

SOCIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF HIROSHIMA AND THE ANTI-NUCLEAR MOVEMENT*

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I. Sociological Implications of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Most people know what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki 41 years ago, but not many have considered its implications for sociology and sociologists. In my opinion, the sociological implications of the nuclear destruction of the two cities can be summarized as follows:

1. *Complete Destruction of a Society*

I do not set out in detail the number of people massacred by those two atomic bombs, but more than 200,000 had died by the end of that year, 1945, and the greater part of the total society of both cities was completely destroyed; homes, workplaces, markets, hospitals, schools, kindergartens, temples, churches, the very community itself. The total milieu for sustaining human life, including the regional community and support systems, were totally demolished.¹⁾ It was a crime not only of massive genocide but also sociocide and vandalism. The society itself, as an object of sociological research was destroyed, and sociologists, themselves actors in sociological study were wiped out. As one of the important concepts of sociology, we think of “social disorganization” or “social disintegration.” Both these terms give the general conception of sociopathological phenomena. About twenty years ago I had an opportunity to do some sociological research about how U.S. military forces deliberately forced “social disorganization” on Vietnamese society.²⁾ It was one of the most brutal forms of “social disorganization” in history. The nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as another form of this, should still today be carefully studied, because it is not merely an event of the past but a present possibility. One of the most urgent tasks of sociologists in this nuclear age is to study the sociological aspects of nuclear disorganization, viz., sociocide.

In connection with this thesis, I think all will agree that the study of crime has played an important role in the development of sociology. The following sociologists are found among famous scholars engaged in criminal studies: J.G. Tarde, E. Durkheim, W.I. Thomas, F.T. Tönnies, A.H. Cantril, F.H. Sutherland and others. If a small crime or small criminal group is a subject of such important studies for sociology, how could it be that the more, nay, the most evil war and genocidal crimes and the greatest violence of groups such as nuclear-armed forces are not a subject for sociology? Already we can cite E.A. Cohen's *Human Behavior in the Concentration Camp* (1953) as a study of Nazi crimes of

genocide, and C.W. Mills' *Power Elite* (1956) and *Listen, Yankee* (1960) as sociological analyses of U.S. crimes of aggression. Two decades ago I also proposed a sociology of war crimes, applying it to the U.S. war crimes in Vietnam.³⁾ As already suggested, the war crimes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki included all kinds of killing: homicide, infanticide, matricide, patricide, genocide, biocide, ecocide and so on. With a deep understanding of such a completely new aspect of the nuclear age, Prof. John Somerville, one of the really pioneering anti-nuclear sociologists and philosophers, proposed the new word, "omnicide".⁴⁾ I agree fully with him and would like to propose a new genre of sociology, that is, a sociology of omnicide, which could be the most appropriate sociological expression of nuclear destruction.

2. *Sociological Implications and Studies of Hibakusha*

The atomic bomb exterminated not only several "societies" and "communities", but was an instrument of "delayed genocide" of the atomic bombed, as well as "futurocide", if I may coin a word for it, inflicting suffering upon generations to follow. By the end of 1984, i.e., 39 years after the first nuclear omnicide, a total of 367,344 persons had been granted hibakusha (atomic survivors) certificates. Since some have not received certificates because of possible discrimination in marriage and employment, the actual number of hibakusha should be considered higher than that. It should also be noted that the concept, "hibakusha" consists of three genres as follows: (a) the directly atomic bombed, (b) the indirectly atomic bombed who suffered radiation from the radioactive black rain, entering both cities within a short time after the bombing, helping the directly atomic bombed and cremating the dead, and (c) those who were children in the wombs of atomic bomb victim mothers.

Many of the hibakusha have lost members of their families through injuries or sickness caused directly or indirectly by the bombing, and have suffered the most serious difficulties in earning a livelihood. In addition, most of the hibakusha who miraculously survived the nuclear hell, suffered the most serious mental shock and its after-effects. They have also suffered from discrimination in employment and marriage, and have prematurely aged. Their offspring, children and grandchildren, have never been free of the fear of genetic effects and sudden onset of illness. For many hibakusha, the implications of life seemed then and still seem to have been lost. Most of them would say they even envy those who died. There are several reports about the higher rate of hibakusha

suicides. (In this meaning, nuclear omnicide includes delayed forced suicides also.) The human damage caused by the atomic bombing was not limited to the immediate postwar years. It has continued and expanded as time has passed. *It knows no limits of time or space.*⁵⁾

