be abolished and predicted the world probably will destroy itself in a nuclear holocaust.

Rickover, pioneer of the modern nuclear navy, told the Joint Economic Committee yesterday that Navy Secretary John Lehman turned down a request to keep him on active duty, but gave him an office for a maximum of six more months.

The outspoken, often irascible Rickover, who will be 82 next month, officially retires Sunday after nearly 60 years in the Navy. His active duty status was extended after he reached retirement age in 1962 by every president since Kennedy. President Reagan called a halt to the custom in November.

Sen. William Proxmire, D-Wis. repeatedly lauded Rickover's service to the nation and invited the four-star admiral to appear one last time before his committee.

The nearly three-hour testimony was Rickover's final stand before Congress, where for decades he has had powerful allies. As usual, his uniform was a black suit.

"To increase the efficiency of the Department of Defense," he said in response to a question from Proxmire, "you first have to abolish it. It's far too large."

Rickover said radioactivity is an inherent danger in nuclear power and warned that atomic weapons will be used in a future war because history showed that nations use whatever weapons are available to them.

He said both nuclear weapons and nuclear power should be outlawed.

"I think we'll probably destroy ourselves," he said. "I'm not proud of the part I played" in fostering the nuclear Navy, beginning with the launching of the first atomic submarine, the Nautilus, in 1958.

The thrust of his prepared testimony was similar to previous public statements about the growing power of large corporations and their potential threat to American society.

"Through their control of vast resources, these large corporations have become, in effect, another branch of government," Rickover told Congress' Joint Economic Committee. "They often exercise the power of government, but without the checks and balances inherent in our democratic system."

He advised the panel to "assign a high priority to addressing the problems growing out" of this concentration of power. The actions of these large corporations, he said, "appear to be having a negative influence on our economy and society."

"If our free enterprise, capitalistic system is to survive, it is incumbent upon corporate executives to exercise greater self-restraint and to accept moral responsibility for their actions," he said.

In his tirade against excess corporate power, he singled out major defense contractors and their lobbyists — groups he has worked closely with over the years.

"Defense contractor lobbyists have generally learned how to get around" laws and regulations designed to prevent excessive profits from Pentagon projects, he said.

As a result of that concern, he said, he submitted recommendations to budget director David Stockman on how to improve efficiency and economy in the Pentagon. No action has been taken, he said.

Rickover said, "Preoccupation with the so-called 'bottom line' of profit and loss statements, coupled with a lust for expansion, is creating an environment in which fewer businessmen honor traditional values.

"Political and economic power," he added, "is increasingly being concentrated among a few large corporations and their officers — power they can apply against society, government and individuals."

RAINBOW SIGN

Out of Southern Black communities there came a folk song with a midrash on the Biblical story of the Flood—reading between the lines a message that is not quite in the text:

God gave Noah
The Rainbow Sign:
No more water—
The fire next time!

As the nuclear arms race quickens and theories of "limited" thermonuclear war come back into fashion, that midrash begins to sound like a prophecy. Prophecy in the classic Jewish sense: not a prediction, but a warning. A prediction, *if*.

I believe one of the most urgent tasks of the Jewish people is to help the world do what Torah commands: "Choose life, that you may live!"—precisely in the shadow of thermonuclear world war. In the shadow of the fact that humankind *could* now choose death—not only for itself but for the planet.

And I believe there are resources in our tradition, specifically in the story of Noah and the Flood, which would help us to uncover our own and the world's creativity, life-energy, in choosing life.

First, in a nutshell:

The story of Noah (Genesis, chapters 6 to 9) says that the Flood began on the 17th day of the second month and that all the living beings came out of the Ark to receive the Rainbow Covenant one year and ten days later, on the 27th day of the second month.

These dates have never been made the basis for any Jewish observance in the past. I am proposing that the Jewish community in our generation, facing the danger of universal destruction as no one has faced it since the Flood, make the eleven days from the 17th to the 27th of Iyyar, in the spring, a time of prayer, talk, and public action to avert destruction. This year these dates fall on May 9/10 and May 19/20, 1982.

