



University of Liverpool
School of Histories, Languages, and Cultures
Department of History

Remembering the Nuclear Past: Uncovering Emotional Histories of
Britain's Nuclear Bomb, 1945-1989.

Emily J. Gibbs
200783303

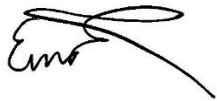
Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy History Department,
University of Liverpool, **March 2021.**

This thesis is the result of the author's original research. It has been composed by the author and has not been previously submitted for examination which has led to the award of a degree.

The copyright of this thesis belongs to the author under the terms of the United Kingdom Copyrights Act as qualified by the University of Liverpool Regulations. Due acknowledgement must always be made of the use of any material contained in, or derived from, this thesis.

This thesis complies with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on the lawful basis of processing personal data which is necessary for "historical research purposes" (GDPR Article 89(1) and DPA 2018 section 19).

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Date: 29/03/2021

Acknowledgements

This thesis began in a living room. It began in a study, a kitchen, a dining room. But most of all it began with the stories and memories of the volunteers who shared their life stories with me. Thank you to each and every one of you and I hope I have done all of you proud. Without you, this project would not have been possible. I was welcomed warmly into your homes, you all shared with me personal stories and your vulnerabilities, you gave me memorabilia, and allowed me an insight into your lives. For your memories of Cold War Britain, I am grateful to you all.

My gratitude also goes to the NWCDTP for funding this PhD and providing me with so many training and development opportunities, including a wonderful placement at the National Library of Scotland which opened my eyes to the world after the thesis. I am eternally grateful to have been given these years to research, study, and become a historian.

To my supervisors at the University of Liverpool: Jonathan Hogg, Laura Balderstone, and Chris Pearson. You have all been so patient, kind, and immensely supportive throughout this project and my many years at the University. Thank you for always meticulously reading my drafts, observing this project, and providing a supportive ear. Without your expertise, guidance, and reassurance, I don't think this thesis would have been possible!

To the Oral History Society for being a network of genuine support. A special thanks to everyone in the University of Liverpool Archery Society for reminding me there is more to life than the thesis! Especially to Rory and Alice, you have always and truly been my friends. To my fellow PhD companions: Emma and Harry, thank you for being a voice of compassion and reason.

To my Mum and Dad and my sisters, Penny and Katy, you always inspire me to work harder and aim higher. Dad, I can't wait to finally join you as 'Dr Gibbs'. Mum, thank you for always being on the other end of the phone and for always listening. None of this would have been possible without my family's unconditional love. To my dearest and closest friends, Harry and David, thanks for being there for me, never judging, always making me laugh, and inspiring me to be better.

This thesis is dedicated to you most of all, Kristian. Your endless love, infinite support, love of research, and infectious laughter kept me going. I am excited for the next chapter of our lives together.

I hope that this thesis makes all of you proud.

Abstract

Emily Gibbs – Remembering the Nuclear Past: Uncovering Emotional Histories of Britain’s Nuclear Bomb, 1945-1989

This thesis investigates the emotional and social experiences of British civilians in the Cold War era (1945-1989) by analysing oral histories conducted by the author in Belfast, Cardiff, London, Liverpool, and Glasgow. Drawing on recent research in nuclear culture studies and the history of emotions, I argue that current definitions of nuclear anxiety fail to capture the spectrum of emotional responses associated with nuclear weapons in Britain. Civilians did not experience a static presence of nuclear anxiety. Instead, they cited diverse, intermingling nuclear *emotions* which ebbed and flowed in intensity throughout the period, framed by cultural, political, and personal contexts. These nuclear emotions, such as feelings of anger, passion, insecurity, righteousness, powerlessness, and anxiety, leads to the suggestion that to claim the prevalence of nuclear anxiety can appear exaggerated if placed in histories of the Cold War without efforts to fully historicise. The testimony reflects how British society negotiated and created new understandings of self, community, identity, and nation in the Cold War.

In the expanding historiography on nuclear culture in the Cold War era, perspectives with an entirely emotional methodology remain largely underexplored. This thesis contributes to this field by exploring nuclear anxiety through oral history testimony. It uncovers how nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear war entered the minds of ordinary civilians and shaped their emotional experiences. Moreover, it contributes to debates surrounding nuclear anxiety and argues that there was not a constant nuclear consciousness or a crippling psychic numbing. Instead, individuals recalled flashpoints of nuclear anxiety that were entangled with other emotions and rooted within memory.

Additionally, this thesis addresses the geographical context of Cold War “British” experiences, considering stories from England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland. Regional and city identities were central to many individual’s Cold War imaginations of nuclear war. It underscores the need to consider the diversity of the everyday experience and emotional narratives of the Cold War. It demonstrates that experiences of nuclear anxiety were anchored in memories of the Second World War and the “present-centeredness” of contemporary nuclear uncertainty in 2016-2019. These periods shaped and framed the core narratives of individual recollection and the ways civilians discussed and reflected upon their emotional experiences within the oral history interview.

The combination of oral history sources and history of emotions methodologies, including consideration of emotional community and emotives, offers a fresh perspective on civilian communities in Britain. It is also the first study to bring together such diverse oral history testimony to explore emotional experiences of the Cold War. As such, this thesis contributes to the histories of British nuclear culture, emotional experiences in postwar Britain, and the broader Cold War.

Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Abstract	2
Acronyms and Abbreviations	5
List of Figures and Images	6
Introduction	7
The British experience of the Cold War	13
Geography and experience	17
Remembered experience	19
Historicising nuclear anxiety	22
The History of Emotions	29
Emotional communities	30
Methodological Approaches	32
Oral History	32
Emotives	37
Present-centeredness	39
Thesis Outline	41
Chapter One – Space and Place: Imaginations of nation and the city in Cold War Britain	44
Section I: Changing perceptions of the British nuclear state	46
Section II: “Britain would sink”: Anxiety and ‘Britishness’ during the Cold War	53
Section III: Local and urban nuclear imaginations: Scottish, English, Welsh, and Northern Irish experiences	74
Scotland	78
Northern Ireland	86
Wales	93
England	98
Chapter conclusion	106
Chapter Two – Historicising emotion in the nuclear age: Events, activism, and politics	109
Section I: The Cuban Missile Crisis: A flash of anxiety?	112
Section II: Passion, anger, and anxiety: Considering the emotional responses to British nuclear politics, civil defence, and the anti-nuclear movement	127

Section III: Secrecy and mistrust: Perceptions of Cold War British government(s)	139
Chapter conclusion	155
Chapter Three – “There is nothing we can do about it”: Reflecting on everyday experience and British nuclear culture	160
Section I: Reception of British nuclear culture	162
Section II: The nuclear everyday	179
Section III: Laughter and acceptance: Humour and nuclear anxiety	191
Chapter conclusion	199
Chapter Four – Home and the family in the nuclear narrative	202
Section I: The ‘nuclear family’ in Britain	205
Section II: ‘I joined CND to protect my children’: Considering activism, anxiety, and family	210
Section III: ‘If nuclear war ever happened...’ Nuclear anxiety at home	219
Section IV: “But mum, will there be a nuclear war?” Children, parents, and nuclear emotions	228
Chapter Conclusion	240
Chapter Five – Selfhood and the individualism of nuclear anxiety	244
Section I: Motivation, resistance, and personal opinion: The individualism of emotions	247
Section II: ‘Not like anybody else’s [?]’: Exploring the individualism of nuclear anxiety	253
Section III: Feelings about nuclear weapons 2016-2019: Donald Trump, Brexit, and the Cold War	264
Chapter conclusion	279
Conclusion – Redefining nuclear anxiety	283
Appendix I – Biographical details of oral history interview participants	292
Appendix II – Documentation provided by oral history interviewees	305
Appendix III – Reflecting on anxiety during the Coronavirus Pandemic, 2020-2021	307
Bibliography	309
Primary Sources	309
Secondary Sources	317

Word Count, excluding bibliography and front matter: 97,642.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Company
CDS	Civil Defence Service
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
END	European Nuclear Disarmament
EU	European Union
H-bomb	Hydrogen Bomb
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force Treaty
IRA	Irish Republican Army
MAD	Mutually Assured Destruction
NATO	North Atlantic Trade Organisation
NIMBY	Not-in-my-Backyard
NHS	National Health Service
RAF	Royal Air Force
ROC	Royal Observer Corps
SCND	Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
SCRAM	Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SNP	Scottish National Party
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
US	United States
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

List of Figures and Images

1.1 The British Nuclear State from Hogg, <i>British Nuclear Culture</i> .	49
1.2 'Flashpoint Manchester', <i>Daily Mirror</i> , 6 November 1980.	77
1.3 'Irish Sea': A Nuclear Cesspool Pamphlet, 1980.	92
1.4 "If it DID happen?", <i>South Wales Echo</i> , 1981.	97
1.5 Destruction Radius of Nuclear Attack on Liverpool', <i>Liverpool Echo</i> , January 1980.	102
1.6 SCRAM Energy Bulletin, Clouds of Death, 1981.	105
2.1 Anti-nuclear images published by SCND, 1982.	116
2.2 Map showing the Election results of 1983.	131
2.3 "Defence as an urgent problem" from C. Marsh and C. Fraser (eds.), <i>Public Opinion</i> .	142
2.4 "Thatcher on Communist spies" cartoon, <i>South Wales Echo</i> , 30 November 1981	147
2.5 'Cowboy Reagan' Cartoon, <i>Belfast Telegraph</i> , 3 November 1980.	150
2.6 Reagan and the nuclear button, <i>Daily Mail</i> , 6 December 1983.	152
3.1 Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 'Trump Cards'	165
3.2 Copy of Painting by Sandra Hawcroft, 1982.	167
3.3 A 'Policeman' interviewed for The War Game docudrama.	175
3.4 Meet Mr Bomb – A Practical Guide to Nuclear Extinction, 1983.	197
4.1 Protect and Survive Government Pamphlet.	206
4.2 Image from the nuclear war film, <i>Threads</i> , 1986.	233
4.3 Images of Scottish CND protestors alongside their children.	237
5.1 Flypast magazine given to me by William Stonewell.	258
5.2 Image of Sparkle ID and Badge, given to me by Shaun Reznik.	260
5.3 Google Interest, trend over time 1/2/2015 – 03/01/2021 [created March 2021]	271
5.4 Google Ngram search for the term nuclear anxiety [created February 2021].	273
5.5 Flyers and leaflets given to me by various interviewees.	276

Introduction

On the 5 November 2018, I stood outside the London home of Andrew and Sylvia Moore. I knocked on the front door and waited. Andrew, an elderly man of 89 years old, opened the door, greeted me with a friendly smile, and welcomed me into his home. His wife, Sylvia, waved to me and proceeded to make tea and coffee. I followed Andrew into his living room, observing the numerous Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) pamphlets and posters stuck onto the walls. “Don’t Nuke Us”, “Ban the Bomb”, and “March for Peace” were common phrases among the posters. Three armchairs pointed at a small television and shelves of well-read books lined the walls. Photographs of Andrew and Sylvia’s family and friends adorned the walls lovingly. I sat down as Andrew searched through his shelves, gathering numerous folders and papers in preparation for our interview. Andrew returned, placing his findings on the coffee table. He sat down and smiled, making small talk about the weather and my train journey. Sylvia returned and sat down. I set up my recording equipment, pulled out my notebook, and we were ready to begin.

We discussed their upbringings, where they had lived, and their memories of the Cold War. Eventually, we turned to the primary topic of our meeting: British nuclear weapons. The tone of the conversation changed as we moved from childhood memories to the realities of growing up under the very real threat of the atomic bomb. “What was it like growing up in the Cold War?” I asked. Andrew fell silent as he thought and then finally spoke. “The presence of nuclear weapons. Well, it was just a fact of life. I can’t remember it *not* being the Cold War. So, all my consciousness we were always at war with somebody or in danger of being at war with somebody. That’s how everyone felt during the Cold War. That’s what it was like.” He paused. “All your consciousness?” I queried. Andrew looked at Sylvia and then back at me. “Well, you see, the Cold War, and nuclear weapons, they were like Mt. Everest.” He paused again as if expecting me to understand. “How so?” I asked. “Well,” he continued, “during the

Cold War, they [nuclear weapons] hung over you, like a mountain, so like Mt. Everest. It was just a fact of life. Casting a shadow. It is difficult to climb it, so it is easier to ignore it, that is what most people did. Just turn away rather than worry about it, but we [CND] tried to do something about it.”¹

The imagery Andrew paints, and the juxtaposition of these thoughts brings together a significant feature of Britain’s nuclear history: the ways nuclear weapons became embedded into the lived experience of many British civilians during this period. After the first atomic weapons were dropped by the United States on Japan in 1945, the world entered the ‘atomic age’ as countries scrambled to develop their own nuclear strategies in exchange for defence, deterrence, and international influence. Once the Cold War began, development of nuclear weapons and the nuclear arms build-up was exceedingly fast, and they became a very real danger to civilian lives. Andrew’s metaphor speaks to the many historiographical arguments made within the field of nuclear history about everyday life in the Cold War. As Jonathan Hogg observes, “lives were [...] defined by British nuclear culture” and these “hidden human dramas [...]” “compel us to think further about the extent to which nuclearity shaped the lives of British citizens in the postwar era.”² John Gaddis argues that nuclear weapons “had a remarkably theatrical effect upon the course of the high Cold War.”³ Dan Cordle demonstrates how “nuclear technology’s influence went far beyond the symbolic.”⁴ These related presuppositions and Andrew’s narrative about how nuclear weapons affected ordinary life form the springboard

¹ Interview with Andrew and Sylvia Moore, 5 November 2018. All interviews in this thesis were conducted by Emily Gibbs, unless otherwise specified. Appendix I contains key details for each interview participant. Italics will be used in quotations where interviewees placed emphasis on particular words. Laughter and pauses will also be included in the quotations used.

² Jonathan Hogg, *British Nuclear Culture: Official and Unofficial Narratives in the long 20th century* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 173; Jonathan Hogg, ‘The family that feared tomorrow: British nuclear culture and individual experience in the late 1950s’, *The British Journal for the History of Science* 45(4) (2012): 549.

³ Dan Cordle, *Late Cold War Literature and Culture: The Nuclear 1980s* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 201.

⁴ John Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1997), 258.

of this thesis. It argues that nuclear anxiety was an important aspect of the experience of living in postwar Britain, and that it sat within a range of emotional responses to the Cold War. This thesis is about how individuals experienced nuclear anxiety, and other nuclear emotions, and considers how historians can historicise the emotional landscapes of this period of British history. These nuclear emotions lead to the suggestion that to claim the prevalence of nuclear anxiety can appear exaggerated if placed in histories of the Cold War without efforts to fully historicise. It considers the emotional, cultural, geographical, political, and national significance of nuclear weapons in everyday life in Cold War Britain. It further demonstrates how memory and geography impacted narratives of nuclear anxiety, considering “four-nation” theory. Oral history and the history of emotions will be employed to unravel this complex and emotive period of British history.

The Cold War was marked by a conflict between superpowers, ideology, and culture, as states stockpiled nuclear weapons. Consequently, British civilians were thrust into a reality where instant destruction and a Third World War became real possibilities. Just as Andrew positioned the nuclear threat as a looming mountain, nuclear weapons were perceived as something which were “always there.”⁵ These experiences were often entangled within British culture and blended with the collective emotional atmosphere of nuclear anxiety. The weapons resulted in various narratives surrounding the realities of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), the end of the world, and horror-radiation tropes.⁶ The frightening realities of a possible nuclear war existed not only within culture but within the minds of ordinary people. Within the interviews, these experiences of nuclear anxiety were framed by imaginations and assumptions forged in the Second World War, the Cold War, and contemporary mindsets formed by events that occurred in the period 2016-2019. These experiences of nuclearity were

⁵ Interview, Moore.

⁶ Jonathan Hogg and Christoph Laucht, 'Introduction: British nuclear culture', *The British Journal for the History of Science* 45(4) (2012): 479-493.

central to the British Cold War experience. Hogg's analysis of nuclearity, which is influenced by Gabrielle Hecht's use of the term, is defined as "the collection of assumptions held by individual citizens on the dangers of nuclear technology; assumptions which were rooted firmly in context and which circulated in, and were shaped by, national discourse."⁷ As Jessica Douthwaite notes, these Cold War experiences depended "on individual attachments to inter-generational, cultural, social, and emotional influences."⁸ Within the testimony recorded for this project, it became clear that recollections of Cold War experience – specifically experiences of nuclear anxiety – were shaped by contemporary and historical identities. These multifaceted layers of perceptions made up individual and collective imaginations of a post-nuclear war world and the emotional experiences which characterized the period.

*

This thesis presents an emotional history of Cold War Britain and nuclear weapons through an oral history methodology. It adds to scholarly understandings of the everyday experiences and memories of this period, uncovering how nuclear weapons entered the minds of ordinary civilians and prompted emotional responses.⁹ It challenges current historiographical tendencies within nuclear history to neglect the importance of emotions. It argues that there was not a constant nuclear consciousness or a crippling psychic numbing within the civilian mindset as Robert Lifton and Paul Boyer have respectively argued. Instead, individuals recalled flashpoints of nuclear anxiety that were entangled with other emotions and deeply rooted within memory. These flashpoints were attached to important aspects of an individual's life such as familial relationships or their sense of national identity. Drawing on the history of emotions, this thesis

⁷ Hogg, 'The family', 535. On nuclearity, see Gabrielle Hecht, 'Negotiating global nuclearities: apartheid, decolonisation, and the Cold War in the making of the IAEA', *Osiris* 21 (2006): 25-48.

⁸ Jessica Douthwaite, '...what in the hell's this? Rehearsing nuclear war in Britain's Civil Defence Corps', *Contemporary British History* 33(2) (2018): 207.

⁹ Joseph Masco, *The Nuclear Borderlands: The Manhattan Project in Post-War New Mexico* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

argues that current definitions of “nuclear anxiety” fail to capture the spectrum of emotional responses associated with nuclear weapons in Britain. A central contribution is this project’s focus on the “four nations” of Britain and demonstration that experiences were shaped by regional identities. This is the first study of its kind to examine and compare these group experiences and emotions within the British civilian cohort during this period.¹⁰ Through a series of original oral history interviews, it explores the ways that nuclear anxiety was structured within society, imagined by individuals, and framed by communities within the context of the interview to contribute to a deeper understanding of the British Cold War experience. It develops the contribution of other oral historians of this period and provides a fresh perspective through an examination of the emotional aspects of the testimony, considering theories from the history of emotions including emotional communities and emotives.¹¹

The main arguments are fourfold. First, I argue that the existence of nuclear weapons created genuine feelings of anxiety which became part of everyday life in the Cold War era.¹² The thesis excavates these moments of nuclear anxiety from collective and individual memories and offers a fresh perspective by bringing together history, oral history, and the history of emotions.

Secondly, I argue that current understandings of nuclear anxiety are insufficient. The social and cultural history of nuclear anxiety offered by oral history reveals that nuclear anxiety was an exceptionally complex emotional response. This response was entangled with other

¹⁰ This research slots into the growing scholarship on localised case studies on the nuclear state. See: special issue of *Contemporary British History* 33(2) (2019): Social and cultural histories of British nuclear mobilisation since 1945.

¹¹ Matthew Grant, ‘Making sense of nuclear war: narratives of voluntary civil defence and the memory of Britain’s Cold War’, *Social History* 44(2) (2019): 229-254; Jessica Douthwaite, ‘Voices of the Cold War’ (PhD diss., University of Strathclyde, 2018); Bridget Kendall, *The Cold War: A New Oral History* (London: BBC Books, 2017); Hunter Davies (ed.) *Sellafield Stories: Life with Britain’s First Nuclear Plant* (London: Constable & Robinson Ltd, 2012).

¹² Peter Stearns and Carol Stearns, ‘Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards’, *The American Historical Review* 90(4) (1985): 813.

emotions and affected by pre-existing assumptions and mindsets.¹³ As much as this thesis is an exploration of nuclear anxiety, it is also a story about the other emotions British civilians experienced and used to navigate and conceptualise the nuclear age such as anger, sadness, and hopefulness. These I refer to as *nuclear emotions*; defined as emotions and feelings, directly and indirectly, prompted, provoked, inspired, and influenced by the knowledge of nuclear weapons.

Third, I argue that nuclear anxiety existed both within collective culture and as an individualised experience. The individual and collective experiences of nuclear emotions resulted in a two-way flow of emotions in the oral history interview whereby individuals would either draw on shared perceptions to frame their own narrative or would reject them in favour of presenting a highly individualised experience. This experience was also dependent on where the individual lived, consequently shaped by geography and perceptions of space and place. The emotional response of nuclear anxiety was thus linked profoundly to broader cultural memories, collective imaginations of nuclear war, and British nuclear culture.¹⁴

Lastly, nuclear anxiety was framed temporally by the contemporary and past experiences of the interviewees. The oral history testimony was affected by individual and cultural memories of the Second World War, the rise of nuclear tensions in the 1980s, and geopolitical developments between 2016-2019. These periods shaped and framed the core narratives of recollection.

Forty-five individuals from Liverpool, London, Belfast, Cardiff, and Glasgow contributed to the interviews conducted by the author between 2017 and 2019. There is no claim that the findings of this project are representative of the whole population.¹⁵ This thesis

¹³ Hogg, 'The family', 541; Grant, 'Making sense', 237.

¹⁴ Joseph Masco, "'Survival is your business': engineering ruins and affect in nuclear America", *Cultural Anthropology* 28 (2008): 361-398, 387.

¹⁵ Alessandro Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', *History Workshop* 12 (1981): 104.

instead suggests that they shine a light on British experiences, offering an insight into the country's varied emotional histories across its four nations. The testimony reflects how British society negotiated and created new understandings of self, community, identity, and nation in the Cold War.¹⁶ The thesis is a historical study of people, and it is therefore structured around the themes in which individuals placed importance: their nation, government, culture, families, and sense of selfhood. Furthermore, it explores how inter-generational and contemporary memory within the oral history interview provide a source from which historians of the twentieth century can draw further clues and analysis of everyday life in the British Cold War.¹⁷

The British experience of the Cold War

The central focus of this thesis is emotions through the lived experience of British civilians during the Cold War. In historiography, lived experience is a major analytical focus in modern British history, particularly within social approaches. It offers a new emotional history of modern Britain, examining lived experience through the lens of nuclear anxiety and nuclear emotions. Claire Langhamer demonstrates how emotions and lived experiences are important to consider together. She suggests that “lived experience and feeling were set against acquired knowledge and training, in all manner of areas, including domestic and local issues, national politics, and international relations.”¹⁸ Social history, which is closely interconnected with emotions history, encompasses “a close interest in the conditions of daily life” as it seeks to get closer to the texture of lived experience and the relationships between the self and the

¹⁶ Hogg and Laucht, 'Introduction'; Jonathan Hogg and Kate Brown, 'Introduction: social and cultural histories of British nuclear mobilisation since 1945', *Contemporary British History*, 33(2) (2019): 161-169.

¹⁷ Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010); Alistair Thomson, 'Fifty Years on: An international Perspective on Oral History', *The Journal of American History* 85(2) (1998): 581-595; Sally Alexander, "'Do Grandmas Have Husbands?'" Generational Memory and Twentieth-Century Women's Lives', *The Oral History Review*, 36(2) (2009): 159-176.

¹⁸ Claire Langhamer, 'Who the hell are ordinary people? Ordinarity as a category of historical analysis', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 28 (2018): 175-195.

material.¹⁹ Ian McIntosh and Sharon Wright propose that “structures of feeling” and “shared typical” experiences shaped wider social structures and narratives.²⁰ Rosalind Edwards and Val Gillies argue that looking at the “lived experience” of a single family reveals wider shared lived experiences of the period in which they lived.²¹ Just as Raphael Samuel and Edward Thompson argue that poverty “must be understood as a lived experience”, this thesis argues that nuclear anxiety must similarly be understood as a lived experience of modern Britain.²² Language, exceptional experiences, privacy, relationships, space, and selfhood are all key analytical tools to an understanding of an individual’s lived experience.²³ Through these, examinations of the everyday are combined with the exceptional, overlapping and fitting together to form the narrative of an individual’s life.

Examining extraordinary lives or events can explain how change occurred. But according to Todd, only through the ordinary can the themes of emotion, selfhood, and experience be understood.²⁴ Extraordinary recollections are often framed by ordinary memories to emphasize exceptionality. However, these are only fleeting moments within a life history, while the mundane drags on and needs to be given a greater space within the telling of an individual’s life.²⁵ As Langhamer and Matthew Grant argue, ordinariness is central to understanding citizenship and identity in postwar Britain.²⁶ Through an exploration of lived

¹⁹ David Feldman and Jon Lawrence, *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 2-3. The text also usefully discusses the various and many historical texts which use lived experience as a lens in Victorian history.

²⁰ Ian McIntosh and Sharon Wright, ‘Exploring what the notion of ‘lived experience’ offers for social policy analysis’, *Journal of Social History* 48 (2019): 448-467.

²¹ Rosalind Edwards and Val Gillies, ‘Insights from the historical lived experience of a Fragmented Economy of Welfare in Britain: Poverty, Precarity and the Peck Family, 1928-1950’, *Genealogy* 4(1) (2020): 2, 1.

²² Edward Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), 9; Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Village Life and Labour* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).

²³ Selina Todd, ‘Class, experience, and Britain’s Twentieth century’, *Social History* 39(4) (2014): 494, 496-500.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 498.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 499-500; Oline Eaton, ‘We must be ready every day, all the time: Mid-twentieth-century nuclear anxiety and fear of death in American Life’, *The Journal of American Culture* 40(1) (2017): 66-75.

²⁶ Matthew Grant, ‘Historicising Citizenship in Postwar Britain’, *The Historical Journal* 59(4) (2016): 1187-1206; Langhamer, ‘Ordinary people’.

experience, political and cultural changes can be understood through the narratives of ordinary people.

Emotions and oral history are useful methodologies for understanding the historical lived experience of individuals. Norman Denzin argues that emotion sits at the centre of forming a social action and often explains *why* individuals acted a particular way and its importance in their life narrative.²⁷ Lisa Cosgrove suggests that by exploring emotions, the richness and complexity of an individual's lived experience can be emphasised.²⁸ This frame of analysis deconstructs broad understandings of particular historical periods to give the mundane and ordinary meaning and generate further historical understandings of individual life in the past. Both individual and collective narratives interconnected to form lived experience. Langhamer's study on love shows that the boundaries between public and private were blurred and emotions were intricately influenced by loved ones, work, education, and culture.²⁹ Just as Hogg demonstrates how nuclearity contributes to an understanding of British Cold War culture and individual experience, this thesis seeks to explore how nuclear anxiety was a central and important aspect of individual and collective lived experiences in Cold War Britain.

This study relies on the voices and experiences of those who lived through the Cold War to understand their everyday nuances, feelings, and perceptions. It contributes to the growing historiographical field which focuses on lived experience in the British Cold War. Grant demonstrates that experiences of Cold War volunteerism in British nuclear civil defence groups were recalled "in different ways." Despite civil defence initiatives forming a large part

²⁷ Norman Denzin, 'Emotion as Lived Experience', *Symbolic Interaction* 8(2) (1985): 223.

²⁸ Lisa Cosgrove, 'Crying out loud: Understanding Women's Emotional Distress as both lived experience and social construction', *Feminism and Psychology* 10(2) (2000): 247; Johannes Lang, 'New histories of emotion', *History and Theory* 57(1) (2018): 104-120.

²⁹ Claire Langhamer, *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

of British policy during this period, individuals were unable to provide “well-developed accounts” of their memories in the Civil Defence Services (CDS).³⁰ Grant argues that cultural imaginations and dominant understandings of civil defence formed in the 1980s shaped the discourses recollected by individuals.³¹ He ultimately suggests that individuals positioned the Cold War and civil defence within their own sense of selves and often utilised popular memories to frame their experiences and imaginations of nuclear war.³² However, Grant’s work focuses solely on the experiences of a small sample of eleven volunteers in CDS, meaning that his conclusions are not representative of everyday life for ordinary civilians in Cold War Britain. Nonetheless, this study draws on Grant’s use of the concept of popular memory, considering how individuals used culture and collective memory to frame their personal experience.

Other scholars have also explored collective imaginations and assumptions, assessing their impact on individual experience. Through analysing journalistic discourses and experiences of nuclearity, Hogg argues that British citizens had an implicit understanding of the negative aspects of nuclear technology which sparked emotional responses, such as nuclear anxiety, and this became normalised in individual experience. Through tracing a chain of articles reporting on the suicide of a British family in the 1950s, Hogg demonstrates numerous assumptions and imaginations were utilised within these discourses to frame the incident. Imaginations of nuclear weapons were perceived on a highly personal basis and tied to broader national concerns.³³ Hogg and Grant conclude that shared assumptions, mindsets, and popular memories shaped the ways civilians imagined, experienced, and recalled the British Cold War. This approach has not yet been combined with a history of emotions approach.

³⁰ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 229-230.

³¹ *Ibid*, 237.

³² *Ibid*, 252-253.

³³ Hogg, ‘The family’, 541.

These scholars have demonstrated the importance of the Cold War to the lived experience of modern British history. This thesis contributes to this field by arguing that nuclear anxiety was a key aspect of modern British history and the lived experience of this period. The experience of nuclear anxiety was influenced by various, important factors such as nuclear culture, cultural memory, and present-centredness. Experiences shaped by geography and place were inherently interconnected with the understanding of the lived experience of the British Cold War. Nuclear anxiety has received substantial academic attention and is a useful lens with which to examine the emotional experience of Cold War Britain. However, a universal definition of nuclear anxiety is virtually non-existent as the term has come to cover all manner of nuclear terrors, fears, stresses, and worries. Therefore, this thesis deconstructs and assesses the lived experience of nuclear anxiety within modern British history and offers an insight into the emotional landscape of the period. The following sections will consider the importance of geography and remembered experience to an understanding of British nuclear anxiety and nuclear emotions.

Geography and experience

This thesis examines British emotional experience through cultural communities and national statuses using “four-nation theory.” Four nation theory developed as a movement away from constructing a nation from traditional political or geographical boundaries, instead imagining them as socio-cultural entities. Natia Tevzadze presents the view that nations can be formed simply by a deviating or distinct culture, rather than historical origins, boundaries, language, or religion.³⁴ Britishness has never been a secure, generic identity and can be seen as something culturally and historically conditioned, always in the making, never made.³⁵ Accordingly, Hugh Kearney’s four-nation theory rejects traditional “nation based history”, which defines

³⁴ Natia Tevzadze, ‘National Identity and National Consciousness’, *History of European Ideas* 19(1-3) (1994): 437-440.

³⁵ Raphael Samuel, ‘British Dimensions: ‘Four Nations History’, *History Workshop Journal* 40 (1995): iv.

Britain as a singular, political, and geographical entity and focuses on cultural history as it “embodies perceptions of the past, social beliefs, and many other aspects of life.” Kearney suggests that to focus on a singular nation runs the “risk of becoming imprisoned within a cage of partial assumptions, ethnocentric myths, and ideologies.”³⁶ A cultural approach involves “breaking the boundaries of Britain” and the recognition of radically different perceptions and interactions within a nation. A nation is therefore seen as an entity created by the “free-will” of a multiplicity of individuals within a community.³⁷ In this way, England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales can be acknowledged as distinct and independent, rather than being analysed within an Anglocentric framework.³⁸ Understanding the four nations of Britain between 2016 and 2019 through narratives of national identity has become increasingly paramount. The distinctions between these nations have been reinforced by popular news outlets questioning the future of the United Kingdom and the rise of nationalist political agendas in the wake of Brexit.³⁹

However, Kearney’s four-nation theory is arguably reductionist as it rejects the significance of national community. Benedict Anderson provides a tool to unite geographical, political, and cultural constructions of nation. Anderson argues that a nation is imagined and therefore formed on notions of kinship and shared community.⁴⁰ He describes nation as imagined because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members”, yet they all have an “image of their communication.”⁴¹ Combining Kearney’s and Anderson’s insights allows each nation to be considered unique nuclear nations

³⁶ Hugh Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1-2.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 5.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 213.

³⁹ Harold Clarke, *Brexit: why Britain voted to leave the European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

⁴⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006 [1983]), 6.

⁴¹ *Ibid*.

with their own geographic and national experiences, rather than four regions of a singular nuclear state. The interviews revealed that these imaginations of national community and identity shaped experiences of nuclear anxiety during the Cold War.

Imagination was also central to the testimony, as civilians considered a post-nuclear world and placed themselves in fictional settings. Individuals navigated these identities and imaginations fluidly throughout history and they contributed to their sense of past selves and emotional narratives. An even sample was taken from five regions of the UK: nine from Scotland, ten from Wales, eight from Northern Ireland, eight from Northern England and ten from Southern England. This thesis is as much a study on the Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish Cold War as it is of the British or English Cold War.

Furthermore, focus was placed on urban spaces, as cities became arenas in which many nuclear narratives were constructed and competed and the city space became one in which many felt nuclear holocaust would be most likely.⁴² As Hogg argues, taking a localised approach to the Cold War can help historians “understand the impact of national nuclear policy on the cultures of local government and everyday life.”⁴³ Through the analysis of oral history testimony from individuals living in five cities, a slice of the everyday emotional life of the British Cold War and the diverse experiences of nuclear anxiety is revealed.

Remembered experience

As this project is largely informed by oral history testimony, memory is another important methodological consideration. Past experience can be understood through the stories and memories people tell or do not tell, providing an insight into individual and collective experiences and the nature of emotions in the past and the present. To understand the specific formations of remembering and forgetting, purposeful and involuntary, is to understand the

⁴² Jonathan Hogg, ‘Cultures of nuclear resistance in 1980s Liverpool’, *Urban History* 42(4) (2015): 585.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 584.

complexities of temporality, perceptions of the interview context, and to find new meanings to better understand past experiences.

One of the most influential advocates of the usefulness of memory was Alessandro Portelli, who noticed that interviewees in the town of Terni ‘misremembered’ the date of the death of another worker. This worker had died during a small demonstration against the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1949, but local people remembered his death as martyrdom during a catastrophic strike and lockout in 1953. Portelli suggests that the mistaken memory was a clue to understanding the *meanings* of events for individuals and communities and how they lived on in memory. While information may not be factually accurate, it remains a true statement of people’s *beliefs* about the event.⁴⁴ In this way, cultural memories are formed and are important to the recollection of individuals. Cultural memory relies upon the interrelationship between the “public and the private, the individual alongside the institutional, for successful adoption and circulation.”⁴⁵ Representations of the past that are created in the public sphere need to have *resonance* with individual recollection to be considered authentic. According to Helen Lock, memory is not recalled as “a fixed original or a singular truth but reconstructed and regenerated (inter)subjectively into many kinds of truths.”⁴⁶ Each time a memory is recalled, it is open to rearrangements, additions, and deletions dependant on feedback, culture, relationships, language, and composure.

Remembering enables the elements of the past to be creatively reconfigured within the narrative articulated at the time, entangling the past and present.⁴⁷ Alister Thomson introduced

⁴⁴ Thomson, ‘Fifty Years, 585; Alessandro Portelli, ‘What makes Oral History Different’ in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Rob Perks and Alistair Thompson (Milton Park; Abington: Routledge, 2016).

⁴⁵ Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson, ‘Keep calm and carry on: the cultural memory of the Second World War in Britain’ past’ in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War* ed. Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013): 10.

⁴⁶ Helen Lock, “‘Building up from the Fragments’”: The Oral Testimony Process in some recent Africa-American written narratives’, *College Literature* 22(3) (1995): 111-113.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

his work on history and memory with two memories from Joan Pickett. He used these examples to contest the unreliability of memory and show how time can change the meaning and significance of a memory.⁴⁸ In 1960, Joan wrote down a memory of a train journey in her notebook and forty years later, she was asked to recall her experience.⁴⁹ These two accounts of the same moment told by the same person at different times are constructed in different ways. In the first recollection, Joan presents herself as the central character, constructing her memory as a dramatic and exciting adventure story. In contrast, the second memory sees Joan's father as the central figure. Her memory is shaped by his death. This shows that the act of remembering can result in new "creative constructions" of memories according to context, relationships, and time. Despite the differences between these recollections, this does not make either of them untrue.

Memory reveals the ways in which the past is active in the present, the meanings behind memories, and the processes of remembering. Mary Chamberlain argues that historians need to "recognise that the interview is a multi-layered document."⁵⁰ The interviewee is "engaged in a continuous revision of self" and "the individual voice contains a multiplicity of voices... it holds within it the shared meanings of languages and cultural narratives".⁵¹ The process by which individuals recalled their memories often shaped the content of the stories themselves and analysing *how* they are recalling memories reveals their meanings and importance. There are many *different* ways historians can think about memory. As outlined in the next section, scholars have used concepts such as cultural memory, shared mindsets/assumptions, and popular memory to understand *how* the Cold War is remembered.⁵² This thesis reveals that

⁴⁸ Alistair Thomson, 'Memory and Remembering in Oral History' in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* ed. in Donald Ritchie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 77.

⁴⁹ Thomson, 'Memory and Remembering', 77-78.

⁵⁰ Mary Chamberlain, 'Narrative Theory', in *Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Thomas Charlton, Lois Myers, and Rebecca Sharpless (Lanham, Md: AltaMira Press, 2006), 402-404.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² This thesis defines these concepts as Hogg and Grant. Popular memory is defined as "an attempt to understand how cultural discourses shape the content and form of what is recalled by individuals, the meanings individuals

interviewees were influenced by cultural memories of the Second World War and the Cold War. It contributes to scholarship on memory, as the thesis uncovers functions of memory and how the past is constructed in the present.⁵³

Historicising nuclear anxiety

Nuclear anxiety is often explored within the scholarship of British culture and the Cold War. The following section will analysis this research, considering how nuclear anxiety has been deployed as a lens of analysis and the historical debates which surround the terminology. Considering the field of nuclear culture is significant to understanding the emotional history of nuclear weapons, as collective and individual experience and emotions must be considered in conjunction with one another. Despite the historical field of British nuclear culture gaining extensive traction in recent years, it has remained “too simplistic” and historians tend to generalise experiences across the whole country.⁵⁴ While advancements in the cultural history of nuclear Britain are significant, the existence of local and daily nuclear experiences within the broader dialogue of the country has been generally neglected. This thesis is a response to calls for greater attention to diversity within British nuclear culture, including the individual lives of civilians and the need for oral history methodologies.⁵⁵

Anxiety is seen as a complex emotion that concerns uncertainties in the future. Anxiety is also a mental health condition and a consequence of medical conditions, as well as an

attach to their own memories, and the emotions these memories provoke in them”, Grant, ‘Making sense’, 231. Cultural memory is defined as “how narratives which are formed and circulated within popular culture” shape memory, Grant, ‘Making sense’, 230. Shared mindsets/assumptions, or ‘nuclearity’, is outlined in page 10 of the thesis. Hogg, ‘Family’, 537. These concepts are all interrelated and are used throughout the thesis.

⁵³ Penny Summerfield, ‘Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews’, *Cultural and Social History* 1 (2004): 67.

⁵⁴ Jeff Hughes, ‘What is British Nuclear Culture? Understanding *Uranium 235*’, *The British Journal for the History of Science* 45(4) (2012): 504.

⁵⁵ Hogg and Laucht, ‘Introduction’, 493.

emotional state, which makes the terminology more difficult to sensitively define.⁵⁶ According to Sigmund Freud, anxiety is usually defined as a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with uncertainty.⁵⁷ This definition of anxiety presented it as a “reaction” when the subject finds “himself in a traumatic situation [...] which he is unable to master.”⁵⁸ Initially, this description of anxiety by Freud was accepted in psychology and psychoanalysis. In the 1980s, anxiety became part of a singular “neurosis” but has since become a broad diagnostic category in which many variations, intensities, and experiences of anxiety lie.⁵⁹ These individual categories of anxiety include social phobia, specific (isolated) phobias, panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, mixed anxiety, depressive disorder, dissociative disorders, depersonalization, and acute stress disorder.⁶⁰ As the twentieth century has progressed, anxiety has become a “major aspect of Westernised culture.”⁶¹ As post-traumatic stress and trauma have become medically recognised and treated in the wake of the Second World War, Korean War, and Vietnam War, anxiety too became diagnosable and treatable. Furthermore, the emergence of “anti-anxiety” drugs in the mid-1950s “popularized” the disorder in Western culture.⁶² In the twenty-first century, there has been an “overall reduction of fear” and yet the diagnosis of anxiety has grown exceptionally, resulting in what Allan Horwitz has called “the age of anxiety.”⁶³ For example, in 1980, only about 2-4% of the American population was diagnosed with anxiety, whereas in 2003/4 this has risen to nearly

⁵⁶ Allen Horwitz, *Anxiety* (Baltimore; Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 2013), 1-3.

⁵⁷ Murray Sidman, ‘Anxiety’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 108(6) (1964): 478.

⁵⁸ Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (London: Karnac Books, 1988).

⁵⁹ Michael Stone, ‘History of Anxiety Disorders’ in *The American Psychiatric Publishing Textbook of anxiety disorders*, ed. Dan Stein and Eric Hollander (Washington: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2002).

⁶⁰ Joe Bienvenu, et al., ‘Anxiety Disorders Diagnosis: Some History and Controversies’ in *Behavioural Neurobiology of Anxiety and its Treatment*, ed. Murray Stein and Thomas Steckler (Berlin: Current topics in Behavioural Neurosciences, 2009).

⁶¹ Horwitz, *Anxiety*, 119-120.

⁶² *Ibid*, 120.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 143.

30%.⁶⁴ The experience of anxiety as both a medical and emotional diagnosis differs greatly from person to person and diagnosis to diagnosis.

Although the emotional and medical terminology of anxiety is complex, it lends itself to be a useful phrase when considering nuclear anxiety. Firstly, anxiety acknowledges the existence of an emotional anxious experience and a diagnosable medical condition. This is appropriate when we consider nuclear anxiety as both an immediate, emotional response to the nuclear threat and as an elongated experience, or phobia, of nuclear war.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the term anxiety has become a medical umbrella term for several different diagnosable conditions, and many of these include the experience of other emotions. These include sadness, anger, happiness (mania), stress, and trauma.⁶⁶ This means that by looking at nuclear anxiety as the subject, other entangled nuclear *emotions* can be revealed and acknowledged. That being said, although other emotions intermingled with nuclear anxiety, these nuclear emotions warrant further space in scholarship in order to successfully historicise the experience of nuclear anxiety.

The historical work of Grant, Hogg, Douthwaite, and Langhamer are examples of scholarship which has utilised the emotional turn in nuclear history, responding to Joseph Masco's call to reclaim the "emotional history of the atomic bomb."⁶⁷ Masco explores how civilians were "emotionally managed" through civil defence programmes to turn nuclear terror into "productive nuclear fear" and control the population.⁶⁸ He puts forwards the term 'nuclear uncanny' to refer to when individuals become conscious of nuclear contexts in everyday life, arguing that civilians would have moments of anxiety brought on by the invisible threat of

⁶⁴ Ronald Kessler, et al., 'Prevalence's, severity and comorbidity of 12-month DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication', *Archives of General Psychiatry* 62 (2004): 617-627.

⁶⁵ Aliaksandr Novikau, 'What is "Chernobyl Syndrome?" The Use of Radiophobia in Nuclear Communications', *Environmental Communication* 11(6) (2017): 800-809.

⁶⁶ Bienvenu et al., 'Anxiety Disorders'.

⁶⁷ Masco, "Survival", 387.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 372, 368.

nuclear war or radiation fears.⁶⁹ Frank Biess builds upon Masco's research by examining the ways the West German government attempted to manage the nuclear fear of civilians. Biess traces the emotional practices, rituals, and standards that emerged in West Germany, revealing themselves to be that of social fear and anxiety which he argues became "nuclear angst."⁷⁰ Friederike Brühöfener suggests that emotions became a driving political force during the Cold War as West German anti-nuclear protesters made their fears about nuclear weapons visible through their campaigns.⁷¹ However, as the next section outlines, current historical research tells us little about the meanings, consequences, and perceptions of the emotional experience of nuclear anxiety and wider nuclear emotions.

Douthwaite's work points to the fruitful bringing together of the studies of British nuclear culture and the history of emotions to understand lived experience and nuclear anxiety.⁷² In this vein, Langhamer utilises the history of emotions to understand civilian responses to nuclear weapons. Through examining responses to the investigative organisation Mass Observation in August 1945 to the prompt "describe in detail your own feelings and views about the atom bomb and those of the people you meet", Langhamer explores the impact nuclear weapons had on "ways of narrating, and managing, the emotional self" in the immediate nuclear age.⁷³ She provides a cross-section of individuals "manifesting particular emotional styles within a specific emotional space", rather than attitudes across time.⁷⁴ Focusing on the nuances and feelings articulated in the responses, Langhamer argues that

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 28; Masco, *Nuclear Borderlands*, 285, 30-32, 27-28, 30, 32-34; Spencer Weart, *The Rise of Nuclear Fear* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012); Spencer Weart, *Nuclear Fear: A History of Images* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988).

⁷⁰ Frank Biess, 'Everybody has a chance: Nuclear Angst, Civil Defence, and the History of Emotions in Postwar West Germany', *German History* 27(2) (2009): 218, 220.

⁷¹ Friederike Brühöfener, 'Politics of Emotions: Journalistic Reflections on the Emotionality of the West German Peace Movement, 1979-1984', *German Politics and Society* 33(4) (2015): 102-103.

⁷² Douthwaite, 'Voices'.

⁷³ Claire Langhamer, 'Mass Observing the atom bomb: the emotional politics of August 1945', *Contemporary British history* 33(2) (2018): 208-209.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 211.

ordinary people genuinely felt they had entered a “new atomic age” and found themselves emotionally managing their fears and moral position.⁷⁵ These emotional politics allowed individuals to position themselves within wider cultures and imaginations around them, which subsequently coloured individual experiences, actions, perceptions, and judgements.⁷⁶ Notably, Langhamer identifies a complex interplay of past experience, present feeling, and future thinking in individual responses as they reflected on the Second World War, their immediate feelings about nuclear weapons, and imagined what nuclear war might look like.⁷⁷

While the study of emotional responses to nuclear weapons has received recent attention, nuclear anxiety has been employed in numerous fields of research and has received many different definitions. Psychologist Michael Newcomb undertook research in 1986 which examined associations between nuclear attitudes with depression, drug use, and quality of life. He defines nuclear anxiety as “fear of nuclear war and its consequences.”⁷⁸ Historian Tom Smith argues that nuclear anxiety has received much contradictory and complex historical attention as some research asserts it was normalised in everyday life, others argue that it was a “sensible” response to the “nuclear status quo” and those who fail to express such fear practice “nuclear denial”, and many argue that nuclear anxiety’s psychological and behavioural consequences have been vastly exaggerated.⁷⁹ Douthwaite aptly notes that these early conceptualisations of anxiety, like those laid out by Smith, were entangled in gendered assumptions, as in the 1950s sociological and medical researchers developed specifically female conditions of anxiety.⁸⁰ Cordle’s definition, drawn from his literary analysis of Tim

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 209.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 216.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 208-209.

⁷⁸ Michael Newcomb, ‘Nuclear attitudes and reactions: Associations with depression, drug use, and quality of life’, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50 (1986): 906-920.

⁷⁹ Tom Smith, ‘A Report: Nuclear Anxiety’, *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 52(4) (1988): 557.

⁸⁰ Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 95. Also: David Cantor and Edmund Ramsden, ‘Introduction’ in *Stress, Shock and Adaption in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David Cantor and Edmund Ramsden (New York; Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), 1-14.

O'Brien's *The Nuclear Age*, aligns itself with Grant and Smith's conclusions that the impact of nuclear anxiety may be exaggerated. Cordle argues that people were not "obsessively terrified" but instead nuclear war was a "lurking dread" as it "loomed over [...] as a possible future scenario." He suggests that "suspense" is a key aspect of nuclear anxiety.⁸¹ Although historians, sociologists, and psychologists have provided often contradictory and oversimplified definitions of nuclear anxiety, it is generally agreed that ordinary people experienced some form of fear response during the Cold War, and this shaped the cultural, social, and political landscape of the period. As this study will demonstrate, the experience of nuclear anxiety is more akin to Hogg and Cordle's definitions: people were not experiencing constant fear, instead anxiety occurred in flashes of suspense or apprehension for what the future might bring, and this was entangled with other emotions.

The most well-formulated analyses of nuclear anxiety are Lifton's theory of psychic numbing and Boyer's theory of nuclear consciousness. Lifton defined "psychic numbing" in 1987 as a "loss of feeling to escape the impact of unacceptable images." To demonstrate the existence of psychic numbing, Lifton lived in Hiroshima and studied the experiences of the survivors of the nuclear attacks at the end of the Second World War. During this experience, he concluded that the people living in Hiroshima were able to dissociate themselves.⁸² Psychic numbing was presented as a rational response to an irrational weapon, and according to Lifton, an unconscious defence against nuclear horror that people were consciously aware they were experiencing. According to Lifton, for people to continue their everyday normal lives and thoughts, they had to deny or oppress their nuclear anxieties instinctively.⁸³ Like Lifton, this study uses the voices and experiences of individuals who lived through a period of emotional

⁸¹ Dan Cordle, 'In Dreams, In imagination, suspense, anxiety, and the Cold War in Tim O'Brien's *The Nuclear Age*', *Critical Survey* 19(2) (2007): 104.

⁸² Robert Lifton and Eric Markusen, *The genocidal mentality* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 249.

⁸³ Milton Schwebel, 'The Construction of Reality in the Nuclear Age', *Political Psychology* 11(3) (1990): 538.

and psychological tension. This project does not take a psychological approach and does not, at any time, assess or diagnose the psychological state of those interviewed. Furthermore, as the study of psychic numbing is based upon the *absence* of nuclear anxiety it is arguably impossible to measure.

Another theory employed by historians to explore nuclear anxiety is Boyer's concept of nuclear consciousness. Boyer uses this term to assess the psychological impact of nuclear policy and technology, arguing that the nuclear bomb had become part of the "very structure of our minds." It has been particularly influential in the development of historiography into the emotional and psychological impact of nuclear weapons.⁸⁴ Through his in-depth and detailed analysis of American culture and everyday life during the Cold War, Boyer persuasively demonstrates how nuclear weapons became deeply embedded into the fabric of daily experience. However, Boyer's notion of nuclear consciousness has its limitations. Nuclear consciousness assumes that there was an overriding awareness of nuclear weaponry which dominated the mentality of individuals throughout the Cold War. As Grant and Douthwaite have shown, while individuals were aware of this reality, mundane concerns and narratives would often be recalled more distinctly.⁸⁵ Furthermore, Boyer's understanding of nuclear consciousness was primarily informed through American nuclear culture and the everyday *reception* was largely overlooked. The existence of a nuclear consciousness implies a single monolithic Cold War experience and fails to acknowledge the emotional spectrum associated with nuclear weapons. Unlike Boyer, this study looks at the voices, memories, and stories of civilians to understand their mindsets, imaginations, and emotions. In this way, it offers an alternative way of understanding nuclear culture and its reception.

⁸⁴ Paul Boyer, *By the Bombs Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), xix-xx.

⁸⁵ Grant, 'Making sense', 243.

This thesis moves away from Boyer's concept of nuclear consciousness and Lifton's psychic numbing. It uses the term nuclear anxiety and nuclear emotions to understand the changing emotional landscape and characteristics of the British Cold War. The thesis argues that nuclear weapons underpinned individual and collective memories and emotions of the British Cold War, revealing how this technology informed responses and perceptions of nation, politics, family, culture, and the self. The following section will consider the history of emotions as a theoretical and methodological tool to understand the changing emotional experience of nuclear anxiety in Cold War Britain.

The History of Emotions

The history of emotions is the field of historical research concerned with human emotions and feelings. The birth of this field can be traced back to *Histoire des Sensibilités* and *The Bourgeois Experience*.⁸⁶ These texts have been important in spurring discussions on the history of emotions. Barbara Rosenwein expresses "worry" about the field, not about the emotions themselves (as it is accepted that people in the past experienced and expressed emotion), rather how "historians have treated emotions in history."⁸⁷ This thesis uses the history of emotions to historicise the rich and multifaceted experiences of the Cold War, by setting them within their emotional concepts. As the history of emotions has expanded, historians have proposed numerous concepts, such as William Reddy's "emotional regimes" and Monique Scheer's

⁸⁶ Lucien Febvre, 'La Sensibilité et l'histoire: Comment reconstituer la vie affective d'autrefois?' *Annales d'histoire sociale*, 3 (1941): 5-20; Peter Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

⁸⁷ Barbara Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', *The American Historical Review* 107(3) (2002): 821. Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); Barbara Rosenwein, "Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions." *Passions in Context: Journal of the History and Philosophy of the Emotions* 1/1 (2010): https://www.passionsincontext.de/uploads/media/01_Rosenwein.pdf

“emotional practices.”⁸⁸ Amongst these various concepts, this thesis draws on “emotional communities” as the most productive and insightful, alongside Reddy’s “emotives.”⁸⁹

The history of emotions demonstrates the importance of understanding the individualism and collectively of experience. Emotionology is one such methodology which considers the individual and collective expressions of emotions in history. The method resolves the interdisciplinary problems with understanding emotions and suggests that emotions are not simply a psychological phenomenon within the brain, but also a social occurrence, as emotions impact the physical world and the emotions of others.⁹⁰ Peter Stearns and Carol Stearns suggest that social patterns are not static within history and often communities “encouraged” rituals and attitudes associated with an emotion.⁹¹ This allows emotions to be seen as a driving force in society as well as how “rules” in communities influence how emotions are experienced, such as within an emotional community. In the same way historians have written emotionologies of love or shame, this thesis will explore the emotionology of nuclear anxiety and wider nuclear emotions.⁹² It considers the *social* and *individual* nature of nuclear emotions, and places personal experiences into the societal context of their emotional communities.

Emotional communities

The notion of emotional communities is a useful lens through which to study the collective historical emotional experience in society. Rosenwein argues that emotions not only change throughout history, they also differ across emotional communities, each of which establishing

⁸⁸ William Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the history of emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 129; Monique Scheer, ‘Are Emotions a kind of Practice (and is that what makes them have a history)?: A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion’, *History and Theory*, 51 (2012): 196.

⁸⁹ Discussed in the section ‘Methodological Approaches’.

⁹⁰ Stearns and Stearns, ‘Emotionology’, 813.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 821-823.

⁹² For example: Stearns and Stearns, ‘Emotionology’, 821; Peter Stearns, ‘Shame, and a Challenge for Emotions History’, *Emotion Review* 8(3) (2016): 197-206; Langhamer, *English in Love*.

their own rules and norms of emotional valuation and expression. She defines emotional communities as the “same as social communities” and the researcher looking at them seeks to:

Uncover systems of feeling; what are these communities (and the individuals within them) defining and assessing as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about others’ emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognise; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore.⁹³

Emotions are formed within individuals, reinforced by institutions, and they are shared and experienced across communities and groups. Individuals can belong to multiple “emotional communities” and move between them. Rosenwein uses this concept “not to determine how people actually felt, but rather to explore normative codes of affective expression” during the early Middle Ages.⁹⁴ Using this methodology, she investigates the characteristics of emotional communities through sources such as funerary inscriptions, early-medieval writers’ classical legacies, and anonymous writers of the late seventh and early eighth centuries. Different standards and norms of emotions are structured at various levels of society, each differently configured into interrelated groups. Agents belong to many cultural contexts at any given time, and they navigate between emotional communities, causing concomitant shifts in their affective behaviour.

This thesis uses emotional communities to “uncover systems of feeling” within Cold War Britain. A key theme that emerged from the oral history interviews conducted was the visibility of distinct emotional clusters across Britain. As Rosenwein argues, groups of people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value – or devalue – the same or related emotions.⁹⁵ By interviewing a member of an emotional community, the emotions of others within that community can at least be principally grasped. The thesis does not claim to have uncovered *all* the emotional communities of Cold War Britain, but it does argue that this feeling

⁹³ *Ibid*, 842.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 842-843.

⁹⁵ Brühöfener, ‘Politics of Emotions’, 97-111.

of belonging to distinct emotional groups greatly impacted individual experiences of nuclear emotions. This thesis explores the diverse emotional communities that were impacted by the experience of nuclear anxiety in British nations, regions, and cities. Nuclear anxiety was not a static, unchanging experience and was related to shifting and different values, goals, and experiences within different groups. As Rosenwein suggests, emotional communities “alert us to transformations at the core of human societies” and “offers new ways to think about historical issues of stasis and change.”⁹⁶ In much the same way, this thesis uses the concept of emotional communities to understand the shifting and changing emotional experiences of nuclear anxiety. The following section will consider the theoretical and methodological approaches of this research, focusing on the oral-emotions framework utilised.

