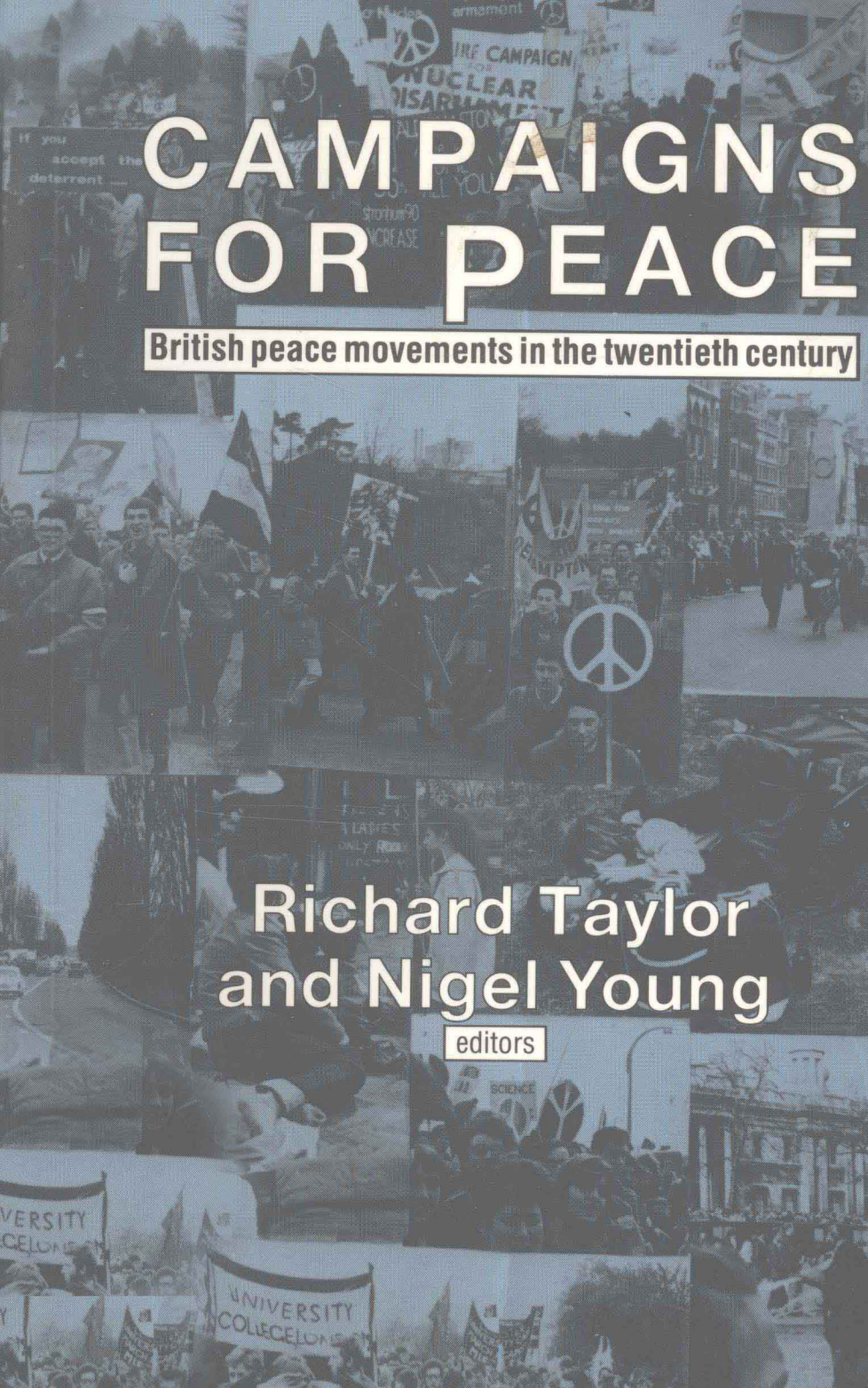
CAMPAIGNS FOR PEACE
British peace movements in the twentieth century
Richard Taylor and Nigel Young
editors

Campaigns for peace: British peace movements in the twentieth century

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Campaigns for peace

This book is dedicated to all those,
in Britain and throughout the world,
who have campaigned for peace
in the twentieth century

Preface and acknowledgements

The idea for this book was first suggested by John Banks of Manchester University Press and we are grateful to him both for this and for his continued support, and forbearance, during the preparation of the text.

