

# Voice and Silence in the First Nuclear War: Wilfred Burchett and Hiroshima

Richard Tanter

## Voice and Silence in the First Nuclear War: Wilfred Burchett and Hiroshima

By Richard Tanter\*

Hiroshima had a profound effect upon me. Still does. My first reaction was personal relief that the bomb had ended the war. Frankly, I never thought I would live to see that end, the casualty rate among war correspondents in that area being what it was. My anger with the US was not at first, that they had used that weapon – although that anger came later. Once I got to Hiroshima, my feeling was that for the first time a weapon of mass destruction of civilians had been used. Was it justified? Could anything justify the extermination of civilians on such a scale? But the real anger was generated when the US military tried to cover up the effects of atomic radiation on civilians – and tried to shut me up. My emotional and intellectual response to Hiroshima was that the question of the social responsibility of a journalist was posed with greater urgency than ever.

Wilfred Burchett 1980 [1]

Wilfred Burchett entered Hiroshima alone in the early hours of 3 September 1945, less than a month after the first nuclear war began with the bombing of the city. Burchett was the first Western journalist – and almost certainly the first Westerner other than prisoners of war – to reach Hiroshima after the bomb. The story which he typed out on his battered Baby

Hermes typewriter, sitting among the ruins, remains one of the most important Western eyewitness accounts, and the first attempt to come to terms with the full human and moral consequences of the United States' initiation of nuclear war.

For Burchett, that experience was a turning point, 'a watershed in my life, decisively influencing my whole professional career and world outlook'. Subsequently Burchett came to understand that his honest and accurate account of the radiological effects of nuclear weapons not only initiated an animus against him from the highest quarters of the US government, but also marked the beginning of the nuclear victor's determination rigidly to control and censor the picture of Hiroshima and Nagasaki presented to the world.

The story of Burchett and Hiroshima ended only with his last book, *Shadows of Hiroshima*, completed shortly before his death in 1983. In that book, Burchett not only went back to the history of his own despatch, but more importantly showed the broad dimensions of the 'coolly planned' and manufactured cover-up which continued for decades. With his last book, completed in his final years in the context of President Reagan's 'Star Wars' speech of March 1983, Burchett felt 'it has become urgent – virtually a matter of life or death – for people to understand what really did happen in Hiroshima nearly forty years ago . . . It is my clear duty, based on my own special experiences, to add this contribution to our collective knowledge and consciousness. With apologies that it has been so long delayed . . .'

[2]

That one day in Hiroshima in September 1945 affected Burchett as a person, as a writer, and as a participant in politics for the next forty years. But Burchett's story of that day, and his subsequent writing about Hiroshima, have a greater significance still, by giving a clue to the deliberate suppression of the truth about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and to the deeper, missing parts of our cultural comprehension of that holocaust.

### **One Day in Hiroshima: 3 September 1945** [3]

After covering the end of the bloody Okinawa campaign, from the moment that he heard reports of the atomic bombing on August 6, Burchett's goal was to reach Hiroshima as soon as possible after the Japanese surrender on 15 August. He reached Japan in late August aboard the transport ship USS Millett and landed with the advance party of US Marines at Yokosuka in Tokyo Bay. With two journalist friends Burchett reached Tokyo by train, days ahead of MacArthur's occupying forces.

Few among the hundreds of journalists who swarmed to Japan with the occupying forces contemplated the hazardous twenty-one-hour trip south to Hiroshima or Nagasaki. Most accepted the claim that the months of aerial and naval bombardment of Japan prior to the surrender had reduced the railway system to rubble, and that it was impossible to travel beyond Tokyo. Even this official discouragement appears to have been almost unnecessary, at least at that stage. The prevailing (and still hardly changed) news values dictated the choice of the majority: 600 Allied journalists covered the official Japanese surrender aboard the battleship Missouri: only one went to Hiroshima. [4]

Burchett spoke only phrasebook Japanese, but received enthusiastic help from the staff of the Japanese Domei news agency in Tokyo, who were greatly concerned for their Hiroshima

correspondent, Nakamura. A US Navy press officer, tickled at the idea of 'one of his boys' reaching Hiroshima ahead of correspondents attached to the other services, provided provisions for Nakamura and for Burchett.

At 6 a.m. on the morning of 2 September, Burchett boarded an overcrowded train heading for Hiroshima. In his knapsack he carried an all-important letter of introduction to Nakamura, the navy-supplied provisions, a Baby Hermes portable typewriter and a most unjournalistic Colt .45, thoughtfully thrust into his hands by an Australian friend before Burchett left Yokosuka.

Outside Tokyo, news of the war's end had come after the Emperor's announcement of Japan's unconditional surrender two weeks earlier. There were as yet, however, no occupying forces. Burchett had landed with the vanguard of Marines, but MacArthur had barely enough troops to occupy central Tokyo and the ports, and at every point on his journey to Hiroshima and back, Burchett found himself actually leading the occupation.

Boarding the train, Burchett crammed in among ordinary soldiers, 'very sullen at first, chattering - obviously about me - in a very hostile way'. But a packet of cigarettes, displays of a scar from a wound inflicted by a Japanese plane in Burma, and the Baby Hermes as the sign of a journalist, and 'from then on it was smiles and friendship, more cigarettes against bits of fish - and even a drop of sake'.

After a few hours' travelling, the new friends dropped off the train, and Burchett managed to get into a compartment which turned out to be full of belligerent Imperial Army officers. As Burchett was later to appreciate, one of the main impediments to the desire of the Japanese Emperor and Prime Minister to surrender in July 1945 was their fear of mutiny by the most extreme of the militarists in the Imperial Army. Memories of the assassinations by zealous militarists of wavering Prime Ministers and

cabinet ministers in the early 1930s, understandably disturbed ministers and the Emperor's chamberlains as they searched for a form of words acceptable to the Allies after Potsdam. They feared that a small group of army officers would react to news of an imperial rescript of surrender by seizing the Emperor himself, and quite possibly using the sacred hostage as the basis for all-out resistance to the death. [5]

On his slow twenty-one-hour trip south, Burchett sensed the depth of enmity towards the victors felt by officers nursing their humiliation.

Here the hostility was total. Among the passengers was an American priest, accompanied by armed guards. He had been brought to Tokyo from internment to broadcast to American troops on how they should behave in Japan to avoid friction with the local population, he explained, warning me in veiled tones that the situation in the compartment was very tense and that a false move might cost us our lives. The officers were furious and humiliated at their defeat. Above all I was not to smile as this would be taken as gloating over what was happening aboard the Missouri. Watching those glowering officers toying with the hilts of their swords and the long samurai daggers that many of them wore, I felt no inclination to smile, especially as the train was in complete darkness as we passed through what seemed like endless tunnels.

Eventually, at two the next morning, Burchett's neighbour prodded him awake with the news of their arrival in Hiroshima. At what was left of the city station, Burchett was arrested by two sabre-carrying policemen, and placed in a makeshift cell for the night, where he promptly collapsed into sleep.

Next morning, Burchett showed the guards his letter of introduction from the Tokyo Domei office, and they made no attempt to stop him

leaving.

I followed a tramline which seemed to lead fairly directly towards the standing buildings, branching off at cross streets for a few hundred yards and then returning to the tramline. Walking those streets I had the feeling of having been translated to some death-stricken alien planet. There was devastation and desolation, and nothing else. Lead-grey clouds hung over the waste that had been a city of more than a quarter of a million people. Smoky vapours drifted from fissures in the soil and there was a dank, acrid, sulphurous smell. The few people in the streets hurried past each other without pausing or speaking, white masks covering their nostrils. Buildings had been pounded into grey and reddish dust, solidified into ridges and banks by the frequent rains . . . No one stopped to look at me. Everyone hurried, intent on whatever it was that brought them into this city of death. [6]

At the police station where he went for help, Burchett was understandably ill-received. After he explained his purpose, the police found Nakamura, who in turn brought a Canadian-born woman as translator. At the headquarters of the surviving police force Nakamura explained Burchett's purpose and his request for help. 'The police were extremely hostile and the atmosphere was tense . . . The more Nakamura explained the more the tension increased. There was some shouting and the interpreter became pale.'

Nakamura later told Burchett that most of the policemen had wanted to have all three shot. Astonishingly, it was the local head of the Kempeitai, the Thought Control Police, who accepted Burchett's explanation of his task, provided a police car, and set out with Burchett to 'show him what his people have done to us'.

Guided by Nakamura and the police chief, Burchett went to the Hiroshima Communications Hospital, 1.3 kilometres from

the hypocentre. One of the city's six hospitals, it was, like the others, very heavily damaged, most of the staff having become nuclear casualties. At that time it held about 2,300 in-patients. Of the 300 doctors in the city, 270 were either killed or seriously injured in the atomic attack, as were 93 per cent of the city's nurses. [7]

Relief medical teams from outside the city had been quickly organized. By the end of September some 2,000 medical workers at makeshift relief stations had treated 105,861 in-patients and another 210,048 had received out-patient treatment. [8] Japanese scientists and doctors had already made considerable progress in developing procedures for aiding the suffering survivors with limited resources and an almost complete lack of prior knowledge of the effects of whole-body radiation. The day that Burchett arrived in Hiroshima, a medical meeting was held on what were to become known as A-bomb diseases, with lectures given on treatment of victims by the Japanese relief medical workers and researchers who had been studying and treating the victims' illnesses for almost a month.

The appalling sights Burchett witnessed in ward after ward were to affect him far more than the physical devastation he had already seen. Patients - and their families - on filthy tatami mats among the rubble were being ravaged by the effects of massive blast and primary and secondary burn trauma combined with advanced stages of radiation illnesses, resulting in fever, nausea, haemorrhagic stools and diathesis (spontaneous bleeding, from mouth, rectum, urethra and lungs), epilation (loss of hair), livid purpura on the skin, and gingivitis and tonsillitis leading to swelling, and eventually haemorrhaging of gums and soft membranes. [9] In many cases, without effective drugs, large burns and the haemorrhaging parts of the body had turned gangrenous. Recovery was inhibited by the

effects of widespread malnutrition, resulting from the cumulative effects of long-term wartime shortages and the Allied blockade of the past year.