A special note on the dates, which may at first seem like hair-splitting but teaches an important lesson:

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In the Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 12a) there is a debate over whether the "second" month is Cheshvan in the fall, which is second if you count from Rosh Hashanah as the beginning of the year, or is Iyyar in the spring, which is second if you count the way the Bible does from the month of Passover, Nisan, as the first month. The argument is never settled. The Talmud says that except for Rabbi Joshua, the sages of Israel think it is Cheshvan; Rabbi Joshua and the sages of the other nations think it is Iyyar.

That the Talmud cares about what the sages of the other nations say on this question is most unusual—but most appropriate, since the Flood affected everyone. In dating a universal event, everyone should have a say. So I would urge we follow Rabbi Joshua and the universal sages: it was Iyyar. And I suggest that in the spirit of this Talmudic passage the Jewish community reach out to everyone to join in commemorating the Flood of water in order to prevent a Flood of Fire.

What would such a commemoration mean?

At the start, some sort of penitential observance—perhaps a fast, perhaps a period of solemn silence, perhaps a recitation of our collective misdeeds (as distinct from the individual ones we recite on Yom Kippur), perhaps a ceremony of immersion in water.

In the middle, teach-ins and other discussions of the danger of thermonuclear war and of how to end the nuclear arms race and pursue world-wide disarmament; vigils, gatherings, visits to public officials of many nations, and other public affirmations of the need to take action.

At the end, a joyful celebration of life renewed and of the Rainbow Covenant:

Never again will I doom the earth...
Never again will I destroy all life...
So long as the earth endures,
Seedtime and harvest,
Cold and heat,
Summer and winter,
Day and night,
Shall not cease.
...This is the sign that I set
For the covenant between Me and you
And every living creature with you,
For the generations forever:
I have set my bow in the clouds.

To which we might append the words of Prophet Hosea, echoing the vision of a covenant of peace among all living creatures: "I will break *bow*, sword, and battle from the earth." ...As if the rainbow sign can be set in the clouds only if the bow of war is broken from the earth.

This eleven-day period will in every year include at least one Shabbos and weekend (sometimes two) and at least

continued

one full work week. So there will always be enough different kinds of time available to have communal prayer and observance, public gatherings, and discussions at schools and workplaces. (It should be noted that the second day of this period is Lag B'Omer, the 33rd day of the Counting of the Omer. Lag B'Omer is traditionally a day for special contact with nature. It should not contradict our proposed observance.)

In 1982, the period will come about a month before the UN General Assembly convenes a Special Session on Disarmament. So the timing would help Jews to address and understand the issues before that body—and perhaps to affect their work.

The symbols of the Flood are so well-known not only to Jews but also to Christians, Muslims, modern secularists, and those of other religions that these symbols would have powerful appeal to them as well:

The Ark, which in our days must mean the entire planet.

The dove and the olive branch, symbols of peace and life-renewal.

The rainbow.

All the arts can play upon these themes—painting and sculpture, dance and theater, poetry and song—so as to make them into powerful symbols of preserving the earth from nuclear devastation.

It is hard to deal with the threat of world destruction. Robert J. Lifton has written that it is a kind of "superdeath." In all cultures, human beings have dealt with the expectation of their own deaths by projecting some form of survival: through their children, through the memory of their actions "great" or "small," through the impact their lives make on the human future.

But if the human species were to be destroyed, this kind of survival would be cancelled out. Lifton says that most people, confronted with this profound attack on their sense of self, respond with "psychic numbing." They forget, avoid, the dangers. And thus they fail to act against the danger. They bring the danger closer. (The midrash says that Noah built the Ark in public so as to warn the people and get them to change their actions—to avert the Flood. They ridiculed him.)

One of the great tasks of religious life is to "circumcise our hearts," to clear away the thick and heavy covering that shields us from our fears and griefs and pains. To end our psychic numbing, in such a way that we do not simply drown in our grief but can transcend it. This is why we lift our own hands to put a shovel-full of dirt upon the graves of those we love the most; this is why we fast on Tisha B'Av.

