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Recommended Citation

Frank, Jerome D., "Sanity and survival: The non violent alternative" (1960). *PRISM: Political & Rights Issues & Social Movements*. 23.

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II: THE NON VIOLENT ALTERNATIVE

by JEROME D. FRANK, M.D.

Fresh Thought on War Series No. 2 • Published by Acts for Peace

ACTS FOR PEACE is a new West Coast peace education effort. Centering in Northern California, and experimenting with new concepts of organization and ideology, it has the cooperaation of a number of national peace organizations. Information on this Fresh Thought on War series, and other activities planned to encourage the continuing coordinated peace education and action needed in American communities, available on request.

JEROME D. FRANK, who took his Ph.D. and M.D. at Harvard, is Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins Medical School. He recently completed a year as a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. While in California, Dr. Frank presented two TV broadcasts on alternatives to violence in international conflict. The scripts of these broadcasts—which drew national attention—furnish the basis for this pamphlet.

OUR GENERATION of Americans faces the task of preserving, defending, and promulgating freedom and democracy in the nuclear age. This creates some hard new problems. The shrinkage of the world, coupled with the vast destructive power of modern bacteriological, chemical and nuclear weapons, has drastically changed the conditions of life in a crucial respect—it has made war obsolete as a means of resolving international conflict, for an outbreak of violence anywhere in the world threatens the existence of all humanity.

So far, mankind has not succeeded in adapting itself to this fact. We are trapped by patterns of behavior and thought which worked fairly well for thousands of years, but suddenly have become lethal. The survival of humanity depends on whether we are able to break the thought barrier constructed by the countless centuries during which superior force has been the final arbiter of dispute between nations. This has led each nation to arm itself to be able to resist pressures from others or, if need be, to impose its will on them. As long as the destructive power of weapons was limited, the recurrent wars resulting from this behavior did not prevent the steady advance of civilization, and in some ways they accelerated it. Nuclear power has suddenly made this habitual way of conducting international affairs unworkable, by introducing the virtual certainty that another

resort to force will destroy all civilization and probably humanity itself. It has literally made war obsolete as a way of resolving disputes between nations.

The basic psychological problem is how to get this simple fact through our heads, so that we (and by this I mean mankind, not just the United States) will adapt our behavior to it in time. Yet we still act as if superior destructive power is the final arbiter of international disputes. Since this is not appropriate to the actual situation, it leads to obviously irrational behavior. For example, although the world's stockpile of nuclear weapons is already large enough to cover the earth with a radiation level which for ten years would be sufficiently intense to destroy all living beings on land, the world is spending about 100 billion dollars a year building more of them. Thus we aggravate the danger by the methods we use to counteract it.

As a psychiatrist I have been struck with similarities between this type of self-defeating behavior among nations and similar patterns in some of my patients. Many patients come to a psychiatrist when they are faced with disaster because their habitual ways of coping with personal problems have failed. The psychiatrist tries to aid them by helping them to identify the forces which keep them trapped in the unsuccessful patterns, and to explore alternative solutions. Analogously, I should like to point out some psychological forces which keep nations trapped in the futile and self-destructive arms race, and to explore an alternative—the non-violent resolution of conflict.

The fantastic destructive power of nuclear weapons has been described so often that I shall not take the time to do this again, except to point out that there can never be a successful defense against them. This sweeping statement does not rest on any knowledge of weapons technology, but on recognition of a simple psychological fact—that the same mental processes which develop a defensive weapon inevitably devise methods of circumventing it. This is why there never has been, and never will

be, a 100% successful means of defense. A less than perfect defense was adequate against conventional weapons. With nuclear weapons, nothing short of a perfect defense could prevent vast destruction. As a result, nations are forced to rely on the threat of mutual annihilation to deter attack. Everyone agrees that this is a very shaky basis for peace which cannot last indefinitely. For the mutual effort to maintain deterrence leads to a steady spread of these weapons. Sooner or later they will inevitably fall into the hands of someone who through accident, malice, or error of judgment launches an attack. The victim cannot then prevent himself from being destroyed. All he can do is launch a counter-attack to destroy the aggressor as well, which is hardly a pleasing prospect.