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This has not been an easy book to write and edit, not least because one of us – Nigel Young – has been mainly based in the USA since 1985 and many of the consultations have had to be in rushed meetings in airports or over the transatlantic telephone. We are more than usually indebted, therefore, to Jenny Taylor and Antonia Young for their support and forbearance.

Richard Taylor
Nigel Young
1986

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Nigel Young, b. 1938 (MA Oxford, PhD California, Berkeley), is Director of the Peace Studies program and Professor of Peace Studies at Colgate University, Hamilton, New York. He has been involved in studying and participating in peace movements since the 1950s, both in Britain and in other parts of Europe and North America. Since 1970 he has been active in developing peace studies in Higher Education and was a founder member of Bradford University's School of Peace Studies, where he was Reader. After studying modern history at Oxford (1956–60), he worked full time for CND before returning to research and teaching. He completed his doctoral thesis, 'War resistance and the nation state', at the University of California, Berkeley (1963–68). This was accompanied by activity against the Vietnam War. He has taught at the Universities of Birmingham, Bradford, California, Munster, Oslo, at Earlham College and now at Colgate. His extensive writing in the field includes books and articles on the New Left (*An Infantile Disorder? The crisis and decline of the New Left*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), war resistance, peace movements, peace strategy and peace education. Recent

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Michael Randle (b. 1933) was a member of the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War and Secretary of the Committee of 100 from 1960 to 1961. He was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment for his part in organising the 'sit-down' at Wethersfield USAF base. He is a council member of the War Resisters International and, since 1980, has been co-ordinator of the Alternative Defence Commission.

Martin Shaw (b. 1947) lectures in Sociology at Hull University. His books include *Marxism and Social Science* (Pluto, 1975) and *The Dialectics of War: An Essay in the Social Theory of War and Peace* (Pluto, 1987) and he has edited *War, State and Society* (Macmillan, 1984), *Marxist Sociology Revisited* (Macmillan, 1985), and (with Colin Creighton) *The Sociology of*

War and Peace (Macmillan, 1987). He has been active in END and CND since 1980.

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Introduction

MARY KALDOR

The biggest demonstration against Cruise and Pershing II missiles took place in the autumn of 1983. There were demonstrations in Bonn, Rome, The Hague, London, Oslo, Helsinki, Copenhagen, Paris, and Brussels. Altogether, some five million people took to the streets. In Finland and Holland, the demonstrators represented some five per cent of the total population.

This remarkable outburst of transnational public sentiment could be said to have marked the beginning of a new kind of movement. Peace groups emerged all over Europe in 1980–83 and spread to North America, Australia and New Zealand. Although the Peace Movement has had less public impact since the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles, at any rate in Western Europe, its numbers have continued to grow. Peace camps, various forms of non-violent direct actions, courses and discussions about peace issues, new books and magazines, films, plays and concerts have all contributed to the creation of what might be described as an emerging peace culture in our society. In Britain, for example, there have been over 7,000 arrests of peace activists for symbolic actions like wire-cutting or daubing paint on missiles over the last two years. Local councils, accounting for over half the population of Britain, have declared themselves nuclear-free zones; to implement the nuclear-free zone policy, they refuse to participate in civil defence exercises and they undertake programmes of public education about the effects of nuclear war and related questions.

This book describes the historic roots of the new Peace Movement in Britain. While, undoubtedly, the new peace activists were able to

rediscover and learn from some important peace traditions in British history, they faced an entirely novel historical context. The context was one, as the editors point out, of threatened species destruction, or exterminism, as E. P. Thompson has called it.[1] The danger has been with us since 1945. And yet it was only as the first post-atomic generation approached middle age that the new Peace Movement came into being. It seems, therefore, that it was not so much fear of nuclear war as such that mobilised so many people. Rather, it could be attributed to a growing sense of disillusionment with the conventional political process. Peace activists became increasingly aware that political institutions are inadequate for the task of nuclear decision-making and this seemed to reflect a deeper malaise in current forms of social organisation. These concerns were especially important in Europe, where decisions about nuclear war, about life and death, would not be taken by European leaders, let alone on the basis of public or parliamentary discussion.