After the party passed through the wards, the doctor in charge asked Burchett to leave:

'I can no longer guarantee your safety. These people are all marked down to die. I will also die. I was trained in America. I believed in Western civilization. I'm a Christian. But how can you Christians do what you have done here? Send some of your scientists at least. They know what this is - they must know how we can stop this terrible sickness. Do that at least. Send your scientists down quickly!'

Burchett left to write the unique despatch to the Daily Express, sitting on a piece of rubble not far from the hypocentre, sometime in the early afternoon. What Burchett felt and saw that day is best conveyed as it appeared in the Daily Express three days later. [10]

30th Day in Hiroshima: Those who escaped begin to die, victims of

THE ATOMIC PLAGUE

'I Write this as a Warning to the World'

DOCTORS FALL AS THEY WORK

Poison gas fear: All wear masks



Express Staff Reporter Peter Burchett was the first Allied Reporter to enter the atom-bomb

city. He travelled 400 miles from Tokyo alone and unarmed, carrying rations for seven meals - food is almost unobtainable in Japan - a black umbrella, and a typewriter. Here is his story from -HIROSHIMA, Tuesday

In Hiroshima, 30 days after the first atomic bomb destroyed the city and shook the world, people are still dying, mysteriously and horribly - people who were uninjured in the cataclysm - from an unknown something which I can only describe as the atomic plague.

Hiroshima does not look like a bombed city. It looks as if a monster steamroller had passed over it and squashed it out of existence. I write these facts as dispassionately as I can in the hope that they will act as a warning to the world.

In this first testing ground of the atomic bomb I have seen the most terrible and frightening desolation in four years of war. It makes a blitzed Pacific island seem like an Eden. The damage is far greater than photographs can show.

When you arrive in Hiroshima you can look around and for 25 and perhaps 30 square miles you can see hardly a building. It gives you an empty feeling in the stomach to see such man-made devastation.

I picked my way to a shack used as a temporary police headquarters in the middle of the vanished city. Looking south from there I could see about three miles of reddish rubble. That is all the atomic bomb left of dozens of blocks of city streets, of buildings, homes, factories, and human beings.

## STILL THEY FAIL

There is just nothing standing except about 20 factory chimneys, -chimneys with no factories. I looked west. A group of half a dozen gutted buildings. And then again nothing.

The police chief of Hiroshima welcomed me eagerly as the first Allied correspondent to reach the city. With the local manager of Domei, leading Japanese news agency, he drove me through or, perhaps, I should say over, the city. And he took me to hospitals where the victims of the bomb are still being treated.

In these hospitals I found people who when the bomb fell, suffered absolutely no injuries, but now are dying from the uncanny after-effects . .

## THE SULPHUR SMELL

My nose detected a peculiar odour unlike anything I have ever smelled before. It is something like Sulphur, but not quite. I could smell it when I passed a fire that was still smouldering, or at a spot where they were still recovering bodies from the wreckage. But I could also smell it where everything was still deserted.

They believe it is given off by the poisonous gas still issuing from earth soaked with radioactivity released by the split uranium atom.

And so the people of Hiroshima today are walking through the forlorn desolation of their once proud city with gauze masks over their mouths and noses. It probably does not help them physically.

But it helps them mentally. .

From the moment that this devastation was loosed upon Hiroshima the people who survived have hated the white man. It is a hate the intensity of which is almost as frightening as the bomb itself.

## 'ALL CLEAR' WENT

The counted dead number 53,000. Another



30,000 are missing, which means 'certainly dead'. In the day I have stayed in Hiroshima - and this is nearly a month after the bombing - 100 people have died from its effects.

They were some of the 13,000 seriously injured by the explosion. They have been dying at the rate of 100 a day. And they will probably all die. Another 40,000 were slightly injured.

These casualties might not have been as high except for a tragic mistake. The authorities thought this was just another routine Super-Fort raid. The plane flew over the target and dropped the parachute which carried the bomb to its explosion point.

The American plane passed out of sight. The all-clear was sounded and the people of Hiroshima came out from their shelters. Almost a minute later the bomb reached the 2,000-foot altitude at which it was timed to explode - at the moment when nearly everyone in Hiroshima was in the streets.

Hundreds and hundreds of the dead were so badly burned in the terrific heat generated by the bomb that it was not even possible to tell whether they were men or women, old or young.

Of thousands of others, nearer the centre of the explosion, there was no trace. They vanished. The theory in Hiroshima is that the atomic heat was so great that they burned instantly to ashes - except that there were no ashes.

#### HEAP OF RUBBLE

The Imperial Palace, once an imposing building, is a heap of rubble three feet high, and there is one piece of wall. Roof, floors and everything else is dust.

Hiroshima has one intact building - the Bank of Japan. This in a city which at the start of the war had a population of 310,000.

Almost every Japanese scientist has visited

Hiroshima in the past three weeks to try to find a way of relieving the people's suffering. Now they themselves have become sufferers.

For the first fortnight after the bomb dropped they found they could not stay long in the fallen city. They had dizzy spells and headaches. Then minor insect bites developed into great swellings which would not heal. Their health steadily deteriorated.

Then they found another extraordinary effect of the new terror from the skies.

Many people had suffered only a slight cut from a falling splinter of brick or steel. They should have recovered quickly. But they did not.

They developed an acute sickness. Their gums began to bleed and then they vomited blood. And finally they died.

All these phenomena, they told me, were due to the radioactivity released by the atomic bomb's explosion of the uranium atom.

#### WATER POISONED

They found that the water had been poisoned by chemical reaction. Even today every drop of water consumed in Hiroshima comes from other cities. The people of Hiroshima are still afraid.

The scientists told me they have noted a great difference between the effect of the bombs in Hiroshima and in Nagasaki.

Hiroshima is in perfectly flat delta country. Nagasaki is hilly. When the bomb dropped on Hiroshima the weather was bad, and a big rain-storm developed soon afterwards.

And so they believe that the uranium radiation was driven into the earth and that, because so many are still falling sick and dying, it is still the cause of this man-made plague.

At Nagasaki on the other hand the weather was

perfect, and scientists believe that this allowed the radioactivity to dissipate into the atmosphere more rapidly. In addition, the force of the bomb explosion was, to a large extent, expended in the sea, where only fish were killed.

To support this theory, the scientists point to the fact that, in Nagasaki, death came swiftly and suddenly, and that there have been no after-effects such as those that Hiroshima is still suffering.

### Return to Tokyo

If reaching Hiroshima had been difficult, transmitting the story to London was also fraught. Nakamura undertook to tap the story out on a hand-set in Morse code to the Tokyo Domei office. But while Burchett was in Hiroshima, MacArthur declared Tokyo off-limits to journalists. This frustrated the plan for his friend Henry Keys to wait in the Tokyo Domei office for the story to be tapped through from Burchett. Twice turned off the train from Yokohama to Tokyo by American Military Police, Keys hired a Japanese journalist to wait for Burchett's story in Tokyo and bring it to Yokohama immediately. Late on the evening of 3 September the story arrived and Keys bullied the reluctant wartime censors to allow the unprecedented story through unchanged.

Burchett was not the only foreign journalist to arrive in Hiroshima on 3 September. A Pentagon press 'Investigatory Group' arrived by plane from Tokyo just as Burchett was finishing his piece. According to Burchett, having been guaranteed an 'exclusive', the journalists in the official party were surprised to see him there. While the journalists felt piqued and threatened by Burchett's scoop the officials accompanying them as press handlers were hostile and suspicious.

In Burchett's eyes, most of the Pentagon press team were headquarters hacks specially flown

in from the US, except for a few who had shared his path on the dangerous island-hopping campaigns. According to Burchett, none seriously attempted to survey the human consequences of the atomic bombing, although he advised one whom he knew that 'the real story is in the hospitals'. [11]

. . . the moment they heard a rival had got to Hiroshima before them they demanded to get back to their plane and on to Tokyo as soon as possible to file their despatches. They had no contact with the local population, as they were a solid 'all-American' body with perhaps a Japanese-speaking interpreter attached. They saw physical wreckage only. [12]

The reporters toured the wreckage, and later held a press conference at the Hiroshima Prefectural Office. [13] After the press conference, and with fog threatening to close in, the reporters prepared to get back to Tokyo as soon as possible.

I asked if I could fly back with them to Tokyo, the train journey being rather risky.

'Our plane's overloaded as it is,' replied the colonel

'You've used up more petrol getting here than I weigh,' I argued. '

Yes. But this airstrip's a very short one and we can't take on any extra weight.'

'Will you take a copy of my story back to Tokyo at least, and give it to the Daily Express correspondent?'

'We're not going back to Tokyo,' was the colonel's brusque reply. He called the journalists together and they piled into their minibus and headed back for the airport. [14]

As it happened, Nakamura had slowly but successfully transmitted the long story. But Burchett could not be sure, and he must have

been deeply angered at the refusal to help him back to Tokyo.

That night, as the story was wired through to London, Burchett began an eventful trip back to Tokyo by train. In the middle of the next day, as the train passed through Kyoto, Burchett saw two unmistakable Australians - prisoners of war from a local camp left in less than benign confusion as the war ended, with no effective arrangements to feed the starving POWs. Word had filtered in to the camp about the end of the war, and the soldiers had volunteered to leave to look for food in Kyoto. The emaciated pair begged Burchett to come back to the camp to meet their fellow inmates to convince them (and the confused guards) that the war was indeed over.

In the next two days Burchett visited six POW camps, speaking to the prisoners, telling them of the Allied victory and the coming of the occupation forces.