Methodological Approaches

Oral History

Alongside the history of emotions, the other methodological strand of this study is oral history. Through oral history, emotions can be expressed and shared in the context of the interview to gain a deeper understanding of the British Cold War. Linda Shopes suggests that oral histories “simultaneously deepen the enquiry and extend it outwards, helping us understand both the internal complexity of the community under study and its relationship to broader historical processes.”⁹⁷ The methodology is not without scholarly criticism, a key issue being the reliability of evidence. According to Amelia Fry and Alice Hoffman “reliability is defined as the consistency with which an individual will tell the same story about the same events on a number of different occasions.”⁹⁸ However, many historians are not able to repeat-interview

⁹⁶ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 203.

⁹⁷ Linda Shopes, ‘Oral History and the Study of Communities: Problems, Paradoxes, and Possibilities’, *Journal of American History* 89(2) (2002): 597.

⁹⁸ Amelia Fry and Alice Hoffman, ‘Oral History’, *The Journal of Literary History* 7(3) (2007): 281.

participants and due to the fragmented nature of memory, it may be recollected in many ways – making it ‘unreliable’ by definition. As David Bynum argues: “one man’s reason is another man’s prejudice or superstition, and one man’s history is another man’s fable.”⁹⁹ Interviewees confuse and forget dates, names, places, and other important details, and rearrange their memories in the act of recollection. They are pressured by social compliance to give the historian a specific narrative or to conceal the truth to protect themselves or community.¹⁰⁰

In response to these criticisms, many oral historians have reconfigured their methodologies, incorporating memory and nostalgia as benefits of oral history rather than weaknesses.¹⁰¹ The consideration of the construction of memory and the interviewer-interviewee relationship is valuable for understanding the subjectivity in individuals and the interpretative approach required to understand it.¹⁰² As Lynn Abrams suggests, the life history reconstructive agenda of oral history methodologies is to “provide evidence about past events that could not be retrieved from conventional historical sources.”¹⁰³ Oral history is not just made up of “factual statements” but contains “expressions and representations of culture”, therefore providing new evidence and highlighting how wider historical processes interacted with everyday life.¹⁰⁴ An oral history methodology, therefore, allows this study to capture, record, and analyse the emotional experiences of the British Cold War.

Douthwaite’s research expands on nuclear oral histories of Britain and explores emotions and experiences of the British nuclear age. She draws conclusions about collective

⁹⁹ David Bynum, ‘Oral Evidence and the Historian’, *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 8(2/3) (1971): 83

¹⁰⁰ Janet McDonnell, ‘Documenting Cultural and Historical Memory: Oral History in the National Park Service’, *The Oral History Review* 30(2) (2003): 108-109.

¹⁰¹ Paul Thompson, ‘Problems of method in Oral History’, *Oral History* 1(4) (1972): 1-47; George E. Evans, ‘Approaches to Interviewing’, *Oral History* 1(4) (1972): 56-71; Samuel Proctor, ‘Oral History comes of Age’, *The Oral History Review* 3 (1975): vi+1-4; Alistair Thomson, ‘Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History’, *The Oral History Review* 34(1) (2007): 61; Thomson, ‘Fifty Years On’, 581-582

¹⁰² Valerie Yow, “‘Do I like them too much: effects of the oral history interview on the interviewer and vice-versa’, *Oral History Review* 24(1) (1997): 79.

¹⁰³ Abrams, *Oral History*, 5.

¹⁰⁴ Luisa Passerini, ‘Work, Ideology and Consensus Under Italian Fascism’, *History Workshop* 8 (1979): 84.

and individual mindsets in her oral history study which comprised of interviews with forty-eight individuals, with a focus on two groups: civil defence recruits and anti-nuclear campaigners. Douthwaite highlights the importance of personal experience and popular memory, arguing that memories of the Second World War framed individual testimony.¹⁰⁵ She concludes that to achieve a more nuanced history of Britain's Cold War, historians "must focus on individuals" and the emotional, everyday impact of the Cold War.¹⁰⁶ This approach must be adopted to strike a balance between the oral history interview as a *historical* experience and a *contemporary* experience. The memories retold within oral history testimony must be understood through the context in which they originally occurred and the context of the interview itself. Likewise, the historical meanings and cultures which shaped the original memory must also be considered.¹⁰⁷ This multifaceted approach to memory in the oral history interview is therefore central to the analysis of this study. This thesis expands and develops Douthwaite's claims through a wider oral history sample and historical period and offers a specific focus on the experience of nuclear anxiety and wider landscape of nuclear emotions.

This thesis's evidence base consists of thirty-eight interviews with forty-five individuals at various stages of their lives who lived in London, Liverpool, Belfast, Cardiff, and Glasgow between the period 1945 and 1989. The interviews ranged from one to four hours long. To capture a representative picture of local nuclear experiences, the sample group was purposely developed to be as wide-ranging as possible and an even spread of interviewees were found in each location.¹⁰⁸ The age group of the participants was varied, ranging from forty-nine to ninety-two years old, to ensure that both the 1950s and 1980s were covered in detail and covering two distinct generations. The first included those born before the Cold War, who

¹⁰⁵ Douthwaite, 'Voices', 2.

¹⁰⁶ Douthwaite, 'Rehearsing nuclear war', 188-189, 200.

¹⁰⁷ Luisa Passerini, 'Memory', *History Workshop*, 15 (1983): 196.

¹⁰⁸ Susan Matt, 'Current emotion research in history: Or, doing history from the inside out', *Emotion Review*, 3(1) (2011): 118.

could recall World War Two, and the second generation, which included those born during the Cold War itself and grew up with the nuclear threat.¹⁰⁹ The sample was made up of seventeen women and twenty-eight men. Many of the women interviewed wished to participate alongside their husbands or families, whereas most male interviewees chose to be interviewed alone. Evidently, the interview sample has a noteworthy gender imbalance. It is plausible to suggest that women were less likely to meet a stranger online or through advertisements than men. The project also recruited in arguably male-dominated spheres, such as local history groups. Alternative sources of oral history testimony have been used to address this disparity wherever possible and these sources also served to support and challenge the testimony gathered for this thesis. All the participants were white and only two participants were born outside of the UK (Czechoslovakia and New Zealand), although many individuals had connections to various countries outside the UK including the Republic of Ireland, Kenya, South Africa, Germany, Russia, Zambia, and Serbia. Over 50% of participants referenced having a university education or higher. Most individuals did not reference or discuss their class identity and it felt unethical for me to ‘assign’ class to participants.¹¹⁰ Therefore, class is not a central consideration of this study as it was not deemed important by the interviewees nor was it a central narrative within their memories.

Participants for the oral history research were recruited through several methods.¹¹¹ Interviewees were found through advertisements and emails, sent out in each of the cities. Local libraries, history groups, anti-nuclear groups, and universities were contacted to advertise the project. Most participants were recruited through CND channels (29%) or local history groups (20%). Two individuals responded to advertisements at supermarkets, four responded

¹⁰⁹ Joseph Zelan, ‘Interviewing the Aged’, *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 33(3) (1969): 420-424.

¹¹⁰ Daniel Engster, ‘Care Ethics and National Law Theory: Toward an Institutional Political Theory of Caring’, *The Journal of Politics* 66(1) (2004): 113-135.

¹¹¹ John Law, *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004); Robert Morris, ‘Document to Database and Spreadsheet’, in *Research Methods for History* ed. Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 143.

to library adverts, five responded to social media posts on Facebook, and one individual was contacted directly. As Dan Warner argues, although social media is a useful tool for oral history recruitment, it comes with an array of ethical and methodological issues.¹¹² Through social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, local history, nuclear, protest, and city groups were located, and the admin of the group was messaged privately to request if the project could be advertised through the Facebook group. Once approved, a public post was made detailing the project and requesting interviewees. Generally, for this study, responses to social media posts were low; 11% of respondents in comparison to 51% of Warner's sample. The Facebook groups I advertised on had varying amounts of activity, which may have resulted in the low response rates. Participants would often bring a family member or a friend to the interview to contribute to the conversation as an interviewee. The remaining 24% of participants were recruited into the study through this snowball method.¹¹³ All interviewees' names have been changed to protect their identity.¹¹⁴

Participants came from several different backgrounds including protest groups, political parties, military occupations, local history groups, and those who had no obvious connection to nuclear weapons. Due to the high response rate of anti-nuclear group email channels, 50% of all participants recruited for the study were members of CND, with the other half having no connection to any anti-nuclear groups. Response rates from CND groups were high and these individuals were the first I was able to arrange interviews with. This is likely due to the now recognised historical importance of the campaign group and the personal motivations of the individuals who took part. Notably, this was higher in women, with 65% of all female participants being a member of CND in comparison to 43% of men. During the 1980s, the anti-

¹¹² Daniel Warner, 'Working Class Culture and Practice amid Urban Renewal and Decline: Liverpool, c.1945-1985' (PhD diss., University of Liverpool, 2018), 51-55.

¹¹³ Leo A. Goodman, 'Snowball Sampling', *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics* 32(1) (1961): 148.

¹¹⁴ Erin Jessee, 'The Limits of Oral History: Ethics and Methodology Amid Highly Politicized Research Settings', *The Oral History Review* 38(2) (2011): 299.

nuclear movement became synonymous with the feminist movement and female-only protest camps appeared across the country.¹¹⁵ This historical context of CND may have contributed to the gender imbalance in CND narratives gathered for this study. Just fewer than 50% of individuals reported having a military background and four individuals described a connection to the nuclear power industry. Although this study was designed to be as diverse as possible, through a combination of recruitment techniques, clear weaknesses remain in the sample.¹¹⁶ As Portelli argues, even the most strenuous sampling methods can ‘never guarantee against leaving out ‘quality’ informants whose testimony might be worth more than ten statistically selected ones.’¹¹⁷ As outlined in the introduction, there is no claim that the findings of this thesis are representative of the whole of the population, but instead that they are illustrative of the collective British experience, or at least a small part of it, offering a slice of the country’s emotional Cold War history.¹¹⁸

Emotives

To capture the tone, pace, and style of speech the interviewees used, as well as the emotional languages and utterances of the individuals, transcribing was done as accurately as possible. This verbatim methodology was used to explore the “emotives” used in the interviews. Reddy argues that emotives are crucial for a historical understanding of emotions. Emotives, or emotional expressions, are the ways individuals attempt to express the inexpressible, namely how they “feel.”¹¹⁹ Feelings are internal, and unless semantically expressed, they are hidden from others. Emotives are an utterance that represents an individual’s attempt to translate their internal feelings through social and cultural conventions to try and match the two. They are

¹¹⁵ Allison Young, *Femininity in Dissent* (London: Routledge, 1990), 654.

¹¹⁶ Helen White, 'Thoughts on Oral History', *The American Archivist*, 20(1) (1957): 19-30.

¹¹⁷ Portelli, 'Peculiarities', 104.

¹¹⁸ Todd, 'Class, experience', 500.

¹¹⁹ William Reddy, 'Against Constructionism: The Historical Ethnography of Emotions', *Current Anthropology* 38(3) (1997): 331.

conscious, chosen descriptions, which are self-edited by the individual to conform.¹²⁰ Emotives stress the performative “emotion-work” that an individual carries out to “fit in” with a given context. Reddy also suggests that emotives can change the underlying feeling, “for only as people articulate their feelings can they “know” what they feel and, reflecting on their newfound knowledge, feel yet more.”¹²¹

Emotions are also expressed through the body and behaviour. Margrit Pernau and Imke Rajamani argue that emotion should not be limited to just semantic analysis, stating that emotion is conveyed through many non-verbal utterances such as pauses, facial expressions, and body movement.¹²² Unlike Reddy, who examined the eighteenth century and used written sources, this study was able to consider the bodily dimensions of emotives through the oral history approach. The methodology of emotives has been integrated into the analysis of this study, as the non-verbal and physical actions of the interviewee are acknowledged alongside the text of the oral history transcripts. Transcribing as close to speech as possible also reveals the importance of particular phrases or tag sentences. Neal Norrick suggests that explicit talk about forgetfulness or memory in testimony can help further recall and reveal the importance and meanings interviewees place on their stories. Narrators may open stories with phrases such as ‘as far as I can remember’ or excuse poor memory with phrases like ‘I’m not sure’ or ‘all that stuff’.¹²³

As an outsider, I cannot claim to know an individual’s internal feelings, only the emotion they outwardly express.¹²⁴ Therefore, the external emotion is the focal points of

¹²⁰ Reddy, *Navigation*, 125.

¹²¹ Rosenwein, ‘Worrying’, 837.

¹²² Margrit Pernau and Imke Rajamani, ‘Emotional Translations: Conceptual History beyond Language’, *History and Theory* 55 (2016): 46-47.

¹²³ Neal Norrick, ‘Talking about Remembering and Forgetfulness in Oral History Interviews’, *The Oral History Review* 32(2) (2005): 1.

¹²⁴ Katie Holmes, ‘Does it matter if she cried? Recording Emotion and the Australian Generations Oral History Project’, *The Oral History Review* 44(1) (2017): 56-57.

observation and analysis for this study. This theoretical framework will be used to consider how a narrator seeks a sense of self from constituting themselves as the subject of their story.¹²⁵ One theme which emerged from the oral history was selfhood, as individuals framed their feelings within a collective ‘self’ or ‘shared emotion’. By examining how British civilians composed their memories, such as through anecdotes or extended narratives, the relationship between public discourse and the recounting of experience can be understood.¹²⁶ Within the context of this study, this approach will be used to understand an individual’s sense of their emotional experience and the ways they frame it within the broader British narrative and their underlying subjectivities. However, while this analysis focuses on emotions within an oral history interview and the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, this methodology is not psychological. Regardless, historians must be aware of the cultural and contextual setting of the interview and the subject matter and be aware of the self and subject in their research.

Present-centredness

The interviews brought together for this project were recorded between 2016 and 2019, a period of specific national and international circumstance which contextualised the interviews. The 2014 Scottish vote for independence was still fresh in the memories of interviewees, with the push for a second vote rapidly increasing in 2019 under the escalating uncertainty of ‘Brexit’, the British divorce from the European Union (EU) in 2016.¹²⁷ Abroad, President of the United States Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force Treaty (INF).¹²⁸ International tension was raised further by the testing of

¹²⁵ Summerfield, ‘Culture and Composure’, 67.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹²⁷ ‘Brexit: Europe stunned by UK leave vote’, *BBC News*, 24 June 2016, accessed October 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36616018>; ‘Scottish referendum: Scotland votes ‘No’ to independence’, *BBC News*, 19 September 2014, accessed October 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-29270441>

¹²⁸ ‘INF nuclear treaty: US pulls out of Cold War-era pact with Russia’, *BBC News*, 2 August 2019, accessed October 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-49198565>; ‘Putin bill to suspend Russia’s

North Korean nuclear arsenals and the Iranian nuclear weapon programme.¹²⁹ The renewed possibility of nuclear war has led historians and journalists to describe this period as the coming of a “second Cold War.”¹³⁰ This context was present in the narratives of interviewees, with many using their contemporary experiences to frame their memories of the Cold War. In this way, feelings and experiences were co-produced within the past and the present. As Douthwaite and Matt Jones demonstrate, those who remember the Cold War exercise an element of ‘present-centeredness’ in the interview, framing their memories of the Cold War within contemporary nuclear anxieties.¹³¹

Within oral history, the past and the present shape the content of the interview. The interviewee is asked to recall “a past self”, which is informed by their “present self.”¹³² The past itself was once present, and when recalling it within a new present, the content, emotions, and memories associated change accordingly.¹³³ In this way, the past self produces the memories within the interview, but the present self modifies and edits the ways in which those memories are structured. Due to the emergence of contemporary nuclear anxiety, how the past is constructed by the contemporary self and the historical self must be contextualised.

Furthermore, those who lived through the Second World War also used this period to frame their memories. These individuals would use a three-way current of memory, recalling the Second World War, the Cold War, and their contemporary experiences to compose their

participation in nuclear treaty’, *The Independent*, 3 July 2019, accessed October 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-russia-us-nuclear-inf-treaty-trump-intercontinental-ballistic-missiles-a8987281.html>. Within public discourse, this overshadowed the review of the British Trident nuclear weapons programme and its subsequent upgrade.

¹²⁹ ‘North Korea’s missile and nuclear programme’, *BBC News*, 9 October 2019, accessed October 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-41174689>; ‘Iran nuclear deal: Key details’, *BBC News*, 11 June 2019, accessed October 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-33521655>

¹³⁰ ‘Russia v the West: Is this a new Cold War?’, *BBC News*, 1 April 2018, accessed October 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-43581449>

¹³¹ Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 8; Matt Jones, ‘Ending Cold War Fears: expectation and interpretation in Mass Observers’ responses to the Gulf War, 1990-1991’, *Contemporary British History* 32(2) (2018): 253.

¹³² Thomson, ‘Memory’.

¹³³ Lock, ‘Building’, 111-113.

memories.¹³⁴ In this way, the semantics of the interview becomes more important. Terms or pronouns may be used interchangeably or inconsistently for personal or social experiences. These modern experiences may be used to refer to the past as a point of comparison, demonstrating the unpredictability of emotions as a past or contemporary feeling.¹³⁵ For example, Jones shows how pre-existing popular memories of Britain's involvement in the Cold War were the prevailing interpretation of the Gulf Crisis in interviews.¹³⁶ Likewise, the context of 2016-2019 shaped memory and emotions of the Cold War period. Through an oral-emotional methodology, this thesis uses an awareness of present-centeredness and emotives to understand the everyday emotional experience of British civilians in the Cold War.

Thesis outline

Within the oral history testimony, five key themes provided a pattern with which to structure the thesis. These were nation, politics, culture, family, and selfhood. The structure of this thesis is also not chronological. Due to the nature of memory and processes of recollecting, interviewees focused on specific details, events, and moments in the construction of their life story.¹³⁷ This thesis addresses the relevance of each theme to individual experiences, memories, and emotions around the British Cold War. Alongside these factors, several subjects and ideas were repeated throughout the interviews, including emotional communities, present-centredness, and nuclear emotions. These themes are explored in further detail across the course of each chapter.

Chapter one explores how interviewees perceived their national identity, country, and city during the Cold War. It considers the ways nuclear weapons, the Cold War, and emotions

¹³⁴ Douthwaite, 'Voices', 285.

¹³⁵ Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (eds.), *The Myths We Live By* (London; New York: Routledge, 1990).

¹³⁶ Jones, 'Cold War Fears', 253-254.

¹³⁷ Lock, "'Building', 110.

became entangled within national identities and the ways in which individuals perceived the city spaces in which they lived, exploring national and regional emotional communities. It considers the city-as-target motif and argues that those living within city spaces experienced specific anxieties which were dependent upon the places they lived in. Lastly, it challenges well-established historiography which presents the British Cold War as a single, homogenous entity, rather than a series of territories, identities, and spaces under constant negotiation under the strain of the Cold War.

Chapter two looks at how the political events of the Cold War were an important, everyday presence that contributed to feelings of anxiety, suspicion, and anger for many people. This chapter highlights the emotional experience of the Cold War as a *mixture* of emotions. While nuclear anxiety was at the core of the oral history testimony, other emotional responses intersected, framed, shaped these narratives. This chapter demonstrates how we may only understand the nature of nuclear anxiety by acknowledging the other emotions expressed within the civilian experience. It explores the emotional communities of individuals belonging to political groups, such as CND. It considers the British civilian perspectives on nuclear security and the flashpoints they recalled, examining recollections of the insecurity of civil defence, the mistrust and secrecy of government, and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Chapter three contributed to well-established historiography on British nuclear culture. It traces the emotional responses attached to the various cultures and media which were produced throughout the Cold War. Through British nuclear culture, nuclear weapons arguably became embedded in everyday life. Furthermore, nuclear weapons and nuclear war became objects of humour for many individuals. By ‘poking fun’ at the presence of nuclear weapons, individuals found themselves integrating it further into everyday life. This chapter explores *reception* to British nuclear culture and the ways nuclear weapons and nuclear anxiety integrated into civilian everyday lives.

Chapter four moves on to explore the impact of the Cold War and nuclear weapons on the family dynamics in Britain. The Cold War permeated many aspects of everyday life, but through the family, it became extremely emotional and intimate. Civilians discussed their wishes to protect their family units, as opposed to self-protection and this often became a driving force for activism within anti-nuclear communities. Parents and children found themselves divided by the nuclear issue and families formed emotional communities around the rejection or acceptance of the bomb. Furthermore, this chapter explores how individuals and families framed the Cold War within memories of the Second World War and contemporary narratives, constructing their nuclear emotions within the production of self.

Chapter five brings together the arguments presented in the previous chapters by examining the individualism of emotions, memory, and experience in the Cold War. It discusses the ways nuclear emotions surfaced within interviews, using oral history testimony case studies. It explores how belief systems, personal experience, and emotions were formed by and reacted to the changing cultural and political climate of the Cold War. It considers how individuals framed themselves and their sense of self within their emotional communities. The chapter demonstrates the temporal significance of the project and interviews conducted, considering the relevance of events in 2016-2019 to the narratives of the interviewees.

Through a combined methodology of oral history and history of emotions, this thesis demonstrates that the Cold War resulted in simultaneous and paradoxical feelings of conflict and acceptance in the everyday lives of British civilians. It argues that historians must consider the memory, imagination, feelings, and fantasy of everyday lives in Cold War Britain. Furthermore, anxiety cannot be treated in isolation. Civilians experienced a spectrum of emotional responses to nuclear weapons and the Cold War, which subsequently impacted their memories, worldviews, and opinions. This formed the broad and diverse emotional landscape of the period. These *nuclear emotions* must be considered in unison to successfully historicise

the experience of nuclear anxiety. These feelings were anchored in, and formed by memories of the Second World War, hopes for the future, and multifaceted identities. The thesis argues that although the experience of nuclear anxiety is part of a collective, broader cultural memory of the British Cold War, the reasons *why* individuals recalled experiences of anxiety were often personal. These emotional experiences were highly influenced by the emotional communities' individuals identified as well, as the broader and multifaceted British experience of the Cold War.

Chapter One

Nation, Community, Home: Society and Place in Nuclear Britain

“It haunted me as a child knowing that in the case of World War 3 breaking out, we would probably be some of the first targets to be destroyed.”
- Interview with Suzie Roberts, 2018¹

In 1945 the Second World War gave way to the era now known as the Cold War, and civilians entered the ‘nuclear age’. Extensive scholarship has explored the impact of this period on the British nation, but research examining civilian and regional communities has remained elusive. This chapter contributes to the overarching argument of the thesis by demonstrating the diverse experiences of nuclear anxiety and nuclear emotions across city spaces and how regional identities and perceptions of the city shaped them.

Through analysing fourteen interviews in detail, and using national and local press articles, antinuclear materials, and cultural sources, this chapter explores how the British nation and urban spaces were framed within the lives of civilians. This chapter offers an introduction to many of the interviewees who took part in this project and is the longest within the thesis. Subsequent chapters will explore experiences of nuclear anxiety in more detail, situating these shifting emotional landscapes within the wider context of the Cold War. This chapter, however, will seek to explain *why* nuclear anxiety differed across the testimony. This introduces the core arguments of this thesis: that nuclear emotions were *diverse* and that they were shaped by *contemporary* and *past* identities. It argues that normality shifted and challenges the assumption that the ‘secretive’ operations of the Cold War did not impact civilian experience.

This thesis will challenge current scholarship about the British Cold War experience by exploring and comparing regional differences of England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland. Historians have begun to interrogate these identities and challenge concepts such as British nuclear culture.² This chapter contributes a distinctly new dimension to the

¹ Interview with Suzie Roberts, 14 March 2018.

² Hughes, ‘Nuclear Culture’ 504.

historiography by exploring and comparing the emotional experience of the “four nations” of Britain *alongside* one another. This chapter argues that a more complete picture of the civilian experience of the Cold War emerges if a wider focus on regional and national identities is adopted, allowing for a greater appreciation of the diversity of emotional experiences and widespread impact of nuclear weapons on everyday life. Consequently, this chapter will also contribute to ongoing debates concerning the terminology of nuclear anxiety, problematising its recent tendency to be used as an all-encompassing and umbrella term when applied to the British emotional experience of the Cold War.

This chapter explores the *experience* of civilians living in urban communities and how these spaces and regional identities moulded their *imaginings* of nuclear war. For some interviewees, the British nation as a collective community was a powerful symbol. Alongside this was often a belief that Britain should act independently from its historical, political, and military companion, the United States.³ Other interviewees resisted “patriotic” Cold War national identities, countering this concept with their own sense and definition of national identity. For all interviewees, Britain was an obvious and likely nuclear target. As Suzie Roberts alludes to in her testimony, the feeling that Britain would be destroyed in a nuclear war was a genuine cause of anxiety. Some individuals considered this a stark and harsh reality of the nuclear age, believing that their city would be a target during a nuclear attack.

Across the interviews which formed this research, there was a shared sense of the *presence* of the Cold War, forming a collective imagination of the impact of the conflict on Britain.⁴ Furthermore, participants acknowledged Britain as a nuclear target, although for various reasons. Pro-nuclear interviewees argued that Britain would be a target due to its political and international strength, whereas anti-nuclear participants felt instead that Britain

³ John Baylis and Kristian Stoddart, *British Nuclear Experience: The role of beliefs, culture, and identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 97.

⁴ *Ibid.*

would become a battleground for American and Soviet nuclear war. Throughout their lives, regardless of when they were born, the perception of the British nuclear nation-state shaped each individual's Cold War experience in some way.⁵ This chapter will firstly outline perceptions of the British nuclear state, considering scholarship on this topic, before considering anxiety and Britishness in the oral history testimony. Lastly, it considers local and regional urban nuclear imaginations to explore the differences in experience, emotion, and identity in Scottish, Welsh, English, and Northern Irish testimony.

Section I: Changing perceptions of the British nuclear state

To outline the impact national identity had on the British Cold War experience and nuclear anxiety, this section will consider the role of nuclear weapons in shaping national and international identity during the Cold War. The testimony reveals that shared mindsets and cultural imaginaries were central to how individuals framed their experiences and their national identities. Furthermore, these were interlinked with experiences of nuclear anxiety. This section will therefore outline the concept of collective memory, considering the relevant historiography. As this thesis will explore throughout, the intersections of collective and individual experience are central to an understanding of nuclear emotions during this period.

During the Cold War, Britain experienced a crisis in its international and political standing in the world. During the Second World War, America, Canada, and Britain began to undertake secret weapons research to develop the atomic bomb in a project that became known as the Manhattan Project, in a race to create the weapon before Nazi Germany. Following successful tests and application of atomic weapons, America refused to share its nuclear secrets

⁵ Pat Thane, 'Family Life and "Normality" in Postwar British Culture' in Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (eds.) *Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

with other nation-states. For Britain, which was economically and militarily ravaged by war, nuclear weapons began to symbolise international power and the promise of superpower status.⁶ In the early years of the Cold War, Britain was determined to become an independent nuclear nation-state, investing substantially into the creation of its own weapons. This is an attitude that still has gravitas in the modern-day, with Britain retaining around 215 nuclear warheads through its renewal of the American Trident programme and in 2021 the cap on the number of warheads able to be stockpiled in Britain was lifted, ending 30 years of gradual disarmament since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.⁷

The international desire for nuclear weapons is interlinked with national recognition and power across the globe. Nations desire freedom from the control of “other nations”, and nuclear technology enabled this.⁸ Margaret Gowing argues that British political discourse was never *whether* the bomb should be kept but *how* it should be kept, against growing anti-nuclear public opinion, as the bomb came to “represent superiority and independence in the world.”⁹ According to Nick Ritchie, if the British nation wanted international credibility it needed to retain independent nuclear power.

This was heightened by the desire to maintain its “special relationship” with America and remain in the Western nuclear coalition.¹⁰ In 1962, in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan hoped for the continuation of the “Anglo-

⁶ Mark Kramer, ‘Ideology and the Cold War’, *Review of International Studies* 25(3) (1999): 539-576.

⁷ Hans Kristiansen and Matt Korda, ‘Status of World Forces’, *Federation of American Scientists*, accessed August 2020, <https://fas.org/issues/nuclear-weapons/status-world-nuclear-forces/>; Dan Sabbagh, ‘Cap on Trident nuclear warhead stockpile to rise by more than 40%’, *The Guardian*, 15 March 2021, accessed 16 March 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/mar/15/cap-on-trident-nuclear-warhead-stockpile-to-rise-by-more-than-40>

⁸ William Epstein, ‘Why States Go – And Don’t Go – Nuclear’, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 430 (1977): 16.

⁹ Margaret Gowing, *Independence and Deterrence: Britain and Atomic Energy Vol. 2, 1945-1952* (New York: St. Martin’s Press), 184.

¹⁰ Nick Ritchie, ‘Relinquishing nuclear weapons: identities, networks and the British bomb’, *International Affairs* 86(2) (2010): 467-468.

American relationship.”¹¹ Ken Young suggests that the relationship between Britain and America shaped the development of nuclear weapons and the alliances of NATO and the United Nations (UN).¹² The importance of remaining in the “nuclear club”, was reflected in the Western rejection of “non-nuclear states.” This created an international perception of “us” (nuclear nations) and “them” (non-nuclear nations).¹³ Hugh Gusterson argues this international discourse split the world into the “nuclear-haves” and “have-nots” causing superpower nations to take a “parental role” to protect the non-nuclear nations who declared “nuclear-purity.”¹⁴ For example, in *Britain: An official handbook 1980*, a publication designed to describe “how Britain works”, the British government made the statement: “Britain has undertaken not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states” except “in the case of an attack on British interests.”¹⁵ In this way, Britain is made to be distinct from ‘other’ nations that do not have nuclear weapons. To not become an international ‘other’, British international identity became associated with nuclear weapons. Thus, possession of them reaffirms and in part constitutes, the collective identity of Britain as an interventionist, pivotal world power.

During the Cold War, Britain became nuclearized and related infrastructures appeared across the country (Figure 1.1).¹⁶ As the Cold War progressed, the presence of these infrastructures became embedded in Britain. Civil defence initiatives, civilian imaginations of nuclear war, and nuclear power stations became features of ordinary life.¹⁷ Grant argues that

¹¹ Contacts between John F. Kennedy, President of the USA, and Harold Wilson, UK Prime Minister, 6 November 1962, National Archives (hereafter NA), FO 598/29.

¹² Ken Young, ‘Special Weapon, Special Relationship: The Atomic bomb comes to Britain’, *Journal of Military History* 77 (2013): 569-598.

¹³ Hugh Gusterson, ‘Nuclear Weapons and the Other in the Western Imagination’, *Cultural Anthropology* 14(1) (1999): 112.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 128-130.

¹⁵ *Britain: An official handbook*, 1980, British Central Office of Information, Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, National Library of Scotland (hereafter NLS), GII.11, 80.

¹⁶ Hogg, *Nuclear Culture*, xi.

¹⁷ Karen Parkhill, et al, ‘From the familiar to the extraordinary: local residents’ perceptions of risk when living with nuclear power in the UK’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35(1) (2010): 49.

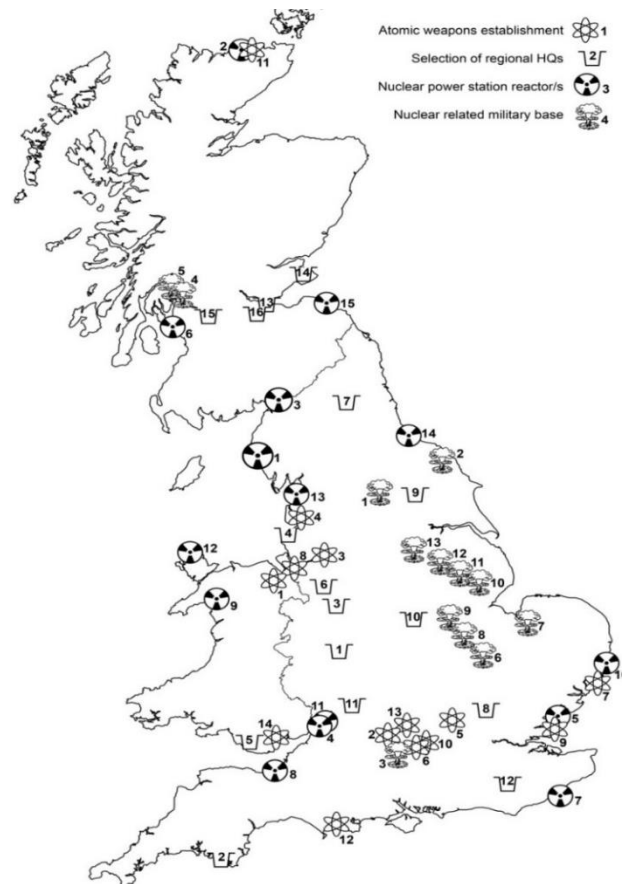


Figure 1.1 The British Nuclear State from Hogg, *British Nuclear Culture*.

these Cold War structures, such as civil defence establishments, formed part of “quasi-military” citizenship and identity. He asserts that they contributed to the abstract imagined realities of the nuclear future such as the role of civil defence, government intervention, and nuclear holocaust.¹⁸ Grant illustrates how British citizenship in the Cold War was affected by the perceptions of other nations. For example, during this period, Communists in Britain were stigmatized as “archetypal bad citizens.”¹⁹ Through the presence of and resistance to nuclear structures, the British nuclear-state simultaneously became an ordinary and extraordinary aspect of everyday life.²⁰ In this way, the nuclear state became a dual dynamic of Cold War security and uncertainty as the Cold War progressed.²¹ The presence and resistance to the

¹⁸ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 250, 252.

¹⁹ Grant, ‘Historicising citizenship’, 1197.

²⁰ Hogg, *Nuclear Culture*, 99.

²¹ Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 132.

British nuclear state also permeated city spaces through civil defence structures and initiatives, anti-nuclear protest movements, and local political discussions.²² Thus, the Cold War and nuclear weapons changed, altered, and pervaded the British nation and urban spaces, shaping everyday life during this period. The following paragraphs consider the current historical understanding of the collective experience and how it might be implemented to understand nuclear emotions.

Numerous historians have argued for the existence of collective identities, memories, and imaginations across various communities, cultures, and nations.²³ According to Rauf Garagozov, collective memory is understood as an “extended or distrusted memory” and as “the outcome of group debates and contestations, mediated by cultural tools in the form of narratives.”²⁴ The discussion of collective memory can “trigger specific emotions” within a particular group.²⁵ Collective memory can include large events such as the national memory of the atomic bombings in 1945²⁶ or collective memories of the trauma of the Second World War within Jewish communities.²⁷ Thus, collective memory is a widely shared knowledge of past social events that are “collectively constructed through communitive social interactions” and can have a “significant impact” on behaviour, feelings, and thoughts.²⁸ These collectives formed the “imagined communities” Anderson theorised. Within the interviews, British civilians would frame their testimony within national, regional and community identities, despite having never met hundreds of members of these groups.²⁹ Furthermore, as previously

²² Susanne Schregel, ‘Nuclear war and the city: perspectives on municipal interventions in defence (Great Britain, New Zealand, West Germany, USA, 1980-1985), *Urban History* 42(4) (2015): 564-583.

²³ Susan Crane, ‘Writing the Individual back into Collective memory’ *The American Historical Review* 102(5) (1997): 1372-1385; Wulf Kansteiner, ‘Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies’, *History and Theory* 41(2) (2002): 179-197.

²⁴ Rauf Garagozov, ‘Painful Collective Memory: Measuring Collective Memory Affect in the Karabakh Conflict’, *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 22(1) (2016): 28-35.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Hiro Saito, ‘Reiterated Commemoration: Hiroshima as National Trauma’, *Sociological Theory* 24(4) (2006): 353-376.

²⁷ Peter Novick, *The Holocaust and Collective Memory* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000).

²⁸ Garagozov, ‘Collective Memory’, 28.

²⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

discussed, numerous Cold War historians including Langhamer, Hogg, Grant, and Douthwaite found that shared identities and cultural memories greatly influenced the lived emotional experience of individuals.

Specific periods of history also impacted this feeling of collective lived experience. Summerfield demonstrates that the Second World War formed an important and central aspect of British collective memory. The testimony conducted for this project revealed that in the same way, the Cold War also became part of British collective memory, shaping national identity, national memory, and shared emotions.³⁰ As Ritchie suggests, national identity is central to understanding the broader Cold War and the meanings assigned to nuclear weapons.³¹ In the same way, an understanding of collective and individual national and regional identity is central to understanding the differences and similarities in the lived experience of the Cold War and nuclear emotions. Geography and collective memory shaped how individuals discussed their memories of the Cold War, as individuals living in one place inherently had different experiences to those living in others. As discussed in the introduction, Kearney argues Britain should be constructed as separate “cultural nations” as each region has unique experiences and identities.³² This chapter reveals a small part of this important aspect of the British experience.

Britain’s Cold War experience with nuclear weapons became entangled with local culture and national identity. This shaped the collective imagination and individual experience of civilians. Benjamin Ziemann and Grant demonstrate the ways nuclear weapons influenced the imaginations of communities and how these shaped the ways “the Cold War was envisioned.”³³ They argue that individual imagination of nuclear war was shaped by cultural

³⁰ Penny Summerfield, ‘Film and the Popular Memory of the Second World War in Britain, 1950-59’, in *Gender, Labour, War, and Empire: Essays on Modern Britain* ed. Philippa Levine and Susan R. Grayzel (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 133-34.

³¹ Nick Ritchie, ‘Nuclear identities and Scottish Independence’, *The Non-Proliferation Review* 23(5) (2016): 653.

³² Kearney, *British Isles*.

³³ Grant and Ziemann, *Imaginary War*, 5.

media and the political agendas they were exposed to. The cultural iconography of the British nation shaped the imagination of British participation in a nuclear war.³⁴ Grant demonstrates how individuals made sense of the collective and cultural imagined possibilities of nuclear war which formed in the Cold War. Often individuals would struggle to form their own memories when imagining nuclear war. Instead, they would often provide vague details or recite popular cultural narratives. He concludes that this was likely due to the difficulty of imagining something which has not happened. Likewise, this occurred within the testimony gathered for this project. Individuals would discuss popular culture or depictions of nuclear war in the media to frame their own understandings and imaginations of nuclear war.³⁵

As Hogg demonstrates, this nuclearity and the collective mindsets held by individuals are important when attaining a deeper understanding of individual lived experience.³⁶ Langhamer found that in responses to Mass Observation, panellists would “claim their own views were widely shared across place and space.” Although a “minority” of respondents saw themselves as outside a community of feeling, most positioned the “self in relation to the collective.” The sociality of feeling was apparent in these narratives particularly when respondents considered their own and other nations.³⁷ Similarly, interviewees within this research placed their experiences within the ‘British whole’ or defined their experience by their regional identity, stressing that their views, memories, imaginations, and opinions were held by their fellow countryfolk. These collective narratives, alongside British nuclear culture, shape individual memory and emotion surrounding the imagination of nuclear war and the destruction of the British nation. The following sections explore the ways these shared assumptions and cultural iconographies entered discourses about the British nuclear nation. The first section will

³⁴ This will be explored extensively in Chapter Three.

³⁵ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 253.

³⁶ Hogg, ‘The family’, 538.

³⁷ Langhamer, ‘Mass Observing’, 216.

consider the concept of British national identity. The chapter will then break down meanings of Britishness and consider regional identities and their juxtaposition with British identities in the context of the Cold War. Throughout, the ways these identities and experiences intersected and resulted in feelings of nuclear anxiety, or other nuclear emotions, will be explored.

Section II: “Britain would sink”: Anxiety and ‘Britishness’ during the Cold War

Many participants recalled a feeling of British independence or pride when discussing the country’s role as a nuclear nation. Many of these accounts expressed a rejection of the American presence within British military bases. In 1963, Britain purchased the American Polaris missile system which was updated in the 1970s by the American Trident system.³⁸ In 1983, American Cruise and Pershing II missiles were placed in British and European military bases. This decision was generally poorly received by the British public, signified by the 70,000 strong peace camp at RAF Greenham and large-scale protests by CND during this period.³⁹ These weapons contributed to the British strategy of “nuclear deterrence”: the idea of deterring national threats through an implication of MAD.⁴⁰ As this section will explore, interviewees placed themselves into distinct groups when reflecting on Britishness and nuclear weapons: those who supported nuclear weapons, those who rejected them through the peace movement, and those who were indifferent and felt they could not change the international events around them.

William Stonewell was born in 1964 into a military family. He spent most of his childhood on airbases due to his father’s occupation as an RAF pilot. William followed this

³⁸ John Baylis and Kristian Stoddart, ‘The British Nuclear Experience: The Role of Ideas and Beliefs (Part One)’, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 23 (2012), 342.

³⁹ Barbara Harford and Sarah Hopkins, *Greenham Common: Women at the wire* (London: Women’s Press, 1984), 1-3.

⁴⁰ John Baylis and Kristian Stoddart, ‘The British Nuclear Experience: the role of beliefs, culture and status (Part Two)’, *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 23 (2012): 498.

same career initially, before training as a doctor. He moved to London in 1980 and remained there for most of his early adulthood. William overtly identified as “right-wing” (although “not as right-wing” as the rest of his family) and generally believed that Britain “should have nukes” and that “deterrence works.”⁴¹ During the interview, William recalled his feelings on the decision to place Cruise missiles in British airbases:

Well, after the [Second World] war we owed loads of money to America so a lot of land we gave to them to house their planes was to pay it off. I guess I understood why. [...] Some became mini-Americas though. I do think we should have them [nuclear weapons] but I don't understand why we can't develop our own. Why we have to borrow- buy them from America. I would rather we have our own.⁴²

William spoke calmly throughout his testimony, rarely breaking composure, even when discussing distressing themes such as nuclear war. He often cited documentaries or news stories to frame his experiences, tapping into popular themes of nuclear war. For example, he referenced watching a “Cold War documentary series” by CNN on YouTube and two undisclosed documentaries on “what happened in the Cuban Missile Crisis” and the “Chernobyl incident” respectively. Although not a documentary, William emailed me in 2019 asking if I had watched the “Chernobyl TV series” on HBO and gave me a book he had found interesting on nuclear accidents.⁴³ He spoke intelligently on Cold War matters throughout the interview, displaying a genuine interest in the historical period he had lived through and was acutely aware of its importance. Despite it being an example of extraordinary lived experience, when discussing his military past William spoke about his access to Cold War knowledge as if it were ordinary. He described how “most of what he knew as a child” was informed by stories his mother shared about his father. He commented that he “rarely” spoke to his father due to him “being away on duty” for much of William’s childhood.

⁴¹ Interview with William Stonewell, 18 February 2018.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ This book was Eric Schlosser, *Command and Control: The story of nuclear weapons and the illusion of safety* (London: Penguin, 2013).

William often referred to the opinions of his fellow British civilians, using pronouns such as “we” and “us” throughout his testimony. Occasionally, he would justify his opinions by adding that “other people felt the same way as him.”⁴⁴ In the extract described above, William invoked the collective identity of the British “we”, while using his specific RAF military knowledge of the American airbases to justify their placement through the debt of the Second World War.⁴⁵ Notably, William’s use of collective pronouns was most common when discussing Britain and other nations. For example, in a discussion about the collapse of the Soviet Union, William reflected on how “we” [Britain] always knew “they” [the Soviet Union] would end. He continued that although “we- everyone was affected by them and what was happening- the Cold War- we would win, we had to.”⁴⁶ Notes of anxiety and pride were palpable as he recalled this experience. In a period of elongated international tension, national pride wielded discursive power. These national feelings of “victory” and solidarity were notable throughout William’s testimony.

As William described air bases becoming “mini-Americas”, clear resentment marked the tone of his voice as he crossed his arms and shook his head in apparent frustration. This transparent desire for Britain to be an independent nuclear power continued in his memories of about the British nuclear weapons development:

Britain was still part of NATO, it was still like you know *the British empire*, it was still an important country in the world. We were a nuclear power, and I was *proud* of that. America and erm France you know they had their own nuclear weapons. I think they developed their own cos they wanted everything to themselves. Other countries just wanting a slice of the game. [...] We needed nuclear weapons. It was just unfortunate it was American ones. We shouldn’t have to rely on anyone else. I wouldn’t like it if it was just one country with them- like America or Russia. So, we need them.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Interview, Stonewell.

⁴⁵ This act of individuals actively constructing a collective through pronouns will be explored in chapter five.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Interview with William and Joyce Stonewell, 21 January 2018.

The imagery evoked by William depicted an independent and strong British nuclear nation. Feelings of pride were palpable in his testimony, demonstrating the ways national identity penetrated his memories. He stressed and lingered on the words of “empire” and enunciated his “pride” for his country. William often reflected on Britain’s role in the Second World War and cited other instances of “Britain’s involvement in the world” and “how these were something to be proud of.” Again, the collective terms of “we” (Britain) and “their” (‘other’ nations) are employed. William’s national identity is clear throughout his testimony as he often described the “inferiority” of Russian technology and the “stupidity” of American influence. Narratives of British power frequently coloured his memories, invoking a dimension of ‘the nuclear game’ motif and a genuine belief that nuclear weapons “could provide status and prestige” to British identity and international power.⁴⁸ In this narrative, Britain is made distinct from other countries, as they are ‘othered’ from the British nuclear weapons programme. William presented America as a “crutch” to British nuclear independence and recalled feeling “disappointed” that Britain never embarked on a sovereign nuclear programme again.

This othering continued in William’s perceptions of Russia as he recalled that “Russian nuclear control systems are not as good as ours.” Later in the interview, he affirmed that “without nuclear weapons, Russia would have invaded us.”⁴⁹ For William, nuclear anxiety was not related to the *existence* of nuclear weapons, but to *who* had them. This is demonstrated in the following exchange:

William: I wasn’t that worried about them.

Emily: So, you didn’t worry about nuclear weapons very much?

William: I think everyone generally was anxious about it. Nuclear weapons I mean. But Russia invading us was much more worrying, I think.

Emily: Was that something you worried about a lot?

⁴⁸ Baylis and Stoddart, ‘British Nuclear Experience (Part Two),’ 512.

⁴⁹ Interview, Stonewell.

William: Well like I said- Russian technology wasn't as good as ours. So yes. But because we had them [nuclear weapons] I knew they wouldn't invade. I was more worried about them having or causing an accident.⁵⁰

Despite often using collective pronouns when discussing his feelings about the Cold War, William acknowledges his opinions, contests others, and weighs up fears of a Russian invasion as more pressing than those about nuclear weapons. He later commented it would be “better red than dead” but he “still was anxious about a Russian invasion.” When asked about the prospect of nuclear war, he once again referred to a “fear of invasion” rather than one of nuclear holocaust. William assured me that “everyone” was anxious about this and affirmed that this “justified having them [nuclear weapons].”⁵¹ “Having nuclear weapons, unfortunately, means power” he solemnly reflected.

William's awareness of the Second World War informed his feelings about the British nuclear nation, despite not living through it himself. Douthwaite reaches a similar conclusion and suggests that the Second World War and the Cold War “worked reciprocally on civilians' feelings.” In particular, she found experiences within CDC and civilian defence were held by public expectations shaped by “the trials and victories of the Second World War.” In this way, the previous World War defined and altered the ways individuals outlined their experiences, emotions, and memories, much like how they used their contemporary self as a frame of reference.⁵² Joyce Stonewell, William's wife, reported a similar experience. Joyce was born in 1965 in Lincolnshire, moving to London in the early 1980s. She described her family as “not particularly political” but “strict.” Joyce studied History and French at university and spent most of her life working in human resources, taking time out in the early 1990s to care for her children. Joyce reflected how her “conservative parents” would “constantly” talk about the Second World War and admitted this “changed what she thought about war.” She continued

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 3.

that she and her family were “proud” of Britain, although as she got older “she cared less and less.” Like William, she reflected on how Britain “needed” nuclear weapons to “prevent another World War” from happening. When asked about how she imagined nuclear war, Joyce would often tag on the phrase: “like the Second World War”, using it as a frame of understanding to describe her experiences.

Joyce reflected upon similar memories of the ‘othering’ of Russia. She recalled how she felt that “Russia were the bad guys” and “Britain, back then, was an independent country” and “had to stay relevant.”⁵³ Joyce’s tone throughout this statement echoed the nationalist discourse that had emerged as part of the 2016 EU Referendum Leave campaign. During the British exit from the European Union, generally the media and press presented Britain as a lone island, using the motifs of the British Empire.⁵⁴ Joyce and her husband often presented a picture of a “strong” and independent” British nation that had “a lot of international power.”⁵⁵ However, Joyce later reported in the interview that she was “fearful of Brexit” and the “rise of nationalism going on today”, comparing it to how “it felt during the Cold War.”⁵⁶ She reflected that “nationalism and nuclear weapons probably don’t mix well.”⁵⁷ The ‘othering’ of the Soviet Union continued in seemingly mundane recollections as Mike Dalton, from Liverpool, recalled that during the Cold War, it was the sporting events he remembered the most such as “football and the Olympics. It was us against them. I could see just how different the Soviets were from us. That sticks in my mind.”⁵⁸ Similarly, Steve Hall found that the “Cold War entered his

⁵³ Interview with Joyce Stonewell, 18 February 2018.

⁵⁴ Daniel Boffey, ‘Empire 2.0: the fantasy that’s fuelling Tory divisions on Brexit’, *The Guardian*, 8 November 2018, accessed January 2021 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/nov/08/empire-fantasy-fuelling-tory-divisions-on-brexit>; Gary Younge, ‘Britain’s imperial fantasy has given us Brexit’, *The Guardian*, 3 February 2018, accessed January 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/03/imperial-fantasies-brexit-theresa-may>; ‘Boris is not Churchill and Brexit is not the Second World War’, *Sky News*, 31 July 2019, accessed January 2021, <https://news.sky.com/story/sky-views-boris-johnson-is-not-churchill-and-brexit-is-not-the-second-world-war-11773843>.

⁵⁵ Geoff Eley, ‘Memory and the historians: Ordinary life, eventfulness and the instinctual past’ in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*: xi-xiv; Noakes and Pattinson, ‘Cultural memory’, 18-19.

⁵⁶ Interview, Stonewell.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Interview with Mike Dalton, 3 May 2018.

cycling club” in “strange ways.” Often, he would be competing against Russian athletes and he reflected it was “like he was fighting the Cold War.”⁵⁹ In these extracts of memory, the nationalism of the Cold War intersected with everyday experience.

As they had for William, military backgrounds and memories of the Second World War influenced the perception of Britain for Frank Davies. Frank was born in 1945 outside of Glasgow and spent most of his life serving in the RAF as an airman. His family was “mostly military”, and he trained on both ground radio and engineering. He travelled around various airbases throughout his life before leaving the force and getting married. In the late 1990s, he settled in Yorkshire. Frank agreed that “nuclear deterrence worked.” He recalled serving on a Vulcan airbase and he “enjoyed the American presence” and it “reminded him of a good old-fashioned war.”⁶⁰ In this way, American and British agenda became entangled in the Cold War, as demonstrated in this recollection:

Frank: I can remember erm the night Kennedy got shot I was on duty and I had to go and call certain people out, only because the V-bombers were in. They were at the end of the runway and they count them like 1, 2, 3, 4 and they were all fired up and ready to go until the call off came down at probably around midnight on that- Erm and obviously we were scared shitless you know cos- this were the first time you had seen it for real. We have had operations, but you know they would be operations, but this wasn't. [pause] It was the real thing. But until they actually found out what had happened, they had no idea who killed Kennedy, so you know.

Jonathan: Yeah, they thought something bigger was gonna happen

Frank: Well yeah, they didn't know so it was just- it was just a matter of you know of that really. We just all sat there you know with the generators running and the rest of it until they called it.⁶¹

After this conversation, Frank stated that it was “important” that Britain was involved in these “American affairs” and that “it kept Britain influential.” As he recollected this memory, there was a clear note of pride for his involvement. Within the context of the interview, he counted down the launching of the Vulcan bombers. As he told me how it was the “real thing” he paused,

⁵⁹ Interview with Steve Hall, 8 February 2019.

⁶⁰ Interview with Frank Davies and Jonathan Scott, 22 October 2018.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

spoke dramatically, and leant forwards as he revealed the story to me. This dramatization of his life experience indicated the importance of his moment to him. Although he commented that he “was scared shitless”, Frank affirmed this was due to the “shock of it being the real deal” rather than a case of nuclear anxiety. When asked if nuclear war worried him, he responded: “No, but the Russians having them worried me.”⁶² Frank presented British ownership of nuclear weapons and participation in the Cold War with pride. It was *different* from the Russian possession of the same weapons.

This memory was central to his Cold War experience and he referred to it numerous times during our encounter. Frank often boasted to his interview companion and life-long friend, Jonathan Smith, about his “contributions to the Cold War”, remarking to Jonathan “what did you ever do for our country? [laughs].” Jonathan was born in 1949 in Yorkshire but spent most of his childhood in Glasgow. He met Frank “when he was a wee lad” and they remained lifelong friends. Their “shared love of history” inspired them to take part in the interview. Like Frank, Jonathan came from a military family and his father’s deployment took him to Germany for “some of his teenage years.” Jonathan batted aside Frank’s remarks and joked that Frank “never really did anything to help the Cold War effort anyway.”⁶³ He added that the Cold War was “worrying” but never “terrifying” as the “nuclear weapons programme was always there to protect them.”⁶⁴ For Frank and Jonathan, it was the continuation of the nuclear programme that ensured successful deterrence and the prevention of nuclear war.

The British possession of nuclear weapons did worry some interviewees. Irene Perkins was born in 1957 in Liverpool. She spent some time in South Africa as a child before returning to Liverpool in 1963. She worked in administration and was an “inactive” member of CND.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Irene was one of four siblings and often felt her parents “sheltered her” from the “real world.” She married in 1979 and had a daughter shortly after. A few years later she divorced and married Stuart Perkins, whom she was interviewed with. Irene felt she was always “at odds” with her parents over the peace movement during the Cold War. She remembered how Cold War tensions “worried” her:

I remember one particular day. It was in 1968. It sticks in my memory and we had gone out for a family picnic and we got home and the [*Liverpool*] *Echo* was lying on the porch and it read that the Russians had invaded Czechoslovakia. And my mum and dad seemed to get really really worried about that. You know. Cos the Russians you know were advancing. I must have been about eleven then. That made me start to be more aware and worried about what was going on.⁶⁵

Irene meticulously described her memories in detail, reading from a small black notebook in which she had written down her thoughts before the interview. She discussed dates and events which “stuck with her.” However, she often would lose composure when asked questions outside of what she had written down. For example, when asked about her memories of the Cuban Missile Crisis she commented that she “knew it had happened” but “couldn’t remember”, apologising to me about her lack of detail.

This appears to align with the conclusions Grant has drawn about how British civilians struggled to remember the Cold War. Irene was able to describe in detail her memories of particular news articles or her relationship with her parents, but questions about large and historically significant events often left her struggling to compose answers and providing vague responses.⁶⁶ These were not important events to her. Instead, mundane memories of “family picnics”, which framed her fears of “Russian invasion” were described as “notable.” Irene later recalled how the “Russian threat” was a real “cause of worry” for her parents and they “tried to explain it to her” when she was a child.⁶⁷ This motif of an “evil” or “aggressive” Russian

⁶⁵ Interview with Irene and Stuart Perkins, 15 June 2018.

⁶⁶ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 251.

⁶⁷ Interview, Perkins.

enemy defined Irene's sense of Britishness as she told me she felt that "we, Britain, had to be better" and "get rid of these weapons" as she reflected on her involvement in nuclear disarmament.

The interviewees all presented their lives and experiences as ordinary. One interviewee considered his Cold War experience as largely extraordinary. The Lord Peter Cattigan was a serving member of the House of Lords, born in 1939 and lived in London for most of his life. He trained to be a teacher, eventually becoming a headteacher. In the late 1970s, he changed careers and became an MP of the Conservative Party until 2010 when he became a Lord. Notably, he served under Margaret Thatcher during the 1980s but was a frequent rebel against her policies. Throughout her premiership, Thatcher supported the nuclear deterrent, and although Peter "often disagreed with her", he "supported the nuclear programme."⁶⁸ According to Peter, Britain having nuclear weapons was "necessary" to ensure a "top seat in NATO" and "control the Russian threat."⁶⁹ He reaffirmed that it "was very much us and them; "us", being Britain and the West, and "them", being the Soviets and the Soviet bloc."

