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SAVING THE WORLD: ACTIVISM IN THE NUCLEAR AGE

Francis Chiappa



The Nuclear Age began in 1945 with the horrific destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The world was captivated. Would this be a war to end all wars? After all, who would risk nuclear war? Patriotic American resolved to build a formidable nuclear arsenal. Patriotic Russians agreed and built their own. The Cold War was on and by 1986, when the arms race peaked, there were over 60,000 nuclear weapons worldwide. Who would risk a nuclear war? The key word here is "risk." While no sane leader would want to use nuclear weapons, the risk of nuclear war, started by intention or by accident, is always there. And even today's 14,900 nukes could destroy humanity many times over. Even a limited nuclear war could result in nuclear winter and the end of civilization as we know it. Nuclear activism is literally about "Saving the World," about preventing Armageddon.

The Ban the Bomb movement appeared in the United Kingdom in 1952, with the first of many walks from Aldermaston to London. Today's Peace Action was born in 1957 as the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy. 48 prominent Americans signed a full-page New York Times ad calling for an end to nuclear

testing. The ad unleashed a surge of activism and SANE was forced to become a large grassroots organization. SANE had its connections in government and with the Kennedy administration, but the Military-Industrial Complex exerted its influence too. In a partial victory, just months before President Kennedy's assassination, the Partial Test Ban Treaty was signed, banning nuclear tests above ground, underwater and in outer space. But the military could still test underground and the arms race continued. At the same time the arms race ceased making news and SANE's membership plummeted. This was a hard lesson then and it remains a hard one for activists today.

SANE was a part of the opposition to the Vietnam War. After Vietnam it was hoped there'd be a peace dividend, directing war funds to more peaceful purposes. This never happened. The Military-Industrial beast must be fed. All it took was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iran hostage crisis to turn public support back towards militarism. Ronald Reagan swept into office, talking about winnable nuclear wars and proceeded to undertake the largest military buildup in US history.

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This issue of the CPA Newsletter features two essays on the history, use, and growth of Nuclear Weapons, stressing the urgent need to ban them completely.

Largely related to recent comments by Presidents Kim and Trump, the media are flooded daily with chilling threats. As a result, the general discussion on the need for the banning of nukes has expanded considerably. That is good news.

We hope to contribute to this discussion, reminding our readers of the facts, and asking them to pass them on to the next generations. It is your kids and grandkids whose survival is most at risk.

The following essays are based on presentations made by two CPA Board members at the "Hiroshima Remembered" event at the First Unitarian Church in Shaker Heights.

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This had a curious effect. It vaulted the fear of nuclear war back into the national consciousness. In a fortunate convergence, one simple idea, the nuclear freeze proposal was afoot. A Call to Halt the Nuclear Arms Race. Randall Forsberg's idea went viral. Halt the testing production and deployment of nuclear weapons. These things are easily verifiable. And the Freeze would be bilateral. The US and USSR would each freeze only if the other also *froze*. This mobilized hundreds of thousands of activists across the country, myself included. We were passionate and driven, feeling a great urgency to Save the World. It was not unlike a religious fervor. Prevent Armageddon! Nationally and locally, we worked hard, with devotion to ending the arms race. Polls told us that 80% of Americans supported the Freeze. There was widespread awareness of the risks and the effects of nuclear war. It was personal, as in, how far do you live from Public Square and what would happen to you if a bomb landed there.

An interesting offshoot was forging relationships between US and Soviet cities. Cleveland and Vladivostok were sister cities. This helped break down the barriers of Us-Them thinking, as we realized nuclear war puts us all in the same boat.

So, the Freeze was successful, right? President Reagan was apparently impressed and to the horror of his advisors and generals, he proposed in a 1984 speech, the elimination of all nuclear weapons. Later, with Mikhail Gorbachev as his Soviet partner, they reversed the momentum of a 40-year arms race. We never succeeded in getting Congress to pass the Freeze. As the Freeze idea faded, we turned our attention to nuclear testing. Many of us Clevelanders protested and were arrested for trespassing at Nevada Test Site, where underground nuclear tests were ongoing. We lobbied Congress and Presidents until President Clinton signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1996. In recent years, only North Korea has conducted a nuclear test.

SANE and the Nuclear Freeze Campaign merged in 1987. After the Cold War ended, nukes just dropped out of the news. As for the Military-Industrial Complex, it did and is doing quite well. The Gulf War, 9/11, the Afghanistan War, the Iraq War, the endless War on Terror. There's always another reason to arm ourselves to the teeth and to make a profit doing so. The US has spent nearly 1.8 Trillion dollars on wars since 2001. This is why we're now called Peace Action. It's not just nukes we must resist.