Miroslav Pecujlic has used the term 'social exterminism', by which he means that the danger of the arms race is species destruction, not just through nuclear war itself, but equally through a slow process of what he calls social involution, the reversal of civilisational progress.[2] Nuclear weapons were the consequence of the application of science and technology to destruction. Since the Second World War, nearly half the world's scientific and technological resources have been devoted to military purposes. New conventional and chemical weapons have been developed that are nearly as destructive in both human and environmental terms as nuclear weapons. The new American binary nerve gas programme is likely to lead to the militarisation of new areas of biochemistry, especially genetics, with unthinkable results.

And while the art of destruction is perfected, the art of living, it can be argued, is gradually lost. The fear of species destruction, the permanent wartime atmosphere generated by the arms race, can be said to interfere with the normal functioning of democracy: freezing politics, entrenching institutions and narrowing the space for human and social creativity.

Hence the problem is not simply the abolition of nuclear weapons. The problem is one of social relationships. How are we to restructure our institutions, our ways of organising ourselves, so that the fruits of civilisational progress are enjoyed by 'the last man', to quote Gandhi? Peace activists put considerable emphasis on participation. Terms like

'empowerment' or 'control over life and our lives', some of which were drawn from the Women's Movement, are fundamental to the new discourse. Self-determination, in both a personal and political sense, seems to be a central tenet of the New Peace Movement, especially in Europe.

The interest in democracy is not, of course, new. As this book shows, many of these ideas were present in earlier movements, especially the war resistance movement. Clifford Allen, quoted in one of Nigel Young's chapters, objected to the 'claim of the state to dispose of a man's life against his will'. Many peace activists identified the link between war and militarisation and political authoritarianism. The totality of the First World War and the invention of the bomber, which so influenced the inter-war Peace Movement, were intimations of what was to come.

What is new, however, in the early 1980s is the fusion of these other traditions – feminist, socialist, libertarian, Christian, conservationist – so that the peace issue is coming to displace other issues in the way we perceive the world and its problems. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a class perspective came to dominate both social theory and political institutions, and class was defined in relation to material production. Political parties were class parties and both past and present were interpreted, not just by Marxists, in class terms. Social relationships that were formed outside the production process – the state, households, nature – were viewed as dependent upon or subsidiary to class politics. New social movements have emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, in an *ad hoc* fashion, aimed at transforming and restoring the centrality of these other relationships – women (households), Greens (nature), peace and human rights (the state).

The Peace Movement is fundamentally about the social relationships that constitute the state. The peace issue encompasses the balance of institutions that comprise the state (warfare versus welfare), how the state relates to other states (peace and war), and how the state relates to society (democracy, accountability, and empowerment). It is about finding new political ways of relating to each other, in contrast to the earlier emphasis on economic relationships. Peace activists share with human rights activists in Eastern Europe, especially Solidarity in Poland, the view that their task is not to capture state power but to transform it. The Peace Movement will succeed when peace demands are put into practice, not when peace leaders achieve political office.

It is this new way of seeing global problems that is coming to displace the earlier economistic definitions. This is not to suggest that problems like starvation or unemployment are not important. On the contrary, they are intrinsic to the concept of social exterminism. Even if not a single nuclear shot is fired, millions will die by the end of the century from economic or ecological disaster. The point is that what is required is not so much an adjustment to economic relationships, either the market or the central plan, as a radical transformation of political structures. Therefore the poor, the dispossessed, the powerless, share a common platform. Peace activists are also struggling against global poverty.