Significant to Peter's memories was the German city of Berlin. After the Second World War, Berlin was split into West Berlin, controlled by the Allies (Britain, France, and America), and East Berlin, controlled by the Soviets. In 1961, a wall was built separating the two cities and it became symbolic of the Iron Curtain between the two contesting ideological sides.⁷⁰

Peter recalled visiting Berlin when he was elected MP:

Peter: Nothing was more clear of the divide between the two sides at the time than by what was going on in Berlin. I visited West Berlin and it was very western and I wanted to go to East Berlin to see the contrast and we had to go through Checkpoint Charlie, and I was detained for around two or three hours.

⁶⁸ George Guise, 'Margret Thatcher's influence on British science', *Notes and Records* 68 (2014): 301-309.

⁶⁹ Interview with The Lord Peter Cattigan, 30 July 2018.

⁷⁰ David Holloway, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Cold War in Europe', in *Imposing, Maintaining, and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain: The Cold War and East-Central Europe, 1945-1989*, ed. Mark Kramer and Vit Smetana (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 452.

Emily: How come?

Peter: Well, I wasn't carrying any weapons or anything [laughs] I hadn't done anything wrong. It was just an assertion of their [Soviet] power⁷¹

For Peter, the British nuclear nation was a political necessity to overcome the Soviet Union and “win” the Cold War. Unlike the other interviewees discussed thus far, Peter had access to political knowledge throughout the Cold War. He reflected upon his extraordinary trips abroad to “negotiate” during the period. His contacts with other politicians, Lords, and the Prime Minister allowed Peter to have an insider knowledge of the Cold War that other interviewees simply did not have. Despite this, Peter considered himself “an ordinary man” who simply had “extraordinary moments intersected in his life.” The Cold War was not presented as a war to be “won” but an “unfortunate matter of us and them.” He continued, “we, Britain, had to do what was right.”⁷²

What these interviews reveal is a clear, shared perception among several British civilians that nuclear weapons had become embedded into British national identity. The nuclear programme allowed the UK to preserve an influential international seat amongst the superpowers and ensured the maintenance of British influence. Notably, nuclear anxiety did not appear in conversations with Peter about *Britain's* nuclear weapons, only when considering the American, Russian, or French possession of them. This motif was frequently reflected in British nuclear culture, arguably framing the emotional experiences individuals recalled.

Throughout the Cold War, the trope of the “Russian enemy” was often depicted in culture. Many films explicitly presented the Soviet Union as a nuclear threat such as *Fail Safe* (1964), *WarGames* (1983), and *The Bedford Incident* (1965). This has continued in many contemporary imaginations of nuclear war and the Cold War such as *By Dawn's Early Light* (1990) and the *James Bond* franchise (specifically *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977), *A View to a*

⁷¹ Interview with The Lord Peter Cattigan, 4 March 2019.

⁷² *Ibid.*

Kill (1985), and *Goldeneye* (1995) series).⁷³ In 2018, *Mission Impossible: Fallout* depicted tensions over stolen plutonium cores by individuals with Russian and Eastern European accents. In these films, America, Britain, and Western Europe were presented as “the good guys.”⁷⁴ Hogg writes that in 1958, *The Times* reported critically of the CND movement, associating its left-wing nature with the Communist Party. Articles commented on how they were “Pro-Russian” or “did not look English.”⁷⁵ These cultural motifs became interwoven into British national identity. They manifested anxieties about what *other* countries could and might do with nuclear weapons, shaping individual perceptions of their own national identities. These tropes of “us against them” defined the British civilian experience in these testimonies and were interlinked with feelings of anxiety around the future, war, and invasion.

Conversely, many of those involved in the anti-nuclear movement tended to present a very different view of the British nuclear nation. Within this community, the British pursuit of nuclear weapons programmes was rejected, seen as something which contributed to the heightening of Cold War tensions. Many activists presented the Soviet Union, or at least its civilians, as victims who needed to be protected by Britain. Carole Fraley and Susan Hodges-Walker were both members of CND and from London. Susan was born in Wakefield, New Zealand in 1936 and lived there for most of the Second World War. She was “lucky enough” to travel around the world “thanks to her father’s work in the UN.” She identified herself as a Quaker and joined numerous peace groups such as CND, PAX Christi, Collateral Damage, and Amnesty International. Carole was born in 1951 in London and lived there her whole life, only briefly relocating to Doncaster to complete teacher training. Following the birth of her

⁷³ Christoph Laucht, ‘Britannia Rules the Atom: The James Bomb Phenomenon and Postwar British Nuclear Culture’, *The Journal of Popular Culture* 46(2) (2013): 358-377.

⁷⁴ Tony Shaw, *British Cinema and the Cold War: The State, Propaganda, and Consensus* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 3.

⁷⁵ Hogg, *Nuclear Culture*, 121.

daughter, she joined CND and was “sort of active.” She joined Collateral Damage and “hosted many events” but often felt she “wasn’t as active as her peers.”

Both women reported feelings of sympathy toward the Soviet Union. Susan had family from Russia. Through them, she “knew Russia as a people” and always had “scepticism of being told ‘boom boom The Russians’.” Her onomatopoeia of “boom boom” referred to the nuclear weapons the USSR possessed. “At the time, the Russians were presented as trigger-happy military criminals who would press the button and it could happen anytime” she commented, scoffing and shrugging with frustration afterwards. “I just got sick of hearing it”, she added. Likewise, Carole recalled how she felt when she learned about the atomic bombing of Japan in school:

It seemed to me that the Americans and Britain wanted it to happen to see what would happen. You know experimental almost. To see what happens when you do. And now all those with failing health and deformed babies. All swept under the carpet. Russian people must have been so scared.⁷⁶

Carole and Susan rejected the ideology of the British nuclear nation, commenting that it was “responsible” for causing fear to the civilians of the Soviet bloc. Carol, unlike the other interviewees discussed so far, considered the feelings of the “Russian people” rather than a vague Russian entity or a military term. Her empathy was palpable in her narrative. I further inquired how they felt about people seeing the Soviet Union as an “evil empire”, to quote the American President Ronald Reagan’s infamous speech in 1983, and Susan and Carole both responded with “angry.”⁷⁷ Carole continued: “and sadness. People just don’t understand.” This alluded to the intermingling of nuclear *emotions* in their recollection, as anxiety about the “uncertainty of the Cold War” cross-sectioned with feelings of anger and sadness.

⁷⁶ Interview with Carole Fraley and Susan Hodges-Walker, 24 April 2018.

⁷⁷ Benjamin Fischer, ‘A Cold War Conundrum: The 1983 Soviet War Scare’, Central Intelligence Agency, 1997, accessed May 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/a-cold-war-conundrum/source.htm>

Frequently their “left-wing” and “progressive” political stance appeared to shape their national identities as they rejected “right-wing nationalism” and “political hatred.” To Carol and Susan, Britishness *could* represent “hope and peace” but unfortunately “it was never like that.” They framed their British identity as separate from those who “supported this ridiculous military spending.” Carol reflected that as a teenager, she often “felt embarrassed” to be British and “be a part of what it represented.”⁷⁸ Susan in particular recalled feeling that she was “in the minority” and that “everyone else seemed to hate the Soviet Union.”⁷⁹ For these women, Britain and Britishness meant very different things throughout their Cold War experience. Carole and Susan’s nuclear anxiety was not about a Russian attack. It was connected to a desire to disarm.

Carol and Susan were not alone in feeling this way. Rosie Stanford from Liverpool, who was also a member of CND, recalled how during the Cold War she would lend her home out to women who lived in the Soviet bloc to “try and educate people here [in Britain] about what it is really like.” She recollected how she felt that the “British nuclear programme was irresponsible.”⁸⁰ Rosie angrily told me how “deterrence wouldn’t always work” and “innocent people are at risk.” She reflected on the “danger of nationalism” and its “contributions to the continuation of the Cold War.”⁸¹ She stated that nuclear weapons were a “violation” of democracy and “could easily go wrong”, citing the Cuban Missile Crisis as a “near-total nuclear war.”⁸² Andrew Moore was also a member of CND and echoed these sentiments, recalling how he felt that nuclear weapons “had become part of [British] national identity. It was all ‘Oh look I’m a big boy. But it wasn’t security, it was insecurity.’”⁸³ These feelings were common and appear in other oral history scholarship. Hogg writes that one woman in Liverpool reported she felt “horrified” by nuclear weapons. An interviewee, Doris, recalled she felt “ashamed to be

⁷⁸ Interview, Fraley and Hodges-Walker.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Interview, Stanford.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Interview, Moore.

English” and be “a part of” the nuclear weapons programme. Another woman, Vera, said she “was patriotic before” but was “horrified” by the “British involvement” in nuclear weapons development.⁸⁴ In testimony outside of my own, some civilians rejected a British national identity connected with the military and nuclear weapons. Instead, they hoped for a rejection of the nuclear state and that Britain would participate “in the war by becoming a beacon of hope rather than a contributor of war and fear.”⁸⁵ These individuals rarely reported feelings of pride in their country. Nuclear weapons intersected with British national identity, but its impact on individual experience and emotions was not universal. There were those who supported nuclear weapons and those who rejected them through the peace movement, and this respectively shaped national identities, opinion, and experience.

Notably, for many who remembered the Second World War, the British-American production of nuclear weapons and the subsequent attack on Japan was perceived as positive. Andrew recalled that he “thought nuclear bombs were a good thing” because “he was just happy the war was over.”⁸⁶ Peter Stanford, also a CND activist alongside his wife Rosie, felt the same, commenting that when the atomic bombs were dropped he felt “safe” and was just “glad it [the war] had finally ended.”⁸⁷ Both individuals later confessed that as they had gotten older, they realised that “they could be used to start a Third World War.” Peter added that this “terrified him more than anything.”⁸⁸ In this way, the Second World War informed their perceptions of the British nuclear nation and national identity. Cheryl Lincoln was born in 1933 and lived just outside Liverpool for most of her life. She briefly moved to Wolverhampton in the 1950s and worked as a secretary for British politician Enoch Powell. She returned to Liverpool after six years. She worked as a teacher for the rest of her career and her husband worked in the military.

⁸⁴ Hogg, *Nuclear Culture*, 68-69. Interviews cited: Interview with Barbara, conducted by Sarah Hewitt, 2011; Interview with Doris, conducted by Sarah Hewitt, 2011; Interview with Vera, conducted by Sarah Hewitt, 2011.

⁸⁵ Interview, Stanford.

⁸⁶ Interview, Moore.

⁸⁷ Interview with Rosie, Peter, and Tracy Stanford, 16 April 2018.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

She told me that “in those days you looked after each other” after a bombing attack but in a nuclear war “there would be no one there to help you.” She fondly and nostalgically told me her memories of her youth in the Second World War such as hiding in Anderson Shelters, her neighbour stealing coal, and a German pilot crashing his plane not far from where she lived. She described in detail her “neighbourhood community” and the different ways they “looked out for each other.” When asked about the Cold War, Cheryl’s tone became markedly sadder as she considered how different a nuclear war would be from her Blitz experience. The cultural memory of the Blitz is often one of pride and perseverance and was often used to imagine what nuclear war might be like.⁸⁹ Her proud national identity, highlighted by her enthusiasm and joy of a “British victory” in World War Two, was visibly jolted as she quietly told me that in nuclear war “no one could win.”⁹⁰

Opinions on the British pursuit of a nuclear weapons programme and the Soviet Union resulted in a greater divide between the identities of those who were ‘pro’ and ‘anti’ nuclear, shaping perceptions of national identity on both sides. Andrew Moore recalled when he participated in peace conferences in Britain and America in the 1980s:

I would go and do these talks. Talks on peace and for CND and against atomic weapons. And every now and again I would arrive, and someone would say to me, oh you must be the leader of the British Communist Party. You must be a communist. And I would think ‘what, no what has CND got to do with communism’ but quite a lot to those who didn’t agree with us it seemed. In fact, once a reporter called me a pseudo-communist. What does that even mean?⁹¹

Throughout the Cold War, CND was accused of being a ‘communist sympathiser’ group for rejecting nuclear weapons and expressing empathy for the Soviet Union.⁹² Although the group did have close ties with the Communist Party, it struggled with separating *British* communism

⁸⁹ Jones, ‘Cold War Fears’, 258.

⁹⁰ Interview with Cheryl Lincoln, 1 May 2017.

⁹¹ Interview, Moore.

⁹² Paul Byrne, ‘The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: The resilience of a protest group’, *Parliamentary Affairs* 40(4) (1987): 517-535.

and *Soviet* communism. George Branco, from Cardiff, and vice-president of CND recalled: “Everyone was out calling us communists because we wanted to get rid of them [nuclear weapons] and wanted to educate them about what it was really like in Russia. I mean I was actually a member of the Communist Party but that’s beside the point. It wasn’t like Soviet communism. People always focused on that rather than the actual points I was trying to make.”⁹³ George reassured me of his British citizenship *despite* his membership to the Communist Party as his political stance was “different” from that of the Soviet Union. Paul Byrne demonstrates how few CND members were actually involved in the Communist Party, but this did not prevent the negative attitudes towards both the Communist Party and CND across Britain.⁹⁴ For civilians like George, his national identity was challenged by the popular “anti-USSR trope.” His nationalism intersected with a “strong British pride”, a “respect for Russia”, and his “belief in communism.” His national identity was complex due to the “strength of his British pride” and his “association with the perceived enemy.”⁹⁵

Others in the peace movement recalled a feeling of being rejected by others in their local community. Margaret Laver recalled how in 1983 she asked a question to her local MP about nuclear weapons:

Most people in my community were Conservative. There was a question-and-answer session with your prospective Conservative— your Conservative candidate and I thought, oh great I’ll go along. It was a question-and-answer session, so I asked a question about nuclear weapons. It was when Cruise missiles were going to be deployed, and there was lots of, you know, I was aware that, that in my opinion, there was a lot of duplicity going on about all this. And so, I stuck my hand up and asked a question about nuclear, the Cruise missiles, and everybody- I was at the back of the room, everybody turned round like - How dare you ask a question!⁹⁶

Like George and Andrew, Margaret found her CND identity conflicting with others in the local community, changing their perceptions of British national identity and how nuclear weapons

⁹³ Interview with Charlie Yorke, George Branco, and Lucy and Rory Marking, 10 July 2018.

⁹⁴ Byrne, ‘Nuclear Disarmament’, 523.

⁹⁵ Interview with Charlie Yorke, George Branco, and Lucy and Rory Marking, 11 July 2018.

⁹⁶ Interview with Margaret Laver, recorded by Ambleside Oral History Group, 28 October 2008.

was encompassed within it. Many individuals who rejected nuclear weapons and actively protested felt British “pro-nuclear” opinion was “foolish”⁹⁷, “daft”⁹⁸, and “stupid.”⁹⁹ For those who resisted nuclear weapons, nuclear anxiety became intrinsically tied to British national identity through the rejection of British nuclear weapons and its attachment to national security. It was the *British* possession of nuclear weapons which caused anxiety.

This rejection of British nuclear weapons was also tied to feelings of hope and morality, which formed the emotional community of the anti-nuclear movement. Irene Perkins recalled feeling that “Britain having nuclear weapons wasn’t right” and that “we [Britain] should do better.” In this way, a desire for Britain to represent what Irene perceived as “good” and “right” was tied into how she perceived and felt about her country.¹⁰⁰ This feeling was shared across the testimony of those involved in CND. Likewise, Cheryl, although not a member of CND but identified as “left-wing”, told me how she would feel “guilty forever” if it was Britain who “dropped one of those things” and “killed innocent people.”¹⁰¹ Within these experiences, individuals presented themselves as “different” from the norm, rejecting feelings of pride towards nuclear weapons and highlighting a shared feeling of “hope that Britain could be something better” forming emotional communities civilians would identify with.¹⁰² Hope became a way to idealise the community and formed a righteous nationalism, distinct from the nationalism of those who supported the nuclear arms race.¹⁰³

For many interviewees, the perception of the destruction of the nuclear state in the Cold War was something which was “not worth” worrying about, as it would result in the end of

⁹⁷ Interview with Yorke, Branco, and Marking.

⁹⁸ Interview, Moore.

⁹⁹ Interview, Stanford.

¹⁰⁰ Interview, Perkins.

¹⁰¹ Interview, Lincoln.

¹⁰² Interview, Perkins.

¹⁰³ Christopher Hill, 'Nations of peace: Nuclear Disarmament and the Making of National identity in Scotland and Wales', *Twentieth Century British History* 27(1) (2015): 28.

Britain itself. Cheryl Lincoln's identity as a schoolteacher and a mother was central to her narrative as she spent much of her interview worrying about "the future of children."¹⁰⁴ In a second interview she recalled:

Cheryl: My husband, he was in the forces you see.

Emily: Did he ever talk about nuclear weapons?

Cheryl: Well yes, he did worry about it. Yeah, he did, but you see, I think people, ordinary people like me, people who have never been in the forces or anything. We couldn't do anything about it anyway.¹⁰⁵

Cheryl disassociates herself from her husband, stating that she had a different experience from him. Cheryl resigned herself to not "having any power" to change the "direction the world was heading in."¹⁰⁶ She continued that in her youth, she "tried to ignore it" and "always turned off the news when they talked about the [nuclear] bombs." In her words, she as an "ordinary person" could not do anything so she just had to get on with it.

This view was echoed by George McEwan, an engineer, born in 1945 in Lincolnshire and moved to Glasgow as an adult. He married his wife, Alice, in the 1960s and they had two children. He was "interested in the RAF" due to his father's "career in the RAF", despite his mother "having a fear of German planes." Alice was born in Glasgow in 1946 and worked as a teacher. She often visited Lincolnshire to see George's family. She recollected that her "conservative parents" were often "worried about nuclear war." George recalled that he felt nuclear weapons were "somebody else's problem." Alice agreed with him, commenting that all "ordinary people could do is run away when it happens, I guess."¹⁰⁷ Alan Hall, born in 1942 and also from Glasgow, reported the same feelings, commenting "there was no point worrying about it. It was up to the politicians to sort it."¹⁰⁸ Alice Fallon, an accountant born in 1943 from

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Cheryl Lincoln, 4 December 2017.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Interview with George and Alice McEwan, 25 October 2018.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Alan Hall, 15 April 2019.

Belfast, recalled “the Cold War and nuclear war passed me over a bit. I had other things to worry about and I could not change anything anyway.”¹⁰⁹ George Cox was born in 1958 just outside of Belfast. He was a single child and completed a psychology degree at Queens University. He worked as a therapist for the rest of his career. He married Jessica Cox as a teenager and had a daughter in the 1980s. In the interview, George stated that he “could do one of two choices. Worry about it [nuclear war] or not worry about it. I can’t make any other decisions about whether or not it happens so that’s that.”¹¹⁰ This resignation and indifference was presented as distinct from those who “supported the bombs” and those who “resisted them.” Instead, these individuals “did their best to ignore it” and tried to “tune out the looming threat.”¹¹¹

What these interviews reveal is that many individuals, rather than allowing nuclear anxiety to affect their daily lives, acknowledged their distance from national issues and their status as ‘outsiders’ in the nuclear state. Even those involved in military and political careers found their emotions at the mercy of accepting the nuclear threat. These individuals seemed to exert a feeling of what Tara Zahra has called “national indifference” or an “imagined non-community.”¹¹² If supporters of nuclear weapons placed themselves into an emotional community of pride and anti-nuclear individuals associated with one of hope, these civilians found themselves in one of indifference. These emotional communities differed on how they defined and assessed nuclear weapons as valuable or harmful and the modes of emotional expressions they expected, tolerated, or deplored. All of these intersected with feelings of nuclear anxiety in some form: anxiety about a Russian nuclear attack, anxiety about British possession of nuclear weapons, or an acceptance of such fears and resignation that they had no

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Alice Fallon, 1 February 2019.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Jessica and George Cox, 1 August 2018.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Tara Zahra, ‘Imagined Non-communities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis’, *Slavic Review* 69(1) (2010): 93-95.

power to stop a possible nuclear war.¹¹³ In this way, some individuals did not link their national identities with the Cold War, instead of accepting their lack of control, status as a civilian, and “just got on with it.”¹¹⁴

Lifton theorised that those directly affected by nuclear weapons often went through a process of “psychic numbing”, or denial, as a coping strategy for nuclear war, or the potential of it. However, unlike those directly affected by the nuclear attack in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, British civilians did not seem to actively deny the threat.¹¹⁵ Crucially, however, civilians in Britain have not experienced nuclear attack as a national experience, likely resulting in less of a need to deny the threat.¹¹⁶ As previously explored, civilians acknowledged that they would “be vaporised”¹¹⁷ and “Britain would be destroyed.”¹¹⁸ These statements were spoken frankly with little visible distress. Often, participants would describe the destruction of Britain in a nuclear attack in a very ‘matter-of-fact’ way. All interviewees, regardless of their political or ideological stance on nuclear weapons, accepted that nuclear war would result in the “end of the British nation.”¹¹⁹ Instead, civilians did their best to “just get on with things.”¹²⁰ This was either done by “trying to ignore it”¹²¹ or “trying to protest it” and “do something about it.”¹²² Civilians accepted their nation as a potential nuclear target and did not deny the possibility of a nuclear attack. Instead, their everyday lives took precedence over feelings of nuclear anxiety of the destruction of their home country, or they took up to try and protect it.

Although anxieties about nuclear war can be deemed part of collective British identity within the testimony collected for this project, their British national identity and its relationship

¹¹³ Rosenwein, ‘Worrying’, 842.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Mike Dalton, 7 February 2018.

¹¹⁵ Robert Lifton, *Connection: On death and the Continuity of Life* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1979), 173.

¹¹⁶ Schwebel, ‘Reality’, 521.

¹¹⁷ Interview, Davies and Scott.

¹¹⁸ Interview, Fraley and Hodges-Walker.

¹¹⁹ Interview, Stonewell.

¹²⁰ Interview, Lincoln.

¹²¹ Interview, Stonewell.

¹²² Interview, Stanford.

with nuclear weapons can be considered diverse and appeared to form into three distinct emotional communities: those who supported nuclear weapons and for whom it became part of their national identity, those who rejected this perception through the peace movement, and those who were indifferent and felt they could not change the international events around them.

Section III: Local and urban nuclear imaginations: Scottish, English, Welsh, and Northern Irish experiences

Although there were numerous trends and patterns in feelings surrounding the British nation, these narratives diverged when participants considered their *regional* national identities and their perceptions of the city space. Interviewees provided reasons why the city or region they lived in was a likely nuclear target. More ominously, many interviewees expressed *hope* that if there was nuclear war their city would be targeted, so they would not have to live on after the nuclear apocalypse. When thinking about the imagined nuclear conflict, interviewees were neutral in delivery and seemed to freely imagine the end of their lives, their city, and of Britain. Interviewees did not consider limited nuclear warfare, often stating that nuclear war would mean “the end of everything.”¹²³ Furthermore, throughout the interviews, interviewees recalled distinct cultures, opinions, and feelings surrounding the British nation-state depending on their regional identity. These examinations of urban and regional nuclear anxiety reveal the diverse feelings and experiences across Britain during the Cold War.

The majority of nuclear history historiography has generally treated Britain as a single homogenous entity. Each regional nation of Scotland, England, Northern Ireland, and Wales had their own imaginations and relationships with nuclear technology, and this ultimately shaped their national identities. National identity is a construction of collective existence in a

¹²³ Interview, Stonewell.

particular place, often created by ‘binary oppositions’, the notion that nations are defined as what they are *not* rather than what they *are*.¹²⁴ It is a sense of belonging, and often is the most defining identity in a person’s construction of themselves, particularly in times of war and the mesh of nation and community become reinforced by a common enemy.¹²⁵ Natia Tevzadze presents the view that national identity can be formed by a deviating or distinct culture. She argues that nations exist as communities that are united by national culture rather than historical origins, boundaries, language, or religion.¹²⁶ Johann Bluntschli expands upon this by suggesting that nation is a political idea formed from a society that is created through a community, united through common cultures and accordingly seeks statehood and international recognition.¹²⁷ Thus, nations clutch at the independence of their own identity, desiring their own recognition internationally. Each of the four nations within Britain has its own identity, which co-exists within the larger identity of Britain. Nuclear weapons and the Cold War not only profoundly shaped British national identity but affected regional identities and perceptions. Nuclear anxieties and broader emotional responses to the Cold War were similarly moulded by these identities.

Numerous historians have explored the spatial and urban experiences of the Cold War. Many have highlighted and argued for the existence of unique nuclear experiences within urban spaces and the inner city. Erin Singer writes about the shifting urban policy and experience within the city of Baltimore, illuminating how nuclear civil defence affected life “at a neighbourhood level.”¹²⁸ Hogg reveals Liverpool’s nuclear experience, with a particular focus on its city-as-target status and production of local nuclear culture.¹²⁹ Many historians have

¹²⁴ Peter Mandler, ‘What is “National Identity?”: Definitions and Applications in modern British historiography’, *Modern Intellectual History* 3(2) (2006): 272.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Tevzadze, ‘National Identity’, 437-438.

¹²⁷ Johann Bluntschli, *The Theory of the State* (Kitchener, Ont.: Baroche, 2000), 98.

¹²⁸ Eric Singer ‘Civil Defence in the city: federal policy meets local resistance in Baltimore, 1957-1964’, *Urban History* 42(4) (2015): 548.

¹²⁹ Hogg, ‘Nuclear Resistance’, 585.

focused on the specific experiences of Cold War cities such as Berlin in Germany, which was divided during the Cold War, and Hiroshima in Japan, which underwent a process of structural recovery after an atomic attack in 1945.¹³⁰ The city, therefore, became entangled with the Cold War in various ways. Anti-nuclear groups often used city spaces for protests, such as London and Cardiff before heading to nuclear infrastructures.¹³¹ In the 1980s, many local city councils declared themselves as ‘nuclear-free’ resisting the national governmental continuation of the nuclear weapons programme. Nuclear culture also permeated representations of the city, such as the British films *Threads* (1986) and *The War Game* (1965) which depicted urban experiences of nuclear war.¹³² Furthermore, the images of the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki haunted those who imagined their own urban homes becoming a target in a nuclear attack.¹³³ Within these depictions, the city was an “un-survivable” environment during a nuclear war. It was an unthinkable and difficult future to imagine, and these depictions of the nuclear holocaust framed the testimony.¹³⁴ A 1980s British civil defence pamphlet, *Protect and Survive*, contained these deeply set assumptions about the city and survivability. Inside the pamphlet and accompanying videos, the images of houses are depicted as detached, rural houses. At the very least, they are the suburbs of a city. For those living in flats and built-up areas, the pamphlet suggests: “your local authority will be able to advise you.”¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Thomas Fleming, *Berlin in the Cold War: The Battle for the Divided City* (New York: Berlinica Publishing LLC, 2010); Anna von der Goltz, ‘Other ‘68ers in West Berlin: Christian Democratic Students and the Cold War City’, *Central European History* 50(1) (2017): 86-112; Ran Zwigenberg, ‘The Atomic City: Military Tourism and Urban Identity in Postwar Hiroshima’, *American Quarterly* 68(3) (2016): 617-642.

¹³¹ Christoph Laucht and Martin Johnes, ‘Resist and Survive: Welsh protests and the British nuclear state in the 1980s’, *Contemporary British History* 33(2) (2018): 226-245; Hazel A. Atashroo, ‘Weaponising peace: the greater London Council, cultural policy and GLC peace Year 1983’, *Contemporary British History* 33(2) (2018): 170-186.

¹³² Dan Cordle, ‘That’s going to happen to us. It is: *Threads* and the Imagination of Nuclear Disaster on 1980s Television’, *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 10(1) (2013): 75.

¹³³ Hogg, *Nuclear Culture*, 99.

¹³⁴ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 229-230.

¹³⁵ John Preston, ‘The Strange Death of UK Civil Defence Education in the 1980s’, *History of Education* 44(2) (2015): 227.

According to Hogg, many cities in the UK viewed themselves as a “city-as-target” during the Cold War and this perception of the nuclear obliteration of urban spaces became simultaneously a humorous and anxious motif in Britain. Hogg demonstrates that many texts, such as *London after the Bomb* (1982) and Duncan Campbell’s *War Plan UK* (1983), employed “visual motifs such as concentric circles over urban centres to represent the potentially vast



Figure 1.2 ‘Flashpoint Manchester’, *Daily Mirror*, 6 November 1980.

range of destruction.”¹³⁶ The local and national press depicted similar images of the urban space being a target in nuclear war (Figure 1.2). In this way, journalistic narratives deployed the “traditional vocabulary of the nuclear age”, underlining the imminent possibility of nuclear attack. Concentric circles, alongside the image of the mushroom cloud, served as confirmation of the “psycho-spatial nuclearization of the city.”¹³⁷ This depiction appeared on television. For example, the 1982 film *Q.E.D.: A Guide to Armageddon*, broadcast by the BBC, depicted a nuclear scenario where London was the target. The film portrayed “repetitive images of the city and indications of the blast radius” which once again utilised the familiar and frightening

¹³⁶ Hogg, *Nuclear Culture*, 137; Owen Green, *London after the Bomb: What a Nuclear Attack really means* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); Duncan Campbell, *War Plan UK: The truth about civil defence in Britain* (London: Burnett, 1982).

¹³⁷ Hogg, *Nuclear Culture*, 139-140.

symbols of concentric circles.¹³⁸ *A Guide to Armageddon*, like *Threads*, invited the viewer to imagine the possibility of the unthinkable in the familiar space of the city.¹³⁹

The city-as-target became a common motif, in both official and unofficial narratives. Consequently, many city-dwelling Britons realised that the present-day survival and flourishing of the city were simultaneously underwritten and radically threatened by their identity as a nuclear target. As the interviews reveal, nuclear anxiety became entangled with perceptions of the city space. Notably, although the testimony points to civilians maintaining this imagination of a city-as-target, many of them expressed acceptance of this reality. Imaginary projections of nuclear attack were based on the rational realisation of the possibility of future annihilation. As this section will explore, the individual nuclear experience was formed by each individual's own, physical spatiality within the city and the regional nation in which they lived. These formed distinct emotional communities within each city and region as specific emotional and cultural norms were formed and accepted across the collective spaces.

Scotland

Scottish identity became entangled with nuclear weapons due to the placement of nuclear submarines in Faslane, near Glasgow in the 1960s. Furthermore, the Scottish population's desire for independence, or at least devolution of power, was rejected in 1979 and this became intertwined in the Scottish nuclear issue.¹⁴⁰ During the 1980s the local press in Edinburgh, the *Edinburgh Evening News*, reported anxieties such as “£8000m – that's the price of peace”, “Trident is the target”, and “Focus on Scots in Trident Battle.”¹⁴¹ Articles outwardly and aggressively rejected Britain's weapons in Scotland in articles such as “Britannia rules – no

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 146.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁰ Malcom Chalmers and William Walker, *Uncharted Waters: The UK, Nuclear Weapons, and the Scottish Question* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001), 1.

¹⁴¹ £8000m – that's the price of peace', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 2 April 1980; 'Trident is the target', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 25 May 1984; 'Focus on Scots in Trident Battle', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 18 January 1983.

way” and “Souvenir of Britain’s H-bomb test”, each of which expressed anxieties over the risks of nuclear war caused by Britain’s placement of weapons in Scotland.¹⁴² The *Glasgow Herald* in 1980 reported on the “success” of 80mph nuclear transport crashes, which were tested in New Mexico. The report discussed the transport routes for nuclear material in Scotland and solemnly concluded with “we are still being asked to have faith” in the safety of nuclear transportation.¹⁴³ The local press, although perhaps more representative of a community than the national press, is not entirely illustrative of the local population. However, press surveys can provide insight into a section of the national and local opinion and the views that a community makes, or at least reads, in public. Public opinion “is some expression on a controversial point.”¹⁴⁴ By this assumption, as newspapers seek to sell their product, the press is a contributor to and is reflective of public opinion. These tensions in Scotland were exacerbated further by the strong presence of the Scottish National Party (SNP), a political group that advocated both Scottish independence and freedom from nuclear weapons.¹⁴⁵ Just as Britain developed concerns that it had become a weapons base for America, the people of Scotland feared becoming a military base for Britain due to the building of Faslane to store British nuclear weapons and this increasing the chances of being a target in nuclear war.¹⁴⁶

Due to these anxieties, Scottish interviewees were often vocally anti-nuclear and anti-British. Alexander Campbell was born in 1938 in Glasgow and remained there his whole life. He was interested in politics from a young age and joined CND at university. He participated in an “uncountable” number of protests throughout his life and continues protesting today, most

¹⁴² ‘Britannia rules – no way!’, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 24 March 1982; ‘Souvenir of Britain’s H-bomb test’, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 23 January 1980.

¹⁴³ ‘80mph crash to prove safety of nuclear load’, *Glasgow Herald*, 10 January 1980.

¹⁴⁴ Richard Hodder-Williams, *Public Opinion and British politics* (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1970), 5.

¹⁴⁵ Ritchie, ‘Nuclear Identities’, 653.

¹⁴⁶ Juilis Komorowski, ‘The End of the Road for action against Trident? Scot’s law and the Trident programme’ in *Scotland and the Cold War*, ed. Brian P. Jamison (Glasgow: Bell & Bain, 2003).

recently lying underneath a vehicle transporting nuclear material in 2017. Alexander expressed a clear, and at times angry, anti-British narrative when discussing nuclear weapons in the UK:

I remember when Faslane was built. It's only a couple of miles from here. And the subs comin' in. They are *utterly* immoral weapons. A *war crime*. That's why we need independence to get these English nukes away from us Scots. You guys, you just leave them here 'cos you don't want to be near them. Well, neither do we. [pauses] Anyway, one day we'll leave, and you can have 'em back [laughs]¹⁴⁷

In this dialogue, Alexander's Scottish identity and my own identity as English or British were brought into the conversation, colouring the tone. The terms "us" and "you" were utilised frequently, as Alexander placed "British blame" upon me. In the beginning, he stressed his words, slowing them down and speaking loudly, conveying clear anger in his statement that it is "*utterly* immoral." As Hogg writes about oral history testimonies from Liverpool, individuals were "horrified and disgusted" by nuclear weapons, with one respondent reflecting on feelings of "guilt."¹⁴⁸ As Laucht and Johnes argue, often anti-nuclear groups, such as CND, became entwined with these wider moral and ethical concerns of the prospect of nuclear war.¹⁴⁹ Alexander's rejection of nuclear weapons as "immoral" interlinks with an opinion of the "immorality" of "English nukes" on "Scottish land." This resonates with Hill's argument that peace became significant in Scotland because "it allowed Scottish citizens to idealise their nation as moral and righteous" away from "immoral" England who threatened their sovereign power and participated in the arms race.¹⁵⁰

After reflecting on the immorality of nuclear weapons, Alexander paused and drastically changed his tone, laughing pleasantly. It seems Alexander composes himself here; firstly, allowing his passionate emotions through his memories and then recomposing himself

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Alexander Campbell, 7 November 2018.

¹⁴⁸ Hogg, *Nuclear Culture*, 68-69.

¹⁴⁹ Laucht and Johnes, 'Resist and Survive', 227.

¹⁵⁰ Hill, 'Nations of peace', 28.

as to apparently not insult me. I continued the dialogue and inquired about his experience in Glasgow CND:

Emily: So, was Scottish- or Glasgow- CND different to National CND?

Alexander: [pause] Yes. And it got worse as the Cold War went on. In fact, I think now, it's worse than ever. I remember, it was in the 1980s. [...] I can't remember. And we had a meeting with national CND, and I remember we were just banging our head against the tables. They couldn't see how significant it was to their cause what was happening in Scotland. They just don't have a clue. They don't understand what it's like, being so close to the bases. It's all fine to be protesting in London. But there aren't nukes there. There was always an alarming lack of understanding on how it affected Scotland. It's not just a question of NIMBY [Not in my Backyard], but it is a *fact* that we are being affected by it more than the English.¹⁵¹

The distinction between different national identities is highlighted by Alexander. The proximity of Faslane to Glasgow and the presence of Trident appears to have deeply affected the Scottish peace movement and their perception of the wider British anti-nuclear movement.¹⁵² Ian Welsh argues that nuclear technology became central to local and national opposition and feelings about locality. At a national level, nuclear technology was central to international power, but at a local level there was a rejection of technology perceived to be dangerous placed “in their backyard.”¹⁵³ As Hill writes, the possession of nuclear weapons in Britain, along with the expansion of the military-industrial complex in Scotland, “was regarded as a symbol of the subordination of the Celtic nations to Westminster.”¹⁵⁴ Alexander continued in his testimony that “the English couldn't take responsibly” for their own “weapons of mass destruction” and placed them in Scotland “to keep their immorality away from them.”¹⁵⁵ This anxiety about British bombs on Scottish soil was central to Alexander's experience of the Cold War, his sense of national identity, and his emotional responses.

¹⁵¹ Interview, Campbell.

¹⁵² Hill, 'Nations of peace', 1-2.

¹⁵³ Ian Welsh, 'The NIMBY Syndrome: Its Significance in the history of the Nuclear Debate in Britain', *The British Journal for the History of Science* 26(1) (1993): 17.

¹⁵⁴ Hill, 'Nations of peace', 29.

¹⁵⁵ Interview, Campbell.

Alexander's resistance to "English nuclear weapons" also seemed to conflict with others in the local population in Glasgow:

Emily: Did a lot of people work in Faslane?

Alexander: Yes. They just don't understand. I don't know how on earth they can reconcile with they are doing. Don't they think about their children? These things. That base. They can only keep going because people like them work there. It's like an enormous machine with millions of little cogs and things and it needs all those little cogs. Without them, it won't work, and the base won't work. Those people are part of the machine and they don't see that. They are as much to blame as the guy who pushes the button, and they don't see that.¹⁵⁶

According to Alexander, just as English people and English CND "didn't understand" the impact of nuclear weapons on Scotland, neither did the local Scottish civilians who worked at the Faslane nuclear base. Alexander's detailed and powerful imagination of the "millions of little cogs" in the "nuclear machine" points to the immorality of nuclear weapons. By describing them as part of a machine and trying to rationalise their own morality ("think about the children", "[...] how they can reconcile"), Andrew separates himself and his moral standing away from those who "enable" the nuclear arms race.

The 'anti-English' attitude towards nuclear weapons was not exclusive to Glasgow. The *Edinburgh Evening News* often referred to "them" or "those", referring to England, who "focus more on survival than prevention" of nuclear war, with a bitter tone.¹⁵⁷ Other reports commented that "too many English people take peace for granted", and that Scots needed to "defend their freedom if others will not", even implying that knowledge was hidden from Scotland by London.¹⁵⁸ As Ritchie argues, Scottish national identity and its relationship with nuclear weapons were largely defined by the "Scottish self" and the "Westminster other."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ 'Their fight for survival', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 18 July 1980.

¹⁵⁸ 'The peace they simply assume', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 31 May 1980 and 'Attack, the subject they're keeping quiet', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 1 February 1980.

¹⁵⁹ Ritchie, 'Nuclear Identities', 654.

The nuclear anxieties that Alexander experienced were inherently attached to his feeling of morality and powerlessness over “English nukes.”

This anti-British sentiment was echoed in John Whittaker’s memories of the Cold War. He was born in 1947 and resided in Glasgow for all his life before moving to the Isle of Bute in the 1990s. He joined CND in his teens but let his membership lapse while he worked abroad in the Balkans, Middle East, and Africa during the 1970s. He renewed his membership on his return to Scotland. He had family connections in Fife, Zambia, and the Balkans, and he was always “passionate about history and publishing.” During the interview, he recollected:

As long as I remember people hated the nukes in Faslane. No one wanted them there. I was aware of this from a very young age. Even in the late 1950s, I remember people talking about it. But by the 1980s, with Thatcher and Cruise and Trident. Everyone was against it. When I was a kid, around the 1960s maybe, I remember a group of children painted “No Polaris” on the school. That’s how active people were. I think it’s because it wasn’t just British weapons. They were American too. It was a form of American Imperialism and British authority over us.¹⁶⁰

According to John, “everyone” in Glasgow, including children and the elderly were involved in resisting the Faslane nuclear base. Like broader British national identity, John resisted the American influence on British nuclear weapons, later recalling “he worried we didn’t have true control of them [nuclear weapons].” Although John mentioned activism in his community in the 1950s and 1960s, he centred his memories of activism in the 1980s, specifically discussing the election of Thatcher and the arrival of Cruise missiles as a turning point.

These feelings were repeated in other testimony from Glasgow. Steve Haycock was born in 1968 in Manchester, moving to Glasgow as a teenager. He admitted he was “immersed in nuclear culture” throughout the Cold War, joining CND in the 1980s. Throughout his career, he worked for the CND Peace Education Programme and described himself as “very active” in the peace movement post-Cold War. He recalled that “in the 1980s people had a *real* emotional

¹⁶⁰ Interview with John Whittaker, 14 October 2018.

response to nuclear weapons in Scotland. Now people just ignore Faslane. It's just there.”¹⁶¹ Alan Hall was born in 1942 in Glasgow. Working as a genealogist, he was “particularly interested in local history” and although the Cold War “affected him”, it was the Second World War which “stuck in his memory.” He came from a military family and was married with children. Alan told me that he felt “angry” that “they [Britain]” had “put nukes on our land” but he “didn’t worry about it, because what could he do?”¹⁶² Nuclear weapons became entangled within Scottish national identity for these civilians. They permeated feelings about Scotland, Britain, and the rest of the world, even shaping the tone of the interview as my own ‘English’ identity conflicted with the interviewee’s sense of Scottishness. I became ‘them’ within these narratives as the emotive memories of the Cold War coloured the tone of the interviews.¹⁶³ At the time of the interviews, Britain had voted to leave the EU, although the Scottish vote had been predominately Remain. As a result, SNP received substantial popularity in the 2019 general election and Scottish nationalism increased. Subsequently, there have been calls for a second independence referendum (indyref2) so Scotland may remain part of the EU and break up the United Kingdom. The interviews I conducted in Scotland were altered by this context, leading to a change in attitudes and emotions. Furthermore, the nuclear question continued to haunt civilians in Scotland in 2018 as Alexander sarcastically put: “It won’t be long until you have your nukes back on your land.”¹⁶⁴

Glasgow’s proximity to the nuclear submarine base of Faslane shaped civilian attitudes and perceptions of the city space. Steve recalled the “sound of the air raid sirens which were regularly tested.” He told me that remembering this “certainly produces an emotional response in me - one of alarm, fear and bleakness.”¹⁶⁵ These sounds, which Steve told me “he will never

¹⁶¹ Interview with Steve Haycock, 21 February 2018.

¹⁶² Interview, Hall.

¹⁶³ Antoinette Errante, 'But sometimes you're not part of the story: oral history and ways of remembering and telling', *Educational Researcher* 29(2) (2000): 17.

¹⁶⁴ Interview, Campbell.

¹⁶⁵ Interview, Haycock.

forget”, symbolised the reality of nuclear war and the possibility of the destruction of his home due to the nearby nuclear submarine base. This anxiety about Glasgow becoming a nuclear target due to its proximity was echoed in John Whittaker’s testimony: “Between then and the 1960s I remember quite prevalently having nightmares about the bomb – being vaporised because we were so close.”¹⁶⁶ John describes the “dreams” and “nightmares” about the possibility of a nuclear attack. He reflected on the immediacy and “suddenness” of his possible death. Again, notable feelings of powerlessness over this “bleak future” were palpable as John reflected how “the worst part of it all was there wasn’t much you could actually do.” These imaginations of the “nuclear nightmare” were a common motif in nuclear culture and imply a feeling of nuclear anxiety which “haunted” individuals with depictions of the destruction of their homes. These imaginations were in the backs of their minds and were brought forwards into consciousness as they slept.¹⁶⁷

These nightmares and anxieties sometimes prompted individuals to take precautions. Alice McEwan’s family was more prepared than most for nuclear attack and recalled her parents “keeping rucksacks ready to go to the north of Scotland” to try and “escape” an attack. Her husband George commented afterwards that it would still “be futile” to run due to the “radius of those things.”¹⁶⁸ Alexander also recalled similar feelings about Glasgow’s proximity to Faslane: “[...] The base is right here. Next to us. ‘Cos Faslane is here, I guess we [Glasgow] would be hit first.”¹⁶⁹ Alexander lingered on his words as he reflected on “just how close” the nuclear base was to his “wonderful hometown.” Frank Davies mirrored this perception of living in Glasgow during the Cold War:

Frank: Yeah, like we knew about it and- we’re sat underneath the target you know. We’re the one on the bullseye you know. But I mean that were a lucky thing to be in one way because one minute you’d be alive and the next minute you would be thousands of atoms scattered all over the universe sort of thing so-

¹⁶⁶ Interview, Whittaker.

¹⁶⁷ Jones, ‘Cold War Fears’ 262.

¹⁶⁸ Interview, McEwan.

¹⁶⁹ Interview, Campbell.

Emily: So, you would rather be at the centre of it?

Frank: Oh yeah definitely. I wouldn't want to be on the outskirts, without a doubt.¹⁷⁰

For these residents of Glasgow during the Cold War, the proximity of Faslane shaped their experience and memories of the Cold War and their attitudes towards the possibility of a nuclear attack. As Catherine Eschle demonstrates within Faslane Peace Camp, there was a feeling of insecurity in everyday life within Glasgow during the early 1980s, due to the proximity of the base.¹⁷¹ Discourses in Glasgow were filled with uncertainty and anxiety regarding nuclear attack yet contained an adamant certainty that the city would be targeted first in the event of nuclear war.

Northern Ireland

The memories of the Cold War and nuclear weapons in Northern Ireland shaped national identity in various ways. The experience of 'The Troubles' between 1960 and 1998 shaped the memories and emotions of those living there. During The Troubles, Northern Ireland was caught within an "ethno-nationalist" conflict involving the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA). It had an ethnic and religious dimension, but the key issue was the constitutional status of Northern Ireland which was part of the UK.¹⁷² Northern Ireland had a "completely different framework" due to the IRA and this "affected its dynamics and experience during the Cold War."¹⁷³ This conflict was fought mainly through terror attacks and resulted in numerous civilian deaths. Subsequently, "conventional bombs" became more of a cause of anxiety for civilians than nuclear weapons.¹⁷⁴ Nuclear bombs simply became an extension of the bombs

¹⁷⁰ Interview, Davies and Scott.

¹⁷¹ Catherine Eschle, Nuclear (in)security in the everyday: Peace campers as everyday security practitioners, *Security Dialogue*, 49(4) (2018): 289. Eschle explores the history of the camp since its establishment in 1982, using oral history testimony gathered between 2014 and 2016.

¹⁷² John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, *Explaining Northern Ireland* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 18.

¹⁷³ Paul Dixon, 'Northern Ireland and the International Dimension: The End of the Cold War, the USA and European Integration', *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 13 (2002): 107.

¹⁷⁴ Bill McSweeney, *Ireland and the threat of Nuclear War* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1985), 1-11.

that were already present in the everyday lives of those in Northern Ireland. Colman O'Reilly was born in 1950 and lived in Belfast for most of his life. He worked in theatre and eventually moved to London in the late 1980s. He recalled:

Nuclear war felt very real and scary in my teenage years. I remember the idea of building a nuclear bunker and preparing for nuclear attack gave me nightmares. But in hindsight, maybe I wasn't that frightened. When I was an adult, nuclear war seemed to disappear into the background of IRA problems.¹⁷⁵

For Colman, nuclear anxiety was remembered as a genuine experience in his youth. Memories of nuclear bunkers and the "nightmares" of having to "quickly prepare for a nuclear war" revealed palpable anxiety and feelings of powerlessness. However, these were eclipsed by IRA fears. He continued: "It was just more affecting on a day-to-day basis. You couldn't go certain places and saw it everywhere in the news. It was frightening."¹⁷⁶

Alice Fallon was born in 1943 in Belfast. She completed a BA in Business Studies in 1964. She worked as an accountant for most of her life. Her father worked in the Home Office in the Second World War and her mother was a housewife. She described them as not particularly political but noted they always voted Conservative. Alice had connections in Kenya and moved to London in 1973, Germany in 1982, and returned to Belfast in 1985. Alice recollected that because of the IRA, the Cold War events and nuclear fears just "passed over her." Her life, "the business of it and moving around" meant she didn't really think about it but she "did think about the IRA a lot."¹⁷⁷ In contrast, one individual recalled being particularly affected by the conflict. Archie Merritt served in the Royal Observer Corps (ROC) in Belfast between 1972 to 1991. He served in Randallstown, Ballymena, and Limavady posts before being promoted to a group officer for monitoring posts in county Londonderry and Newtownstewart in County Tyrone. He told me:

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Colman O'Reilly, 7 January 2019.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Interview, Fallon.

Although the ROC had no involvement in The Troubles, we had to be careful we weren't mistaken for those brave people who did serve in the armed forces. So, we never travelled in uniforms for security from the IRA.¹⁷⁸

While Archie did remember feelings of anxiety while he was in the ROC, particularly when he was stationed at monitoring posts, the IRA and the anxiety of The Troubles stuck in his memory more profoundly. Unlike many other interviewees who would temporally refer to their memories as being within "the Cold War", Archie consistently placed his memories within the timespan of 'The Troubles', revealing that it was this period that shaped his experience more than the Cold War.

In October 2018, I interviewed a family from Belfast together: Jack, Wendy, and Adam Kelly. Jack was born in 1946 in Bangor but moved to Belfast in the 1960s. He worked in a factory and was briefly made redundant in the 1980s. He married Wendy in 1969. Wendy was born in 1948 but did not disclose where she was born. She met Jack in Belfast where she worked as an administrator in a government department. Their son, Adam, was born in 1970 in Northern Ireland. He "vaguely" was aware of the Cold War, but "IRA fears definitely stuck more in his mind." He works as a teacher. When asked about their memories of the Cold War, the IRA consistently appeared in the dialogue:

Emily: What do you remember about the Cold War.

Jack: Well, the IRA was a big thing. I always worried that somewhere near us would become a target. I knew someone who had their legs blown off from an IRA car bomb.

Adam: Yeah, it was still an issue when I was an adult. I didn't really think about the Cold War I guess back then.

Jack: Yeah, it was just the random attacks. [pause] I always worried about it turning into something more. Gettin' called up to fight and things.

Emily: What about nuclear war?

Wendy: Well, you couldn't really do anything about it anyway.

Jack: Yeah, and when I was young, I mean me and Wendy we knew each other for ages so I know you felt the same too. Well, when you're young you just feel

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Archie Merritt, 2 April 2018.

invincible from stuff like that. [pause] We didn't worry about nuclear bombs or talk about it much really. But the IRA that always sticks out in my mind. I just worried about how they were going to affect us. You know-

Wendy: Yeah, and when we had you [Adam] I worried more about it. I thought about protecting our family more than the Cold War.¹⁷⁹

The feeling of being “ordinary” and outside of the wider British nuclear nation is uncovered in this exchange. The family presented their narrative as an “ordinary” experience, reflecting on how they did “what any other family would have done.” When asked about their memories of the Cold War, all three family members reported ‘The Troubles’ as being a key period in their remembered experience. Although nuclear anxiety subtly entered the conversation (for example, “I was aware people were worried about nuclear weapons, it was in pop culture and music all the time in the Reagan years”) anxieties and fears about the threat of conventional bombs dominated their memories. Notably, feelings of powerlessness were palpable in the family’s testimony. Wendy reflected on a desire to protect her son in the event of a nuclear holocaust. In this way, a feeling of a lack of control about nuclear bombs (“There was nothing you could do anyway [pause]) and a sense of control during the IRA conflict (“You could check things, read the news, look under your car [...]”) was central to her narrative.¹⁸⁰

Jessica Cox was born in London to an Irish family and was the youngest of five siblings. She moved to Belfast as a child. She trained as a masseuse, meeting George, and marrying him in her early twenties. She “dreamed of moving away from the city” but “never achieved it.” She had a daughter in the mid-1980s. She admitted while she was “interested” in the peace movement, she never joined herself but recollected her eldest brother and sister being arrested while protesting. Jessica and George reported feelings of powerlessness and lack of control about their experiences of the Cold War. Jessica recalled:

I didn't worry about them [nuclear weapons] that much. I was involved in some peace movements and that made me feel like I was doing something about it, but I

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Jack, Wendy, and Adam Kelly, 23 October 2018.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

always knew I couldn't do much. At least with The Troubles, I could do more. You know, go certain places, not go certain places, check my bags and things, and keep an eye on the news. [pause] I felt more in control of that.”¹⁸¹

Like other interviewees, Jessica referenced a feeling of control when it came to fears about nuclear weapons in comparison to the Northern Irish conflict. Jessica's reflections on wanting to “do more” and not being able to “do much” alluded to how it was the physical act of being able to resist The Troubles that made her feel “in control.” Later in the interview, Jessica considered how the peace movement helped her “feel like she had some power” but ultimately her actions “didn't contribute much to stopping the arms race.” Jessica concluded that it did “help her feel better.”¹⁸² Like others who lived in Northern Ireland at the time, The Troubles impacted daily life. Nuclear anxiety became intertwined with anxieties surrounding the Northern Ireland conflict and the IRA for these civilians. This is further made evident in the local press in which the phrase ‘the bomb’ was used to describe “conventional bombs” and later used interchangeably with nuclear weapons.¹⁸³ Other newspapers coined the term ‘The Bomb’ to refer to the atomic or nuclear bomb, but this was rarely used in the *Belfast Telegraph*. These extracts reveal that The Troubles shaped individual memories, experiences, and emotional responses to the Cold War far more than nuclear weapons did in Northern Ireland.

Despite this, many interviewees still believed Belfast would be a target in the event of nuclear war. Despite most of the Cold War “passing by” Alice's “work and social life”, she still feared war and “invasion” in Belfast from the Soviets when she was a child in the mid-1950s.¹⁸⁴ Jessica and George believed “Belfast would be a likely target” in nuclear war due to “the city having a capital status.”¹⁸⁵ The couple were not alone in their anxieties. Lewis Brenett

¹⁸¹ Interview, Cox.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ ‘Bomb hunt goes on’, *Belfast Telegraph*, 21 September 1982; ‘Bomb hoax residents forced to flee homes’, *Belfast Telegraph*, 23 September 1982; ‘Bomb warning to drivers’, *Belfast Telegraph*, 24 September 1982; ‘The bomb should be banned’, *Belfast Telegraph*, 1 November 1982; ‘The Horrors of the A-bomb’, *Belfast Telegraph*, 25 August 1981.

¹⁸⁴ Interview, Fallon.

¹⁸⁵ Interview, Cox.

was originally from Glasgow but briefly lived in Belfast with his partner during the 1980s. He spent two years in Canada in the 1980s with his father. Lewis was well educated, having completed a BA and MA in history. He moved to England in the early 2000s and was interested in “the environment, politics and the peace movement.” He recalled that “the IRA and The Troubles were more concerning to everyone. It [the Cold War] didn’t affect people the same way as it did here [Glasgow] I don’t think.”¹⁸⁶

Belfast’s location on the shores of the Irish Sea drew concerns that nearby British nuclear power stations were contaminating the sea with radioactivity, resulting in greater concerns about nuclear power than weapons for civilians.¹⁸⁷ This was reflected in Jessica’s memories in which she recalled local anxieties about the “pollution” of Sellafield and the news of radiation leaks:

Well, I remember reading about Sellafield. A lot of people were protesting it and were- were worried about radiation [pause]. What was going on there? What they were doing with the waste or making bombs or leaks. It was worrying what it was doing to the Irish Sea and the environment. It did make me angry too. I- I think people are more concerned about those things nowadays though.¹⁸⁸

Concern about Sellafield and damage to the Irish Sea was also present in local Belfast CND campaigns. Leaflets included titles such as “Nuclear power? No Way!”, “Resist nuclear power” and “Irish Sea: Nuclear Cesspool” (Figure 1.3). The latter advertised an event hosted by Belfast CND in the city of Liverpool as it attempted to gauge more support for the protest.¹⁸⁹ This is further demonstrated by a poem published in the *Irish Radioactive Times* series. The poem imagined the death of the world rather than its inhabitants and referred to how the “water and air” would become “captives” in a nuclear war. The poem vividly imagines how nuclear

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Lewis Brenett, 2 August 2018.