Should we be more worried now about nuclear war? Absolutely! Yes! More on that later. But today there are so many worries that compete for our attention. America's nuclear IQ was high back in the 80's. Today, younger generations are relatively unaware of the dangers. Today's concerns are more personal. Racism. Poverty and economic worries. Sexism. Coping with illness or degraded living conditions. The list goes on. Concerns about nuclear war are not experienced as personally as these things. Concerns about nuclear war have generally been the concerns of more privileged people.

At the Nevada Test Site, we were guests of the Western Shoshone Nation. In a ceremony before one of our protests, spiritual elder Corbin Harney, intoned these words, which I will never forget. "One Earth. One Water. One Air." As I search to understand myself, my world, my place in the world, my connection to others, and the connection between all our concerns, these words help. "One Earth. One Water. One Air." Everything is connected to everything else. We live in an incredibly complex world. One we cannot hope to fully understand with words, with our rational minds. But it can and must be experienced and felt passionately. As Jesus said: "What you do unto the least of my brethren, you do unto me." We are One People, living together in One World. So let us act together to Save the World.

**No More Hiroshimas.
No More Nagasakis.
No More Bigotry.
No More Injustice.
No More Hate.
More Awareness.
More Connection.
More Love!**

Remembering Hiroshima While Still in the Shadow of Nukes

Nina McLellan

72 years ago, August 6, 1945, the American B-29, Enola Gay, named after the pilot's mother, took off from a US air base in the Western Pacific. Six hours later at 8:15 AM, the pilots released the nuclear bomb they called "Little Boy" over the center of the city. In a flash, an estimated 66 thousand were incinerated, and another 69,000 would soon die after suffering in the next days and weeks.

Three days later, Nagasaki was destroyed by "Fat Man", a larger atomic bomb, immediately killing another 74,000. Death and destruction were extreme reaching 4 miles or more from these blast centers.

Consider these numbers in relation to our own community — the combined population of Cleveland Hts. and Shaker Heights is about 75 thousand persons - men, women and children, our friends, family and neighbors.

Besides Japanese, there were many others who died or were injured including some Americans. And then there were the 23,000 U.S. servicemen who entered Hiroshima and Nagasaki following the blasts who were not warned about the massive doses of radiation they might encounter.

Japanese survivors, called HIBAKUSHA (translated as "explosion-affected people"), have written first-hand eye-witness accounts and I thought I'd read several this morning. After actually reading a few of these, I changed my mind about leaving you with horribly graphic images of injury and destruction. Instead, let me relate just a little about the healing responses the Japanese initiated in addressing their trauma.

In 2010 the Japanese government started a program to appoint Hibakusha, atomic bomb survivors, as "Special Communicators for a "world without nuclear weapons". Through this program, survivors share their first hand experiences with people around the world, especially reaching out to younger generations and testifying to the UN which now maintains an educational disarmament website, including Hibakusha stories available in all official UN languages.

I experienced their commitment when I participated in a march to the UN in 2005 on the occasion of the UN's Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty review process. Many hundreds of Japanese filled the streets, the women traditionally dressed. They quietly gave us folded peace cranes and personal messages recounting family experiences.

Do you know about Mayors for Peace? Mayors for Peace was started in 1982 by the then Mayor of Hiroshima to promote the solidarity of cities toward the total abolition of nuclear weapons. There are now 7400 city members from 162 countries, 210 in the US, including Cleveland. I wonder if our present Mayor and city council are aware and are at all active?

The current President of Mayors for Peace, Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui, spoke to the recently concluded UN nuclear weapons ban conference. He said: "Now that the new treaty has been adopted, our next challenge is clear: We need to encourage all countries to join this treaty, including the nuclear-weapon states and their allies. Mayors for Peace will work together with our diverse partners in the world to encourage world leaders to take decisive leadership towards nuclear abolition. Reliance on nuclear weapons is not only useless for solving current challenges of international security, but will also endanger the survival of the entire human species. The entire world community, therefore, needs to cooperate and work together to ensure that the new treaty will become a fully effective legal instrument to achieve nuclear abolition. Let us begin this work today.

Passed in July, this historic total ban treaty is the first legally-binding instrument for nuclear disarmament to have been negotiated in 20 years. In addition to the Hibakusha, 2500 scientists from 70 countries, were instrumental in pressuring the UN General Assembly to call this conference. The ban treaty passed with the support of 122 participating countries. But all nuclear weapons states (US, Russia, Britain, France, India, Pakistan, China, Israel, N. Korea — and their key allies) boycotted the negotiations. In a joint press statement, the delegations of the United States, United Kingdom and France said they "have not taken part in the negotiation of the treaty... and do not intend to sign, ratify or ever become party to it" because it doesn't address realistic security issues.