It was necessary to bluff the Japanese camp commanders, with whatever authority I could muster, that I had come officially to ensure that the surrender terms were being complied with and that living conditions for the POWs were being immediately improved. I have addressed various types of audiences in my time, but never such eager listeners as these. These men were famished. They bore on their faces and bodies all the evidence of physical hunger, but above all their eyes told that they were famished for news. Hesitating for a moment, at that first encounter, while I tried to formulate the most economic way of telling them what they yearned to hear, I felt the compulsion in scores of pairs of eyes glittering with the intensity of their appeal to begin, to tell them it was all over and they would soon be on their way home again, with a few details of how it came to be over so suddenly. [15]

## Confronting the Manhattan Project

Back in Tokyo, 'the American nuclear big-shots were furious'. Burchett's article had raised a storm. Not only had the Daily Express headlined the story 'THE ATOMIC PLAGUE - I Write this as a Warning to the World', and put it on the front page, but they had released it gratis to the world's press. On the surface, US officials were mainly angry about Burchett's claim that residual radiation was still hazardous and that, a month after the bombing, people were still dying from radiation illness - what he had referred to as 'the atomic plague'.

On the morning of 7 September Burchett stumbled off the train in Tokyo to discover that senior US officials had called a press conference at the Imperial Hotel to refute his article. He reached the press conference just in time to hear Brigadier-General Thomas Farrell, the deputy head of the Manhattan atomic bomb project, explain that the bomb had been exploded at a sufficient height over Hiroshima to avoid any risk of 'residual radiation'.

There was a dramatic moment as I rose to my feet, feeling that my scruffiness put me at a disadvantage with the elegantly uniformed and bemedalled officers. My first question was whether the briefing officer had been to Hiroshima. He had not. I then described what I had seen and asked for explanations. He was very polite at first, a scientist explaining things to a layman. Those I had seen in the hospital were victims of blast and burn, normal after any big explosion. Apparently the Japanese doctors were incompetent to handle them, or lacked the right medication. He discounted the allegation that any who had not been in the city at the time of the blast were later affected. Eventually the exchanges narrowed to my asking how he explained the fish still dying when they entered a stream running through the centre of the city.

'Obviously they were killed by the blast or overheated water.'



'Still there a month later?'

'It's a tidal river. so they could be washed back and forth.'

'But I was taken to a spot in the city outskirts and watched live fish turning on their stomachs upwards as they entered a certain patch of the river. After that they were dead within seconds.'

The spokesman looked pained. 'I'm afraid you've fallen victim to Japanese propaganda.' he said, and sat down. The customary 'Thank you' was pronounced and the conference ended. Although my radiation story was denied, Hiroshima was immediately put out of bounds, and I was whisked off to a US Army hospital for tests. [16]

At the hospital, Burchett's white-blood-cell count was found to be lower than normal. At the time Burchett accepted the explanation of the low white-corpuscle count as the work of antibiotics he had been given earlier for a knee infection. Only many years later did Burchett discover that the explanation was quite wrong: the number of white corpuscles in his blood ought to have increased to fight the infection. On the other hand a low white-blood-cell count is characteristic of radiation illness. [17]

By the time Burchett emerged from hospital a few days later, his camera containing unique shots of Hiroshima and its victims had been stolen. MacArthur had withdrawn his press accreditation and announced his intention to expel Burchett from occupied Japan. Although the intervention of friends in the US Navy with whom Burchett had worked for much of the Pacific campaign led to the withdrawal of the expulsion order, Burchett left Japan at the call of the Beaverbrook press shortly afterwards, not to return for over two and a half decades.

## Hiroshima: Constructing the Silence

Although Burchett dismissed most of the obstructions placed in his way at the time of the Hiroshima story as the predictable overreactions of bureaucrats, he eventually came to see a more deeply disturbing pattern. Reflecting later on his difficulty in transmitting his story, his hospitalization, the theft of his camera, the extreme hostility of US military officials in Hiroshima and Tokyo, and the efforts to limit access to Hiroshima, Burchett came to see his own story in a broader context of official US policy to conceal the truth of Hiroshima. 'In 1945 I was too overwhelmed by the enormity of what happened at Hiroshima and Nagasaki to appreciate the cool deliberation and advance planning that went into manufacturing the subsequent cover-up.' [18]

Here Burchett quite rightly saw his own scoop as provoking an official US government response. How much was premeditated and planned before the bombing is unclear, but there is little doubt that with Burchett's announcement to the world of the effects of radiation illness, the true character of the holocausts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki could not easily be contained. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were to take on a meaning different to other, comparable holocausts such as the firebombing of Dresden, Hamburg and Tokyo.

The extent of the suppression of the truth of the first nuclear bombings is probably even greater than Burchett guessed, and certainly more complex. Beginning with the attack on Burchett, there were three strands to official American policy towards information about Hiroshima and Nagasaki. First, access to Hiroshima was denied to Allied journalists. Second, public discussion of the topic was banned in Japan. Finally, through the censorship and official disinformation program as a whole, Western perceptions were channelled in such a way as to minimize understanding of the human, as opposed to the physical, destructiveness of the weapon. The

first step in the attempt to suppress the truth about Hiroshima was to attack claims of radiation illness, and to deny authority to Japanese-sourced accounts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The dismissal of Burchett was part of this. In the week after Burchett's claim of continuing radiation illness and residual radiation, Manhattan Project officials publicly attacked such claims several times. Statements by General Farrell and his chief, Major General Leslie Groves, appeared in the New York Times describing claims such as Burchett's as 'Japanese propaganda', and categorically denying any residual radiation effects. [19]

According to the Manhattan Project's official publicist and historian, New York Times science writer, William L. Laurence, This historic ground in New Mexico, scene of the first atomic explosion on earth and cradle of a new era in civilization, gave the most effective answer to Japanese propaganda that radiations were responsible for deaths even the day after the explosion, Aug. 6 and that persons entering Hiroshima had contracted mysterious maladies due to persistent radioactivity. The Japanese are continuing their propaganda aimed at creating the impression that we won the war unfairly, and thus attempting to create sympathy for themselves . . . Thus, at the beginning, the Japanese described 'symptoms' that did not ring true. More recently they have sent in a radiologist, and since then the symptoms they describe appear to be more authentic on the surface, according to the radiologists present here today. [20] In fact, Japanese radiologists and nuclear specialists had arrived in Hiroshima within days of the bombing: the first confirmation that the weapon that struck Hiroshima was an atomic bomb was provided by Japan's leading nuclear physicist, Nishina Yoshio, on 10 August. Systematic radiological soil sampling was commenced the same day by Kyoto Imperial University scientists, and continued around Hiroshima for the next week. Within two weeks of the bombing some twenty-five autopsies had

been performed to establish the effects of radiation illness. [21] Leaving aside the fact that US scientists and military planners knew perfectly well the potential – and expected – radiation effects of the weapon, at that time, United States scientists were in no position to be authoritative: no US scientists entered either of the bombed cities until 9 September, six days after Burchett.

The US rebuttal did not stand up. Burchett, and his Japanese sources in Hiroshima, were quite right to stress the radiation effects of the bombing. Contrary to Groves' and Farrell's claims, scores of thousands of people became ill and died from exposure to radiation emitted from the bomb, principally gamma rays and neutrons. Burchett's newspaper account of people dying from the after-effects of the bomb without any visible injury is quite accurate:

For no apparent reason their health began to fail. They lost appetite. Their hair fell out. Bluish spots appeared on their bodies. And then bleeding began from the ears, nose and mouth. At first, doctors told me, they thought these were the symptoms of general debility. They gave their patients Vitamin A injections. The results were horrible. The flesh started rotting from the hole caused by the injection of the needle. And in every case the victim died.

Radiation deaths were still occurring in large numbers when Burchett visited the Communications hospital – and still occur today as the long-term effects of exposure to radiation are revealed in the form of a variety of blood diseases, leukaemia and other cancers. [22]

Burchett was also correct on the possibility of residual radiation at dangerous levels. Residual radiation comes mainly from irradiated materials that have turned into radio isotopes and from particles of uranium from the bomb that escaped fission. As fallout, residual radiation could disperse widely and in an-

uneven pattern of concentration. Radio isotopes thought to have been generated in the explosion had half-lives varying from a few minutes or hours (e.g. manganese 56, half-life 2.6 hours) through to several years (e.g. cesium 134, half-life 2.05 years). Japanese studies have concluded that 'the total gamma-ray dose from induced radiation up to 100 hours after the explosion one metre above the ground at the hypocentre in Hiroshima averaged about 100 rads' and fell off sharply away from the hypocentre. Fallout effects would be additional, and unevenly distributed according to weather patterns which prevailed after the bombing. [23]

These are certainly levels that could induce radiation illness either through direct exposure or through the breathing or swallowing of induced-radioactive material. In the days after the bombing many people entered the city to help and to search for relatives. Mortality rates cannot confirm the effects of residual radiation among these early entrants [24], but morbidity rates among survivors certainly do. Immediate radiation effects were clear among substantial numbers who entered the hypo centre area within two or three days. In the long term, 'the crude mortality rate for leukaemia, according to the 1960 national census, was three times greater for those entering Hiroshima within three days after the bombing than the average crude leukaemia rate in all of Japan.' [25]

There had been great anxiety about the possibility of the atomic weapon rendering both cities biologically sterile in toto. The announce-ment by Tokyo Radio of the sprouting of the first green shoots in the late summer after the bombing was understandably a matter of great joy and relief. [26] Farrell returned to attack the credibility of Japanese witnesses and scientists on 19 September when he denied newspaper reports of biological sterility. [27]

In fact, temporary sterility among men was

quite common, and Farrell's attack wrong. 'Since spermatogonia of the testis and follicular cells of the ovary are radio-sensitive, disturbance of the reproductive function was an inevitable consequence of exposure to the atomic bomb.' [28] The month after Burchett's visit, surveys of sperm of men exposed to the bomb showed that nineteen out of twenty-two men one kilometre or less from the hypocentre were effectively sterile. One third of a larger sample of men were sterile in late 1945. Within five years, the majority returned to normal fertility. Among women up to five kilometres from the hypocentre, some seventy per cent suffered irregular menstruation, and ovarian disorders were common. [29] At this point growth disorders such as microcephaly (a smaller than normal head, often accompanied by mental retardation) as a result of exposure of children in utero to massive radiation had not yet emerged.