Recently I attended a conference of scientists from both sides of the Iron Curtain, including some world-famous nuclear physicists. None of these brilliant men could think of a way of achieving security while keeping modern armaments.

Although the dangers of modern weapons are appalling, we tend to show a remarkable indifference to them. This is analogous to what psychiatrists have termed "denial." One way of dealing with an overwhelming threat is to pretend it doesn't exist. An example is the refusal of some mortally ill patients to accept the imminence of death. Since death is inevitable, it is perhaps just as well that no human being can steadily contemplate his own demise. In fact, without this safety device, life would probably be unbearable. In the same way, all of us tend to "deny" the death threat posed by nuclear weapons. This is especially easy to do because we have never experienced their power and cannot imagine it. Our land has not directly suffered war for about 100 years, and even then only a very small portion of the country was devastated. The human mind cannot grasp the destructive force of 20 million tons of TNT, the equivalent of one hydrogen bomb, much less the effects of hundreds of thousands of them exploding at once.

Moreover, these weapons do not impinge on any of our senses. We cannot see, hear, touch, taste or smell submarines with nuclear missiles lurking off-shore, planes with hydrogen bombs far overhead, ICBM's in Russia aimed at our cities, or even strontium 90 nibbling at our bone marrow right now.

Our efforts to break out of the Arms Race are impeded not only by the tendency to deny the full extent of the danger, but also by the emotional tension it creates. A moderate amount of tension supplies a useful incentive to solve the problems which caused it, but if it is too strong, or lasts too long, it makes both thought and behavior rigid. This is especially true of anxiety.

Some years ago a psychologist did a famous experiment with rats in which he studied their ability to discriminate forms by making them jump at doors which had different forms on them —a square and a circle, for example. He made them jump by blowing a blast of air on them. If the rat jumped for the correct door, it opened and he obtained food. If the rat jumped for the incorrect door, it was locked so he bumped his nose and fell into a net. Then, the experimenter did a mean thing—he locked both doors, but still made the rats jump. After undergoing this upsetting experience for a while, many rats developed absolutely rigid habits of behavior. For example, a rat might develop the habit of jumping at the right-hand door. After this, even if the left-hand door were left open with the food in plain sight, the rat would still jump for the right-hand one, bump his nose and fall to the net. This is an example of how severe emotional states can make behavior rigid. Of course, people seldom become this fixated; but anxiety, especially, tends to have this effect.

Since uncertainty is a major source of anxiety, the person in the grip of this emotion tends to see everything in black and white terms. To use a technical term, his thinking becomes stereotyped. He tends to select from his experience only the information which fits his stereotype, and to overlook or minimize what does not fit. Thus he gets deeper and deeper into a mental rut.

A particularly common and dangerous stereotype is that of the enemy. When two individuals or groups are in conflict, each tends increasingly to see the other as unrelievedly evil and his own side as possessing all the virtues. Whoever the enemy is, and whoever we are, the enemy is perceived as cruel, treacherous, and aggressive, while we are honorable, kind, and would fight only in self-defense. This process has been clearly at work between Russia and China, on the one hand, and the United States on the other. We know from reports of visitors to these countries that their image of themselves and of us is the mirror image of our own. Of course, every stereotype has some truth in it, and when two enemy groups attribute evil intent to each other, one or both are probably at least partly right.

A major problem is that when two countries cast each other in the role of enemy, communication between them, which might help to correct their mutual stereotypes, tends to be disrupted. This is partly because anyone who desires to communicate with the enemy is suspected of disloyalty. Also, because the enemy is seen as so diabolically clever, we fear that he will be able to use increased communication to his advantage. Moreover, communications that do get through tend to be distorted to fit the stereotype. For example, if we view Russians as the enemy and meet individual Russians who turn out to be much like we are friendly, helpful, devoted to their families and so on—this does not bother us at all. We simply break the concept "Russian" into two parts, the people and the leaders. The people, then, are friendly and kind as we are, but it is the leaders who are bad, dangerous, and so on. This leads to the dangerous fallacy that the good Russian people will soon overthrow the bad Russian leaders. No doubt the Russian man in the street wonders why the good American people have not yet revolted against their bad, capitalist warmongering leaders!

