Members’ Forum

Sociologists on the Seville Statement on Violence
Louis Kriesberg, Syracuse University

At the most recent Section business meeting, a draft of a Section commentary on the issues addressed in the Seville Statement was presented and discussed. It had been prepared at the request of the ASA Council and was to be sent to the Council. While those attending the business meeting generally supported the ideas in the commentary, it was agreed that it should be edited further and presented to all the members of the section for comments before sending it to the ASA Council.

The editing would be done by a committee consisting of James Burk, A & M University; Dana Eyre, Stanford University; Sam Marullo, Georgetown University; David Segal, University of Maryland; and Louis Kriesberg (Chair), Syracuse University. The commentary has been drafted by Louis Kriesberg with comments and suggestions by: Heidi Burgess, Mary Anna Colwell, Jen Hlavacek, Kurt Lang, Mathew Melko, David S. Meyer, Sam Marullo, Martin Patchen, David Segal, and Carolyn Stephenson, among others.

Please send comments and suggestions about the statement to Louis Kriesberg or other members of the editing committee.

The Seville Statement on Violence, written by a distinguished international group of psychologists, ethnologists, and other scientists is one with which most sociologists would agree. Its five major propositions are consistent with sociological research; humans are not genetically programmed to do violence to each other. Although war and violence are widespread, so are peace and cooperation; we need to explain variations in both. This statement provides a sociological

Media Misrepresentation of the Anti-Gulf War Protest
Sam Marullo, Georgetown University

When the Persian Gulf War turned hot after the standoff in the Arabian desert last January, the peace movement mobilized its resources in historically short order. Long-standing peace organizations and their younger siblings from the 1980s surge of the movement were relatively quick to voice their opposition to U.S. military intervention. Yet, as we all know, the movement failed to prevent the Persian Gulf War. In the process, it was disparaged and smeared by pro-military forces (particularly

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Studying the Soviet Peace Movement
John MacDougall, University of Massachusetts—Lowell

Many Soviet peace and environmental activists participated in the tenth conference of European Nuclear Disarmament (END) in Moscow in August 1991, which I attended. The conference was held just before the attempted coup. I did not have a chance to talk to Soviet activists after the coup, but I would guess that if anything, the popular support and independent spirit I observed before the coup have increased after it.

The term “peace movement” is rather discredited in the U.S.S.R. because the Soviet Peace Committee for years pressured thousands

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We encourage our members to submit articles on any subject that you feel is pertinent to Section members.
Deadline for submission to the next edition of the Newsletter is January 2, 1992.
Minutes of the ASA Peace and War
Section meeting

August 25, 1991, Convention Center, Cincinnati, Ohio. Louis Kriesberg, Chair of the Section, called the meeting to order.

Russell Dynes, Chair of the Election Committee, reported election results. Chair-elect: Sam Marullo; Secretary-Treasurer: William Gibson; Members of Peace and War Section Council: Mary Anna Colwell, James Hannon, Martin Patchen.

Jen Hlavacek requested that information accompanying the ballot henceforth include the candidates' statements about their aims or proposed direction for the section.

Elton Jackson, Chair of the Elise Boulding Student Paper Award Committee, reported that three papers were submitted, of which four were especially strong. Amy Hubbard's paper, "The Role of Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution Groups in Social Movements: American Palestinians and Jews and the Middle East," received the award. A certificate of recognition will be mailed to her.

Allen Grimshaw suggested that student authors be encouraged to submit their papers to journals, especially regional journals.

Sam Marullo, Chair of the Membership Committee, reported that the Section had the largest percentage growth of any section, albeit from a small base. Jen Hlavacek and Helen Raisz with Sam worked on recruitment. ASA members belonging to sections with related subject matter were especially targeted for recruitment, and the mailing occurred at the same time as ASA membership renewal requests. This appears to be effective and should be repeated.

"Teaching the Sociology of Peace and War: A Curriculum Guide" has been assembled and edited by John MacDougall and Helen Raisz. It is available through the ASA Teaching Resources Center for $10.50. It includes 23 syllabi. Helen Raisz welcomed further submissions and volunteered to help on the next update of the guide.

