FOUR

"Fight the Power": Two Groups Mobilize for Peace

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It's a rainy San Francisco night, and an affinity group of Bay Area Peace Test (BAPT) is meeting to plan an upcoming act of civil disobedience at the Nevada Test Site. One woman volunteers to facilitate, and the group collectively constructs an agenda. First they deliberate alternative actions, making sure that everyone has a chance to express an opinion. They also discuss how they're going to maintain a sense of community in the Nevada desert, how they will support each other through the various hardships they're likely to encounter: radioactive dust, dehydration, possible police brutality. The meeting ends with an evaluation of the group's process, and finally, holding hands, they sing a freedom song.

At the tranquil conference facilities of Beyond War, another meeting is taking place. About eighty people from all over the country have been discussing the future direction of the organization. Paintings of religious symbols and aphorisms hang next to a large photograph of the Earth and lend an air of solemnity to the gathering. They have spent the weekend reporting on various team projects: seminars on environmentalism, study groups on myth and cosmology, cross-cultural exchanges. At this closing meeting, hosted by the president of Beyond War, people are invited to stand up and individually affirm their commitment to the new heterodox direction the organization is taking.

Bay Area Peace Test (BAPT) and Beyond War are both peace groups. BAPT, a local affiliate of the national American Peace Test, is a coalition that organizes civil disobedience campaigns against nuclear testing and arms production. Beyond War is a national organization dedicated to changing the way people think about war. It sponsors a variety of educational programs and cultural activities. Broadly, both

groups share similar goals: eliminating the necessity for war, reducing military arsenals, ending the ecological damage wrought by arms production and testing, and redirecting national resources from military to social programs.

Both groups are also guided by a similar orientation, one they share with other "new social movements" (NSMs). Wary of institutional politics, they neither lobby nor try to secure power for themselves. Instead, both groups focus their activities in the civil arena. They appeal directly to people, encouraging citizen initiatives, networks, and assemblies. Grass-roots organizing is a self-conscious strategy for both, as the process of building community and an alternative sense of identity is in itself considered a countervailing force to militarism.

Yet despite these similarities, there are some striking differences between the two groups, as the opening descriptions clearly underscore. BAPT believes in confrontation, Beyond War in harmony. BAPT engages in direct action, specifically acts of nonviolent civil disobedience. Beyond War purveys ideas, focusing on education, dialogue, and spiritual reflection. BAPT hopes to transform social relationships by creating prefigurative communities. Beyond War works to transform individual consciousness, believing that this will ultimately lead to a new thinking in the society as a whole. Even to hear them talk about one another, one might imagine they belong to entirely different movements. Each group sees the other as misguided. BAPT disdains Beyond War's tactics as elitist and naive; Beyond War thinks BAPT unnecessarily contentious and inflammatory. Neither thinks the other is addressing the root cause of the problem.

The differences between these two groups can best be understood by examining their respective assumptions about power. For BAPT power implies domination or control. In its most overt form, power involves the use of force—the force, for example, that police use to arrest protesters. (And of course even the threat of force can be coercive.) BAPT also identifies a second, more diffuse form of power: domination, which is inherent in the "system." The logic of the "system" and its bureaucratic apparatus, whether state or corporate, intrudes into all aspects of people's lives to control them. They are ruled by everything from test scores to draft status, social security numbers to credit ratings. Finally, BAPT goes even further to argue that domination is latent in all human interactions. Power is exercised in a variety of ways, through social roles, introjects, and norms, through language and semiotic convention. Even custom and procedures can be arenas of power.

Beyond War's conception of power differs sharply. For this group, power is neutral. Like energy, there is nothing inherently abusive about it. The power of the sun, for example, or a magnetic force can be used

either constructively or destructively. Certainly power can be abused to dominate others. When people have an atomized sense of themselves, they may marshal this energy to serve their own interests. They may attempt to exercise power *over* others. If, however, people understand that all life is interconnected, that their interests are inextricably linked with the good of the whole, power can lead to cooperation. It becomes simply a life-giving source of creativity. This is expressed as "the power *to*." Power is perceived variously as domination or affiliation depending on one's sense of self and place in the world.

These different notions of power lead to important distinctions between the two groups. Curiously, the literature on "new social movements" undertheorizes the whole dimension of power and so is unable to make useful distinctions between groups within the same movement. "The self-defense of 'society' against the state (and the market economy)," an abandonment of "revolutionary dreams in favor of . . . self-limiting radicalism," and a focus on "forms of communication and collective identity"[1] are seen by theorists as the defining characteristics of NSMs. Nothing is said about new representations of power.

In this chapter I challenge the prevailing understanding of NSMs. By fleshing out two distinct notions of power in BAPT and Beyond War, I show how each leads to entirely different approaches to politics and social change. I trace how different strategies, tactics, and internal organizational structures emerge from each group's assumptions. And finally, assuming these notions of power to be representative of two modal tendencies, I look at the implications this holds generally for theories of NSMs.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT POWER IN BAPT AND BEYOND WAR

"BAPT doesn't really exist," I was told by one activist. "It's just a cluster of affinity groups." And indeed BAPT is not an organization in the conventional sense, with an office, letterhead stationery, and dues-paying members. It is a coalition of peace groups, anarchist collectives, and independent activists, loosely affiliated with the national American Peace Test (APT). BAPT participates in direct-action campaigns around the Bay Area, at weapons labs, and at the sites of defense contractors. For the last few years BAPT has also organized the Bay Area's participation in civil resistance at the Nevada Test Site. BAPT handles local publicity for the actions, including outreach to schools, churches, and community groups, and raises funds to subsidize those who want to travel to the test site but can't afford to go. BAPT also coordinates transportation from the Bay Area to Nevada and conducts training in

nonviolent resistance as well in the legal and political ramifications of civil disobedience.

