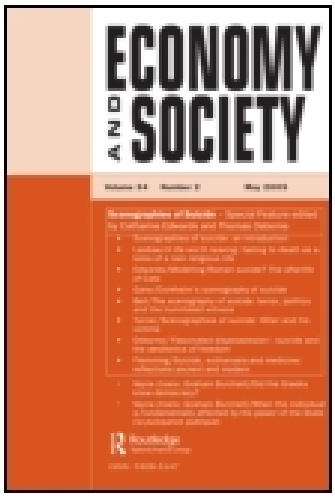

Economy and Society
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/reso20

Peace and political theory: a response to Paul Hirst

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Published online: 24 May 2006.

Correspondence and Controversy

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Introduction

In a recent number of *Economy and Society* (Vol. 16, Number 2, 2 May 1987), Paul Hirst offered the academic public his thoughts on 'Peace and Political Theory'. The subject of that article, ostensibly, was a comparison of Kant and Schell's prognoses for peace; its subtext, however, was a polemic against the alleged unworldliness of those groups and interests we have come to know as the peace movement.

This Response to Hirst takes up a series of issues raised by his essay, though only insofar as they relate to the peace movement: the Kant-Schell parallel is unremarkable and will not concern me. Respectively, I propose to:

1 Refute the allegation that 'in Peace Movement writing' there is to be found 'no political analysis of *how* to achieve nuclear disarmament among the Great Powers' (Hirst, 1987, p. 204, emphasis in original); as we shall see, there is a substantial body of literature on just this topic.
2 Contest and qualify the essentially *ad hominem* point that CND etc. repeat 'a politics of moral earnestness' (ibid.).
3 Claim that there are sound realistic, even Clausewitzian, rationales for unilateral initiatives.
4 Argue that while Schell's 'deterred state' solution to the bomb is challenging – Hirst believes it to be 'our best hope for a feasible nuclear peace' (ibid., p. 215) – and deserves a measured response from members of the peace movement, there are reasons to believe it is nonetheless seriously flawed.
5 Contend that if peace is more than the absence of war, it is also more than an agreement stitched-up by the governments of the superpowers.

My paper concludes with a sketch of some of the problems the peace movement will need to address in the future.

Economy and Society Volume 17 Number 1 February 1988

1 Achieving nuclear disarmament

Where Hirst's essay makes reference to the peace movement, its comments are without exception negative. He pays no tribute to the work of thousands of people who succeeded in, for example, alerting public opinion to nuclear war-fighting strategies and the extent of the arms build-up; who mobilised a mass campaign for reconciliation and against international aggression in dangerous times; and who ensured – despite the failure to halt cruise and the Pershing IIs – that governments would exercise due caution over other proposals that, without concerted opposition, might have otherwise proceeded willy nilly: for instance, extensive neutron bomb and chemical weapon deployment, or the manufacturing of the Longbow truck-launched ballistic missile (see Plesch, 1985.) Hirst also fails to acknowledge the patient, strenuous efforts of bodies such as END (European Nuclear Disarmament) and the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation to foster international links at a citizen level, to support independent peace groups in Eastern Europe (Stead et al., 1982; Köszegi and Thompson, 1983, Artman, 1986), to refuse to duck the linkage of peace and liberty (Thompson, 1983), and to air and respond to, for the most part undogmatically, oppositionist criticisms from 'the other side' (see esp. Thompson and Racek, 1981; Kavan and Tomin, 1983; KOS, 1983/4). Hirst does not even appear to recognise that the 'associationalist socialism' he canvassed recently in the *New Statesman* (Hirst, 1987a) has been a marked feature of the very movement he derides: without a liberal, tolerant and respectful attitude to diversity, without a pluralist and federalist structure, the peace movement would never have gained, and for five years sustained, the support it did. Yet to tax Hirst with lack of generosity, I will be told, is not to address his explicit assertions.

Chief among the latter is a quite extraordinary statement he makes in the second paragraph of his article. Agreeing that 'Intellectuals have had little trouble in demolishing arguments for deterrence as a stable condition, as a viable armed peace which prevents war', he nonetheless insists:

> What no one has been able to do is to analyse peace as a political condition, to provide a political alternative to an unstable deterrence which has lasted longer than we have a right to expect. I will be told I am ignoring the vast outpouring of literature from the Peace Movement. Well, I can say with some certainty that I am not. That literature proves that nuclear war is immoral, disastrous and too likely to happen to be ignored . . . I can find in Peace Movement writing no political analysis of *how* to achieve nuclear disarmament among the Great Powers, only

> pious invocations that it *should* happen and the belief that it will happen if enough people commit themselves to it. (Hirst, 1987, p. 204, emphasis in original)

