



The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 15
Issue 2 June

Article 8

May 1988

Transcending Despair: A Prelude to Action

Norman N. Goroff
University of Connecticut

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>

 Part of the [Peace and Conflict Studies Commons](#), and the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Goroff, Norman N. (1988) "Transcending Despair: A Prelude to Action," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 15 : Iss. 2 , Article 8.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol15/iss2/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Social Work at ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.



Transcending Despair: A Prelude to Action*

NORMAN N. GOROFF

University of Connecticut
School of Social Work

The central thesis of this essay is that in order to feel empowered to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons, persons need to face and transcend their despair when they contemplate the nuclear destruction of the planet. The repression of fear of nuclear disaster results in a sense of powerlessness to do anything about the inevitable destruction and consequently nothing is done, thereby allowing the "Lovers of Death" (Fromm, 1964) to build bigger and better ways to destroy the planet.

The most fundamental issue facing the human species is that of the survival of life on this planet. We have the means to destroy all of life on this planet. At the same time we see few efforts by the over 220 million people in the United States to try to eliminate these weapons and systems of destruction. "Mutual Assured Destruction" (MAD) may have contributed to over 40 years of a lack of direct military confrontation between the "superpowers," but the threat of total destruction is great with existing nuclear arsenals. Furthermore, the development of new and sophisticated technologies increase the possibilities of technical errors and hence the probability of nuclear destruction by mistake.

In view of this condition, what contributes to the lack of public outcry against the increased probability of nuclear destruction? The central thesis of this essay is that in order to feel empowered to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons, persons need to face and transcend their despair when they contemplate the nuclear destruction of the planet. The repression of fear of nuclear disaster results in a sense of powerlessness to

*Presented at the Ninth Symposium on Social Work with Groups, Boston, Massachusetts, October 29 to November 1, 1987.

do anything about the inevitable destruction and consequently nothing is done, thereby allowing the "Lovers of Death" (Fromm, 1964) to build bigger and better ways to destroy the planet.

The Problem

I have been active in SANE and other Peace groups for over thirty-five years. Other events in life required attention and the immediate concern with nuclear destruction receded to the background. The Freeze movement of the early 1980s encouraged me to join with other like-minded people to make a freeze on the development of further nuclear weapons a matter of public policy. Daily events again required attention and again peace activity tended to recede.

During all this time, I do not recall having felt the deep despair I experienced the week my first grandchild was born. I was in my study preparing an audio cassette for him when I was overcome by an intense feeling of sadness and pain. Would he have the opportunity to grow up and listen to this tape? Will we be able to avoid destroying all of life on this planet?

I sat in my study for a long time and cried. The despair that I had carried around in a repressed state broke through to full awareness. The realization of the real and present danger that Nicholas may not have the life-opportunities which thousands of generations before him enjoyed had an enormous impact. It caused an issue which I had felt to be important these many years to become a categorical imperative. On a personal level, the stakes had changed from a general sincere concern with future generations to an intense concern with very specific people.

When I was born, my grandparents took it for granted that just as there had been generations in the past, there would continue to be generations in the future. This was the way of life on this planet. Obviously, this certainty is no longer true.

Denying despair through repression indirectly causes people to accept the inevitability of death and destruction. This acceptance results in a lack of hope for the future and an ever-increasing concern with personal salvation, an existence in heaven for eternity. Death is accepted as the opportunity for an eternal existence. The issue of whether death comes as a result of the

natural processes of life or through mass destruction makes little difference as long as the individual feels the promise of being saved and rewarded with that eternal existence.

The sense of powerlessness that results from repression of feelings of despair contributes to a desire for certainties and answers to complex situations. The world is defined as a hostile and dangerous place where one needs to be constantly prepared for the worst. Frequently this very attitude creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. Because there is no trust in others nor are others recognized as being an interdependent part of one's existence, the resulting alienation contributes to the creation of a hostile and dangerous place.

We have for instance, seen a systematic attempt during these last seven years to make nuclear war appear to allow that there can be a victor. There have been attempts to legitimate megadeath by talking about our ability to survive as a nation even if we suffer one hundred million deaths. The concept of nuclear survivability seems to somehow remove some of the intensity of despair if one can believe that all of life on the planet will not be destroyed.