I have not had a chance to check this with the Russian man in the street, but at the Conference I mentioned earlier, a Communist Chinese physicist (who, incidently, had spent years in America) told me seriously that he had no quarrel with the American people whom he knew to be peace-loving like the Russians and Chinese. It was the warmongering, imperialist American ruling class who caused all the trouble! This is how the stereotype of the enemy operates.

The worst thing about this stereotype is that it tends to make itself come true. It sets a process in motion whereby the enemy becomes more and more like what we fear him to be. The mutual distrust of enemies eventually becomes justified.

Some enemies are untrustworthy to begin with, but all become so eventually. Enemies cannot trust each other because each is forced to act in such a way as to confirm the other's misgivings. This is an example of what has been called the "self-fulfilling prophecy."

The way the self-fulfilling prophecy operates is perhaps best seen in the behavior of individuals. All social behavior tends to pull corresponding behavior from the person towards whom it is directed. Friendliness begets a friendly response; hostility, a hostile one. People are likely to treat you the way you treat them. So if you expect someone to react to you in a certain way, you may act towards him in such a manner that he reacts in the way you predicted. Thus you cause your own prophecy to be fulfilled.

This can be seen most clearly in the behavior of psychiatric patients because of the rigidity of their behavior. A good example is the paranoid patient who expects everyone to be his enemy. You may be disposed to be friendly when you first meet him. Since he is sure you hate him, however, he persistently rebuffs your advances and maintains a surly, suspicious manner. In the face of this, you are very apt to come to dislike him. Thus he succeeds in confirming his prophecy that everyone is against

him, and will be even more suspicious of the next person he meets.

The same kind of mechanism operates at the level of societies. Russia and America each claim to base their policy towards the other on the fear that the other would attack if it dared. This leads each to act in such a way as to make the dreaded attack more likely.

Each fears that if the other perceives it as weaker, it will pounce; so each insists that it dare not negotiate except from a position of strength.

Russia and the United States enter into negotiations distrusting each other; so negotiations break down, increasing the mutual distrust. We ring Russia with bomber bases to deter her from attacking us. She aims missiles at our cities for allegedly the same reason. As this process continues, each side becomes more and more tempted to strike first, as the only way of saving itself from total devastation. Thus each strengthens the other's fear of attack and increases the likelihood that it will occur—that the prophecy will be fulfilled.

In order to escape from this predicament, it is obvious that all peaceful means of diminishing tension and at the same time defending and promulgating our way of life must be exploited. I shall pass them over with brief mention to get to the main issue, which is disarmament. It would be desirable to increase all forms of communication, to enable each side to get a more complete and accurate picture of its opponent, including virtues as well as defects. To this end, exchange visits at all levels should be encouraged. Participation in cooperative activities such as the International Geophysical Year and the proposed International Medical Year are especially helpful because they foster mutual trust and develop areas of common interest. The rising volume of interchanges between Russia and America offer considerable grounds for hope that in time this will reduce tension to the point where substantial moves towards peace can be made.

Another obviously useful line of endeavor is a continuing effort to achieve tension-reducing political settlements in areas where the Communist and non-Communist worlds are locked in inflexible positions, such as the two Koreas, or Berlin. It is also vital to begin to develop and strengthen procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes, including the development of a system of enforceable world law. This would require surrender of some aspects of national sovereignty to a supra-national organization, a step which will become possible only when nations accept the fact that in a world of missiles and earth satellites, unlimited national sovereignty is a myth.

Progress along all these lines is essential to the achievement of disarmament, which cannot occur in a vacuum. However, there is a limit to what they can accomplish. Some of the most deadly wars in history were fought by peoples who were in perfect communication and shared the same government—notably the American Civil War.

Hence the crucial problem of how to bring about disarmament still remains. I believe that in a nuclear world this can only be accomplished if nations abandon the obsolete belief that international conflicts can be solved by force. For there are only two ways of achieving disarmament, mutual agreement or unilateral action, and both are blocked psychologically by the reliance on superior destructive power as the ultimately deciding factor.