Hirst, as we see, states, 'with some certainty' that he has not ignored 'the vast outpouring of literature from the Peace Movement' which, he claims, fails to deal with the political question of how nuclear disarmament by the Great Powers is to be achieved. (By 'Great Powers', I assume he means the official 'nuclear powers', which would include, but not be limited to, the two Superpowers.) I can say, with greater certainty, that demonstrably he has ignored this literature. Of the more systematic contributions Hirst might have considered one can mention: the multiplicity of concrete disarmament suggestions emanating from the 1975 Pugwash symposium (collected in Epstein and Toyoda, eds., 1977, esp. pp. 145–262);[1] Alva Myrdal's reformulation and synthesis of the nuclear free zone proposals codified in the Kekkonen, Undén and Rapacki plans (Myrdal, 1981, pp. 209–276; cf. Myrdal, 1976, esp. pp. 293–334); Johan Galtung's multi-dimensional approach to peace politics, entailing an integrated, synchronised set of principles based on conflict resolution, balance of power, disarmament and 'transarmament'[2] (Galtung, 1984) and Marcus Raskin's suggestions for the development of international organisations, including a 'revitalised' United Nations, to mediate conflict, promote dialogue and disarmament, and enhance security. (Raskin's ideas come complete with a 'Programme treaty for security and general disarmament', consisting of ten 'chapters' and eighty-four articles, to be enacted in three five-year stages commencing in 1990!: Raskin, 1986, pp. 193–268; anticipated in Raskin, 1982, pp. 221–2).[3]

None of the above projects and proposals are without problems, some serious. Reasoned debate about their credibility and chances of success is to be welcomed, a legitimate subject for discussion. But Hirst simply denies their existence. In so doing, he shows his very limited practical and analytical engagement with the arguments of the peace movement.

2 Morality and politics

One of the most familiar tactics of political argument is that which presents one's opponents as bleeding-heart idealists whose beliefs and precepts, however worthy, fail to address the stark choices only too evident to the tough-minded realist. The tactic mixes condescension and tendentiousness in roughly equal proportions, and is well illustrated in another of Hirst's comments on the peace movement. Here we are told that its 'pious invocations' are 'no

more than the high-minded stock-in-trade of the "liberal conscience" ' and repeat 'a politics of moral earnestness, in other words, a non-politics, which has been with us since the nineteenth-century' (Hirst, 1987, p. 204).

There are at least two replies to this sort of remark. First, moral convictions *are* an integral and perfectly legitimate part of peace politics; there is no reason, *prima facie*, to be defensive about them. Indeed it would be humanly grotesque in debating, for instance, nuclear deterrence, threatening as it does nothing less than genocide, not to invoke ethical questions and take them seriously. One may also note that it is precisely Schell himself, whose general argument Hirst appears to endorse, who makes moral agency the fundamental starting point of *The Abolition*. Schell is explicit that we must make 'a conscious choice' against nuclear weapons, and 'assume responsibility for the continuation of our kind' – i.e. '*choose* human survival' (Schell, 1984, pp. 3–4, emphasis in original). Certainly, this will be a hollow choice if that is all we do. An ethical stance is not a policy, is no excuse for a policy, and is no guarantor of a sane policy. We need to construct a programme to translate 'the choice' into tangible, political reality. This programme must be subject to the most stringent evaluation. On the other hand, a comprehension of what is morally right, permissable, intolerable, life affirming, evil, etc., in state behaviour is hardly tangential to rational politics (it can be tangential, of course, to *Realpolitik*: is this what Hirst is proposing?), which is why Schell presents the moral choice of abolition as the decisive, *anterior* condition of his peace proposals, and why countless others also feel justified in doing so. (See Schell, 1984, pp. 13, 71, for his reasoning on this.)

A second response to Hirst's attempt to rubbish the peace movement as moralistic is of a rather different order. When he says that 'CND advocates Britain disarming unilaterally and unconditionally, as a moral lead to the rest of the nuclear powers' (Hirst, 1987, p. 204) he actually appears to misunderstand an important element of the CND project.[4] In fact, a key objective of British independent disarmament is not moral. In relation to American weapons stationed on British soil or occupying British skies and waters, the point is to refuse client-status in bloc nuclear confrontation. In relation to Britain's own bomb, the purpose is to awaken our nation to the realities of her post-imperialist future (Britain's possession of the bomb impedes a sensible perception of her inevitably modest role in the world). Further, independent nuclear disarmament constitutes a rejection of cold war assumptions regarding 'parity'; a robust means of dismantling a nuclear state necessarily built upon secrecy, enhanced surveillance and the general restriction of civil liberties (here the peace movement

meshes with anti-nuclear-power campaigns); while nuclear renunciation is also designed to begin, or accelerate, the process of dealignment. As Thompson argues:

> Of course, Britain on her own cannot restructure relations between the blocs nor force the superpowers to disarm. Nor will necessary and honest measures of independent nuclear disarmament – sending back cruise missiles, closing US bases on this island, and cancelling Trident – have any substantial effect upon the 'nuclear balance' between the giants . . . Yet if my analysis is correct, the symbolic political effect of these measures could be profound, for the weapons and bases are there on our territory precisely as symbols of US hegemony and of Britain's submissive status within the controlling Cold War system. Their expulsion would be the first major fracture in that system. (in Smith and Thompson, 1987, p. 39; cf. 41)

The Cold War, and the military alliances that sustain it, have to be unmade, deconstructed, superseded. Nuclear 'defence' policy must not be allowed to usurp or distort a rational foreign policy. Members of CND and END believe that independent, 'self-propelled initiatives' (Mydral, 1981, p. 219) can contribute to that process. But let us suppose that one does not, as a matter of political judgement, believe in the short or medium term feasibility of breaking-up the bloc system; let us suppose that one believes this to be a highly irresponsible or implausible act to entertain. Even then Hirst's collapse of unilateralism into the gestures of moral rectitude remains highly questionable, for reasons I shall now turn to discuss.