Last summer, indeed, *Menorah* proposed that the period of Tisha B'Av, which is always close to Hiroshima/Nagasaki Day, be seen as a time for addressing the danger of the burning of the planet as well as the memory of the burning of the Temple. I still think these connections should be made, but we should take account of three problems in making them:

1. Some Jews feel that Tisha B'Av, with its freight of tragedy for the Jewish people, is an inappropriate time to confront a universal tragedy.

2. Some feel that the atmosphere of deep mourning on Tisha B'Av calls for an inward focus, not on reaching out to help transform the world.

3. Some feel that under the conditions of American life, the summer period of Tisha B'Av and Hiroshima/Nagasaki Day is one in which few Jews (except summer campers) are gathered in a focused, Jewish way.

The period from the Day of the Flood to the Day of the Rainbow is quite different on all these counts. It has a universal meaning that is rooted in Jewish tradition, and no other emotional or intellectual investment that might be damaged; it is long and varied enough to be used for both inward and outward re-making; and Jews are gathered in their Jewishness.

The great problem—and the opportunity—is that we would start almost from scratch with these days of the Flood and the Rainbow. They have no emotional bite—until we give it to them.

Yet it seems quite clear that if we must open ourselves to fear and grief when we deal with the deaths of individuals and the near-death of our people, so we must do when the whole human race faces death. And it seems appropriate to complete the task each year by celebrating seed-time and harvest, the Image of God in the human race, and our joy in the generations to come after us!

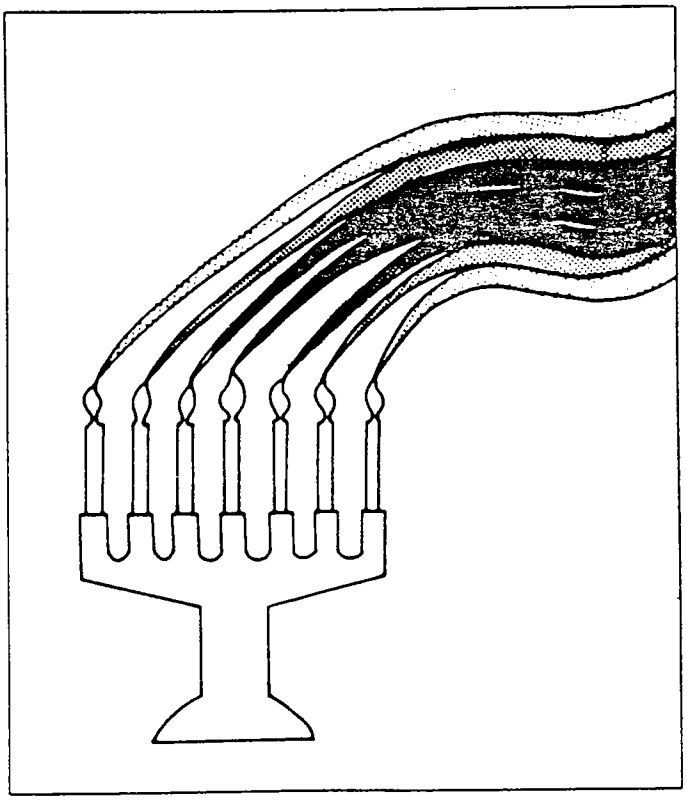
Menorah, along with the B'nai Or Religious Fellowship, has taken the responsibility to initiate this effort. We welcome others to the process. We will be glad to publish responses, suggestions, graphics, liturgies, references to readings and speakers on thermonuclear war and how to prevent it, ideas for increasing the public and policy impact of these efforts.

In every generation, Jews have acted to enrich our sacred calendar out of the concerns that face our living people. In *our* generation, one of the oldest passages of Torah speaks to us:

God gave Noah the Rainbow Sign. . .and we are free to write our ending to the sentence.

—AIW

The seven colors of the Rainbow and the seven lights of the Menorah kindle and rekindle each other.



HUNTHAUSEN'S ACTION

National Catholic Reporter
February 5, 1982

'Sign of new Catholic American identity'

By GORDON ZAHN
Special to the National Catholic Reporter
Boston, Mass.

THE NEWS of Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen's decision to withhold part of his taxes undoubtedly will come as a profound shock to many Catholics, even though they should have been prepared for this after his stirring message of last June.