The group is almost exclusively white. The "hard core," those who do most of the organizing, have rejected their predominantly middle-class backgrounds for the life of full-time activists. They support themselves by taking on a variety of part-time, often menial jobs. Those who participate in the actions are mostly of the new middle class, with professional or paraprofessional jobs (medical technicians, union organizers, writers, students). There is a fairly equal mix of men and women.

At BAPT, *power* has extremely negative connotations. In the words of one activist, "I'm scared of power—all the ways people use power over you. It's power that's gotten us into the trouble we're in." It matters little which particular class or system of authority is pulling the levers. Power in itself is something to be feared because it implies a relationship of domination. BAPT recognizes three different forms of power. Firstly, power is coercion, whether force is actually used or, as is more often the case, there is an implied threat of force. Secondly, power is reflected in the state and the market's often invisible encroachment into civil society. And finally, power manifests itself in the myriad "micro" contexts of everyday life.

The most straightforward form of power, BAPT believes, is the power the state wields over its citizens, which despite the appearance of democratic restraints in this country goes increasingly unchecked. The state has unprecedented coercive force at its disposal, though it is rarely marshaled against the civilian population directly. Yet when individuals or groups challenge the state's authority, even in something as benign as a church sanctuary program, they experience the brunt of that force. The state puts them under surveillance and arrests and prosecutes them.

BAPT points to a second form of power: the encroachment of the state and marketplace into all aspects of life. The more the logic of the marketplace and state bureaucracy inserts itself into all arenas of society, the more we see the breakdown of important civil institutions. When all human interactions are mediated by bureaucratic regulations, people lose the ability to deal directly with one another. Thus bureaucratic mediation undermines the ability of communities to regulate their own affairs and forces them into an ever-greater dependence on the state. If a weapons plant jeopardizes the health of the community, for example, local residents, rather than organize to shut down the plant, are just as likely to rely on another state agency to mediate, either state government, or the Environmental Protection Agency, or perhaps even the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. This estrangement of people from one another and from their ability to de-

termine the conditions of their own lives represents a more insidious and possibly more dangerous exercise of power than coercion, BAPT contends.

BAPT argues, however, that our government is not necessarily more malign or our corporate managers more pernicious than elsewhere. Large bureaucratic structures simply invite the abuse of power because of their centralized character. But even if we could do away with these institutions of authority, domination would not disappear, for they are only the most explicit manifestation of power. Power relations and domination exist also in the myriad interactions of everyday life. They creep into all relationships, even the most seemingly benign: between parents and children, between lovers, or between members of the same peace group. Power is exercised when we are forced to conform to particular roles. It is woven into our work routines, into our values, even into our language. In some ways, BAPT feels, we must be even more vigilant about power relations in these "micro" contexts because they are much less explicit and therefore easier to miss. But they are just as dangerous.

Beyond War is a distinctly different organization. Formed in 1982, it emerged out of Creative Initiative, a nonprofit foundation offering workshops in personal growth and communications skills. A group of people affiliated with the organization were so awed by the magnitude of the nuclear threat that they pledged to dedicate themselves to the eradication of war. Beyond War has grown considerably since that time; it is difficult to estimate the number of people associated with the group, because it is not a membership organization. Circulation figures for their newsletter, however, suggest that approximately 10,000 people may be currently involved.

Like BAPT, Beyond War is also predominantly white. Many couples are involved in the organization, with one partner working (usually at a professional job) and the other volunteering on a full-time basis at Beyond War. The full-time volunteers (both men and women) have often given up lucrative professional careers to devote themselves exclusively to Beyond War organizing.

The group undertakes a variety of consciousness-changing projects. It develops educational television and radio programs, conducts seminars, and disseminates literature. It also sponsors a host of cross-cultural events, including art exhibits and musical performances, international satellite conferences, and individual acts of citizen diplomacy.

Now that the nuclear threat no longer seems to generate the same sense of urgency it once did, Beyond War is reassessing its mission. Many at Beyond War find themselves concerned about other social problems, including homelessness, drug abuse, and the degradation of

the environment. It is possible that a new organization will emerge with this new set of priorities, but the national office seems unperturbed. Beyond War considers itself a social movement rather than an organization, and if the movement should take on a new form, so be it.

Unlike BAPT, people at Beyond War are not at all wary of power. They feel that power is a neutral force and can assume different forms. "Power over" describes a posture of domination and control, but "power to" is a relationship of wholeness, of connection with all life. This power emanates from the life force, from the creative energy that is latent in everyone and everything. The challenge is to move from the first system of power to the second, from domination to affiliation.

The notion that *power* necessarily implies power over another, its association with institutions of authority and even with force, is misguided, according to Beyond War. It is only possible to have power over others when you deny any affinity with them, when you turn them into something wholly other. "This," in the words of a Beyond War volunteer, "describes the Hobbesian universe which we have inhabited," in which life is a struggle of each against all. Individuals pit themselves against the alien outsider, zealots against the infidel, righteous nation against an evil empire. To the extent that we identify ourselves in these limited ways, we also define our interests in correspondingly limited terms and find enemies all around—people we need to subdue or prevent from trying to subdue us.