3 Clausewitzian unilateralism

Over the last twenty five years a number of attempts have been made to theorise the contribution of unilateral initiatives to security and disarmament. The most famous of these was provided by the psychologist-turned-strategist, Charles E. Osgood in a book which has become something of a classic of peace literature, *An Alternative to War or Surrender* (1962). In that text Osgood coined the acronym GRIT – Graduated Reciprocation in Tension-reduction – to refer to a process through which governments are able to take independent initiatives which, in turn, encourage and promote a corresponding logic of reciprocity. Osgood himself is not a total abolitionist; his ideas presuppose, and are designed in good measure to cope pragmatically with, the dangers engendered in our nuclear world. At the same time his book contains insights that are crucial for an understanding of the wider peace dynamic.

First, he perceived that the arms race itself is a graduated,

mutual process, fuelled by independent steps whose consequence is the increase of tension, and that a peace strategy could be devised which, as it were, applied the same logic in reverse (ibid., p. 87). And second, Osgood realised that independent (unilateral) departures were not an alternative to multilateral or bilateral moves, but could actually facilitate them through creating the necessary conditions of trust to 'edge-down' the 'escalation ladder' (Osgood, 1979, p. 77). Osgood thus helped to break the sterile and completely unreal unilateral-multilateral conceptual dichotomy, just as he managed to see that in the building of trust and cooperation national self interest is not a necessary obstacle but a potential means to that achievement (Osgood, 1962, pp. 104–7).

An examination of the fifteen principles governing the operation of GRIT (Osgood, ibid., pp. 89–134) would take me too far from my immediate concern, which is Hirst not Osgood. Nor do I have space here to describe Etzioni's thought-provoking interpretation of the 'Kennedy Experiment' (Etzioni, 1979, orig. 1967), the negotiations Kennedy triggered through a GRIT-like unilateral process which eventuated in the 'Hot Line Agreement' and the Partial Test Ban Treaty. (A good summary of Osgood and Etzioni can be found in Crossley, 1984, pp. 27–39). To be sure, there is much in Osgood's schema which would be anathema to a member of, say, CND, including his first principle which requires that 'Unilateral initiatives must not reduce our capacity to inflict unacceptable nuclear retaliation on an opponent should we be attacked' (Osgood, 1962, p. 89). But that is not my point. My purpose in mentioning Osgood here is to insist that unilateral initiatives can be defended on instrumental, not merely moral grounds. Yet Hirst might retort: can unilateralism which involves *total renunciation* of nuclear weapons be pragmatically sustained? In the case of Britain, there is reason to think that it can, even accepting the bloc system and the military alliances that shore it up.

Consider, for instance, Ken Booth's rigorous defence of unilateralism. Reminding us that 'the god of strategy is called Murphy' (Booth, 1983, p. 45), Booth argues that nuclear deterrence, 'multilateral disarmament' and conventional arms control measures all require our critical reflection. Regarding the issue of nuclear deterrence, Booth contends that 'Western thinking . . . falters on the question of what happens if deterrence fails' (ibid., p. 47); if it does fail Western policy is committed to the insane resort to extermination and national suicide. (Schell nicely describes nuclear deterrence 'like a gun with two barrels, of which one points ahead and the other points back at the gun's holder', 1984, p. 54; cf. 64, 80). Moreover, there is little consolation, and precious little

security, to be found in multilateral disarmament negotiations. Multilateral disarmament talks are so often:

> an exercise in which (a) it will be demonstrated that the adversary is unreasonable and uncooperative, and so the continuation of existing armaments policies will be justified, or (b) an attempt will be made to manouevre the adversary into accepting a disadvantageous agreement. (Booth, p. 48)

Similarly, arms control measures are proving largely ineffectual, either bogged down in the casuistry of 'balance', or even counterproductive, as, for instance, states seek qualitative improvements in their arsenals to counter arithmetical limitations on brute numbers or categories (e.g. warheads, missiles, delivery vehicles) of weapons. In this situation, a reassessment of Western defence thinking becomes necessary and desirable, and 'hard unilateralism' a prudent strategy for Britain to adopt. Hard unilateralism amounts both to a posture of British nuclear renunication, defensible for the most part on instrumental and security grounds, combined with a clear 'conventional' alternative to nuclear deterrence. The commitment to renunciation rests on the premise that, as currently constructed, Britain's nuclear strategy is unreal and dangerous in its inability to secure 'a more rational, national and instrumental strategy for Britain – the Clausewitzian trinity' (ibid., p. 50). In effect, Britain's nuclear deterrent position implicates it in the Clausewitzian nightmare of war without limits – 'absolute war' – a theoretical sphere devoid of political influence and restraint. Or as Booth himself puts it:

> We still live in a Clausewitzian world as far as politics among nations is concerned, but we live in a post-Clausewitzian world when it comes to the potential destructiveness of our weaponry. Technologically we have something approaching the capacity to engage in the 'absolute war' which Clausewitz recognised as a theoretical construct, but did not imagine would be possible and could not conceive as an instrument of politics . . . 'War', 'strategy', and 'weapons' all take on a drastically new meaning when the adjective 'nuclear' is placed in front of them: the adjective negates the Clausewitzian implications of the word which follows, and in so doing threatens the very future of state policy – the thing which Clausewitz's strategic ideas were intended to further. (ibid., p. 51)

Because nuclear war would in all probability, and unlike wars of the past, be the end of politics – as opposed to the furtherance of state policy by other (i.e. violent) means – a military strategy designed to be an instrument of politics but which countenances its termination is incoherent. And nuclear deterrence *must* countenance such a

prospect; its very credibility depends upon it! The preparedness, the intention, the determination to use nuclear weapons is central to the doctrine of deterrence: without the willingness to engage in nuclear war, deterrence would be a palpable bluff able to be called at any time. If follows that:

> Since we cannot guarantee that the nuclear leviathan will always deter, even if it usually will, then it is obvious that the un-Clausewitzian notion of nuclear war is integral to the idea of nuclear deterrence. It must therefore be concluded that nuclear deterrence is ultimately un-Clausewitzian. A strategy which has no reasonable answer to its breakdown, except inviting the prospect of 'absolute war', cannot be considered to be Clausewitzian in its inspiration, however remote the possibility of that breakdown. (ibid., p. 52)

Booth's answer to our predicament is to suggest an alternative strategy for Britain which in its utilisation would not invite, thought could never preclude (nothing now can) a nation's total destruction. The objective of this strategy would be to deter war through non-nuclear means and, if this were to fail, to be then in a position actually to defend Britain. That strategy would not be predicated on anticipation of the Soviet Union also dismantling its nuclear weapons, or on withdrawal from Nato; it would not save money, or guarantee that Britain will never become a target for nuclear weapons. Nor would moral purity be the reward. All defence entails the willingnes, in extremity, to shed blood. Instead hard unilateralism would be justified in 'rational, national, and instrumental' terms and 'be based on a posture of conventional continental defence and a strategy of expedients' (ibid., p. 57). The conventional continental defence envisaged by Booth unashamedly includes remaining in Nato (while at the same time seeking recognition of Western Europe's special defence interests), and the requirement of national conscription. A 'strategy of expedients', complementarily, implies 'flexibility and mobility, dispersal and decentralised command; . . . good training, defence in depth, and heavy firepower packed in small bundles – all within a common "seek and destroy" doctrine' (ibid., p. 61). The aim would be to 'frustrate and wear down the offence, while leaving the defence with flexibility and choice' (ibid.).

Now it is perfectly true that Booth's defence alternative is in conflict with many strands of peace movement thinking. On the other hand it is not incompatible with all strands of that thinking. For example, current CND policy is to get out of Nato, on the grounds, first, that Nato is at present implacably a nuclear alliance, and second, that the political cost of remaining in Nato is

subservience to U.S. hegemony. However, CND members have long been divided on this issue and it is noticeable that CND's national council has been conspicuously reluctant to highlight this part of its policy, or prioritise it in public campaigning. Many members of CND, and the peace movement more generally, have argued that a non-nuclear Britain should, in the short term at least, stay within Nato and attempt to erode its nuclear strategy from within. Further, it has been argued that if 'a country like Britain tries to change Nato from within there is also less danger of a destabilising military association between France and West Germany, or of a bigger US military build-up in West Germany, which might arise from withdrawal of a major Nato ally' (Carter, 1987, p. 121). Transcending the bloc military alliances would then be construed as the end of a process, rather than as a dramatic, sudden rupture. To be sure, there 'is a paradox in a British government promoting dealignment and the ending of military blocs through Nato' (Alternative Defence Commission, 1987, p. 74) yet, according to a recent study, 'success in changing (Nato) policy would lead in this direction', (ibid.). National conscription, another component of Booth's package, would be morally repugnant and unacceptable to the highly valued pacifist wing within the peace movement, but is by no means inconsistent per se with the support of nuclear disarmament. And as for Booth's version of Moltke's 'strategy of expedients', nothing at all is settled; there is no necessary reason why it should not take its place within the overall context of the alternative defence debate.

We have seen that unilateralism is more than an exercise in moral gymnastics. Unilateralism is a political strategy, though not a panacea. CND's commitment to it has a moral dimension but one that also has instrumental, pragmatic uses and possibilities. Let us, by all means, debate the limitations of independent initiatives and CND's inconsistencies. But let us do this in such a manner that avoids absurdity and caricature.

