

Youth Organizing at the Dawn of a Post- Hibakusha Antinuclear Movement

1. Re-think Cold War as Limited Nuclear War
2. Visualize decline of antinuclear movement
3. Motivations for Youth Participation





Long Peace: The nuclear war that was not fought

- A-bomb as discrete event and nuclear warfare:
 - A **historical non-event**, only found in fiction and speculation (*Derrida 1984*)
- Cold War:
 - A **metaphor** that indicated the conflict's temperature (*Grant & Ziemann 2017*)
- Symbol of peace through strength:
 - Despite the arms race, political tensions, hair-triggered MAD risks, nuclear war was successfully **deterred**
- Nuclear revolution:
 - Raised the cost of war was raised so high that **victory became impossible** for both aggressor and victim (*war no longer an extension of politics*)

KEIR A. LIEBER AND DARYL G. ...

THE MYTH OF THE NUCLEAR REVOLUTION

POWER POLITICS
IN THE ATOMIC AGE

Nuclear Weapons

- Have **not revolutionized** international relations
 - (e.g., relative conventional advantages, alliances, territory...)
- Have **not pacified** regions / relationships
 - Part of a competitive process aiming at stalemate.
- Are not just used to deter, but also **to coerce**.



Cold War: A Limited Nuclear War

Long Peace is a privileged, disembodied, colonial, narrative. **Nuclear weapons were used** more than 2,000 times between 1946 and 1991 (over 45 tests/year), exposing millions of people to radioactive fallout.



Peace narrative prevents us from seeing war-like effects of Cold War nuclear testing

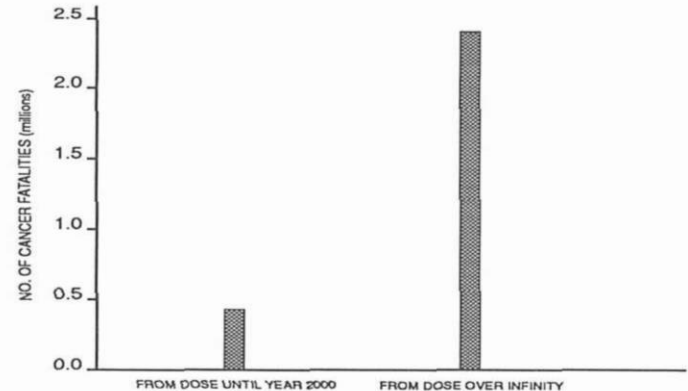
- Rongelap residents (152 km from Bikini test) received **equal radiation exposure** to those Hiroshima residents (2.4 km from ground zero)
- Young people are most vulnerable.
- Oral histories and testimonies.

Limited nuclear war:

- **War:** at least 1,000 deaths per year
- **Nuclear tests:**
 - limited (heat, blast, gamma) to a local geographical area in selected targets
 - Permits economic, social and political trends to continue without serious disruption nor demanding utmost confrontation.
 - Harming only people and ecosystems that were, to them, expendable.

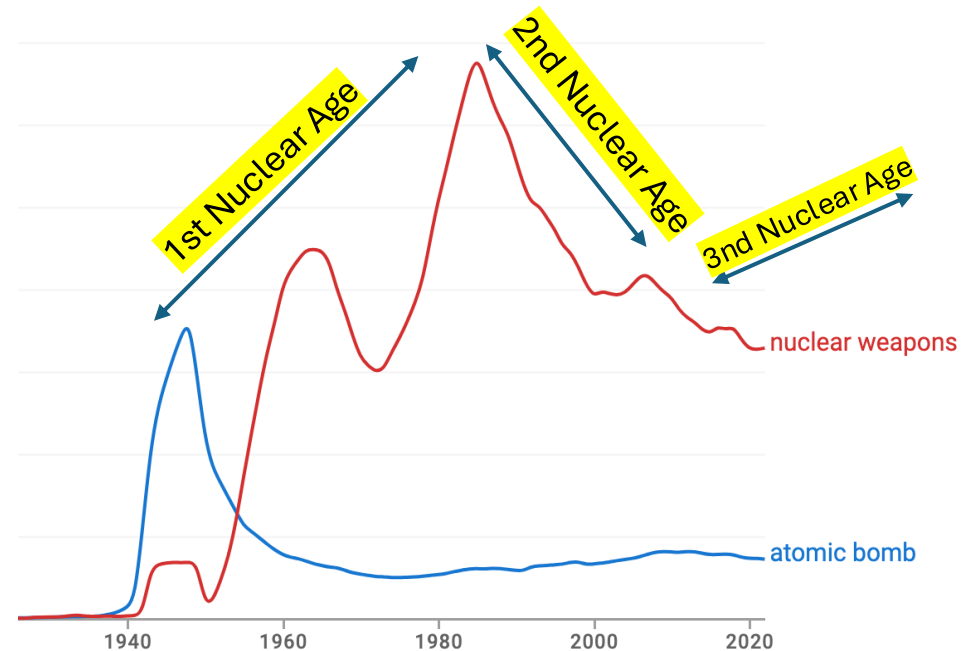


Figure 1
BEST ESTIMATE OF GLOBAL CANCER CASES
FROM NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING FALLOUT



2. Visualizing decline since end of Cold War

- Left behind a “**golden age**” for nuclear disarmament
- Shrinking **budgets** and **membership**
- Today, “**only a small minority** [of people] take part in activism that raises awareness about the dangers of nuclear weapons, lobbies for arms control, or contributes to the goal of abolition” (*Tannenwald, 2020, p. 217*)
- Not just dormant or stalled, but “**at an historic ebb**” (*Desai, 2022, p. 350*)