Immediately after Burchett's story on the radiation effects of the bomb was published, severe restrictions were applied to journalists, both Allied and Japanese. On 5 September, MacArthur's headquarters banned Allied journalists from Tokyo as MacArthur's troops prepared to enter the city. 'It is not military policy for correspondents to spearhead the occupation,' declared a spokesman for General MacArthur. [30] Hiroshima and Nagasaki were placed completely out of bounds.

Sophisticated censorship plans had been drawn up in April 1945 at MacArthur's Philippines headquarters in preparation for the expected Operation Olympic invasion in November 1945. [31] The most serious restriction on both journalistic reporting of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and public Japanese scientific and medical surveys was a series of civil-liberties and press codes issued by MacArthur's headquarters.

The first civil-liberties code, issued on 10 September, was aimed at achieving 'an absolute minimum of restrictions upon freedom

of speech'. The directive commanded the Japanese government to 'issue the necessary orders to prevent dissemination of news . . . which fails to adhere to the truth or which disturbs the public tranquillity'. [32]

In the following week the tranquillity of MacArthur's headquarters was disturbed on three fronts: public opinion at home, the Japanese media and the Japanese government. Each was to contribute to a tightening of censorship about the nuclear bombing. As wartime news restrictions were lifted, and prisoner-of-war camps liberated, appalling accounts of Japanese atrocities towards Allied soldiers flooded the front pages of Western newspapers. Far outweighing the coverage of the nuclear bombings, these stories whipped up an atmosphere of revenge where any suggestion of sympathy for the defeated was to be scourged. Newspaper reports from Tokyo carried the suggestion that the Allied powers were treating the conquered leniently. MacArthur's actions in Tokyo immediately came under scrutiny for evidence of 'softness towards the Japanese'.

In Japan, newspapers and radio were attempting to deal with Allied revelations of Imperial army war atrocities mainly by denial. Asahi Shimbun wrote: 'Virtually all Japanese who have read the report are unanimous in saying that the atrocities are hardly believable.' [33] As was to be the case for decades to come, Japanese anger over the use of the atomic bomb obliterated recognition and guilt of the atrocities of a decade of militarism. In some cases this continued the distortion and false reporting characteristic of the state-controlled media of wartime Japan, as when the Domei press agency defended the Empire, declaring 'Japan might have won the war but for the atomic bomb, a weapon too terrible to face, and one which only barbarians would use.' [34]

The basic fact that a war crime of massive proportions had been committed to bring down

a ferociously militarist government provided the ongoing grounds for the flawed moral challenge to the authority of the Allied powers. On 15 September Asahi Shimbun reiterated the argument of the Japanese cabinet when it described the use of the atomic bomb as 'a breach of international law', which it most certainly was. Two days later the paper argued that if it were correct, as the occupying power argued, that Japanese atrocities in the Philippines had led to Filipinos abandoning their previous support for the Japanese, then would that not also apply to the Allied forces in Japan? [35]

MacArthur's headquarters was not only dealing with unrepentant Japanese media and vengeful victorious American (and Australian and British) public opinion, but also with a cynical Japanese government still attempting to extract maximum political concessions from their conquerors.

According to declassified US military intelligence documents, the US code-breaking system MAGIC intercepted the following message from Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru on 13 September to Japanese missions in Lisbon and Stockholm: 'The newspapers have given wide publicity to the Government's recent memorandum concerning the atomic bomb damage to Hiroshima and Nagasaki . . . since the Americans have recently been raising an uproar about the question of our mistreatment of prisoners, I think we should make every effort to exploit the atomic bomb question in our propaganda.' [36] The intercepted reply of the Japanese minister in Stockholm was even more damaging. Why not, radioed the diplomat, take a more subtle approach, and organize domestic Japanese reporting of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to be picked up by overseas news bureaux? Better still, have 'Anglo-American newspapermen write stories on the bomb damage and thus create a powerful impression around the world'. This provided MacArthur's hawks with

the evidence they needed to justify the most stringent censorship.

Burchett's article published a week earlier could not have come at a worse time from the perspective of the censors. Victors' justice prevailed. The enraged MacArthur ordered 'one hundred per cent censorship . . . No more false state-ments, no more misleading statements are to be permitted; no destructive criticism of the Allied powers.'

The press code issued on 19 September was designed to educate the Japanese by prescribing journalistic ethics:

1. News must strictly adhere to the truth.
2. Nothing shall be printed which might, directly or by inference, disturb the public tranquillity.
3. There shall be no false or destructive criticism of the Allied powers.
6. News stories must be factually written and completely devoid of editorial opinion.
7. News stories shall not be colored to conform with any propaganda line . . .
9. No news story shall be distorted by the omission of pertinent details. [37]

Pre-publication censorship was exercised by GHQ, with any excisions to be rewritten properly, without black patches of ink or XXXs or any other hints of censorship. The pretence of free speech was vital to achieve the full effectiveness of the censorship.

The atomic bombings were a priority concern of the censors. To begin with the press code severely restricted spoken and written reporting about the bombed cities. No Japanese scientific or medical data could be published. It was not until the end of the occupation period in 1951 that newspaper photographs of the victims of the nuclear bombing, the hibakusha, showing the keloids on their bodies, were published by Asahi Shimbun. As a result of the censorship, all public discussion of the bomb damage, and all medical treatment reports, disappeared, greatly impeding both public

understanding of what had taken place and the urgently needed diffusion of medical research and treatment information. Meanwhile the occupation authorities were meticulously collecting scientific information on the bomb and its health effects for American scientific consumption.

The press code was not applied simply to suppress unfavourable or critical or accurate reporting and discussion of the atomic bombings. Such discussion as was allowed had to be slanted in particular directions. According to Japanese historians, the only acceptable treatment of the bombing had to accept and reflect the view that the bombs shortened the war, and were effectively instruments of peace. [38] In April 1947, during the first mayoral election in Hiroshima which inaugurated the national civic democratization programme, a candidate was cut off in the middle of his radio speech by a US military observer because of his failure to comment favourably on the bombing. [39]

When the novelist Nagai Takashi attempted to publish his book *Nagasaki no Kane* (The Bells of Nagasaki), he was told that it could appear only if a description of Japanese atrocities were added to the volume. Nagai, a Catholic who believed that the bomb was God's will, in fact acceded to the censor's demand and the book became a best seller. But, as Lifton remarks, 'What the particular American, or groups of Americans, who made this decision did not realize was that the equation of the two was a tacit admission that dropping the bomb was also an atrocity.' [40] Not surprisingly, Lifton suggests that beneath the censorship policy's overt concern to minimize any possible retaliation against the victors, or succouring of resurgent militarism, there lay both American guilt and horror over the effects of the bombing, as well as what Lifton rather coyly refers to as 'wider American political concerns'.

Survivors of the bombing turned to writing as



testimony to the holocaust. They too immediately encountered the censor. Many poems and other writings were distributed illegally. The Hiroshima poet, Kurihara Sadako, published her poem 'Let the Child be Born' in 1946 in a Hiroshima magazine edited by her husband. The poem, based on a story she had heard, which tells of a baby born in a cellar amid 'the smell of fresh blood, the stench of death', is an evocation of life and its renewal amid otherwise unending suffering:

'I am a midwife. Let me help the delivery,'  
 said one of the seriously wounded,  
 who just now was groaning.  
 So, in the depths of this gloomy hell,  
 a new life was born.  
 But before the light of the dawn the midwife,  
 still stained with blood, dies.  
 Let the child be born,  
 let the child be born,  
 even if it means throwing away one's own life.

After publishing this poem Kurihara and her husband were taken to General Headquarters and interrogated about the poem, which was held to violate the press code, and the unwritten code stipulating suitable treatment of the atomic bombing. [41]

One event in particular has come to symbolize the US censorship approach. As part of the joint Japanese scientific and medical survey of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the film company Nippon Eiga-sha filmed material for a comprehensive visual documentation of the effects of the bombing. The film was immediately prohibited. When the Japanese scientific survey staff protested, the GHQ reversed its decision, and allowed the filming to proceed. Then, in February 1946 when the filming of the 11,000-foot *Effects of the Atom Bomb* (edited from 55,000 feet) was submitted to the US authorities, it was despatched to Washington, together with all known prints and negatives. In fact, a group of the film workers secretly made an unauthorized print and hid

ten reels of the film, keeping its existence secret until the end of the occupation. [42]

### Celebrating the Bomb

A still more profound form of distortion, one which was to have a significant effect on Western understanding of nuclear war, becomes evident if Burchett's article is compared with other accounts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by Allied journalists at the time. In the West, the common images of the nuclear holocaust have always been essentially technological, or more precisely, without human content. The hands of the clock ticking towards midnight refer to the machine-like and apparently inexorable move to the terminal explosion. The most general image, the mushroom cloud, is even further removed from the earth and the fate of human beings. The associations of the billowing, technicolored eruption are with an awesome and perhaps terrible power but not at all with the human beings consumed within it. Still less does that image suggest the responsibility of the human agency involved - the pressing of the button and the decision that it should be pressed.

Just how potent an effect this removal of the human element has been on our imaginings of nuclear war is revealed by comparing it to the common images of other twentieth-century horrors of war. The First World War produced an extraordinary set of visual and written images, but all essentially human in scale and implication - trenches, barbed wire, bodies in mud. The Nazi war on the Jews is remembered in the popular imagination through the concentration camp, the SS master and inmate-slave, guards and the almost unbelievable industrialized killing of the gas chambers. But, however far beyond the experience of the watcher, the images are still on a human scale, a direct signification of human suffering. This is not true of our understanding of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In part, this is a matter of censorship and suppression. But as a comparison of

Burchett's account and that of his contemporaries shows, there was another level of distortion involved.