4 Schell's analysis and alternative

While my disagreements with Hirst will now in many respects be evident, I do not dissent from one observation he makes: he is right to point out that Schell's *The Abolition* has been virtually ignored (Hirst's word is 'marginalised', 1987, p. 213) in peace circles, certainly in Britain at least. This is a pity. Schell's analysis is immensely challenging, indeed brilliant in its attempt to exploit the paradoxes of deterrence for the good of humanity. It deserves to be widely read and discussed. *The Abolition's* argument that while 'We are not condemned to live always in a world armed with nuclear

weapons, . . . we shall always live in a nuclear world' (Schell, 1984, p. 24); that 'whether we possess nuclear weapons or abolish them the terror they inspire will dominate our affairs and dictate the character of our political decisions' (ibid., p. 104) is discomfiting but probably true. Its contention that it is possible to have a 'deterred state' (ibid., p. 97) based on nuclear technological capability without the actual possession of nuclear arsenals, because 'the capacity for rebuilding nuclear weapons would deter nations from rebuilding them and then using them' (ibid., p. 119), is ingenious. The proposition that, in the domain of international disputes, it is safer to suspend global quarrels than attempt to resolve them, (ibid., p. 98), is worth our consideration. The argument that the necessary price to be paid for nuclear abolition, in the short and medium term at least, is a freezing and formalisation of extant superpower spheres of influence (ibid., pp. 99, 110), with change 'relegated to other spheres, such as the economic, the cultural, and the spiritual, and to domestic turmoil, including revolution' (ibid., p. 99) is counter to END's arguments for dealignment and erosion of the bloc-system, but, again, requires a response. Finally, one feels gratitude to, and respect for, a thinker who with such clarity has confronted the really hard question of how to achieve nuclear disarmament.

My own opinion of Schell's strategy for abolition, and the 'agreement' it enshrines[5] (ibid., esp. pp. 114–9, 139) is still very much in a stage of gestation. I shall not comment on his proposals here in any detail for the simple reason that I do not have as yet a detailed reply to give. Instead, I confine myself to three observations.

In the first place, there is much in Schell's book with which many members of the peace movement would concur. (Let me add emphatically that I see the heterodox Schell as very much a member of our heterodox movement). His rejection of nuclear strategies such as mutually assured destruction or flexible response, his condemnation of armed nuclear deterrence, and his commitment to complete nuclear disarmament, would all find wide approval; so would his support for such 'interim measures' as 'the establishment of a Soviet-American control centre for the exchange of information in a crisis; SALT or START agreements; a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons; the freeze' etc. (ibid., p. 132). More than this, it is presumptious of Hirst to claim that 'No nuclear disarmer could accept Schell's recognition of the deterred state' (1987, p. 213). Hirst, usually the indefatigable critic of essentialism in all its modes, commits the same fallacy himself when he speaks of disarmers as if they were a unitary, static entity with a common mental framework. The peace movement is manifold in composition,[6] its ideas still very much in the process of formation. In fact

there are many disarmers, including the present author, who would in principle be willing to accept something far less than the ideal, including Schell's alternative of 'weaponless deterrence' (Schell, 1984, pp. 119, 158) if it were the only plausible disarmament option available, if one could believe it would make the world safer by lengthening the fuse wire to extermination (as it intends) or if there were grounds to think it might – as a 'holding operation' (ibid., p. 129) – provide a viable basis on which credible policies for peace in the long term could be established.

But this brings me to the second observation: it is not at all clear that we can so be convinced by Schell's reasoning and proposals. Schell fails to engage with the powerful argument of END that it is precisely *the blocs themselves* – frozen in Schell's 'agreement' – motored by political, military, ideological and economic interests, which are now the primary cause of the nuclear arms race and the major cause, too, of a potential third world war. Formalising the bloc system, far from being an encouragement to peace, might actually set the ultimate political copestone on this adversarial structure. END's alternative – designed to tackle the political conditions generating the weapons – is dealignment, that is, 'a positive policy aimed at eroding the bloc system, rather than (as in non-alignment: P.B.) standing outside the bloc system' (Kaldor et al., 1985–6, p. 18). This alternative, to be the creation of diverse, national peace practices, has the goal of promoting: the reassertion of political solutions over technical and military ones; the affirmation of a pluralistic diplomacy with the right of nations to decide their own security needs independent of bloc diktat; the democratisation of security policy, in which regions, localities, and cities twin across the blocs, establish their own nuclear-free zones, negotiate their own micro peace treaties, etc. – all this beneath the formal apparatuses and bureaucracies of the state. In addition dealignment has the aim of fostering a sense of community among, and internationalism between, peoples determined to eschew unwarranted interventions in the legitimate affairs of any particular nation state (ibid., pp. 18–19).

Now, in contrast to Schell's detailed 'agreement' as he painstakingly sets it out in *The Abolition*, all this looks vague, skeletal, perhaps even somewhat evasive; in particular, the role of governments in dealignment remains unspecified, an important omission since, in the last resort, it is governments that will sanction or fail to sanction dealignment. (This particular nettle is grasped, however, in the judicious second report of the Alternative Defence Commission, referred to earlier.) But END's analysis of the bloc system seems to me correct, and the most convincing basis on which to start to construct a disarmament programme.