Such problems of hibakusha raise some new tasks of research for sociologists, such as the following: How a sociological survey about social, health and mental conditions of hibakusha can be made? Is it possible to make surveys in which attention is paid to personal life history and spiritual history of the hibakusha? Naturally, such surveys have been impossible without the cooperation of the hibakusha themselves, and studies such as these were initiated by sociologists at Hiroshima University and later carried out by researchers in sociology, social policy, and social medicine at many universities, in combination with the hibakusha movement; the studies contributed very much to the appeal to the public about the serious damages suffered by hibakusha, thereby strengthening the movements for the denunciation of nuclear omnicide as well as for the demand for enactment of a "law for assistance and protection of hibakusha", although this is still ignored by the Japanese government.

3. Sociological Implications of Expanded Genres of Hibakusha

The damage suffered by citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has not been limited to themselves alone. The first "damage" of the atomic bombing of Japan was totally unnecessary from the military and political standpoints. Japan was then at the point of surrender. Seen from the position of international law, it was a totally unjustifiable act of war and crime of genocide. The purposes were (1) to test the destructive power of atomic bombs on living human bodies, and (2) to initiate a blackmail policy against the Soviet Union⁶⁾ and other peoples. In this context, those two first atomic bombings had the inevitable result of setting going the on-going nuclear arms race. One year or several months before it happened Drs. Niels Bohr, Leo Szilard, James Franck and other top level nuclear scientists, with deep insight into this inevitability, made desperate efforts to urge high U.S. officials to refrain from using the bombs, but in vain.⁷⁾ As a result, humanity is now in the position these men had foreseen. The nuclear omnicide of Hiroshima and Nagasaki gave impetus to the never-ending series of nuclear tests and the arms race, as well as the expansion of the nuclear fuel cycle, producing new genres of hibakusha all over the world. As I see it, genres of hibakusha can be classified as follows:

- i. Hibakusha (Atomic Bombed)
 - (a) Dead victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
 - (b) Living victims who survived the nuclear hell
 - (c) Hibakusha of the 2nd and 3rd generations
- ii. Hibakusha (Atomic Radiated)
 - (a) U.S. and British soldiers who were ordered into Hiroshima and Nagasaki to dispose of nuclear waste, and later were found to be suffering atomic diseases
 - (b) Atomic citizens—Japanese fishermen as well as Pacific and American residents directly affected by the nuclear tests. There must also be such hibakusha in the Soviet Union, China and other nuclear power countries
 - (c) Atomic soldiers who participated in nuclear tests. In the U.S. the number of such hibakusha is estimated at somewhere between 250,000 and 500,000.⁸⁾ There must also be such hibakusha in the Soviet Union, China and other nuclear states
 - (d) Atomic workers exposed to radiation in the nuclear fuel cycle, which starts from uranium mining, through refining uranium and plutonium as well as manufacturing nuclear warheads and working in nuclear power plants, and in dealing with nuclear waste⁹⁾
 - (e) Stillborn atomic babies who have died because of radioactive fallout from nuclear tests and plants¹⁰⁾
- iii. Hibakusha (Atomic Threatened)
 - (a) All human beings who have been forced to absorb into their bodies, more or less, the nuclear ashes of death produced and diffused by nuclear tests and the nuclear fuel cycle
 - (b) All human beings who have been and are threatened by nuclear blackmail and possible nuclear omnicide.

In summary, all members of human society are now hibakusha. Day and night, all are threatened with nuclear omnicide. It would be no exaggeration to say that all sociologists and all schools of sociology have never in their history faced such a great danger.

II. Sociological Implications of the Anti-nuclear Movement

1. *Historical Outline of the Anti-nuclear Movement in Japan*

In the context of the sociological implications of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as outlined above, we can well understand the social and historical background of the rise of the anti-nuclear movement all over the world since around the year 1978, when the first Special Session on Disarmament (SSDI) of the UNO was held. History since Hiroshima and Nagasaki has seen the significance of nuclear omnicide being recognized. In Japan, the anti-nuclear movement was initiated by surviving hibakusha who had experienced nuclear omnicide. They witnessed and documented that nuclear hell, defying the U.S. occupation forces, which refused to permit publication of any evidence or reports recorded by the hibakusha, threatening them with trial by a military tribunal and imprisonment. It was not until 1952 that the Japanese could openly publish documents setting out the facts without fear of suppression.