Let us heed Mayor Matusi's call and strengthen our resolve to make the abolition of nuclear weapons a movement that will correct our nation's dangerous course.

Today at their Peace Park, Hiroshima is holding its annual Peace Memorial Ceremony to console the victims of the atomic bombs and to pray for the realization of lasting world peace. In addition to Japanese survivors and their families, there are participants from all over the world, including, as always, a Peace Action delegation.



*Nina McLellan's reflections continues with
"Where We Stand Now in the Shadow of Nukes"
on page 4.*

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This January, scientists announced they'd moved the hands of the Doomsday Clock, closer to midnight — to imminent earth disaster. This is the closest the clock had been to midnight since 1953, the year after the United States and the Soviet Union conducted competing tests of the hydrogen bomb. Why now? The scientists in charge said it was the combination of climate change, nuclear weapons and Trump.

Why are the experts saying that we're now at higher risk of nuclear disaster from war or accident than at the height of the cold war? Didn't President Obama pledge to abolish them. But in 2010 he made a very bad bargain with Congress. To get their votes to pass the New START treaty — he agreed to fund "modernization" of nuclear weapons production facilities, warheads and delivery systems. The cost: an estimated \$1.2 trillion over 30 years.

The gigantic defense budget now funds this dangerously destabilizing escalation. And other nuclear weapons countries are following suit. The world is now engaged in a new nuclear arms race.

We, the U.S., have 3 super-redundant ways to deliver nukes to targets anywhere in the world.... and the plan is to upgrade all three legs of the delivery triad: air, sea and land.... with upgraded warheads for each delivery system. If we continue down this path, our whole nuclear arsenal will be faster, more accurate, and potentially more usable.

The plans include, but are not limited to, a new dangerously destabilizing nuclear cruise missile, a more accurate and more usable gravity bomb, new long range strike bomber. At sea, new ballistic missile submarines. On land, a revitalized set of ground-based inter-continental ballistic missiles — the ICBMs. Former Secretary of Defense, William Perry advises that the land-based ICBMs should not only **not** be upgraded, but that they should be completely eliminated. On hair-trigger alert, they are the most prone to accidental launch, and have a history of accidents.

We recently learned that language in defense bills in both the House and Senate, as part of their effort to oppose Russia, would require the military to begin developing medium-range missiles. Such missiles are **banned** by the 1987 INF treaty (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty) that Ronald Reagan negotiated with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev during the twilight years of the Cold War. If this goes forward, such a weapon system would lay the groundwork for a new nuclear weapon to be deployed in Europe.

Besides the risk of war and accident, the huge costs should give all of us pause. As then President Eisenhower said in his famous "cross of Iron" speech in 1953: Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children...This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.

On this the anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, let us pledge once again to lift the shadow of nuclear war and work together for a world that negotiates conflict and turns it's attention to the pressing challenges of poverty, disease, and a sustainable, healthy planet.

IS THERE A WAY TO ENFORCE A TRUE NUCLEAR BAN?



COULD THIS WORK?

Letter to the Editor
THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER
July 25, 2017

Last week at the United Nations, 122 countries voted to ban nuclear weapons. The nine nations that currently have nukes boycotted the negotiations. How then can we ever achieve a ban? One possibility is to systematically and verifiably reduce the numbers. The total number of active warheads held by Russia and the US has been cut from 68 thousand in 1985 to 4 thousand today. Perhaps the route to take is "bit-by-bit": for example cutting the number of warheads by 10% per year.

To achieve this, the UN must organize a detailed, precise inventory of every warhead on the planet and of every pound of plutonium and highly enriched uranium. They must intrusively inspect every enrichment facility, every reactor, and waste facility. Lack of cooperation should result in well-defined sanctions. While such oversights will be costly and contentious, they will be cheaper than the continued development of "next-generation" nukes and delivery systems. With such an intrusive system in place and the systematic downsizing of weapons-related operations, the goal of a nuclear-weapons-free planet can be reached. Without such action, the future of humanity is at ever-increasing risk.

*William Fickinger, Physics Professor Emeritus,
CWRU, Secretary of Cleveland Peace Action*

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Check our website for news and events: <http://peaceactioncleveland.org>



PAND CONCERT 2017
*IT'S A WONDERFUL WORLD,
 DON'T BLOW IT*

On August 9th Cleveland Peace Action Education Fund co-produced with PAND (Performers and Artists for Nuclear Disarmament), the annual concert in remembrance of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This critical reminder of the grave risk of nuclear and the need to ban these weapons has never been more timely.