But Beyond War members are confident that if people develop a sense of identity that reaches beyond the members of their immediate group—clan, religion, race, geographic region—and includes all life, then the notion of power over others will simply melt away, and all people will be able to enjoy the power to. As we come to recognize the unity of all life (that "we are one") we understand that the well-being of each person or group is inextricably linked to the welfare of everyone else. We come to redefine our interests in terms of what benefits the whole. The image of an organism is an apt metaphor for social relationships. We see that all life on the planet is interwoven, that we are all part of an integrated living system: a single breathing organism in which each diverse part has its own unique function.

When we recognize ourselves as part of this undifferentiated whole, Beyond War members believe, we realize that relationships of domination are unadaptive, even absurd. This spiritual insight makes political power virtually irrelevant. We need look no further than the relationship between mother and child to find a poignant example of the power to. As one Beyond War volunteer pointed out, "a mother would never use her power to dominate her child. She is profoundly connected to him. She uses her power to nurture him." This kind of con-

nectedness becomes the prototype for all relationships in the human family.

Whether we constitute power relations as power over or power to depends on how broadly we define ourselves and our interests, according to Beyond War. There is nothing about power itself, nor anything in us as humans—greed, irrationality, or simply the will to dominate—that is inherently corrupting. Our perceptions are at the root of power dynamics, and we can shift from one system of power to the other with a gestalt switch.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

At one of the BAPT outreach meetings, a young man asked what the protesters hoped to accomplish in Nevada. A woman who was returning to the test site for the second time replied, "It helps make their power visible." This oblique reference to the state highlights an important objective of the test site actions: to make the exercise of state power explicit. When ordinary citizens protest government policies, albeit nonviolently, they come up against the full power of the state. Even during a training session in which arrests were simulated, one of the participants confessed that she felt devastated: "There was something really frightening about this kind of confrontation with the police." And another responded, "I grew up in the suburbs. We'd say, 'There goes Joe, our friendly neighborhood policeman.' Now when I see a policeman, I don't trust him, or anything he represents. I'm not sure what I trust." When people are arrested, imprisoned, sometimes even brutalized, the inherently adversarial nature of our relationship to the state and the coercive nature of state power become palpable, BAPT argues. The state tries to position itself as social guardian, defending us from enemies abroad and "anarchy" at home. But being arrested for expressing political dissent forces one to look at whose interests the state actually serves.

BAPT encourages people to confront this power nonviolently by refusing to acknowledge the state's legitimacy when it behaves coercively. The means of confrontation include passively resisting arrest and refusing to be processed through the penal system (not giving one's name, refusing to post bail, not cooperating in jail). The way to confront the coercive power of the state is to simply "withhold our cooperation from those who abuse power."

The thought of fighting state power on its own terms may seem sisyphean, inexorably frustrating and compromised. After all, the apparatus is so gargantuan, the control it exercises often so mediated, where does one begin? But in the Nevada desert—stark, barren, sixty

miles from civilization—the conflict is put into sharp relief. The struggle is over land. Who controls it? Who, if anyone, owns it? In the geography of contemporary protest, the test site has become a fault line between the state and society.

The protests in Nevada are an effort to "reclaim the land" from state control. This land was granted to the Western Shoshone Nation as early as 1863, but after a century of federal maneuvering, various state agencies now control it without having renegotiated the original agreement. The Department of Energy exercises jurisdiction over the test site itself, a piece of land about the size of Rhode Island. The Bureau of Land Management administers the surrounding land.

The protesters deny the state's jurisdiction over this land. As one BAPT member stated, "the line there is a line they have drawn." It is an imaginary line, and "it's important to cross it." The peace camp is pitched on one side of this arbitrary line, and representatives of the state are poised on the other side, ready to defend the boundary.

The state stakes out the land quite clearly, with barbed-wire fences, cattle guards, and holding pens for protesters, but activists find many different ways of crossing the boundary. During the April 1989 actions, over 1,500 people "trespassed" onto DOE land (and were arrested). Most who crossed onto the test site brought visitor permits from the Shoshone, underscoring the latter's continuing claim to the land. Activists staged blockades of the road leading to the test site. They tied masks or wove patterns into the fence. And over a hundred people risked both exposure to radiation and long prison terms by launching incursions several miles into the test site. One woman hiked fifty miles to the control point with two others, put up a banner that read "Food Not Bombs," and chained herself to the complex.

Pushing back against overt state power is only one target of the Nevada actions, however. BAPT talks about the struggle against a more covert and insidious form of power: the intrusion of the "system" into all domains of life. Just as the capitalist economy attempts to put a consumer product between every itch and scratch, bureaucratic logic inserts a regulation into every human interaction. Nothing is more harmful to a sense of community. People become insulated from one another. They grow used to having all their relationships mediated, by licenses and contracts, laws and procedures. They even come to believe that state mediation is the only way their interests will be served. People are out for themselves, following this logic, but the state is there to protect us.

The antidote to this alienation from one another is community. Indeed, according to BAPT, the test site actions are "as much to show we are a community as to fight nuclear testing." It is a way to rebuild bonds

between people in a system that is designed to make the individual feel weak and alone. While the government conducts its nuclear tests in Nevada, BAPT is conducting its own tests—peace tests—which are experiments in self-organizing and self-determining community.

At the peace camp, participation in all work—the provision of food and water, cleanup and recycling, medical care, and transportation—is voluntary. People are asked simply to contribute whatever they can. In the words of one activist, "You take what you need, give what you can. . . . What happens: strangers become friends, friends become family, family becomes community! . . . That's a movement."

Through both work and play the spirit of community is rekindled. The camp reverberates with music and singing. People dance into the night. They stage solemn processions, comic theater, and impromptu ceremonies. They construct giant weavings, create sculptures and masks, or paint murals. It may seem vaguely quixotic to deploy balloons and banners against the might of nuclear weapons, but peace campers believe that one can confront the massively destructive power of these weapons only by undermining the system that produces them. They affirm community in the face of alienation, life in the face of death, dignity in the face of barbarism.