Jen Hlavacek, Chair of the Newsletter Editorial Board, reported that three newsletters had been produced. She urged submission of articles, letters, news notes from all viewpoints in the section: military sociology, international relations, conflict resolution.

Leslie Kurtz, Co-Editor of the Newsletter, mentioned Gideon Sjoberg's work-in-progress on human rights and peace. He encouraged Jim Skelly to contact a scholar in the USSR to write a piece about Soviet sociology.

Lou Kriesberg recalled the action at last year's meeting in which we endorsed the Seville statement and urged ASA Council to endorse it as well. ASA proposed a more sociologically-phrased statement. Kriesberg distributed a revised version and asked what the Section wished to do: adopt, revise, submit to ASA Council, or? David Meyer proposed that the statement be made in active rather than passive voice. Kurt Lang commended the revision. Jen Hlavacek suggested a pithier version, addressed to a popular audience. Kriesberg summarized the discussion as proposing: (1) a version to satisfy ASA Council and justify their endorsement; (2) a statement for news release phrased to address the general public; (3) a summary of the state of the art concerning social science understanding of the causes of war.

Martin Patchen observed that it wasn't only the general public who thought war an inevitable product of human nature, citing the example of an educated, well-informed, clergyman. Others agreed that "elites" as well as "masses" assume war to be rooted in biology.

Leslie Kurtz observed that we shouldn't be hurried into premature publication of a statement, that it might be a lengthy process and should be accepted as such. Kriesberg responded that ASA Council, however, needs something now. Kurt Lang proposed a committee be appointed to work on the statement. Allen Grimshaw proposed that the committee's statement be circulated to Section members through the newsletter so that those not attending this meeting would have a chance to respond. What is needed is a succinct, demonstrable, polished, statement.

Martin Patchen suggested that a brief interim report be made to ASA Council as a reminder.

Kurt Lang moved that the Chair appoint an editorial committee to revise the statement, make it available for the autumn newsletter, and submit the final version to ASA Council before their midyear meeting. The motion was approved unanimously. The committee: Louis Kriesberg, David Segal, Jen Hlavacek, David Meyer, Jim Burk, Sam Marullo.

David Segal reported that discussion over the past 2-3 years favored establishment of an annual award from the Section to a non-student for distinguished scholarship, teaching, and/or service to the profession. No award would be given if there were not appropriate candidates. While there has been agreement about having such an award, there has been no consensus about a title for it. One proposal is that it be titled the Addams-Janowitz award (Jane Addams-Morris Janowitz). The appropriateness of each name was questioned. James Burk doubted that consensus would ever be achieved on names and asked why it couldn't be titled the Peace and War Section Award. Kurt Lang suggested that titling it by a concept rather than by persons' names might more readily win consensus. Helen Raisz proposed that the newsletter publish nominated titles and get member feedback. Burk again favored a "bureaucratic" i.e. title-of-the-section, name.

David Segal proposed that at next year's annual meeting the council and section meetings be merged to eliminate the need to repeat reports and discussion and to free more time for roundtables.*

Incoming Chair, David Segal, named some of the committee members for 1991-1992. Nominations Committee: Jim Skelly, Dana Eyre. "Adult" Award: James Burk, Jan Friz. Newsletter: Jen Hlavacek, Leslie Kurtz. Membership: Sam Marullo, Helen Raisz and Jennifer Turpin. Other committees and committee members will be appointed and their names given in the next newsletter.

*NOTE: Council meeting minutes were not printed because they were essentially the same as the General Business meeting minutes.
James Malachy Skelly has been teaching this past year at the University of Limerick and acting as Associate Director of the Irish Peace Institute, where he is developing programs in international education. Dr. Skelly was recently awarded a MacArthur Foundation grant of $59,400 under the Foundation’s Research and Writing Program in Peace and International Cooperation. The grant will support the research and writing for a book on the military’s role in the transformation of American popular culture during the Cold War. To undertake the research, he will be a Visiting Scholar at the Institute of International Studies at the University of California at Berkeley for the 1991-1992 academic year.