What this means in practice, how to articulate a philosophy and appropriate organisational forms around the wide-ranging, specific and random demands of the peace movements, is something we are only beginning dimly to learn. This book explores the various strands, historically and politically, that have constituted the twentieth-century Peace Movement in Britain and analyses the nature of this movement. It will thus be of relevance and importance for all those who, whether they are Peace Movement supporters or not, are concerned about the Movement in Britain that evolved to campaign for a radical change in political strategies and cultural attitudes towards the achievement of peace – the most central issue of our time. And, more specifically, the book will also help those of us actively engaged in the Peace Movement to stand back and look at ourselves and our past and will, therefore, make an important contribution to this learning process.

References

1 E. P. Thompson *et al.*, *Exterminism and the Cold War*, New Left Books, London, 1982.
2 Miroslav Pecujlic, 'The Other Europe', paper presented at the UNU Conference on East–West Relations and Europe, Amsterdam, October 11–13, 1985.

2

Tradition and innovation in the British Peace Movement: towards an analytical framework

NIGEL YOUNG

Introduction

As the author of one of the chapters in this book remarks, it is difficult to talk of the British Peace Movement because of the range of definitions of the term 'peace', and the range of organisations and ideologies associated with the word, with a widely divergent set of objectives and traditions. One must go further than this and add that the idea of a single continuous Peace Movement in Britain is difficult to sustain because of the major discontinuities over the past 200 years. There have been periods when not only was public activity on peace issues reduced to a minimal level, but when some of the organisations and even intellectual traditions faded away. It is also the case that even in the periods of mass activity, such as those associated with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament between 1958 and 1963, and 1980 and 1985, no one organisation ever captured or totally 'represented' the Peace Movement. There were always large segments of the Peace Movement – for example the Committee of 100 in the 1960s (see Chapter 7) and the Women's Peace Movement in the 1980s (see Chapter 10) – which operated largely autonomously, despite some overlap of support.

This study represents a sampling of different dimensions of the Peace Movement (even, to some extent, different peace movements) at different periods. The themes, traditions and periods analysed and discussed are, in the editors' opinion, of central importance to an understanding of the development of the Peace Movement as a whole. By analysing critically and in detail both crucial periods (the inter-war years, for example, as in Chapter 5), *and* crucial ideo-

logical interrelationships (the Labour Party/Socialist/Marxist/Peace Movement relationships in all their complexity, for example, as in Chapters 4, 6 and 8), the study attempts to provide a solid core of sociological, political, and historical understanding of the British Peace Movement. Particular periods and themes *are* omitted: this does not purport to be an exhaustive chronological *history* of the Peace Movement. (Thus, for example, there is no sustained discussion of Welsh and Scottish anti-militarism, or of the pre-twentieth century religious and secular pacifist intellectual origins of the Peace Movement.)

The focus is, generally, on the more contemporary period, and upon analysis and critical discussion of the Movement and its problems, as opposed to detailed narrative description. Overall, the book delineates the main aspects of an extraordinarily diverse, deep-rooted and complex social and political phenomenon, and attempts to examine critically its successes and failures, its ideologies and politics, its problems and divisions, and, perhaps most important of all, its potential for the future.

This chapter attempts to place the study in context and create a set of classifications or typologies – as well as periodisations – into which the later chapters can be set.

Since the rest of the book is thematic rather than chronological and is concerned mainly with the post-1914 period, any kind of definition and analysis of the British Peace Movement needs to deal with the issue of classification and typologies of what would otherwise seem an amorphous, unmanageable and discontinuous phenomenon. I have tried to solve this methodological problem by looking at periodicity, and taking a 'one-shot photograph' of the movements as they had emerged in 1914 – and later deal with the range of intellectual approaches that had emerged in six major traditions by that period. And later in the chapter I illustrate some of the later traditions to emerge since 1914.

As a final footnote to the above it must be stressed that some groups and organisations which employ the term 'peace' are arguably not part of the Peace Movement at all, whilst a number of groups (feminists, ecologists, religious groups, civil libertarians, anti-nuclear power campaigners, humanists, and communitarians – as well as war-resistant groups outside the peace organisations) which do not directly associate with the term 'peace', perhaps *should* be included because of their