¹⁸⁷ ‘Radioactivity test scares’, *Belfast Telegraph*, 3 July 1984; ‘End nuclear dumping in Irish Sea’, *Belfast Telegraph*, 14 May 1984; ‘Call for nuclear leak investigation’, *Belfast Telegraph*, 2 August 1984.

¹⁸⁸ Interview, Cox.

¹⁸⁹ Anti-Nuclear action Leaflet, ‘Nuclear Power?: No Way!’, Belfast Central Library, Local Political Archives (hereafter BCL, LPA), 0/0 PL/49710 collection; ‘Resist Nuclear power poster’, BCL, LPA, 0/0 PL/49710 collection; ‘The Irish Sea: A Nuclear Cesspool CND Pamphlet’, BCL, LPA, 0/0 PL/49710 collection.

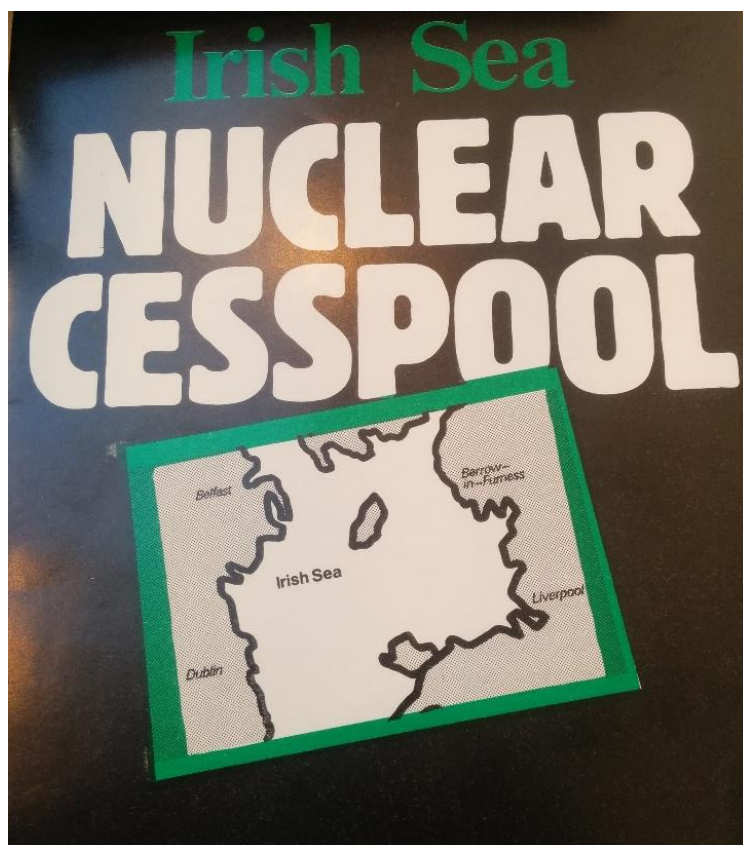


Figure 1.3 'Irish Sea': A Nuclear Cesspool Pamphlet, 1980.

technology would “lay waste of all life until the whole planet’s empty.”¹⁹⁰ Lewis distinctly recalled feeling “concerned” when he was given iodine tablets while living in Belfast “just in case” there was a leak at Sellafield. When asked about this further, he recalled it was a “local initiative” and “remembered others on his street being given them” although the “specifics around the reason why we had them or who was in charge” “evaded him.” He fondly told me how he had “kept these tablets as a part of history”, revealing his awareness of the historical importance of the period and “his own fears about nuclear obliteration.”¹⁹¹

Like Glasgow, the location of the city and its surrounding landscape shaped attitudes towards nuclear weapons. Residents of Belfast found themselves more anxious about other issues in their city, such as radiation leaks or the IRA than the prospect of nuclear war. While civilians employed the city-as-target motif, believing their home to be a likely nuclear target,

¹⁹⁰ ‘Noah Nova’ poem, *Irish Radioactive Times*, May 1982, BCL, LPA, 0/0 PL/49710 collection.

¹⁹¹ Interview, Brennett.

their daily lives were more occupied with other conflicts around them. Northern Irish identities during the Cold War were more profoundly shaped by ‘bomb anxiety’ and the IRA than nuclear anxiety and nuclear weapons.

Wales

Notably, Welsh identity infrequently appeared within interviewee testimony. Welshness did not seem to affect Cold War experiences as clearly and interviewees seldom referred to their Welsh identity, unlike interviewees who resided in Northern Ireland and Scotland. Conversely, it was only those involved in the CND peace movement who explicitly discussed their sense of Welshness. For example, Linda and Greg Southport, both born in 1944, expressed palpable pride in the Welsh involvement in CND movements:

Linda: Sometimes marches would start here in Cardiff and we could march in places all over Wales. I was always so proud. You know of the Welsh involvement in this.

Greg: Yes, like we would all book buses and meet up with lots of people. Loads of people all over the country and things but the presence of our Welsh group was always inspiring.¹⁹²

Within this dialogue, the feelings of “pride” and “inspiration” are tangible in their memory. Within the interview, the couple fondly recalled shifts doing “Nuke Watch”, hosting fundraising events, and travelling in buses from Cardiff with their friends to protests. Greg also pointed to specific geographical reasons as to why he initially joined CND:

When I was younger, there would be all these planes flying over. Some of them so low. So low. Dangerous. It was all for these you know, civil defence exercises and whatnot. They flew so low to the hills and over the city. I’ve always been interested in the environment and climate change and things. You know and some of these planes I just think must be doing awful things to the air we breathe. Just to practice for nuclear war. I mean- I mean it’s astounding, isn’t it? Anyway, I got fed up and decided to join up. Firstly, environmental reasons. You know Wales is so beautiful. So much natural beauty. And then eventually it was more about the nukes. I mean after all, if one of them is dropped then there won’t be an environment to protect.¹⁹³

¹⁹² Interview with Linda and Greg Southport, 23 January 2019.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

For Greg it wasn't just "a matter of pride", it was a desire to protect what he believed was important to Welsh identity: environmental values. Similar conclusions have been drawn by Hill, who argues that nuclear disarmament became a "national issue" for Wales and interlinked with environmental awareness and sovereignty.¹⁹⁴ Laucht and Johnes also suggest that peace and disarmament contributed to Welsh national identity during this period as the image of a nuclear-free Wales became a "symbol of how Welsh nationalism could protect and create a better Welsh nation."¹⁹⁵

Charlie Yorke, George Branco, and Lucy and Rory Marking were all members of Welsh CND and residents of Cardiff. They were interviewed together as a group over two days at George's house. George was born in Cardiff in 1935. He completed a PhD in chemical engineering. He was a member of CND and the Communist Party during the Cold War. His father was a conscientious objector in the Second World War. His mother went on the first CND demonstration in 1958 and he joined six months later. He was Chair of CND in the 1970s and remains the Vice-President of Cardiff CND. George was close friends with Charlie. Charlie was born in 1953 in Cardiff, studying in Liverpool in the 1970s. He set up a student CND group in Liverpool and returned to Cardiff after completing his degree. His parents were members of the Communist Party and Charlie joined the Green Party. He recollected being taken to CND protests as a child but they "disapproved" of him pursuing a career with them. Lucy Marking was born in 1939 in Birmingham, meeting Rory in Cardiff as an adult. She had family roots in South Wales and opted to stay. She described her father as a "fascist" and joined the Young Communist League as an "act of rebellion." Her husband, Rory was born in 1959 in Bridgend. After going to university in 1977 he did a placement year at the Atomic Energy Authority, returning to Cardiff afterwards.

¹⁹⁴ Hill, 'Nations of peace', 6-7, 16.

¹⁹⁵ Laucht and Johnes, 'Resist and Survive', 237.

The group recalled connections between Welshness and the peace movement. Lucy recollected how she wanted to “represent Cardiff” while she stayed at Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp in the 1980s. Charlie and George recalled numerous identity changes which took place in Welsh CND during the 1980s in this dialogue:

George: During the 1980s, CND was so popular. It was a huge movement then. Our branch had grown from something like two members of paid staff to about ten. And oh, the administration-

Charlie: Yeah, I remember-

George: And people were worried about us too. The government you know. So, they tried to put spies in our branch and tap our phones. My phone was tapped for years.

Emily: Oh, that sounds like an exciting time! I mean apart from the spies and phone tapping [laughs]

George: Well yes, you know we got lots of publicity and it was very busy with all the protests and organising it and more and more people were getting interested but you see the thing you have to understand is, people were joining for different reasons. Before in the 1950s, when I was much more involved, so this is before you [Charlie] were in the group. People were joining for peace. They were joining to protest against nuclear weapons-

Charlie: Yeah-

George: Yes. But you see, in the 1980s, when CND was so popular, and our branch was so busy. People were joining for different reasons. They joined because they didn’t like the government, you know economical reasons or national reasons. They joined because they were sympathetic to the Soviets or because of nuclear power, or nuclear weapons. Erm or environmental reasons and such. Lots of people just joined because it was just a ‘popular’ thing to do. It got much more complex you see. So, the aims of Welsh CND got much foggier.¹⁹⁶

This nationalist entanglement with Welsh nuclear protest is presented as complex and multifaceted, tying together numerous specific national goals into the protest movement.¹⁹⁷

However, for those involved in the CND movement, a feeling of ‘Welsh identity’ was prevalent and palpable. Although tones of resistance against England were tangible, feelings of pride

¹⁹⁶ Interview, Yorke, Branco, and Marking.

¹⁹⁷ Laucht and Johnes, ‘Resist and Survive’, 226-228.

were far more profound within conversations. In this way, the Welsh peace movement mobilised national identity to resist the nuclear threat.

Interviewees also found themselves evoking the city-as-target motif. Suzie Roberts was born in 1958 and lived in Wales for most of her childhood. She trained as a nurse in adulthood. She recalled seeing “huge radio masts glowing across fields” in Wales and imagined them “picking up Cold War messages and sending information to nuclear submarines.” Like many other interviewees, Suzie recollected experiencing “nightmares” about a nuclear war which resulted in “genuine moments of fear”:

Emily: Do you think living in Cardiff affected how you felt [about nuclear weapons]?

Suzie: Yes. It haunted me as a child knowing that in the case of World War Three breaking out, we would probably be one of the first targets to be destroyed. With all the bases around. And those radio masts in Wales. Once we went on holiday and we were less than 5 miles from Criggion Transmitter Station. I watched the glowing radio masts through binoculars. They still haunt me in my dreams.¹⁹⁸

Suzie emotively recalled a feeling of nuclear weapons targeting her home “haunting” her as a child, and still having an impact on her today. Even while Suzie was on holiday, this fear penetrated her memory, influencing memories she described as “happy.” In Suzie’s view, the city was a space in which the horrors of a Third World War may play out and the “glowing masts” were a physical totem of the power of the government and military to order a nuclear attack.

Suzie was not alone in feeling this way. Roger Leech, an author and retired nuclear engineer, was born in 1944 in Cardiff and lived there for most of his life. He went to a grammar school and described his childhood as “noisy” due to the nearby factories and docks to his childhood home. He worked in Geneva on nuclear physics research and returned to Cardiff in the 1970s. He is a published author and described having “lifelong” interests in “music,

¹⁹⁸ Interview, Roberts.

meditation, and woodworking.” Throughout the interview, he reflected upon his “love of Cardiff” and his “sense of Welshness.” He recalled how “hopeless” it felt to be living within a city during the Cold War:

Well, it made me very edgy [living in Cardiff]. It was all a bit scary to us kids back then. I remember all this civil defence stuff coming out about a 4-minute warning and the things we had to have prepared. As a family, we discussed all this as though it was a bad dream. My grandfather and Dad- both having lived through world wars- erm looked at the government pamphlet and realised just how futile it was. They knew the power of ordinary bombs or shells. They knew it was going to be impossible to save ourselves if we were involved in a nuclear attack, even if the nearest bomb fell 50 miles away. Radiation and starvation would give us all a slow death anyway. Better to be blown into a vapour, in a flash, than to pretend that hiding under the stairs, would protect us, I guess.¹⁹⁹

Just as Suzie had described, Roger was also “haunted” by nuclear war, “like it was a bad dream.” This motif of nuclear nightmares is strongly embedded in British nuclear culture such as the civil defence film *Waking Point* (1951) in which the main character wakes from a dream about nuclear war, motivated to join the British civil defence programme.²⁰⁰

Within Roger’s memories, he imagines the futility of surviving nuclear war within a city, later citing the images of the concentric circles which “were in the news as often as the football.” As shown in Figure 1.4, images of concentric circles were common in the national and local British press as civilians were shown the extent to which their hometowns would be

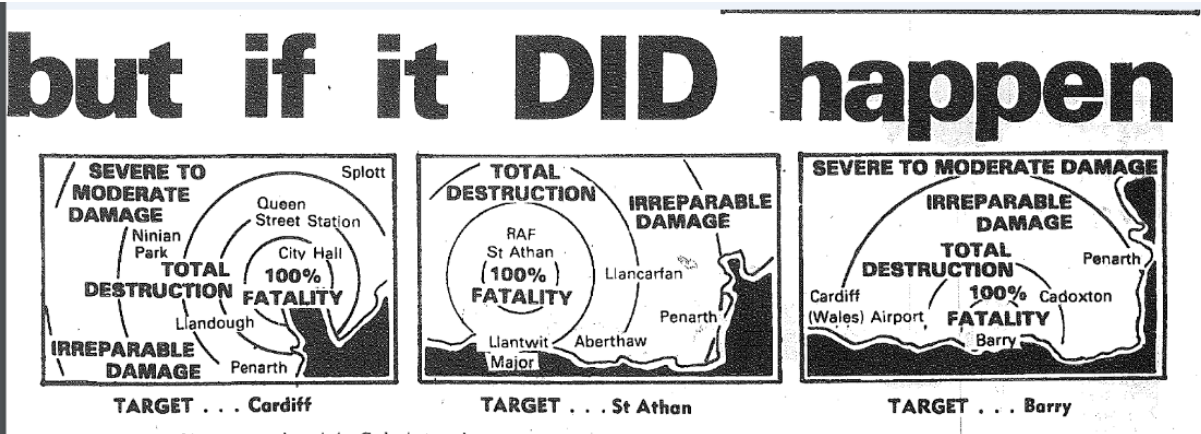


Figure 1.4 “If it DID happen?” *South Wales Echo*, 1981.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Roger Leech, 30 January 2019.
²⁰⁰ Hogg, *Nuclear Culture*, 81-82.

destroyed. This particular example showed concentric circles for “100% fatality”, “Total Destruction”, and “Irreparable Damage.” In Roger’s view, the use of civil defence to “prepare” for nuclear war was useless and his family’s experiences of the Second World War informed his view. Both Suzie and Roger’s views on the destruction of their city spaces were informed by childhood memories and feelings of uncertainty that imagined the destruction of their city.

England

English identity was difficult to define within the oral history testimony. All interviewees who lived in what is geographically defined as England never self-identified as being English, usually preferring to label themselves as British. Their language and identities tended to fit more broadly into a wider British Cold War experience, rather than a separate “English experience.”²⁰¹ In contrast, Englishness was more often reflected upon by those who *did not* identify as English. This was particularly common in Scottish narratives as discussed in the previous section. This seemed to relate to the cultural resonance of the British empire and victory narrative of the Second World War, which impacted British popular memory, culture, and attitudes towards the Cold War. The cultural memory of the Second World War fuelled a conviction that Britain should protect smaller nations from “ideological predators” and this mindset informed beliefs of British interests and Englishness in the Cold War.²⁰²

Due to its capital status, London was widely believed to be a major target in a nuclear war. Mike Dalton was born in 1970 in South London, moving to Liverpool in 2006. He had Irish roots and his mother worked as a cleaner. He began his career in photography but moved into administration. He recalled that he often felt that he was living in the “target zone” while he was growing up:

Emily: Do you think where you lived affected how you felt about [the Cold War]?

²⁰¹ Simon Cook, ‘The Making of English: English History, British Identity, Aryan Villages, 1870-1914’, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 75(4) (2014): 629-649.

²⁰² Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 57-56.

Mike: Yeah, well London is the capital. So, I guess that means we would be the first to go. We were definitely a big target. Like it would be a target if it happened. Yeah, I do think it would be absolute obliteration erm so yeah. Total destruction.²⁰³

This imagination of the utter destruction of a “big target” like London was echoed in the memories of other interviewees such as William Stonewell who recalled that he felt that “cities would be the first to go [in nuclear war], especially London.” He continued that it was “such a big and clear target”, reflecting upon the *size* of the city as justification for it being a target.²⁰⁴ Interestingly, this viewpoint was held regardless of attitudes towards to anti-nuclear groups. For example, Andrew, Sylvia, and Sandra felt similarly and recollected their anxiety of living within London during the Cold War due to its “target” status and likely destruction.²⁰⁵ Andrew’s narrative was laced with hope, as he recalled hoping that the works of “Campbell and such” would make people realise how “real” the threat of nuclear war was.²⁰⁶ Therefore, it was the capital *status* and the *size* of London which were most commonly cited as a cause for it being a nuclear target, and this shaped the experiences of those living in London.

However, the local press depicted an alternative view. It is likely that because Britain needed nuclear technology to retain its seat in international politics, reports were controlled or mediated to try to maintain civilian cooperation.²⁰⁷ The capital had to protect the reputation of nuclear weapons, particularly during the 1980s. Furthermore, because of the frequent political activities taking place in London at the time, nuclear knowledge needed to be controlled. For example, Michael Heseltine, who became the Secretary for Defence in 1983, actively manipulated the press to keep particular events and opinions from the public in the capital.²⁰⁸

²⁰³ Interview, Dalton.

²⁰⁴ Interview, Stonewell.

²⁰⁵ Interview, Moore; Interview with Sandra Hawcroft, 5 September 2018.

²⁰⁶ Interview, Moore. Andrew cites a number of research texts which came out during the 1980s which discussed the impact of nuclear war on London such as: Green, *London after the Bomb* and Anne Ehrlick et al. *London under attack: The Report of the Greater London Area War Risk Study Commission* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

²⁰⁷ Matthew Fuhrmann, ‘Taking a walk on the supply side: the determinants of civilian nuclear co-operation’, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(2) (2009): 185.

²⁰⁸ Brian Jamison, ‘Will they blow us a’tae hell? Strategies and obstacles for the disarmament movement in Scotland’ in *Scotland and the Cold War*.

This acceptance of a nuclear attack occurring in London was reflected in the interviewees more immediate concerns about IRA terrorist attacks in London. Whereas all interviewees who lived in London reported that they felt their home city would be a target, these narratives were usually unemotional and factual. William Stonewell spoke frankly, as he stated, “London would be instantly detonated” in a nuclear attack.²⁰⁹ In contrast, palpable feelings of anxiety surfaced when residents recalled their experiences with the IRA. For example, this interaction with Mike:

Emily: So, you felt London was a key target?

Mike: Yeah, but I wasn't worried about it much. You know it was the IRA which worried me more, for me. At least you know where we lived and my mum was a caretaker and the Ritz was a hundred yards away. There was a bomb as a kid and our windows came in and things, so I thought about that more. I was more worried about that going around Oxford Street and there might be a bomb- a bomb scare, and police would show up and be all around and that was more- anxious for me.

Emily: So, you thought about that more than nuclear weapons?

Mike: Yeah, cos that was happening. Whereas nuclear weapons weren't happening.²¹⁰

Mike's experience of the Cold War was framed by his memories of the IRA which felt much closer to home than nuclear weapons. His family experiences of IRA bombings were a more palpable anxiety because they were occurring nearby and there were visible effects of the attacks. In comparison to nuclear weapons, which in Mike's words were “not happening”, the distance of nuclear weapons from London reduced his fears of it occurring.

Similar anxieties about the IRA resurfaced in William and Joyce's testimony as they reflected upon their time living in London:

Emily: Do you remember feeling where you lived affected how you felt about nuclear weapons?

William: Well yes but no at the same time. I remember living in London though there was more concern about the- the IRA, it was a huge thing when I was in London. You know checking your bags, making sure there were no bombs, and that was

²⁰⁹ Interview, Stonewell.

²¹⁰ Interview, Dalton.

probably more of an anxiety to people in London than a nuclear bomb. I suppose because you can't do anything about it, as a person, whereas when you can do something— the IRA— you can make sure, we can check, we can look in- [trails off].

Joyce: So, I remember constantly being stuck in a tube station and not being able to get home, not being able to get home from work cos all the tube stations were shut. Erm so yeah, you're quite right, all the IRA stuff was much closer to home than and a much much bigger topic at the time. Without a doubt.²¹¹

These viewpoints are repeated later in the interview. William describes a heightened concern of IRA attacks due to the fact you could “do something about it.” He recalled how he felt that “if there was nuclear war, it would be the end of it” and “you couldn't do anything about it.” In contrast, he could check his bags and be vigilant to avoid IRA bombs which was “much closer to home” than nuclear weapons. Joyce recollected how the IRA affected her daily life and this resulted in it being a more pressing anxiety for her:

Definitely for me, yeah on a day-to-day basis yeah definitely. You know, the Victoria bombing, that took place; I was on my way to work that day and had to get off my train because I couldn't get into Victoria. It took me about three hours to get to work. When I got to work there was a room full of people, my mum on the phone, my dad on the phone, cos no mobile phones didn't exist then, nobody knew where I was. Everybody feared that I was stuck in that, it was a very vivid memory, so as those closures of tube stations, and roads which were happening on a very regular basis, every few weeks, it made me very conscious. That was a much bigger fear.²¹²

Although for Joyce, nuclear weapons were part of everyday life in the sense that they “were always on the news”, they felt “very far away.” In contrast, the presence and impact of IRA attacks on her daily commute were a “much much” bigger anxiety. Although many interviewees felt that London was a key target for nuclear attack, most civilians were preoccupied with other local concerns which brought feelings of anxiety.

Like many other cities across the UK, Liverpool developed a form of nuclear culture that encompassed its “strong awareness of the city-as-target” within district councils and residents described a narrative of living within a city-as-target.²¹³ Chris Bradbury was born in

²¹¹ Interview, Stonewell.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ Hogg, 'Nuclear Resistance', 599.

1957 in Liverpool. He recalled a belief that the presence of the docks would result in Liverpool becoming a nuclear target: “Liverpool? Well, it got the docks and that- we would definitely be hit, I think. Least I would hope it would land on my head [laughs].”²¹⁴ This attitude is revealed throughout the thesis as it was a common attitude amongst the interviewees to wish for a “quick



**Figure 1.5 ‘Destruction Radius of Nuclear Attack on Liverpool’,
Liverpool Echo, January 1980.**

death” during a nuclear attack.²¹⁵ The *Liverpool Echo* reported on Liverpool’s likelihood of being a nuclear target in 1980, publishing a concentric circle of the city (Figure 1.5). The report received several letters from readers titled ‘I would rather not be a survivor’ and ‘nuclear tragedy.’ Within both, the writers expressed a desire to not survive in a nuclear attack on Liverpool.²¹⁶ In 1983, the newspaper commented that “we would be the first target.”²¹⁷ Another article frankly discussed a doctor’s comments that nuclear victims would “need to be stoned to death” to “put them out of their misery.”²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Interview, Chris Bradbury, 7 September 2018.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ ‘I Would rather not be a Survivor’, Letter, *Liverpool Echo*, 17 January 1980; ‘Nuclear Tragedy’, Letter, *Liverpool Echo*, 10 April 1980.

²¹⁷ ‘We would be the first target’, *Liverpool Echo*, 12 May 1983.

²¹⁸ ‘Stone N-blast victims to death’, *Liverpool Echo*, 12 August 1983.

Chris Bradbury was an active member of CND, the Labour Party, and the Quaker group. Politics, national identity, and the peace movement were central to his life story narrative. He recalled the politics of the Cold War in Liverpool during the 1980s:

In the election in the 1980s, nuclear bombs were pretty political in Liverpool then. There was this idea of a militant Labour party- you know with Michael Foot. And there was conflict. And of course, when *that* woman became Prime Minister, Thatcher. Liverpudlians resisted her. She wanted bombs so we didn't [laughs].²¹⁹

The *Liverpool Echo* reported frequently on Thatcher's decision to replace Polaris with Trident in the 1980s. These articles published letters from local civilians describing the continuation of the nuclear weapons programme as a "tragedy." These attitudes reflect Chris' feelings expressed in the interview.²²⁰ He spoke with genuine distaste as he spoke, referring to Thatcher as "that woman." Notably, Chris felt that his opinion "reflected popular opinion" in the city of Liverpool, commenting that "she [Thatcher] was never welcome here [in Liverpool]." This attitude was alluded to further by Chris' remarks that many Liverpudlians "chose peace to resist her [Thatcher]." Those involved in the local Merseyside CND groups also reported a "strong sense of community" and "support" within the city for their anti-nuclear efforts. Rosie reflected on how her peace "support community" helped her "care for her family" and got her through "tough times." Chris felt that his peace communities "got him through university" and they "had fun." While Irene Perkins was not an "active member" of CND, she still felt "being a part of it" was important to her "sense of identity" and her experience of being a "peaceful Scouser."²²¹

Like Belfast, residents in Liverpool reported concerns about nuclear power, as well as the prospect of nuclear war. In April 1986, the nuclear power station in Ukraine, Chernobyl, had a

²¹⁹ Interview, Chris Bradbury, 20 March 2018.

²²⁰ 'Poll Blow for N-Plan', *Liverpool Echo*, 27 February 1982; 'Heffer: We'll axe Polaris', *Liverpool Echo*, 25 May 1983; 'Orwell's prophecy true, says CND', *Liverpool Echo*, 5 March 1984.

²²¹ Interview, Stanford; Interview, Perkins. This attitude was also reflected in the *Liverpool Echo*: 'Campers who care about peace', *Liverpool Echo*, 2 June 1980; 'Women who give peace a future', *Liverpool Echo*, 13 December 1982; '2,000 in Nuclear Demo – Like a Family Day Out', *Liverpool Echo*, 7 March 1983.

reactor meltdown releasing considerable amounts of airborne radioactive contamination into the atmosphere, with much reaching the North West of England and Wales.²²² This experience was cited by several interviewees who lived in Liverpool. Harry Powell, who reported that for the most part, the Cold War passed by him, recollected: “I remember talking to a farmer in Cheshire after Chernobyl and he told me his sheep were radioactive. That is what sticks out the most for me.”²²³ Mike Dalton recalled: “Yeah, I was quite concerned about Chernobyl yeah because yeah, I remember spotting the clouds coming westward you know. Yeah, that was a bit worrying. You know it was coming this way. But yeah, definitely that was a big worry.”²²⁴ Mike tangibly remembered seeing “radioactive clouds” coming over Liverpool, despite the fact he wouldn’t have been able to see radioactive material as clouds. The popular *image* of mushroom clouds therefore *altered* his memory. He added that he worried “a bit about the rain” after that. Like Harry, Mike generally did not express anxiety about nuclear war or nuclear weapons. Instead, it was the clouds that brought radioactive rain which evoked feelings of worry for him.

Peggy Rosenthal argues that during the Cold War the image of the “nuclear cloud” or “mushroom cloud” came to symbolise death and anxiety for civilians. This image was “marketed” by governments trying to create “an image of triumph” in the Second World War and the anti-nuclear movement, who presented it as an “image of death.”²²⁵ For example, this attitude is reflected in a 1981 front cover of the Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace (SCRAM) leaflet (Figure 1.6) as a mushroom cloud is described as a “cloud of death.”²²⁶ Mike reflected upon what the nuclear cloud meant to him and he recollected it symbolised “an

²²² Richard Mould, *Chernobyl Record: the definitive history of the Chernobyl catastrophe* (Bristol: Institute of Physics Publishing, 2000).

²²³ Interview with Harry Powell, 12 April 2018.

²²⁴ Interview, Dalton.

²²⁵ Peggy Rosenthal, 'The Nuclear Cloud as Cultural Image', *American Literary History* 3(1) (1991): 63, 66, 71-72.

²²⁶ SCRAM Energy Bulletin, No. 26, October/November 1981, Digitised 2017, Laka Archive, SCRAM collection.

unwinnable war” or “horrible mutation.” Cultural imaginations of radioactive mutation influenced his feelings about the city space he lived within and were a root of nuclear anxiety.

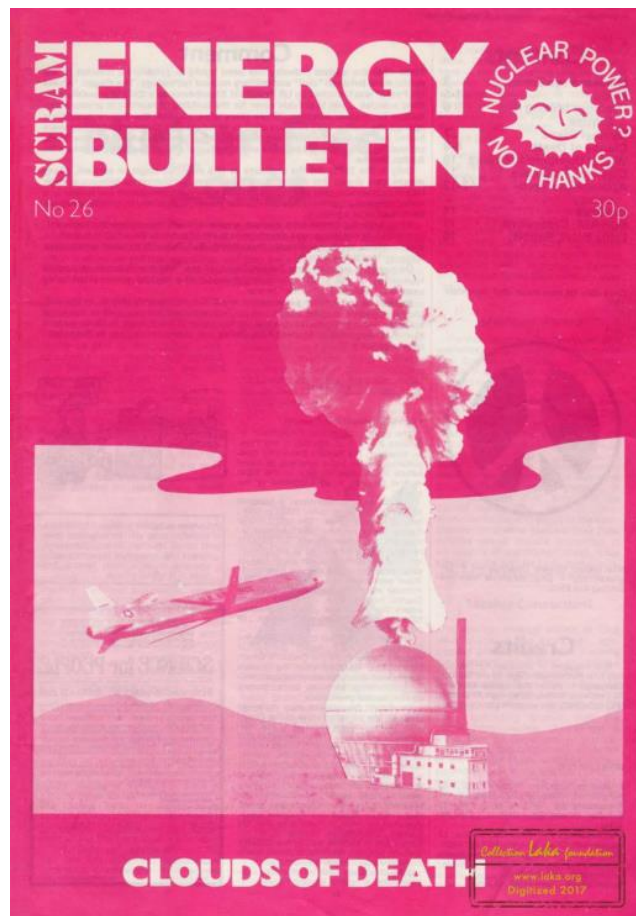


Figure 1.6 SCRAM Energy Bulletin, Clouds of Death, 1981.

However, most interviewees did not live in one place during the entirety of the Cold War, with many moving for employment and family reasons. Interviewees who lived in multiple places found themselves justifying why their old or new home was a nuclear target. This also appeared in rural areas. Roger was regularly deployed for long periods while he worked as a nuclear engineer. During the 1980s, Roger spent some time working at Sellafield and he recalled a feeling of living within a nuclear target:

Emily: So, you felt Cardiff would be a target?

Roger: Well yes. Sometimes. But more when I worked at Sellafield. I lived not far away while I worked there. And that would definitely be a target [laughs] How could it not be?²²⁷

²²⁷ Interview, Leech.

While Roger did recall feelings of his hometown of Cardiff being attacked, other locations in which he had lived and worked also symbolised feelings of anxiety for him and a sensation of living within a target. Jack Kelly, who was born in Bangor but moved to Colchester later in life commented that “Colchester is a military town, so it would be a target nowadays I think.”²²⁸ Similarly, William and Joyce moved from London to Lincolnshire after the Cold War and told me that “Lincolnshire would definitely be a target, it has all the RAF bases- yeah we would be one of the first to be hit I think.”²²⁹ Here we see not just the city being a target, but the home. As interviewees moved around the UK, it appeared that the threat of nuclear war continued to follow their everyday lives and the spaces in which they lived, often manifesting themselves in vivid imaginations of destruction. In this way, tensions between rural and urban are revealed. Just as the lay of the land and the specific spatial elements of cities, such as Glasgow’s proximity to Faslane and Belfast’s proximity to Sellafield, resulted in experiences of nuclear anxiety, movement across the British nation and rural environments resulted in their own prompts of this feeling. Individual’s connections to specific cities, areas, and regions framed how they discussed their experiences and the emotions they attached to them.

Chapter conclusion

Living in the British nuclear nation-state was an emotive experience for many civilians, which became part of their everyday lives. This chapter has demonstrated that the city-as-target became an everyday motif in British society during the Cold War. Images and narratives of British cities turned to rubble after a nuclear attack were commonplace in newspapers and the British media. Likewise, civilians in the cities of London, Cardiff, Belfast, Glasgow, and Liverpool believed that their urban homes would become a nuclear target. Furthermore,

²²⁸ Interview, Hall.

²²⁹ Interview, Stonewell.

civilians who had lived in multiple locations across the UK found themselves justifying why their old or new homes were also a nuclear target.

This chapter has consequently demonstrated that the emotional experience of nuclear anxiety is far more diverse than scholarship has previously acknowledged. It has furthered arguments made by Hughes that concepts such as British nuclear culture and nuclear anxiety need to be broken down to achieve a deeper understanding.²³⁰ This chapter has approached the concept of nuclear anxiety with a fresh perspective, examining the national civilian experiences of England, Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland alongside each other. These regions became distinct emotional communities during the Cold War. As such, we can see the validity of Kearney's assertion that, instead of focusing on British experiences, scholarship should consider "breaking the boundaries of Britain."²³¹ It has also demonstrated that interviewees did not express a denial or psychic numbing which Lifton theorised nor was it presented as a "constant presence" as Boyer argued.²³² In its attempts to underscore the significance of city spaces in nuclear imaginaries, aptly demonstrated by scholars such as Hogg, this chapter has alluded to the complex and multifaceted emotional landscapes of Cold War Britain between 1945 and 1989.²³³

Nuclear weapons, and the broader Cold War, became entangled in British national identity and regional identities. Although ideas and emotions surrounding nuclear weapons were not always determined by national affiliation, it certainly influenced them. Individual and collective experiences of nuclear anxiety, and imaginations of nuclear war, were coloured by national identity and the cities in which these civilians lived. Experiences of nuclear anxiety were therefore rooted within the tension between local context and national influence. Just as

²³⁰ Hughes, 'Nuclear Culture', 504.

²³¹ Kearney, *British Isles*, 1.

²³² Boyer, *Bombs Early Light*, xix-xx; Lifton, *Connection*, 173.

²³³ Hogg, 'Nuclear Resistance', 599.

the Soviet Union and communism were associated with the escalation of the conflict, America also symbolised an overreliance on the Anglo-American alliance. Feelings about the Cold War were shaped by inter-generational and popularised assumptions about Britain, America, and the Soviet Union, rooted in the Second World War. These tensions and assumptions intersected into the everyday life of British civilians and shaped their emotional experiences of the Cold War profoundly.

As the Cold War progressed, civilians genuinely believed that their home would be a target in a nuclear war, and they would be consequently obliterated. The conclusions of this chapter can be best summarised by Joyce Stonewell: “I think that the whole political landscape that was unravelling at the time affected everybody and it didn’t matter where you lived. And I think the point about the nuclear- the power of the nuclear weapon was that nobody was exempt from it. So, you know it did not matter where you lived, how rich you were, who you knew, that- that threat was real for everybody. Erm so no, I don’t think it made a difference [where you lived].”²³⁴ Although unique geopolitical influences, societal differences, and national identity shaped the experience of the civilian experience of the Cold War and their memories of their home cities, the possibility and imagination of nuclear destruction remained very real, regardless of where they called home. This resulted in clear tensions between local and national imaginaries as civilians often had differing emotional attachments and feelings about the British nation and their local identity. As will be explored in the next chapter, these imaginations of nuclear holocaust were also palpable in civilian recollections of politics and government in the Cold War.

²³⁴ Interview, Stonewell.

Chapter Two

Historicising emotion in the nuclear age: Events, activism, and politics

“They don’t think there is any point in trying to stop it. I think that’s the problem. People need to have courage to say things different and be willing to say: ‘I will not push the button. You’re not going to get me to say I will push the button.’”¹

- Interview with Carole Fraley, 2018.

The Cold War was a period rife with international conflict and escalating tension, political jargon and speeches, and “secretive” government agendas. The Cold War was fought in the minds and culture of civilians and it was peppered with notable military conflicts such as the Korean War (1950-1953), the Hungarian uprising (1956), and the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962). This chapter explores British politics and attitudes towards events and conflict during the Cold War. It contributes to the conclusions drawn from the previous chapter by furthering the argument that nuclear anxiety was a complex experience and part of the *diverse* emotional landscape of Cold War Britain. This chapter unpicks how we, as scholars, might think about interviewee recollections about the Cold War, highlighting the emotional experience of the Cold War as a *mixture* of emotions. While nuclear anxiety was at the core of the oral history testimony, other emotional responses intersected, framed, shaped these narratives. This chapter demonstrates how we may only understand the nature of nuclear anxiety by acknowledging the other emotions expressed within the civilian experience.

As the previous chapter explored, nuclear anxiety was an important part of the British civilian experience. It shaped people’s sense of national identity and how they navigated the world around them. This chapter will develop this argument further by interpreting how civilians traversed through Cold War events, conflict, activism, political culture, and perceptions of their government through their structures of feeling and lived experiences. Just as Samuel and Thompson argue that poverty “must be understood as a lived experience”, this

¹ Interview, Fraley and Hodges-Walker.

chapter demonstrates that nuclear anxiety must similarly be understood as a lived experience of modern Britain.²

The strategic military developments of the Cold War were felt deeply in everyday life as security was forcibly promoted and the probability of a nuclear attack was left to civilian imagination, yet scholarship on the civilian and emotional experience of these events are largely absent. Examining extraordinary lives or events can explain how change occurred. This chapter explores what Douthwaite has described as “flashpoints” of the Cold War, arguing that these moments also became flashpoints of emotion.³ These moments reveal how the British emotional landscape was transformed by the tense political backdrop of the period.

The Cold War was fought secretly, behind public knowledge and was marked by conflict in ideology, diplomacy, strategy, and culture.⁴ The few military confrontations which broke out during the Cold War were limited and fought far from superpower territories.⁵ Moreover, Britain enacted a strategic rationale to possess nuclear weapons to simultaneously enhance deterrence while maintaining the capability to retaliate if threatened. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the British political stance throughout the Cold War was not whether the bomb should be kept but how it should be kept.⁶ Nuclear weapons, therefore, shaped the political agenda in Britain throughout the Cold War. As Douthwaite has demonstrated, memories of the British Cold War were reminiscent of Masco’s notion of ‘nuclear ruins’: a set of ideas and images of collective danger which informed the acceptance of militarisation and security state in society.⁷

² Thompson, *English Working Class*, 9; Samuel, *Village Life*.

³ Douthwaite, ‘Voices’ 129.

⁴ Gowing, *Independence*, 184; Kristian Stoddart, *Losing an Empire and finding a role: Britain, USA, NATO and nuclear weapons, 1964-1970* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

⁵ Sean Greenwood, *Britain and the Cold War, 1945-91* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁷ Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 127; Joseph Masco, “‘Survival is Your Business’: engineering ruins and affect in nuclear America’: *Cultural Anthropology* 23(2) (2008), 362.

Many scholars have researched and explored moments of historical significance of the Cold War, but this chapter is not concerned with these occurrences. Instead, it is interested in the events, moments, and experiences which were important in the lives of British civilians and cited as key flashpoints in their narratives. As Goodwin, Jasper and Polleta argue, “Emotions are part of the “stuff” connecting human beings to each other and the world around them.”⁸ In the same way, this chapter demonstrates how emotions, including nuclear anxiety, were experienced, felt, and used by civilians to conceptualise and understand the uncertain nuclear age. It will consider how these structures of feeling gave meaning to these flashpoints during the Cold War, focusing on the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 as a case study. A close examination of this event demonstrates that nuclear anxiety was intertwined with many other emotional states and is a complex and multifaceted experience. For many interviewees, feelings of passion, anger, and anxiety flared in their testimony as they recalled the insecurity of civil defence and the mistrust and secrecy of government.

This chapter’s contributions are threefold. Firstly, it uses the Cuban Missile Crisis as a case study of a flashpoint of anxiety. The Cuban Missile Crisis was often recalled in vivid detail by many interviewees and was frequently used to frame how they felt about Cold War politics. These experiences were laced with feelings of genuine anxiety and awareness of civilian powerlessness during this period. This supports Douthwaite’s arguments that the Cuban Missile Crisis was a flashpoint “in the history of British civilian perspectives of nuclear security.”⁹ Secondly, this chapter suggests that other emotions need to be considered to contextualise and more deeply understand civilian experiences of nuclear anxiety. It suggests that there is a danger of over-privileging the role of nuclear anxiety. Lastly, it argues that nuclear politics during the Cold War resulted in feelings of powerlessness, insecurity, and

⁸ Jeff Goodwin, James Jasper, and Francesca Polleta, *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 10.

⁹ Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 129

resulted in perceptions of an untrustworthy government. Individuals imagined politicians “pushing the nuclear button” and reflected on their lack of power over these decisions, often reflecting on a motif of “luck” when describing the possibility of nuclear war. Within the interview, discussions about politics were framed by present-centred preoccupations of events such as Brexit and contemporary tensions between North Korea and the USA. Through these interconnected contentions, this chapter further explores the intricate impact nuclear anxiety and nuclear emotions had on British civilian Cold War experiences.

Section I: The Cuban Missile Crisis: A flash of anxiety?

In October 1962, the rapidly mounting tension between the US and USSR over the placement of nuclear weapons became known as the Cuban Missile Crisis. It was a 13-day period (16-28 October) during which America discovered Soviet plans to deploy nuclear weapons in Cuba. The placement of these weapons was perceived as a direct threat to American civilians.¹⁰ Under President John F. Kennedy, America established a naval blockade. After a few days of tense negotiation, the blockade ended and the Soviet Union dismantled their nuclear weapons in Cuba while America removed them from Turkey.¹¹ In the West, Europe feared an American or Soviet retaliation and world-wide nuclear war. In Britain, anxiety about its closest Cold War ally raised concerns about Britain’s role in international diplomacy and status as a nuclear target. Douthwaite demonstrates within her research on British civilians in the ROC and the anti-nuclear movement, that the Cuban Missile Crisis became a “flashpoint” of anxiety about nuclear security and overseas stability in popular British memory.¹² As the event was used as

¹⁰ Gerard DeGroot, *The Bomb: A Life* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), 256-263.

¹¹ Len Scott, *Macmillan, Kennedy, and the Cuban Missile Crisis: political, military and intelligence aspects* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999).

¹² Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 129.

a point of anxiety in many testimonials, it will be used as a case study to explore the experience of nuclear anxiety and the collective imagination of the event.

Culturally, both in 1962 and within recent depictions, the Cuban Missile Crisis was presented as an immediate risk to British security and the closest the world has ever come to nuclear war.¹³ Historians have long argued that the circulation of dominant cultural discourses within popular culture shapes individual memory.¹⁴ Contemporary scholars have examined the extent to which the crisis “changed the world” or brought Britain “to the brink” of nuclear war.¹⁵ The British press also sensationalised the event. *The Guardian* described it as the “first great nuclear crisis”, the *Glasgow Herald* referred to the event as an “international emergency”, and *The Observer* reported that President Kennedy and Soviet statesman Nikita Khrushchev “saved the world” through diplomacy in the “crisis.”¹⁶ Len Scott suggests that the event caused “emotional and psychological distress” to ordinary people.¹⁷ Much scholarly work on the Crisis focuses on domestic politics, the Anglo-American alliance, and British policy on European security. Within this field, emotions and memory are referenced as points of impact as a direct consequence of the crisis.¹⁸ This field of scholarly work on the Cuban Missile Crisis, combined with a strong cultural and collective memory of the event, has led to exceptionalism, intense emotional memories, and vivid personal anecdotes within personal experience.¹⁹

Within the testimonies conducted for this research, ordinary people often recalled dramatic and anxious memories surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis, tapping into the vast emotional and collective memory of the event. In this way, their memories were framed by

¹³ David Lowe and Tony Joel, *Remembering the Cold War: Global Contests and National Stories* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 31.

¹⁴ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 230; Abrams, *Oral History*.

¹⁵ Scott, *Macmillan, Kennedy* 1-12.

¹⁶ ‘The first great nuclear crisis’, *The Guardian*, 10 December 1962; ‘Arms blockade of Cuba’, *Glasgow Herald*, 23 October 1962; ‘To the brink: The days that saved the world’, *The Observer*, 4 November 1962.

¹⁷ Scott, *Macmillan, Kennedy*, 1-12.

¹⁸ Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 130-131; Christopher Andrew, ‘Taking the Long View’ in *Out of the Cold: The Cold War and its Legacy* ed. Michael R. Fitzgerald and Allen Packwood (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 181.

¹⁹ Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 131.

international trauma, comparable to individuals remembering exactly where they were in the 2001 9/11 terror attacks. Lucy Bond argues “when we remember, the manner in which we imagine events is informed by a body of cultural knowledge that individuals acquire through socialisation – customs or traditions passed through generations.”²⁰ The cultural and political status of the Crisis informed how individuals recalled and felt about the event.²¹ However, while some recalled vivid and exceptionally emotional memories, others retold their experience of the Cuban Missile Crisis with vague details. Despite this, interviewees who “could not remember” the event recognised it as a “significant moment” they lived through, often expressing “embarrassment” that they did not remember more or providing justification for not being able to recall the crisis.²² The testimony revealed that for British civilians, the Cuban Missile Crisis symbolised a period of heightened nuclear anxiety. It became an exceptional flashpoint that intersected with their everyday lives and imaginations of nuclear war.

Nuclear politics were central to many interviewee’s life histories through participation in political or protest groups, an interest in world events around them, or through their families. Alexander Campbell was one such example. Alexander was from Glasgow and he recalled feeling “very unhappy” with politics from a young age. He vividly recollected the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. From a young age Alexander was a member of CND and its Scottish equivalent, the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (SCND). For the most part, Alexander lived “an ordinary life” outside of his SCND protesting.²³ Strongly identifying as Scottish, Alexander distanced himself from the wider CND effort and was exceptionally active in the peace movement throughout the Cold War. He was often arrested

²⁰ Lucy Bond, *Frames of Memory after 9/11: Culture, criticism, politics, and law* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 18.

²¹ Matti Peltonen, ‘Clues, Margins, and Monads: The Micro-Macro Link in Historical Research’, *History and Theory* 40(3) (2001): 347; Chuanfei Chin, ‘Margins and Monsters: How some Micro Cases lead to Macro Claims’, *History and Theory* 50(3) (2011): 347.

²² Interview, Lincoln.

²³ Interview, Campbell.

for blocking lorries containing nuclear material, vandalism at military bases holding nuclear weapons, and resistance to arrest. In the 1960s, he participated in the filming of the *BBC's The War Game* (1966). A year before our interview, Alexander was arrested for diving under a lorry in a nuclear protest.

Throughout his testimony, Alexander was strongly anti-nuclear, often referring to politicians as “bomb-dropping bastards.” He frequently spoke with humour, nostalgia, and pride throughout the interview. Although he often reflected on broader and collective feelings of nuclear anxiety (“We should be scared [of nukes]”; “People were scared, nuclear weapons make them worried, but they don’t do anything about it”), Alexander rarely discussed his feelings of fear in a serious manner.²⁴ An exception was his memory of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Alexander’s memory of this event was particularly remarkable and encompassed wider civilian British responses to the Crisis and cultural memories. He recalled:

I remember the Cuban Missile Crisis. Kennedy had found Soviet missile silos in Cuba and they were like 90 miles from America. And the Soviet Union wouldn’t move them, and it was a stalemate. I remember there were threats of pre-emptive strikes and emergency UN sessions. All over the news. No one was budging though. [pause] Oh yes, I was very worried about it. I genuinely thought nuclear war was going to happen. I remember one night. It was cold. And I was lying in my bed next to my wife. And I turned over and opened my eyes. On my windows we have these blind slats and as I opened my eye, I suddenly got the full blast of the dawn. And I just thought ‘Christ they have done it’ and I just leapt up and hid under my bed [laughs]. My wife was more scared than me in the end [laughs]. [pause] But later I just sat there, and I had my head in my hands and just kept thinking what sort of world have we created when dawn, the universal symbol of hope and new birth and-when dawn- the coming of dawn fills us with terror. What sort of world have we created? I honestly thought they had done it that morning.²⁵

Like many memories of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Alexander’s experience was rooted in his recollection of what he was witnessing unfold on the news as a bystander to the conflict. In his emotive memory, Alexander’s anxieties were played out in a domestic setting (in bed with his wife, waking up to dawn) but were also an example of exceptional fear (hiding under the bed).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Seemingly mundane details of the story are also mulled over such as the temperature of the room. For Alexander, this was “the only” time he really believed nuclear war “could have genuinely happened.”²⁶ In particular, Alexander draws upon the popular motif of the “dawn of the nuclear age”, as he describes the normality of the sun shining through his blinds representing something that genuinely terrified him. Early nuclear bomb imagery included that of the sun’s creation symbolism and depictions of its “cosmic force.”²⁷

This dramatic recollection may be tied to Alexander’s anti-nuclear belief and ideas. Throughout the interview, he often encouraged me to “join the movement” against nuclear weapons. It was clear that I was not the first person to hear these stories. Dramatic anti-nuclear narratives were often employed in SCND and CND publications. In 1982 for example, the SCND newsletter published comics of politicians hammering a computer with the comment “We’re trying to get the computer to malfunction so we can start the war”, reflecting anxieties over a possible accidental (or intentional) nuclear attack by the government. Another image depicted parents with their child pushing a trolley containing nuclear missiles remarking that the “average British family” contributed to the national nuclear weapons programme (Figure 2.1). It also published a satirical letter which was submitted by a member of SCND:



Figure 2.1 Anti-nuclear images published by SCND, 1982.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Rosenthal, ‘Nuclear Cloud,’ 67; Weart, *Nuclear Fear*, 103.

Dear Councillor, Grandma died last week. We did, fortunately, have an extra-large plastic bag from when the hoover was delivered but getting her out of the window wasn't easy. The window box is only three foot six inches and we didn't want her rolling off [...] When we voted for you at the last election you said you would provide facilities for old people, so please will you come and collect her.²⁸

The letter was written from the perspective of an individual after a nuclear war, writing to the government asking them to collect their dead grandma. These emotionally evocative images and publications were common in anti-nuclear narratives and likely influenced how Alexander composed his story to me. In this way, nuclear anxiety became a central trope of Alexander's storytelling. It was also an example of the ways emotion was used to promote an anti-nuclear political agenda through experience, as the memory was employed to raise awareness of a contemporary issue.

Throughout the Cold War, CND transformed from a "moral crusade" into a "mobilisation of anxiety" which "harnessed the fears of the British public."²⁹ Christopher Rootes argues that the narrative of CND changed from trying to set an example for the world to follow into rallying the public to "avoid becoming victims of nuclear war."³⁰ In fact, of the nineteen individuals interviewed who had been a member of CND in the Cold War, seventeen remained active protestors. Although these individuals usually refrained from discussing their present-day activism, it made it more difficult to separate their past and present sense of activism. Despite Alexander's memory of genuine fear, evidenced by him physically hiding under the bed, he highlighted the absurdity of it through humour, laughing about the scare he gave his wife and the comedic scene of him jumping from his bed in fear. This was an exceptional and vivid memory for Alexander and served to historically contextualise the climate

²⁸ Edinburgh CND News, Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Edinburgh Branch, April 1982 (NLS QP.la.1254 SER)

²⁹ Christopher Rootes, 'The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: from Moral Crusade to Mobilisation of Anxiety', in *Public Opinion and Nuclear Weapons* ed. Catherine Marsh and Colin Fraser (London: Macmillan, 1989), 85.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

of 1962 through a personal recollection which intersected with the wider cultural and political anxiety of the time.

Roger Leech reported experiencing a similar, exceptional, and emotive experience during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Roger was interested in nuclear physics and spent most of his career as a nuclear engineer, spending some time in the 1980s working at Sellafield in Cumbria. He became an established author and wrote several books reflecting on his childhood experiences. He would later tell me that he chose not to dwell on the Cold War within his biographies as they “didn’t fit” with the “innocent childhood” narrative present in his writing. Roger recalled the year 1962:

I remember Macmillan was our Prime Minister. Yes. The Cuban Missile Crisis was really a frightening time. It was like a real nuclear Russian Roulette [laughs] It did really feel like Armageddon itself or like it was about to be a Third World War. But this time there wasn’t any soldiers or warships or plans. It was- it was like a war fought from two underground bunkers between the most powerful men on earth. They just needed to press a button and much of mankind would be no more. It honestly scared me to death [laughs].³¹

Like Alexander, Roger recalled the Crisis being “on the news every day and on the front pages of the newspapers.” His comparison of the event to a “real Russian Roulette” is notable. Russian roulette is a game of chance in which a player passes around a revolver loaded with a single round and each player pulls the trigger, pointing towards their head, hoping that the weapon does not discharge. The comparison of the event to this lethal luck-based game demonstrates attitudes and feelings towards the “very likely” possibility of the “end of the world.”³² This comparison re-emerges as he reflects on “they [politicians]” being able to “just press a button” to instigate a nuclear attack.³³ Central to Roger’s anxieties was the lack of human involvement in the decision of nuclear war. As he reflected on the “pushing of a button” or the pulling of a

³¹ Interview Leech.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ This was a common imagination amongst interviewees. This will be explored extensively in section three of this chapter.

trigger, Roger conceded that nuclear war was “terrifying” because it did *not* have any soldiers or “plans”. Instead, it was “frightening because was a luck-based” confrontation between “powerful men” in “bunkers.”³⁴ Although Roger laughed after this comparison, he was notably tense. This same tone repeated as he reflected how he was “scared to death.” Throughout this section of his testimony, he frequently dwelled on themes of luck and death.

Roger’s memories were also lightened by humour. Later in the interview, he sarcastically remarked “oh that made it all alright and safe then” when recalling that the “Queen had said it [the Cold War] would all be okay.”³⁵ He concluded his memory of the Cuban Missile Crisis “feeling it was mad that it could be MAD [laughs].” Although anxiety is palpable in both Alexander and Roger’s vivid and sensational memories, humour is also present. It highlights attitudes towards the “absurdity” of the international conflict and the “very real” possibility of nuclear war.³⁶ In Bourke’s study of emotions in American and British military forces in the First and Second World Wars, fear is found to be the “most dominant” and “common” emotion in these “military narratives” but often interplayed with other emotional experiences.³⁷ Bourke argues that emotions such as “empathy”, “anger”, “exhilaration and resignation” formed the “tumbling confusion of emotions in the confrontation between the individual and technology.”³⁸ Although many of the interviewees who participated in this research did not see military action, they reflected upon these motifs and cultural memories to shape their feelings about the Cold War. This reflects the suggestions of Hogg regarding a “unified understanding of nuclear danger.”³⁹ Nuclear anxiety appeared to be “always there” for interviewees and would spill over during flashpoints of anxiety. The responses of individuals during these flashpoints

³⁴ Interview, Leech.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Joanna Bourke, ‘The emotions in war: fear and the British and American military, 1914-1945’, *Historical Research* 74(185) (2001): 315.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 330.

³⁹ Hogg, ‘The family’, 545.

reflected this shared mindset, knowledge, and understanding of nuclear war. Civilians experiences were framed by and rooted in British nuclear culture and the knowledge that emerged from the mass media. This then shaped the emotional responses of interviewees.⁴⁰

Notably, throughout both recollections, nuclear anxiety seemed to be entrenched in a feeling of “suspense”, which Cordle argues is a key characteristic of nuclear anxiety.⁴¹ For Alexander, the coming of dawn and a new day during the 1962 Crisis generated a feeling of suspense.⁴² On the other hand, Roger recalled feeling “everything was happening slowly and quickly at the same time” and it was “on his mind all the time during those few days.”⁴³ Roger and Alexander’s moments of genuine anxiety were rooted within the broader, psychological impact of the suspense of the Cold War. The Cuban Missile Crisis made these anxieties of a possible nuclear war a reality.⁴⁴ Roger and Alexander’s fears also manifested themselves into their everyday lives and experience, affecting their feelings about the future. Both experiences revealed the genuine anxieties present in the British Cold War experience, as well as how *other* emotional states and cultural motifs intersected with these recollections.

Memories of the Cuban Missile Crisis were not always told in such emotive and dramatic narratives. However, even when the Crisis was not presented as a moment of anxiety, it was always recognised as a “significant moment” of widespread anxiety in Britain and the wider world. Peter Cattigan recollected how he was a “young schoolmaster at the time” and “had just been chosen as a Conservative candidate for the next election.” He told me it was a “time of real tension” and recalled “the Cuban Missile Crisis was nuclear brinkmanship of the highest order. People around me genuinely thought it was going to happen.” He then proceeded

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 548.

⁴¹ Cordle, 'In Dreams,' 103.

⁴² Interview, Campbell.

⁴³ Interview, Leech.