Jennifer Turpin is now Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of San Francisco. She received her doctorate from the University of Texas at Austin last spring. Her dissertation was on the Soviet Novosti Press as an agency of institutional impression management, comparing the Brezhnev and Gorbachev eras.

The Peace Studies Association Announces its Fourth Annual Meeting

"Conflict and Change in the 1990s: Redefining Power, Democracy, and Development"
The University of Colorado at Boulder
February 27 - March 1, 1992

The Peace Studies Association invites the submission of papers for presentation at its Fourth Annual Meeting. Paper topics must relate specifically to the conference theme. Appropriate topics include, but are not limited to, the following examples: peace studies perspectives on the nature and types of power, democracy, or development relevant to global and domestic transformation; ethnic and racial conflict and cooperation in the 1990s; consequences of the Persian Gulf War for the environment and the development of peace in the Middle East; ramifications of the break-up of the Soviet Union for the development of peace and justice; global stratification in the post-Cold War era; conflict and change due to the changing demographics of the U.S.; the environment and sustainable development; and peace and pedagogy.

A 200-word abstract should be received not later than December 1, 1991. Send to:
The Peace Studies Association
Campus Box 471
University of Colorado
Boulder, CO 80309-0471
(303) 492-7718, 7714

Copies of the full text of accepted papers are due by February 1, 1992. If more papers are submitted than can be accommodated, priority will be given to those submitted by students and faculty in PSA member programs.
perspective on the issues the Seville statement addresses.

How people define and use the terms "violence," "war," and "conflict" significantly affects their social conduct. They use the terms to make sense of social events and to influence those events.

Violence is conventionally regarded as illegitimate hurting of people. Thus, even killing someone may not popularly be considered violence, when it is done by persons who are regarded as having the authority to commit the act. The word is often used as a way of claiming or denying legitimacy of various acts. Social scientists usually regard conventional definitions as part of the explanation for variations in the use or threatened use of coercion which physically harms other persons.

War popularly refers to all kinds of large-scale intense conflicts, but generally is understood to be struggles conducted by governments employing organized armed forces against each other. Sociologists add that it is a particular social-cultural institution, a social invention.

Conflicts are conventionally viewed as disruptions of order in which antagonists seek to harm each other. Sociologists, however, generally regard conflicts as an inherent aspect of social life and a way of changing relations among adversaries. It does not necessarily entail physically damaging others since conflicts can be waged in many different ways.

1. Violence occurs in a wide variety of settings and forms, e.g., interpersonal fights, family feuds, organizational rivalry, class-based revolutions, communal riots, and state-based international wars. No single set of genetic dispositions, social conditions or social processes accounts for this great variety of ways in which people injure or kill each other. Thus, relatively elaborate and extensive forms of violence require explanations about the boundaries of group identifications, coalition promotion, norms about what violence is legitimate, and obedience to authority. Of course, these same matters are as relevant to peacemaking and cooperation as to violence and conflict. Whatever relevance humans' genetic make-up may have for interpersonal or even interfamilial violence, it contributes little to explaining the great variations in large-scale socially constructed forms of conflict such as wars. They are sustained by cultures and social organizations which greatly vary.

2. Violence, war, and conflict are best understood in the context of the full range of human relations, including cooperation, love, and mutual dependency. Certainly people relate to each other in struggles, but most social life is cooperative, and social interaction always blends both conflict and cooperation. Moreover, it is possible to wage fights without violence or war, by using nonviolent coercion, persuasive appeals, and by offering benefits for cooperation.

Violent forms of conflict survive largely because they receive some form of social legitimation. Wars, for example, are an institutionalized way of conducting conflict among peoples whom governments direct. Even interpersonal and intergroup violence is most often carried out by people doing what the groups to which they belong regard as appropriate conduct. Those kinds of violence which are not socially approved are considered deviant and have different sources.

3. Violence and war in part arise from and are exacer-

bated by forces internal to the perpetrators, whether individuals, groups, organizations, or countries. The forces which support violence are social, cultural, and economic, as demonstrated in research on areas such as the military-industrial complex, gender socialization, group solidarity, socialization into group identities, including nationalism, and collective behavior and social movements.