My third comment on Schell's position boils down to this. Even if one were to grant the desirability of the agreement he advocates – essentially, freezing the global status quo as the political condition of total nuclear abolition – it is very hard to see how it could be implemented without nations relinquishing the proper degree of sovereignty that Schell himself accepts must remain for the settlement to be tenable, while avoiding the ghastly possibility of world government. He argues that the abolition agreement:

> would be enforced not by any world police force or other organ of a global state but by each nation's knowledge that a breakdown of the agreement would be to no one's advantage, and would only push all nations back down the path to doom. (ibid., p. 115)

But this picture lacks credibility. Given the prominent role the superpowers must inevitably play in the agreement, given the added prestige and power it will confer on them over the blocs they will bestride like Titans even mightier than before, their position now legitimated and underwritten by global, quasi-judicial authority, it is surely likely that intensified measures of discipline, control, intervention, in a word, policing, *would* in fact be the unintended outcome of Schell's solution. A single world government one might avoid, but there would still be plenty of scope for an Orwellian dystopia division between Oceania and Eurasia (not to mention Eastasia). Schell's second stage in the 'resolution of the nuclear predicament', the stage for which nuclear abolition is the prerequisite, and in which 'the frozen world of deterrence would begin to melt and move – peacefully – as new, nonviolent means for decision-making were discovered and instituted' (ibid., p. 157) would be stymied by the very means sought to promote it. In short, one is back with the inescapable problem of the blocs – the entrenchment of that system cannot facilitate national sovereignty – and the consequences of superpower domination over them. (Furthermore, as Hirst also recognises (p. 215) Schell's agreement would in all probability fail to win the consent of many people and nations for whom issues of justice, liberty, national identity, confession etc. are, in their immediate experience, more pressing problems than what is conceived to be the remote possibility of nuclear war, and for whom loathing of the superpowers is the strongest political emotion. It is doubtful that the Polish government would, post-Solidarity, wish to certify its incorporation in the Soviet Empire, and even more doubtful that the government of, say, Nicaragua could accept a proposal which formalised its subaltern status in 'America's backyard'. What role would these and similar countries play in the agreement? What attitude should

be taken towards them if they refuse to accept its provisions? Is the agreement an impossibility without their co-operation?

5 Dimensions of Peace

A striking feature of Hirst's essay is its exclusive portrayal of peace as a settlement between states. There is of course good reason to accord this dimension of peacemaking some priority, inhabiting as we do a world in which states (by definition) control the chief agencies of social violence in the territories over which they claim jurisdiction. However, peace is a far richer concept and practice than state compact or covenant. Once we recognise this fact, the work of the peace movement gains significantly in importance.

As James O'Connell has noted (1985, p. 30 punctuation amended), the concept of peace contains within it a positive and a negative element. Peace is 'the willing co-operation among persons for social and personal goals (the positive element: P.B.) and the absence of violence – in the shape of direct physical, psychological or moral violence (the negative element: P.B.).' Or as he puts it elsewhere:

> The term 'peace' represents a precious historical and analytic concept: it embraces the sense of wholeness and integration of the Hebrew 'shalom', the absence of war of the Roman 'pax' and the benign tension of solution-seeking in the Chinese 'ping'. What it does, in other words, is to provide a term and conceptual content that indicate a dynamic set of social and personal relations that include security, co-operation and inter-dependence in mutually beneficial projects, respect for rights, adequate and benign communication, resolution to deal as far as possible with conflict, without using force or violence, and trust based on predictable reciprocity. (O'Connell, 1987, p. 16)

O'Connell writes of peace as an aspiration, as a state of being, as a process to which activity is directed (1985, p. 31); he also links it to the ideas of justice and freedom (ibid., pp. 32–3). True, one must be wary of the pitfalls of amorphousness. On the other hand, O'Connell's discussion is helpful in reminding us of the complexity of the phenomenon he strains to define: peace turns out to be a multifaceted idea and practice, embracing, but much wider than, the functioning of state agencies. This carries the implication that the building of peace must recognise and reflect this complexity.

Against the above theoretical background, what contribution to peace has the peace movement sought to make? The attempt to answer this question sensibly is hazardous for reasons I have already mentioned: the peace movement is not a monolith. Still, as

long as we realise that all categorical statements in this context will be simplistic, a few generalisations I hope can be permitted. First, the peace movement, its locus within civil society, has striven to influence and transform, through collective action, *state policy*. It knows, as socialists know, that radical concessions from the state require concerted pressure from popular forces; they are not given away like largesse. But the peace movement – accepting the wisdom of Brecht's observation (in 'To Those Born Later') that 'Hatred, even of meanness, contorts the features. Anger, even against injustice, makes the voice hoarse' – has endeavoured to do this without violence, without malevolence, without branding dissenters within the movement as renegades and traitors. In short, its practice as well as its objectives have sought to conform to that spirit of peace O'Connell defined above.

Second, the peace movement has attempted to change through its campaigning the *political culture* of the societies it has worked within. Among other things, it has challenged enemy images and stereotypes; attempted to reveal the links between violence against women and militarism; ventured to influence the language we use about one another, and the negative symbols we employ; questioned hierarchical structures within and outside its own organisations, and moved to transform them into democratic ones; affirmed the rights of the oppressed to self-determination.