⁴⁴ Cordle, 'In Dreams', 105.

to move onto the 1964 general election and his memories of standing as a candidate.⁴⁵ For Peter, the Cuban Missile Crisis was a flashpoint of tension, but he framed his memory of the event between his professional and political career, normalising the exceptional event into his everyday narrative. Although the event was situated between Peter's memories of his professional career, he stressed how it was a crisis "of the highest order", situating the Cuban Missile Crisis as a landmark in his Cold War memories. His referral to "people around him genuinely" feeling nuclear war was going to happen was a reflection of the political anxiety at the time, as politicians scrambled to resolve the crisis just as Peter began his political career. According to Gerard DeGroot, for politicians and civilians around the world, "a catastrophic war seemed a very real possibility."⁴⁶ Although Peter did not express explicit anxiety about the Cuban Missile Crisis, he reflected upon the "widespread suspense" of politicians and civilians at the time. Even where nuclear anxiety was not explicitly present within the testimony, civilians still reflected upon its importance in the wider British Cold War experience. It is also important to note that Peter had access to knowledge that other civilians simply did not have. His integration with political life and policy shaped his narrative profusely. Although it was not explicit, it was certainly implied that this was also the case for the Cuban Missile Crisis as Peter rarely shared his personal opinion of the event and cited numerous political and historical narratives to frame his experience.

Andrew and Sylvia Moore's testimony also reveal the experiences of nuclear anxiety during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Andrew Moore was born in 1929 in London. He became a Roman Catholic Priest but left this role to pursue protesting in CND full-time. He held several key positions in the organisation and remains an influential member to this day. He married Sylvia in the 1980s. Sylvia was born in 1953 and was born and educated in London. She was a

⁴⁵ Interview, Cattigan.

⁴⁶ DeGroot, *The Bomb*, 263.

member of many peace groups including CND, Collateral Damage, and PAX Christi. Her interests lay in journalism and writing. The couple were interviewed together and while recalling the Cuban Missile Crisis, Andrew told me “I have a psychological problem where I never see a disaster happening until it has happened and so I never believe it is going to happen you know and it will all be alright. Something will turn up.” He continued that when he went through the Cuban Missile Crisis “he had that kind of mentality” but later he realised “it could have all gone wrong.”⁴⁷ Like Schwebel suggests, Andrew seemed to suppress the “apparent disaster” of the Cuban Missile Crisis and “only realised” it was so close to nuclear war “a few days after it was over.”⁴⁸ Andrew did not perceive the event as a crisis, until much later when he reflected “what an impact it had had.”⁴⁹ He concluded his recollection with a quote from Robert McNamara that “we were saved” from the Cuban Missile Crisis “not by our good judgment but our good luck.” He continued “it was just good luck [laughs].”⁵⁰ Sylvia agreed and recollected that it was “lucky” that “nuclear war didn’t happen.” Just as Roger compared the event to a game of Russian roulette, Andrew and Sylvia reflected on “chance” and “luck” frequently throughout their recollection of the event.

Civilians were unable to physically exercise power over nuclear weapons, and thus luck and chance were common motifs in their narratives. This suggests feelings of powerlessness within the British civilian community during this period. Hogg argues that throughout the 1950s, a sense of uncertainty, powerlessness, and anxiety disrupted “the broader conceptions of self, nationhood, and existence in British life.”⁵¹ In much the same way, the Cuban Missile Crisis intersected and disrupted everyday life, resulting in feelings of suspense, anxiety, and powerlessness. It was a flashpoint of anxiety for Andrew, albeit a delayed one. For Sylvia, it

⁴⁷ Interview, Moore.

⁴⁸ Schwebel, ‘Reality’, 539.

⁴⁹ Interview, Moore.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Hogg, ‘The family’, 549.

was a “profound moment” in her life and “motivated her” to “take action.” Despite not feeling “particularly worried” at the time, Andrew continued to discuss its “importance” in “Cold War history” and a “pivotal moment” in “CND efforts against the bomb.” He acknowledged the Crisis as one of “particular significance.” As Andrew and Peter’s experiences suggest, the Cuban Missile Crisis was an event that resulted in a feeling of widespread anxiety about the future and the realities of nuclear war.

Those who did not remember the Cuban Missile Crisis also discussed its significance in their Cold War experience. William Stonewell recalled feeling anxious about the crisis, despite being born in 1964:

There was the Cuban Missile Crisis. I wasn’t born then but my mother remembers that. I think that was the closest we’ve ever been to nuclear war, that’s what my mother used to talk about that, that’s what my father used to talk about. I think it was a lot closer to nuclear war than anyone actually- the general public- than anyone actually really knows personally [pauses].⁵²

In this memory, the cultural belief in the brinkmanship of the Cuban Missile Crisis shaped his experience.⁵³ Despite William not living through the period, he lived through the event through his parents’ experiences. William also acknowledges this lack of knowledge about the “real events”, remarking that the general public “didn’t really know how close it [nuclear war] got”. After reflecting on this, William paused for a while and did not speak again until prompted. William then commented, “it’s just a bit freaky when you think too much about it [laughs].”⁵⁴ Parents often inform the perceptions of events their children did not live through.⁵⁵ Mike Dalton reflected on a similar experience, recollecting that his parents spoke about the “very real fear of nuclear destruction during the Cuban Missile Crisis.”⁵⁶

⁵² Interview, Stonewell.

⁵³ Hogg, ‘The family’, 541; Grant, ‘Making sense’, 237.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ This will be explored extensively in chapter four.

⁵⁶ Interview, Dalton.

In the BBC ‘People’s War’ Project, in which hundreds of stories were collected from individuals about the Second World War, children would often re-tell the stories of their parents in exceptional detail.⁵⁷ The experiences of parents who fought and served in the war effort shaped the lives, emotions, perceptions, and memories of their children.⁵⁸ Robert Reynolds argues that cultural and collective traumas are often passed down within society and therefore form the life stories of individuals who did not live through the trauma itself.⁵⁹ National traumas such as the Holocaust or the atomic attacks in Hiroshima are examples of such events which have continued to shape the perceptions, memories, and emotions of civilians. Garagozov argues “even if participants have no particular painful subjective memories of conflict, they have a collective memory which is framed by the social context” of the society they live within, “a society with collective trauma.”⁶⁰ In this way, the Cuban Missile Crisis defined the memories and experiences of the Cold War of those who did not live through it. The language and “story-telling” of the Cuban Missile Crisis being the closest the world came to annihilation mysticised it.⁶¹ This cultural iconography of the Crisis has led to the embedding of the memory into lived experience, enhanced its emotional associations, and influenced how these experiences are recollected.⁶²

Despite this, some interviewees could not remember the event, challenging the sensational cultural narrative of the international event.⁶³ Despite their inability to recollect the Crisis, civilians would often express embarrassment that they could not recollect it or would

⁵⁷ Noakes and Pattinson reflect on the ways the Second World War shaped cultural memory in Britain. Noakes and Pattinson, ‘Keep Calm’ in *British Cultural Memory*.

⁵⁸ WW2 People’s War Archive, BBC, accessed January 2020, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/categories/c1165/>

⁵⁹ Rauf Reynolds, ‘Trauma and the Relational Dynamics of Life History Interviewing’, *Australian Historical Studies* 43(1) (2012): 84

⁶⁰ Garagozov, ‘Collective Memory’, 34.

⁶¹ Eaton, ‘Nuclear anxiety’, 68.

⁶² There has been extensive work on how historical events have shaped cultural and popular memory, particularly of the Second World War: Penny Summerfield, ‘The generation of memory: Gender and the popular memory of the Second World War in Britain’ in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War* ed. Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 28-29.

⁶³ Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 133-134.

continue to acknowledge its importance in the wider British experience. Frank Davies, who was “about eighteen” at the time of the Crisis, recalled that he “couldn’t remember what happened” but he was “probably watching Top of the Pops at the time.”⁶⁴ Although many narratives cited the Cuban Missile Crisis as appearing “constantly” in the news, Frank recalled being preoccupied with the normality of everyday television within the domestic setting of his living room. Despite this, he commented the Crisis was an “important moment in history.”⁶⁵

While the Cuban Missile Crisis was not always remembered as a flashpoint of nuclear anxiety within the lives of interviewees, it was still highlighted as a flashpoint of nuclear anxiety in the British *collective* experience. Cheryl Lincoln told me she “remembered it vaguely” but the memory was blurred:

I can’t even remember what it was now. I remember it though just not what happened [laughs]. With Cuba. Was it Roosevelt? No JFK? But they made friends in the end, didn’t they? No, I can’t remember. It’s gone.⁶⁶

Cheryl remembered the Cuban Missile Crisis as a flashpoint but did not have a *specific* memory entrenched within it. In her narrative, she expressed frustration at not being able to remember particulars about the conflict, commenting that “she should know more” about it.⁶⁷ After this discussion, Cheryl confessed she was “embarrassed” that she could not remember “such an important event of British history” and that her “husband would have been disappointed in her [laughs].”⁶⁸ Just as some individuals expressed indifference to the British nuclear nation, others expressed indifference to this flashpoint in nuclear history. Mike Dalton remarked: “well we would have all died if it had become a nuclear war, so who cares.”⁶⁹ The Cuban Missile Crisis was symbolic of genuine moments of nuclear anxiety and this became a dominant motif in

⁶⁴ Interview, Davies and Smith. It is interesting to note that this reference is temporally incorrect as *Top of the Pops* did not air until 1964.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Interview, Lincoln.

⁶⁷ Interview, Lincoln; Norrick, ‘Remembering and Forgetfulness’, 3.

⁶⁸ Interview, Lincoln.

⁶⁹ Interview, Dalton.

nuclear culture and cultural memory of the event. Sheldon Stearn argues that “an entirely mythical Cuban Missile Crisis is alive and well” and transformed cultural and collective memory.⁷⁰ This was not wholly representative of all those living in Britain however, with some civilians expressing indifference or simply did not place it within their narrative at all.⁷¹

Representations of the Cuban Missile Crisis in the media and knowledge of the cultural memory of the crisis were used as reference points from which to conceptualise the event within their Cold War memories. The testimonies from this section serve to reinforce the argument made in the previous chapter that nuclear anxiety was deeply varied and personal to ordinary people, but wider national, cultural, political, and emotional assumptions, and the operation of cultural memory, shaped how interviewees told their stories. Awareness of suspense and uncertainty was central to many of these memories, as the Cuban Missile Crisis became the climax of years of increasing international tension which “very nearly resulted in the end of humankind.”⁷² An analysis of this event through the testimony of British civilians reveals how the extraordinary intersected with the everyday. This “important moment of British history” was recalled by all as an event of political and international significance.⁷³ Despite this, not all interviewees recollected it in the same way. Some described dramatic memories, which were sometimes politicised, while others recalled moments of genuine anxiety. Many referred to feelings of powerlessness and a sensation that the Crisis was only overcome by luck. However, several interviewees expressed embarrassment or frustration that they were not able to recollect the event in detail. The number of references in the testimonies reveals how this flashpoint of nuclear anxiety disrupted everyday life and shaped experience during the British Cold War.

⁷⁰ Sheldon Stearn, *The Cuban Missile Crisis in American Memory myths verses reality* (California: Stanford University Press, 2012), 5.

⁷¹ Zahra, ‘Imagined Non-communities’, 93.

⁷² Interview, Moore.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Section II: Passion, anger, and anxiety: Considering the emotional responses to British nuclear politics, civil defence, and the anti-nuclear movement

The political climate which foregrounded the British experience of the Cold War shaped the memories, experiences, and emotions of civilians. Politics often became a topic of conversation throughout the interviews, both prompted and unprompted. Although these memories were often referenced alongside feelings of uncertainty, other emotions were expressed alongside nuclear anxiety. These moments in which emotional states intersected demonstrate the complex and multifaceted experience of nuclear anxiety during this period. Frequently, interviewees expressed passionate emotions of anxiety and anger and often the emotional states intersected. Bourke argues that anger “contains elements of fear”, including anxiety.⁷⁴ In this way, narratives of anger can reveal feelings of anxiety. Notably, humour also found its way into these memories. Karen Parkhill et al examines the humour and emotion work in communities living near nuclear power stations and argues that humorous language and discourses can reveal affectively charged states such as anxiety, frustration, and anger. For example, humour can be used as a more permissible and socially acceptable way to express feelings of anger and anxiety to others.⁷⁵

In the interviews, recollections about the anti-nuclear movement and their political agenda, civil defence initiatives, and international political decision making were common and were recalled alongside feelings of anger, frustration, and passion. This section unpicks the different emotional responses that intersected and impacted experiences of nuclear anxiety within the oral history testimony. It also argues that specific political experiences, particularly

⁷⁴ Joanna Bourke, ‘Fear and Anxiety: Writing about Emotion in Modern History,’ *History Workshop Journal* 55(1) (2003): 115.

⁷⁵ Karen Parkhill et al, ‘Laughing it off? Humour affect and emotion work in communities living with nuclear risk’, *The British Journal of Sociology* 62(2) (2011): 325.

the involvement with the peace movement, drastically shaped individual Cold War experiences and emotions.

British civilians found their everyday lives were impacted by international, national, and local politics which defined the period. The Cold War was defined by the East-West divide, as political speeches described an “Iron curtain” between Western Europe and Eastern Europe and Germany was split into two halves.⁷⁶ Throughout this period, numerous events and conflicts escalated the growing international tension and fears of Communism and American nuclear missiles. After 1962, the Cold War saw a lull in nuclear anxieties as the Vietnam War dominated popular culture. Between 1979 and 1989, a renewal of intense nuclear anxieties accompanied the controversial renewal of Trident nuclear submarines and the deployment of Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe.⁷⁷ The period also saw two major nuclear accidents of global significance, Three Mile Island (1979) in the US and Chernobyl (1986) in the Soviet Union, which intensified the anti-nuclear movement and increased fears of nuclear-related accidents. These events and moments dominated the media and politics throughout the Cold War, leading many interviewees to reflect its “constant presence in the news.”⁷⁸

Many individuals recalled a feeling of anger or resistance to the government, regardless of where they placed themselves on the political spectrum, although the reasons for these emotions differed greatly. Carole Fraley and Susan Hodges-Walker were both members of CND. In their interview, they reflected upon their feelings about politics during the 1980s:

Emily: So, with what was going on with the Cold War in the 1980s, politically, what emotions did that evoke for you?

Susan: Anger. Certainly.

Carole: That’s what came to me first as well. Anger. And then sadness.

Emily: Why?

⁷⁶ Greenwood, *Cold War*, 39.

⁷⁷ Graham Stewart, *A History of Britain in the 1980s* (London: Atlantic Books, 2013) 29-32, 197.

⁷⁸ Interview, Moore.

Carole: Well for me. I had concerns about the future and Thatcher, her just being elected and I was horrified by her actions and what was happening. The Falklands. Trident. It was all really.

Susan: Yeah. Sadness about other people not seeing why we need to get rid of these weapons. But it was determination too. [pauses] That we are not going to give up trying to get rid of them. And you know this year- well last year, they did get a treaty signed then and as we all know international law is not respected by the powerful countries. While their action behind what they *know* is the right thing to do. Yeah, I would say I was angry. And the imminence of a nuclear bomb dropping wasn't in my mind. I was angry that nuclear weapons were still being supported and used by politicians and powerful countries. And I did worry about it.⁷⁹

This interaction unravels the multifaceted feeling of anxiety alongside anger against political rhetoric or regimes.⁸⁰ Although threads of anxiety are tangible within the women's testimonies, such as Carole's anxiety over her children ("I joined CND for my children") and Susan's reflection on total nuclear war ("Well we would all be incinerated."), Susan rejected a narrative of anxiety, specifically that of feeling frightened or scared for one of anger. Susan reflected how she did "worry", particularly "about the future of the world", aligning her feelings closer to a sense of suspense. Alongside this were explicit affirmations of her anger ("I was angry that nuclear weapons were being supported") and sadness ("sadness about other people not seeing why we need to get rid of them"). Notably, a sense of activist determination was palpable, as Susan reflected that these feelings "motivated her to take action", particularly "how angry" she felt about "politicians and the war crime of nuclear war."⁸¹

As Stearns and Stearns have shown, political activism often became entangled with feelings of anger. Indeed, within such movements, expressions of anger were encouraged within the emotional communities.⁸² Robert Hewison demonstrates that the political and cultural climate of Cold War Britain was one of anger and resistance which brought with it the rhetoric

⁷⁹ Interview, Fraley and Hodges-Walker.

⁸⁰ Carol Stearns and Peter Stearns, *Anger: The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's History* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 228.

⁸¹ Interview, Fraley and Hodges-Walker.

⁸² Stearns and Stearns, *Anger*, 27.

of the “angry youth” and radical changes in attitudes in British life.⁸³ During the 1980s, against a backdrop of social fragmentation, violence, high unemployment, and socio-economic change, the British youth inserted political ideas into music and culture, resisting the status-quo, all of which served as an important cultural backdrop to the emergence of anti-nuclear anger.

According to Matthew Worley, the cultural innovation of punk became synonymous with feelings of anger and frustration.⁸⁴ In particular, anger against authority, and feelings of alienation and powerlessness sparked this cultural shift.⁸⁵ This movement intersected with CND, as mass rallies of the political youth (such as university CND groups or anarchy groups) joined their marches and “punk-informed cultures” began to resist the nuclear bomb. Art, music, and culture in the punk movement incorporated the CND movement. Worley argues that this “affirmed punk’s oppositionism and sense of “us and them.”⁸⁶ This cultural backdrop influenced the emotionology of nuclear anxiety.⁸⁷ Chris Bradbury remembered “young anarchists and communists” appearing at the protests in the 1980s.⁸⁸ Anger was reported outside of anti-nuclear testimony, reflecting the mood of the country. William Stonewell expressed anger over Britain “not developing its own nuclear weapons”⁸⁹ Cheryl Lincoln expressed “feeling angry” when she thought about the “children who were affected by Chernobyl” and reported “feeling cross” when she reflected on Hiroshima.⁹⁰

In Susan and Carole’s testimony, specific events evoked their feelings of anger towards the actions of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher renewed the British nuclear

⁸³ Robert Hewison, *In Anger: Culture in the Cold War* (London: Weindenfeld & Nicolson, 1981), 3.

⁸⁴ Matthew Worley, *No future: punk politics and British youth culture, 1976-1984* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 7, 102-103,

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 140, 151

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 239-240, 241, 242.

⁸⁷ Stearns and Stearns, ‘Emotionology’, 813.

⁸⁸ Interview, Bradbury.

⁸⁹ Interview, Stonewell.

⁹⁰ Interview, Lincoln.

programme Trident, which was sold by America, in 1980.⁹¹ This marked a closer relationship with America, which Thatcher actively sought, and brought about the deployment of US Cruise missiles to Britain. These political decisions lead to an intensification of the nuclear protest movement.⁹² The Falklands conflict and powerful countries “not doing the right thing” by disarming also induced a feeling of anger for the women. Throughout the 1980s, CND fell out of popularity as Thatcher and the Conservative government defeated the Labour Campaign, led by CND supporter Michael Foot (Figure 2.2).

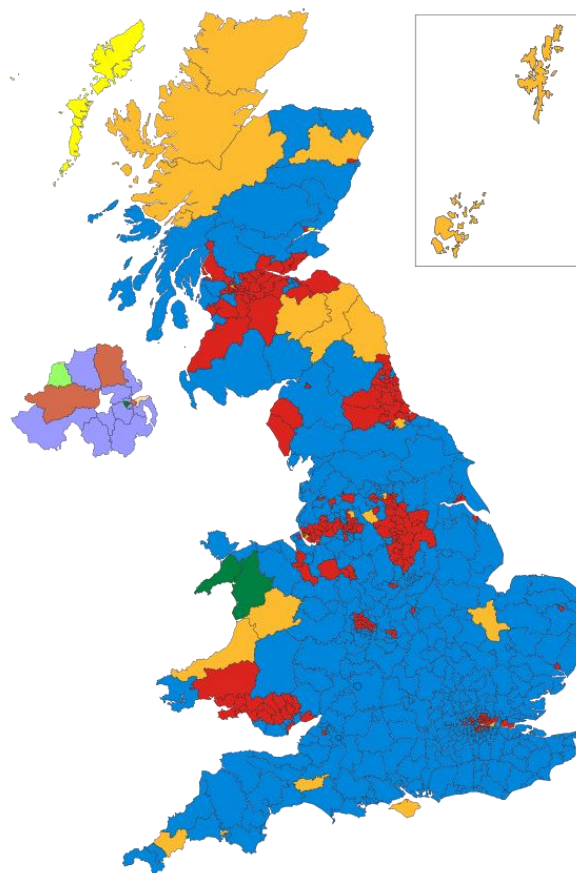


Figure 2.2 Map showing the Election results of 1983. The key combatants were Conservative (Blue), Labour (Red), and Social Democratic Party (SDP) (Orange).

Anger, morality, and anxiety were emotions that intersected in anti-nuclear testimony, echoing the strong sense of emotional community across anti-nuclear groups.⁹³ Susan reflected

⁹¹ Richard Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The politics and social upheaval of the 1980s* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 31.

⁹² Laucht and Johnes, 'Resist and Survive', 226.

⁹³ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 203.

on her feelings that the atomic bombing of Hiroshima was “a war crime” and “violates every sort of international law and morality one could imagine.”⁹⁴ Susan’s anger was audible and palpable as she discussed this. In this case, Susan’s feelings of anger linked to her perception of morality and righteousness, resisting the rhetoric of MAD and the nuclear arms race. Stearns and Stearns argue that politics, protest, law, and public policy were “accepted” outlets for anger in society and often entangled in feelings of “righteousness.”⁹⁵ In Susan’s narrative, anxiety intersected with these feelings. Although she expressed “anger at the lack of support for the peace movement” and she felt “determined” and “confident she was doing the *right* thing”, she still noted she felt “worried” for the future. In this way, nuclear anxiety was not a singular emotive experience, and overlapped and interconnected with other nuclear emotions.

For the most part, feelings of anger were associated with those who participated in the peace movement. This is demonstrated by the text *Righteous Anger* published by Juley Howard and Faith Moulin.⁹⁶ The text captures the experiences of these women while they protested at the Greenham Common peace camp between 1983 and 1993. The camp was established in 1981, in response to the Cruise missiles which were based in RAF Greenham Common in Wales. It became a women-only endeavour and was active until 2000.⁹⁷ *Righteous Anger* retells the life-story of Juley and her memories of the camp. Convinced by the morality of the anti-nuclear position and driven by righteous anger, actions such as “cutting the fence” and resisting the police became symbolic of “direct non-violent action” and defiance against the political nuclear rhetoric.⁹⁸ Chris Bradbury, an activist in Amnesty International, CND and Pax Christi, recalled that he felt “many people in the [peace] movement were actually really angry” about

⁹⁴ Interview, Fraley and Hodges-Walker.

⁹⁵ Stearns and Stearns, *Anger*, 228-229.

⁹⁶ Juley Howard and Faith Moulin, *Righteous Anger: One woman’s action for peace 1983-1993* (UK: FeedARead Publishing, 2017), 19-20.

⁹⁷ Harford and Hopkins, *Greenham Common*, 4.

⁹⁸ Howard and Moulin, *Righteous Anger*, 19-20.

the nuclear arms race but at the same time, they were “good and right” and it was “better than living in fear.”⁹⁹

Passion and humour also intersected these feelings of anger. Alexander Campbell frequently referred to politicians (usually British MPs) as “bomb dropping bastards.” His tone was loud, passionate, and angry but was simultaneously presented as a joke as he laughed kindly after making this remark. This aligns with Parkhill et al’s findings, as Alexander used humour to express his anger at those in power. Shortly after this comment, he remarked in a sombre tone that “it’s only them [politicians] who can push the button”, which represents a belief in the powerlessness of individual citizens. As Parkhill et al notes, Alexander’s use of humour highlights his various affective states, in this case, anxiety, anger, and powerlessness.¹⁰⁰ These narratives demonstrate the complex emotional political landscape of Cold War Britain, particularly within the emotional community of the peace movement.

Anger also appeared within wider British culture focused on nuclear weapons and the Cold War. Newspapers often used anger to frame their headlines on Trident costs and reports on the conflicts between anti-nuclear groups and the government. These narratives were not exclusive to anti-nuclear culture, with feelings of anger associated with MPs and local government initiatives common in local press reports.¹⁰¹ One report from the *South Wales Echo* in 1981 reported that teachers were “angry” by their union’s refusal to adopt a policy approving unilateral nuclear disarmament.¹⁰² Adrian Bingham, in his review of the British popular press between 1945 and the early 1960s, found that the press would often employ angry language to

⁹⁹ Interview, Bradbury.

¹⁰⁰ Parkhill et al, ‘Laughing it off?’ 331.

¹⁰¹ ‘New anger over the costs of Trident’, *Evening Standard*, 14 May 1984; ‘Church call for nuclear ban angers MPs’, *Belfast Telegraph*, 7 August 1982; ‘Anger over N-protest hut plan’, *South Wales Echo*, 6 March 1984; ‘Political ban plans anger CND’, *South Wales Echo*, 22 June 1983; ‘Defence snub angers Council’, *South Wales Echo*, 12 January 1983; ‘N-war plans anger MP’, *South Wales Echo*, 17 August 1982.

¹⁰² ‘N-policy failure angers teachers’ *South Wales Echo*, 18 May 1981.

“criticise the nuclear weapons programme” and “anger the authorities.”¹⁰³ Anger also appeared in political discourses. In 1982, for example, the Church of Scotland General Assembly met to “discuss the nuclear question.” George Reid, a Scottish minister of the Church of Scotland, provided an impassioned speech which described, in angry tones, that nuclear weapons were “hellish”, “corrupted” and the “real enemy.”¹⁰⁴ This anger intersected with anxiety as his speech reflected on the “hellish consequences” of nuclear weapons and the “corruption of nature” due to their use. Reid continued, stating the audacity that the “principle of violence” [nuclear weapons] are used as “keepers of peace.” The assembly later voted 255 to 153 to call upon the Church of Scotland to oppose the use of nuclear power for war-like purposes. In these mediums, anger and anxiety were used to employ an emotive incentive to join the resistance to national and local political decisions, often encouraging civilians to act. Within culture and political narratives, nuclear anxiety was not a singular emotional response and overlapped with others, forming a complex emotional landscape of Cold War British politics.

Recollections offered by interviewees immersed in anti-nuclear communities who resisted Cold War British ideology were often romanticised for their sense of righteousness and morality. Memories of resisting the nuclear nation-state were integrated with nostalgic recollections, entangled in feelings surrounding the morality and righteousness of the non-use of nuclear weapons. Rosie Stanford, a member of CND, Snowball, Greenpeace, Amnesty International, and Mothers for Peace, provided one such example. She was born in 1944 to a Methodist family. Her father was a Church Minister and a conscientious objector. She was initially interested in human rights groups and joined CND in the early 1970s. Like Juley, Rosie participated in non-violent direct action, often ‘cutting the wire’ at Greenham Common or RAF

¹⁰³ Adrian Bingham, 'The Monster? The British popular press and nuclear culture, 1945-early 1960s', *British Journal for the History of Science* 45(4) (2012): 612.

¹⁰⁴ Clip from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1982, Scotland's Record, Church of Scotland, Digitised by Unlocking Our Sound Heritage (UOSH), NLS MS 22302, UNLS001/106.

Molesworth, where Cruise missiles were also based.¹⁰⁵ Rosie felt that joining CND was “the right thing to do” and nuclear weapons were “immoral.” Furthermore, she often commented she felt “appalled” and “angry” at the British nuclear weapons programme. Rosie was arrested numerous times, often intentionally, to resist the political and legal rhetoric of nuclear weapons:

So, it was an attempt by activists to confront our legal system about the illegality of nuclear weapons. And we did it by snipping fences. We committed criminal damage and we did it openly- after informing the police and- then they would arrest us. They would bring us to court, and we would aim to speak in court and the legal definition of nuclear attack. [...] and we used to go there on a regular basis and get and get arrested [...] The whole idea was to gain publicity and to challenge the legal system and- and usually we were fine because the damage wasn't huge but of course if you break a link in a fence the whole fence has to be replaced and when a whole group of people were lining up to snip fences there's quite a bit of damage done.¹⁰⁶

Rosie participated in political action, like other women did, to resist nuclear weapons.¹⁰⁷ Her experiences were entangled in feelings of anger. Rosie recollected how the judge or police would “often let her go” so she “couldn’t speak” in court, which caused frustration.¹⁰⁸ She reflected how the movement was a “symbol of resistance for women” and her actions were a “small step towards stopping these weapons [nuclear bombs] being used for nuclear attack.”¹⁰⁹ These anxious, angry memories were laced with nuclear emotions: hope, nostalgia, and pride.

Many interviewees associated with the peace movement often reflected upon their memories in CND with happiness and nostalgia. Rosie recalled protests and vigils with friends and her family, meeting others in the movement she admired, and standing up for “what she believed in.”¹¹⁰ She brought along many photos to the interviews, which depicted Rosie and her friends smiling as they cut wires at bases or posed with police officers.¹¹¹ Throughout the

¹⁰⁵ Interview, Stanford.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Catherine Eschle, 'Gender and the subject of (anti)nuclear politics: revisiting women's campaigning against the bomb', *International Studies Quarterly* 57 (2013): 714.

¹⁰⁸ Interview, Stanford.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Images of these photos are not included in the thesis as Rosie was uncomfortable with me taking them away or photographing them. She was happy for me to make notes, however.

interview, Rosie's feelings about nuclear weapons were often conflicted as she grappled with a multitude of emotions. Despite her anger at nuclear weapons and the happy nostalgia she recalled; Rosie still felt "worried" about nuclear war. This supports Schwebel's findings in which anti-nuclear activism lowers individual feelings of powerlessness and increased perceptions of the nuclear threat.¹¹² In a later interview, she told me "she might have been denying how worried she felt" by participating in the peace movement.¹¹³ Meredith Veldman demonstrates CND activists often found themselves with an "alternative way of thinking about and practising politics." It became a way for civilians to reclaim their rights to control their nation and was "romanticised" as a moral movement.¹¹⁴ Grant argues that images and films depicting nuclear war were often used as a moral standpoint and popularised by CND. Films like *Threads* were screened at CND events to motivate others to join the campaign.¹¹⁵ Several studies on those involved in the anti-nuclear movement found that many did not "deny" or participate in psychic numbing of the nuclear threat. They instead reported that they could "suppress their concerns" through political activity.¹¹⁶ In this way, nuclear anxiety was controlled and reduced by participants through participation in the anti-nuclear campaign. On the other hand, other nuclear emotions such as anger or passion were actively encouraged.

Conversely, one interviewee found that Cold War politics intersected his life in exceptional ways. The Lord Peter Cattigan was an MP for the Conservative Party in 1970 as the Cold War saw its second wave of protest and international tension. Although many civilians found Cold War politics became embedded into their everyday lives, Peter experienced this to a profound degree compared to the average British civilian, whose only contact with politics

¹¹² Schwebel, 'Reality', 539.

¹¹³ Interview, Stanford.

¹¹⁴ Meredith Veldman, *Fantasy, the Bomb, and the Greening of Britain: Romantic Protest, 1945-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 201.

¹¹⁵ Matthew Grant, 'Images of survival, stories of destruction: Nuclear war on British screens from 1945 to the early 1960s', *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 10(1) (2013): 7-26.

¹¹⁶ Schwebel, 'Reality', 539.

was usually through newspapers or television.¹¹⁷ Throughout the interview, Peter frequently recalled moments when his life became intersected with broader British politics, and like Rosie, his reasons for becoming politically active were those of passion. Peter felt that when he became an MP, the “Cold War was at its height” and for the “first twenty years” of his political career “it was very very very much the dominant issue in foreign politics.”¹¹⁸ Peter recalled his early years as an MP:

One of the first things that I did when I became a member of Parliament was to become a chairman of the campaign for the release of Soviet Jews. [...] They were very badly treated under the communist regime and when I was elected to the House of Commons, a Jewish MP approached me, if I, as a Christian, would be willing to be on the campaign. And I agreed and I went to the Soviet Union on a number of occasions, and I was always less than courteously received by the Soviet ambassador of the day. I was always refused a visa to go there.¹¹⁹

For Peter, his political and religious passions overlapped with the wider Cold War. He found an almost everyday conflict with the regime of the Soviet Union in his life through the presence of Cold War issues in the House of Commons.¹²⁰ This conflict was made palpable when Peter recalled his experiences with communism, memories of being retained in Berlin, tense interactions with Soviet diplomats, and personal interactions with the “nasty regime.”¹²¹ For Peter, Cold War ideologies, beliefs, and politics were at the heart of his nuclear experience.¹²²

Although the Cold War was an important aspect of Peter’s political career, he rarely discussed his opinion on nuclear weapons only briefly stating that he “was no friend of nuclear weapons” but they “ended the Second World War much earlier” and “prevented” a “Third World War.” Conversely, he often told me that the weapons made him “feel uncertain” but they “could not be undone.”¹²³ For Peter, the prevailing political mindset was one driven by passion

¹¹⁷ For example, William Stonewell, Irene Perkins, and Roger Leech all reported getting their news from these outlets. Interview, Stonewell; Interview, Perkins; Interview, Leech.

¹¹⁸ Interview, Cattigan.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Baylis and Stoddart, ‘Nuclear Experience (Part 2),’ 493

¹²³ Interview, Cattigan.

and morality. In his testimony, he recalled his charity work and efforts for peace, while criticising the communist regimes of Eastern Europe for their cruelty. Feelings of passion laced these memories; passion for his career, for his political party, and for what he believed was morally right in the Cold War ideological conflict. This sense of morality was often intertwined with feelings of anger about nuclear weapons, particularly in religious narratives.¹²⁴ Peter described himself as Christian and often referred to his faith when discussing the “horrors” of nuclear war. As Kristian Stoddart and John Baylis argue, the political identity of Britain was shaped by nuclear weapons, subsequently shaping the identities of those within it, those who opposed it, and the civilians who watched it unfold in the news.¹²⁵ In much the same way anti-nuclear politics shaped the experience and emotions of activists, nuclear weapons shaped the identity of Peter who worked within the political organisation responsible for them.

As historians of emotions have shown, anger was often associated with feelings of anxiety and fear revealing the complexities of understanding the experience of nuclear anxiety. Nuclear anxiety was not simply a fear response. It was intertwined with *other emotions* such as hope, righteousness, passion, anger, and distrust. All these emotional states and intersections had different meanings to different individuals and shaped their relationships with and opinions about the British nuclear weapons programme. In British politics, anger came to define many of the memories and experiences of British civilians and politicians; anger with the nuclear weapons programme and anger at those who resisted it. As Sterns and Stearns have shown, anger was an accepted emotion with which individuals could express their opinions of governmental decisions. By examining the narratives of anger, righteousness, and passion in the British Cold War experience, nuclear anxiety can be explored more deeply.

¹²⁴ Jonathan Gorry, *Cold War Christians and the spectre of nuclear deterrence, 1945-1959* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Steven P. Lee, *Morality, Prudence and nuclear weapons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹²⁵ Baylis and Stoddart, *British Nuclear Experience*.

Section III: Secrecy and mistrust: Perceptions of Cold War British government(s)

For most interviewees, regardless of their stance on nuclear weapons, government(s) came to symbolise secrecy, mistrust, and incompetence throughout the Cold War. This, alongside the surge of nuclear culture which presented the same popular motifs, influenced a perception of the British government as ‘trigger-happy’, secretive, and irresponsible. This sense of secrecy emerged in the 1950s and 1960s and reappeared with renewed strength in the 1980s. Cultural images of ‘cowboy’ Reagan, politicians accidentally launching nuclear weapons, or the omnipresent image of the ‘the nuclear button’ were pasted across newspapers and portrayed on television.¹²⁶ Narratives of Cold War spies, secret communists, and the locations of nuclear weapons were often speculated in the public domain.¹²⁷ According to Hennessy, the British government became imagined as “secretive” and “shrouded in mystery.”¹²⁸ Within historiography, the secrecy of politics including the transportation of nuclear weapons, testing, laboratories, and secret civil defence programmes have been explored.¹²⁹ This perception of the British state was reflected within the testimonies of British civilians. Most interviewees felt that the government withheld information about nuclear weapons from civilians, regardless of their political stance. Some expressed feelings of uncertainty or mistrust, while others defended the secrecy of the British government as important to the Cold War effort. This section explores civilian political emotional experiences and feelings of mistrust and insecurity. It considers attitudes towards the British government and politicians and offers a specific case study on British civil defence initiatives. Finally, it examines symbols of political insecurity which appeared in the testimony.

¹²⁶ Hogg, *Nuclear Culture*, 51.

¹²⁷ Frances Stoner Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta Publications, 1999).

¹²⁸ Peter Hennessy, *The Secret State: Preparing for the Worst 1945-2010* (London: Penguin, 2010), 3.

¹²⁹ Taylor Miles, ‘St Stephen’s in War and Peace: Civil Defence and the Location of Parliament, 1938-1951’, *Parliamentary History* 38(1) (2019): 135-148; Sam Carroll, ‘Danger! Official Secret: The Spies for Peace: Discretion and Disclosure in the Committee of 100’, *History Workshop Journal* 69(1) (2010): 158-176.

Civilians felt that information about nuclear weapons and nuclear war was withheld from them, but diverse and conflicting perceptions intersected these opinions. Jessica Cox “often” felt the British government “was not revealing everything” and was “sceptical” that this was always to protect the population.¹³⁰ Lewis Brenett expressed a similar opinion recalling feeling that “despite it [nuclear weapons] being on the news all the time” he “barely knew anything” about “what they could actually do.”¹³¹ Interestingly, when Susan and Carole were asked about their perception of the British government’s flow of information to civilians they discussed the British media:

Emily: During the Cold War, did either of you feel that the government ever withheld information from British people?

Carole: I think you’ve always got to question what the media says actually and [...] whatever I’m reading I try to read it critically you know think about what side you are hearing really. So, you can make up your own mind about it as much as possible.

Susan: Yeah likewise. I was sceptical about the media. Then and now.¹³²

Rather than discuss whether the government withheld information from them, Susan and Carole related this question to how the *media* presented and withheld information from them. In this way, culture (the media) and the government formed part of the same entity which should be met with “scepticism” on the information being broadcast. Susan and Carole seemed to have an awareness of the ‘cultural conflict’ through which the Cold War was fought.¹³³ Alexander Campbell recalled the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945:

Well, I remember what happened in Japan. I was 7 years old. And I got on the tram and the windows were covered in giant letters covered in ticket paper reading VJ, VJ, VJ, Victory in Japan. And the world was rejoicing. But people had no idea what had actually happened. There were no photos of human casualties. It was the strictest censorship. I was angry. We weren’t told anything.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Interview, Cox.

¹³¹ Interview, Brenett.

¹³² Interview, Hodges-Walker and Fraley.

¹³³ Tony Shaw, 'The Politics of Cold War Culture', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3(3) (2001): 59

¹³⁴ Interview, Campbell.

Within these memories, there was a clear feeling of anger and frustration at *not knowing* what was “really going on” in nuclear national and international politics.

This sense of hidden political agendas appeared frequently in the testimony of Linda and Greg Southport. Linda was born in Crosby, near Liverpool, in 1944. She described her life as “fortunate” as she was able to “spend most of it protesting things she believed in.” Her parents were pacifists and “encouraged her.”¹³⁵ She joined CND when she was fifteen started her own local CND groups and frequented Greenham Common. She met her husband Greg in the 1960s and moved to Wales. She told me “she was proud her lineage had continued” as her daughter was recently arrested for participating in a CND protest.¹³⁶ Greg was brought up in a Quaker household and his parents were conscientious objectors, as were his grandparents. He was born in Bath in 1944 and moved to Wales in the 1960s after marrying Linda. He worked in recycling, a passion “close to his heart” but described his anti-nuclear activism as “lazy, in comparison to Linda’s.”¹³⁷

Linda and Greg often participated in ‘cruise watch’ during the 1980s. This involved watching and mapping the movements of the Cruise missiles brought into the UK.¹³⁸ Greg recalled that he would often attend the watches in his “business suit” and his “big Audi car” which would “throw off the police” who couldn’t believe “someone like him was tracking cruise movements.”¹³⁹ Within the couple’s testimony, the 1980s was highlighted as a period of particular concern. During this period, membership in anti-nuclear groups skyrocketed as Cold War tensions increased. As Catherine Marsh and Colin Fraser demonstrate in a graph depicting British public opinion, the issue of ‘defence as an urgent problem’ increased rapidly in 1982-

¹³⁵ Interview, Southport.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

1983 and 1986 (Figure 2.3).¹⁴⁰ A key driver of this increase in concern in the British population was the placing of American Cruise missiles on British soil, as civilians feared Britain would become an “American airbase” or the “Soviet-American war would be fought on British soil.”¹⁴¹ These weapons symbolised the hardening of the nuclear rhetoric and have been cited in much scholarship, and testimony, as a moment of uncertainty as the missiles were transported “across the UK secretly, in the shadows.”¹⁴² Within this testimony, the British government was presented as an organisation that *hid* information from the civilian population.

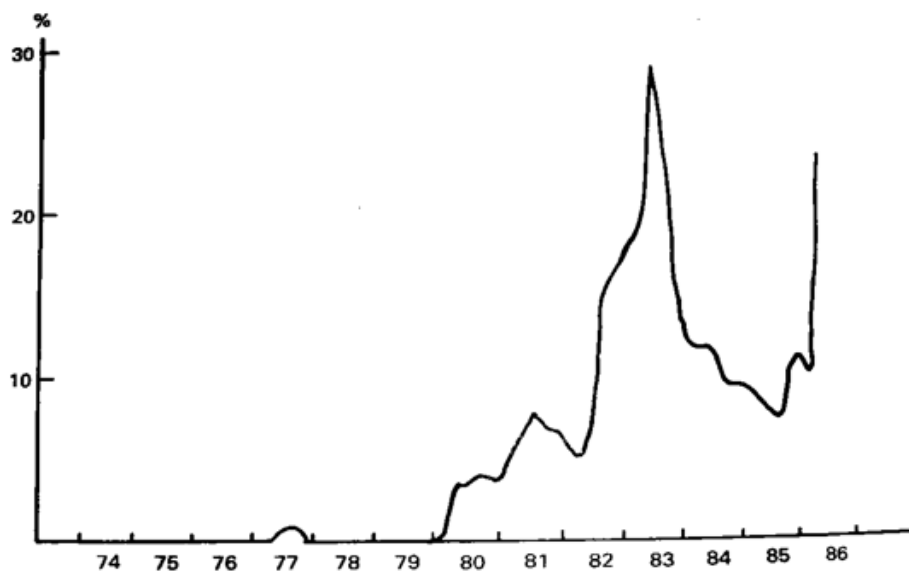


Figure 2.3 "Defence as an urgent problem" from Marsh and Fraser, *Public Opinion*.

Conversely, other civilians accepted that information was kept from them and defended this secrecy. Mike Dalton recalled knowing that the government “kept stuff from us” but he “didn’t mind” because he thought “they [the government] knew what they were doing” and “if they didn’t” he “didn’t want to know as it would have scared the living daylights out” of him.¹⁴³ This instance further supports Schwebel’s hypothesis that ordinary people *suppressed* rather

¹⁴⁰ Catherine Marsh and Colin Fraser (eds.), *Public Opinion and Nuclear Weapons* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 13-14.

¹⁴¹ Interview, Stonewell; Interview, Stanford.

¹⁴² Interview, Stanford.

¹⁴³ Interview, Dalton.

than denied the nuclear threat. Mike overtly expresses that he wouldn't have wanted to know if there were greater risks than those already being broadcast to him as these would have revealed further vulnerabilities and promoted more nuclear fear.¹⁴⁴ Mike's suppression was conscious as he reflected upon how "not knowing" was better than "knowing what the Soviets could really do." Mike furthers his point by citing the 1983 Soviet nuclear false alarm incident, in which Soviet soldier Stanislav Petrov did not respond to a signal which indicted America was launching a nuclear attack. The signal was revealed to be a computer malfunction.¹⁴⁵ Mike noted that he "was glad he didn't know about it at the time" as it "would have worried him."¹⁴⁶ He acknowledges the presence and persistence of "nuclear worries in Britain" and was aware of what would and would not make him more anxious. Although Mike had "faith" in the British government to "make the right decisions", anxiety underscored his recollection.

Other testimony reflected this outlook on "the truth" about nuclear war. Jack Kelly recollected:

I don't knock the government. You know it is their duty to us to try and keep us safe. I don't think they were hiding information maliciously. I personally don't think that there would be much of this country left after nuclear war.¹⁴⁷

Jack's imagination of nuclear war explains why he accepted the secrecy of the British government over the Cold War. While nuclear anxiety of "potential destruction" underpins his memory, he supports the British government and believed they are doing "the best they could" to keep people safe or "at least feeling safe."¹⁴⁸ Cheryl Lincoln reflected upon her experience of the Second World War to justify the government's secrecy in the Cold War. She freely admitted feeling the British government kept information from the public during

¹⁴⁴ Schwebel, 'Reality', 539.

¹⁴⁵ Rudolph Herzog, *A short history of nuclear folly* (London: Melville House, 2012), 123.

¹⁴⁶ Interview, Dalton.

¹⁴⁷ Interview, Kelly.

¹⁴⁸ Atashroo, 'Weaponising peace', 2.

the Cold War but remarked that “it was okay, it was just like the last war.”¹⁴⁹ Cheryl then discussed the British radio-language radio broadcaster, William Joyce (known as Lord Haw-Haw), who circulated Nazi propaganda between 1939 and 1945. She continued that he would “tell us all sorts of things” such as “our bombs were killing their children” and it was “awful.”¹⁵⁰ Cheryl felt anxious as people listened to him “because he was stupid, but the things he said crept into your mind and you would think about them.”¹⁵¹ She reflected that the “news during the Cold War felt like him. Spreading misinformation.” Cheryl’s memories of listening to Lord Haw-Haw framed her perception of the British government in the Cold War. Her anxieties of being fed “false information” from others justified politicians keeping information hidden from the public and reinforced her belief that “the government could be trusted to do the right thing in the end.”¹⁵²

Another topic that often appeared in the testimonies were feelings about the British government’s decisions on nuclear civil defence, particularly the 1980 civil defence leaflet *Protect and Survive*.¹⁵³ Cordle argues that the leaflet was “meant to offer reassurance that nuclear attack would be survived, but it ultimately and inadvertently highlighted the vulnerability of ordinary people.” In this way, *Protect and Survive* became part of the iconography of 1980s nuclear culture in Britain and came to symbolise the “absurdity” of nuclear war and MAD.¹⁵⁴ Notably, this pamphlet has been humorously used to “prepare for Brexit.”¹⁵⁵ Grant explores how civil defence became central to British nuclear politics in the

¹⁴⁹ Interview, Lincoln.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Protect and Survive*, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Prepared for the Home Office by the Central Office of Information, 1980.

¹⁵⁴ Dan Cordle, ‘Protect/Protest: British nuclear fiction of the 1980s’, *The British Journal for the History of Science* 45(4) (2012): 656.

¹⁵⁵ ‘Protect and Survive: Official advice on how to withstand a no deal Brexit’, *NewStatesman*, 25 July 2018, accessed October 2020, <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/brexit/2018/07/protect-and-survive-official-advice-how-withstand-no-deal-brexit>; ‘Some excerpts from the new ‘Protect and Survive: Brexit edition’, *The Poke*, accessed September 2020, <https://www.thepoke.co.uk/2017/03/23/excerpts-new-protect-survive-brexit-edition/>

1980s, as *Protect and Survive* became an “icon of nuclear madness.”¹⁵⁶ The leaflet was leaked by *The Times* in a turbulent and tense period and it was met with “widespread protest and ridicule.”¹⁵⁷ The pamphlet was satirized on various television shows and films and transformed into a CND and European Nuclear Disarmament (END) *Protect and Survive* campaign against civil defence.¹⁵⁸ During the 1980s, civil defence was a source of ridicule, unlike the early Cold War period in which civil defence was perceived as respectable.¹⁵⁹ This conclusion can be drawn from the testimonies. Many interviewees recalled *Protect and Survive*, citing the derision surrounding it. Mike Dalton recalled how the pamphlet was a “joke on his playground.”¹⁶⁰ William Stonewell recollected how *Protect and Survive* advised civilians to “hide under the table” and felt that “it was more like a practical joke than a government-issued pamphlet.” Alexander Campbell dismissed the pamphlet as a “pathetic government attempt to reassure people.” He enthusiastically told me that “it made people realise how foolish it all was” rather than “offer any real reassurance.”¹⁶¹

Some interviewees were deeply affected by *Protect and Survive*. Irene Perkins recalled receiving civil defence pamphlets through her doors in the 1980s:

I had become a member of CND in the 1980s because I was worrying about- things were coming through the door. Leaflets. *Protect and Survive*. And I talked to my mum about it ‘how are we going to take the doors off’ you know and make this stupid shelter kind of thing. And she just said oh well we will probably all be taken away in the blast anyway. She moved to Wales later and she said, ‘well you’ll all have to come to Wales and live here and wait for the radiation to calm down’.¹⁶²

British nuclear civil defence led to the creation of a politics of vulnerability as *Protect and Survive* served to *reveal* the vulnerabilities of ordinary people rather than reassure them.¹⁶³ The

¹⁵⁶ Grant, ‘Making Sense’, 237; Hogg, ‘Nuclear Resistance’, 584-602, 591.

¹⁵⁷ James Stafford, “‘Stay at home’: the politics of nuclear civil defence, 1968-1983”, *Twentieth Century British History* 23(3) (2012): 402.

¹⁵⁸ Grant, ‘Making Sense’, 240.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Interview, Dalton.

¹⁶¹ Interview, Campbell.

¹⁶² Interview, Perkins.

¹⁶³ Cordle, ‘Protect/Protest’, 654.

pamphlet motivated Irene to join CND and stop “planning” for a nuclear attack by building “stupid” shelters or moving away from the city. For Irene, *Protect and Survive* was a central cause of her “anxieties about what nuclear war could be like” and influenced her decision to “become more active.” Her experience of vulnerability and nuclear anxiety prompted action and resistance. Roger Leech recalled a similar perspective. Although he described *Protect and Survive* as “silly” and felt it was “impossible to construct a nuclear shelter” in his living room, he expressed “feeling worried” about “not doing anything at all” and this caused him “great anxiety.” Roger expressed several concerns about the pragmatics of civil defence, asking me “how large would the container need to be to store water for six people for six months? And where would we get water from? How would it be kept fresh and topped up? Where would the lavatory be? How much toilet paper would we need to buy?”¹⁶⁴

British nuclear civil defence was at the heart of British politics during the Cold War, and it was received with a mix of nuclear emotions including humour, anxiety, indifference, and even joy by the activists who saw it as an opportunity to resist the government’s rhetoric. Civil defence became a way for ordinary civilians to frame their vulnerabilities as they came face to face with the realities of nuclear war. It was a source of multifaceted and diverse emotional responses which were being played out in the Cold War political arena.

The testimonies revealed that perceptions of the British political arena were highly influenced by memories of the Second World War and ingrained attitudes towards the Soviet Union. Individuals often found themselves expressing overt anxieties relating to infiltration, communism, and spies within the UK. Peter Cattigan recalled the expelling of Russian diplomats in the 1970s: “In those days the Cold War was at its height. I mean, I remember there was a tremendous expulsion of I think it was 119 Russian diplomats were expelled from

¹⁶⁴ Interview, Leech.

London.”¹⁶⁵ As the government sought to remove potential spies and saboteurs from its rank, the press’ “appetite for stories of disaster and conspiracy ensured that it [...] speculated about the dangers posed by the activities of spies.”¹⁶⁶

These expulsions continued throughout the Cold War and permeated popular culture. For example, an image published in the *South Wales Echo*, published in 1981, depicted Thatcher nervously reading to disgruntled reporters “here are the names of those who are probably not spies” to “put the country’s mind at ease” (Figure 2.4). As Hogg demonstrates,



Figure 2.4 “Thatcher on Communist spies in the British government” cartoon, *South Wales Echo*, 30 November 1981.

although communist and spy fears were predominately in the 1950-1958 period, the 1980s saw a resurgence of anxiety over a communist insurgency in Britain.¹⁶⁷ Cheryl Lincoln and Peter Stanford, both of whom lived through the Second World War, commented that they were “worried” about communist spies and “infiltration” into the UK.¹⁶⁸ William Stonewell recalled having a school debate in which they discussed being “better dead than red.” He commented

¹⁶⁵ Interview, Cattigan.

¹⁶⁶ Bingham, “The Monster?” 613.

¹⁶⁷ Hogg, *Nuclear Culture*, 77, 139.

¹⁶⁸ Interview, Lincoln; Interview, Stanford.

that it “didn’t make sense to him at the time and still doesn’t now.”¹⁶⁹ Interestingly, Mike Dalton, one of the younger interviewees, told me that he wanted to take part in this project because of his childhood “love of James Bond” and his “battles with Russian spies.”¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, those who were members of CND found themselves being accused of being spies or communists (although plenty of members were part of the Communist Party). Just as narratives of communist spies and infiltration entered British nuclear culture, they seeped into the experiences of ordinary people.

As previously suggested by the testimony, knowledge (or lack thereof) about nuclear war seemed to shape British civilian experiences of nuclear anxiety. In much of the testimony, nuclear accidents were a key motif, exposing experiences of powerlessness and insecurity. In 1964, the British-American film *Dr Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* was released. It was a political satire that played on Cold War fears of a nuclear attack. The film followed an unhinged US Air Force general who orders a nuclear attack on Russia and the various, unsuccessful, and often comedic attempts to prevent nuclear war.¹⁷¹ *Dr Strangelove* became symbolic of anxiety surrounding an accidental nuclear attack which persistently appeared in the testimonies. This is made particularly apparent through this interaction with George McEwan:

George: The reasons for it- [the Cold War] the big fear was something accidental happening. You know somebody would do something and retaliate and so on.

Emily: Was that a fear at the time or an impression you got later?

George: No, I think it was a fear amongst the general public that someone would do something daft.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Interview, Stonewell.

¹⁷⁰ Interview, Dalton.

¹⁷¹ Rebecca C. Lubot, 'A Dr Strangelove Situation: Nuclear Anxiety, Presidential Fallibility, and the 25th Amendment,' *Fordham Law Review* 86(3) (2017): 1176.

¹⁷² Interview, McEwan.

George felt palpable anxiety over “something accidental happening”, specifically relating this to human or political error, rather than a genuine order of nuclear attack. Ordinary people often became concerned about possible nuclear war through a human error at nuclear facilities or by politicians or technical malfunctions.¹⁷³ During the Cold War, numerous accidents and cover-ups relating to nuclear weapons were made public across the world leading to anxieties surrounding an accidental nuclear war such as Three Mile Island (1979) or Chernobyl (1986).¹⁷⁴ These accidents were used in anti-nuclear campaigns, such as the 1983 text *Defended to Death* which listed various nuclear accidents which had occurred across the world.¹⁷⁵

This anxiety about a nuclear accident emerged in other testimony. Roger Leech recalled the events and experiences during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis:

I remember as a countermove the USSR set up a blockade of Berlin. And then Kennedy set up an ‘air-bridge’ to supply the city. I remember thinking then that the chance of an accidental firing of an aircraft’s weapon or the accidental pressing by some trigger-happy politician of the nuclear button was high.¹⁷⁶

Chris Bradbury recollected that “there was more of a fear that it might happen by accident you know. Someone doing something wrong. Or a conspiracy.”¹⁷⁷ In their interview, William and Joyce Stonewell frequently discussed their fears about a potential nuclear accident. When asked if they were more worried about accidents, they both responded “definitely.” Joyce continued that “all it takes is one overconfident politician to press the button.” William proceeded to comment on “cowboy Reagan” and he was the “most likely” to induce a nuclear accident back then. The symbol of ‘cowboy Reagan’, due to the American President’s previous career as an actor and his political bravado during the Cold War, became a common image in Cold War

¹⁷³ Bingham, ‘The Monster?’, 620.

¹⁷⁴ Herzog, *Nuclear folly*; Schlosser, *Command and Control*.

¹⁷⁵ Gwyn Prins *Defended to Death: A study of the nuclear arms race from the Cambridge University Disarmament Seminar* (Suffolk, Penguin, 1983), 237-241.

¹⁷⁶ Interview, Leech.

¹⁷⁷ Interview, Bradbury.