PAND was founded in 1984 by Cleveland Orchestra musicians Gino Raffaelli and Diane Mather. In recent years, the program has grown more eclectic. This year's concert included a rousing set by Nashville-based singer songwriter Anne E. DeChant and her band. A standing-room-only crowd at Mahall's in Lakewood went home moved and inspired.



Here are a few photos:

Quartetto per Four Violini by Grazyna Bacewicz - Analise Kukelhan, YunTing Lee, Carolyn Warner, Ioana Missits
 Bach's Cello Suite No. 1 — Dane Johansen
 Poetry by David Adams (*read it on next page*)
 Anne E. DeChant and Kelly Wright
 Making Merry Hoohaw Over Misery by Paul Barsom — Frank Rosenwein, Oboe

Upcoming Events

August 26th Workshop at MOCA

CPA board member Francis Chiappa will present a workshop on the Nuclear Age and the activism it has generated. Kate Sopko and Angela Beallor have re-created the 1960's fallout shelter now installed at MOCA. Fallout shelters have always raised obvious questions of who gets to be inside and who is excluded. This opens a dialog about privilege as well as the scourge of nuclear weapons.

More info at:

<http://www.mocacleveland.org/programs/fallout-collective-action-workshops>



Monday, September 4th, 10:30 AM

CPA's Move the Money Action Group will march in the 11th District Caucus Labor Day Parade from 146th and Kinsman to Luke Easter Park, Cleveland. Please join us, to hold banners and pass out Move the Money flyers. We'll meet at 143 St. and Kinsman. If you're coming, please let Nina know at mclellan.nina@gmail.com
 More at: www.facebook.com/11thcdclabordayparade/

September—date to be determined

Join Northern Ohio Faith & Community Advocates Jeff Abood and Sr. Paulette Schroeder
 "Our Journey to Palestine"
 Pilgrim Church 2592 West 14th Street, Cleveland

David Adams joined the PAND Concert event by presenting one of his poems about the Bikini nuclear tests and their impact on the Bikini Islanders. We are pleased to share it with you, along with a note from Mr. Adams..

BIKINI

It's out there, somewhere towards evening,
with small waves lapping at the coral sand.
So a stranger comes to Majuro and watches
as the clouds conform to an ageless dream.
He whispers that they seem "the breath of God,"
which is to say they might be anything.

If you listen, you can hear the trade winds
tell the story. God gave us this place
to be our home. It became the home of death.
This, too, is our history. First, we called it
Crossroads, then we called it Castle,
when the islands woke to a double sun.
Bikini, where we buried so many things:
Nagato, Saratoga, some goats, the lies
beneath the lies in the gray rehearsals
of the newsreels, the bland assurances.
And more than half the world's supply of film.
And the hundreds of Bikini
not a fraction in the scheme of things.

You would have thought by then
the world would know that with a God
you must have something in between—
a little wave, a nautilus, a storm,
some birds slanting above the currents.
But even here there was a brother like a wolf
who built his gift of ironwood to drown.

It's out there, somewhere towards evening,
the clouds swollen with the faces of removal:
Strauss, LeMay and Forrestal, these friends
of someone else's reasons. They said they needed
to drop the bomb to find out what would happen.
So go to Rongerik and starve. Go to Kili and
starve.
Try living with the spirits of the dead.

It's out there, somewhere towards evening.
If you listen, you can hear the sailors
joking in the rain, the static in their bones.
Their stories beg forgiveness.
Try living with the spirits of the dead.
If you listen, you can hear the stars
in the breadfruit burning like tongues.
If you listen, you can hear the skins.
If you listen, you can hear the ticking years.

When can we all go home? When we have waited
long enough to forget everything we knew.
There is a girl walking in flowered silk,
carrying a basket of fish with one arm,
hibiscus woven in her hair. She is walking
beneath a line of palms with perfect shadows.
She is long dead now; she is still perfect,
even her shadow, even her smile.



Author's Note::

The displacement of the Bikini Islanders during the nuclear testing in the post-war period, and their subsequent mistreatment, was heartbreaking and wanton in its arrogance and cruelty. The specter remains. There are more historical references here than I normally employ. Readers can learn more about these events on Jack Niedenthal's excellent website: www.bikiniatoll.com. There is also an fine documentary on Crossroads tests: Radio Bikini by Robert Stone. The Marshallese have a legend of a man who, out of envy, built his brother a canoe of ironwood, a wood denser than water, hoping to drown him. It's an old story, as they say.