4. The social system within which potential antagonists exist greatly influences the likelihood of violence and war. Norms and values about violence and the availability of institutionalized means for resolving conflicts shape the strategies adversaries choose to pursue their goals. In every society, systems of dispute settlement, including elaborate legal systems, provide nonviolent means of managing conflicts. The limited nature of such systems globally, and the lack of confidence in their efficacy, contribute to making war and large-scale violence more likely. Over the past two centuries, there has been a trend of increasing attempts to institutionalize international systems for the prevention or control of war and other forms of violence.

5. Social, cultural, and economic integration among potential antagonists reduces the risk of violence and war. Mutual dependency, crosscutting identities and bonds, and cultural and political similarities also lessen the likelihood of violence and war. In contrast, socialization of group members which emphasizes ingroup virtues and outgroup vices increases the likelihood of violence and war, as does the perception of injustice or illegitimate inequality. There is, then, much we can do to make the world safer and less violent.

Call for Papers

The Web of Violence: From Interpersonal to Global is the topic of a book being edited by Jennifer Turpin and Lester Kurtz. Please submit ideas for papers by December 15 examining linkages between micro- and macro-sociological aspects of violence of either a theoretical or empirical nature. Papers are requested by May 1992. Papers will also be considered for a special issue of Peace Review. Send all correspondence to Jennifer Turpin, Department of Sociology, University of San Francisco, Ignatian Heights, San Francisco, CA 94117-1060.

Papers on The Geography of Nonviolence are solicited for an edited book. What can we learn about the successes and failures of nonviolent tactics and strategies in various parts of the world in recent years? Lester Kurtz and Sarah Beth Asher are editing a volume that evaluates the global spread of active nonviolence in recent decades and are soliciting papers from around the world by activists and scholars to discern the distribution and efficacy of nonviolent movements. Contributions should include primarily, but not exclusively, narratives of nonviolent campaigns from activists, and analytical reviews and empirical studies from scholars. The volume will explore a key question: Under what conditions does nonviolence work and when does it fail? Please let us hear from you if you are interested, or have suggestions. Send papers or abstracts by February 28, 1992 to Lester Kurtz, Sociology Department, University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712.
Anti-Gulf War Protest  (Continued From Page 1)

U.S. political leaders and hawkish "analysts") with the mainstream media acting as a more-or-less willing conduit of this attack. If the movement wishes to be more effective the next time militarism marshals its forces, it must learn from this defeat. One element of mobilizing public support for the war consisted of marginalizing, trivializing, and discrediting the peace movement, preventing its message from even being heard, let alone acted on. The analysis presented here offers suggestions as to how this can be avoided in the future.

We must keep in mind that much of the public at large is predisposed against war (albeit superficially) and reluctant to engage in military intervention unless U.S. security is directly threatened. It is this last phrase, however, that is so loosely defined that it can be manipulated by pro-military forces to justify intervention virtually anywhere around the globe. The Bush administration was quite cognizant of this lack of support for using force and thus had to undertake a month-long process of shifting public opinion to support a military solution. Recall that in September, 1990, only 17% of the public felt that the United States should go to war against Iraq, 61% wanted to wait for the sanctions to take hold (with most willing to give sanctions a year or more to work), and 20% did not want to go to war at all (source: Americans Talk Security poll, September 1990).

The Administration successfully shifted this opinion through the use of exaggerated claims and accusations against Saddam (who was certainly a perfect target for such a campaign), selective presentation and withholding of information, and attacks against domestic opposition. Commanding the bully pulpit of the White House certainly makes this task possible. But it could not be done without at least the tacit support of the media. A long term goal of the peace movement should be to make war propagandizing more difficult by educating the public to adopt a foreign policy framework that strictly delimits the use of force and encourages alternative methods of conflict resolution. It also should work to prevent the media from being such uncritical conduits for the militarists' message. As a first step in this process, the movement has to be clear in defining itself and its messages. We cannot allow the media to repeat the militarists’ charges that the movement is un-American; that its supporters are misfits, leftover hippies, or naive do-gooders; and that foreign policy positions can be defined along a political spectrum running from conservative, patriotic war supporters to liberal unpatriotic appeasers. The following analysis presents a more realistic assessment of who participated in the anti-Gulf war protest and what it was about. It does so by contrasting the Administration (and media’s) claims about the movement with a more factual accounting of the movement based on survey results.