In contrast to the policy of suppressing critical accounts of the effects of the atomic bombing, 'articles that publicized the power of the atomic bomb were warmly welcomed by GHQ'. [43] What was to become the dominant official assessment of the nuclear bombing was clear to the Japanese at the very beginning. As some of them wrote later:

A group of American reporters who visited Hiroshima on 3 September 1945 expressed satisfaction with the complete destruction of the city. At a press conference held at the prefectural office, a New York Times reporter [W.H. Lawrence] noted the total devastation of the city and extolled the obvious superiority of the bomb's potential. Some Japanese reporters present at this press conference raised questions from the standpoint of the bomb's victims . . . but [Lawrence] refused to answer such questions. His concern was solely with the power of the bomb: its victims interested him only as proof of that might. [44]

The day Burchett's 'Atomic Plague' article was published in the Daily Express, W.H. Lawrence, with the Pentagon-approved press team wrote of his visit to Hiroshima in the New York Times. [45] A reading of the long article substantiates the Japanese reporters' comments on the press conference. Lawrence and his party landed at Kure Naval Base near Hiroshima, and toured the city with a Japanese naval surgeon, speaking occasionally to witnesses. There is no indication that he visited any hospital or medical relief station.

The dominant concern of this description of Hiroshima is the physical damage which made it 'the world's most damaged city, worse than Warsaw or Stalingrad that held the record for Europe'. The tour of the rubble, amid the decay of the remaining bodies, is interspersed with

brief coverage of the medical situation, but without any of Burchett's attempts to portray the situation of the burn and radiation victims in the hospitals. Lawrence wrote vaguely that

Japanese doctors told us they were helpless to deal with burns caused by the bomb's great flash or with the other physical ailments caused by the bomb . . . They told us that persons who had been only slightly injured on the day of the blast lost 86 per cent of their white blood corpuscles, their hair began to drop out, they lost appetites, vomited blood and finally died. [Emphasis added.]

Surprisingly for experienced journalists, the party apparently made no attempt to substantiate these dramatic claims, or to expand on them. Astonishingly, the presumably well-briefed journalists of the official party made no explicit reference to the effects of radiation. As we have already seen, Lawrence reported the official refutation of Japanese sourced claims of widespread radiation illness after his return to Tokyo without referring to his own visit. In his report on a visit to Nagasaki, again largely concerned with physical damage, he said, 'I am convinced that, horrible as the bomb undoubtedly is, the Japanese are exaggerating its effects in an effort to win sympathy for themselves in an attempt to make the American people forget the long record of cold-blooded Japanese bestiality.' [46]

Echoing the emerging official US justification for retaining a monopoly of nuclear-weapons use, Lawrence went on, 'It should be the last evidence needed to convince any doubter of the need to retain and perfect our air offense lest the fate of Hiroshima or Nagasaki be repeated in Indianapolis or Washington or Detroit or New York.'

Lawrence's basic attitude, and the one which was to underpin the dominant 'official' meaning of Hiroshima that came to be constructed, is

clear from his comment on his own feelings: 'A visit to Hiroshima is an experience to leave one shaken by the terrible, incredible sights. Here is the final proof of what the mechanical and scientific genius of America has been able to accomplish in war.'

Three themes had by now emerged in officially sanctioned American coverage of the nuclear bombing. The first was that the bombs were a just and necessary contribution to world peace, and that a continued US nuclear monopoly would maintain the peace. The second was that the most important quality of the bombs to be emphasized was their physical power. Finally, the human consequences were to be conceded so far as was necessary to establish the claim of technological omnipotence, but were otherwise to be ignored or suppressed. Together these made possible the elimination of any legitimate perspective other than that of the victors and the celebration of their power.

The contrast between Burchett's view of the bombings and the duty of the journalist becomes even more clear when Burchett's writing on Hiroshima is compared with that of another New York Times writer, William L. Laurence (not to be confused with W.H. Lawrence). [47] Seconded from his newspaper to the Manhattan Project, Laurence became the official publicist and historian of the first nuclear weapons. As a science writer he had written on the possibility of nuclear weapons before the war, and been given the task of explaining the atomic bomb to the world public, including writing the statement with which President Truman announced the first atomic bombing.

Laurence witnessed the Trinity test at Alamogordo on 16 July 1945, and accompanied the USAF 509th Bombing Group to Tinian later that month. Listening to Truman's announcement on the radio, he wrote of his pride as a journalist: 'The world's greatest story was being broadcast, and mine had been the

honor, unique in the history of journalism, of preparing the War Department's official press release for worldwide distribution. No greater honor could come to any newspaperman, or anyone else for that matter.' [48]

Two days later Laurence flew in an observer plane in the attack on Nagasaki, about which he wrote a long account published a month later in the New York Times. [49] For Laurence the Nagasaki plutonium bomb was 'a thing of beauty to behold, this "gadget"'.

Being close to it and watching it as it was being fashioned into a living thing, so exquisitely shaped that any sculptor would be proud to have created it, one somehow crossed the borderline between reality and non-reality and felt oneself in the presence of the supernatural. Could it be that this innocent-looking object, so beautifully designed, so safe to handle, could in much less time than it takes to wink an eye annihilate an entire city and its population?

Just as his near-namesake Lawrence had conceived of the bombing as an expression of 'the mechanical and scientific genius of America', Laurence saw the bomb in spiritual and aesthetic terms that rendered the deathly qualities of the weapon somehow invisible. The aesthetic, moral, political and scientific claims were interwoven and mutually reinforcing.

In imagery redolent of alienated power and sexuality, the result – the result of the exquisite technology that Laurence recognizes in his transcendent adoration – is a cloud that lives:

The mushroom top was even more alive than the pillar, seething and boiling in a white fury of creamy foam, sizzling upward and then descending earthward, a thousand geysers rolled into one. It kept struggling in an elemental fury, like a creature in the act of breaking the bonds that held it down . . . It was as though the decapitated monster was growing a new head.

Death and responsibility were banished. In the air over Nagasaki, Laurence - apparently for the only time - addressed himself to the moral question: 'Does one feel any pity or compassion for the poor devils about to die?' His answer was resounding: 'Not when one thinks of Pearl Harbor and of the Death March on Bataan.'

This reflexive American defence of the slaughter of the civilians who made up the target was hypocrisy. One might suppose that the innocents below had participated in or bore responsibility for the earlier events.

As well as establishing the innocence of the bomb, another important myth was being created here, that of the clean atom: 'I saw the atomic substance [i.e. plutonium] before it was placed inside the bomb. By itself it is not dangerous to handle.' Laurence returned to Alamogordo after the Nagasaki bombing, and from there wrote the 12 September attack on Burchett and the Japanese-sourced claims of large numbers of radiation deaths. [50]

It is very hard to imagine a more complete contrast between two approaches to journalism than that between Burchett and Laurence. Laurence provides the archetype for Robert Lifton's study of nuclearism - that late-twentieth-century secular religion 'in which "grace" and even "salvation" - the mastery of death and evil - are achieved through the power of a new technological deity . . . capable not only of death and destruction but also unlimited creation.' [51] For Laurence, the dropping of the nuclear bomb on Hiroshima was a point in a secular crusade for the new religion. In this new muscular deism, there was no place for the victims of the holocaust; only a transcendent fusion of technology and the power that directed it.

### **'The Alienation is Temporary, the Humanity Imminent.'**

Burchett himself was not innocent of this predominantly masculine worship of

technology. As a war correspondent in the Pacific, he had not expected to survive the war. While was more radical than most in anticipating sympathetically the emergence of post-colonial Asia, Burchett was in some respects a typical male war correspondent.

In *Democracy with a Tommygun*, apparently written in the last year of the war (the chapter on Hiroshima is 'A Postscript'), Burchett describes LeMay's US Air Force firebombing of Japanese cities from November 1944 in glowing and admiring terms. Writing here of the long-range bombing campaign Burchett praised the wonder of 'American planning, production and organization'. The aircraft in question, the B-29, evoked Burchett's greatest admiration, as a specifically American achievement:

'The Superfortress, apart from being able to deliver heavier bombloads farther than any other plane, is also the most beautiful aircraft yet produced. Smoothly tapering like an artist's brush handle, it rides like a feathered dart.' [52] This admiration of American technology carries over into a description of the Tokyo fire raid of 10 March 1945: 'The world's greatest incendiary target had been touched off by the war's greatest incendiary raid. Never since the great fire of London had there been a conflagration as started early that Saturday morning in the centre of downtown Tokyo, where in the most inflammable portion of the city, the population density exceeds 100,000 people per square mile.' [53]

In a description very similar to that of W.H. Lawrence describing Hiroshima in statistics, Burchett tells the externals of that appalling night, essentially from the perspective of the pilots and aircrew whose lives and dangers he shared. That night went beyond even the horrors of Dresden and Hamburg. The United States Air Force had developed the napalm bomb especially for the firing of Japanese cities. [54] To test the new incendiaries developed for the highly inflammable Japanese

cities, the air force built a miniature Japanese city block, complete with rooms and furniture. A nearby army firefighting team was then equipped with Japanese fire equipment and pitted against the new products. When the new jellied petroleum bomb produced a fire that defeated the firefighters, the researchers knew they had met the air force's requirements. Several hundred B-29s, carrying six tons of napalm or oil-filled incendiaries apiece, each blanketed an area 2,500 feet by 500 feet with burning gasoline. [55] A factory worker, Tsuchikura Hidezo, spoke of the scenes among the 750,000 people trapped in the world's most crowded urban area when 100,000 died:

Fire winds with burning particles ran up and down the streets. I watched people, adults and children, running for their lives, dashing madly about like rats. Flames ran after them like living things, striking them down. They died by the hundreds in front of me . . . The whole spectacle with its blinding lights and thundering noise reminded me of the paintings of purgatory - a real inferno out of the depths of hell. [56]

What is striking, and to Burchett's credit, is that as soon as he actually saw the human results of the work of his comrades of the past year, he immediately responded: in the plain and decent prose of his Hiroshima account he described the unprecedented suffering before him which amounted to what he called 'the watershed in my life'.