This attempt to make nuclear war thinkable has resulted in several counterpoints being stressed. The recent report from M.I.T. indicating that even a limited nuclear exchange will result in such massive disruptions of our economic means of production and distribution as to make survivability exceedingly painful. For example, survivors would need to face issues such as the unavailability of food, water, elementary hygiene and medical care. Radioactive fallout would expose the population to long-term consequences of radiation, including cancer, fetal deformities and genetic abnormalities. Other possible catastrophes would include nuclear winter and disruption of the ozone layer.

Despair and concern are demonstrated in many different forms. At a Presbyterian Youth Gathering at Purdue University in 1986 the first concern voiced was the fear of nuclear war. The second concern of youth was their choice of career. It should be noted that although there was an awareness and fear of nuclear destruction, there was not a concern voiced with how to work to eliminate nuclear arsenals, but rather, "How can I get on with my life and career?" It seemed that these young people, recog-

nizing the enormity of the problem, implicitly felt powerless to do anything about it, and focused instead on elements they assumed were within their influence.

A social worker with a group of troubled adolescents describes the sense of helplessness and hopelessness about the future that permeates this group. Such comments as "Why should we? There won't be a chance for us to grow up." are used as a justification for nihilistic attitudes and behavior. When questioned further, their responses specifically noted that the "grown-ups are going to blow the world up—so why bother?"

Several years ago, the United Way in Amarillo, Texas withheld support from the Catholic Charities because members of that group were helping people make choices not to work in the local nuclear assembly plant. These people were making a personal moral statement in leaving the assembly plant. The local Catholic organization was assisting them in making their choice and dealing with the consequences. The local assembly plant, the largest employer in Amarillo, was fearful that this would result in opening a flood gate and that the loss of workers would negatively impact their profitability.

The massive war production capacity which employs millions of people comprises an effective lobby in obtaining the necessary federal funds to continue to produce weapons of destruction. The availability of work in those industries frequently beclouds people's judgments and choices. The immediate need for work to pay for the bills of living blinds many to the fact that they are in fact building the weapons of death.

A critical component of any mass movement for nuclear disarmament is to have viable alternatives available to provide employment for millions of people. How to achieve such a state is beyond the scope of this essay. However, it is not necessary to wait until there is a plan in place before we start the efforts to help people move beyond their despair.

The prevalence of repression of the fear of nuclear destruction can be seen in part by people's reaction to the accident at Chernobyl. The amount of radiation released at that time was very little when compared to the radiation that would come from a modern nuclear weapon. Nevertheless it was enough to kill scores of people, to contaminate hundreds of acres of farm land

so as to make it unproductive for food stuff, and to condemn residences because they became radioactive. The clouds carried the radioactive fallout great distances beyond Chernobyl. This situation is a miniature of the elements that would be involved in nuclear attacks. What was absent was the explosion and fireball from a nuclear weapon.

In none of the press reports that I read was there any reference to how this event might compare to nuclear war. One might well conclude that there was a conspiracy of silence for fear of stimulating a mass movement against nuclear power and nuclear weapons. The collusion of millions of people in trying to keep their fears repressed enabled them to avoid dealing with the significance of Chernobyl.

The movement for nuclear disarmament needs to be a two-phased project. The first phase involves millions of small groups designed to help people cope with their despair and go beyond it. The consciousness-raising groups of the beginning phases of the women's movement may be a prototype for what is being proposed.

The second phase is a mass movement in which people assert their power in order to bring about change. The balance of this essay will be devoted to a discussion of the two phases.

The most difficult phase is helping each other transcend despair. The feeling of despair is frequently so intense and so painful that it is frightening to experience when one is alone. It is also disruptive of one's life unless it can be accepted as not pathological, but as a reflection of one's basic humanity. The feeling must be engendered by the recognition that one is part of the world which has a history, and a present. If there is to be a future, we must work to allow it. The burden of the future hangs heavy upon this generation.

Awareness of the consequences of nuclear holocaust is without doubt the main deterrent to catastrophe. However, only if the fear of annihilation can lead to a destruction of nuclear weapons is there any likelihood that we can avoid the mistake that can lead to the end of the planet.