The results reported on here are based on a survey conducted on January 26, 1991 at the peace demonstration in Washington, D.C. The protest was organized by the Coalition for Peace in the Middle East and estimated to have been attended by 150,000 people. Over two hundred protesters were interviewed by me and a team of twenty undergraduate and graduate students. The interviews consisted of a series of questions about the respondents’ past social movement activities and current participation, their social and demographic characteristics, and a number of open-ended questions about their opposition to the war. The respondents were overwhelmingly candid with the interviewers, with the interviews ranging in length from twenty to thirty minutes. Efforts were made to select respondents randomly from the crowd, though there is no way of assuring that the sample is unbiased. We are strengthened in our beliefs regarding the sample’s representativeness, however, because of the similarity of our results on demographic questions with those found in a poll reported in the Washington Post the next day (see R. Morin, “Marchers in D.C. Liberal, Educated, Survey Finds,” 1/27/91). Although the anti-war protesters who attended the January 26 demonstration may not represent the whole anti-war movement, the diversity of their views and background characteristics reflect the major elements of the contemporary peace movement that have been documented in recent studies. This diversity of voices—indeed, any voice, was lacking—however, in the media’s coverage of opposition to the war.

CLAIM 1: The peace protesters’ “unpatriotic dissent” hurts the morale of the troops.

Taking a page from the Reagan administration’s anti-peace movement tactics, early efforts by the Bush Administration to discredit the movement attempted to portray activists as apologists for or dupes of Saddam. (Remember the Reagan charge in the early 1980s that freeze supporters were “communist-led” or “well-intentioned dupes of the KGB.”) Like the earlier efforts, this failed and quickly gave way to a “kinder, gentler” criticism by officials and military advocates—that the protesters were un-American by not supporting the troops. Most movement leaders were quick to state their support for the troops, distinguishing it from criticism of the policymakers’ decision to go to war, but their support was dismissed as being either not fervent enough or insincere. In perhaps the ultimate display of media “lap-doggism,” Washington Post columnist Juan Williams (usually labeled as a “liberal”), refused to accept the movement’s distinction between criticizing the policy while supporting the troops and labeled such claims as being “the big lie.” (Williams, “Double Talk from War Protesters,” 2/7/91). The television coverage of peace protests implicitly supported this charge by showing flag-burning scenes and pro-Iraqi banners. The fact that these offended most protesters was not conveyed.

Reality

As any casual observer of the anti-Gulf war rallies would note, the most common sign carried by the protesters stated their support for the troops. Perhaps the most frequently observed banners said WE SUPPORT THE TROOPS/BRING THEM HOME ALIVE and WE SUPPORT THE TROOPS/NOT THE WAR. Indeed, this support was so strong that several long-term peace activists questioned the snaqcity of expressing such support for the troops on tactical grounds, arguing that it symbolically strengthened the hand of the militarist forces. Despite such shows of support found in the peace movement’s use of yellow ribbons, U.S. flags, and

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banners in support of the troops, charges that the movement's unpatriotic protests hurt the morale of the troops persisted. We decided to allow the protesters to respond directly to the charges that their anti-war demonstrations hurt the morale of the troops.

The most frequent response of the protesters (32%) was that they wanted to protect the troops by bringing them home immediately. Another 28% stated simply that they do support the troops, while 27% stated that they support the troops but not the president or policy makers that sent them to war. Thus, seven out of eight protesters directly contradicted the charges directed at them. In addition, a good number of the protesters challenged the premises of the question, with 29% flatly refuting the claim that the protests hurt the troops' morale, 11% blaming the media for distorting their message, and 7% claiming that the protesters were expressing the soldiers' desires to avoid war which they cannot express for themselves. (Percent total more than 100% because many respondents gave multiple answers.) In short, less than 5% overall expressed any concerns or doubts that their actions may in fact be hurting the morale of the troops.