Burchett's reversion to a shared humanity paralleled that of others who had completely supported the war's aims in the Pacific. An Australian prisoner of war who reached Hiroshima a few days later wrote of the immediate transformation of his consuming hatred: ' . . . we felt no sense of either history or triumph. Our brother man went by crippled and burned, and we knew only shame and guilt . . . Our hatred for the Japanese was swept away by the enormity of what we had seen.' [57]

At the heart of war is a profound alienation from the enemy, an alienation experienced as hatred, fear and a sundering of any possibility of communion or fellow feeling. But, as Michael Walzer has put it, 'The alienation [of the enemy] is temporary, the humanity imminent.' [58] Burchett and the POW both experienced what the religious call the conversion of the heart, which makes possible a reconstitution of a shared humanity. From that position Burchett wrote his prophetic warning from the hospitals of Hiroshima.

At the heart of the state is the legitimization of its right to violence and its right to demand that the citizen take part in organized violence. As a result, states are always engaged in a contest of legitimization with their peoples - legitimization, not of this regime rather than that, but legitimization of the right of war. Such rights are never wholly accepted, wholeheartedly, by the whole population in societies divided by sex, class, and ethnicity, and the humanity of the enemy is always in danger of erupting through the state-managed artifice of hatred and alienation. But in the twentieth century, legitimization of the violence of the state has become at the same time more contingent and more necessary than before.

Hiroshima, while marking a turning point in some ways, is in other respects simply the culmination (or more pessimistically, the lowest point so far) of a trend towards a loss or restraint over the slaughter of civilians that has marked this century. Throughout the century, the proportion of civilians killed in wars has tended to rise as a proportion of the dead. Most important in this trend has been 'the terrific growth of air warfare, and the sweeping disregard for all humane limitations on bombardment from the air. This has produced an extent of devastation, and in some part a degradation of living conditions, that has not been approached since the end of the Thirty Years' War.'



Writing in 1945 before the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Liddell Haft continued: 'It is the combination of an unlimited aim with an unlimited method - the adoption of a demand for total surrender together with a strategy of total blockade and bombing devastation - which, in this war, has inevitably produced a deepening danger to the relatively shallow foundations of civilized life.' [59]

The need for legitimation of this new stage of total warfare grew from the resistance to unthinking - or unfeeling - acquiescence in what was palpably atrocious, justifiable, if at all, only by a calculation of means and ends. The American justification was, in fact, widely challenged, both at a political level and by the immediate revulsion felt by many. At the time Burchett wrote, public opinion was quite mixed about the nuclear bombing, and the American justification was by no means universally accepted. The day after the Hiroshima bombing the Vatican expressed serious concern. [60] US newspapers reported widespread European concern and dismay: the New York Times ran an article three days after the bombing headed 'Britons Revolted by Use of Atom Bomb'. At home, the New York Sun claimed that 'the entire city is pervaded by a sense of oppression. Many feel they would have been happier if the 2,000,000,000-dollar experiment had failed, or the knowledge had been thrown in the river like an unwanted kitten.' [61]

Before long an argument emerged that a principal reason for the haste to use the bomb was as a warning to the Soviet Union, and to end the war before the wartime ally would have to be given a major role in a Pacific settlement involving Japan. This was buttressed by the report of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey of Japan which concluded that even without the nuclear bombing, Japan could not have continued the war for more than a few months, and that an invasion costing many Allied lives would not have been necessary. All that was at stake was the speed of victory. [62]

It was a time of historic decision, if only the collective means could be found to make it. Burchett sensed it, and wrote his warning to the world with that aim. In this setting, legitimation of the atomic bombing was not at all certain, and since the United States rapidly decided to build its post-war global dominance around a nuclear monopoly, securing public acquiescence was of paramount importance. The uncensored discoveries of Burchett about the human effects of the bomb, and particularly the devastating impact of radiation illness, needed to be stopped and an official interpretation rendered secure.

Military and foreign policy is always the least democratic area of state decision. On nuclear matters the state resolved that it would tolerate no serious public discussion either of the human impact of the bomb or of the option of not using the bomb. US state managers were not sure of the reactions of the American people. As National Security Council Document No. 30 of 1948 put it:

In this matter, public opinion must be recognized as a factor of considerable importance. Deliberation or decision on a subject of this significance, even if clearly affirmative, might have the effect of placing before the American people a moral question of vital significance at a time when the full security impact of the question had not become apparent. If this decision is to be made by the American people, it should be made in the circumstances of an actual emergency when the principal factors are in the forefront of public consideration. [63]

Popular involvement in decisions of the nuclear state was seen as a risk that could be taken only at a time of war fever, when the possibility of a calm and informed decision could be minimized. The silence of Hiroshima is a crucial part of the nuclear state's strategy of maintaining the perpetual alienation of the enemy. Burchett's small but urgent voice from

Hiroshima helped to render the imminent shared humanity palpable, to this extent contributing to the possibility of a collective decision to refuse acquiescence in the next nuclear war. 'One of evil's principal modes of being,' says John Berger, 'is looking beyond (with indifference) that which is before the eyes.' [64] Evil, in this sense, is organized and orchestrated by state and mass media, but never quite successfully. 'In visiting Hiroshima', Burchett later wrote, I felt that I was seeing in the last hour of WW2 what would be the fate of hundreds of cities in a WW3. If that does not make a journalist want to shape history in the right direction, what does? Or should?' [65]

## Afterword

August 6, 2005 Originally written for the fortieth anniversary of the US attack on Hiroshima, *Voice and Silence in the First Nuclear War*: Wilfred Burchett and Hiroshima was published a year later in a long out of print book reviewing the life of the Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett. [66]

Twenty years after writing *Voice and Silence* what strikes me is its continued salience. The threat of nuclear war is if anything greater now than at the height of the Reagan years, with the dangers coming from multiple sources:

- The number of nuclear-armed states has increased sharply, by and large with acquiescence if not collusion of the sole remaining superpower.
- The risks of nuclear terrorism by non-state actors have expanded greatly, and should not be ignored by those accustomed to concerns about nuclear-armed states.
- The structural characteristics of the new

nuclear world are even more dangerous than before. The Cold War was at root a bilateral nuclear contest, closely analysed by game theorists seeking "rational solutions" to the Prisoners' Dilemma, which lay only in heightened trust and communication between the opposing sides. In game theory terms outside that cold war context, when the number of effective players rises above  $n=2$ , strategic stability, deterrence, bluffing and war avoidance all become problematic, resulting in extreme uncertainty. [67]

- In an effort to overcome restrictions on the use of nuclear weapons arising from both moral concerns about genocide and practical military concerns about the counter-productive consequences of such use, the United States has been pressing ahead with the development of new types of nuclear weapons, such as "bunker-buster" tactical nuclear weapons.

- Pressure for disarmament within governments and in global civil society has ebbed. Early post-Cold War commitments to dismantle existing nuclear weapons have been set aside. More importantly still, the actions of successive US administrations have almost hopelessly compromised the core international legal-political restraints on nuclear proliferation: the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

- The psycho-cultural state of nuclear terror endured by the populations of the nuclear-weapons countries that was a crucial part of the structures that maintained the Cold War has been effectively re-constituted – on a much wider scale in the context of globalization – through the disabling consequences of the post 9.11 motif of terrorism. [68]

- The worldwide peace movements sparked by the nuclear escalation of the Reagan years have all but disappeared, with little effective public restraint on the actions of the nuclear states, despite everything that is known about the

invasion and occupation of Iraq.

These sources of danger intersect with others such as the high level of irrationality and ideological motivation of decision-making in the Bush administration, and the intertwining of the nuclear threat to security with other problems of genuinely global scale such as climate change, threats to biodiversity, and the contradictory consequences of market-driven globalization. The complexity of these threats, combined with their global rather than simple national character makes the task of building social movements for peace and sustainability both more difficult and more urgent than a quarter of a century ago.

### **“The Atomic Plague”: the indubitable achievement**

Burchett’s September 6th Daily Express article was the first eyewitness published account. Yet the importance of Burchett’s article was not just the fact that he was the first to write from the site of the holocaust, but also what he wrote about – and what his colleagues embedded in the U.S. Occupation press corps did not: the human consequences of the technology he had hitherto admired uncritically. This is clear from the headline to his Daily Express article: “30th Day in Hiroshima: Those who escaped begin to die, victims of THE ATOMIC PLAGUE: ‘I Write this as a Warning to the World’”. In response, U.S. occupation forces and the U.S. Defence Department denied his claims of radiation poisoning, branding him a victim of Japanese propaganda, and commenced the decades-long US government censorship of the full effects of the bombing.