The pattern of support for the government in all matters relating to what it chooses to define as national security and defense needs is so much a part of U.S. Catholic tradition that the very thought of such a protest will probably be difficult for most to grasp.

If nothing else, this is further proof that the church in America has come a long way in the last few decades. As a World War II conscientious objector, I have had a personal stake in observing the changes that have taken place, and frankly even I sometimes find it hard to believe what I am seeing and hearing.

It is probably too early to say, as some are saying, that the Catholic church has become a "peace church" in the same sense as that term has been used to describe the Quakers, Mennonites, etc. What can be said, though, is that we are well along the way to recovering the total commitment to the gospel message of peace and nonviolence which will make that description come true.

Historically, U.S. Catholics have always prided themselves upon their unquestioning obedience to the nation's call to arms. Fearing that they might be charged with divided loyalty, they have developed a kind of "200 per cent patriotism."

Catholics might have been critical of a given government and its economic or domestic programs and policies, but when it came to supporting wars and preparations for wars, they went along and had little patience with those who refused to do likewise. Sociologically one might speak of this as a reversal of self-identity. Instead of being American Catholics, that is, Catholics who happen to be American, they tended to regard themselves as Catholic Americans, Americans first who happened to belong to a particular religious community.

This has changed, and the change is dramatic. Parents as recently as the war in Vietnam threatened to disown sons who became conscientious objectors; now often the parents seek the information and resources that will help them persuade their sons to take that stand. Tax resistance had already been adopted by many. Now I am sure, Hunthausen's decision will persuade many others to follow suit. Certainly it will force those who, like myself, still have reservations concerning the effectiveness of that form of protest to reassess the arguments for and against.

Many will be scandalized by a bishop's refusal to give Caesar the coins which bear his image or, to be more correct, the coins which bear the image of the mushroom cloud which threatens the future existence of the world and all its inhabitants. (Would they be equally scandalized by a refusal to pay taxes which help provide abortions, one wonders.)

Hunthausen's act of courageous leadership deserves to be admired and applauded, even by those not yet ready to follow his lead.

As we head into what has been called "the year of disarmament," in anticipation of the UN's upcoming second special session on disarmament, he has made a profound statement by his action. Let us hope his witness will be heard in Washington and counteract the immorality of the Reagan budget, which proposes to escalate the arms race and pay for it by depriving the poor and disadvantaged of necessary social programs. Hunthausen has challenged the immorality of those policies in this most dramatic act of conscience. By doing so, he has brought honor to the American Catholic community.

Gordon Zahn, a sociologist, is author of books including German Catholics and Hitler's Wars *and* In Solitary Witness: The Life and Death of Franz Jagerstatter.

HUMAN RIGHTS & NUCLEAR WAR

Can Omnicide Include the Basic "Right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness"?

By JOHN SOMERVILLE

THE FIRST THING that must be understood about nuclear war is that it is not war. What we are dealing with is, first of all, a massive case of linguistic self-deception which arises out of the fact that we have gone on using an old and familiar word — war — to denote a new thing that has a superficial resemblance to the old thing called war, but which in reality has been transformed into something qualitatively different. The adjective "nuclear" is by no means sufficient to express the new quality; a new noun is needed.

The social phenomenon we have always called war, a phenomenon as old as human history, is understood by everyone as a form of physical conflict between large groups of people, after which conflict it was usually possible to identify a winning and a losing side. Most important of all, it was always possible to count on the fact that there would be human beings and a habitable earth left when the war was over.

To continue to use the word "war" misleads people into thinking that the same ethical, legal, political, economic or other judgments and attitudes they may have arrived at concerning war must essentially apply to the new activity, only perhaps in some quantitatively bigger way.

Since we now already have a series of nouns which denote successively wider ranges of killing — suicide for killing oneself, infanticide for killing infants, genocide for killing national or ethnic groups — and since nuclear weapons can now kill all human beings and obliterate all human creations in one relatively brief conflict, it seemed appropriate to call such a conflict "omnicide."