In contrast, Beyond War tends to ignore the realm of politics altogether and focuses instead on changing the way people think. For members, consciousness is the basis of social change. Peace is only possible, for example, when there is a consensus about certain values, chief among them the unity of life. But the strategy is not strictly educational, even though the group refers to itself as an educational foundation, because abstract knowledge is not enough. Social change also involves a decision to live one's life differently. It requires a profound personal transformation that verges on the spiritual. Thus it is not surprising that there is a decidedly gnostic cast to the organization's beliefs and practices.[2] And it also makes sense that its strategy follows a basically religious model, a tripartite process of conversion, living testament, and proselytizing.

First comes the conversion process. Because the roots of war are embedded in a particular world view, change can occur only with a "paradigm shift" to a new perceptual framework. Thus Beyond War works to bring about a transformation of consciousness by exposing people to a new way of thinking. It offers a series of workshops, beginning with the "interest evening." Here speakers introduce the Beyond War principles, the most important of which is the "perennial principle: I am one. We are one. All is one".[3] Not merely an ontological statement, this principle is a revelation, a "mystical memory of the garden of harmony, the primal unity of all life." Of course spiritual insight

alone is insufficient. Knowledge must be accompanied by decision, a decision to live one's life differently. This is a profound commitment, and therefore should not be entered into lightly.[4]

But knowledge and decision must ultimately be converted into action if they are to lead to social change. People's lives must become a testament to the Beyond War principles and, like any spiritual discipline, the practice of making one's actions congruent with beliefs becomes a consuming project. Beyond War helps people in this process by offering "implications seminars." Members are given the opportunity to reflect on the personal ramifications of the Beyond War principles. What does it mean, for example, to resolve conflict without using violence? How can people learn to live without enemies, without casting adversaries in the role of the other? How can people work together with others to build a world beyond war? And most important, how can individuals translate the principle "we are one" into daily practice?[5]

If the organization is to usher in a world without war, this shift in consciousness must occur on a broad scale. Therefore, individuals must work together to proselytize, to spread the truth that "we are one." They must work to build "agreement" about the new mode of thinking. As one Beyond War member put it, "we are committed to something great, and then spreading it." Volunteers are extremely dedicated and resourceful in doing this. In 1984, for example, seventeen families pulled up roots in the Bay Area and moved to strategically selected states around the country, much in the same way missionaries might do, to spread the word. Small house meetings, seminars, convocations, and various journalistic media are all used to get the word out. The goal is not to aggrandize the organization, but rather to build consensus about the Beyond War principles. A member from the Pacific Northwest stated succinctly, "We're not trying to build an organization, but to purvey an idea. After all, organizations come and go, but ideas live forever."

The importance of ideas in this movement is patently clear. Peace is directly related to consciousness. Beyond War works to develop a critical mass of people who embrace the new mode of thinking because, it believes, this is the surest way to eliminate war. Drawing on marketing research, it has concluded that 50 percent of the population must be exposed to the Beyond War principles for them to be accepted by 5 percent. But with a mere 5 percent, the new mode of thinking will be "embedded" in the culture, and with 20 percent it will have become "unstoppable." Thus, the dissemination of these ideas is the most important thing people can do to end war. And with Gorbachev's "new thinking" the foundation of so many of the changes in the world, Beyond War believes it is right on track.

INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

For BAPT, concern about power is a major influence on how it organizes internally. Personal empowerment is not just a movement shibboleth, not simply an effective strategy for organizing: "Reclaiming a sense of personal power is a major goal of the actions." It is an essential feature of BAPT's politics, integral to the elimination of nuclear weapons. In contemporary society, BAPT contends, "we see masses of people kept and keeping themselves uninformed and powerless." A deference for authority is evident throughout our culture—in hospitals, in schools, in the workplace, and especially in the defense establishment. BAPT believes that the direct opposition to nuclear weapons is only part of the struggle. It is equally important, it argues, to oppose the kind of authority relations that make nuclearism possible. Wherever experts, elites, hierarchies, or classes emerge, they must be fought. Not surprisingly, then, BAPT tries to be scrupulous about decentralizing power within the organization.

The lack of formal structure within BAPT is designed to encourage the direct participation of all members. The basic organizational unit is the affinity group. These groups emerge out of neighborhood, workplace, or political affiliations. Comprising anywhere between five and twenty people, they are a decentralized base of operations for planning and carrying out acts of civil disobedience, and are also intended to be a source of community and support for activists. Sometimes affinity groups must select an individual to represent them, but whenever possible, direct democratic participation is preferred.

Affinity groups are based on the principle of sharing power equally among all members. Usually, a consensus process is used at meetings and is seen as a way to elicit contributions from all group members so that "everyone has power over what happens and the group is able to come to an agreement that everyone can live with." It is considered by many at BAPT the principal means of empowering individuals. (Personal empowerment does not necessarily imply harmony, however; conflict often arises not only over substantive issues but, ironically, over the best process for empowering the group.)

There are no formal leaders at BAPT, "no mimicking of the establishment hierarchy." Each group has several roles, which rotate: usually a facilitator, a note taker, a timekeeper, and a "vibes watcher"—someone who monitors the emotional state of the group. The facilitator guides the group, and so potentially has more power than the others. But facilitation is supposed to be nondirective, and everyone is encouraged to take responsibility for monitoring the group's process. Facilitators are frequently interrupted with process suggestions and reminders.