Britain (Figure 2.5). These attitudes and a feeling of “untrustworthiness” toward the government contributed to the British experience of nuclear anxiety.



Figure 2.5 'Cowboy Reagan' Cartoon, *Belfast Telegraph*, 3 November 1980.

As the previous chapter argued, the geographical element of nuclear attack was important to the experience of nuclear anxiety. William added that if it “was an accident on a submarine in the middle of nowhere, it wouldn’t affect me.”¹⁷⁸ If the accident occurred *away* from home, it was “not as bad.”¹⁷⁹ On the other hand, Cheryl Lincoln reflected on the possibility of an “accident on a nuclear submarine killing the marine life, and lots of people nearby.”¹⁸⁰ In her testimony, the geographical location of the accident did not matter. The prospect of a nuclear accident influenced other civilian’s experience in different ways. Mike

¹⁷⁸ Interview, Stonewell.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ Interview, Lincoln.

Dalton recalled feeling “more anti-nuclear” after the 1986 Chernobyl accident as he became more “aware that it could go wrong.”¹⁸¹ Carole Fraley explicitly blamed politicians, recalling how she felt “they say they [nuclear weapons] haven’t been used and they have kept the peace and all these sorts of things like there haven’t been any accidents or won’t be any more in the future. But we know there have been accidents.”¹⁸² While civilians did not overtly fear a nuclear strike from America or Russia, they feared the actions of human error or software malfunctions would cause an unpreventable nuclear war. As Joyce later recalled in a second interview, she felt “more afraid that an accident may happen because it was more likely” than “someone intentionally doing it.”¹⁸³ The motif of human error and nuclear accidents became a common subject in the popular news and culture and this shaped ordinary civilian experience of the Cold War, as they often explicitly blamed the hands of politicians for “slipping and pressing the button.”¹⁸⁴ This links back to previous observations about interviewees reflecting upon luck, chance, and powerlessness.

Anxieties surrounding accidents and political conflict was often imagined or symbolised through objects. In the case of many interviewees, the imagination of the ‘red phone’ and the ‘nuclear button’ were common themes when discussing nuclear politics. These images appeared in the mass media and popular culture and played a “central role in the construction of political meaning for the public” and became “sites of meaning.”¹⁸⁵ The nuclear button became a common image in the popular press and within nuclear culture (Figure 2.6). This example, which further references ‘cowboy Reagan’, shows the US President almost pressing a ‘nuclear button’ on a television remote, with Thatcher stood behind. The imagination of politicians “stretching a finger towards the nuclear button” became commonplace in media

¹⁸¹ Interview, Dalton.

¹⁸² Interview, Hodges-Walker and Fraley.

¹⁸³ Interview, Stonewell.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ William Gamson and David Stuart, ‘Media Discourse as a Symbolic Contest: The Bomb in Political Cartoons’, *Sociological Forum* 7 (1992): 55.

across the world.¹⁸⁶ Within *Dr Strangelove*, a nuclear button was used to launch the weapons. In particular, the idea of a politician being able to (or not) press ‘the button’ was rife in culture, even appearing in the language of those in politics.¹⁸⁷



Figure 2.6 Reagan and the nuclear button, *Daily Mail*, 6 December 1983.

This came to form part of the cultural imaginary of Cold War Britain, as individuals witnessed the motif of the nuclear button in the newspapers and on their televisions. These imaginaries, full of anxiety about a singular person overseeing the button or an accidental pressing of it, form an important aspect of the popular memory of Cold War Britain, as evidenced by the many times interviewees mentioned them.

There are numerous examples of this symbolism in the testimony, revealing how these meaningful icons represented experiences of nuclear anxiety. Joyce Stonewell reflected on the “ability of Russia and America to push the button” and how it was a “constant presence” which “existed all the time.”¹⁸⁸ She reflected further: “Well it was more because it was a mistake, you

¹⁸⁶ Laura Ciglioni, ‘Italian Public Opinion in the Atomic Age: Mass market Magazines facing Nuclear Issues (1963-1987)’, *Cold War History* 17(3) (2017): 213.

¹⁸⁷ Hennessy, *Secret State*, 311.

¹⁸⁸ Interview, Stonewell.

know, you always kind of imagine there would be a button and someone has pressed it wrong, like *WarGames* and then suddenly everything is over and that's the end of it really."¹⁸⁹ For Joyce, it was the suddenness of the consequences of "such a small mistake" that caused her "to worry." Likewise, Roger Leech recalled feeling "quite frightened" about "the possibility of a nuclear accident. They just needed to press a button and much of mankind would be no more."¹⁹⁰ Once again, a sense of suddenness and powerlessness is evoked.

Civilians used these meaningful symbols to describe their experiences of nuclear anxiety.

Cheryl Lincoln also conjured the image of the nuclear button:

It's not ordinary people. It's the politicians who cause all the trouble, isn't it? but erm the fact that you can- someone can just press a button to make a nuclear weapon- a nuclear war start. You know, it's frightening.¹⁹¹

Later in the interview, Cheryl commented that "was all up in the air." When I asked her to clarify, she responded that in the Second World War it was "fought in the air" whereas nuclear weapons operators "haven't got to come out and do it. They just press a button."¹⁹² Susan Hodges-Walker evoked similar imagery recalling how she felt that politicians and people needed to be willing to say, "they will not push the button."¹⁹³ Notably, this remains a contemporary debate as British party leaders are still expected to make a statement on if they would push the button.¹⁹⁴ For ordinary people, the nuclear button symbolised the instantaneous and irreversible order of nuclear attack by the hands of an individual.

For some, the red telephone similarly symbolised experiences of nuclear anxiety. This imagery came from the Moscow-Washington hotline which acted as a confidence-boosting

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Interview, Leech.

¹⁹¹ Interview, Lincoln.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ Interview, Hodges-Walker and Fraley.

¹⁹⁴ Tom Gordon, 'Jo Swinson defends willingness to press nuclear button', *The Herald*, 22 November 2019, accessed October 2020, <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18053904.jo-swinson-defends-willingness-press-nuclear-button/>

measure to decrease tensions and prevent accidental nuclear war. It became a famous symbol during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. William Stonewell recalled being told that “there was always discussion between Russian and American politicians on this red phone.”¹⁹⁵ He discussed his memories of a ‘red telephone’ in popular culture, recollecting that it was “a popular symbol that fascinated him as a child” but often “made him feel nervous” about “conversations between countries and political leaders, what were they talking about? What if they couldn’t resolve it?”¹⁹⁶ Chris Bradbury evoked a similar image recalling that “conversations about nuclear weapons were always on a red phone.” In these recollections, feelings of insecurity and powerlessness were palpable as Chris reflected on how it was “a politician’s world” and “we would never know what they talked about.”¹⁹⁷

Unlike the ‘nuclear button’ which represented instantaneous and worldwide holocaust, the red phone represented dialogue or, for Roger Leech who had a unique experience with a red telephone, the warning before a nuclear attack:

As part of my training as an electrical engineer, I spent some months in an underground grid control centre. There was a red phone on the control desk. It was the nuclear warning hotline, a direct line from somewhere. If this rang, there was this emergency protocol which we had to follow but I never saw it. I assumed it was locked up. Anyway, I used to always wonder, who was on the other end of the phone? What were they doing? Sometimes on a night shift, I would occasionally glance at this phone. Although it was thankfully silent it almost had this ‘voice’ of its own, like a presence that I couldn’t ignore. This device, which was a bit like one we had at home, was proper evidence which I could physically touch that represented what the country was living under. The threat of nuclear war. I think it was the simplicity of a telephone which brought it home.¹⁹⁸

For most civilians, the nuclear button or a red telephone for nuclear communication was an imagined, distant anxiety which formed part of their dialogues about their experiences of the Cold War. For Roger however, the red telephone was physical evidence of the possibility of

¹⁹⁵ Interview, Stonewell.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Interview, Bradbury.

¹⁹⁸ Interview, Leech.

nuclear attack, to such an extent that he imagined the presence and voice of the phone. This part of the interview was told with the most coherence and had clearly been retold many times. While Roger recollected this memory, he was visibly anxious, playing with a pen in his hands and avoiding eye contact with me. Afterwards, he smiled and told me “although it worried him, it is still an important story to tell.” The nuclear button and the red telephone were sites of meaning and symbols of nuclear anxiety. They represented the possibility of nuclear war and the lack of power civilians had to prevent it.

Ordinary people in Britain grappled with diverse and conflicting emotional responses to the political arena they lived within. This section has shown the diverse ways nuclear anxiety intersected with feelings of insecurity and powerlessness. Many popular motifs dominated nuclear culture such as communist spies, government secrecy, nuclear accidents, and the nuclear button fed into their memories and formed their imaginations of a nuclear attack. These formed the cultural imagination of Cold War Britain and these symbols represented their greatest nuclear anxieties – the possibility of an accidental nuclear attack and their powerlessness in its advent.

Chapter conclusion

Many historians have observed that the Cold War was fought secretly and away from the civilian domain.¹⁹⁹ As Douthwaite highlights, in the early Cold War “competing understandings of nuclear risk, contradictory visions of global strategies for nuclear war, and differing opinions about foreign policy [...] threw the believability of official information” for civilians.²⁰⁰ Although government weapons strategy and development remained censored for

¹⁹⁹ Historians of defence and security have traditionally assumed that state secrecy did not have an impact on ordinary civilian lives and restricts what these narratives can tell us. For example, see; Hennessy, *Secret State*, 3.

²⁰⁰ Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 271.

most, these secrets became objects of “protest, scepticism, and publicity.”²⁰¹ This chapter has demonstrated that Cold War events, politics, and activism shaped the British civilian experience. Through an exploration of the lived experience of *nuclear emotions*, with a specific focus on nuclear anxiety, this chapter has revealed how the British emotional landscape was transformed by the tense political backdrop of the period. Reflecting on Carole Fraley’s words which began the chapter: “People need to have courage to say things different and be willing to say, ‘I will not push the button’”, civilian political opinions became hardened and found themselves on a “spectrum of ideology” of what was “right or wrong.”²⁰²

This chapter has developed the contributions of this thesis by demonstrating the diverse, complex nuclear emotions which became entangled within the civilian experience of the British Cold War. It has argued that discourses of political opinion, nuclear politics and activism drastically shaped their lived experience. For historians, the Cold War has understandably been written through the lens of periodic flashpoints which, it is assumed, brought with them intense emotional responses. Through the interviews, it does seem that some political decisions, conflicts, or figures brought with them feelings of anxiety. The Cuban Missile Crisis, for example, has been used in this chapter as a case study to demonstrate the impact such events had on the everyday lives of civilians and how the extraordinary intersected with the ordinary. This particular moment in Cold War history resulted in civilians’ narratives of extraordinary experiences, such as Alexander hiding under the bed, and ordinary experience, such as Frank watching Top of the Pops.²⁰³ In cultural memory and within historical scholarship, the Cuban Missile Crisis “changed the world” forever and brought it to the “brink” of nuclear war.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, 271-272.

²⁰² Interview, Fraley and Hodges-Walker.

²⁰³ Interview, Campbell; Interview, Lincoln; Interview, Davies and Smith.

²⁰⁴ Scott, *Macmillan, Kennedy* 1-12.

It is clear that memories of British Cold War politics, while laced with anxiety, were tinged with other emotional responses. These *nuclear emotions*, such as feelings of anger, passion, insecurity, righteousness, powerlessness, and anxiety, lead to the suggestion that to claim the prevalence of nuclear anxiety can appear exaggerated if placed in histories of the Cold War without efforts to fully historicise. As outlined, much nuclear scholarship has attributed the experience of civilians to be one of fear.²⁰⁵ This chapter suggests that there is a danger of exaggerating the role of nuclear anxiety. In the introduction, I reflected that as much as this is an exploration of nuclear anxiety, it is also a story about *other emotions* British civilians experienced and used to navigate and conceptualise the nuclear age. This is what I hope this chapter has shown: that *many* emotions ran alongside, entangled with, and mediated the experience of nuclear anxiety. Furthermore, the case study of the Cuban Missile crisis demonstrated that although there were moments of genuine anxiety, there were also moments of staged, exaggerated, or politicised emotion, particularly in anti-nuclear narratives.

There was also a complete absence of key historical moments in the testimony, despite the traditional historiographical trend to focus on these events. This chapter has showcased the specific moments which were important to the civilians of the British Cold War. This approach aligns with Bourke who argues that the emotion of anxiety can be intertwined with other emotions²⁰⁶ and with the findings of Robert Schatz and Susan Fiske that found that individuals in North Carolina reported feelings of “fear, worry, terror, sadness, anger, and helplessness” when thinking about nuclear war.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ For a small slice of this scholarship: Hogg, ‘The family’; Eaton, ‘Nuclear anxiety’; Weart, *Nuclear Fear*; Bingham, ‘The Monster’; Eckart Conze, Martin Klimke, and Jeremy Varon (eds.), *Nuclear Threats, Nuclear Fear and the Cold War of the 1980s* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

²⁰⁶ Bourke, ‘Fear and Anxiety’, 114.

²⁰⁷ Robert Schatz and Susan Fiske, ‘International Reactions to the threat of nuclear war: the rise and fall of concern in the eighties’, *Political Psychology* 13(1) (1992): 6.

Ordinary people found security politics in the British nuclear nation an arena of conflict and mistrust, often feeling that their government was not able to protect them. Attempts by the British government to reassure civilians with nuclear civil defence initiatives led to feelings of hopelessness and insecurity, particularly in the 1980s. Humour traversed these experiences as civil defence was ridiculed in popular culture and the media, an emotional phenomenon that will be explored in more detail in the next chapter. As Masco and Cordle demonstrate, civil defence policies became a paradox; as attempts to improve the security of the state only revealed the vulnerability of it.²⁰⁸ Civilians were left asking ‘what could be done’ in the event of nuclear war. In this way, feelings of powerlessness contributed to civilian experiences of nuclear anxiety. Throughout the testimonies, nuclear policies of MAD, deterrence, and the aggressive rhetoric of the 1980s nuclear arms build-up, became part of the “seemingly unchangeable backdrop of British lives” where people “accepted it by rationalising it as an important component in the process of maintaining peace, or as something to be ignored, relegated to the liminal spaces of the imagination.”²⁰⁹ Political ideas, stances, affiliation, and opinions shaped individual experiences of the Cold War in diverse ways, revealing the complexity of the emotional landscape during this period.

The testimonies revealed how emotions played out throughout the Cold War and were influenced by cultural memory, as anxieties over communism and spies were rooted in memories of the Second World War and pre-existing attitudes towards the Soviet Union.²¹⁰ Civilians felt powerless to prevent a possible nuclear war and many genuinely believed that nuclear war would be a result of the accidental pressing of the nuclear button or malfunctioning software than an intentional attack.²¹¹ This imaginary was influenced by cultural memory and

²⁰⁸ Masco, 'Survival', 363; Cordle, 'Protect/Protest', 655.

²⁰⁹ Matthew Grant, 'The Imaginative landscape of nuclear war', in *Understanding the Imaginary War: Culture, Thought and Nuclear Conflict, 1945-1990* ed. Matthew Grant and Benjamin Ziemann (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 110.

²¹⁰ Jones, 'Ending Cold War Fears', 254; Douthwaite, 'Voices', 281-282.

²¹¹ Cordle, 'In Dreams', 105.

conjured up images such as the red telephone, a symbol of nuclear attack and failure of civil defence, and the ‘nuclear button’, which symbolised the ease with which nuclear war could start an accidental nuclear war. These symbols resonate in the present-centeredness of the Cold War. The issue of the nuclear button is reflected in contemporary debates, such as the “condemnation” of the Liberal Democrat leader, Jo Swinson, in 2019 when she confirmed that “she would use nuclear weapons.”²¹² As Hogg and Cordle have demonstrated, memory of the Cold War was shaped by assumptions, mindsets, and popular culture. This is revealed through interviewee references to contemporary debates, popular culture, memories of the Second World War, and cultural memory to frame their experiences of the flashpoints of the Cold War. As briefly discussed in chapters one and two, popular culture often influenced and shaped these experiences of nuclear anxiety. This will be explored in depth within the next chapter.

²¹² Rob Merrick, ‘Sickening’: Jo Swinson condemned for unhesitatingly saying she would use nuclear weapons’, *Independent*, 20 November 2019. Accessed January 2021. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/jo-swinson-nuclear-weapon-button-war-lib-dems-election-debate-a9210456.html>

Chapter Three

“There is nothing we can do about it”: Reflecting on everyday experience and British nuclear culture

“Nuclear weapons, it is now clear, had a remarkably *theatrical* effect upon the course of the high Cold War.”¹
- John Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*

A significant theme that emerged in the interviews was that British nuclear culture was at the centre of an emotional paradox. This chapter suggests that British nuclear culture became embedded in everyday life and shaped the civilian experience of the British Cold War between 1945 and 1989. First, I will argue that analysing how nuclear culture was received and understood by individuals is a fruitful methodology to unpick the British Cold War experience. Secondly, I suggest that nuclear culture became embedded in the British postwar experience and contributed to how civilians felt about the Cold War. I show that it was used as a vehicle to describe nuclear emotions and relate information to me in the context of the interview. I also argue that current understandings of the reception of nuclear culture are not sufficient. Finally, the chapter demonstrates how, to make sense of this incursion into everyday life, people used humour both as an expression of anxiety and to navigate horrifying perceptions of nuclear war. By examining the humour employed by individuals and the humorous cultural references they describe, the processes through which nuclear anxiety is embedded as a mindset can be more deeply understood. Through analysis of oral history testimony and nuclear culture, this chapter contributes to the acknowledgement made in previous chapters of humour as an important nuclear emotion and as a possible indicator of anxiety.

Although scholarship on British nuclear culture has demonstrated that nuclear anxiety was reflected in culture, there has not been extensive work on the *reception* of this culture. The field has seen rapid expansion in recent years, with many historians exploring its significance

¹ Cordle, *Late Cold War*, 201.

in modern British history.² Some notable examples have examined nuclear culture through civilian experience. Hughes, for example, explored the diversity of nuclear culture through the reception of a play *Uranium 235*.³ Oline Eaton examines nuclear anxiety through American celebrities, asserting that studies of their lives provide a framework to examine the public and private concerns of the society in which they lived.⁴ Exploring lived experience through culture is a fruitful lens of analysis. Paul Ricoeur argues we understand ourselves only by the long detour of the signs of humanity deposited in our cultural works.⁵ Examining the cultural expressions of nuclear anxiety alongside the reception of nuclear culture offers a deeper understanding of the emotional history of Britain.

Interviewees reported that the films, images, comics, and cartoons that depicted nuclear war simultaneously represented feelings of nuclear anxiety and contributed to them. The film *Threads* (1986), for example, was cited by interviewees as a “representation of what nuclear war could be like” and their “fears.” But it was *also* a “cause of anxiety” and “made people more scared.”⁶ In this way, British nuclear culture shaped the experiences and emotions of civilians. As much as interviewees used their own experiences to craft their responses in the interview, they also used cultural resources to frame, expand, and explain their narratives. They were deliberately deployed in the interview, both as a way to help me understand recollections and as a means of storytelling within the interview. Civilians were not static ‘receivers’ of culture and they also contributed to the production of culture itself. Individuals contributed to what Hogg calls nuclearity, as their memories and experiences were shaped by a deeply embedded set of assumptions and a shared mindset of nuclear war. As discussed previously,

² Kirk Willis, ‘The Origins of British Nuclear Culture, 1895-1939,’ *Journal of British Studies* 34(1) (1995): 59-89; Cordle, ‘Protect/Protest’, Hogg, ‘The family’; Maguire, ‘Never a credible weapon’; Hughes, ‘Deconstructing the bomb’; Hogg and Laucht, ‘Introduction’; Hogg and Brown, ‘Introduction’.

³ Hughes, ‘Nuclear Culture?’ 506.

⁴ Eaton, ‘Nuclear anxiety’, 67.

⁵ Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 87.

⁶ Interview, Lincoln; Interview; Moore; Interview, Stonewall; Interview Winston.

this thesis is concerned with the resources and cultural mediums which were portrayed as a source or representation of anxiety *by civilians*, rather than exploring the diverse landscape of British nuclear culture itself.⁷ It will offer a closer exploration of 1980s British nuclear culture, as this was the period the interviewees cited most. The chapter will use anti-nuclear memorabilia, artwork, poetry, literature, and films such as *Dr Strangelove* (1964) and *The War Game* (1965). Through this, I explore the everydayness of the Cold War through ordinary civilian experiences such as football and cycling.

The final section of this chapter considers the importance of humour in the interview. Humour was employed by the interviewees as they joked about the possibility of nuclear war, further revealing the complex emotional landscape of postwar Britain and the various ways anxiety became embedded into lived experience. Parkhill et al argues that how something extraordinary, such as living near a nuclear power station, becomes ordinary through a “process of familiarisation” which “reframes the risk issue.” This risk ebbs and flows through an individual’s life as it is reframed by its ordinariness and extraordinariness. Parkhill et al further argues that this process of familiarisation is aided using humour and “humorous talk can be serious talk” which can “enrich our understandings of lived experience.”⁸

Section I: Reception of British nuclear culture

When considering British nuclear culture and individual reception of ideas, “what kind of culture – and whose culture” we mean matters.⁹ Culture does not simply exist and is produced, it is also received by various social groups within different social contexts. Understanding these contexts is important for unpicking the emotionology of a historical period.¹⁰ According to

⁷ Langhamer, ‘Mass Observing’, 215.

⁸ Parkhill, ‘Laughing it off?’

⁹ Hughes, ‘Nuclear Culture,’ 506; Mark Towsey, *Reading History in Britain and America, c.1750-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

¹⁰ Stearns and Stearns, ‘Emotionology’, 813.

Martyn Thompson, historians have attempted to understand the historical reception of particular events and cultures, endeavouring to analyse the reception at the time of something in the past.¹¹ Scholars of historical reception must consider the contextual background and interpretation of culture and not presume meanings that are obvious to those in the present. To understand the reception of culture, historians must consider the political, social, cultural, and personal backgrounds of the specific cultural example in question, as well as the temporal and spatial contexts in which it was produced and displayed to an audience.

Hughes demonstrates the importance of considering reception when analysing British nuclear culture. He argues that current scholarship on nuclear culture relies on “self-evident significance” rather than dealing with cultures and the relationships with “various contexts current elsewhere in historical disciplines.”¹² Using the play *Uranium 235* (1946-1952), Hughes demonstrates the contrasting reception of the performance, arguing that its historical and cultural meanings “lie in the specificities of its creation, its enactments, and its reception in the different contexts it was performed.”¹³ The play was “met with a wide range of expectations and responses” forming and contributing to “nuclear cultures” rather than a single, homogeneous British nuclear culture.¹⁴ Hughes suggests that historians of British nuclear culture need to understand “these wider contexts of production, performance, and reception” to “shed light on the range and meanings of the nuclear in the public sphere in postwar Britain, and their relations to wider cultural, political, and ideological settings.”¹⁵

Across the testimony, participants referred to specific examples of British nuclear culture. Culture was used to help an interviewee describe how they felt. An individual’s nuclear

¹¹ Martyn Thompson, ‘Reception Theory and the Interpretation of Historical Meaning’, *History and Theory* 32(3) (1993): 249-250.

¹² Hughes, ‘Nuclear Culture’, 506.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 507.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 514-515.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 517.

anxiety was either represented by nuclear culture or contributed to these feelings. Interviewees referred to films that made nuclear war “seem real.” They would quote song lyrics that they felt represented their emotions towards nuclear weapons. But not all civilians viewed British nuclear culture as a presence of anxiety. Some civilians admitted that while they were “aware” of films or mediums depicting nuclear weapons, they had never watched them. The reception of British nuclear culture within the testimony is a wide spectrum of emotions, ranging from feelings of anxiety to indifference. Many civilians also contributed to British Cold War culture by creating their own paintings, sculptures, poems, and propaganda.

Several interviewees were involved in, associated with, or were a member of the British anti-nuclear movement and these individuals found themselves immersed in unique nuclear cultures which were sometimes received differently by those outside of the community. In the 1980s, anti-nuclear culture contributed to the broader landscape of British nuclear culture. For example, in Liverpool, the city council produced its own civil defence pamphlet, produced by Merseyside CND, which urged residents to “make their own minds up about nuclear policy.”¹⁶ Chris Bradbury was kind enough to show me some of the documents he kept from his days in CND. He was born in Liverpool in 1957 and spent some time in London and travelling around the world as a young adult before returning. He worked in theatre, administration, and teaching. He was a member of the Catholic Church and was a Quaker, joining Pax Christi in the 1980s. He joined CND while he was a student in the mid-1970s. Chris spent most of the interview reflecting upon his time in CND, often drawing comparisons between contemporary politics and the Cold War. In our second interview, Chris brought some multicoloured “CND flashcards” which were provided to members of the organisation who would do “door-to-door campaigning.” They described themselves as “snappy arguments for doorstep debaters and

¹⁶ Hogg, ‘Nuclear Resistance’, 600-601.

public speakers” (Figure 3.1).¹⁷ The cards depicted “common questions” from those who opposed CND and provided detailed responses. According to Chris, they were purchased only by those brave enough to campaign at the doorsteps of strangers within the West Region CND branch. The cards advertised further anti-nuclear merchandise such as *A Disarmament Action Manual* and the *Hitchhikers guide to the arms race*.

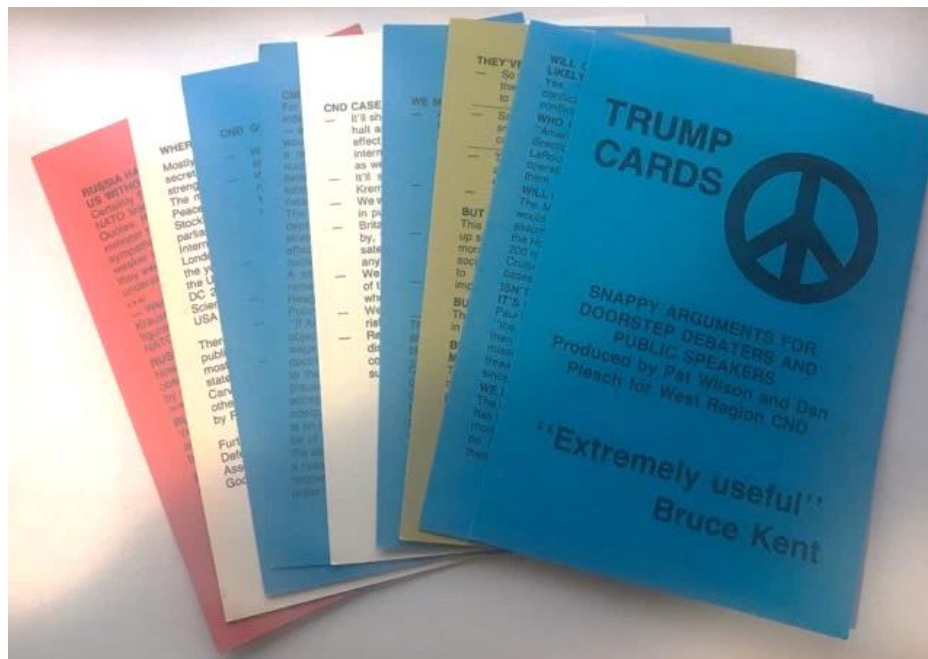


Figure 3.1 CND ‘Trump Cards’ Produced by West Region CND in the 1980s. [Specific year/date unknown]

Chris told me he bought these during his “eager and activist days” while he was a student. In the interview, he reflected that these “inspired him” to teach others about the CND campaign and explained that he “looked up” to those committed to the protest movement. After inviting me to keep them, Chris commented that “although the cards may not be an example of nuclear anxiety” they “certainly represented a form of anxiety for him” in the shape of “becoming a good representative for CND.”¹⁸ Although Chris “worried” about the prospect of nuclear war, he expressed in detail his anxieties about being a “good member” of CND. Furthermore, when asked about his memories of the Cold War, Chris often referred to the

¹⁷ Interview, Bradbury.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

“Thatcher years” and the “coal strikes”, particularly reflecting upon its impact in Liverpool. His testimony was littered with memories of CND marches, travelling the world, and the friends he met. Chris reflected fondly on his life and we often found ourselves straying from the topic of the Cold War. As Grant found, particular moments which held more personal meaning to interviewees were remembered in greater detail than the Cold War.¹⁹ These memories had more meaning to Chris than the imagined possibilities of the nuclear future.

Some individuals participated in the production of their own material in response to nuclear issues and this was a key aspect of their Cold War experience. Dr Sandra Hawcroft was born in 1954 in Cambridge and moved to south-west London as a child. She was educated to PhD level. She joined CND in the 1970s. Her father worked for the UK Atomic Energy Authority, although she refused to say more about him or discuss her personal feelings about his work. Sandra participated in numerous anti-nuclear art exhibitions throughout the Cold War and continues in the present day. She was proud of these productions and invited me to attend some upcoming exhibitions.²⁰ She shared a particular art piece with me that she had created in 1982 and circulated at several exhibitions (Figure 3.2). The image depicts contrasting colour schemes of the bright watercoloured trees, rainbow, and sky to the dark mushroom cloud and human skulls. At the bottom, are the handprints of friends and family. The words ‘Build Peace’ appear within the rainbow. The painting reads “Not WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction).” This painting is an example of individuals creating their own responses to nuclear issues for a public audience and expressing their emotions. While it was mostly friends and affiliates of anti-nuclear groups who attended these exhibitions, Sandra assured me often many members of the public would view their creations.

¹⁹ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 251.

²⁰ Interview, Hawcroft.

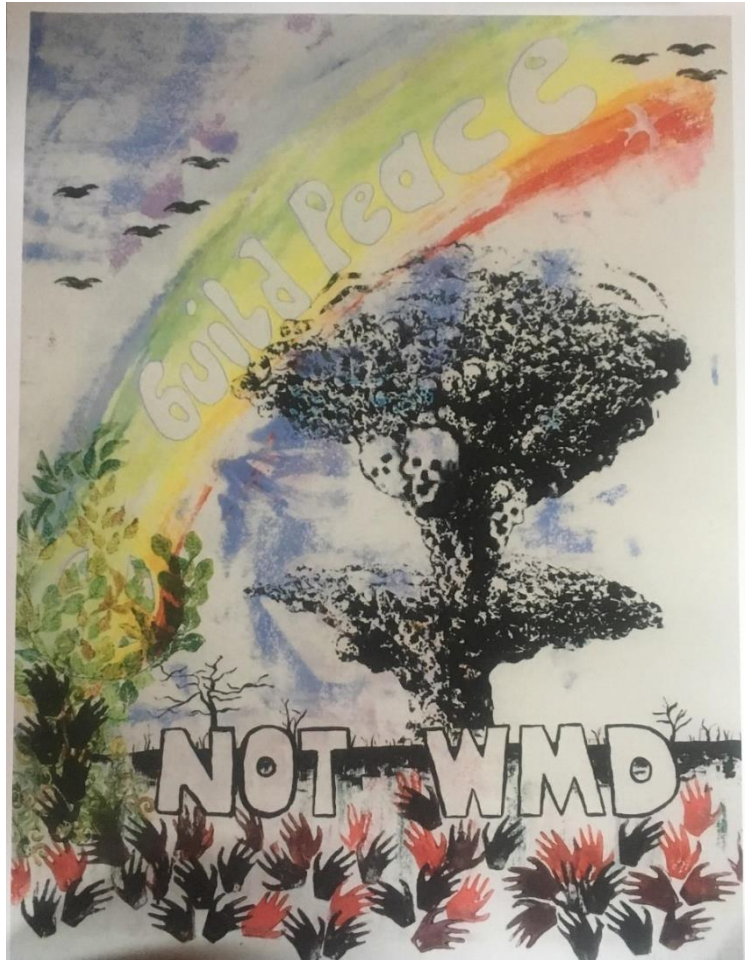


Figure 3.2 Copy of a Painting by Sandra Hawcroft, 1982.

Although anxiety laces the painting through the dark colour scheme and images of skulls and the mushroom cloud, it simultaneously presents a message of hope. While the ground and trees are destroyed by the weapon, birds and other living vegetation emerge on the edges of the painting. A rainbow blends into the dark clouds of the mushroom cloud. In the interview, Sandra reflected on the painting and commented that “fear was important to show” to “motivate people to think about what the weapons could do.”²¹ Throughout her testimony, Sandra fondly recalled her time in CND during the Cold War, telling me that she felt “she was doing the right thing” and “always wanted her messages to have some hope that things can be better.”²² The painting reflects Sandra’s simultaneous feelings of hopefulness and anxiety. This

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

juxtaposition of emotions was common in many anti-nuclear mediums. This reflects the arguments made in chapter two. Nuclear anxiety was not a static or singular emotional response. It was multifaceted and often layered with other nuclear emotions.

Another example of hope and anxiety co-existing in culture is demonstrated through the Stanford's family testimony. Tracy Stanford was the daughter of activists, Rosie and Peter Stanford, and she reflected that her experience of CND was "full of merchandise." She told me that CND would sell badges, T-shirts, flyers, and posters at "almost every CND rally she was at."²³ Her mother Rosie recalled how she and other women in CND had created a quilt together as part of a protest display. The quilt itself had travelled internationally and is currently held in London.²⁴ Many CND members recollected that the act of making signs, slogans, and puns were "a huge part of protesting."²⁵ Many posters, leaflets, and pamphlets produced by protesters also leaked into popular culture and everyday life, such as booklets by *The Church and the Bomb* and *Mercury: The Real Peace Movement* which were kindly donated to me by Rosie. These memorabilia were unique in that they represented the intersection of anxiety and hope. In this way, members of the anti-nuclear community participated in unique, exclusive nuclear cultures which were tied to feelings of hope and community, alongside a sense of anxiety.

Interviewees occasionally cited instances they used crafting techniques to discuss or express their feelings surrounding the Cold War. In our interview, Roger Leech shared a chapter he had written for one of his publications called 'The World Holds Its Breath.' The writing detailed his personal experience and fears growing up during the Cold War, in particular reflecting how Bertrand Russell's *Has Man a Future* influenced his childhood

²³ Interview, Stanford.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.* The Imperial War Museum displayed the iconology of CND protests in an exhibition in 2017 titled *People Power: Fighting for Peace*. This exhibition displayed flyers, badges and "other ephemera emblazoned" with the iconic CND symbol.

anxieties. Russell's text imagines an unrecoverable worldwide nuclear war, providing several advisements to lessen global nuclear tensions in its introduction. Roger recalled how he "still remembers the shock of reading it" and the "nightmare scenario of a nuclear attack which could happen."²⁶ He expressed feeling "worried" for "most of his childhood" about a nuclear attack "due to what Russell described." In Roger's chapter, after framing the Cold War itself, he begins to detail his "postwar childhood" starting with his memories of Russell's text. Roger reflected on the "very real possibility of nuclear war" and "frequently imagined how it could – it might – all suddenly end."²⁷ He continues in his chapter to reflect on his memories of civil defence, the CND movement, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, recalling that it was "a very frightening time for us kids."²⁸ Roger told me in our interview that he decided to cut this section of writing as it "didn't seem to fit in" with the "otherwise innocent childhood" he described in his final publication.²⁹ Although the text expresses explicit anxieties regarding nuclear war and the Cuban Missile Crisis, in particular, it does end with a hopeful note, commenting that he was "glad things had settled down" and still "hoped for the future." In this way, anxiety was expressed alongside a sense of hopefulness.

Several researchers argue that individuals experiencing anxiety or stress use "crafting exercises" as a form of coping or to express their emotions.³⁰ In the interview, Roger reflected that he found it "productive" recalling his "Cold War fears." Similarly, Sandra told me she found her art was "a way to communicate her passion for peace."³¹ As the previous chapters have shown, these experiences of nuclear anxiety were not static or singular. Alongside the

²⁶ Interview, Leech.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Roger Leech, 'The World Holds its Breath', withheld chapter, 2018.

²⁹ Interview, Leech.

³⁰ David Sandmire *et al.* 'Psychological and automatic effects of art making in college-aged students', *Anxiety, Stress and Coping* 29(5) (2016): 561; Shawn Harrington, Orrin Morrison, and Antonio Pascual-Leone, 'Emotional Processing in an expressive writing task on trauma', *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice* 32 (2018): 116-122.

³¹ Interview, Leech; Interview, Hawcroft.

experience of nuclear anxiety were other emotional experiences such as hope. Furthermore, civilians not only responded to nuclear culture. Several of them involved themselves in the making of creative, physical expressions of their emotional experience.

Interviewees across Britain cited numerous different cultural sources to articulate and express their feelings of nuclear anxiety. Shaun Reznik was born in Czechoslovakia in 1970, moving to Cardiff in the latter years of the Cold War. As he reflected on his “Czechoslovakian and British nuclear anxieties” he used the *Fallout* franchise to articulate his feelings about nuclear war and the Cold War.³² *Fallout* is a video gaming franchise focusing on a post-nuclear war 1950s America. The games depict radioactive monsters and cannibalistic survivors, and it remains a popular franchise to this day. It was used to frame his imaginations of nuclear war. He commented, “yeah it would be like that- in- in the Vaults or trying to survive and then the radioactivity.”³³ Although *Fallout* was not released until 1997, Shaun used it to describe how he perceived the outcome of nuclear war. In this way, *Fallout* symbolised Shaun’s emotional response and opinions regarding nuclear war. Talking about the game and showing me pictures of it was a way for him to articulate how he imagined nuclear war.

As Grant argues, the very nature of nuclear war is “unimaginable.” In this way, “cultural scripts”, popular memories, imaginations, and perceptions shape civilian imaginations. Furthermore, as nuclear war has not actually happened, it was difficult for civilians to imagine. In this case, contemporary cultural representations were used to frame Shaun’s imagination, coinciding with Grant’s conclusion that there is “a lack of remembering how nuclear war was imagined in the 1950s and 1980s.”³⁴ This was also reflected in Mike Dalton’s testimony. Mike recalled that most of his Cold War and nuclear information “came from James Bond” novels.³⁵

³² Interview with Shaun Reznik, 28 February 2019.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 253.

³⁵ Interview, Dalton.

The franchise follows a fictional British Secret Service Agent known as James Bond. The novels and the subsequent films often contained Cold War and nuclear motifs. Mike related to this franchise frequently throughout the interview, describing how they represented (and informed) his feelings about the Cold War.³⁶ These contemporary depictions of the Cold War and nuclear war informed the testimony of Mike and Shaun.³⁷ Although they recalled their past selves, they used these modern depictions to frame them. They were used to help me understand their imaginations. These examples of nuclear culture were utilised by individuals to communicate emotions and imaginations about nuclear weapons and the Cold War.

As previously discussed, *Dr Strangelove* (1964) was referenced in several interviews. The film follows a US Air Force General who orders a first-strike nuclear attack on the Soviet Union, the President of America, several advisers trying to prevent the nuclear attack, and the crew of the bomber delivering the weapons. It was a political satire and black comedy and many interviewees recalled finding it humorous. William Stonewell reflected that he “still found it funny today”, especially the “German scientist character.”³⁸ John Whittaker commented on its “dark humour” and still “enjoyed watching it today.”³⁹ He told me how he thought the film “captured the absurdity of nuclear war”, reflecting that this was “why it is so funny.”⁴⁰ Within these recollections, humour was employed to discuss an “admittedly dark topic” within interviews.⁴¹ Previous chapters explored how interviewees often expressed hope that they would be killed first within a nuclear attack. In the same way, civilians cited British nuclear culture as a humorous articulation of “what was really going on in the world.” Reflecting upon this, Roger noted that he “probably enjoyed *Dr Strangelove* so much” because it “was an escape from what *could* happen. *Dr Strangelove* made something frightening into

³⁶ Interview, Dalton.

³⁷ Laucht, ‘Britannia rules’, 358.

³⁸ Interview, Stonewell.

³⁹ Interview, Whittaker.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Interview, Leech.

something funny and that resonated” with him.⁴² Within our interview, we began by discussing memories he deemed most important such as the Cuban Missile Crisis or his time as a nuclear engineer. Roger then changed the conversation to the “kinds of films that came out then [in the Cold War].” He recalled that “one American one” was “really funny.” Roger reflected on the events within *Dr Strangelove* and recalled that it did make him “more aware” of the “possibility” of a nuclear accident. He continued: “just one person or a madman could just set it [nuclear weapons] off.” He trailed off and remarked that the “real-life character of Dr Strangelove probably wouldn’t be very funny in real life.”⁴³ Within Roger’s testimony, the memories of *Dr Strangelove* appear to revitalise both feelings of humour and anxiety, demonstrating the multifaceted nature of the experience of nuclear anxiety and intermingling nuclear emotions.

The possibility of a real-life *Dr Strangelove* was explicitly worrying to some interviewees. Within our interview, Alice and George McEwan recalled:

Alice: There was that film-

George: Oh yeah there was that film- oh Dr Strangelove yes that’s it. That’s the sort of impression most of us got about the Cold War and an accident happening.

Alice: We were all terrified, weren’t we?

George: Yeah

Alice: Really and truly.⁴⁴

In this recollection, Alice was visibly nervous and sought reassurance from her husband about how “we were all terrified.” They discussed how the film depicted a nuclear “accident” and this evoked feelings of nuclear anxiety. For them, the absurd scenario of the film was frightening rather than humorous. The couple reflected on the collective experience of the film (“most of us”, “We were all terrified”), suggesting that others around them felt the same. As

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Interview, McEwan.

discussed in the previous chapter, the idea of a nuclear accident was a common and palpable fear in many of the testimonies. This anxiety is best summarised by George Branco, a member of the British Communist Party and CND, who commented that although he felt the film was “funny” it also showed “American- actually all politicians’ incompetence with nuclear weapons.”⁴⁵ Nuclear war was presented as an absurd and frightening future. Some civilians used *Dr Strangelove* to articulate this feeling. Although anxiety was palpable as civilians recollected the film, humour was expressed alongside it.⁴⁶

Other films were referenced in the testimonies to frame the emotions and imaginations of British civilians. The *War Game* was often cited by interviewees. It was a British film produced in 1965 but did not air until 1985 due to BBC censorship. The docudrama depicted the events prior, during, and after a Soviet nuclear attack on Britain. Grant argues that the film resulted in heightened feelings of nuclear anxiety due to its shocking and graphic nature.⁴⁷ This perception was reflected in George and Alice’s recollection of the reception to *The War Game*:

George: I don’t think we understood to this detail- when you looked at the effect on people, that film which was banned on the BBC.

Emily: *The War Game*?

Alice: Yes

George: That showed the effect on ordinary people.

Alice: I can remember them making that. It was terrifying. We kept rucksacks ready to go- yeah to go up to the north of Scotland. At the time I was living erm south of Cardiff. So yeah.⁴⁸

Throughout this testimony, collective pronouns are frequently referenced (“effect on ordinary people”, “effect on people”, “I don’t think we understood”). These references to shared mindsets reflected the view that Alice and George felt their experiences were representative of the wider British experience. Within the interview, George used *The War Game* to

⁴⁵ Interview, Yorke, Branco, Marking.

⁴⁶ The third section of this chapter will explore this juxtaposition of emotions in more depth.

⁴⁷ Grant, ‘Images of Survival’, 7.

⁴⁸ Interview, McEwan.

communicate his imaginations of nuclear war. He reflected that the film showed “the effect on ordinary people”, which the film overtly claimed to demonstrate.⁴⁹ He categorises himself (and his wife) within the broader British population and implies that what happened in *The War Game* could happen to him. These self-made emotional communities demonstrated the sociality of feeling and how emotions and culture tied the individual to the world.⁵⁰ As Langhamer found in the crafted responses within Mass Observation during the 1940s, British civilians cited cultural resources as they reflected upon their feelings about the bomb.⁵¹

Like *Dr Strangelove*, *The War Game* was used to describe how civilians felt about nuclear war. When asked about his imaginations of nuclear war, George reflected: “that [*War Game*] is what it would be like. All that screaming and crying and the shock, I wouldn’t want to be a part of it, I remember thinking I would just stand on the roof of a tall building and wait. Honestly, I think most people would prefer to do that and go quickly than mutation or radiation burns or cancer or something.”⁵² This sentiment of hoping for death during a nuclear attack was commonplace in the testimony. Just as Chris reflected in chapter one that he “hoped a bomb would hit him on the head first”, George hoped to also “go quickly.” These articulations demonstrated the shifting emotional landscape of postwar Britain. These civilians were concerned about the future and pessimistic about peace. Underpinning this emotional shift was the knowledge and anxiety of the unimaginable destructive force of a nuclear weapon. For George, the horror of nuclear war which *The War Game* depicted shaped his imagination of nuclear war. Later in the interview, I asked the couple what they remembered from their imaginations of nuclear war at the time. George remarked: “Well like the *War Game*.” Nuclear war films then painted a very convincing image for many British civilians as they forced them

⁴⁹ Tony Shaw, ‘The BBC, the State and Cold War Culture: The Case of Television’s *The War Game* (1965)’, *English Historical Review* CXXXI(494) (2006): 1358.

⁵⁰ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 203.

⁵¹ Langhamer, ‘Mass Observing’, 216

⁵² Interview, McEwan.

to imagine the unimaginable.⁵³ For George and Alice, the film was real. It was a depiction of a frightening reality her family chose to prepare for. *The War Game* therefore simultaneously symbolised and contributed to their feelings of nuclear anxiety.

Alexander Campbell had a unique recollection of *The War Game* as he participated in its filming. Alexander proudly and passionately recalled:

So, Peter Watkins approached CND looking for extras. So, I went down, and we arranged to meet, and they were doing a shoot- so I went down. And he said, 'Never mind acting- don't- just do what you would do if it were for real.' And that's all the advice he gave us. And I thought well I'll do that then. And we started and I saw this group of people and there was a policeman, and I went over and said 'excuse me but what has happened? Could you tell me' and he looked at me and said, 'We're doing a film'? [laughs] The policeman was an actor- an actor like me, and I said to him 'I know, you stupid bastard, I'm acting too!' [...] And then I did the same thing again and the policeman said this time 'Nothing sir, just be on your way' and I asked him again and built it up that way. And it built up and built up and built up. It got out of control and I looked at him and hissed 'Ya bastard ya great bugger' and shouted really loud. [laughs]⁵⁴

Alexander fondly describes his experience on set while filming for *The War Game* and these memories bring feelings of nostalgia and anger. During filming, he took his acting "a bit



Figure 3.3 A 'Policeman' interviewed for *The War Game* docudrama. In this particular scene the policeman talks about being a 'normal human being' with 'normal human reactions and emotions' to the background noise of women and children sobbing.

⁵³ Grant, 'Making sense', 252.

⁵⁴ Interview, Campbell.

seriously” and would “often” prompt others to respond to his attempts to “do it for real.” He laughs and jokes both at his fellow actor, who was dressed as a policeman, not knowing what he was doing (Figure 3.3). As the scene escalated, Alexander shouted profanities at the actor as “that’s what it really would have been like.”⁵⁵

Throughout the oral history testimony, the seriousness in which Alexander took nuclear war was palpable as he recalled this memory. He intentionally changed the pace and pitch of his voice, indicating it was not the first time he had composed this narrative. At the end of this memory, Alexander paused before breaking the silence with laughter, inviting me into his joke. Although the story was predominately one of anger and frustration, it was laced with humour and laughter. Notably, it was the actor’s incompetence that seemed to frustrate Alexander. He reflected that “he [the policeman actor] was supposed to be someone of authority so he definitely would be acting very different in a nuclear war. Panicking or looting or something.”⁵⁶ His opinion of how the authority would act in the event of a nuclear war was framed by his experiences protesting in CND as he “was often arrested back in the day.”⁵⁷

For Alexander, *The War Game* was real in a very literal sense as opposed to something viewed on a television screen. Later in the interview, he added:

I had to do another role. I had to be councillor sort of thing and I said to Peter: ‘You know if this was real. I wouldn’t do this. I wouldn’t accept it’. And he said cut and he re-did the scene and there was real cameras and non-real cameras and I run and shout at the cameras ‘Mary wherever you are, get the kids, get the family and run they are gonna use the bombs’. I was so angry and worried. It was real. It was good. I don’t think it made the cut though. I think it’s in the extended version.⁵⁸

Alexander expresses feelings of pride in his influence of a particular scene in the film, alongside feelings of “real” anger, fear, and excitement at his perceived performance. He then conveyed

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

disappointment at the scene only appearing in the “extended version.” For Alexander, *The War Game* represented the “frightening possibility and reality of nuclear attack.” Alongside these feelings were expressions of nostalgia, humour, and fondness. Charlie Yorke recollected *The War Game* representing the “reality of nuclear war” and was “something we [CND] often used to communicate the truth to the public effectively.”⁵⁹ While *The War Game* had been censored on public television for nearly 20 years, those who worked in the anti-nuclear movement were permitted to publicly screen it, and in Alexander’s case, participate in its production.⁶⁰

Experiences and emotions surrounding *The War Game* in these examples differ greatly. Charlie and Alexander, members of CND, reflected upon *The War Game* with pride, nostalgia, and activism. George and Alice, members of the British public, used it to describe their imaginations of a possible nuclear war. Emotional attachments were seemingly dependant on whether they were viewing the film in their living room or as part of the CND movement. Although the films discussed depicted the horrors of nuclear war, the emotional responses were multifaceted and represented the shifting emotional landscape of Cold War Britain. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War and the dropping of the first atomic weapons, Langhamer found that respondents to Mass Observation were pessimistic about the future and “felt depressed about peace.”⁶¹ This marked a shift in the emotional culture of postwar Britain. The interviewees recorded for this project seemed to demonstrate a second shift in this emotional landscape. Within the testimony, civilians reflected how nuclear war “had never happened” but was a “possible future.”⁶² These individuals had experienced years of suspense, near-accidents, and the rhetoric of MAD. While anxiety was a transparently dominant emotional experience, it was interlaced alongside expressions of humour, passion, sadness,

⁵⁹ Interview, Yorke, Branco, Marking.

⁶⁰ John Cook and Patrick Murphy, 'After the bomb dropped: the cinema half-life of the War Game (1965),' *Journal of Popular British Cinema* (2000): 131.

⁶¹ Langhamer, 'Mass Observing', 220.

⁶² Interview, Lincoln.

anger, and nostalgia. Within the oral history testimony, these multiple parallel nuclear emotions unfurled and played out in the context of the interview.

British nuclear culture did not always result in feelings of nuclear anxiety about nuclear war and the ways examples of nuclear culture were employed by each individual differed greatly. For some interviewees, nuclear culture was used to describe how they felt about particular events, utilised as a method of communication to articulate their feelings. For others, nuclear culture reinforced and represented their current feelings of nuclear anxiety. As Grant suggests, civilians who recall the Cold War used popular culture and cultural memories to compose their imaginations of a possible nuclear future.⁶³ The reception of nuclear culture was dependent on the time, place, and context in which it was viewed. It also depended on the individual and their pre-existing emotional state and assumptions regarding the British Cold War. Membership to CND, for example, vastly shaped the emotional attachments to particular films.

Existing historiography has examined how British nuclear culture represented the changing landscape of postwar Britain. However, this literature has failed to explore the reception of British nuclear culture. The existence of these sources demonstrates the presence of anxiety in Britain and these responses to nuclear culture were diverse across Britain.⁶⁴ Langhamer further argues that some cultural resources were “a source of anxiety” or a “mouthpiece for scientists” or politicians.⁶⁵ This section contributes to this scholarship by demonstrating that British nuclear culture did diversify and impact the civilian experience of the Cold War. This section also demonstrates that British nuclear culture was utilised to articulate emotions and imaginations. Within the oral history interviews, the emotions

⁶³ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 252.

⁶⁴ Hogg, ‘Nuclear Resistance’; Hughes, ‘Nuclear Culture’; Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 140.

⁶⁵ Langhamer, ‘Mass Observing’, 215.

connected to these cultural resources were complex and multifaceted. Individuals expressed feelings of passion, anger, sadness, hope, and nostalgia. Therefore, although the presence of these cultural resources does demonstrate the existence of nuclear anxiety in the postwar British emotional landscape, it also demonstrates the existence of other nuclear emotions. As much as the *War Game* symbolised British nuclear anxiety, it also represented feelings of nostalgia for filming on set and making friends. It represented feelings of community as CND activists gathered in tents to watch the censored film together. *Dr Strangelove* represented feelings of anxiety about nuclear accidents for some civilians. But for others, recollecting it brought feelings of childhood joy and satirical humour. These popular and cultural depictions of nuclear war were used by the British public to shape their imaginations of a nuclear attack, altering the emotional and imaginative landscape of the British Cold War demonstrating what Hogg describes as nuclearity.⁶⁶ Across the cultural mediums created and referenced within the oral history testimony, civilians reflected upon how they reinforced or represented their emotions and imaginations of nuclear war.

Section II: The nuclear everyday

For many British civilians, nuclear anxiety became part of everyday experience, which was entangled in their social, cultural, political, and personal spheres. Biess demonstrates through his analysis of nuclear angst and civil defence in West Germany, nuclear anxiety became part of the “permanent state” of the nation as anxiety was “seen and heard on a regular basis.”⁶⁷ Biess argues West German civil defence was focused on the “containment of fears” and “managing popular emotions.” Anxiety became central to everyday life and political

⁶⁶ Hogg, ‘The family’, 535.

⁶⁷ Biess, ‘Nuclear Angst’, 219.

mobilisation.⁶⁸ Similarly in the UK, civil defence, nuclear culture, and cultural memory resulted in feelings of anxiety. It became a background presence in the lives of civilians. Interviewees reflected how the weapons “were always there” or “hung over” their lives. These individuals engaged with what Hogg describes as nuclearity, as they responded with a set of ingrained assumptions on nuclear weaponry in everyday life.⁶⁹ Within the oral history testimony, civilians reflected upon the “everyday presence” of nuclear weapons and considered how they had “shaped their Cold War experience.”⁷⁰

This section considers how civilians framed nuclear weapons within their daily lives. The section expands on current understandings of nuclear anxiety and reception of British nuclear culture. As previous chapters have briefly explored, civilians did not express denial of the nuclear threat and instead seemed to willingly accept the reality of their deaths. They would often comment that this was a normal opinion to have. This section explores this perception and suggests that nuclear anxiety was an experience not necessarily connected to denial. These responses were characterised by the normalcy in which they were discussed. These wishes for death rather than survive a nuclear attack were shocking at first. I found it unsettling to hear civilians willingly, and sometimes very descriptively, describe how they hoped to perish during a nuclear war. However, the frequency of these responses demonstrated the ways nuclear anxiety embedded into the everyday experience in Britain. This expands upon Cordle’s theorisation of British civilian responses to the nuclear threat. He suggests that civilians either protested the nuclear threat by joining the anti-nuclear movement or they protected themselves from the nuclear threat by engaging in civil defence or believing in nuclear deterrence. This section demonstrates that some civilians found themselves in a third category: acceptance of

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 228, 243.

⁶⁹ Hogg, ‘The family’, 535-538.

⁷⁰ Interview, Moore.

the nuclear issue.⁷¹ This section argues that civilian responses to the nuclear threat were diverse and the constant stream of nuclear culture across the world contributed to the embedding of nuclear anxiety into everyday lived experience during the Cold War.

Through the constant political and cultural bombardment of the Cold War and nuclear weapons, they soon became part of everyday life for people living in Britain. As Eschle shows, feelings of insecurity became entwined with mundane life in anti-nuclear activist peace camps. She argues that the campers emphasise the everyday “insecurities of people living close to the state’s nuclear weapons, the blurred boundaries between us and them, and the inevitability of insecurity in everyday life.”⁷² The very routines and practices which campers exercised demonstrated their feelings of insecurity within a base that was built “to protect them.”⁷³ Parkhill et al consider the everydayness of living next to nuclear power stations in Cold War Britain. In particular, they argue how this geographic and social context became an aspect of everyday life through a process of familiarisation to make it an “unthreatening part of everyday life.”⁷⁴ Arguably, in the same way, many civilians in Britain used this same process of familiarisation to remove the risk of nuclear weapons and embed them into ordinary life.

However, these scholars have focused entirely on extraordinary contexts. Only a small population of Britain lived at either a nuclear peace camp or near a nuclear power station. This thesis attempts to explore the everyday experiences of *ordinary* British civilians. Urban narratives can be assumed to be a more representative or typical experience of the ‘British everyday’ as approximately 72.8% of civilians lived in urban communities in 1981.⁷⁵ Thus, the narratives produced by the interviewees for this research, who all lived in urban communities, can be assumed to represent at least a slice of typical normality in the Cold War. Many of the

⁷¹ Cordle, ‘Protect/Protest’, 654.