The third objective the peace movement has tried to realise is probably the most profound one of all: it has undertaken to affect *human sensibilities*, to make the prospect of war on our fellows increasingly repugnant, just as, for most people in most countries slavery and torture are today repugnant. And sensibilities do change. A man who once laughed at a racist joke, now feels ashamed he did so. A person who once enjoyed eating meat, now recoils as he passes a butcher's shop. A woman who once accepted a passive status, is now adamant to defend her rights to equality. Some will say the examples are crass because they refer to individual subjects; there is a strain within the socialist tradition habituated to the idea that feeling and biography must be divorced from politics if vapid sentimentality is to avoided. But aside from the fact that sensibilities themselves are socially formed – recall Elias' (1978; orig. 1939) work on the development of manners – the peace movement has doggedly insisted on the heresy that feelings and individuals matter. Peace groups, strongly influenced by feminist, pacifist, socialist-libertarian and anarchist ideas, have resolved unapologetically to give credence to the social-psychological, personal side of politics. This has been achieved, within the peace movement (perhaps especially in the 'affinity groups' involved in non-violent direct action) through allowing space for

the emotions, through taking individual responsibility for wrongs we can right, through cultivating such attributes as 'empathy, listening, patience, sense of timing and imagination' (O'Connell, 1987, p. 13). More broadly, by eliciting – in poem, song, essay and a plurality of other media – compassion for those who have suffered the consequences of militarism, by inviting love and respect for the earth, its flora and its creatures, the movement has drawn attention to our common species humanity – Thompson's 'human ecological imperative' – and, if nuclear war comes, our common fate.

The above picture is plainly an idealisation. It neglects the frustration, the disappointment, the clash of personalities, the bitterness that are part of all human affairs. It one-sidedly omits to mention the groups that fell apart, the friendships that fell apart, the differences that could not be bridged, the quarrels over peace tactics and strategies, the boredom and impatience occasioned by countless meetings. But the picture I have drawn is not a fiction in a literal sense. On the contrary, my hope is that it distils and crystallises, however inadequately, key features which many peace movement activists will recognise as constitutive of their own practice, a practice devoted to summoning the imagination and harnessing the effort necessary to fashion a more peaceful world.

And so I think it evident that the peace movement, far from evincing the 'non-politics' of Hirst's gibe, was and is about a particularly radical, thoroughgoing politics, one aimed at the state, culture and sensibility. This gentle politics may fail in its ambitions, but the attempt to make it succeed has occupied many energies within the peace movement, inspired some of its noblest achievements, and transformed numerous human lives for the better.

Conclusion

My aim in this article has been to rebut Hirst's cartoon characterisation of the peace movement. A response to Hirst was necessary because to have left his argument stand unanswered in a socialist journal would have been, in effect, to acquiesce to it. On the other hand, it would be vain to deny, and few would deny, that there *are* problems with a number of practices, ideas and proposals emanating from the peace movement, though these problems are quite different from the ones depicted in Hirst's essay.

The very diversity of forces working for peace and disarmament, a source of invigoration and strength in so many respects, can also inhibit strategic planning. This is probably a consequence of *being* a social movement, as opposed to being a party or sect, with the ritualised disciplines the latter institutions normally entail; however

the diversity just mentioned does raise practical issues of some complexity. Hence, the radical, imaginative peace politics I tried to summarise in the previous section, does not sit comfortably with, though may not logically be incompatible with, alternative defence ideas – Clausewitzian or otherwise. It is also difficult to see how the issue of staying in or getting out of Nato will be resolved by our movement (it will of course be ultimately resolved by government).

Then there is the issue of alternative defence itself, and what systems are appropriate to different countries. So-called in-depth territorial defence – adopted in Switzerland, Sweden and Yugoslavia – is one popular model. This entails a non-provocative, non-nuclear deterrent and defence posture in which the strategic imperative is protection of a nation's homeland through some combination of a citizen army, local militias, decentralised military command, effective civil defence, and through maximising the topographical defence opportunities of the state in question. However the applicability of this model to Britain is a moot discussion point in the literature. For instance, the Alternative Defence Commission's first report, *Defence Without the Bomb* (1983), argued that in-depth territorial defence had serious drawbacks in the British case. It could, as with Yugoslavia (but not Sweden) lead to an objectionable militarisation of society. Furthermore, Britain's island terrain, her defence traditions, her highly urban and densely populated configuration, also all combined to militate, the Commission argued, against a territorial defence analagous to those of Yugoslavia and Switzerland (ibid., pp. 132–6, 142.) (Alternative defence, more generally, has been the target of criticism. Hence Clarke, [1985, pp. 4–11] has objected that territorial defence, be it in-depth or 'frontier-based' – the Alternative Defence Commission's preferred option –[7] is an obstacle to collective security alliances, is ill-equipped to deal with a concentrated armoured attack on Nato's central front, and may fail to act as a deterrent in circumstances where war is perceived as essential for an antagonist's survival.)