This is not an issue we can leave to the leaders of the world's nations to resolve. It is an issue requiring the involvement of all the people on this planet in order to say *No* in unison to the

existence of nuclear weapons. Is this an unobtainable utopian vision or can it be a reality? Of those who consider it to be an unobtainable utopian vision, the consequences may be inaction and by omission, to permit these weapons of total destruction to continue to exist. The unanticipated consequence will be to increase the odds that there will be one mistake that can lead to the end of our planet.

The process of helping each other accept our feelings of despair as an expression of our humanity and then accepting the responsibility to act to eliminate the source of this despair will be slow.

Basic Human Essences

All human beings are born with three basic essences. First and foremost, is the need and the capacity to love and be loved. This is fundamental to human existence and it is in fulfilling this essence that persons have meaning and purpose in life.

It is not necessary to teach the infant to love. It is there at birth. As the song from *South Pacific* says "You have to be taught to hate." However, the opportunity to be loved is not always available to all persons and hence they grow up feeling not good enough; they grow alienated from their essence.

The second is the need and the capacity to create and be creative. Everything in the social world which human beings use is created by human labor. The need to create is an inherent part of the person and is the source for human activity.

People need to work as an expression of their need and capacity to create and feel creative. This is why so many have developed avocations which allow them to express their creativity, because their world of work denies them the opportunity.

The third essence is the need and capacity to constantly grow and develop. This essence is a key factor in human existence. It is not external motivation to grow that is necessary, but opportunities to be nurtured and to be loved which is required for growth and development. To be nurtured by others is to be confirmed as a person with dignity.

Principles of Social Group Work Practice: The Love Paradigm

The Love Paradigm Defined

The Love Paradigm is based on a fundamental relationship between persons which involves an active concern for the continuing life and growth of fellow-human beings. Love has four components, care, responsibility, respect and knowledge. In caring for others, there is concern and involvement and acknowledgement that they have become a part of one's life. Being responsible involves a readiness to respond to other persons. In one's response, there is an affirmation of the other's dignity and integrity. Having respect for others, we can see people as they are, being aware of their unique individuality and feeling concerned that they be allowed to grow and unfold. There is no exploitation of persons. Knowing a person is very different from knowing a thing. Knowledge of the person is similar to Buber's "becoming aware" of the person. It is based on the recognition that the person in one's human aspect is an unfathomable secret to oneself and to one's fellow persons. Yet one knows in the only way knowledge of that which is alive is possible for the person—by experience of union—not by any knowledge our thoughts can give. Care, respect, responsibility and knowledge are interdependent components of love—the union between two or more people.

"Love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person: it is an attitude, an orientation of character which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole, not toward one object of love. If I truly love one person, I love all persons. I love the world. I love life." "The affirmation of one's own life, happiness, growth, freedom is rooted in one's capacity to love, i.e., in care, respect, responsibility and knowledge" (Fromm, 1964).

Love is based on the recognition that all human beings have equal dignity, integrity, are worthy of respect, and have the right to an equitable share of the resources required for human survival. Love is a phenomenon that exists between persons and not within each person.

A critical component of the Love Paradigm is the faith we have in the potentialities of others. This has its culmination in a faith in humankind. It is based on the idea that the potentialities of persons are such that given the proper conditions,

they will be capable of building a social order governed by the principles of equality justice and love.

Although we have not yet achieved the building of such a social order, we have the faith, based on wishful thinking but on evidence of past human achievements, that it can be done. "The basis of rational faith is productiveness; to live by our faith means to live productively. It follows that the belief in power that exists is identical with disbelief in growth potentialities which are as yet unrealized" (Fromm, 1964).

The Love Paradigm views the person, not as an alienated individual who feels cut off and isolated, but as a reflection of the "fundamental fact of human existence, which is the person with the person" (Buber, 1955).

Buber develops this further. "Individuality makes its appearance by being differentiated from other individualities. A person makes his appearance by entering into relation with other persons. The one is the spiritual form of natural detachment, the other the spiritual form of natural solidarity of connection." "The will to power" notes Buber, "is opposed to the dignity, integrity and freedom of the person" (Buber, 1955).

Implications of the Love Paradigm

The first implication of the Love Paradigm is summarized by Buber's statement, "In spite of all similarities every living situation has, like a newborn child, a new face that has never been before and will never come again. It demands of you a reaction which cannot be prepared beforehand. It demands nothing of what is past. It demands presence, responsibility; it demands you" (Buber, 1955).