The major psychological stumbling block to disarmament by mutual agreement is that because of the rapid advance of all forms of weapons technology, there will never be an absolutely safe inspection scheme. By the time such a program has been worked out for current weapons, new ones have been developed which make it obsolete. The melancholy history of the efforts to achieve agreement on the control of nuclear arms since the last war illustrates this. Each time agreement seems near some new bit of information comes up which casts doubt on the adequacy of the agreed-upon inspection scheme, and so negotiations

stall and mutual bitterness mounts.

So the only way to enter into an agreement to start disarmament would be to accept one that the other side might possibly successfully circumvent. As long as everyone believes that superior destructive power is decisive, the side that accepted such an agreement would be looked on by itself and the other side as naive and foolish. So there is no agreement.

The alternative, a *unilateral disarmament move* as a means of diminishing the other side's mistrust and motivating them to follow suit, faces similar difficulty. For to make it convincing to the enemy, it would have to represent a genuine weakening of relative military power, and in the context of force, this would be viewed by all parties as an act of surrender, or at least as a sign of weakening to the will to resist. Hence it would tend to demoralize the side that made it and cause grave unrest among its allies. Therefore a genuine disarmament step is only possible if the side that makes it does so out of the conviction that it can attain its aims only by non-violent means. In this context it becomes a courageous act, not a cowardly one.

The essence of the non-violent approach to the resolution of conflict is to meet violence with calm courage and willingness to accept suffering, without ceasing to resist, but also without hating the attacker. Violent behavior tends to elicit fear, hatred, and counter-violence from the person attacked, and this in turn, intensifies the attacker's zeal. The basic psychological insight of non-violence is that if the victim remains unfrightened, calm and friendly, this inhibits the aggressor. By demonstrating to his adversary that he is willing to suffer for his beliefs, and that he is concerned for his attacker's welfare as well as his own, the practitioner of non-violence tries to weaken the will of his persecutor and to win him over, not to beat him down.

It is often argued that non-violence can never work because it flies in the face of human nature. Man is a fighter by instinct, it is said, and any line of thinking which denies this is doomed to futility. This may well be true. Human beings seem to enjoy killing for sport, and history is a sequence of bouts of mass killing called War. But if it is true, then mankind will probably become extinct, like many species before him, since in a nuclear world he cannot wage many wars without extinguishing himself.

Fortunately, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the habit of resort to war as a means of settling international disputes could be changed. Man is a very modifiable creature, and his behavior depends a lot on his past training. Dr. Scott, an animal psychologist, has shown that mice can be trained to fight, or not to fight. And if mice can be trained, why cannot man? Many personal disputes that formerly were settled by duels or armed conflict are now peacefully settled through recourse to law. Furthermore, there are in the world societies that are perfectly peaceful, and others that are very warlike, and some societies are peaceful at one period of their existence and warlike at another. In short, there is no reason to think that the habit of resorting to war as a means of settling international disputes is unmodifiable.

There is no denying that war has met certain important human needs such as the thirst for glory, self-sacrifice, heroism, and group solidarity. The prospects of eliminating it would be brightened if we could develop other ways of meeting these needs. Years ago the great American psychologist William James called for a "Moral Equivalent of War," to satisfy the legitimate human drives for which this was the main outlet. With remarkable foresight he suggested something like the CCC under Roosevelt, in which young people could work together dedicated to a common cause. Modern means of communication and technology make it possible now to apply this idea on a worldwide scale. At a recent conference with Russian scientists, I discovered to my astonishment that the Russians seemed to welcome the proposal to send teams of Russian and American youth to help in the development of the backward countries

of the world. Such an endeavor would have exciting potentialities.

A second new opportunity for finding a moral equivalent for war lies in the coming conquest of space. This endless frontier offers unlimited chances for heroism, self-sacrifice, and group solidarity. In the end it may be one of the greatest hopes for the maintenance of peace on earth.

The strongest ground for hope is the existence of many successful examples of both individual and group non-violence. If it works sometimes, it should be possible to make it work more often.