It is said of Confucius that when he was asked what was the secret of good government, he answered to call things by their right names. It is clear that the need to call things by their right names in matters concerning government was never greater than it is today, because it is precisely governments that possess the nuclear weapons. For example, would it not help all of us, morally and logically, instead of saying, "our government is preparing for nuclear war," to say, "our government is preparing for nuclear omnicide"?

Would the government be inclined to argue that it could win omnicide, or that the people could survive omnicide, or that the best way to avoid omnicide is to prepare for omnicide?

The big powers and their allies in the United Nations have so far refused to vote for, and have, in fact, blocked a resolution that would outlaw nuclear weapons and nuclear war, although, for example, poison gas is outlawed. Would it not be more difficult for any U.N. member to oppose a resolution that would outlaw omnicidal weapons and omnicide? Would anyone be inclined to argue that omnicide is in the national interest, is patriotic, or is economically profitable?

Surely these questions answer themselves. When nuclear war is called by its right name — omnicide — it must be acknowledged to be the greatest, most inclusive, and least forgivable violation of human rights that could possibly be conceived. In terms of ethics, whether naturalistically or supernaturalistically conceived, nothing could fulfill the requirements of absolute evil so perfectly as omnicide, which can exterminate all human values without exception. In a supernaturalistic perspective, could there be a greater sin than to dare to end the whole human world that God created, and to end it in the hitherto undreamed of sufferings and agonies foreshadowed by Hiroshima and Nagasaki, now multiplied billions of times?

Yet the supremely ironical fact is that today we live in fear of and in possible sight of the human committing of this crime so unspeakable that it did not even have a name, this crime so enormous it can be committed only once. The historical truth is that in the 1940's the splitting of the atom and the production of the bomb took everyone by surprise, and very few were prepared to think through its consequences.

"Our government has been on record since 1975 with public declarations of its willingness to be the first to use nuclear weapons. Here the problem is sheer ignorance of the facts rather than disbelief of known facts. Elementary education is lacking."

But we philosophers have always had a special obligation to think in terms of the totality: what is common to all its parts, its possible purpose, its possible beginning, and its possible end. To do this in the modern scientific period, we must above all put the results of the special sciences together and show their consequences for the totality. When we do this today, we see that the whole human world is facing a crisis of truly unique depth and urgency — a crisis that suggests nothing less than the problem of eschatology, arising out of the scientific-technological progress that created omnicidal weaponry as a political byproduct. Put in scientific-philosophical terms, what we now so desperately need, on pain of universal extinction, is a preventive eschatology.

Religious emotion, feeling, dedication, and faith must be united with scientific methodo-

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Dr. Somerville, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, City University of New York, gave a major talk at the Xth Inter-American Congress of Philosophy in Tallahassee, Fla., in October, 1981, from which this article is taken.

logy, efficacy and practicality, in order to prevent the ending of the human world. All of the social sciences and disciplines should be drawn upon: sociology, political science, law, education, psychology, what we call the humanities, and the immensely influential fine arts and popular arts, all forms of literature, drama, theatre, film, television, the electronic media, and the printed press. As omnicide threatens everything, everything capable of resisting must resist. Omnicide is not a class problem nor a regional problem nor a sectarian problem. It is an all-human problem, one in which all competitors must join forces in order to preserve the very possibility of competition.

Because of the urgency of the case, I think the short-term aspect of the problem should concern us first: to convince the governments which possess the omnicidal weapons, (a) that these weapons must not be used in any circumstances; (b) that they must, by treaty agreement, be abolished and outlawed. How can this be done? Probably the quickest way would be by a combination of education and political pressure. That is, what is needed first of all is to convince more and more people — students and the general public as well as people in government — that they must really believe the central facts which, in one degree or another, they already know but do not allow themselves fully to believe: that these weapons can and will end the human world by killing every single individual on earth in the cruelest and most painful manner imaginable.

St. Anselm of Canterbury long ago acutely pointed out the relation between understanding and believing: I do not understand in order to believe; I believe in order to understand. A contemporary way of applying his point is to recognize that belief is a matter of degree, so that the more deeply a person actually believes the omnicidal facts already known, the more quickly will he take the action that they call for. This means that the known facts must be repeatedly communicated by all the existing means and techniques of reason and art, affectively and cognitively, always truthfully, but always remembering that truth needs art as faith needs work in order that they may flower and bear fruit in human life. The truth can indeed make you free, but only on condition that you really believe it and act on it.