⁷² Eschle, ‘Nuclear (in)Security’, 289.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 295.

⁷⁴ Parkhill, et al, ‘From the familiar’, 46.

⁷⁵ Tony Champion, ‘People in cities: the numbers’, *Government Office for Science* (UK: June 2014): 25-26.

interviewees held various assumptions about nuclear weapons across Britain. These included a feeling that the Cold War hung over their lives, that there was nothing they could do to prevent nuclear war, and that the Cold War was simply part of life. Through these mindsets, the Cold War and nuclear weapons became embedded in everyday life, becoming entrenched in daily activity, emotion, and experience.

A notable aspect of the Cold War experience was the normalcy in which civilians would discuss their demise in the event of a nuclear attack. Many individuals expressed an acceptance of their death and mortality during a potential nuclear war. Some even hoped or wished for death, rather than continue living after a nuclear attack. For example, Jack Kelly recollected:

Yeah, like in the back of your mind you just thought, you weren't gonna survive. We would be the ones standing on the roof like this [*spreads arms out*] I'd say come and get me.⁷⁶

Jack explicitly comments that survivability was impossible and would instead, quite literally, embrace death. His gesture was performed in front of his wife and son who nodded in agreement. I asked why he would choose to do that, and Jack commented that he felt that there would be “no point living after nuclear war” because of “all the radiation and burns and death.” Jack assured me that when the bomb drops “he would be running towards it.”⁷⁷

Jack was not alone feeling this way. Towards the end of an interview with George McEwan, he made a remark that he “hoped the bomb would drop directly on him.”⁷⁸ This acceptance of death also appeared in narratives of those associated with the anti-nuclear movement. Chris Bradbury, a member of CND, recalled feeling that nuclear war “wasn't survivable” and he “hoped a [nuclear] bomb would hit him on the head.”⁷⁹ Alexander, a prominent anti-nuclear figure in Glasgow, reflected on the survivability of nuclear war:

⁷⁶ Interview, Kelly.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Interview, McEwan.

⁷⁹ Interview, Bradbury.

Emily: So, did you ever think about protecting yourself from nuclear war?

Alexander: No. No. No. A waste of my time. If you want to save your children from suffering, then get a large brick and hit them as hard as you can on the head. It's the only thing you can do. Hit them and you as hard as you can and get it over with.⁸⁰

In this exchange, there is not only an acceptance of death but an implication of suicide and assisted suicide to others if nuclear war occurred. These extracts in the oral history testimony were common and no interviewee expressed a desire to live past a nuclear attack. These examples challenge Lifton's theorising of an unconscious psychic numbing to cope with nuclear anxiety. These civilians instead consciously *accepted* the potential for nuclear attack and their premature death. The nuclearity of everyday life is revealed through these experiences. Individuals lived their lives following the assumption not only that nuclear war was un-survivable, but that survivability was undesirable. Just as chapter one demonstrated within the perceptions of nuclear war in their urban areas, individuals accepted their deaths and did not *deny* the assumed un-survivability of nuclear war.

Many individuals reflected upon how the Cold War and nuclear weapons became embedded in their lived experience. As previously explored in chapters one and two, the civilian experience of nuclear anxiety was more akin to feelings of suspense than fear or terror. This is further reflected in Mike Dalton's testimony:

Mike: It made me uneasy you know but erm at the time I was a young teenager I was worried about other things, and it just felt like it was so out of my hands.

Emily: So, you weren't worried about nuclear war?

Mike: Erm [pause] I suppose because I've lived through it all me life. It was just there. It has always been, and you know and almost- as I remember it, always will be I mean we could never- I thought it would never change.⁸¹

A sense of "uneasiness" is explicitly expressed as Mike reflected upon the "general experience" of the Cold War. Rather than a vocabulary of fear, he used language of suspense within his

⁸⁰ Interview, Campbell.

⁸¹ Interview, Dalton.

recollection. As Cordle argues, this “lurking awareness” of the nuclear threat in everyday lives “drives nuclear fears beneath the surface” resulting in a sense “of living under the nuclear shadow.”⁸² This is parallel to Mike’s recollection that the Cold War “has always been” there and his sense that “it would never change”, exposing a sense of powerlessness.⁸³ This resurfaces the arguments made in chapter two. Mike later discussed how he felt that it was “up to the politicians” and there “wasn’t anything he or any normal person could do.”⁸⁴ When asked if he was worried, Mike reflected that it probably was *because* he had lived through it his whole life. His narrative captures the sense of suspense Cordle argues defined the Cold War; a feeling that “one is living always on the cusp, just before nuclear war.”⁸⁵

Roger Leech recollected a similar feeling, telling me that the Cold War “was just there. It was on the news every day. Like how Brexit is now.”⁸⁶ Roger used the contemporary, near-constant news of Brexit to articulate the everydayness of the Cold War and nuclear weapons. For example, since the 2016 referendum, the BBC has a dedicated Brexit news page which received almost daily updates and articles. In this testimony, Roger’s present-centeredness interjects his recollection of the Cold War. He also used the contemporary political climate to help me understand his experience. By relating his life experiences to a period of time I had personally experienced, he was more able to articulate his feelings. In 2016 Brexit was an extraordinary phenomenon that eventually became part of normal life as was reported on a near-daily basis. Likewise, in 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic was perceived as an unprecedented experience and narratives of a “new normal” entered public and cultural spheres. In the same way, Roger reflected how the Cold War was “new and worrying at first” but it “just kind of disappeared into the background of everyday life. It was there, but we were

⁸² Cordle, ‘In dreams’, 103.

⁸³ Interview, Dalton.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Cordle, ‘In dreams’, 104.

⁸⁶ Interview, Leech.

all getting married, getting jobs, having kids, all while wondering if a nuclear war would ever happen.”⁸⁷

Other testimony reflected upon the embedded everydayness of the Cold War. A notable example was Frank Davies. Frank was a member of the RAF throughout most of the Cold War and recalled civil defence exercises:

Well, on this exercise, - this was an exercise, and they weren't- they were trying to beat us. It was like a game of football. You know, we were trying to penetrate them, and they were to us. It was exactly the same. Like a game of football.⁸⁸

Frank fondly recalled how civil defence exercises between America and Britain were “like a game of football.” For him, the Cold War and the military exercises it prompted became as normal as one of Britain’s most popular sports. A similar experience is mirrored in Archie Merritt’s interview. Archie was a member of Belfast’s ROC between 1972 and 1991 and when asked about his experiences, they often fell into the mundane. He described the “smells of plastic cleaner” used to clean the display boards in the underground monitoring post where he was stationed, the changes in his uniform in the mid-1970s, and the contents of his ration packs.⁸⁹ Throughout these recollections, a sense of powerlessness is palpable, revealing how individuals genuinely believed that the Cold War may never end and formed the background to their lives. Cordle argues that while nuclear weapons have a “tendency to be shown as exceptional” they are “rooted in broader visions of society” and by the 1980s the threat of war “had become so common it became mundane.”⁹⁰

Steve Hall was born in 1943 in Cardiff and spent most of his adult life there. From a young age, Steve was interested in cycling and spent much of his youth within various clubs and teams. Steve’s interest took him all over the world throughout the Cold War. He

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Interview, Davies and Smith.

⁸⁹ Interview, Merritt.

⁹⁰ Cordle, ‘Protect/Protest’, 669.

commented that although “he didn’t always know it at the time”, the Cold War entered his life “constantly” and in “unexpected ways.”⁹¹ Steve recalled:

By 1960, I had started biking- started cycling. And in the early 1960s, I used to race a lot. Erm event races all over Britain. I rode- well the British equivalent of the tour de France. But again, even that was- that had a Cold War element. In 1960 a guy appeared riding his bike and- and he was very good. But anyway, when we got to know him- he turned out to be a Hungarian refugee who had come over. I mean he never really talked about Hungary and he was well settled here. He was just one of the boys. But we knew there was this backstory. You know like oh god that was part of the Cold War and the Hungarian uprising- and I thought of him.⁹²

The Cold War entered Steve’s life through cycling. For example, the Hungarian uprising of 1956 “did not affect him at the time.” Instead, his awareness of the event hinged on others he met in his cycling career. Shortly after this, Steve remarked that the “Cold War kept appearing” in his cycling club:

Well as well, my- the president of our cycling club. He was one of the first people to go on a tourist holiday trip to Siberia which stunned everyone. And we- our cycling club was pretty apolitical- but- erm I was on the committee and I was surprised. We were amazed. It was like the first organised tour behind the Iron Curtain. That was- that was quite a sensation in the club. It was even in the papers!⁹³

Through the actions and experiences of others in his cycling club, Steve became profoundly aware of the Cold War. He frequently referred back to his memories of the cycling club to frame his feelings and experiences. It was these memories that were *meaningful* to Steve. He continued: “I remember he gave us all a slide show of ‘behind the Iron Curtain’. The whole club came and some neighbours too. We were excited to see the other side of the Cold War.”⁹⁴ Steve’s testimony reveals how the Cold War entered the spheres of public and private life for civilians. Through his ordinary hobby of cycling, the Cold War entered his daily life and impacted his experience of the Cold War.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Interview, Hall.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

The Cold War and the political climate of the time even shaped the dynamics of cycling competitions Steve participated in. He continued:

I rode out in 65' and 66' and in both years we had riders from the Iron Curtain and- erm- you know I was I was in a couple of teams- [...] There were Polish riders, Romanian, Eastern German riders as well. And erm- erm one of the- thinking of these guys. You know it was like the enemy! And war breaking out and the Iron Curtain. I mean I got on perfectly well with them aside from language differences, but we definitely had this Cold War rivalry. So yeah, another Cold War thing.⁹⁶

He later recalled how in the following year, he was “horrified to hear that the Russians were competing” and his team “were worried about what was going to happen.” For Steve there was a real feeling of “Cold War rivalry” as his British teammates faced opponents from “beyond the Iron Curtain.” Cycling was present in many of Steve’s recollections. He recalled his anxiety as he rode past “huge round radar dishes” that were “looking to the East.” He remembered being asked if he “was or had ever been a member of the Communist Party” while at customs in New York for a competition. It was these everyday mundane moments that “brought the Cold War home.” Throughout his testimony, Steve expressed uncertainty when he considered “what would happen” if the “rivalry” between the US and the Soviet Union escalated. He commented: “I think it would be worse than losing a simple bike race [laughs].” Within Steve’s life, cycling was a hobby, a passion, and his income. It was part of his everyday routine and central to his life history. Steve’s testimony reveals how the Cold War intersected with ordinary life. It was through his cycling that he attached *meanings* to the Cold War.

The testimony revealed examples of this juxtaposition of ordinary life and nuclear anxiety. Chapter two explored the Cuban Missile Crisis as an example of a flashpoint of anxiety in many British civilians’ lives. These flashpoints were also rooted in mundane memories. These moments reveal how the Cold War and nuclear anxiety became embedded in lived experience during this period. Three interviewees recollected a moment in their lives where

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

they believed nuclear war was genuinely happening. These experiences were rooted in mundane settings and reveal how the emotional climate of nuclear anxiety was sometimes brought to the forefront. They demonstrate the influence the Cold War had on everyday life. Nuclear war sat at the intersection of typical and exceptional. As Cordle argues, this was a “signature Cold War mindset” of the “lurking dread” and “looming” possible nuclear war scenario.⁹⁷ However, this background awareness would sometimes rise to the surface, resulting in feelings of intense nuclear anxiety.

These three examples all reflect upon memories relating to a rumour which sparked a genuine moment of nuclear anxiety. Linda Southport vividly recalled:

Yeah, there was a group of us, we- we went round telling everyone that there was a specific day they were gonna drop nuclear bombs. It was a rumour that we started- yeah.⁹⁸

While she was at school in the 1960s, Linda began a rumour about nuclear war occurring and according to her “many people believed it.” She had intended to start this rumour to “raise awareness” of the nuclear threat and was “just a bit of fun.” She continued:

So, it came to the day- the day we said it was gonna happen. I can’t remember what day it was. And we were in maths, just sitting there. And then we heard these air raid sirens and- and everyone just panicked! We all jumped down and hid under our tables- [laughs] The teacher was so confused. We all thought it was actually happening. But they were just testing the sirens outside- it wasn’t real. Just a test.⁹⁹

Within this memory, the normality of joking about nuclear war and schoolyard rumours materialised into genuine nuclear anxiety. Linda retold his memory to me with humour, laughing throughout, but pausing to stress the “real” fear of her classmates. When the air raid sirens were circumstantially tested, Linda’s classmates responded with “panic.”¹⁰⁰ She continued: “for just a second I genuinely thought it was going to happen, I believed my own

⁹⁷ Cordle, ‘In Dreams’, 104; Cordle, ‘Protect/Protest’, 669.

⁹⁸ Interview, Southport.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Preston, ‘Strange death’, 227.

rumour for long enough to hide under my table.” She and her class hid under their school desks in response to the sound, following World War Two civil defence guidance.¹⁰¹ This supports Cordle’s notion of a “mindset of suspense.” Linda’s memory was embedded in the normality of school and childhood.¹⁰² The sound of the sirens suddenly made the looming dread a reality transforming the memory into a flashpoint of nuclear anxiety.¹⁰³

Over 170 miles away and years apart, Roger Leech reported a similar rumour at his school. Roger recalled that in the late 1950s, a “rumour went around that nuclear war was going to happen.” He continued:

I remember- everyone was talking about nuclear war happening on this one day. Was it going to happen and things- just kids talk? And we were in English class or something and suddenly there was this huge rumbling sound, and the floor was shaking and me and my friends we thought- honestly- that it was happening. Nuclear war was happening. But you see, our classroom was near the gym and it was just the kids going to the sports hall to play basketball. That was the rumbling. But it was a bit scary- we thought it was really happening.¹⁰⁴

Roger reported feeling genuine anxiety as a child. Within the context of the interview, he recollected the event humorously and fondly. He laughed at his own “naivety.” Roger’s referral to the rumour being “kids talk” demonstrates how nuclear weapons entered the mundane space of the schoolyard. Michael Carey conducted a study on American children who had experienced ‘duck and cover’ air raid drills and found that although some denied nuclear fear affected their lives, they had a vague sense of living under the nuclear shadow and that would never quite go away.¹⁰⁵ Likewise, Roger and Linda recalled moments in school where nuclear war appeared to be happening and reported feeling a similar way throughout their childhood: that the Cold War hung over their lives. Later in the interview with Roger, I asked if the

¹⁰¹ Interview, Southport.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Cordle, ‘In dreams’, 2014; Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 172.

¹⁰⁴ Interview, Leech.

¹⁰⁵ Michael Carey, ‘Psychological Fallout’, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist* 38(1) (1982): 20-24.

rumours of nuclear war initially worried him, but he repeated, “it was just something kids would joke about.”¹⁰⁶

Jessica Cox recalled a third rumour which began in her school in the 1970s that nuclear bombs “would be dropped soon.” Jessica recollected how during class “a train went past the school and- and for just a second- a split second” she “thought it was really happening. That the rumour was true.”¹⁰⁷ Cheryl Lincoln had a similar experience in school, recalling how she was “afraid that Britain would sink if nuclear war hit us” as “that’s what they used to say at school.”¹⁰⁸ Britain sinking in the event of nuclear war or bombs being dropped on a particular day were myths, rumours, which feed into people’s normalised perceptions and feelings about nuclear weapons. At face value, these recollections of schoolyard rumours reveal that British civilians were aware of the atomic threat, believing it to be unsurvivable, and yet it was a “fact of life” at the time.¹⁰⁹ These recollections reveal the lack of security individuals felt in their everyday lives and breaks the “illusion of protection” nuclear weapons intended to provide.¹¹⁰ In this way, nuclear weapons were not constantly in the minds of many individuals, it was more akin to a suspenseful awareness.¹¹¹

Nuclear anxiety existed in the background, an embedded aspect of everyday experience during the Cold War, rising to the surface in specific contexts. Furthermore, feelings of worry, uncertainty, or uneasiness were an intrinsic part of the Cold War British experience. As Mike reflected in his testimony: “everyone was a bit worried, for good reason. But no one was like running around or building shelters or hiding or anything. No one was like *that* scared. Just a bit nervous about it.”¹¹² This section has shown the interplay between ordinary and

¹⁰⁶ Interview, Leech.

¹⁰⁷ Interview, Cox.

¹⁰⁸ Interview, Lincoln.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Cordle, ‘Protect/Protest’, 654.

¹¹¹ Boyer, *Bombs Early Light*, xvii.

¹¹² Interview, Dalton.

extraordinary moments of nuclear anxiety. It has demonstrated how these moments of nuclear anxiety were often rooted in the mundane. Interviewees drew upon their experiences to craft their narratives of nuclear anxiety, reflecting upon their hobbies and everyday life.

Section III: Laughter and acceptance: Humour and nuclear anxiety

Humour was used by interviewees to navigate the experience of the Cold War, deal with the troubling realities of nuclear war, and to align themselves to the humorous clichés which became deeply embedded in Cold War Britain. Humour became a way for individuals to employ coping strategies, both in the past and within the interview itself. The following section briefly considers how humour was employed within the oral history testimony to discuss the Cold War and what it tells us about the postwar British experience and nuclear emotions.¹¹³ Through humorous anecdotes and jokes, nuclear anxiety was articulated in public and private spaces. Humour also served to further embed nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear war into the emotional landscape of Cold War Britain.

Humour theory can reveal why joking about things that seem uncertain is funny and can uncover the ways nuclear anxiety is expressed. Joking can be understood as a means to “lighten up” what could be perceived as “oppressive or difficult.”¹¹⁴ Experiences of nuclear anxiety or the recollection of memories associated with this feeling were often presented as negative emotional responses. Thus, many individuals used humour to provide “relief” during the interview. According to Thomas Veatch, humour is rooted within the everyday and it must make “some reference to normality.” Humour reveals “something real” in an individual’s life. However, Veatch argues that for a joke to be funny, the content must be seen as both “normal

¹¹³ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 253.

¹¹⁴ Sarah Tracy, Karen Myers, and Clifton Scott, ‘Cracking Jokes and Crafting Selves: Sensemaking and Identity Management among human service workers’, *Communication Monographs* 73(3) (2006): 283-308.

and emotionally absurd.”¹¹⁵ When considering nuclear weapons, participants would often joke about the presence of nuclear weapons (their normality) and what would happen if nuclear war occurred (absurdity) in a joke.

Scholars have demonstrated that jokes may represent deeper and more complex social assumptions in what is said, unsaid, and unsayable.¹¹⁶ Françoise Zonabend suggests that anxieties are “easy to find once one looks for them”, even if they are “denied or dodged” by those questioned. She continues that these latent anxieties appear evident within “local discourse, whispered jokes, and mutterings” of the local population.¹¹⁷ Jerry Palmer suggests that humour is a way for people to discuss their fears and anxiety without “breaching security.” It allows taboo subjects, thoughts, and feelings to be expressed in culturally permissible ways.¹¹⁸ Parkhill et al argue that researchers using humour should consider “that through the expression of one emotion there may be other emotions and feelings underneath.”¹¹⁹ It is accepted by psychologists and historians that listening to laughter can reveal other emotional states which individuals may be uncomfortable with directly sharing. Furthermore, laughter reveals the normality of nuclear weapons. Individuals would make jokes in the interview and invite me to share in their humour, further embedding the humorous absurdity of nuclear war.

As previously explored, civilians recalled feeling that they would prefer to perish in a nuclear war than survive, often employing humour in these recollections. Jack Kelly commented that he “always felt” that “surviving nuclear war would be worse than living.” He continued that he “would be standing on the roof saying come and get me” if nuclear war occurred. Within this interaction, Jack smiled during the comment and laughed afterwards,

¹¹⁵ Thomas Veatch, ‘A Theory of Humour’, *Humour-International Journal of Humour Research* 11(2) (1998): 161-216.

¹¹⁶ Parkhill, et al, ‘Laughing it off?’, 327.

¹¹⁷ Françoise Zonabend, *The Nuclear Peninsula* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹¹⁸ Jerry Palmer, *Taking Humour Seriously* (London: Routledge, 1994).

¹¹⁹ Parkhill, et al, ‘Laughing it off?’, 327.

while spreading his arms out in an embrace of his death.¹²⁰ Jack pokes fun at the absurdity of nuclear war and makes the conscious choice to die in the heat-blast than to attempt to survive. This is also echoed in Alexander's testimony. While discussing the survivability of nuclear war in the interview, he reflected that if nuclear war happened "then it would be better to get someone to hit you with a large brick." He laughed and humorously gestured to his head.¹²¹ George McEwan and Chris Bradbury also told me that they "hoped the bomb would drop on their heads."¹²² In both interactions, they laughed afterwards. Cheryl Lincoln humorously recollected the feeling "if a nuclear bomb was dropped, you can't hide from it. I mean you might as well stand there and catch it [laughs]."¹²³ Their references to the absurdity of nuclear war and their acceptance and hope for a quick death was a cliché I also found humorous.

These examples can be viewed as either an incongruity joke, in which laughter is a response to the unexpected or unusual (which is in this case, a hope to perish in a nuclear war), or a relief joke (laughter as a way of relieving tension).¹²⁴ These jokes revealed a shared mindset and an emotional community amongst British civilians that nuclear war would be "unsurvivable." This links back to previous discussions about how individuals had referenced the humour of *Dr Strangelove* in the first section of this chapter and within their humorous and anxious imaginations of Cold War politicians in chapter two. The absurdity of nuclear war and mutually assured destruction was often offset with humour within the interview. As Grant suggests, these imaginations of nuclear war were distressing and difficult to compose.¹²⁵ Just as Langhamer found in her study, civilians living through the Cold War held a shared mood of pessimism about the survivability of nuclear war. The emotional shift, caused by the destructive

¹²⁰ Interview, Kelly.

¹²¹ Interview, Campbell.

¹²² Interview, McEwan; Interview, Bradbury.

¹²³ Interview, Lincoln.

¹²⁴ Julian Simpson, and Stephanie Snow, 'Why we should try to get the joke: Humour, Laughter, and the History of Healthcare', *The Oral History Review* 44(1) (2007): 81.

¹²⁵ Grant, 'Making sense', 253.

power of nuclear weapons, which unfurled in 1945 continued throughout the Cold War, influencing individual feelings about the present and the future.¹²⁶ While these testimonies were recollected humorously, the context and subject of the joke reveal the deeply embedded pessimism in Cold War Britain for a future after a nuclear war.

Humour is a useful way to uncover deeper emotional responses and experiences within memory in oral history interviews. According to Norrick, the presentation of embarrassing and painful events in humorous narratives provides “compelling everyday evidence of how memories are reconstructed for a particular audience in a particular context.”¹²⁷ Julian Simpson and Stephanie Snow argue that laughter provides a way of understanding the “truths of understanding” and “cultural values.”¹²⁸ Humour demonstrates group dynamics and the “normalisation” of potentially distressing themes, revealing shared mindsets and assumptions. Through humour, emotions can be “managed” within a group or emotional community to set a social norm and generate positive interactions between members of an interacting group.¹²⁹ “Joking cultures” can also be formed, revealing the standards and norms of communities.¹³⁰ Within an interview, the interviewer and interviewee(s) are part of this interacting group, so the use of humour can simultaneously build rapport and set social standards within the interview. A shared joke between an interviewer and interviewee can reveal shared understandings between the two and is central to “enhancing an understanding of the interview itself.”¹³¹ Parkhill et al demonstrate how humour can simultaneously mask and reveal affectively charged states about living with nuclear risk. They conclude that by using humour, participants could live with risk by suppressing vulnerabilities which empowered them and renegotiated what

¹²⁶ Langhamer, ‘Mass Observing’, 221.

¹²⁷ Neal Norrick, ‘Humour in Oral History Interviews’, *Oral History* 34(2) (2006): 85.

¹²⁸ Simpson, and Snow, ‘Humour, Laughter’, 77.

¹²⁹ Linda Francis, ‘Laughter, the best Mediation: Humour as Emotion Management in Interaction’, *Symbolic Interaction* 17(2) (1994): 147-148.

¹³⁰ Gary Fine and Michaela de Soucey, ‘Joking Cultures: Humour themes as social regulation in group life’, *Humour* 18(1) (2005): 1.

¹³¹ Simpson and Snow, ‘Humour, Laughter’, 77.

communities perceived as a threat.¹³² Individuals were able to normalise living near a nuclear power plant and make light of a living situation that outsiders would perceive as undesirable.

Humour was used by individuals to relieve feelings of anxiety within the interview, often to lighten the mood and to build rapport between the interviewer and interviewee. Mike Dalton discussed the possibility of surviving a nuclear war but used humour to lighten the topic. He often attempted to break the taboo of discussing these themes, actively sought to make me laugh, and invited me into his jokes with rhetorical questions.¹³³ When asked about his feelings about the Cold War, Mike reflected:

It was like; it was always there really. It was sort of like it was us against the Soviet Union it was just there you know. Erm big fan of James Bond so [both laugh].¹³⁴

Mike reflects on the Cold War stating that it “was always there” and ends his recollection with a joke about James Bond. This expression of humour was early on in our first interview, likely used to break the tension between two strangers. After discussing the likelihood of “surviving something like a nuclear war” and “getting through the radiation and heat and mushroom clouds”, Mike uses fictional narratives to frame his discussion. Grant argues the distressing nature of imagining nuclear war led to interviewees losing composure and referring to more comfortable topics.¹³⁵ Later, Mike reflected on the Cold War culture which “defined” his youth:

I guess, like every time I would see videos, I guess erm I just remember there was one, I think it was a traffic warden erm running around with- I always remember, it was a 1960s thing, but they showed us in school in the ‘80s. You know like what would happen in the event of world war, nuclear war, what would happen actors pretending to be dead on the floor and stuff [laughs]¹³⁶

Mike pokes fun at the idea of “actors lying down pretending to be dead on the floor” in nuclear war films. Our topic of conversation was morbid as we discussed death and life after a nuclear

¹³² Parkhill et al, ‘Laughing it off?’ 324.

¹³³ Veatch, ‘Theory of Humour’, 161-216.

¹³⁴ Interview, Dalton.

¹³⁵ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 253.

¹³⁶ Interview, Dalton.

war. At the end of this segment of the interview, Mike lightened the conversation with humour. He continued that “when he was young those films used to make him a bit scared of nuclear war” but he would “never admit it to his friends.” When asked if he felt the same now, Mike told me that he “didn’t anymore” and thought it was “funny that it had ever worried him.”¹³⁷ Within Mike’s testimony, gallows humour was dominantly used, offsetting the macabre topics of our conversations. Mike presented the finiteness of nuclear war as the butt of the joke and this humour was used as a form of relief to offset the “anxiety he used to feel.”

As explored in chapter two, British nuclear civil defence, such as *Protect and Survive*, was widely considered a joke in British nuclear culture.¹³⁸ One article in the *Liverpool Echo* in 1980 reflected how “*Protect and Survive* assumes everyone is a complete moron and contains a substantial amount of misinformation.”¹³⁹ Mike recollected a specific memory of this period. While he was at school, he was shown a “spoof” version of this government pamphlet. In our second interview, I brought with me several parody pamphlets of *Protect and Survive*. Mike told me “pretty sure” it was the publication “Meet Mr Bomb”, or at least this particular pamphlet was most similar to the one he saw (Figure 3.4). I asked Mike to recall how he felt about the prospect of nuclear war during this turbulent period of British history. He reflected, “it [the Cold War] had always been there, so people made fun of it, they took it in their stride.”¹⁴⁰ He elaborated:

Erm well I mean like I said that spoof *Protect and Survive* that was passed around the playground that was a bit of an er- [laughs] That was a bit of fun. Erm, again I mean sort of like indirectly with the films that were out there at the time sort of you know like erm the Mad Max types of scenarios it was all like err if there was a nuclear holocaust what would you do? Sort- sort of thing and it would be like what sorts of things you could get away with and what would you do in your sort

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Grant, ‘Making Sense’, 237; Hogg, ‘Nuclear Resistance’, 584-602, 591.

¹³⁹ ‘Group Approach to Survival’, *Liverpool Echo*, 9 September 1980.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

of last few moments. You know it was like that, not sort of oh no we are all going to die, you know. [laughs]¹⁴¹

Mike claimed that the humour and laughter he experienced was widely shared across Britain, commenting that it “wasn’t all oh no we are all going to die.” He was not “obsessively terrified” of the possibility of nuclear war but shared in the mindset of a pessimistic outlook of what that future would look like and an acceptance of his own mortality. Mike shared memories of discussing “what would you do in your last few moments” on the school playground. He frequently joked about breaking the law and “what you could get away with”, inviting me into the joke and weigh in my opinion on the topic.

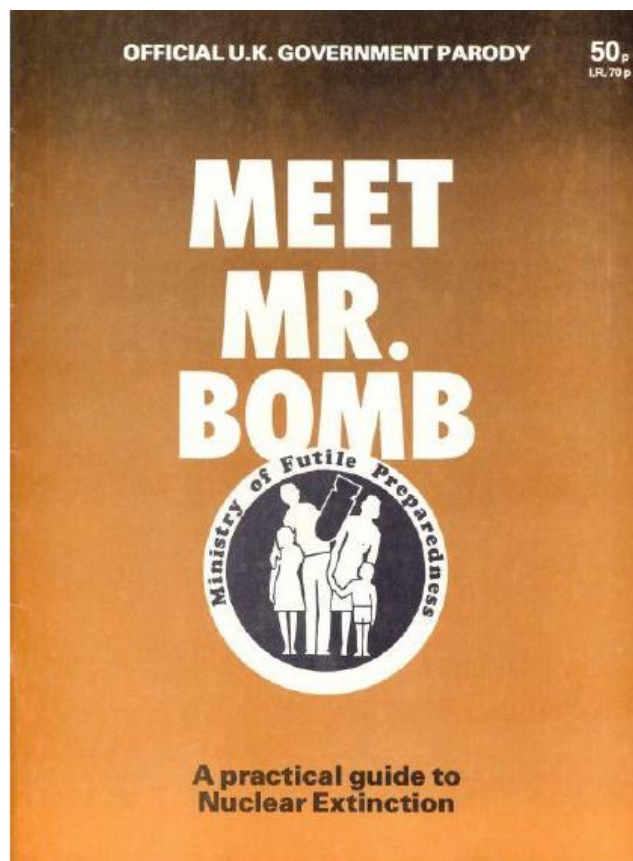


Figure 3.4 Meet Mr. Bomb: A Practical Guide to Nuclear Extinction

This intersection of anxiety and humour has been noted in other scholarship. Douthwaite found that members of the CDC often would reflect on humorous and fond

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

memories of their training.¹⁴² Within oral history testimony of the Cold War, Grant discovered that memories of civil defence volunteers were filled with narratives of fondness, leisure activities, and humour – such as the importance of going to the pub after training.¹⁴³ Mike’s humour of the “ridiculousness” of *Protect and Survive* is rooted in embedded assumptions and popular memories of the pamphlet as it revealed the vulnerability of civilians living in a nuclear state.¹⁴⁴ This insecure and anxious experience was offset by humour. In this way, civilians engaged in the emotional politics of nuclearity. Humour was further used to help interviewees articulate their imaginations of nuclear war and navigate the pessimistic emotional shift after the Second World War.¹⁴⁵ Considering how nuclear anxiety can be expressed and masked by humour reveals interviewee’s understanding and the social order in which they were entwined. It also further exhibits the complexities of feeling and understanding emotions such as nuclear anxiety.

By using humour, interviewees were able to not only normalise nuclear weapons and nuclear war but were also able to discuss their mortality with light-heartedness. Jokes about nuclear weapons were sometimes “just a joke.” Yet, an examination of these emotional displays reveals deeply embedded anxieties about post-apocalyptic Britain and tells us much about the emotional experiences of civilians during the period. Scholarship on British nuclear culture has demonstrated that there were deeply entrenched feelings of anxiety in the British public. This chapter furthers the argument that this emotional landscape was multifaceted and expressed in a variety of ways, made up of intermingling nuclear emotions. Furthermore, these humorous memories revealed the entanglement of nuclear clichés and assumptions in the British public. Making a joke regarding one’s own death, and the destruction of Britain was a culturally

¹⁴² Douthwaite, ‘Rehearsing nuclear war’, 199.

¹⁴³ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 247.

¹⁴⁴ Cordle, ‘Protect/Protest’, 665.

¹⁴⁵ Langhamer, ‘Mass Observing’, 220.

acceptable way to discuss nuclear attack. This section has demonstrated that anxiety was not always expressed explicitly or with negativity, furthering to demonstrate the complexity of the British Cold War emotional landscape.¹⁴⁶

Chapter conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the reception of British nuclear culture in the civilian population, how nuclear weapons and the Cold War became embedded in everyday life, and how these anxieties and other nuclear emotions entered the realm of absurdity through humour. Through nuclear culture, the prospect of a nuclear attack became part of the everyday experience of British people. Many individuals found themselves expressing diverse and differing opinions surrounding various examples of British nuclear culture, demonstrating the diverse reception of the British public. Nuclear culture was not always received with anxiety, but with humour, hope, and indifference. Often individuals found that these examples either reinforced or symbolised their already established feelings about nuclear weapons.

The Cold War became embedded in everyday life for many people, simply becoming part of normalised daily thought, opinion, and emotion. As Cordle argues, individuals were not “obsessively terrified” but instead had an “awareness” of the Cold War “hanging over them”¹⁴⁷, and through nuclear culture the visibility of the nuclear threat and imaginations of nuclear war were so commonplace they became “mundane.”¹⁴⁸ People did not constantly think of nuclear war or weapons. It became background noise, disappearing behind matters individuals deemed more important until it surfaced in occasionally intense ways. Nuclear weapons also became normalised through humour, becoming an accepted cliché. Individuals would contribute to

¹⁴⁶ Humour in the Cold War is generally an under explored topic and warrants further research.

¹⁴⁷ Cordle, ‘In dreams’, 104.

¹⁴⁸ Cordle, ‘Protect/Protest’, 669.

nuclearity, as their memories and experiences were shaped by a deeply embedded set of assumptions and a shared mindset of nuclear war. Across all the interviewees, none found themselves able or willing to imagine themselves surviving a nuclear holocaust.¹⁴⁹ The testimonies describe an acceptance of the unsurvivability of nuclear war and pessimism for the future. As Masco argues, within the Cold War a new kind of social contract was formed in the nuclear age based on the national contemplation of ruins. In this way, anxiety and the imagination of nuclear war became normality.¹⁵⁰

It seems appropriate to conclude this chapter by reflecting upon the present-centeredness of these memories. Interviewees would invite me to participate in their jokes, act out their imagined deaths, and invited me to their art exhibitions. Their memories were shaped and framed by the nuclear culture within which they lived. Civilians would use films and popular culture to help me understand how they had experienced the Cold War, utilising these resources as symbols of their anxieties.¹⁵¹ The present-centeredness of these narratives further revealed the impact nuclear weapons had on British people's understanding of their pasts, the present, and the future. As much as it was used to express nuclear anxiety, humour was also used to offset the initial tension of the oral history interview.¹⁵² As will be explored in the final chapter of this thesis, jokes about Brexit, Donald Trump, and increasing nuclear tensions in the period 2016-2019 were frequently reflected upon in the testimony. As George McEwan eloquently remarked: "It's funny because we are probably having the same conversations now that people had in the eighties."¹⁵³

The previous chapters have shown how civilian lives were tremendously shaped by the experience of the Cold War. They have explored themes of nation, politics, and international

¹⁴⁹ Hogg, 'The family', 537.

¹⁵⁰ Masco, 'Terror as normality', 361.

¹⁵¹ Langhamer, 'Mass Observing', 212

¹⁵² Norrick, 'Humour', 87.

¹⁵³ Interview, McEwan.

conflicts abroad. This chapter has considered how the Cold War entered the living rooms of civilians through films and how even humour was shaped by the threat of nuclear war. The remainder of the thesis will now seek to delve deeper into the emotional history of nuclear weapons and their impact on the lives of ordinary people. The following chapter explores the subject civilians discussed most readily, and often with the most emotion: their families.

Chapter Four

Home and the Family in the Nuclear Narrative

“If there is another war, I pray neither my husband, my children nor myself survive. I wouldn’t like to.”

- J.S., Letter to the *Edinburgh Evening News*.¹

As the above letter by J.S. to the *Edinburgh Evening News* encapsulates, the emotional impact of nuclear weapons permeated family life. Within the oral history testimony, civilians described how their children, parents, and partners influenced their Cold War experiences, perceptions of British nuclear weapons, and their emotional responses.² Civilians discussed their wishes to protect their family units, as opposed to self-protection. This often became a driving force for activism within anti-nuclear communities. This chapter explores the role of the family and the home within the oral history testimony. It argues that nuclear anxiety permeated the family space and impacted familial dynamics and relationships. This chapter suggests that nuclear anxiety was passed through generations within the family. Through this, it was shaped by past and present experiences, as well as hopes for the future. This chapter argues that discussions about family resulted in often the most palpable and emotive memories, reinforcing the argument that nuclear weapons impacted everyday life for British civilians that this thesis has made thus far.

By looking at nuclear weapons and the emotions they inspired through the lens of the British family, new ways of examining the emotional history of Britain can be explored more deeply. Building on the work by Grant and Douthwaite, this chapter demonstrates that many participants were highly influenced by World War Two narratives, using the ways their parents discussed the war or their personal experiences of it to frame the impact of nuclear war upon

¹ J. S., ‘We must avoid war at all costs’, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 25 March 1980.

² Carmen Ptacek, ‘The Nuclear Age: Context for Family Interaction’, *Family Relations* 37(4) (1988): 437.

their family.³ In this way, nuclear weapons and the Cold War entered the private sphere of the home and affected familial relationships.⁴

To uncover how nuclear weapons culture entered people's lives, concepts from the history of emotions scholarship, particularly Rosenwein's notion of emotional communities, will be considered.⁵ Three families form the backbone of the analysis of this chapter: the Perkins, a couple loosely associated with the peace movement and with very specific family dynamics that shaped their experience, the Stonewalls, a military family, and the Stanfords, a family with strong connections with CND. These seven individuals and their testimony are explored in detail throughout this chapter. I also consider how the context of the interview shaped the testimony when discussing the family. Many interviewees chose to participate in this research with their children, partners, friends, and family members. Thus, nuclear weapons did not just enter the domestic sphere during the Cold War, they (re)entered when I was invited to discuss these memories. There has been little scholarship on the experiences and memories of families who lived in the nuclear age and how this period of history shaped and altered their domestic relationships. This chapter contributes to this deficiency in historiography.

As previous chapters have shown, other emotions were entangled in testimony on the topic of the family. Interviewees frequently expressed palpable anxiety through their emotives, utterances, and stories when discussing their personal and close relationships and the imagination of nuclear war. Often far more so than when discussing their national, political, and cultural memories of the Cold War. However, sadness, anger, and uncertainty saturated their memories, revealing the multifaceted nature of the emotional experience of nuclear anxiety, furthering the argument made in previous chapters.⁶ Notably, individuals framed their

³ Grant, 'Making sense'; Douthwaite, 'Voices'.

⁴ Ptacek, 'Nuclear Age', 437.

⁵ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*.

⁶ Ptacek, 'Nuclear Age', 437-438, 442.

memories of the Cold War within narratives of the Second World War and those of the present day. This construction of the past and present self occurred most frequently in discussions about families, as interviewees reflected on the experiences of their parents and their hopes for their children. Even in the testimony of those born after the Second World War, these imaginaries of Britain participating in total war was utilised in their memories as a frame of reference, and intergenerational trauma was passed through memory. There was a notable difference between the emotions of those born during or before the Second World War (World War children) and those born during the Cold War (Cold War children) and how they recalled the emotional state of their parents and children. Family communities had strong parent-child boundaries between them, forming unique and emotional groups and rifts between them. Parents would seek to protect their children from experiencing nuclear anxiety by removing it from domestic conversation. Despite this, Cold War children would frequently recall the worry their parents experienced.⁷ These narratives also often became gendered in their content, which changed the varying emotions which were expressed.⁸ During the Cold War, nuclear weapons became entangled in domestic affairs and family becoming part of everyday life and occasionally impacting personal relationships. Thus, articulations of family life was a key, and intensely emotional, topic for civilians in Britain.

This chapter will firstly outline key scholarship on family and the Cold War, considering the different ways historians have explored this topic and demonstrating gaps in current historiography. This introduction will also consider how the family became symbolic and mobilised as an icon of survivability in the Cold War through political debate, cultural references, and civil defence. The first section will explore the role of children in imaginations of nuclear war, experiences of nuclear anxiety, and within the context of the interviews. For

⁷ Summerfield, 'Generation of memory', 28-29.

⁸ Douthwaite, 'Rehearsing nuclear war', 189.

most interviewees, children either motivated activism or caused anxiety for the future and the prospect of nuclear war. The second section considers nuclear anxiety and its impact on wider family relationships and experiences, shaping feelings about the home and other family members. The chapter then considers the intergenerational differences of nuclear anxiety within the family and how these feelings were passed between different family members. It considers parent-child relationships in the context of the Cold War as parents sought to protect their children from a sense of futurelessness. This chapter contributes to the arguments of the thesis by further demonstrating the present-centeredness of the construction of nuclear anxiety, how it shaped the everyday lives of civilians, and the multifaceted and often complex nuclear emotions that formed the wider emotional British Cold War experience.

Section I: The ‘nuclear family’ in Britain

A small number of researchers have examined the ways nuclear weapons entered domestic and family life, altering the experience of the Cold War for the individual. Despite this, little has been done on the emotional dimensions of this topic. Nevertheless, the family has become bound to ideas surrounding nuclear weapons, survivability, and civil defence through the iconic symbolism of the “ideal” family encased in a protective white circle in the 1980 British nuclear civil defence pamphlet, *Protect and Survive* (Figure 4.1).⁹ Within this image, two parents and two children are shielded by British civil defence initiatives; by building fallout shelters at home, painting their windows white, and becoming self-sufficient the British nuclear family could endure and survive a nuclear war.¹⁰ Through civil defence, nuclear weapons and the

⁹ *Protect and Survive*, 1980.

¹⁰ John Preston, ‘Protect and Survive: ‘Whiteness’ and the Middle-class in Civil Defence Pedagogies’, *Journal of Education Policy* 23(5) (2007): 478.

wider Cold War became embedded within family life and the home. The following section will briefly outline the key scholarship on family and the Cold War.

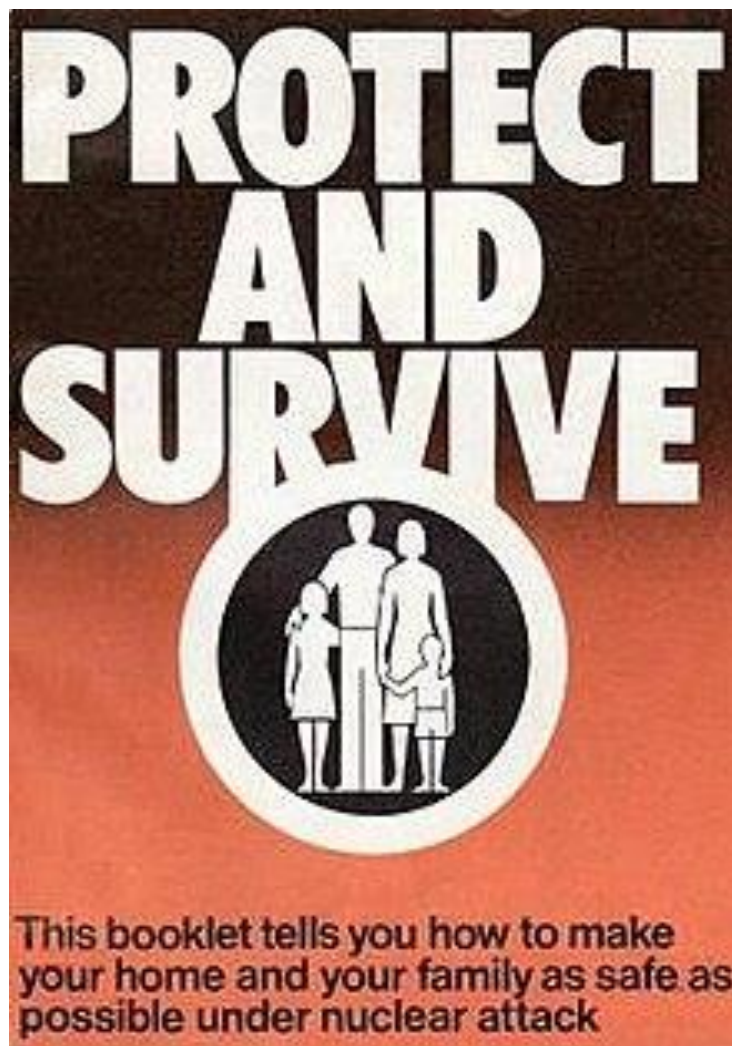


Figure 4.1 *Protect and Survive* Government Pamphlet.

Thomas Bishop examines how the DIY American Fallout shelter affirmed gender norms in America and the ways this enforced dominant American notions of masculinity. The “ideal” husband/father was portrayed as one capable of technical and complex DIY projects and was able to protect his family from the threat of nuclear attack.¹¹ Sarah Lichtman expands upon this and argues that American civil defence enforced gender norms upon both men and

¹¹ Thomas Bishop, ‘We are now a Nation of Minute-Men’: Survivalist Masculinity, Fallout Shelters and Cold War America’, in *Imagining the End: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Apocalypse* ed. Thomas Bishop and Jeremy Strong (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2015): 19-21.

women. Within civil defence pamphlets, the father was depicted doing the manual labour while the wife was left to “stock the pantry.”¹² Husbands were seen “bonding” with their sons while building a fallout shelter, while their daughters played in the background.¹³ This perception of the family also appeared in British civil defence pamphlets. Within *Protect and Survive*, the husband was depicted doing the manual work, with the rest of his family members disappearing into the background of the visuals.¹⁴ In a second government advice pamphlet, *Domestic Nuclear Shelters* (1981), only a man was shown building fallout shelters.¹⁵ British civil defence recruitment drives in the 1950s mirrored these gender roles in their advertisements which remarked: “there is a job for women too!”¹⁶ Douthwaite discusses how these gender roles permeated British civil defence through its allocation of duties between men and women, shaping their remembered experience of this period.¹⁷ Through British civil defence efforts, the government placed responsibility on the family, consequently bringing the nuclear issue into British homes.

The Cold War became entwined with domestic life for British families through culture and politics. For example, in 1959 US President Richard Nixon and Soviet First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev partook in what is now known as the “kitchen debate”, in which they disputed the merits of communism versus capitalism through “recreational devices” and domestic technologies.¹⁸ For Britain and Europe, these shifting family dynamics and the reinforcement of a family unit ideal was similar to World War Two ideologies.¹⁹ The family

¹² Sarah Litchman, 'Do it yourself Security: Safety, Gender, and the Home Fallout Shelter', *Journal of Design History* 19(1) (2006): 46.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁴ Preston, 'Protect and Survive', 477.

¹⁵ *Domestic Nuclear Shelters*, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, prepared for the Home Office by the Central Office of Information, 1981; *Domestic Nuclear Shelters: Technical Guidance*, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Prepared for the Home Office by the Central Office of Information, 1981.

¹⁶ Civil Defence Corps Recruitment Poster, National Campaign, 1953.

¹⁷ Douthwaite, 'Rehearsing nuclear war,' 189.

¹⁸ Sarah James, 'A Family Affair: Photography, the Cold War and the Domestic Sphere', *Photoworks Annual* 20 (2013): 168.

¹⁹ Summerfield, 'Generation of memory', 28-29.

unit and DIY protection which had defined British civil defence during World War Two embodied perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of the family in the nuclear age. The family became central to the reconstruction of postwar Britain and became entangled in developing Cold War ideologies and national restoration in war-recovering Europe.²⁰ According to Sarah James, the images of the mushroom cloud became associated with the family. Through an analysis of *Life* magazine and *The Family of Man* photography exhibition, James explores the contrast between domestic and familial images of optimism, nostalgia, and hardship.²¹ Through nuclear civil defence, cultural iconography of the family during the Cold War, and influence from attitudes towards familial responsibility during the Second World War, perceptions of the role of the family in the nuclear age shifted.

Some psychological research has been undertaken on the impact of nuclear weapons and the Cold War on the family, with the majority of this scholarship adopting a focus on the experience of children. Patricia Hanley and Daniel Christie created the “nuclear anxiety test” to measure the impact of the threat of nuclear war on adolescents. They found that young people during the 1980s experienced “fear, futurelessness, and powerlessness.”²² The pair replicated their work in the 1990s and looked at how education affected fear of nuclear war.²³ Lisa Goodman conducted a similar study and concluded that young children “did not feel safe” and “expected death within their lifetimes” due to nuclear war.²⁴ In 1986, the *International Journal of Mental Health* released a special issue on the mental health implications of the nuclear age, and numerous articles found that children during the Cold War were experiencing feelings of

²⁰ James Chappel, ‘Nuclear Families in a Nuclear Age: Theorising the Family in 1950s West Germany’, *Contemporary European History* 26(1) (2017): 85-109.

²¹ James, ‘Family Affair’, 170-171.

²² Patricia Hanley and Christie Daniel, An inventory designed to measure the impact of the Threat of Nuclear war on Adolescents: Dimensions of Fear, Futurelessness and Powerlessness, Published Report. (Ohio: Ohio State University, 1988); 1-24.

²³ Patricia Hanley and Christie Daniel, ‘Some Psychological Effects of Nuclear War Education on Adolescents during Cold War II’, *Political Psychology* 15(2) (1994): 177.

²⁴ Lisa Goodman *et al*, ‘The Threat of Nuclear War and the Nuclear Arms Race: Adolescent Experience and Perceptions’, *Political Psychology* 4(3) (1983): 501

hopelessness and a disappearance of a sense for the future.²⁵ Leila Thearle and Helen Weinreich-Haste found that children in Britain felt an overwhelming threat to their future (for example, feeling like there was no point in getting married or having children) and a sense of helplessness; that they could not influence the arms race or the policies of the government.²⁶ Carmen Ptacek argues that the Cold War changed the family dynamic through feelings of futurelessness and nuclear fear. His examination of testimony from the Cold War revealed that parents and children felt “powerless” in response to the nuclear threat. He concludes that thoughts of nuclear annihilation “penetrated deeply” into the consciousness of children and parents thus transforming the “response to the nuclear threat” as a “family issue.”²⁷ This is further explored by Becky Alexis-Martin, Emma Wright, and Mwenza Blell in their social study of British nuclear test veteran families. Through interviews, observation, questionnaires, and demographic analysis, they found that nuclear technology and the Cold War influenced the health, wellbeing, perceptions of risk, and relationships within families.²⁸ Psychological and social research has clearly demonstrated that the threat of nuclear war changed the ways families interacted and that the Cold War experience between children and parents differed.

Throughout the Cold War, the role of the family in a nuclear war was considered in culture, the press, and civil defence. Furthermore, in the psychological research that followed the aftermath of the first nuclear attack, the family was a focus of inquiry. These narratives speculated a perception of familial “futurelessness”, in the words of Hanley and Daniel, for

²⁵ Mental Health Implications of Life in the Nuclear Age, *International Journal of Mental Health* 15(½) (1986): Petra Hesse, ‘Children’s and adolescent’s fears of nuclear war: is our sense of the future disappearing?’ *International Journal of Mental Health* 15(½) (1986): 93-113; Magne Raudalen and Ole J. Finney, ‘Children’s and Teenager’s views of the future’, *International Journal of Mental Health* 15(½) (1986): 114-125; John Goldenring and Ron Doctor, ‘Teenage worry about nuclear war: North American and European Questionnaire Studies’, *International Journal of Mental Health* 15(½) (1986): 72-92; Greg Diamond and Jerald Bachman, ‘High school seniors and the nuclear threat, 1947-1984: political and mental health implications of concern and despair’, *International Journal of Mental Health* 15(½) (1986): 210-241.

²⁶ Lelia Thearle and Helen Weinreich-Haste, ‘Ways of dealing with the nuclear threat: coping and defence among British Adolescents’, *International Journal of Mental Health* 15(½) (1986): 126-127.

²⁷ Ptacek, ‘Nuclear Age’, 437-438, 442.

²⁸ Becky Alexis Martin, Emma Wright, Mwenza Blell, *Nuclear Families: A Social Study of British Nuclear Test Veteran Community Families*, (University of Southampton, 2019), 1-3.

children and parents. Harry Powell reiterated these findings within his testimony, reflecting the findings of much psychological work on the Cold War. Harry was born outside of Liverpool in 1967 and worked as a photographer. He described the Cold War as an “eerie presence” throughout his youth. Harry recalled feeling “concerned” about “having children in the future” and “going to university.” He felt that “he might start university but never finish it” due to the “likely outcome of nuclear war.” Although he did indeed complete university, would later marry, and have his own children, these recollections of the Cold War were “still vivid.”²⁹ Langhamer found similar feelings occurring in 1945 within Mass Observation. One woman framed her feelings about nuclear war with the recent birth of her daughter, revealing a “personal, notably visceral, emotional politics of nuclearity.” The woman felt that her children “could not escape annihilation.” Another respondent described how his wife revived the question on having more children and he “thought of the future in terms of the atom bomb.” In contrast, however, some respondents felt that the bomb would “make the world safe for children”, describing it as a future “paradise.”³⁰ The testimony collected between 2016 and 2019 reflected similar feelings: “will nuclear weapons make the world safer or more dangerous for my children?”³¹

Section II: ‘I joined CND to protect my children’³²: Considering activism, anxiety, and the family

Many interviewees explicitly stated that it was their children who motivated them to act against nuclear weapons. Others conversely cited them as the *reason* they experienced feelings of nuclear anxiety. Conversations on the impact of nuclear war upon their families often became

²⁹ Interview, Powell.

³⁰ Langhamer, ‘Mass Observing’, ‘208-209, 220.

³¹ Interview, Stonewell.

³² Interview, Fraley and Hodges-Walker.

intensely emotional and laced with feelings of nuclear anxiety throughout the interview. Notably, in the oral history sample for this project, the majority who expressed concern about the future of their children were primarily in the anti-nuclear movement. While those who were not part of the movement still reflected upon their children, it occurred most frequently in the testimony of those involved in activism. The Cold War and the threat of nuclear weapons appeared to deeply affect family relationships and experiences in Britain. The following section will consider how nuclear emotions, nuclear weapons, and the broader Cold War shaped the dynamics of British families, spotlighting the experience of the Stanford family.

In April 2018, I interviewed a family together in their living room in Liverpool. Rosie, Peter, and Tracy Stanford had been keen to be interviewed together and share their experiences with me. Rosie was a highly active member of CND and several other protest groups, including Snowball and Mothers for Peace. She married Peter in the 1960s and Tracy was their youngest child. I had previously interviewed Rosie separately and she commented that nuclear weapons and her involvement in CND “affected her family.”³³ She later confessed to me that her daughter had asked to take part in the project so I could “get the whole story.”³⁴ Although CND was important to Rosie, it was also “just part of her humanitarian work.”³⁵ In contrast, she told me that her participation in Mothers for Peace was more significant:

I joined that because I felt that [*pause*] that it wasn't enough to- to go on the streets protesting and that I wanted to do something positive. And Mothers for Peace was an organisation of women. Erm who made links with people in other countries who were also involved in the peace movement.³⁶

The group organised “exchanges” with other mothers across the Iron Curtain. They lived together and encouraged their visitors to speak in schools and in churches about “who they

³³ Interview, Stanford.

³⁴ This view was expressed within an email from Rosie to me on the 13 March 2018. It has been referenced with permission. See Appendix I.

³⁵ Interview, Stanford.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

were, what they did at home, and what their kids were doing, and that sort of thing.”³⁷ Rosie told me that her activism through Mothers for Peace began her movement to take direct non-violent action against the British government throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Her identity as a mother motivated her to join particular anti-nuclear protest groups, meet other mothers and children, and later led to her arrest several times throughout the Cold War.

When interviewed together, the Stanford family fondly recalled family trips to CND protests at various military bases and facilities, building and burning cardboard MX missiles in their back garden for bonfire night, and the various protest events they hosted at their home.³⁸ Rosie recalled that many times she and Peter brought their children on demonstrations, such as this particular event in 1985:

Emily: Did you protest together a lot?