CLAIM 2: The peace protesters are left-over hippies from the 1960s, anti-Vietnam war protesters who have since become professional protesters. They are social misfits, counterculture dropouts, or "well meaning but naive."

As a means of diverting attention from the message of the anti-war movement, pro-military forces attempted to discredit the source. The lesson they learned from the Vietnam War era is not to allow the peace movement message to be conveyed through the mass media, or if it must be covered, then to place it in a negative light as possible. This is done through overt, derogatory claims targeting the protesters and through more subtle images carried in news reports. If the focus can be kept on the protesters and their actions—with a negative spin attached—then their message does not have to be addressed. At the explicit level, political pundits attempted to dismiss the protesters by portraying them as left-over anti-Vietnam War era hippies and protesters. More subtly, television crews were more likely to focus their cameras on the protesters with tie-dye t-shirts, long stringy hair, or those banging drums. The average looking, middle-aged, respectably-behaved protester does not present an interesting enough visual backdrop for the news report and is unlikely to be covered.

Reality

Quite in contrast to this image, the protesters are very highly educated, have high incomes, and are disproportionately likely to have professional occupations. There were also a large number of undergraduate and graduate students at the demonstration. The number of people who claimed to have protested against the Vietnam War was relatively large, but constituted only 40% of the respondents (which we believe to be an inflated value).

In contrast to the image of the demonstrators being "professional protesters," 20 percent of our respondents said this was the first rally or demonstration they had ever attended. There was an additional 10 percent for whom demonstrating against the Gulf War the previous weekend or a few weeks earlier was their first protest activity. Contrary to the dismissive description of the protesters as "professionals," quite a different message is conveyed in the finding that 30 percent of the demonstrators were new converts to protest in their speaking out against the Gulf War. We found that only 12 percent of the protesters claimed to have attended ten or more other demonstrations.

In terms of occupations, the protesters were disproportionately professional and technical workers—72 percent of the nonstudent respondents hold these jobs whereas less than 20 percent of the population as a whole occupy such positions. The most common professions were educators (16%), writers and artists (15%), health care providers (11%), managers and administrators (9%), lawyers (6%), and scientists (6%). Other white-collar nonprofessional positions were held by 6 percent of the protesters and 4 percent held service sector jobs. An additional 7 percent of the protesters held jobs in machine trades and crafts, 4 percent were unemployed, 3 percent were retired and 2 percent were homemakers.

Corresponding to these occupations, it is not surprising to find that the protesters were very highly educated. Nearly 40 percent of the respondents were students (of whom roughly two-thirds were in college and one third in graduate school). Of the 60 percent who were not students, only 4 percent did not attend college, one third had college degrees, and over half attended graduate school. In fact, one of five protesters (21%) had medical degrees, law degrees, or doctorates. Given the occupational and educational background of the protesters, it is not surprising that their average household incomes were $39,000, placing them well above the national average.

More damaging than the pro-militarists' efforts to smear the character of movement participants, however, is the media's refusal to allow the peace movement to speak for itself. The media have conveyed an image of anti-war protests as it fits their stereotypes (taking their lead from pro-militarists) or as it fits their needs for news coverage (i.e. as an event, as theater, or as dramatic confrontation), but not its message. This is the most critical concern, but also the least likely message to be conveyed—why they are opposed to war. The movement has been unable to convey its message through the mainstream media and has no alternative mechanism readily available. At best, movement spokespersons can hope to have a "sound bite" broadcast. More likely they get reporters' voiceovers describing the demonstration as an event, devoid of content. In the next section, we convey some of the depth and diversity of the protesters opposition to war.

CLAIM: Peace protesters are liberal Democrats opposed to the President

The Washington Post headline over the continuation of their article on the January 26th demonstration reads, "Majority at D.C. Rally were Liberal Democrats..." This is the depth of their analysis and the image is clearly one of domestic partisan politics. For most of the war coverage, the "experts" brought to us by the media to explain the war were all present and former officials. Apart from the Congressional debate on the eve of war, there were virtually no voices heard
expressing opposition to the war. Thus, opposition to official policy was limited to a very narrow frame of debate (stick with sanctions longer before going to war, or go to war now), without other alternatives being considered. For the peace protesters, however, the pragmatic debate over how long to stay with sanctions was not even an issue for nearly two-thirds of them.