Like any other organization, BAPT needs writers, public speakers, and people who can conduct training or act as media liaisons. While some of these areas demand particular skills or experience, the group tries to be sensitive to the need for transferring skills as quickly as possible, so that power doesn't begin to congeal in the hands of a few dedicated activists. Every effort is made to enable all group members to perform different functions, and because roles are rotated, members seem to have little ego investment in their positions. This was demonstrated rather forcefully on the eve of a mass action in Nevada, during a particularly tense planning meeting. A BAPT activist thought that they were getting bogged down and suggested that the facilitator allow someone to take his place. He stood aside gracefully, and a woman stepped in. If his pride was bruised by this encounter, he did not show it.

Of course this self-reflexivity about power can reach the point of infinite regress. The group can become so meticulous that it creates a new "process elite" and can virtually paralyze itself when concern about the process of mobilization takes on a greater significance than the action itself.[6]

Beyond War, on the other hand, is relatively unreflexive about power relations within the organization. Members believe that abuses of power are a result of perceptual distortions, a failure to recognize that we are all one. They assume that once people experience the unity of all life, a profound sense of connectedness replaces any impulse toward domination, and the notion of power over becomes essentially irrelevant. Ironically, the emphasis on unity tends to obscure power dynamics within the organization and leaves Beyond War quite vulnerable to internal forms of domination and control.

Ostensibly Beyond War promotes a decentralization of power. It argues, for example, that "the individual is determinative," that each person must take the initiative to make peace happen. And of course, the notion that "we are one" implies we are all equal. But, in fact, the internal dynamics at Beyond War seem to engender conformity rather than personal empowerment. Conformity is generated in two ways. Firstly, all the activities of the organization are tightly managed, but it is unclear by whom because the hierarchy is invisible and thus difficult to challenge.

For example, who is chosen as a delegate to the USSR, who will speak at a particular convocation, who is invited to the Beyond War award ceremony—it is unclear exactly how these and many other decisions are made. It seems to be Beyond War strategy to recruit well-

educated, successful, and financially secure individuals—those who can influence "opinion leaders." How was that strategy arrived at, and can it be challenged? There is a policy of incrementally dispensing information about the new mode of thinking. Who determines what knowledge is a prerequisite for the more intense weekend seminars? These decisions are not made consensually or through an open forum, but seem to be made behind the scenes and then handed down to the organization.

Even the workshops and meetings are highly controlled. Only approved Beyond War materials are used. Agendas are tightly structured.[7] New facilitators are paired with veteran members, who oversee the proceedings and generally ensure that things are on the right track. And the conference facilities are governed by a rigid set of rules. Even informal gatherings are subject to tacit codes of behavior. For example, when a participant brought a jug of wine to an evening pot-luck meeting, she was ushered into the kitchen and informed, with some embarrassment, that "we don't drink at Beyond War," even though individually most of the people in the room had no such prohibition against alcohol.

A second way the internal dynamics generate conformity is the "new mode of thinking." It takes on the character of a credo, which people adopt somewhat unquestioningly, and there is little tolerance for dissent.

The new mode of thinking requires a leap of faith, a kind of surrender. The decision to adopt this arcane knowledge comes first, with a promise that deeper understanding will come later. Individuals cannot embrace this new world view until they have cut completely with the past. Old identities, ideas and beliefs, ties to family, ethnicity, or religion are all entrapments, things that bind them to the "old mode of thinking" and prevent them from identifying with the "Truth." They must first shed the past and make a total commitment to a new identity based on unity and the good of the "whole." They can then work out the subtleties of this new world view in workshops and seminars.

But the "new mode of thinking" tends to reduce complex social phenomena like war or slavery to simple formulas, and there is little room for alternative explanations. For example, when someone in a workshop came up with a materialist interpretation of war, the facilitator responded with, "That's an interesting concept. Perhaps you could hold that thought. We're going to get to it later," but the topic was never mentioned again. It is apparent that members are not supposed to challenge Beyond War tenets, that they are to have only positive thoughts about the group, its leaders, and its ideas.

Former Beyond War volunteers report that when they felt skeptical about something, it seemed like heresy. They assumed that the problem lay with them. Perhaps they had failed to grasp some essential principle or were insufficiently committed to the movement. If they actually expressed their doubts to others, they usually encountered overt resistance. Challenges tend to be met with rationalizations: "Yes, when I found out that the Beyond War award went to Reagan and Gorbachev, I was shocked too. But. . . ." If the challenge poses a threat to internal authority, it is often met with a Beyond War slogan, such as "You've got to trust the process" or "You seem to be preoccupying yourself with an enemy here." Doubters sometimes even experience stony hostility. One man wouldn't talk to me or even make eye contact after I challenged something he said.

But perhaps harder than explicit resistance is the internalized sense of guilt dissenters feel. If one accepts the premise that individual well-being is linked to the good of the whole, it seems unconscionable to block the progress of the group, particularly a group with such a lofty goal as world peace. Disagreement seems like an act of hubris, a demonstration of individualistic "old thinking." And so Beyond War volunteers suspend their own judgments in favor of the Beyond War principles, they trust the process, and subject their own power to the power of the group.