At the community and national levels there are the striking examples of Gandhi in India and Martin Luther King in Alabama. In both these situations non-violent techniques proved extremely effective means for achieving the aims of an oppressed group. Now, it's perfectly obvious that the measures these two men used would not work in every situation. For one thing, both were working within the framework of a religious orientation which is not shared by many segments of humanity. Gandhi was, and King still is, a man of very rare character and courage. Both men used this method in a society in which they could command widespread publicity. They also advocated measures which had considerable support in the ruling group of the society, and they could appeal to the laws and ideals of the ruling group. Because of these special features and others, people are apt to dismiss the non-violent approach as impossible for America in the present international scene. Let us consider some of the major objections briefly. It is pointed out, first, that Gandhi's methods might work against the English, who have a long tradition of respect for the individual, but would never work against a Communist dictatorship. To this it may be said that the same British who yielded to Gandhi's program in India do not hesitate to use extreme brutality in Kenya where they have been opposed by the violence of the Mau Mau. There is nothing special about

the English that makes them reluctant to use violence in all situations. Nonviolent methods might be hard to use against a dictatorship and would probably entail considerable suffering and loss of life. But the success of nonviolent resistance depends on its power to undermine the will of the oppressor, and there is no reason to think that a tyrant's henchmen, who, after all, are more like other human beings than they are different from them, would be permanently immune to this type of pressure.

A second objection is that nonviolence has only been tried within countries, and would not work at an international level. Undoubtedly this method would require considerable modification before it could be used to resolve conflicts between countries. Any large nation, however, which adopted a program of working toward the non-violent settlement of disputes could command even more publicity than Gandhi and King, which would enable it to mobilize similar feelings in its own allies and in neutral countries, and even in enemy countries, because there are many groups in every land who have come to see the impossibility of continuing to resort to force as a means of settling international disputes.

The most telling objection to nonviolence is that, though it might be suitable for Hindus, who have a long tradition of this sort of thing, it would never be acceptable to Americans, who are thoroughly accustomed to fight violently for what they believe, if necessary. To this it may be pointed out first, that persons who as individuals might use violence to defend themselves or their families against attack—and in some situations probably should do so—that these very same persons can commit themselves to non-violent methods when these are in the service of a well worked-out program and have strong group support. Only about 100 of Gandhi's followers were fully committed to his philosophy. The vast majority of the people who waged the successful non-violent campaign against British rule were ordinary mortals, like you and me, many of whom had used violence

in other situations. And King's followers were members of an American minority which has long been accused of being exceptionally prone to violence.

But the most important point is that Gandhi and King have shown that non-violent resistance could work in settings in which no one would have predicted they would have been successful before they tried it. They have achieved a breakthrough in the conduct of human affairs which should be taken very seriously. The task now is to develop and modify it so it could be successfully applied at the international level.

Since the doctrine of non-violence is easily misunderstood, a few points about it should be emphasized. It does not seek to eliminate conflict from the world, but views conflict as a stimulus to creative solutions in which both sides gain. For example, King named the movement to end segregation in buses in Montgomery, Alabama, the Montgomery Improvement Association. He saw the struggle as one to benefit all the citizens of Montgomery, white and colored, by eliminating an evil that harmed them all. Non-violence has nothing to do with passive submission or surrender, but represents, rather a determination to fight actively for what one believes, with all possible means short of violence. It is not a method for cowards, since it requires more courage and steadiness of purpose than the use of violence.

Non-violence is not an easy or immediate solution. Obviously, it requires a long period of education, preparation and training as to how to act in the eventuality that one's opponent decides to use force. A non-violent approach to the settlement of international problems does not by any means guarantee victory, and many lives might well be lost in such an effort. If one takes this approach seriously, one has to be willing to risk one's life in the cause of peace as much as in the cause of war. Resorting to violence doesn't guarantee victory either, and does guarantee the loss of many more lives, and in all probability, the destruction of all parties involved. Finally, it should be obvious that non-vio-

lence does not imply underestimation of the evils of Communism or willingness to surrender to it. Many aspects of the Communist way of life are repugnant to us, and Communism is an expansionist movement which seeks continually to extend its sphere of domination and does not shrink from ruthless measures to achieve its goals. The examples of Hungary and Tibet are still fresh in our minds.

I am confident, however, that people in the Communist countries share the hunger for liberty that is common to all mankind; and that as the standard of living improves in these countries, they will put increasing pressure on their leaders to grant them greater freedom. As a matter of fact, this seems to be occurring already. Visitors to Russia in recent years agree that, although personal liberty is still markedly restricted compared to this country, it is steadily gaining ground. Any relaxation of the tensions of the arms race would probably accelerate this process, since the fear of America impedes the movement of Russia towards liberty, as our fear of Russia erodes liberty in this country.