Every time people come together to interact with one another, a new living situation is upon us. We cannot plan beforehand what we will do. We need to be present and to participate in the life with the uncertainty, but also with the faith, that as we respond in a caring fashion, recognizing each person's integrity and dignity, we will help create that social entity we call a group, a network of between-persons relationships, which will nurture each of the participants.

In the Love Paradigm, it is stressed that relationships between persons are an end in themselves and not a means to

wards other ends. Persons need to be with one another in order to nurture each other. The relationship between persons are on an I-You basis in which each cares, responds, respects and attempts to understand one another.

When persons come together for the first time they are usually strangers to one another and the first task they face is to overcome this strangeness. In our culture, the stranger, for the most part, is viewed as someone not to be trusted. Before trust between persons can be established, they need to become acquainted and come to know each other better.

One way to help overcome distrust is to view each meeting of the group as a celebration. This is an existential concept marking the fundamental, visceral joy of a human being at not only being alive, but at being alive together with other human beings. In this existential celebration, each individual member of the group is a celebrity, visible, unique and possessing dignity. The uniqueness and humanity emerges without the label, the social category. The role is doffed and the person exists and interacts with other persons in the group in all his/her splendor.

Celebrations are frequently marked with a sharing of food. It helps overcome the strangeness when members of groups celebrate the occasion of being together by acknowledging with others and sharing food. It is immaterial who brings the food; it is the sharing that is important.

Social group work practice must simultaneously provide persons with opportunities to address their concerns and attempt to impact the social world which has contributed to the person's pain. We create the social world through our interactions with one another. Although the emotional pain we experience is real, most frequently, the cause of the pain is a consequence of how we have organized our lives together. Social change is ubiquitous. The question we face is whether our attempts to influence the direction of change towards a humane world is by overt action-commission or by inaction-omission. Omission frequently allows others, who act by commission, undue influence in effecting the direction of the change and thus a disproportionate say in creating the kind of social world we live in.

In a group, persons are responsible to one another and not for one another. To be responsible to another person requires

the recognition of the individual's basic rights to make his/her own decisions within a framework of concern for the feelings and rights of others. In the group there is the reality that each person's decisions have a direct impact on other persons in his/her immediate present. Every person makes choices and acts on the basis of the choices. A person in relative isolation may make a choice or decision which has consequences for others in the future. In interaction among persons in a group, actions by one person have immediate consequences for others. In a group where persons are responsible to one another, the individual's choices, decisions and actions are such as to preclude the infliction of avoidable pain on the others. Thus we recognize that self-determination is not a matter of individualism, of individual choices or of abstract independence; rather it is a social act reflecting the interdependence of persons and our responsibility to be concerned with each other.

Where the members of a group have developed relationships based on an affirmation of each person's dignity, there is present the opportunity to nurture and be nurtured. To be nurtured is knowing that one's existence as an individual is important and meaningful to other persons; that what happens to one impacts others; that one has become an integral part of the other's world. Nurturing others is to care for them, to have them become the subject of your concern. It is a truism that as one nurtures others, one is nurtured by that very act. The act of nurturing and being nurtured is essential to overcoming the pain that emanates from one's separateness from the prison of aloneness. Thus a major purpose of social group work is to enable people to overcome the pain of separateness and aloneness. They have the opportunity to share a collective experience and to make history for themselves with each other. They help one another deal with issues and events in their lives that have caused them pain and despair.

An important function the group performs is to dispel the myth of independence. An aspect of the individualistically-oriented culture, it is postulated that independence is the proper state of being for the person. In social work, we do not want to have persons dependent. We assume the opposite of dependency

is independence. A consequence of this myth is that persons either achieve independence and are alone and therefore lonely or, failing to achieve independence think of themselves as inadequate and failures. The reality is that persons are mutually interdependent. None of us can exist for any length of time without being dependent of others, and they in return are dependent upon us. The group is a living reality of interdependence.

Making things talkable provides the opportunity to bring into awareness many issues. For example, the frequency with which emotions are defined as irrational while the intellect is seen as rational is one such issue. The tendency to devalue the emotions where they are defined as irrational, creates a situation in which persons feel uneasy when they experience emotional reactions. One needs to be in control of oneself reflects the wisdom that emotions are uncontrollable and therefore not to be trusted. This type of wisdom has been seen to have a particularly debilitating effect on many males in our society who feel prohibited from exhibiting tender emotions. This content area deserves frequent discussion because many members report that they feel peculiar when they react emotionally.