On the geo-political level, meanwhile, the peace movement has much thinking and acting to do. A realistic appraisal of the Soviet Union – Gorbachev, Glasnost, and the prospect of Geneva double-zeros notwithstanding – must remain on our agenda (see Mann, 1983, p. 203). Preoccupation with the Cold War must not blind us to other kinds of division which threaten our world with catastrophe: one thinks immediately of the North-South divide, or the conflagration that is beckoning along the fault of revolutionary versus status quo regimes in the Middle East. The vision of 'a global shift to non-alignment in which the abnormal bi-polar division of power gives way to polycentric or plural diplomacies' (Thompson, 1987a, p. 14) may well underestimate the possibility of

nationalist resurgence (see Freedman, 1980, p. 3). With these and other problems the peace movement will be compelled to grapple in the future.

Because thought is prone to fossilise into dogma, socialists and peacemakers alike, need their iconoclasts. Paul Hirst is one such iconoclast though sometimes, as in the article to which I have now responded, I believe the images he strives to shatter are largely of his own construction. At the same time, it must be obvious that in the days ahead we will also be gravely in need of *builders*; people and movements prepared to form the coalitions required to create a more just, more equal, and more peaceful domestic and international order. In this effort, the peace movement will continue to make its own distinctive contribution.

Addendum

This article was written in July–early August, 1987. If I were to write it today, I would certainly want to revise some of the propositions and emphases in section three (on 'Clausewitzian unilateralism'). That the December 8th INF deal has implications for aspects of the unilateralist argument will be obvious to all but the most doctrinaire. However I leave exploration of this issue to another place so as to avoid excessive alteration to these proofs, and because this will allow me time for further reflection.

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Notes

1 See, for instance, William Epstein's step-by-step 'integrated programme', linking nuclear and conventional disarmament measures. Epstein's sequence begins with what he deems to be a relatively easy step (a superpower agreement on an underground test ban), and proceeds serially to more ambitious moves (e.g. the proposal for a halt within a specified time period of 'all testing, manufacture and deployment of new nuclear weapons and delivery systems' [in Epstein, W. and Toyoda, T. eds. 1977, p. 173]). His programme culminates in suggestions aimed to reduce state military budgets, conventional armaments, and arms sales to the Third World. Cf. the symposium's closing Report and the proposals included therein, ibid., pp. 321–25.

2 'Transarmament' is the term Galtung uses to denote the elements of an alternative, decentralised, genuinely defensive defence system. Such a system, as he envisages it, would be located in a nation's own territorial space, and designed to protect that space through a combination of conventional, paramilitary and non-

military means. Militarily, the emphasis would be on locally-based though 'highly mobile, small units with limited range', allowed relative military autonomy in the event of a breakdown in national command co-ordination, and equipped with 'very efficient, precision-guided weapons with considerable destructive power but limited impact area', (Galtung, 1984, pp. 172–184, at pp. 175–6, emphases omitted).

3 Among some of the more interesting provisions of Raskin's Programme are the stipulations that on 'entry into the Treaty each nation will deposit X billion dollars in gold bullion into an escrow fund' (Raskin, 1986, p. 232); that the 'internal law of the respective parties shall be amended to include an oath by scientific workers which abjures them from doing research, development, and experimental work on weapons of mass destruction' (ibid., p. 233); that parties to the disarming process will incorporate into their national laws the Asian and Nuremberg Tribunal standards 'so that the destruction of innocent populations, the preparation for aggressive war, the use of terror weapons' etc. 'shall qualify as a crime against internal domestic law' (ibid., p. 237); that the 'military of each nation shall internalise these standards in their respective regulations and codes of behaviour' (ibid.); that 'Each nation Party to the Programme shall internalise in its respective laws a no-surrender clause which makes it a domestic crime to surrender against an aggressor nation' (ibid., p. 238); that 'each industry wholly or in part involved with military contracts will file an economic conversion plan' (ibid., p. 248).

On the principles and practice of conversion (yet another respect in which peace movement writers have sought to confront the practical issues of *how* to disarm) see the informative papers in Elliott (1977).

4 Incidentally, whether or not proponents of the 'freeze' – who do not advocate unilateral abolition, but are very much part of the peace movement – are to be included in Hirst's category of 'the high-minded' and morally earnest we have no way of divining. Three 'packages' for future freeze campaigning can be found in Prins (1986).

5 Schell's agreement allows for the retention, albeit 'limited and balanced', of conventional weapons; permits the development of 'anti-nuclear defensive forces' as a hedge against cheating; and enables 'nations to hold themselves in a particular, defined state of readiness for nuclear rearmament' (Schell, 1984, pp. 116–18) in case flagrant violation of the agreement were to occur (– one would then be back with old-style, armed nuclear deterrence).

6 For an indication of the multiplicity of groups in the European peace movement see Disarmament Campaigns (1987). The hundreds (thousands?) of informal or non-formal peace groups could not of course be included in this directory.

7 On the frontier-based option, see Alternative Defence Commission (1983) pp. 125–32. The ADC acknowledges some compatibility of, and overlap between, in-depth and frontier-based defence strategies.

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