Over the past 41 years there have been five high tides of the anti-nuclear movement in Japan, which I set out below:

1. 1950: Campaign in support of the "Stockholm Appeal" with some 6,450,000 signatures
2. 1954–55: Massive protest meetings against U.S. nuclear tests at the Bikini Atoll in the Pacific as well as the first World Conference against A & H Bombs and the formation of Gensuikyō (Japan Council against A & H Bombs) with 30,404,908 signatures of protest
3. 1977–78: Temporary unification of the anti-nuclear movement and the campaign for anti-nuclear signatures, with 20,178,453 submitted to SSDI of the UNO
4. 1982: Mass meetings in Tokyo, Hiroshima and other places as well as the campaign for anti-nuclear signatures totaling more than 29,000,000 on the occasion of SSDII
5. 1985–86: Campaign for anti-nuclear signatures supporting "Appeal from Hiroshima and Nagasaki" with 20,320,568 signatures by the end of June 1986, as well as a campaign for nuclear-free declarations by local self-governing bodies. 1,026 of the total of 3,324 such communities had declared themselves "nuclear-free" by the end of June.

2. *Sociological Aspects of the Anti-nuclear Movement*

As the above shows, the anti-nuclear movement has its own social and poli-

tical background. With this as a precondition, it seems to me that the sociological implications of this movement can be outlined in the following way:

First, it is not a social movement that originates from immediate economic need and demand. In this sense, it is different from economic movements such as the labor movement for wage increases or employment.

Second, it is a political movement, but a political movement that does not represent the interests of any special political party or organization. The actors in it belong to all social groups, including hibakusha, workers, farmers, self-employed, intellectuals, religionists, men and women, youth and aged, boys and girls, and even soldiers, officers, capitalists and monopoly capitalists, but not of course the nuclear military-industrial-complex and its supporters. It can also embrace all kinds of organizations: anti-nuclear organizations, political parties, trade unions, farmers' co-operatives, organizations of professionals, intellectuals, religionists, the youth and the aged, boys and girls, soldiers and officers, capitalists and even monopoly capitalists, *except* those of the nuclear military-industrial-complex and its accomplices. It is a most universal and supra-class political movement.

Third, it is a social movement to replace the old way of thinking among people and political leaders, with what Einstein called "a completely new way of thinking". In this sense, we can say that it is a cultural, ethical and philosophical movement of humankind who want to survive the most serious danger in human history. It cannot exist and function without the creation and diffusion of an anti-nuclear culture, nor without untiring efforts at anti-nuclear education. I would add that it is a social movement to appeal to common sense, reason, feeling and human imagination for survival.

Fourth, it cannot but be national as well as international, because without national consensus and international agreement there can be no perspective for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Fifth, it is a historical movement to resist any exterminist attempt to put an end to history itself. The task is urgent, but at this present time, there is no certainty that history will not be ended by nuclear omnicide. It will take many years for humankind to be completely free from this danger, and I fear that the task of the anti-nuclear movement, that is, to ensure human survival, will not soon be accomplished.

Sixth, it is therefore expected that the anti-nuclear movement must create the most massive, popular, enduring and varied forms. It seems that it is not by

chance that in Japan the main forms of the movement have been the campaigns for collecting signatures to be submitted to self-governing communities, the government and the UN.

3. *Sociological Considerations on the Campaigns for Anti-nuclear Signatures*

As I have said, one of the high tides of the campaign for anti-nuclear signatures in Japan was from November 1977 through May 1978. On this campaign, Chifuren (National Federation of Local Ass'ns of Women) collected 5,323,352 signatures, 26.4% of the total of 20,178,453. In 1979, I made a sociological survey about how the local association of women organized the campaign at the level of the local community in Hiroshima city.¹¹⁾ Chifuren is considered to be the biggest independent and neutral women's organization in this country. We found that most of its grass-roots leaders were conservative, and the campaign was mainly organized by women of influence in each neighborhood, and reportedly was encouraged by the mass media.

In contrast to the campaign in 1977-78, the campaign of 1985-86 has been independently initiated and organized by Gensuikyo, which is considered to be Communist-oriented. This campaign has almost been ignored by other anti-nuclear organizations like the Socialist-oriented Gensuikin as well as neutral organizations like Chifuren. (The political background to this might be explained by a change of policy of the Socialist Party, which, from 1980, formed an anti-communist agreement with the Komei Party.) The campaign has also been ignored by the mass media other than the organs of the Communist Party and Gensuikyo affiliated organizations.