Nowhere has this been more clearly evinced than with the recent shifts in the organization's focus. The United States hasn't dismantled a single warhead since Beyond War was founded, and yet the board issued a statement in December 1988 declaring that its goals had largely been met. Eighty Beyond War volunteers from around the country concurred unflinchingly that the move away from the nuclear issue was appropriate, that the "discovery" process to arrive at new organizational objectives was healthy, and that the organization was "right where we need to be." Beyond War's very reason for being was being questioned by the leadership, and yet there was not one dissenting voice.[8]

POWER AND THE PEACE MOVEMENT

How is it that theories of new social movements (NSMs) cannot account for these important differences between BAPT and Beyond War? I believe it is because they ignore the key concept for making sense of these differences: orientations to power. Instead, they tend to distinguish between groups on the basis of their "modern" or "antimodern" tendencies. This framework leads them to conflate groups as diverse as BAPT and Beyond War (both would be considered "antimodern"), and

it also prompts them to disapprove of groups that they perceive have an "antimodern" or "fundamentalist" strain.

Fundamentalist groups reject modernity, these theorists believe, and instead want to recreate some kind of bygone halcyon era; thus they are open to charges of romanticism and regressive utopianism. In their tacit dialogue with Marxism, NSM theorists want to defend movements against such charges and so focus most of their attention on "modern" groups.

Many NSMs take modernity as given, the theory suggests. These groups do not want to turn back the clock but to preserve and advance those aspects of the enlightenment tradition that are positive, while challenging those that are not. Andrew Arato and Jean Cohen argue, for example, that for many groups, "it is not cultural modernity, per se, but its selective institutionalization and resulting cultural impoverishment that is problematic."[9] Jürgen Habermas also cautions that the increasing complexity of modern life is not *inherently* pathological, only those features that contribute to the rationalization of the lifeworld.[10] Movements must be able to distinguish between the two.

Although most civic institutions—schools, the media, unions, political parties—have become seriously compromised, they still contain an emancipatory potential.[11] The effective "modern" NSMs are able to recognize the dual capacities of these civic forums and to protect and even extend them. Even further, these groups take an offensive role, attempting to reform economic and political systems from within civil society. Cohen argues that it is important for NSMs to counter the fundamentalist tendency to completely disengage from the political process.[12]

From the perspective of these theorists, a peace group like SANE/Freeze would be the prototypical NSM. This group organizes in civil society. Canvassers go door-to-door attempting to engage people in peace issues. They use journalistic media to educate and mobilize. They encourage citizens to become involved in the debate around defense by organizing large assemblies and conferences. But they also attempt to reform political institutions through the initiative process and extensive lobbying. In fact, they are primarily a political pressure group.

On the one hand, this "modern"-"antimodern" distinction makes sense in light of the problems the U.S. peace movement faces. After all, what is the best way to confront the threat of global annihilation and ecocide, problems of such stunning magnitude? It is reasonable to have some tangible goals—to try to redirect U.S. defense policy and to nudge the economy toward civilian production. The impetus may come from within civil society, through citizen initiatives, mass rallies, and referendums, and for these to be successful, the movement may have to reinvigorate some foundering civic institutions. But if the peace movement is to be successful it must place pressure on the institutions that perpetuate militarism, something "antimodern" groups are unwilling to do.

It is important to recognize, however, that many supposedly "antimodern" groups like BAPT and Beyond War view "nuclearism" as an outcome and not really the crux of what they struggle against. They believe that a system of power is at the heart of the problem, a particularly modern or even postmodern system of power that makes "nuclearism" possible. Consequently, they do not simply fight militarism in its various manifestations. In the words of the popular rap song, they "fight the power."

To be sure, this concern with power is not solely the province of the peace movement or even of political actors, for that matter. Intellectual and artistic currents have converged with the political on the central significance of power. Virtually every intellectual enterprise has been touched by this reconceptualization of power, and while Foucault is the avatar, the theme has been taken up by many others. The project is very much embedded in the historical moment.

Part of this project involves identifying the locus of power and how it works, which is difficult to pin down. There is something irreducible about power. It is not only vested in institutions, in the state apparatus and the marketplace; it is much more ubiquitous. It exerts itself in internalized values and beliefs; it is woven into language; it is manifest in rules and customs and procedures.

At first glance it may seem that the peace movement is operating within a more monolithic framework of power. It may seem that a leader with a finger on the button represents the apotheosis of premodern sovereign authority. But in fact it is not experienced that way. People have a diffused sense of this power. They tend to remove "a human hand from the trigger" and instead think of "the bomb" as an all-powerful force unto itself. It is not a particular individual or party that is responsible, but a labyrinthine system in which human actors are caught up. The power becomes internalized as a vague sense of hopelessness and fatalism in the face of an arbitrary holocaust.[13]

Power is structured into the discourse on defense. Who is permitted to speak and what are they permitted to speak about? (The logic of deterrence is never questioned, for example.) Even the timbre is preestablished. "Rational" value-free language sets the tenor, which serves to sanitize the violence being considered and to purge, in the words of a consultant to the Department of Defense, the "influence of 'guilty'

scientists and 'religious, political-theoretical, and frankly emotional premises.' "[14] In other words, it removes any moral reasoning from a discussion of defense.

Power is also manifest in the social values that sanction violence, which fetishize technology and a mastery of nature. In short, the postmodern system of power is not something that can be understood in reified terms. It is not found only in structures and institutions. It is not even always strictly coercive. Rather, it is ubiquitous, multiplex, and circuitous. It is something that seeps into every corner of people's lives.

With this in mind, BAPT and Beyond War's strategies seem less like a fundamentalist or "antimodern" search for a lost Arcadia, and more like a postmodern concern with the multiple layers of power. Interestingly, despite its centrality within other theoretical frameworks, the complexities of power are largely ignored in the NSM literature.