Realty

In addition to the pragmatic debate fought between Congressional Democrats and Republicans, we must consider at least four other dimensions of discourse to understand the protesters’ opposition to war. These four other dimensions can be identified as tapping sentiments of non-interventionism, religious pacifism, alternatives to violence, and protectionism. Although these four overlap with each other and the pragmatism dimension, they are analytically distinct and they differentially weighed upon the demonstrators’ responses to our questions. The specific question I will focus on here asked the respondents why they were opposed to the war. It was an open-ended question and the respondents offered fourteen distinct substantive answers. We have boiled them down into the five major dimensions enumerated above.

The most frequently cited reason (35%) for opposing the war was that the respondents felt that it was not justified because sanctions had not been tried for a long enough period of time. This is the pragmatic issue debated in the Congress and the focus of much of the media analysis and debate, yet only one third defined this as the reason for their protesting. The next most common reason was cited by 33%, claiming that U.S. policy in the Middle East is wrong and that we have no legitimate reason for being there. Included in this dimension were the roughly 5 percent of the protesters who were “anti-U.S. imperialists” and another 5 percent who were isolationists.

The third most commonly cited reason for being opposed to the war reflects the religious pacifism dimension (28%). These protesters cited moral or religious or specifically Christian values as the basis for their being opposed to war. For most of them, they did not cite their specific opposition to the Gulf War, but stated it in terms of their opposition to all war. A few described their protest activities as bearing moral witness to the evil the U.S. government is committing.

A close parallel to the third dimension is a secular anti-war sentiment expressed in the language of there being alternatives to violence (27%). This group did not use moral or religious language to oppose the war, but conflict resolution language by claiming there are always alternative means to solving conflicts other than violence. For them, negotiations, flexibility, creativity, and compromise are the keys to resolving disputes—none of which were demonstrated by the U.S. government prior to the resort to force.

Finally, another set of reasons cited by 21 percent of the respondents focused on more narrowly defined threats resulting from war and their desire to avoid them. These people wanted to protect friends or family members in the Gulf region, protect the environment, or ensure that American men and women are not killed in the fighting. Less than 2 percent of the respondents expressed a concern that the U.S. could not win the war, so it was their concern that the losses that could be sustained were not worth sacrificing for military victory.

Obviously many of the protesters cited more than one reason for their opposition to the war, but these categories appear to be quite distinct in our preliminary analysis. The implication is that each of these types of reasons represents a distinctive discourse for analysis, of which only one was discussed in the mainstream media. There are leaders and spokespersons representing each of these views, none of whom were able to penetrate the consciousness of the media. It is quite likely, in fact, that even most peace protesters are unaware of the diversity of views held among their fellow demonstrators, suggesting the need for continued education among movement participants.

In retrospect, it is obvious that there was little the movement could have done to prevent a war that the Bush administration was committed to waging from the outset. This is in large part a result of the structural defect in the U.S. political system that prevents the people from expressing their opinion in response to government policy—especially in the area of foreign and military policy. A movement goal must continue to be to find ways to penetrate the shroud of secrecy and misinformation that cloaks U.S. foreign policy. The long-term solution requires educating the public regarding the alternatives to war and overcoming the institutional barriers to implementing them. In the short run, it requires rebutting the false claims made against it by pro-militarist forces.

Some 35 years ago, C. Wright Mills wrote that “we have become observers of everything but witnesses to nothing.” CNN’s live coverage of the war was the technological fulfillment of Mills’ fears—we could observe simultaneously the conduct of the war halfway around the globe, but we had no adequate political or moral framework with which to understand it. The public by default had to rely on the political leaders who sought war in the first place to explain to them why it was necessary. The mission of the peace movement must be to create the frameworks that can resist such rationalizations.