To make the discussion of non-violence more concrete, let me consider in conclusion what the consequences of a unilateral, limited, but definite disarmament move might be, assuming that it were made not out of fear, but out of conviction that the American way of life can be defended and promulgated in a nuclear world only by non-violent means. Because of Russia's distrust of us, their first reaction would probably be that this was a ruse, a trick, in order to gain some hidden advantage. They would therefore become doubly alert and tense, and for a while the danger of disaster would probably be increased. This would mean that the initial disarmament move would have to be very clear and simple, and would have to be persisted in long enough to convince the Russians of its genuineness. There would also have to be opportunity for inspection by them and probably by an international group. When the Russians finally became convinced that we meant it, there are four possibilities as to what

they might do. First, they might launch a destructive nuclear attack on us. The danger of this is extremely small. For the chief incentive for such an attack is the fear that we might someday get strong enough to make a pre-emptive attack on them, and this incentive would be removed. Secondly, they might send over an army of occupation. I think this, too, is unlikely, because occupation of a country as large as ours would be a great strain on their resources, especially if they knew they would be met by a population fully determined to resist them by nonviolent means and well trained to do so. If they did occupy us, however, then we would have to rely on non-violent resistance. and this would probably be costly in lives, and might not succeed. Still, it would be much less costly, and have a much better chance of succeeding, than nuclear war. For as long as human beings exist, the spark of liberty will stay alive. One sure way of extinguishing it forever is through the destruction of the human race by a nuclear holocaust.

Thirdly, in the event of a unilateral disarmament step by us, Russia might well step up its pressure, backed by superior military power, on neutral countries and peripheral areas, in an effort to undermine our influence. This is indeed a danger, but it must be remembered that there are many kinds of influence. Our disarmament move would, of course, have to be accompanied by measures which would increase economic and medical aid, selfhelp programs, and other kinds of influence in uncommitted areas sufficiently to offset the influence our opponents had gained through military predominance. In other words, we would have to convince these countries that they had a genuine community of interest with us. Then they would be motivated to resist communist domination for their own sakes, not for ours. Probably we would fail in some areas. On the other hand, our most powerful form of influence would be the example of disarmament since this would, in all probability, meet with a great positive response in the peoples of the entire world, including those in Russia.

Modern atomic, bacteriological and chemical weapons are no respecters of ideology. They look just as terrible to all peoples, and all humanity longs to be relieved of the threat they represent. So there would be real reason to hope that the fourth possibility might come to pass—that a genuine disarmament move on our part, based on a renunciation of force as a means of settling international conflicts, would lead to reciprocal moves by other nations, and so gradually usher in the era of peaceful competition which both Russia and America claim to desire.

As this little flight of fancy makes clear, commitment to the non-violent means of settling international disputes is not an easy or simple solution, and is certainly not an immediate one. It would require considerable advance education, preparation and training. It might entail great suffering and could not be certain of success. The main ground for advocating it is that ultimately it offers the only hope for the continuance of the human adventure. Renunciation of force has become a necessity for human survival. The only question is whether it will come before or after a catastrophe. Fortunately, there is yet time to work for the peaceful, prosperous and free world which all mankind seeks, and in which human beings can for the first time realize their potentialities.

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America

could be leading the world to a just peace, instead of "collaborating" with the Communist bloc in preparation for war;

if

there was an American Peace Movement that flatly challenged the idea of peace through a nuclear arms race;

and did so out of a deep commitment to the defense of democratic values:

and if

that peace movement made clear the alternative political, economic, and non-violent defense methods by which it proposed to deal with problems posed by Communist expansion;

and took the maintenance of responsibility of all men for each other as its essential ground;

and pressed for changes needed in our American society because of the same values that led it to oppose totalitarianism;

and if

the organizations that took on different parts of the work coordinated their efforts and brought their strength to bear in a related way;

and the people that made up that peace movement actually acted in some specific continuing way to make these ideas visible and understandable in every community.

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