The role of worker in a group that is basically an egalitarian relationship between the members and the worker requires clarification. Egalitarian relationships do not deny the existence of different knowledge, wisdom and understandings among people. In egalitarian relationships one does not attempt to use knowledge and understanding to gain status advantage. Knowledge is used to enable others to try to see the world in a similar fashion, recognizing the inherent right to make one's own decisions.

The worker is not required to be passive in interactions within the group, nor is nondirective the preferred pattern. What is required is a nondominating, nonimposing, nonexploitive way for the worker to express his/her view of the world and the events therein. The worker avoids interpreting the meaning of others' behavior which might communicate the message that "I know better than you the cause or meaning of your behavior." This would be an attempt to gain a dominant status in relation to the others.

The worker makes "I" statements. "This is how I see it" or "What you are saying and doing is having this effect on me." This type of statement communicates to others that they are having an impact and is a statement that affirms the others without attempting to dominate them.

The worker has a commitment to a value system which affirms the importance of a dignified humane existence in a world with social and distributive justice. In being responsible for oneself and to others, there is an obligation to act upon these values. In an egalitarian, nonimposing, noncontrolling relationship the issue of "imposing one's value system upon others" is a nonissue. The worker needs to be clear as to what values she/he advocates and to express them openly.

In the interaction among persons in the group there is a mutuality of participation. No one person has greater responsibility than others to participate in the activities of the group or to enable or facilitate. In the Love Paradigm, leadership is not vested either in an individual or in a position. All members of the group have equal responsibility to participate in a way which will enable all persons to be a part of the group. The concept of leadership applicable to this focus concerns the behavior or the act which enables or facilitates the members of the group to continue to nurture one another and to continue to address their concerns. The concept of enabler, facilitator and worker when applied to a person has the consequences of establishing a status differential. However, our activity seems to be structured so that we tend to designate a person to be the worker. My point is that regardless of the external definitions, when people come together in a group to nurture one another, the distinctions of worker and member within the Love Paradigm disappear. No one empowers others because no one has the power to give to others. Within the principles and values of the approach, persons are careful not to take power that others may be willing to give up. We mutually enable one another to accept the power we have which is reflected in the recognition that we have responsibility for the choices we make and that we are the authors of an event or of an object. There is a mutual empowerment as a consequence of none claiming power over others, or willing to take the other's power.

The Proposal: Self-Help Consciousness Raising Groups

The self-help support groups involved in helping people deal with their despair when contemplating the nuclear destruction of the planet and to transcend it may be formed under any auspice: religious institutions, community organizations, civic groups, family services, public libraries, any setting where people can gather to nurture one another. It is advisable for the groups to meet on an every-other-week basis. The content and the issues involved may become too intense for the members of the group to have to deal with every week.

Once formed, the group should have a stable membership. It is very disruptive for people to come and go. The members of the group need to develop trust in one another to be able to risk the emotional pain involved in acknowledging one's despair. The size of the group must allow for all of the members to have sufficient opportunities to verbalize their feelings and reactions. Six to ten members appears to be an ideal size.

Although the content of the group meetings will arouse intense emotional responses, these are not therapeutic groups. The feelings that are aroused when contemplating our planet's destruction are symptoms of a person's basic humanity and not that of pathology.

How to introduce the idea of self-help groups for transcending despair may be a concern. One pattern that seems to work is to sponsor a community-wide meeting on issues of nuclear weapons and the future of the planet. An integral part of these events is to have an announcement ready that self-help support groups will be organized at specific sites on specific days. Obviously, there is a need for some people to do some advanced planning. In different communities, a variety of groups may take responsibility. In several communities in Maine, local peace groups affiliated with churches have sponsored community meetings followed by small group meetings. In other areas, groups interested in closing nuclear power plants have sponsored both the community and the small group meetings.

It is possible that the newly-formed national group which merged SANE and the Nuclear Freeze Movement and has appointed the Reverend William Sloan Coffin as its executive

can become a major sponsoring group for both community meetings and small group meetings.