Arato and Cohen, for example, in their recapitulation of Habermas's theory of communicative action, argue implicitly for a unidimensional conception of power: the power of the "system." The "system colonizes the lifeworld" through the media of political power and money. (The very metaphor of colonization smacks of traditional sovereign notions of power.) Even if civic life has become partially corrupted by the incursion of system power, it nevertheless still contains an immanent emancipatory potential, which can be approached through the revitalization of institutions in civil society. Presumably then there are interstices, arenas of civil society, that are exempt from considerations of power.[15]

Touraine understands the character of modern or "postmodern" power better than the other NSM theorists. He argues, for example, that "individuals, and groups [are] being confined in thicker and thicker networks of signals, rules, and interdictions" that are virtually inescapable, and yet he too sees the dual nature of these forms, and the possibility that people can free themselves "from the constraints of order, or, most often, of using them to [their] own advantage."[16]

The "modern"-"antimodern" framework of these theorists obscures an essential feature of the NSM project—a concern with power—and also obscures important distinctions between groups within the same movement.

CONCLUSION

BAPT and Beyond War both attempt to confront the system of power that underlies "nuclearism," and both challenge traditional understandings of what that system entails, but, as we have seen, they do so in fundamentally different ways. They have divergent assumptions about

the specific nature of this power and are therefore drawn to different forms of mobilization.

For BAPT, power is negative. It always implies domination. It may involve outright coercion or it may be an unintended consequence of bureaucratic control. Most significantly, it can insert itself into any relationship—no interaction is exempt. Like a spider's web in which we are all trapped, there is something ineluctable and pervasive about it. The best we can do is be constantly vigilant to guard against any emerging encrustations.

Beyond War, on the other hand, sees nothing inherently malign about power. In fact, members believe that it has a constructive potential. But the prerequisite for the nonexploitive exercise of power is a moral consensus about human interdependence. People must share a sense that we do not exist each against all, but rather each for all.

Does this antinomy of power have any relevance for other NSMs? I believe it does. It is probably most fruitful to think of it, not in terms of rigid categories, but as ideal types. Then we can begin to trace the same modal tendencies in other contemporary U.S. movements.

Consider, for example, the environmental movement. We find, on the one hand, the militant environmental group Earth First! Like BAPT, its members are suspicious of power, and specifically the modern industrial system of power. They also engage in civil disobedience, including what they call ecotage or monkeywrenching. And like BAPT, they are careful not to reproduce the same power relations they are attempting to subvert.

Contrast this with the Northern California Green Alliance. For this group, like Beyond War, the root cause of contemporary enviromental problems is a particular perceptual framework. Fritjof Capra, author of a book on Green politics and active in the Bay Area Green movement, argues that a "self-assertive value system" is the basis for the world's major problems. For the Green Alliance, politics begins with the recognition that every aspect of life is interconnected. Understandably then, the Greens focus much of their activity on public education, on changing the way people think about the world and their place in it. They sponsor lectures and discussion groups on spirituality and Green theory; they plan Earth Day events and solstice rituals.

The same polarity is evident in the women's movement. Take, for example, a group like BACOR (Bay Area Coalition against Operation Rescue). It is one of the many groups around the country that have sprung up in defense of abortion rights. Like BAPT they regard power as domination or control, and they see it as similarly ubiquitous. The patriarchal system of power is exercised through political, legal, and religious institutions. (It is, of course, the Supreme Court that handed

down the *Webster* decision.) But BACOR believes patriarchal power also manifests itself in less overt ways, in the "right to life" discourse, even in the fact that men presume jurisdiction over women's bodies. Because patriarchy is so pervasive, BACOR has little faith in the political process as a way to ensure that women maintain control over their lives. It relies on direct action. It organizes demonstrations, protest rallies, and boycotts. It faces confrontation and arrest to keep abortion clinics open and defend clients from harassment. And though members don't follow strict consensus process, like BAPT, they tend to be reflexive about the internal politics of the organization.

The profusion of women's spirituality groups stands in sharp contrast to more militant organizations like BACOR. Small and informal, they are reminiscent of the consciousness-raising groups of the 1970s. Like Beyond War, they conceive of power as a neutral energy, a *power within* or *power to*. By learning to channel this energy, these women believe, they "transform inner foes into allies." They begin to heal themselves and their relationships with others, and from that point they can begin to heal some of the world's ills. Like Beyond War, they believe that personal transformation is the basis for social change. They teach a female-centered spirituality, one based on harmony with nature, wholeness, and integration. They study women's history ("herstory"), learn to practice women's arts like herbology, midwifery, and healing, and they study myth and ritual.

Beyond War probably has more in common with these women's spirituality groups or with the Northern California Green Alliance than it does with BAPT. And correspondingly, when BAPT talks about "the movement," it is often referring to organizations like BACOR or militant environmental groups rather than other peace groups like Beyond War. Movements are defined as much by their assumptions about power as by an issue like peace or feminism. Power is probably the central category for understanding NSMs. It enables us to distinguish NSMs from movements, like labor, that have more traditional understandings of power relations. It is therefore crucial in determining what is distinctively new about "new" social movements. It also permits a more nuanced articulation of the differences within those social movements that have been classified as "new" and have been previously viewed as homogeneous.

AFTERWORD: THERE'S MADNESS IN OUR METHOD

My introduction to participant observation was Alison Lurie's novel *Imaginary Friends*. The book tells the story of two sociologists from upstate New York who undertake the study of a rather bizarre cult. One of them winds up falling in love with the high priestess of the group, and the other gets so carried away with the role he is playing that he eventually comes to believe he is Ro of the planet Varna, and descends into madness. With this vivid image of how *not* to do research implanted in my brain, I thought I'd be somewhat fortified against the vagaries of doing field research. This was naive.