Peace Movement

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of people to support the party line and “volunteer” for committee activities. However, there now exists an independent movement against militarism in the Soviet Union that is diverse and strong. For example, Soviet participants at the END conference included: 1) mothers of the 6,000 men a year who die in the Soviet military because of peace-time accidents; 2) protesters against nuclear testing, especially members of the organization called Nevada-Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan; 3) groups seeking to expose and clean up environmental hazards at nuclear weapons plants; 4) people who want to establish a trade union for soldiers; 5) opponents of conscription; and 6) advocates for the rights of conscientious objectors. Apart from these efforts, which are generally quite specific and appear to have put down roots in the working class, there is clearly a lot of ferment over more abstract peace issues among intellectuals. (cf. “The Russian Peace Society” 1991)

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There is in these campaigns a lot of sentiment against the oppressiveness of military institutions, a determination to call the authorities to account, and strong desire to bring about real changes. For instance, the Nevada-Semipalatinsk campaign has rejected as inadequate the 5 billion rubles offered by the Kazakhstan authorities to the victims of nuclear testing.

No doubt many people still fear punishment by the authorities for acts of protest, and no doubt some organizations are infiltrated by the KGB (and now perhaps by its republic-level equivalents). Nonetheless, I often heard at the ENS conference comments such as “We must protest for the sake of our children” and “We are tired of being afraid.” I suspect that such sentiments are quite widespread. I was impressed by the activists’ courage, openness, persistence and energy. They also seem for the most part committed to democratic procedures and rights.

Some Soviet peace organizations are clearly part of the large and growing environmental movement. Granted, some peace groups seem to distance themselves from environmental issues; for instance Nevada-Semipalatinsk has no official position on nuclear energy. On the other hand, some organizations have a conscious joint program of environmentalism and peace. For instance, Save Peace and Nature, which appears to be well-funded, says its major projects include “retraining of ex-army officers dismissed due to the disarmament process” and a “public ecological laboratory for independent environmental impact assessment.”

Many Soviet peace groups have a global vision and enjoy broad support. True, some of them press specific ethnic causes, for instance in Armenia. But other groups have formed solid cross-ethnic alliances. For instance, Nevada-Semipalatinsk, whose support crosses class lines, has received strong support from miners in Kazakhstan, who have threatened a political strike if nuclear testing is renewed. The group rejects the charge of only opposing nuclear testing in its own backyard: its members oppose testing worldwide and have marched in Northern Russia to oppose tests on Novaya Zemlya island in the Arctic Ocean.

How influential is the peace movement? This is hard to answer, though one success story is the cessation of nuclear tests in Kazakhstan for two years—a commitment reinforced by the republic’s president after the August 1991 coup. There can be little doubt that the movement has contributed to the democratization of Soviet political culture. This is reinforced by what looks like the strong support some peace organizations receive from local and regional governments and the media. I met activists from Kazakhstan and the Southern Urals who belong to municipal and regional councils and have no problems getting their views published.

This movement needs support from Western scholars, in the form of money, fax machines, etc. It is also a rich field for peace researchers. I found activists very willing to talk and to show me their files. In the post-communist Soviet Union (whatever territory that might encompass) questions like the ones mentioned above deserve serious study by Western scholars and their Soviet colleagues.


Fellowships in Military History: The United States Army Center of Military History offers two fellowships each academic year to civilian graduate students preparing dissertations on subjects relating to the history of warfare on land, especially the history of the U.S. Army. Possible topics include military biography, campaigns, military organization and administration, policy, strategy, tactics, training, technology, logistics, and civil-military-societal relations. Each fellow receives an $8,000 stipend and access to the Center’s facilities and technical expertise. Applicants must be American citizens and have completed by September 1991, all requirements for the Ph.D. except the dissertation. Interested candidates should contact Dr. Clayton Laurie, Executive Secretary, CMH Dissertation Fellowship Committee, U.S. Army Center of Military History, S.E. Federal Center, Bldg. 159 - 5th Flr., Washington, D.C. 20374-5088, telephone (202) 475-2598/7868. The deadline for applications and supporting documents is February 1, 1992. EOE.