Burchett was no saint, nor did he aim for “detachment”. His account of the human effects of the Hiroshima bombing, stands as the one indubitable achievement in a long and controversial working life, during which he was banned from his own country, labelled traitor

and worse. [69]

Charges that Burchett participated in North Korean and Chinese brainwashing of US and allied prisoners of war pursued him until his death in 1983. The most careful study of those claims, by Gavan McCormack, refutes them, concluding

When all the false, garbled and malicious stories of his activities in Korea are discounted, what remains is the portrait of an honest man who tried to tell the truth, who was almost alone in seeing the war primarily from the point of view of the suffering Korean people rather than that of the ‘Great Powers’ or his own or any other government. [70]

At the height of the Vietnam War, Burchett accompanied a National Liberation Force unit into South Vietnam, reporting the life of the guerrilla resistance – for which he was mercilessly pilloried in the mainstream media. While Burchett’s courage in reporting from the NLF side was never in doubt, even leading peace movement activists of the time were concerned about the reliability of his reporting. David Marr’s long and careful assessment of Burchett’s quarter century of writing about Vietnam from the peace talks of 1954 onwards to the late 1970s confirms the flaws as well as virtues:

Did Burchett tell the truth about Vietnam? The record is more mixed. He certainly worked hard to dig out the facts, organize them and present them forcefully to readers. On the other hand, he sometimes deliberately left out evidence, and he wilfully distorted evidence presented by the ‘other side’. [71]

Today, regardless of the final assessment of Burchett’s reporting of Vietnam, the question that comes immediately to mind is why so few of his colleagues – of whatever political stripe – took the same chance to report the other side. Looking at the pattern of complaisant

contemporary reporting in a new age of destructive imperial over-reach, the same question arises even more forcefully. The contrast between the work of Robert Fisk, Dahr Jamail, John Martinkus and other independent journalists on the one hand, and that of their colleagues embedded in the Green Zone of Baghdad makes the same point – unbearably, almost daily. [72]

The role of journalists was, and remains, as Burchett maintained, central to this telling and re-telling of history. Burchett was pilloried. The New York Times' William L. Laurence, who denied his extensive knowledge of the radiation effects of the bomb when he willingly led the charge to deny Burchett's claims, went on to win a Pulitzer Prize. [73]

### Recovering historical memory

In his book *Shadows of Hiroshima*, Burchett lamented the loss of the series of long reports from Nagasaki filed to the Chicago Daily News by his friend George Weller. Like Burchett, Weller had jumped off the official caravan of embedded journalists in Yokohama, and headed south alone to Nagasaki. Unlike Burchett Weller submitted his copy to the GHQ censors, who blocked it, and it was never seen again. But just recently, a long lost carbon copy of the reports wrote from Nagasaki was discovered by Weller's son, and the first of the reports was finally published. [74]

Since *Voice and Silence* was written, it has come to light that US authorities suppressed not only the Japanese footage of Hiroshima and Nagasaki discussed there, but also even more footage, in colour, filmed by a US military film unit. [75]

Since this essay was written historians in the US and Japan and elsewhere have greatly expanded our knowledge of the wider pattern of reporting about Hiroshima and the US censorship campaign. Questions about the relationship between history and memory that

preoccupied me in the last part of *Voice and Silence* twenty years ago have now come to centre stage in the complex and powerful work of American historians of the Pacific War and of Japan. [76]

### Born of the conquerors

There is a final importance to be discerned in *The Atomic Plague*. It is a product of victory, written by an Australian who had flown as a comrade with the young American crews of the B-29s as they incinerated hundreds of thousands in the cities of Japan in the spring of 1945. Despite its focus on the human consequences of the technology and military organization Burchett had hitherto admired uncritically, its author was not Japanese, was not opposed to the war effort, and was not – at that time – hostile to the United States.

This separates Burchett's act of witness from most Japanese accounts, contemporary and otherwise, including that of many official Japanese acts of remembrance. Many of these, especially the voices of official Japan, stress the undoubted significance of humanity as a whole, morally and politically, but in a way that truncates the specifically Japanese story of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, making a story that starts early one hot summer morning in 1945. Notoriously, the Hiroshima Peace Park, site of the annual national commemoration attended by every post-war prime minister, for many years continued the work of the war by erasing memory of the many Korean hibakusha who died in the city. At its worst, Hiroshima becomes a symbol not of a universal capacity for suffering and a call to abandon war, but a badge of a specifically Japanese victim status.

When Kurihara Sadako died in March 2005, aged 92, it was her justly famous 1946 poem, 'Let the Child be Born' that was widely reproduced in Japan. Yet in her later poems like "Hiroshima and the Emperor's New Clothes" and most famously "When we say 'Hiroshima'"

Kurihara targeted the hypocrisy of this official Japanese valorizing of Japan's position as victim.

When we say "Hiroshima,"  
do people answer, gently,  
'Ah, 'Hiroshima'?' ...  
Say "Hiroshima," and hear "Pearl Harbor."  
Say "Hiroshima," and hear "Rape of Nanjing."  
Say "Hiroshima," and hear women and children  
in Manila  
thrown into trenches, doused with gasoline,  
and burned alive.  
Say "Hiroshima,"  
and hear echoes of blood and fire.  
Ah, 'Hiroshima',  
we first must  
wash the blood  
off our own hands. [77]

Kurihara reminded her Japanese post-war audience that witness to events of transhistorical human significance is always conducted by women and men standing in history at particular places. An authentic – or at least a decently complete – Japanese account cannot begin on that summer morning.

One of the virtues of "The Atomic Plague" was that it was written for the victors by one of its best war correspondents, writing almost directly from the worst his civilization could do right before his eyes. Kurihara is right, that the Japanese of her generation should not avert their eyes from the events in which, dictatorship or not, they were to varying degrees complicit. Burchett, writing from the victors for the victors, is demanding that they face what had been done in their name. That story had to start in Hiroshima, the other side of victory.

Today, for Americans and their allies of the Pacific War (reborn half a century later as the Coalition of the Willing) it is still difficult to face the fact that the Pacific War came to an end with an unprecedented act of mass terror,

a crime never before committed. So far as it is humanly possible to make such judgments, Hiroshima, together with Nagasaki and the firebombings that preceded them, rendered the scales of atrocity equally heavy on both sides.

The deeply entrenched triumphalism of the victors' subsequent political cultures endures to this day, masking and fostering the pathologies that poison the deep structure of relations between Japan and the U.S., and helping in turn to shield the United States from self-doubt in its ongoing imperial ventures. One listens in vain to unending demands from American and Australian politicians for full Japanese apology for the Pacific War waiting in vain for the other shoe to drop. As with all such suppressed pathologies, there is a terrible psychological – and political – price to be paid with the return of the repressed.

### 'One of evil's principal modes of being'

All of this work confirms the reality of the suppression of the historical record that Burchett – unwittingly – documented for the first time, the complexity of trauma on the side of the nuclear victors as much as the defeated. Burchett's achievement confirms the continuing salience – now as much as twenty years ago – of John Berger's comment on our complicity in evil, then and now: 'One of evil's principal modes of being,' says John Berger, 'is looking beyond (with indifference) that which is before the eyes.' [78]

### Notes

\* The original version of this essay was first published in Ben Kiernan (ed.), *Burchett Reporting the Other Side of the World 1939-1983*, Quartet, London, 1986. That version has not been changed except to remove obscurities and infelicities of expression. In the Afterword I note several important subsequent developments in our knowledge of the events dealt with here, especially concerning the U.S.



censorship of the radiation effects of the bombing. Joel Kovel, Gavan McCormack and Belinda Probert were particularly helpful in commenting on the original version, and I am grateful to Mark Selden for careful and productive editing of this version.

1. Letter to David Gourlay, 9 July 1980.
2. *Shadows of Hiroshima*, Verso, London, 1983, pp.8-9.
3. Burchett told the story of how he got to Hiroshima a number of times in published form. The first is in 'Hiroshima: A Postscript' in his *Democracy with a Tommygun* (F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1946); again in his autobiographies *Passport* (Nelson, Melbourne, 1969) and *At the Barricades* (1980); and finally in *Shadows of Hiroshima* (Verso, London, 1983). The story of Burchett's trip to Hiroshima and back as told here is drawn from all three.
4. One other journalist also broke through official restrictions at the time and reached Nagasaki. George Weller of the *Chicago Daily News* avoided military public relations 'hawks' and reached Nagasaki by subterfuge on 6 September. The 25,000-word article he wrote on the basis of interviews with witnesses and medical workers was much more detailed than Burchett's. 'As a loyal, disciplined member of the press corps, I sent the material to MacArthur's press headquarters for clearance and transmission . . . The paper . . . received nothing. MacArthur had "killed" the lot.' (cited in *At the Barricades*, p.116.)
5. For the well-founded fears of the Emperor's circle see Pacific War Research Society, *Japan's Longest Day*, Kodansha International, Tokyo, 1980.
6. *Passport*, p.167. Burchett later quotes one of the remaining doctors as saying that they knew they were not dealing with an infection, but that use of these masks provided some comfort in the face of an otherwise incomprehensible experience.
7. Committee for the Compilation of Materials on Damage Caused by the Atomic Bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, *Hiroshima and*

*Nagasaki: the Physical Medical and Social Effects of the Atomic Bombings*, Hutchinson, London, 1981, p.516.

8. *Ibid.*, p.519.
9. *Ibid.*, pp.130ff.
10. The piece that was published in the *Daily Express* on 6 September 1945 was slightly altered by an editor who thought 'poor Peter [Burchett]' had been overcome by the sights of the inferno, and who inserted some gratuitous paragraphs from the Science Editor. The article is reprinted in *Shadows* and in Harry Gordon (ed.), *The Eyewitness History of Australia*, Currey O'Neill, Melbourne, 1981, pp. 361-2.
11. *Shadows*, p. 4l.
12. *Passport*, p.173.
13. *Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, op.cit., p.15.
14. *Passport*, p.172. In the various published versions of the story, Burchett repeatedly acknowledged the support he received from several of the veteran war correspondents in the official party who protested at this unprofessional behaviour.
15. *Passport*, pp.174-5. A contemporary account of Burchett's POW-camp exploits by Jim Vine was published in the *Brisbane Courier-Mail*, 11 September 1945, and reprinted in Gordon, op.cit., p.364. Burchett must have been the source. Burchett mentions encounters in the Kyoto-Tsuruga area and Kobe-Osaka. Vine places the liberated camps as two on the west coast of Honshu and three on the Inland Sea.
16. *Shadows*, pp.22-3.
17. Even as late as 1970 Burchett still accepted that initial explanation (*Passport*, p.176). Presumably his reassessment of the probable link between his own low white-blood cell count and his exposure to residual radiation in Hiroshima began when he returned to Hiroshima for the first time a year later.
18. *Shadows*, p.9.
19. Farrell is reported in an article in the *New York Times*, 13 September 1945, p4 by W.H. Lawrence and datelined Tokyo; Groves's statement is reported by William L. Laurence in the *NYT*, 12 September 1945, pp. 1,4 in an

article, datelined New Mexico, 9 September, delayed.