The campaign was not a spontaneous move, but was purposefully organized. Gensuikyo set for itself the goal of collecting the signatures of half of the total population, nationally and locally. By the end of June 1986, the number of signatures collected amounted to 20,320,568, 34.3% of the target figure. It is noteworthy that such a number of signatures has never before been collected by only one anti-nuclear organization. At prefectural level, the highest rate (75.4% of half the population) has been accomplished in Kyoto Prefecture. The second (74.1%) in Wakayama Prefecture. At the level of cities, towns and villages, the highest rate (83.0% of the whole population) has been achieved in Kumanogawa town, Wakayama Prefecture and Chino city, Nagano Prefecture. I made a study of the local communities where the campaign has been organized. The sociological and organizational aspects of them can be outlined as follows:

First, Gensuikyo and its branches at prefectural and local levels set up independent committees for the signature campaign, which comprised leading personalities of trade unions, organizations of farmers, intellectuals, professionals, women and youth and other societies. The committee immediately asked men and women of influence, including a mayor or town headman, to endorse the campaign. It then sponsored and held many meetings showing anti-nuclear films or videos at grass-roots level. In this organizational work, members of trade unions affiliated with Toitsurousokon (Communist-oriented Federation of Trade Unions for Promotion of a United Front) played a leading role.

Second, after such preparatory organizational work, each committee began the collection of signatures. The campaign was first organized *vertically* through the affiliated organizations of the committee. Then, committees for the campaign were set up by school districts, the smallest unit of a local community. Its leading personalities became activists in the campaign. In cooperation with them, activists of trade unions and other affiliated organizations were allotted some sections of each district. The campaign was then organized *horizontally*, and the day of united action set. On this day, the activists, following the map of resident registration, visited each home one by one. Some new ideas were created in order to achieve the goal. For example, a copy of the "Appeal from Hiroshima and Nagasaki" was delivered to each home the day before the united actions day. By this means, the residents were given time to carefully read the text beforehand and discuss its implications with family members. Absent families were asked to make use of the copy by way of a folding letter addressed to the committee. Through such an expanded network of the committees at various levels, the campaign was carried out *vertically* and *horizontally*.

Third, a decisive factor for the campaign was in asking leading personalities of local communities, especially a mayor, a headman of town or a village chief to become an endorser, which of course made it necessary for activists of the campaign to redouble their efforts to persuade them to become endorsers. But success in this gave the campaign prestige at grass-roots levels, and made it easier to expand the organizational work. In many local communities, the administration itself provided for the activists the facilities of its own broadcasting system as well as public halls and other buildings. The signature campaign necessarily led to asking a local assembly to declare itself "nuclear free", a declaration that in return directly encouraged and promoted the signature campaign. In so far as the government of a local community abides by such a resolution, it can-

not but play a support role politically and financially for the anti-nuclear signature campaign.

Fourth, Gensuikyo has its own staff of full time officers as well as its building. Most of its prefectural branches also have full time officers and offices. Without such a basis, it would have been impossible to conduct such a campaign, showing how important it is for the campaign to finance full-time officers and even to increase them.

Fifth, for Gensuikyo and its branches to wage this campaign, it has always been necessary to organize a system of reciprocal communications, top to bottom and vice versa. To do this, it was necessary to equip the movement with many electronic equipments, including computers, facsimile, Xerox, printers, word-processors and so on. The process of the organization itself had to be planned and scheduled, and activists are expected to observe the scheduled plan and discipline. It can be recalled in this connection that Lenin emphasized the necessity for the revolutionary movement to free itself of amateurishness and rebuild the organizational work on the principle of a great industry.¹²⁾ To me this Lenin thesis still seems valid today for all kinds of democratic social movements, including the anti-nuclear movement.

III. Toward a Scientific Theory of Social Movement

For many years, the social movement has been one of the most important subjects of sociology. The history of sociology could even be described as the history of theories of the social movement.

One of the main trends in these theories might be called an irrationalist approach which stresses the emotional aspects of the mass and explains the social movement as a mob movement.¹³⁾ Another is the Marxist approach which understands social movements as forms of the class struggle, which is said to be finally explained by contradictions between productive forces and production relations. It is true that Marx, in his *Capital*, made clear the economic laws of capitalist society and in this way made economics a science. His contributions cannot easily be overestimated. However, can we say that the theory of social movement has already become a science even from a Marxist standpoint? Are there any sociological surveys about the real organizational conditions and process of social movements of political parties, trade unions, peace campaigns and so on from the point of view of Marxism? Certainly, there are many discussions

about “what it is”. First of all, sociological surveys should be conducted, and then, based on them, we would be able to make the theory of the social movement more scientific.