3. - Political Socialization

- *Glasberg & Shannon (2011):*

Political Socialization refers to a process whereby we

- learn how the world is organized,
- how it should be,
- who we are,
- and how we should behave based on what society expects from us

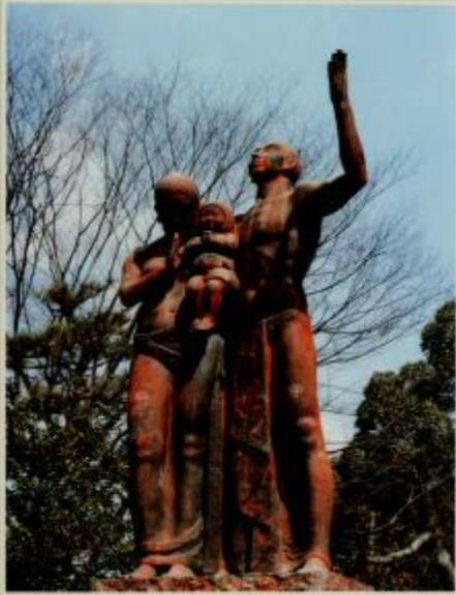
Theory – Antinuclear Political Socialization

- *Castro Escobar (2024-2026):*

Antinuclear political socialization is operationalized:

- When did you first encounter the concept of nuclear weapons?
- Why did you join your first antinuclear activity?
- ...

Peace Education: A Guide for Parents



Masako Shōji

3. When did you first encounter the concept of nuclear weapons?

- “every child in Japan is taught at school that Japan became a **peaceful** and democratic country after World War II” (Yuasa, 2024, p. 3).
- Children are usually introduced to the history of the atomic bomb at an early age, as the educational process involves family members, schools, libraries, museums, the streets, media, social media, and other agents

A-bomb as unrelated

“I don't feel any relationship with that... I didn't have the feeling that it, actually it could happen to me.”

Although such history was “horrible” and “should not be repeated,” I “couldn't find any immediate threats.”

A-Bomb in the Past tense

“We didn't learn what is the situation today. How many nuclear weapons around the world now? Who have these nuclear weapons? I don't think I learned about these things. So, that's the difference between my image of nuclear weapon and atomic bomb is: Atomic bomb in Hiroshima, for example, is something happened 79 years ago. Nuclear weapons, it's about today's society, politics, and our life.”

A-bomb as irrelevant

“okay the bomb was dropped here 1945, but it's not anymore. So, why do I have to care about this history?”

Unlike climate change—where “we feel the temperature differences every single year, that's very urgent”—after the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, there was a nice blue sky, with convenience stores and shops nearby.

A movement for older people

“When I saw news or something for working for nuclear abolition, they're old [laughs]. Like, my grandmother, grandfather's generation people working for it. And the hibakusha is also those age, right?... But from my recognition, it's a movement for people who experienced or people who are around those ages.”

Antinuclear political socialization

- Atomic bomb as source of peace
- Atomic bomb in past tense
- Atomic bomb as irrelevant or unrelated
- Antinuclear movement as movement for older people
- The Peace Messengers were founded in 1998, by a teacher, following India and Pakistan's nuclear tests.



国際連合・アントニオ・グテレス事務総長 様
Dear Mr. António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres
Secretary General of the United Nations.

わたしたちは、戦争も核兵器もない
「平和な世界の実現」を求めます。

We would like to ask for your further efforts to make the world a peaceful place without wars and nuclear weapons.

わたしたちは、一日も早い核兵器の廃絶を求めます。
わたしたちは、世界中の人々が平和な生活ができるよう求めます。
わたしたちは、戦争のない平和な世界の実現へ向けて、国連の一層の努力を求めます。
We request the elimination of nuclear weapons as soon as possible.
We request that people all over the world live in peace and harmony.
We request further efforts from the U.N. to make a peaceful world without wars.

わたしたちは、世界中の若者と手をつなぎ共に平和な世界を築くことを誓って、この署名を「高校生平和大使」に託します。

We pledge ourselves to do our best to establish a peaceful world hand in hand with the youth of the world, and entrust these signatures to our representatives.

[illegible]

核兵器の廃絶と平和な世界の実現をめざす「高校生1万人署名活動」実行委員会
The executive committee of the "The 10,000 High School Students Signatures Campaign"
to eliminate all nuclear weapons, and to make a peaceful world

【取り扱い事務局】 〒850-0052 長崎市筑後町2-1 平和活動支援センター気付 FAX095-822-5253

Why did you join?

- A teacher nominated me to give a speech.
- A professor scouted me.
- A friend invited me.
- I saw an opportunity on LinkedIn
- I saw news coverage about the organization on TV.
- I saw a poster at a Karaoke room.
- Wanted to improve my English skills and travel.

Thank you!
2 April 2025
Keele
University



LEGACY AND SURVIVAL

Evolving Global Threats from the Atomic
Bomb to Climate Change

2 APRIL 2025 | 2 P.M. UK TIME

THINK LAB, DENISE COATES BUILDING, KEELE UNIVERSITY
(AND ON TEAMS)

Speakers:

David Alexandre Ellwood (British Pugwash)

María Antonieta Jáquez (Coordinator for Disarmament and
Nonproliferation at the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of Mexico)

Franco Castro Escobar (PhD researcher, Keele University)

Register for free here: <https://forms.office.com/e/LjiFtkpSpJ>

For further questions, contact the DBC Director, James Peacock
j.h.peacock@keele.ac.uk



SCAN ME