20. Laurence, *ibid.*

21. Hiroshima and Nagasaki. p.504.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-9.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*, p.243.

25. *Ibid.*, p.270.

26. New York Times, 7 September 1945, p.7.

27. Hiroshima and Nagasaki. *op.cit.*, p.616.

28. *Ibid.*, p.151.

29. *Ibid.*, pp.152-3

30. New York Times, 5 September 1945, cited in *Shadows*, *op.cit.*, p.23.

31. Marlene J. Mayo, 'Civil Censorship and Media Control in Early Occupied Japan: From Minimum to Stringent Surveillance', Robert Wolfe (ed.), *Americans as Proconsuls: United States Military Government in Germany and Japan, 1944-1952*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 1984, pp.292-3. Mayo's important new study of US censorship policy is based on declassified US official documents. However, she devotes no attention to the question of censorship of the effects of the atomic bombing.

32. Toshio Nishi, *Unconditional Democracy: Education and Politics in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1982, pp.86-7.

33. New York Times, 18 September 1945.

34. Nishi, *op.cit.*, p.87.

35. *Ibid.*, p.88.

36. Mayo, *op.cit.*, p.294

37. Nishi, *op.cit.*, pp.88-9.

38. *Ibid.*, p.101.

39. *Ibid.*, p.102. Robert J. Lifton, *Death in Life: the Survivors of Hiroshima*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson. London, 1968, p.329.

40. Lifton, *op.cit.*

41. For the story of the poem (translated by Gavan McCormack) and its full text see Rokuro Hidaka, *The Price of Affluence: Dilemmas of Contemporary Japan*, Penguin Australia. Ringwood, 1985, pp.30-1. See also Lifton. *op.cit.* p.329. Hidaka reports Kurihara's subsequent critical reflections on the meaning

of Hiroshima for Japan.

42. Hiroshima and Nagasaki, *op.cit.*, p.510; Nishi, *op.cit.*, p.102. The film was eventually returned in 1967 after a Japanese campaign, but even then could not be seen by the Japanese public, or the victims: 'The Ministry of Education however, did not fully release the film to the public. reasoning that much of it would violate the privacy of those people who had been exposed to the bombs and that it contained too many cruel scenes.' *Ibid.*

43. Hiroshima and Nagasaki, *op.cit.*, p.14.

44. *Ibid.*, p.15.

45. 'Visit to Hiroshima Proves It World's Most Damaged City', New York Times, 5 September 1945, pp.1,4.

46. 'Atom Bomb Killed Nagasaki Captives'. New York Times, 10 September 1945, pp.1,5.

47. Burchett - and the chroniclers of Hiroshima and Nagasaki - confuse the two New York Times reporters, W.H. Lawrence, the war correspondent in Hiroshima the same day as Burchett, and W.L. Laurence, the Manhattan Project publicist. In one passage, Burchett tries to work out how and why Laurence/Lawrence took so long to publish his Hiroshima account after visiting Hiroshima the same day as Burchett (Lawrence's report was in fact published the day before Burchett's), and why he moved backwards and forwards across the Pacific. That Burchett has confused the two is clear from pp.18-19 of *Shadows*, where the author of the New York Times article 'No radioactivity in Hiroshima ruin', datelined 'Tokyo, 13 Sept.' is given as W.H. Laurence (in the original Times by-line, W.H. Lawrence). The author of the article 'US Atom Bomb Site Belies Tokyo Tales', datelined 'Atom Bomb Range. New Mexico, Sept. 9' is correctly given as William L. Laurence. The chroniclers of Hiroshima and Nagasaki also note the presence at a press conference in Hiroshima on 3 September 1945 of 'W.L. Laurence' rather than W.H. Lawrence, (p.15). To make matters worse, Robert Lifton's discussion of W.L. Laurence and nuclearism refers to 'William L. Lawrence'.

48. William L. Laurence, *Dawn Over Zero*,

Alfred Knopf: New York, 1947, p.224.

49. 'Atomic Bombing of Nagasaki Told by Flight Member', New York Times, (9 Aug. delayed). 9 September 1945. pp.1, 35. The same material was later included in *Dawn Over Zero*.

50. 'US Atom Bomb Site Belies Tokyo Tales', New York Times, 12 September 1945, pp.1, 4.

51. *The Broken Connection*, Touchstone, New York, 1980, pp.371-6.

52. *Democracy with a Tommygun*, p.238.

53. *Ibid.*, p.242.

54. Gene Gurney, 'The Giant Pays Its Way', in James F. Sunderman (ed.), *World War in the Air: The Pacific*, Watts, New York, 1962. p.249.

55. *Ibid.*, p.258; see also, Wesley Frank Caven and James Lea Cate (eds.), *The Army Air Forces in World War 2. Volume 5 - The Pacific: Matterhorn to Nagasaki*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1953.

56. Cited in John Costello, *The Pacific War*, Rawson, New York, 1981, p.551.

57. Kenneth Harrison, *Road to Hiroshima*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1983, pp.15, 267.

58. Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: an Argument with Historical Illustrations*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1980, p.142.

59. B.H. Liddell Hart, *The Revolution in Warfare*, Faber and Faber, London, 1946, pp. 67, 74. 60. New York Times, 8 August 1945, p.1.

61. Reported in 'Fears of "Atomic" Wars in US', Herald, Melbourne, 9 August 1945, p.2.

62. See, for example, P.M.S. Blackett, *Fear, War and the Bomb*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1949. In one of Clío's little ironies, the leader of the bombing survey in Japan, was Paul Nitze, a leading nuclear advocate for the Committee on the Present Danger forty years later.

63. Cited by Peter Pringle and William Arkin in *SLOP: Nuclear War from the Inside*, Sphere, London, 1983, p.28.

64. John Berger, 'Hiroshima - a portrait of evil', New Society, 6 August 1981, p.222.

65. Wilfred Burchett, letter to David Gourlay, 9 July 1980. Notes to Afterword

66. Ben Kiernan (ed.), *Burchett: Reporting the Other Side of the World 1939-1983*, Quartet,

London, 1986.

67. See Paul Bracken, "The Second Nuclear Age: How Much Has Changed, How Much Remains the Same?" (2002), Nautilus Institute Global Scenarios Workshop 2004: Who Will Stop Nuclear Next Use, April 27-28, 2004. <http://www.nautilus.org/gps/scenarios/paper.html>, and Patrick Morgan,

*Deterrence Now*, Cambridge U.P., 2003.

68. See Joel Kovel, *Against the State of Nuclear Terror*, Southend Press, 1984.

69. Our knowledge of Burchett's life and work will be greatly enriched by to soon-to-be published works. Tom Heenan's critical biography, originally a Monash University History Department PhD, *The Life of Wilfred Burchett*, is to be published by Melbourne University Press. And a consolidated and definitive edition of Burchett's various memoirs edited by his son, George Burchett, and Nick Shimmin, as *Memoirs of a Rebel Journalist: The Autobiography of Wilfred Burchett* (860 pp.) is due from University of New South Wales Press in October 2005..

70. Gavan McCormack, "Korea: Burchett's Thirty years' War", in Kiernan, Burchett, op.cit. p.205.

71. David G. Marr, "Burchett on Vietnam", in Kiernan, Burchett, op.cit. pp.235-6.

72. "Tomgram: Dahr Jamail on living in two worlds"; and John Martinkus, *Travels In American Iraq*, (Black Inc., Melbourne, 2004). <http://www.tomdispatch.com/index.mhtml?pid=2619>

73. See Greg Mitchell and Robert J. Lifton, *Hiroshima in America: Fifty Years of Denial*, Putnam, 1995, and the demand by Amy Goodman and David Goodman to rescind Laurence's Pulitzer: "Hiroshima Cover-up: How the War Department's Timesman Won a Pulitzer", Common Dreams News Center, August 10, 2005, <http://www.commondreams.org/views04/0810-01.htm>.

74. Weller's much longer account confirms Burchett's impressions, referring to the effects of radiation as "Disease X". The first of Weller's

reports is published in English by the Mainichi Daily News, June 29, 2005, at [http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/search/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1000963439](http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1000963439). For two detailed accounts see Greg Mitchell, "SPECIAL REPORT: A Great Nuclear-Age Mystery Solved", Editor and Publisher, June 16, 2005, [http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/search/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1000963439](http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1000963439) and Mark Selden, "Nagasaki 1945: While Independents were Scorned, Embed Won Pulitzer, Japan Focus, July 7, 2005. <http://japanfocus.org/article.asp?id=325>

75. Greg Mitchell, "SPECIAL REPORT: Hiroshima Film Cover-Up Exposed", Editor and Publisher, August 3, 2005. [http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1001001583](http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1001001583).

76. See Mitchell and Lifton, op.cit.; Michael Hogan, ed., *Hiroshima in History and Memory*. Cambridge U.P., 1996; John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, Pantheon; Laura Hein and Mark Selden,

eds., *Living With the Bomb: American and Japanese Cultural Conflicts in the Nuclear Age*, M.E. Sharpe, 1997. The Nuclear Education Project by Peter Kuznick and Mark Selden on Japan Focus provides a comprehensive listing of relevant studies in English: <http://japanfocus.org/category.asp?id=66>.

77. Translated by Richard Minear in Sadako Kurihara, *When We Say Hiroshima: Selected Poems*, Michigan Monograph in Japanese Studies 23, University of Michigan Press, 1998. See also his translation of "Hiroshima and the Emperor's New Clothes" in his "Kurihara Sadako, 1913 - 2005", Japan Focus, March 15, 2005. <http://japanfocus.org/article.asp?id=237>

78. John Berger, 'Hiroshima - a portrait of evil', *New Society*, 6 August 1981, p.222.

Richard Tanter is Senior Research Associate at the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability ([www.nautilus.org](http://www.nautilus.org)). His book [Masters of Terror: Indonesia's Military and Violence in East Timor in 1999](#) (expanded and updated edition) is in press. He wrote this article for Japan Focus. Posted August 11, 2005.