In 1975 I published a book called *The Peace Revolution: Ethos and Social Process*, in which I tried to set forth the relevant facts and the precise documentation. One of the central facts — in some ways the most important and incredible fact — is that the executive leaders of the Kennedy Administration in my country in 1962, during what was called the "Cuban missile crisis," deliberately made a political-military decision which they admittedly expected to result in the annihilation of the human race — the decision to bomb the Soviet missiles if they were not withdrawn from Cuba. We know all the details of that decision because President Kennedy's brother Robert, who was then Attorney General of the United States and a leading figure in the executive group that handled the crisis, wrote a small book about it called *Thirteen Days: The Story About How the World Almost Ended*, in which he tells the whole incredible truth; and the government has never denied his account. In fact, all our succeeding administrations have adopted the same policy, which, if we call things by their right names, is a policy of omnicidal blackmail.

Robert Kennedy's account was also printed in a popular family magazine where it was read by millions of people. But the strange thing was that neither the book nor the magazine publication caused any outcry of indignation, though the text demonstrated in the most explicit detail that the President and the other leaders "expected" the ultimatum they sent the Soviets would not be obeyed and that the resulting world nuclear conflict would be "the end of mankind." It further demonstrated that the only reason this result did not come about was the Soviets unexpectedly complied with the ultimatum. I concluded that the reason there was no outcry of public indignation at our government's decision was not only the success of the blackmail, but the fact that the readers could not really believe it happened that way.

In order to make it more real in the affective sense, I decided to write a play about it, a play that would include all the relevant documentation given by Kennedy, but would put it in the mouths of the actual leaders he had written about, in just the way he had reported that the decision was made. I called the play *The Crisis*, but then I found that no publisher would print it, in my own country. Perhaps the drama made the truth too believable. However, the play was published in Japan, where people are more ready to believe the omnicidal truth, and sold 50,000 copies in three months. It

"I do think your problems are serious, Richard. They're just not very interesting."

was staged in Tokyo and also in a state theatre in Sweden. In the United States I published it myself, circulating an edition which is now being used as study material in an increasing number of universities. I recite these facts not because my work has attained any observable success in changing the policy of my government, which is actually growing worse, but because my experience may throw light on problems that confront us in the psychology of belief. I should add that when I dealt with the problem of the Cuban missile crisis in a symposium at the XVth World Congress of Philosophy, the Soviet speakers emphasized that their government would never again yield to nuclear blackmail.

A similar instance relevant to the problem of omnicide is what happened to the proposal made on three separate occasions by the USSR, as leader of the Warsaw Pact states, to the U.S. as leader of the NATO states, for a mutual treaty that neither side would be first to use nuclear weapons. The first of these offers was made in 1976 from Warsaw, the second in 1979 from Budapest, the third in 1980 from Moscow. The fact is that they were all rejected by our government behind closed doors, without any discussion in Congress or any explanation to the public, the vast majority of whom are entirely unaware that the proposals were ever made, since they were so little reported by any of our media. At the same time, our government has been on record since 1975 with public declarations of its willingness to be the first to use nuclear weapons. Here the problem is sheer ignorance of the facts rather than disbelief of known facts. Elementary education is lacking.

A classic formulation of human rights in the American Declaration of Independence states: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government."

In other words, human rights include the right of revolution. In fact, this very right of revolution is the only one that is also referred to as a duty, for the Declaration adds that, when any government persistently violates the human rights of the people, "it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government." The actual violation of human rights which occasioned this Declaration and the revolution which implemented it in socio-political practice in 1776 had to do mainly with the right to liberty. However, it is not accidental but entirely logical that the Declaration puts the right to life first of all, since all else, including liberty, depends on life.

The conclusion is inescapable that people threatened by omnicide have more justification for revolution than people threatened by any other form of despotism. The problem of omnicide, miscalled nuclear war, puts all human rights in question, and gives all philosophers a common enemy. Let us all join, each from his own view, to overcome that enemy.

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