With the above thesis as my premise, I would like to suggest some theoretical theses,¹⁴⁾ which might be considered in our efforts to form a scientific theory of the social movement.

In the first place, such a theory will have to include a theory of the development process of mass groups. Generally speaking, this process consists of three stages: (a) a spontaneous un-organized and inner-oriented group or a group *of itself* (an sich, to use Hegel’s terminology), (b) an organized but other-oriented group or a group *for itself* (für sich) and (c) the most organized, self-oriented and independent group or a group *of and for itself* (an und für sich). Most mass groups forming the social movement for democratic goals develop themselves, starting from stage (a), through stage (b), to reach stage (c). A leading group, already established as stage (c), organizes and leads a stage (a) group into stage (b), and with the help of a group at stage (b), seeks to organize the last into stage (c). To do this, a leading group is always responsible to educate and raise the groups at the lower stages to the higher levels. A leading group can be such and expand its social movement only by being like a self-multiplying organism. Any democratic social movement can develop if it is organized and led by a leadership which always tries to *aufheben*, to use again Hegel’s terminology, to raise itself.

Further, any social movement develops when such an organizational process goes from top to grass-roots, and from national to local level. Perspectives through all vertical and horizontal levels should be provided. The conditions and demands of the people at grass-roots are important. All social movements, basing themselves only on the grass-roots people, can successfully develop. But this does not mean that the grass-roots mass can consistently organize themselves and develop the social movement. They cannot get the perspective. Rather, the initiative, the approach and the perspective given by the leadership are the decisive points.

Moreover, this developmental process of groups is at the same time the process of development of individual personalities that make up the groups. Individual personalities are not developed at stage (a). Generally speaking, they are egocentric, apolitical and apathetic to most social and political problems. At stage (b), they cannot but pay attention to the destiny of others, and become

more or less organized and find it necessary to observe the principles of the group. At stage (c), the members of the group seek to develop their individuality and to harmonize their individuality with the common interest of their group. They cannot but educate themselves to become all-round developed persons.

It seems to me that we can see such a process taking place in the anti-nuclear movement in Japan, especially in areas where the signature campaign has been successfully organized. The urgent task of the abolition of nuclear weapons surely requires such a process to be further developed and accelerated.

It would be no exaggeration to say that all schools of sociology now need to study the sociological and organizational aspects of the anti-nuclear movement, thereby contributing to the survival of society and humankind, including sociologists and their schools.

Notes:

1. *A Call from Hibakusha of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Proceedings of International Symposium on Damage and After-Effects of Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, Asahi Evening News, Tokyo, 1978; the Committee for Compilation of Materials on Damage caused by Atomic Bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, *Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Physical, Medical, and Social Effects of the Atomic Bombing*, Basic Books, New York, 1981.
2. S. Shibata, *Lessons of the Vietnam War*, Grüner, Amsterdam, 1973.
3. Ibid., especially Chapter II. "The Vietnam War and the Tasks of Social Science"
4. J. Somerville, *Philosophy and Ethics in the Nuclear Age*, Japanese version, Tokyo, 1980; "Nuclear 'War' Is Omnicide", *Nuclear War*, ed. by M.A. Fox and L. Groarke, Peter Lang, N.Y., 1985.
5. See books cited in note 1.
6. G. Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy*, Simon & Shuster, N.Y., 1985, enlarged new edition.
7. M.J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed*, A.A. Knopf, N.Y., 1973.
8. H.L. Rosenberg, *Atomic Soldiers*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1980; L.J. Freeman, *Nuclear Witnesses*, N.Y., 1981; T.H. Saffer and W.S. Kelly, *Countdown Zero*, N.Y., 1982 and H. Wasserman and others, *Killing Our Own*, N.Y., 1982.
9. See books cited in note 8.
10. E. J. Sternglass, *Low-level Radiation*, N.Y., 1972; H. Caldicott, *Nuclear Madness*, Brookline, 1978.
11. S. Shibata and K. Kimoto, "Sociological Study of the Movement for Prohibition of

- Nuclear Weaponry”, *Yearbook of Social Scientific Studies*, No. 6, in Japanese, Tokyo, 1982.
12. V.I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?*, 1902.
 13. For example, see G. Le Bon, *Psychologie des foules*, 1895; K. Young, *Handbook of Social Psychology*, London, 1946.
 14. My organizational theory of the social movement is described in detail in my book, *Theory of Human Nature and Personality*, in Japanese, Tokyo, 1961. I was helped much by the works of A. Gramsci and A.S. Makarenko.