After members of a group have introduced themselves and begin the process of overcoming their strangeness with one another, I have introduced the topic of the meetings by distributing an article by Joanna Rogers Macy entitled "Dealing With Despair" which appeared in the April 1979 issue of *New Age*. The reactions to reading the article varied depending upon the degree of trust the members had established.

Generally, the pattern seemed to follow that described by Mary White and Dorothy Van Soest (1984) who conceived of the process, moving from despair to action, as similar to the grieving cycle. They talk about denial, anger/rage, bargaining, depression and the final stage as acceptance and reorganization. Joanna Rogers Macy notes "Despair cannot be vanished by sermons on 'positive thinking' or injections of optimism. Like grief, it must be worked through. . . . To do so, a process analogous to grief work is in order. Despair work is distinct in that its aim is not the acceptance of loss (indeed the 'loss' has not yet occurred and is tardy to be 'accepted') but similar in the dynamics unleashed by the willingness to acknowledge, feel, and express inner pain" (Macy, 1979).

Frequently the denial phase revolves around the fear of invasion, attack or being taken over by an enemy. Nuclear weapons are seen as a security blanket. Reference is made to the fact that this is the longest period in modern history, where there has not been a war between major world powers. People seem to forget both the Korean War in the 1950s and the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s. When this is discussed the issue is more focused on MAD, Mutual Assured Destruction. The denial phase seems to deal with political and ideological issues. Mutual Assured Destruction is highlighted with emphasis on the *destruction* component.

Getting past the denial phase involved a readiness by the members to face their sense of despair. The despair must be validated as a healthy, normal, human response to the situation of possible total destruction of the planet. One way that has been effective is to discuss how powerless each person feels to affect the process of changing the direction of national policy

regarding nuclear disarmament. Inevitably comments such as not having sufficient knowledge or that others are more expert, is a reflection of feelings that they feel not good enough. This provides an opportunity to discuss how these feelings of personal inadequacies contribute to their abstaining from involvement in change efforts.

The process of empowerment requires that people accept that they are the best they can be and they have the right and responsibility to participate actively in the creation and recreation of the social world. It is through the utilization of the principles of group work within the Love Paradigm that the accepting and supportive setting is established which enables persons to deal with the variety of concerns they have as they move through the denial phase. The group has become a safe place where members can expose their fears, acknowledge their pain and continue to move in the direction of accepting personal responsibility to act.

The process of moving from the denial to the acknowledgement of despair will obviously vary for different persons within the group and among different groups. However, what seems universal is the recognition that experiencing the feelings involved in moving from denial to empowerment is a sane reaction to an insane situation. It helps to know that we are not alone in our fears.

It is critical for the group members to develop action projects which they can undertake in their efforts to effect change. It is imperative that during the group meetings it be recognized that the process of social change—the creation of a humane world—is a process and not an event. The process of change is cumulative.

There are a variety of individual actions such as, writing to elected officials identifying oneself as committed to nuclear disarmament and peace, participating in public demonstrations, writing letters to the editor and preparing op-ed articles which people can perform as an expression of their having transcended despair and focusing on the elimination of the source of the dread—nuclear weapons of destruction.

The initial purpose of the group's helping the members to transcend their despair is the time-limited project. What is not

possible is to predict how long it would take any given group of people to successfully complete this task. It is important to be ready to have the members of the group reconvene from time to time as they begin to feel the "burn-out" effort of the slow pace of change.

One way the number of groups can be expanded is for those who have experienced the transcending of their despair to become facilitators of new groups, thus creating a type of reverse pyramid effect. The groups are seen as a necessary component for the development of a mass social movement.

An important function for the professional social group worker is to assist in helping people develop some rudimentary skills in facilitating the formation and function of self-help groups. We have a long history and much experience in this area. In days of old, it was sometimes called working with the untrained leaders; later it became working with indigenous leaders. No matter how we would phrase it now, social group workers have a special obligation to share knowledge and skills, and actively participate in the process of peace-making. However long and arduous the road to peace, it is the only road that will assure there will be a future for life on the planet.

References

- Buber, M. (1955). *I and thou*. New York: Scribners.
Fromm, E. (1964). *The heart of man*. New York: Harper Colophon Books.
Macy, J. (1979, April). Dealing with despair. *New Age*.
White, M. and Van Soest, D. (1984). *Empowerment of people for peace*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Women Against Military Madness.