In the course of doing participant observation, I slid into my own insanity. I came to feel like Eve—the one with the three faces. I was doing research at three different field sites and I developed a separate identity at each one. I was simultaneously trying to keep a grip on my identity as a researcher. And I even hoped that there would be some small piece of me left over to maintain a private self. I quickly abandoned the latter as hopelessly delusional and concentrated instead on juggling the alter egos.

Initially I had one site and one role: I worked at SANE/Freeze and I defined myself primarily as a researcher. Life was easy in those days. I simply observed everything. Even when nothing was happening, I'd do things like draw floor plans, document the different kinds of herbal teas, or note the health of office plants.

But my data prompted me to redefine my project, and I went from working in one field site to three. (SANE/Freeze had formed a coalition with BAPT, and for purposes of comparison I felt it necessary to add Beyond War to my study.) This made things more complicated, but I still defined myself primarily as a researcher at that time, so my main tasks, as I saw it, were to observe and to "belong."

I did my best to install myself in the three organizations. I worked at two of them doing things like organizing information evenings and fundraisers. At all three, I attended countless meetings, briefings, seminars. I also hung out, went for walks, drank coffee, and even drank beer for the sake of my research. At first, I was a conscious dissembler. I molded myself to fit in, and usually I played the role of being a group member rather convincingly, but part of me was always vigilant for juicy material, something that would look good in my field notes.

As I spent more time at each field site, however, by degrees I actually became the roles I was playing. They took on a life of their own. I was caught up in the web of relationships, in the everyday dramas of each group. I felt like I had a stake in what happened at each organization. I found it difficult, if not impossible, to work next to people without forming attachments, without beginning to care about them as individuals and without having them make some personal demands on me. And oddly, even though I spent less time in all three organizations than I would have spent at an ordinary 9-to-5 job, I became obsessed. I lived, breathed, even dreamt about my field sites.

Moving between different groups engendered a kind of dislocated personality. My identity kept shifting, and I found myself seeing things differently depending on which organizational perspective I brought to the experience. To compound the disorientation, my eyes as a researcher saw things differently than as a group member. I experienced a gestalt switch every two minutes.

It happened gradually and imperceptibly, but one day I realized that I had begun to feel more distant from one group, and at the same time I had become completely enmeshed in the other two. Beyond War proved to be a difficult field site for me. They seemed to want not only my time and commitment but my soul. It was an organization of believers and consequently a bit clubby. It was frequently painful to be there. I felt like an infidel, an outsider.

Both SANE/Freeze and BAPT, on the other hand, were open organizations, eager for people's participation. I slipped comfortably into the role of insider. The SANE/Freeze staff invited me to become a board member. People at BAPT expressed confidence that I could hold down the fort in San Francisco while most of them went to Nevada to begin the action. And not only did these groups trust me, but I had become incrementally committed to them. Little things gave it away, like the fantasies I had of abandoning academia and running away to join the ranks of the peace army, or the responsibility I felt for SANE/Freeze's financial solvency.

I was both gratified and terrified by my status in these groups. I felt I was in danger of becoming so firmly ensconced in these organizations that I would lose touch with my identity as a researcher. I was being pulled in too many directions. But at least there was one advantage to this identity crisis: it helped my research. The role I assumed in each organization, how people responded to me, the kinds of personal relationships and loyalties I formed, how I was integrated into the group—all this gave me invaluable information about these organizations.

Fortunately, I was able to get a bit of distance at the Nevada Test Site. It wasn't deliberate; it just seemed to happen. Most BAPTers were ecstatic at the beauty of the desert. I, on the other hand, was none too fond of the radioactive dust and the cactus thorns that pierced my shoes. Moreover, the prospect of being handcuffed and held in a pen under a sweltering 100-degree sun for eight hours, without water or latrine, seemed like undue physical hardship. I reproached myself with the memory of all those researchers who troop off to face unknown dangers in hostile field sites. But as I was throwing up in a cheap Las Vegas motel (accommodations my fellow protesters disdained as far too cushy) from drinking contaminated water, I resolved that my next participant observation project would be studying the leisure habits of the very wealthy. Perhaps, despite all these multiple identities, there was an essential self after all, someone with a predilection for comfort. I knew then that I had reached a turning point.

My disenchantment with the rigors of being a peace activist coincided with an impending deadline to complete my research. I now had more than enough data. I knew I should begin to pull back from the field and devote more attention to writing. But how? How could I extricate myself gracefully? I was committed to these organizations; I had become part of them and I didn't want to abandon the cause. It was, after all, my interest in the peace movement that had led me to study these groups in the first place. I felt torn, like a rider in one of those westerns, straddling two galloping horses, hoping desperately that I wouldn't fall and break my neck.

As it happens, I hurt my back instead, and this furnished me with an immediate reason to leave the field—not the graceful exit I had hoped for, but it did give me time to focus on writing. I still had multiple perspectives, however, which I struggled to integrate into a coherent picture. These competing visions still haunted me even once I had left the field. What, for example, was the most reasonable way to mobilize for peace? Did it make sense to lobby, to resist, or to educate? Could the three different approaches be reconciled? During moments of clarity, I could hold all three groups in my mind simultaneously and see them in a larger framework, but often the picture would dissolve again into competing perspectives.

Of all the difficult things that occurred in the course of my field work—abandoning my original project, having to entirely reconceive what I was doing, expanding from one to three field sites—nothing was more disconcerting than moving continually from one identity to another. It's difficult enough with one field site to shift back and forth from the researcher role to participant. Multiple field sites can drive you crazy. It was a wrenching experience, and one for which I was totally unprepared. I had always thought of research as an active process. I never anticipated how much I would be affected personally by the experience of doing participant observation.