Rosie: Yes, we did protest together and sometimes we took our children on big demonstrations. We- we- we went to- I remember we went to a Greenham together on a big Easter time demonstration and there was also a big Easter time demonstration one year at Molesworth which- which we went to for a 3-day walk and we walked from Leicester to Molesworth with- with the children.³⁹

These memories were recalled “fondly” by all family members present. They smiled, nodded, and laughed as they reminisced together. Tracy did tell me that her brother “probably wouldn’t remember them as happily” as she did. She admitted that her experience at school was “shaped by these activities” as she would often be ridiculed for having a “hippy mum.” She reflected that “her brother cared more about this school talk” than she did. These memories were also laced with anxiety within the family. Tracy recollected “frightening phone calls” from those who opposed the family viewpoint on the Cold War.⁴⁰ Tracy later would tell me that she “feared for her family structure” due to her mother’s frequent protests and arrests.⁴¹ The

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Interview, Stanford.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Stanford family's memories of the Cold War and experiences of nuclear weapons were expressed with nostalgia, underpinned with anxiety and uncertainty. In the case of this family, it was not nuclear weapons which directly caused these feelings. Anxiety was instead caused by people who had differing political viewpoints on nuclear weapons treating the family with suspicion. Rosie's participation in the anti-nuclear movement shaped Tracy's school experience and "made her nervous" about the future.

Tracy and Peter shared stories about Rosie being often arrested, which frequently divided the family during the Cold War. Tracy recalled how her mother was often not there to pick her up from school and was left "waiting for hours." She remembered her father having to leave the house to collect Rosie from the police station after an arrest. Peter confessed this "caused tension" at home and "during dinner time conversations."⁴² In my initial interview with Rosie, she told me that she was active in CND to protect her children. In the family interview, Rosie confessed this to Tracy for the first time. This became a very intimate and emotional family moment for which I was present. Tracy expressed shock and happiness at her mother's confession and Rosie "couldn't believe" she had not told her daughter earlier. When we later reflected on this interaction, Tracy began to cry, and we paused the interview. Once we started recording again, Tracy told me that she had believed her mother had campaigned for reasons outside of the family and she was touched that Rosie's efforts had been for her.⁴³ Rosie, Peter, and Tracy recalled experiencing "worry" and "concern" about the possibility of nuclear war. When Tracy was a child, she would "read *When the Wind Blows* and consider how she and her family could survive." Despite this, their family participation in protests was recalled fondly and did not contribute to a heightened sense of anxiety. These activities did add to tensions and "growing rifts" between the family as Tracy and her brother recalled difficulty

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

at school, the arrests of their mother, and a rejection of their families political and moral opinions. When these came together in the interview and the family reflected on their Cold War experiences, intense emotional experiences of sadness and happiness were revealed through their contemporary family resolution of tensions from the Cold War.

This example of the Stanford's family experience demonstrates the present-centeredness of the Cold War within the practice of oral history. The Cold War, nuclear weapons, and Rosie's experience of CND shaped the family's dynamic and the relationships of its members. Rosie and Tracy often interjected each other, citing that they remembered particular events differently. Rosie's proud participation at a protest was recalled as a moment of loss and "abandonment" for Tracy. Within the context of the oral history interview, these conversations were facilitated, and the family reflected on their memories collaboratively as they established and discussed their narrative during the Cold War. During the family's revelation, my presence also shaped the story. I encouraged the family members to share their side of the stories, comforted Tracy as she cried, and helped Peter make tea as his wife and daughter shared a moment alone. I also experienced the emotions of the narrators.⁴⁴ I felt sympathy, sadness, and happiness for the family as we picked up the interview again and reflected on how Rosie's confession had "changed" how Tracy "felt about that period of time [the Cold War]."⁴⁵ This example demonstrates the fluidity of emotions and memory as Tracy and Rosie's Cold War experience was reshaped by contemporary reflections. Emotions, such as nuclear anxiety, are made and remade in memory and within the context of the interview itself. The past is not static, unchangeable and it can be reconfigured and reshaped. Emotions act in much the same way: forged in the past, shaped by experience, and configured in the present.⁴⁶ The nuclear bomb entered the home, a domestic space, within the Stanford's living

⁴⁴ Karen Halttunen, 'Self, Subject, and the Barefoot Historian', *The Journal of American History* 89(1) (2002): 23.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Lock, 'Building up', 111.

room. It also permeated the family space, within the Stanford's family relationships. And through the context of the interview, the conversation was facilitated, and the Cold War was once again brought into the home through Rosie's confession that it was her children who motivated her to join the peace movement.

Children as a motivating cause for action or anxiety appeared in other interviews, reflecting the experience of the Stanfords. I jointly interviewed Carole Fraley and Susan Hodges-Walker who were both members of CND. Carole frequently mentioned that the birth of her children was a driving motivation to join the group, even if she "mostly just paid membership fees."

Emily: Was there a particular thing or event that motivated you to join CND?

Carole: Yeah, for me it was when I had my children, I had concerns about the future and erm what was happening in the world.⁴⁷

She continued, speaking quietly, "when I had them, I just wanted to protect them. Any way I could." Susan agreed with her and lovingly placed her hand on Carole's knee, encouraging her, and exhibiting the bond between the two women. Whilst Susan herself did not have children, she expressed that the "future of our children is paramount" and "is an important part of our campaign."⁴⁸

This view was held by those not in the anti-nuclear campaign too. William and Joyce Stonewell commented on how their children had changed how they felt about the Cold War. I asked the couple if they had ever discussed nuclear weapons together during the Cold War and they proceeded to discuss contemporary fears such as political uncertainty in America and North Korea. Joyce told me it was because of her children she felt this way and worried about the outcome of the Cold War.⁴⁹ William agreed with her and commented that his daughter's

⁴⁷ Interview, Fraley and Hodges-Walker.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Interview, Stonewell.

recent trip to Japan “brought back these fears.”⁵⁰ Despite William and Joyce’s children being born *after* the Cold War, their presence in their lives framed how they recalled and discussed their memories and emotions during this era. Peter Cattigan recalled “although nuclear weapons protected us” he “worried about what the future would be for our children and all young people.”⁵¹ This anxiety is made distinctive by its suspense for the future of children and loved ones.

This focus on children within oral histories of the Cold War is reflected in other scholarship. Within interviews that did not focus on feelings or emotions about nuclear weapons in the Cold War, individuals still reported that it was their children which made them feel worried about the future. For example, Douthwaite interviewed Elsie in 2015 who told her she cared greatly for her children while she protested:

Oh well, I didn’t care for anybody there except my own family, and no, well we just marched and sang and marched and sang and either went to London or went to Aldermaston [...] but we did take the children.⁵²

When asked what her “role of caring” was during the protest marches, Elise commented that it was her family that she cared for, and they often participated in the marches. Through resistance to nuclear weapons and concern about the future, the bomb became embedded within the family and individuals reflected upon the role of parents, children, and families in a nuclear war. Similar views were expressed by individuals from Liverpool interviewed by Sarah Hewitt in 2011. Barbara Harrison told Sarah that when she thought of the atom bomb, it was her children who were her “main worry more than anything.”⁵³ In a second interview with Vera Jeffers, she told Sarah that nuclear weapons “made her feel very frightened and very fearful for the future and worried about her son.”⁵⁴ Later, Vera commented that the

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Interview, Cattigan.

⁵² Interview with Elsie, recorded by Jessica Douthwaite, 2015.

⁵³ Interview with Barbara Harrison, recorded by Sarah, 2011.

⁵⁴ Interview with Vera Jeffers, recorded by Sarah Hewitt, 2011.

prospect of nuclear war made her feel like “[life] isn’t worth living” because “all of your loved ones and all of your family and all you have worked for and everything wouldn’t mean a thing.”⁵⁵ Interviews recorded for various projects at the British Library also echoed these emotions. For example, Angela Browning recalled joining Women and Families for Defence to resist British nuclear weapons policy.⁵⁶ Lindis Percy was a midwife and recalled how in the 1980s she joined a group in the NHS which tried to highlight that the health service would struggle to cope with a nuclear incident and discussed how to deal with irradiated victims. Lindis commented that she was conflicted between her identities as a midwife and a mother during these discussions.⁵⁷ Within all these interviews, individuals reported feelings of worry, fear, and futurelessness, all qualities of an emotional response to nuclear anxiety. These fears became central to many family units as parents worried for the future and the safety of their children. This often resulted in their participation in anti-nuclear activity or lead to experiences of nuclear anxiety.

Conversely, nuclear weapons also notably resulted in the bringing together of family units and the experience of hopefulness and togetherness. This also shaped the British Cold War family dynamic. Due to escalating international tensions, many families found themselves spending more time together, particularly families associated with CND. As previously discussed, Rosie and Peter had taken their family on days out protesting, bringing their children along to marches, vigils, and walks in the name of disarmament. These memories were recalled fondly, particularly for Tracy. She recalled being at tents set up for protesters’ children, where she would draw pictures and meet other children. It was a “fun and vibrant space.”⁵⁸ It was not just the child-parent dynamic that shifted under the threat of

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Interview with Angela Browning, recorded by Kayleigh Milden for the History of Parliament Oral History Project, 10 March 2013.

⁵⁷ Interview with Lindis Percy, recorded by Lucy Ashwell for the Observing the 1980s project, 1998.

⁵⁸ Interview, Stanford.

nuclear war. Many couples found themselves spending more time together. Peter and Rosie are again an example of this relationship, as Peter spoke lovingly and with pride of his wife's achievements. He admitted that he went protesting to "spend more time with [Rosie]." They also showed me several photos depicting the couple standing proudly with their arms wrapped around another amid a CND march and poems he wrote about his wife's protest experiences. The poem, titled 'Peace on Earth', described an "Englishwoman" being arrested by servicemen and policemen for the crime of sticking "a small blue label" on an Air Force Truck which read "Peace on Earth." The poem particularly encapsulated the gendered conflict Rosie faced as men ("policeman", "servicemen", "President's men") arrested women for efforts for peace. The language was angry, describing the serviceman as "bellowing" and full of "rage" for the small act of resistance.⁵⁹ Under the renewed threat of nuclear war in the 1980s, Peter and Rosie found themselves sharing a passion, and began to spend more time with each other.

Though the threat of nuclear war hung over their lives and families, many couples involved in anti-nuclear movements found themselves feeling pride, hope, and love. Andrew Moore also reported protesting with his wife on anti-nuclear issues and she fondly recalled to me how they met during a protest as she passed me a leaflet advertising a local CND gathering.⁶⁰ Lucy and Rory Marking from Cardiff also recalled their "dates" on CND protests, fondly telling me a particular story of how Rory climbed atop a Cruise Missile. Lucy spoke of the actions of her husband with beaming pride and despite him climbing upon a nuclear weapon, there was no anxiety in either of their voices.⁶¹ In 1981, the *Liverpool Echo* reported on the frequent concerts and music festivals hosted by CND, reflecting on the "celebrations" of the group. The article embodied the sense of community spirit and togetherness CND evoked for many. These articles of CND members "having a good time" disrupted the routine

⁵⁹ Interview, Stanford. Appendix II.

⁶⁰ Interview, Moore.

⁶¹ Interview, Yorke, Branco, and Marking.

publications on political unrest and unwieldy antinuclear protests.⁶² In these instances, the nuclear bomb did not divide families. The struggles against them brought families and couples together.

While many individuals who were not a part of the anti-nuclear movement reflected upon their children's future in their testimony, those involved in activism did so far more frequently and vividly. These attitudes towards the role of the family in a nuclear war were also reflected in broader British political and cultural narratives, revealing the emotional politics of nuclearity and the family unit. Deeply embedded assumptions about survival, nuclear war, CND, and gender roles shaped family experience. Nuclear anxiety is also shown to be multifaceted within these recollections, entangled with other nuclear emotions such as sadness, hope, love, and pride. These recollections demonstrate the ways nuclear weapons and feelings of nuclear anxiety shaped and permeated family dynamics during the Cold War. Family members found their relationships shifted as Britain entered the nuclear age, and "uncertainty was rife."⁶³ In the particular case of the Stanfords, nuclear anxiety was at the heart of their familial relationships as tensions were wrought by Rosie's CND activism and her daughter's "sense of abandonment." Their example demonstrates the fluidity of emotion and memory in the context of the oral history interview and the continuing reconfiguration of Cold War emotions and family dynamics.

Section III: 'If nuclear war ever happened...'⁶⁴ Nuclear anxiety at home

Some interviewees had very particular experiences of nuclear anxiety in the home, which they carried with them to adulthood. The following memories of Stuart Perkins alludes to the

⁶² 'Care to bop against the bomb', *Liverpool Echo*, 24 April 1981.

⁶³ Interview, Stanford.

⁶⁴ Interview, Perkins.

multifaceted, complex, and sometimes highly emotional impact nuclear weapons had on family relationships. His testimony reveals how contexts of the family, relationships, and mental health shaped Cold War experiences. On the 15 June 2017, I interviewed Irene and Stuart Perkins in a café in Liverpool. Over four hours, the pair keenly and readily recalled their memories of joining CND, bringing photos and notes to the interview. Irene had contacted me to take part in the research and asked if she could bring her husband along. She told me that Stuart had “interesting stories”, but he did not want to participate in the interview.⁶⁵ Irene went through her book of notes, discussing in detail her family experiences and memories. The interview was light-hearted and the three of us enthusiastically discussed Irene’s memories of her resistance to her father and the importance of her children during the Cold War. After sharing stories about her eldest daughter, Irene paused for a while before concluding “that was all she could really remember” and had “nothing else to say.” We began to finish the interview until Stuart interrupted and said he “would like to share his memories.” He composed himself and began to share his own “strange experience” of the Cold War.

Stuart shared with me that his family experience was “pretty traumatic” and the “Cold War played a large part in that.” As he spoke, Irene nodded along, smiling encouragingly at her husband, and squeezing his forearm gently. He spoke slowly and deliberately while he shared stories “he did not often share.” Stuart told me that his mother was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and calmly recalled how when he was nine years old, his mother became preoccupied with the news, particularly the Cold War and nuclear weapons.⁶⁶ He recalled in detail the diagnosis of his mother, how she lived with her condition, and how he coped with looking after her alone while his father was working overseas. He recalled the Cuban Missile Crisis:

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

When the Cuban Missile Crisis came along, she was literally terrified and the effect on me as a sort of only child- a young child, and to be subject to the double-whammy of her being a paranoid schizophrenic and- and the rest of it. Erm, are you familiar with Pink Floyd? The band? That lyric, ‘Mummy’s gonna put all of her fears into you’. I knew what that was like. I knew how it felt.⁶⁷

His voice trailed off a little, but he continued to speak with serious calm. Although Stuart seemed to express his nuclear anxieties directly due to nuclear weapons, commenting later that “he felt the same way as Irene” when she explicitly said she felt this, Stuart seemed to co-experience his mother’s nuclear anxieties. Perhaps, he was more afraid of how his mother felt than how he felt. When describing the Cuban Missile Crisis, nuclear weapons fell to the end of the list, categorised as “the rest of it.”⁶⁸ Conversely, he made specific references to his mother and her disorder as a key aspect of that memory. Although Stuart seemed to speak almost without emotion, he referred to the 1979 Pink Floyd song, aptly named ‘Mother’, and remarked that “he knew how it felt.”⁶⁹ The song, which begins with a heavy sigh, is slow, sombre, and full of sadness. The chorus Stuart directly references describes a mother controlling her child (Hush now baby, baby, don’t you cry / Mama’s gonna make all your nightmares come true / Mama’s gonna put all her fears into you / Mama’s gonna keep you right here under her wing / She won’t let you fly but she might let you sing). The song also begins with the lyric ‘Mother do you think they will drop the bomb?’ seemingly referring to the nuclear bomb. Although in this instance Stuart did not explicitly express sadness or anxiety, his words and his choice of song seemed to encapsulate the emotions he was experiencing.

After revealing this to me, the tone of the interview changed. Stuart reflected upon the “trauma” of his “mother’s mental health.” Throughout, he rarely broke composure, and managed his emotional self as he shared these “difficult stories.” While I felt privileged that Stuart felt he could share his experiences with me, I was careful with my own composure, tone,

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

and language as we continued the conversation. I was conscious of not taking the role of a psychologist.⁷⁰ Stuart's mother became a key aspect of our interview and as we progressed, Stuart became more open with me. He told me that throughout his childhood her fears got "so pronounced it was beyond belief." After a pause, he told me that his mother had told him when he was nine that "if nuclear war ever happened, I will strangle you and kill myself."⁷¹ This disclosure surprised me and caught me off guard. Stuart recalled the memories calmly, concealing any overt emotional response. He later admitted that he was not afraid of dying in a nuclear war, but afraid of his mother "murdering him" if war ever occurred. He told me:

As an only child, with nobody else to relate to, I was literally terrified. It- It- It's- I realise years and years later that it was not her fault. She was affected by this horrendous illness and maybe she was responsible for putting a lot of fears into me, but she wasn't guilty.⁷²

Stuart felt he could not escape his mother's fears of nuclear war, nor the fear that his mother might actually murder him, but he did not blame her. Stuart was aware that his mother projected fear of nuclear weapons onto him. In this way, Stuart experienced a different kind of nuclear anxiety compared to other interviewees who have been discussed thus far.

Although the Cold War and the context of nuclear weapons form the basis for discussion in the oral history interviews and form the foundations of this thesis, this project is also an examination of the intimate lives of individuals and how his period of history knotted with the everyday lives of civilians. Stuart's experience showcases this lens of analysis remarkably. Although his story is one of nuclear anxiety and the Cold War, it is one of mental illness and intergenerational trauma.⁷³ As Stuart and I discussed his experiences, it became clear that although nuclear war was the *topic* of our conversation, his anxiety was rooted in the

⁷⁰ Barbara Taylor, 'Historical Subjectivities' in *History and Psyche: Palgrave Studies in Cultural and Intellectual History* ed. Alexander Taylor (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2012), 199, 195-210.

⁷¹ Interview, Perkins.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Reynolds, 'Trauma', 84

“fixation” his mother had with the *context* of the Cold War and the “narrative of fear the media pushed.”⁷⁴ The Cold War, and the interview, were used by Stuart to unpick and make sense of his experiences.⁷⁵ According to Penny Summerfield, individuals make sense of their experiences by drawing upon “generalised public versions of the aspects of their lives that they are talking about to construct” and contextualise “their own particular, personal accounts.”⁷⁶ Although Stuart did not use cultural narratives the same way as others, for example, Harry Powell directly referring to the “influence of *Threads*” on his experience of the Cold War, his memory reflects the complex relationship between the public feeling and cultures of nuclear anxiety and the private. This interview also revealed the shifting emotions within Stuart’s home, which were feelings of “anxiety” and “trauma” which “later became reconciliation and understanding.”⁷⁷ The final chapter of this thesis will explore the individualism of the Cold War experience in more detail, but Stuart’s story reveals the necessity to consider these extraordinary and difficult realities of everyday life for some people in Britain.

Later in the interview, Stuart told me that he worried for the future of his family, his wife, his children, and the world more broadly. Here he became emotional, and the interview was paused several times as Irene comforted and encouraged him.⁷⁸ Stuart became sad and tearful when considering the prospect of nuclear war affecting his loved ones. We paused the interview frequently or changed the topic of conversation (for example, we changed topic to discuss local events in Liverpool) until Stuart felt ready to continue or circle back to reflections of his childhood. I should state here that I am not a therapist or psychologist. I will make no statements about Stuart's mental health. I was conscious that the interview and my role as interviewer needed to support Stuart as best and appropriately as possible, without overstepping

⁷⁴ Interview, Perkins.

⁷⁵ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 231,232.

⁷⁶ Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women’s Wartime Lives: Discourse and subjectivity in oral histories of the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 65-93, 68.

⁷⁷ Interview, Perkins.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

boundaries. Although Stuart reflected that “it felt good” to talk about his experiences with somebody, reflecting the therapeutic effects of the interview,⁷⁹ I never forced Stuart to talk or reflect upon his memories.⁸⁰

Stuart also drew parallels between his present-day anxieties with his experience with his mother. In this way, for Stuart, nuclear fear was entangled with domestic anxieties which he projected onto his present-day family. Stuart seemed to fear the mortality of his loved ones, but more importantly, said he was “afraid of them being afraid.”⁸¹ His experiences and memories of his mother shaped his emotional associations with nuclear war which Stuart carried into adulthood. Perhaps when he had been a child, nuclear anxiety had been a common occurrence for Stuart. But as he grew older and reflected upon his experiences, he “no longer blamed his mother” but the “horrendous illness” she had.

In 1957, in the North West of England, a mother and father gassed their three children and killed themselves.⁸² In their suicide note, the parents calmly wrote: ‘in view of all the things that are happening in the world and the talk of the new wars which will mean the extermination of the masses of people, and especially children we decided we could not allow this to happen to our children.’⁸³ This ‘family that feared tomorrow’ seems to have had parallels to the experiences of Stuart in the later Cold War. Just as Stuart’s mother had told him that she would strangle him, the Marshall family in 1957 went through a similar crisis of apparent nuclear anxiety. According to Hogg, the Marshall family’s experience and how it was reported in the press demonstrated how “nuclear danger shaped domestic, social, and political narratives” in

⁷⁹ Taylor, ‘Historical Subjectivities’, 199, 195-210; Interview, Perkins.

⁸⁰ Engster, ‘Care Ethics’; Tracy K’Meyer and A. Glenn Crothers, ‘If I see this in writing, I’m going to shoot you’: Reluctant narrators, taboo topics, and the ethical dilemmas of the oral historian’, *The Oral History Review* 34(1) (2007): 80-81, 93.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Hogg, ‘The family’, 535.

⁸³ ‘The family that feared tomorrow’, *Daily Mirror*, 16 August 1957.

Britain.⁸⁴ Even within the reports of the 1957 event, *The Mirror* wrote about the “juxtaposition of quaint domestic concerns and fear of global nuclear war.”⁸⁵ These two families, the Perkins in the 1960s and the Marshalls in the 1950s, experienced intense domestic nuclear anxiety which was projected and amplified within the family and their home. Hogg demonstrates that imaginaries of nuclear war became linked to extreme human behaviours, such as suicide, by the British press. Similarly for Stuart, his mother’s imagination of nuclear war resulted in intense feelings of nuclear anxiety and sadness. These imaginaries shaped the nuclearity of Stuart’s family and consequently his experience of the Cold War.

Other testimony further revealed the palpable emotional significance of family in the context of the Cold War. Stuart had connections to CND, but William Stonewell, whose testimony we will explore next, came from a military background. Like Stuart, William found nuclear anxiety entering the family space through his parental experience and it was brought to the core of the discussion during our interview. During both of his interviews, William rarely discussed his family life and personal memories, instead preferring to discuss official narratives through documentaries, news stories, and books about the Cold War. As the interview progressed, William began to recall memories of his father. He told me he came from an RAF background and his father was a pilot and had flown “Vulcan Bombers at one point.”⁸⁶ He also told me that his father flew “sniffer planes” to “collect the radioactive dust” from atomic tests.⁸⁷ Later in the interview, he told me his father died of cancer but refused to discuss the topic further. He also admitted that everything he knew about his father was “through his mother” and it was all “very secret.”⁸⁸ Despite this apparent sensitivity to the topic and unconcealed expressions of sadness regarding the loss of his father, William and the rest of his living family,

⁸⁴ Hogg, ‘The family’, 536.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Interview, Stonewell.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

used humour within the family unit to normalise his father's work and death, much in the same way other interviewees had used humour to discuss death and nuclear war, as discussed in chapter three. When discussing the radioactive clouds his father flew through, William laughed and said "they used to wash it down with water to try and get rid of the atomic dust. How stupid."⁸⁹ Following this, I asked if William had been involved in the anti-nuclear movement, wondering if his father's death, which he seemingly silently (and sometimes jokingly) connected with his father's work, had motivated him to take action. William laughed and said no, commenting that his family thought they were "nutty." He then went on to tell me a story between him and his sister:

I remember my sister got erm- when she was at work, she got a pair of CND earrings [*laughs*] these things, as a joke, cos they knew [*laughs*] she was quite right-wing, and she'd just chuck them away. [*all laugh*]⁹⁰

Despite nuclear weapons and the Cold War having a direct impact on William's family, familial "inside jokes" about the topic were frequent and he recalled them fondly.⁹¹ The Cold War forced an event upon William which many could interpret as traumatic, as it had been to Stuart. But unlike Stuart, William expressed fondness, humour, and closeness with his living family members. In this way, perhaps, humour allowed the Cold War, nuclear weapons, and his father's relationship with them, to be normalised within the family.

Through the Second World War and British civil defence, gendered ideologies were often laced within discussions about the Cold War, nuclear weapons, and family. Generally, across all the interviews, women, and more specifically mothers, tended to discuss their children more than their male counterparts. In the testimony analysed, all made explicit references to their children, their role as a mother, and how their children became a major reason for them experiencing nuclear anxiety. Most men who were interviewed were (or had

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Interview, Stonewell.

been) married and had children, but most rarely discussed them. The exceptions to this trend are, of course, William and Stuart, but it should be noted that they were both interviewed with their families. Interestingly, William *only* made references to his children when interviewed with Joyce, and rarely talked about his family when interviewed alone.⁹² As shown in previous sections, rather than discuss the impact of their children on their nuclear anxieties, the men interviewed fell into official narratives and discourses of Cold War history to inform the content of their interviews.⁹³ The gendered ideologies of the nuclear family and the mother's role to care for the children seemed to be embedded in these discussions.⁹⁴ In this way, the ideology of the nuclear family, and deep-set gendered principles were embedded within the content of the interviews, and how they were expressed.⁹⁵

Conversely, gendered ideologies were resisted and challenged in families with anti-nuclear involvement, particularly the women who visited Greenham. During the 1950s and 1980s, the anti-nuclear movement, including CND, gained increasing membership. In the 1980s in particular, CND became part of a wider feminist movement and the protest camp at Greenham Common became a female-only endeavour.⁹⁶ However, as Allison Young has shown, many of these women were depicted as "bad mothers" by the local and national British press, which criticised them for leaving their children.⁹⁷ Thus, many mothers involved in the anti-nuclear movement sought to resist this stereotype, telling me they "brought their children with them" or they did it "for their children."⁹⁸ Rosie, who was arrested multiple times, told

⁹² *Ibid*,

⁹³ Carol Cohn, 'Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defence Intellectuals', *Signs* 12(4) (1987): 687-718.

⁹⁴ Michael Pressler, 'Atomic Warfare and the Nuclear Family: Domestic Resistance in Hollywood Films about the A-Bomb', *Film Criticism* 27(3) (2003): 40-52.

⁹⁵ This is not a generalisation across all men and women. This trend did appear within my own interviews, but of course, everyone is different, feels differently, and has different experiences. As more oral histories on the British Cold War are created, I am sure many men and women will challenge this trend. The statements I am making are about the individuals I spoke to.

⁹⁶ Harford and Hopkins, *Greenham Common*.

⁹⁷ Young, *Femininity*, 43, 59, 66-73.

⁹⁸ Interview, Hawcroft; Interview, Fraley and Hodges-Walker.

me she always “thought of her children before she did anything.”⁹⁹ In this way, mothers resisted the journalistic representations of them as bad mothers, and iterated that their family was a central motivator for their actions. These anti-nuclear women sought to resist the stereotypes and gender roles enforced on them to “fight for the future of their children.”¹⁰⁰

To conclude this section, I will reflect on how nuclear weapons became part of the domestic space in more direct ways. Many of the interviews took place within family homes. In this way, the very interviews themselves domesticated the bomb and brought the Cold War into the family in new ways. During these interviews, I was invited into living rooms, kitchens, dining rooms, and studies; I was shown family photographs, heirlooms, and poetry. I was invited to meet their family members, and often interviews would become familial discussions between wives, husbands, and children. Through the interview, nuclear weapons descended upon the family in the present day. Subsequently, many individuals told me that they had “discussed it with their families” since talking to me or had decided to “talk to their children about it more.”¹⁰¹ Thus, nuclear weapons did not just enter the domestic sphere during the Cold War, they (re)entered when I was invited to discuss these memories.

Section IV: “But mum, will there be a nuclear war?”¹⁰² Children, parents, and nuclear emotions

There was a disparity in experience between children and parents during the Cold War, revealing the impact of inter-generational dynamics on the experience of nuclear anxiety and nuclear emotions. Generally, parents worried about the future of their children, seeing children

⁹⁹ Interview, Stanford.

¹⁰⁰ Interview, Winston; Lawrence Wittner, ‘Gender Roles and Nuclear Disarmament Activism, 1954-1965’, *Gender and History* 12(1) (2000): 197-222; Eschle, ‘(Anti) Nuclear Politics’, 713-724.

¹⁰¹ Interview, Lincoln; Interview, Hawcroft.

¹⁰² ‘But mum will there be a nuclear war’, *The Guardian*, 29 April 1986.

as a motivation for action or anxiety, or conversely a symbol of optimism. On the other hand, children experienced feelings of futurelessness.¹⁰³ Bo Jacobs concluded that American parents had entirely different relationships with nuclear weapons and nuclear culture than their children. Parents were concerned about the ‘American way of life’, whereas children instead feared for their personal futures.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, the testimony reveals a distinct difference between the experience of parents and children. Often this distinction continued when children became parents themselves during the Cold War. The following section discusses these experiences within family relationships. It suggests that parents and children belonged to their own emotional communities as well as the broader, overlapping emotional community of the family.¹⁰⁵ This overlap was a result of parents trying to ‘shelter’ their children from the realities of nuclear war. These multifaceted emotional communities reveal the complex nature of the experience of nuclear anxiety in Britain and the influence of intergenerational memory.

In most instances, parents seemed to ‘pass on’ their nuclear anxieties to their children, despite not discussing nuclear war with them. Carole Fraley recalled her mother telling her that Carole’s birth had brought some degree of anxiety to the family:

Emily: Would you say you were ever worried about the prospect of nuclear war?

Susan: Yeah, I would say I was angry, I wasn’t frightened. And it never you know the immense of a nuclear bomb dropping didn’t- wasn’t in my mind so I wasn’t scared in that sense.

Carole: I think I was [pause] more frightened for my children, my daughters really. It- I don’t know that I ever lived in complete fear you know not in that sort of way, but I always remember my New Zealand mother-in-law, she’s got a sister the same age as me and at the height of the Korean War there was my mother saying, ‘what have I done bringing this child into the world now.’¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ James, ‘A Family Affair’, 170; Hanley and Daniel, ‘An inventory’; Hanley and Daniel, ‘Some Psychological Effects of Nuclear’; Goodman *et al.* ‘The Threat of Nuclear War’; Hesse, ‘Children’s and adolescent’s fears’; Raudalen and Finney, ‘Children’s and Teenager’s views of the future’.

¹⁰⁴ Bo Jacobs, ‘Atomic Kids: Duck and Cover and Atomic Alert Teach American Children how to Survive Atomic Attack’, *Film and History* 40(1) (2010): 25.

¹⁰⁵ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*.

¹⁰⁶ Interview, Fraley and Hodges-Walker.

She also confessed that when her daughters were born, she worried about the world she had brought her children into. Nuclear anxiety seemed to transcend generations within Carole's family. Carole worried for her children in the same way that her mother-in-law worried about the world when her daughter, Carole's sister-in-law, had been born. Carole mentioned that having children was a driving motivation to join CND. I asked if she had ever told her children that she had joined CND for them, and like Rosie, she told me that she had not told them and it was not "something most families talked about."¹⁰⁷ In this way, Carole seemed to wish to protect her children from the fears she had experienced, despite (or perhaps because of) her mother-in-law seemingly passing them on to her.

Likewise, Cheryl Lincoln who had been a primary school teacher during the Cold War told me that she felt she should have "talked to the kids more about the nukes."¹⁰⁸ I asked her why she hadn't and she told me that she "didn't want to scare them" even though she knew they "would find out anyway."¹⁰⁹ Just as Carole had hoped to shield her children from nuclear fear, Cheryl expressed a desire to protect the children she worked with and reflected that she should have prepared them for the future.¹¹⁰ Nuclear anxiety for many people was entangled with their family lives and the future of their children. In many instances, nuclear weapons caused families to put up emotional barriers to protect their children. Thus, parents would bear the burden of experiencing nuclear anxiety, so their children did not have to. This demonstrates the role of intergenerational dynamics on memory and experience. Tania Zittoun argues that family memories were used to make sense of one's own life. Individuals with whom the interviewee is "closely emotionally related with" can have "radical prevalence over distant

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Interview, Lincoln.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Jacobs touches on this occurrence within American school; Jacobs, 'Atomic Kids'.

others” and the subjectivity of the self, due to the “need to preserve relations to close ones.”¹¹¹ In this way, the dynamics of the family shaped *how* and *what* was remembered in life stories.

Children seemed to either resist or accept the views and emotions of their parents, even if their parents never explicitly told them. Rosie Stanford’s father was a Methodist Minister and while he had never told her, Rosie was “sure he would have hated nuclear weapons.”¹¹² Although her father had tried to “protect her from direct action and protest”, Rosie would later join CND and take an active role.¹¹³ She thought her father wanted to protect her from his experience of being an “active conscientious objector.”¹¹⁴ Jodie Winston also stated her interest in CND came from her father’s objection against nuclear war. Jodie was born in 1927 in South London, spending most of her life in Wimbledon. She joined CND when it formed in 1958 and continues to be active today. Jodie lived in a “political household” and was active in numerous peace groups. She told me that although her father “never really spoke to her about it”, she knew how he felt and was “inspired to join the movement.”¹¹⁵ On the other side of the spectrum, both William and Joyce Stonewell commented they came from “right-wing families” who “loved Thatcher” and “agreed with anything she said.”¹¹⁶ William stated that although he was not “as right-wing as his mother or sister” he “believed in Thatcher” and “in nuclear weapons.”¹¹⁷ Likewise, Joyce, although identified as left-wing politically, said that she “thought nuclear weapons were necessary” as her “father had made some pretty good arguments” for them.¹¹⁸ Mike Dalton, on the other hand, said that “his parents didn’t care too much about nuclear weapons” as they “had other things to worry about” so “he didn’t think

¹¹¹ Tania Zittoun, ‘Dynamic Memories of the collective past’, *Culture and Psychology*, 23(2) (2017): 303.

¹¹² Interview, Stanford.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Interview, Winston.

¹¹⁶ Interview, Stonewell.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

about them too much either.”¹¹⁹ Of course, children did resist parents. Chris Bradbury told me his father “did not feel the same way he did” about nuclear weapons and had “challenged” him by joining CND. However, Chris still said he “felt his parents worried about the Cold War but didn’t say.”¹²⁰ These examples reveal the emotional barriers between parents and children as they either shouldered the same emotions as their parents or outright rejected them.

Interviewees whose parents had experienced the Second World War were more secretive than those who did not.¹²¹ These individuals spoke “extensively” about World War Two but little about the Cold War.¹²² Joyce said that she felt that it was because of the Second World War that her parents did not “feel like talking about it.”¹²³ Cheryl, who lived through the Second World War, said that she worried about the Cold War because it would not be like the previous World War:

But having lived through a war, you think, oh we lived through it, we’re okay. But the next one wouldn’t be like that [pauses] I mean in some ways the last war you could enjoy parts of it, even when you were sitting down in a shelter, with the rest of the street, you’d sing songs, you know and people helped each other a lot. If someone was bombed out, you’d go and fetch them, you know. We’ve got a space in our house, you can come, you know. You help people, but, if an atomic bomb dropped, nobody would help anybody, that’s how I feel. Well, it won’t happen in my lifetime, but I worry for my grandchildren. My great-grandchildren.¹²⁴

Cheryl nostalgically recalled her experience of the Second World War and solemnly reflected that the next world war “wouldn’t be the same.” After a pause, she sadly considered that the biggest difference, or the one that had the most meaning to her, was that no one would be able to help each other. Her experience of the Second World War as a child affected how she raised her children and her discussions of the Cold War, saying that “she didn’t like to talk to the kids

¹¹⁹ Interview, Dalton.

¹²⁰ Interview, Bradbury.

¹²¹ Thane, ‘Family Life and “Normality”’; Monica Riera and Gavin Schaffer (eds.) *The Lasting War: Society and Identity in Britain, France, and Germany after 1945* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 17-43.

¹²² Interview, Stonewell.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Interview, Lincoln.

about it.”¹²⁵ Jodie Winston similarly said that she worried about a Third World War because of “the last one.” She campaigned in CND to “protect her children” from the “horror of war.”¹²⁶ Thus, the parents of the Second World War wished to protect their children from their experiences by denying, or not wanting, to discuss the possibility of a nuclear war.¹²⁷

Family units existed as multiple, overlapping emotional communities. Some examples included the parents who sought to protect their children from nuclear anxiety and the children who were emotionally isolated from their parents’ feelings but were often in tune with it regardless.¹²⁸ In this way, emotional barriers were put up between parents and their children. As previously discussed, parents would not express their worries about nuclear weapons to their children to protect them emotionally. An example of this emotional barrier is revealed in the treatment of nuclear war films in Britain. In 1984 *Threads*, a film that depicted the impact of nuclear war on two families in Sheffield was released and there were numerous discussions



Figure 4.2 *Threads* depicts the long-term consequences of nuclear war on two families, the Kemps and the Becketts.

¹²⁵ Interview, Winston.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Michael Peplar, *Family Matters: A history of ideas about family since 1945* (London: Longman, 2002).

¹²⁸ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*.

regarding showing these films to children (Figure 4.2). Many Cold War children reported that they were not “allowed” to watch these films by their parents. Joyce commented that she knew *Threads* had come out, but her mother had told her “not to watch it.”¹²⁹ Cheryl told me that some CND groups asked to show such films in the schools she worked at, but she felt that “those films shouldn’t be shown to children.”¹³⁰ Parents attempted to emotionally protect their children by refusing to discuss nuclear weapons or not permitting them to see certain films. Regardless, children still seemingly felt the nuclear anxiety their parents had experienced.

This feeling of parental sheltering from the truth was commonly mentioned in interviewee testimony and reflected the palpable sense of insecurity of governmental sheltering discussed in chapter two. Roger Leech’s unpublished chapter on his memories of the Cold War was “a child’s take” on the shift from “security” to “insecurity.” Roger reflected how he was “sheltered from reality by parents and family” and recollected “questioning the survivability of nuclear war”, despite his parents’ “dismissal” of his “worries.”¹³¹ Irene Perkins recollected feeling that her father “sheltered her” from the truth of nuclear war and was “angry with her” when she joined CND. In an “act of rebellion,” she put a CND badge on her daughter and sent her to school, “hoping to annoy” her father. She continued that she “didn’t want her daughter to be denied the truth that was masked” from her.¹³² Other interviewees reflected this feeling of dismissal from their parents:

Jack: I don’t think my mum or dad ever mentioned it. I learned more about their childhood growing up through World War Two and what it was like and my mum had a nervous breakdown during World War Two. She was really badly affected by it. And her father was in the police- I mean he wasn’t in the army, but it was still bad. It was very different for them, but my dad was too young to serve at that time.

Wendy: Yeah, my parents never spoke about it at all.

¹²⁹ Interview, Stonewell.

¹³⁰ Interview, Lincoln.

¹³¹ Interview, Leech.

¹³² Interview, Perkins.

Jack: I guess it must have been in their mind, but they were more worried about bringing us up. I guess it was in their minds, but they didn't talk about it at the dinner table. If they worried, they worried alone.

Emily: I guess it's something you might not want to talk to your children about.

Jack: Well, no.

Wendy: Yeah, you want to protect them, and you go into protective parent mode. And you don't really want to talk about that sort of subject.¹³³

In this example, the influence of the Second World War is further revealed, as the Cold War went "unmentioned" by Jack's parents. In the same way, Jack and Wendy "protectively" didn't have conversations with their son about nuclear war. Notably, in the interview, their son mentioned that he would "like to have more conversations about the Cold War" with his parents.¹³⁴ Cheryl Lincoln recalled that when she was "worried about things", she would "confide" in her father:

Yeah, I talked to my father, my mother though she didn't want to talk about it. She would dismiss it. She used to say, 'if it happens, it happens' you know, but me dad would talk about it. Cos, he knew I needed to. But it was still worrying because- I'd never seen such destruction before, and they showed it all. We had only just got telly anyway. And the sight after they dropped the bomb, and it was just unbelievable. It felt like it was my fault because I was English, and I know it was the Americans who dropped it. But I was convinced it was our fault. [laughs].¹³⁵

Although she found these conversations "helpful", she often felt that her parents "didn't validate" her "feelings of insecurity" about potential nuclear war. These examples demonstrate how a sense of dismissal contributed to and framed feelings of nuclear anxiety in the family, occasionally resulting in tension in the home.

According to Elaine Tyler-May, the nuclear bomb entered family life and affected individual relationships, homes, and perceptions of the family unit and its role in the Cold War. In this way, the nuclear bomb became part of "family security" and there was a need for

¹³³ Interview, Kelly.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Interview, Lincoln.

families to come together for protection.¹³⁶ Kate Brown looks at radiation anxieties in plutonium cities in America and the Soviet Union and considers how the Cold War permeated the family. Fears of radiation, secrecy, and political ideologies entered family spaces in a way it had not before.¹³⁷ Alongside family photographs of her interviewees, Brown examines how family structures and relationships shifted and developed in the context of living within a plutonium city. For example, she recalled an instance where technicians were “shocked” when they met some children playing and measured their radioactivity, becoming “anxious” about the health of the “children swarming them.”¹³⁸

Children and their perception of the future became a cause of anxiety in the Cold War. In December 1966, the BBC asked schoolchildren to predict what ‘Tomorrow’s world’ would be like in the year 2000. Although some responses considered a future underwater or attending a “robot funeral”, many children speculated a future nuclear war. Responses included one boy thinking about how he would “come home from hunting to his cave” after the “bomb goes up” and another thought that the world will have become “like a supernova.” One girl reflected on how the nuclear arms race “couldn’t be stopped.”¹³⁹ The television programme, which intended to report on “what is new today for those interested in tomorrow”, encapsulated the anxieties of young people living in the British Cold War. Children were also used within anti-nuclear protest movements as motivators to join the movement. Images of Scottish CND, for example, attached signs to their children’s prams, calling others to consider their future (Figure 4.3).¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Elaine Tyler-May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

¹³⁷ Kate Brown, *Plutopia: nuclear families, atomic cities, and the great Soviet and American plutonium disasters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 158-159.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 239-240.

¹³⁹ Tomorrow’s World, Children predict the year 2000, *BBC*, 28 December 1966, accessed January 2020. Archived: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/children-predict-the-year-2000-1966/zmts7nb>

¹⁴⁰ Child in CND, March 1984, Brain Steward (photographer), 23 April 1984, The Scotsman Publications, Held at NLS LI1011733, Scan ID: 000-000-586-143-D; Trident demonstrators at a meeting in Clydebank shopping centre, Pathfinder Pack on the Conservative Party and CND, from *The Herald* newspaper archive, 11 March 1984, held at the NLS 0249, 001344, Scan ID 000-000-115-591-C.

Groups such as *Schools Against the Bomb* and *Mothers for Peace* also formed, with children as a key motivation for their activism.¹⁴¹



Figure 4.3 Images of Scottish CND protestors alongside their children.

The role of the family and the distinctive experiences of parents and children in the Cold War appeared in British culture. For example, the local and national press often reported on concerns about the impact of nuclear anxiety on children. *The Guardian* reported on ‘Nuclear fear for children’ (1969) and particularly emotive articles such as ‘Mummy, why do you go to Greenham Common?’ (1984) and ‘But mum, will there be a nuclear war?’ (1986).¹⁴² The latter article discussed the “guilt” parents were experiencing in the Cold War due to “bringing their children into the world” and being “unable to protect them and reassure them.”

¹⁴¹ R. A. Williams, *Children in the Nuclear Age* (London: Teachers’ Committee for Nuclear Disarmament, 1962), Working Class Movement Library, Salford, Peace – Box 6.

¹⁴² ‘Nuclear fear for children of the world’, *The Guardian*, 30 July 1969, ‘But mum will there be a nuclear war’, *The Guardian*, 29 April 1986; ‘Mummy why do you go to Greenham Common’, *The Guardian*, 7 February 1984.

It also stated that there were “two mind frames” that “could help reassure parents” and that was either “wanting more nuclear weapons” or wanting “disarmament”.

The family was often at the centre of cinematic and literary productions of nuclear culture. *Threads* and *When the Wind Blows* both centred around a familial experience of nuclear war, placing nuclear weapons within a domestic context and considering the role of families and partners in this future possibility. Throughout the Cold War, the press linked fears over cancer and radiation to children and discussed the role of children within nuclear peace movements.¹⁴³ In 1986, *The Guardian* published an article titled ‘an adult strategy for an age of anxiety.’ The report specifically discussed the fear of nuclear war and how children were affected by the Chernobyl nuclear power station accident in Ukraine in the same year. The article encouraged parents to “prepare their children’s minds to cope with the appalling times in which we live.”¹⁴⁴ In the 1980s, the *South Wales Echo* published several articles which argued for the protection of children in an “age of uncertainty.” Reports discussed how CND was for “the children’s sake” and that children were experiencing a “nuclear nightmare” and were worrying about the future.¹⁴⁵

In the *Evening Standard*, reports were again few and far between and focused on the treatment of children by the women staying at the Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp in the 1980s. These articles claimed the mothers were “abandoning” their children to protest against nuclear weapons.¹⁴⁶ Rosie Stanford recalled, “such articles published” about “the

¹⁴³ On children and protest: ‘Mother and 5 children join nuclear marchers’, *The Guardian*, 29 December 1959, ‘End the nuclear tests for the children’s sakes’, *The Guardian*, 21 September 1984, and ‘They lie we die: Behind the lines: *The Guardian*, 8 August 1978. On children and cancer/radiation: ‘Nuclear link to child’s cancers’, *The Guardian*, 30 July 1969, ‘Study of child cancer near nuclear plants to go ahead’, *The Guardian*, 3 September 1987; ‘Children near N-plants run increased risk of leukaemia’, *The Guardian*, 8 October 1987.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Adult Strategy for an age of anxiety’, *The Guardian*, 13 May 1986.

¹⁴⁵ ‘Mum back from US Cruise fight’, *South Wales Echo*, 22 November 1983; ‘Children’s nuclear nightmare’, ‘Children’s nuclear nightmare’, *South Wales Echo*, 22 January 1983; ‘CND protest is for our children’s sake’, *South Wales Echo*, 21 January 1982.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Peace camp baby found starving’, *Evening Standard*, 24 August 1983; ‘Peace women has baby in tent’, *Evening Standard*, 10 May 1983, ‘Peace mothers demand free taxis’, *Evening Standard*, 4 May 1983; ‘Little girl in middle of ‘peace’ taxi row’, *Evening Standard*, 6 May 1983.

mothers who wanted to protect her children” and resisted them. However, the experience of the Stanfords appeared to confirm the gendered bias in the press and civil defence. While Rosie joined CND to protect her children, Peter attended protests to “spend time with his wife” and “care for his children.” In this way, the mother (Rosie) worried, experiencing anxiety, whereas the father (Peter) sought to improve family life and was much less concerned about the nuclear arms race. How families, parents, children, and partners were depicted in civil defence, culture, and the press reflected the dynamics of the family unit in the Cold War.

Even parents who did break these emotional barriers found that their children still experienced nuclear anxiety in the same way as those isolated did, and often felt strongly that they were a product of their parents’ emotions. Stuart’s mother, for example, was explicit to him about her feelings regarding nuclear weapons. As previously discussed, Stuart felt his mother had passed her fears onto him. Despite this, he still said that “you follow your parents, don’t you?”¹⁴⁷ Irene Perkins also told me that her parents were explicit in their feelings, telling her that they “might have to move away” if nuclear war happened. When she was eleven, she said her father told her they had “plans to move to Wales just in case.” Like Stuart, Irene commented that what her parents had said made her feel “scared.”¹⁴⁸ Suzie Roberts told me that her first house in Wales was near a Transmitter Station. When she asked her parents what it was, they told her “it was to send signals to nuclear submarines.” Suzie said that this “glowing” tower “haunted her as a child” because she “knew their purpose” from her parents.¹⁴⁹

The difference between parents and children, and more specifically the difference between generations, during the Cold War, seemed to continue to influence the content of the interviews.¹⁵⁰ At the time of interviewing, I was aged 25-26 and was considerably younger than

¹⁴⁷ Interview, Perkins.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*,

¹⁴⁹ Interview, Roberts.

¹⁵⁰ Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 65.

my speakers. Frequently, interviewees would ask me questions, enquiring if I still had hope for the future and that young people “like me” had to change things. During my interview with Cheryl, she asked me “do you worry about nuclear weapons?” Once I had given my answer she said, she hoped “young people could un-make them [nuclear weapons].”¹⁵¹ At the end of my interview with Jodie Winston, I asked if there was anything else she wanted to add to the recording. She said that she “had hope for the future” and “young people need to be interested in nuclear weapons again.” She also commented that she hoped more “young people would join CND.”¹⁵² Andrew Moore told me that it would be “people like me” who would need to “take action to change our future.”¹⁵³ Perhaps most passionately, Peter Cattigan, a currently serving member of the House of Lords asked me if I “thought I had the ability to change things in the future.” I responded truthfully, and Peter told me that “it was up to young people to take action” and only we “could take responsibility and do something about [politics].”¹⁵⁴ Within these contexts, people who had lived through the Cold War told me that my generation should have hope, and take action, to prevent fear of nuclear war or to rid the world of them entirely. The transcendence of nuclear anxiety and other nuclear emotions came full circle. As parents had passed their feelings of anxiety onto their children, those children communicated them to me and hoped that I could be optimistic about the future.

Chapter conclusion

This chapter has revealed the complex and shifting nature of the family relationships of ordinary civilians during the Cold War between 1945 and 1989. It has shown how this period of history shaped how British civilians felt about their children, parents, partners, and family

¹⁵¹ Interview, Lincoln.

¹⁵² Interview, Winston.

¹⁵³ Interview, Moore.

¹⁵⁴ Interview, Cattigan.

unit in a period of escalating international tension. Discussions about the family resulted in several interviewees becoming intensely emotional. The case studies of the Perkins, Stanford, Stonewell families were encompassing of these moments. Thus, for many civilians it was not the fear of the end of the world that frightened people, it was instead the fear of the end of their world: *their family*.¹⁵⁵ These examples of the British Cold War experience offer a slice of how family dynamics and relationships were affected by the prospect of nuclear war, activism, and involvement in the Cold War effort.¹⁵⁶ Although not necessarily representative of the country's population, the stories that the interviewees shared with me about their families reveal the diversity of the British Cold War experience, and how deeply embedded the Cold War was in civilian family life. Crucially, these stories tell us much about how memory and emotions are constructed in the oral history interview.

Explorations of families within the life history of individuals open opportunities for interviewees to reflect temporally on their parents and their children, framing their lives within the past and the present. Memories and experiences of the Second World War heavily permeated these familial narratives.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, many individuals discussed their present-day children within their Cold War memories and often included me within their discussions of the future. In this way, nuclear anxiety within families became intergenerational. Parents of the Second World War projected anxieties onto their children born in the Cold War, who would then do the same to their own.¹⁵⁸ There was a notable difference between the emotions of those born during or before the Second World War (World War children) and those born during the Cold War (Cold War children) and how they recalled the emotional state of their parents and children. In this way, inter-generational dynamics shaped the British civilian experience of the

¹⁵⁵ Ptacek, 'Nuclear Age', 437-438, 442.

¹⁵⁶ Alexis-Martin, Wright and Blell, *Nuclear Families*, 1-3.

¹⁵⁷ Douthwaite, 'Rehearsing nuclear war,' 189.

¹⁵⁸ Summerfield, 'Generation of memory', 28-29.

Cold War and nuclear emotions.¹⁵⁹ This furthers Langhamer's recent contributions to the emotional history of the Cold War. Langhamer found that civilians writing for Mass Observation used their family experience, such as a recent birth of a child, to frame their own feelings about the atom bomb in 1945.¹⁶⁰ In much the same way, in 2019 women reflected on the birth of their children in the 1980s. This reflects the complex interplay of past experience, present feeling, and future thinking within the contextualisation of emotions. I argue that explorations of how the past, present, and future shaped emotional experiences of civilians have shown the need to historicise and conceptualise experiences of nuclear anxiety, and nuclear emotions, within the oral history interview.

Nuclear war and nuclear weapons became embedded in everyday life and entangled within the family unit. Parents were driven to join anti-nuclear groups or to bear the burden of nuclear anxiety to protect their children throughout the Cold War. They attempted to separate their children into different emotional communities within the family unit, shielding them from the realities they were burdened with.¹⁶¹ The emotional community of the family became complex as parents believed they were protecting their children from nuclear anxiety, and children reported "experiencing the same worries their parents had."¹⁶² Consequently, many children and parents had similar but separated experiences in the Cold War as the emotional community of the family shifted and changed throughout the period.¹⁶³ My presence within the family in group interviews also shaped the emotional backdrop of the interview, aiding our understanding of how memory and emotions are constructed in the oral history interview. In the testimony, the family was a common topic of conversation. It was also a topic in which the most genuine and palpable emotional responses were experienced, revealing the emotional

¹⁵⁹ Douthwaite, 'Voices', 281.

¹⁶⁰ Langhamer, 'Mass Observing', 208.

¹⁶¹ Interview, Moore.

¹⁶² Interview, Perkins.

¹⁶³ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 203.

politics of nuclearity. Through these interactions with families, nuclear weapons re-entered the domestic sphere through the interview.

Many of these domestic narratives and relationships with nuclear war were very particular across different families due to their specific circumstances. This chapter has ultimately shown the complexities of nuclear anxiety and the multifaceted ways it entered everyday life for civilians. When discussing the family, nuclear anxiety seeped through as feelings of anger, sadness, futurelessness, and hope. Reflecting on the letter from J.S. which began this chapter, J.S. prayed that her husband and her children would not survive a nuclear war, reflecting the visceral emotional experience of the period 1945 to 1989 and the permeation of nuclear anxiety into the family unit. This chapter has intimately explored the impact of nuclear weapons and the Cold War on the family and relationships. The final chapter will discuss the impact on the individuals and their sense of self during the Cold War.

Chapter Five

Selfhood and the individualism of experience and emotion

“The previous rhythms of consciousness were disrupted by nuclear weapons, resulting in the formation of a new, militarized consciousness. The ‘nuclear’ had invaded all spaces, physically, mentally, and in consciousness.”
- Joseph Nechvatal, ‘La beauté tragique’¹

This thesis has explored the various and diverse ways nuclear weapons and the wider Cold War permeated everyday life for British civilians. I have demonstrated the various emotional responses and experiences of many British civilians from different locations, backgrounds, and identities. Throughout, memories, experiences, and nuclear emotions have been drawn out from the testimonies gathered for this research. This final chapter will explore the individualism of both experience and nuclear emotions, finalising the core arguments made throughout the thesis. The thesis has moved from the broad social, to cultural, and will now explore the self. The chapter demonstrates the diversity of the British Cold War civilian experience and the impact nuclear weapons had on ordinary lives. These examples also highlight the need for historians to explore the emotional histories of the Cold War more deeply, focusing on the ordinary as much as the extraordinary. I have offered a fresh perspective on current historiography by bringing together a diverse sample of interviewees. These stories and memories have told us that for us to truly delve into the emotional experience of the Cold War, a greater focus on the individual is required to understand exactly *why* certain emotional responses were triggered.

This chapter will demonstrate that although many individuals accessed and interpreted many popular Cold War motifs and cultural memories, the experience of the Cold War is significantly subjective and unique according to the individual who lived it.² It builds upon the

¹ Joseph Nechvatal, ‘La beauté tragique: Mapping the Militarization of Spatial Cultural Consciousness’, *Leonardo* 34(1) (2001): 27-28.

² Crane, ‘Writing the Individual’, 1376.

work of Biess, Douthwaite, Hogg, Grant, Langhamer, and Eaton who have all begun the important work of understanding the experience of the *individual* and what these life stories can tell us about the broader Cold War.³ The stories that the interviewees tell reveal the meanings nuclear weapons and the Cold War had in their lives and the value they placed on specific experiences. They do this by sharing stories with me that have meaning in their past and to their sense of self.⁴ Assessing these memories tells us a great deal about the conceptualisation of the Cold War in ordinary lives.

Nuclear emotions will also be considered as a way of understanding the individual experience.⁵ The chapter examines articulations of the “self-image” to understand the Cold War experience and the conventional assumptions about the threat of nuclear war. I argue that the Cold War, nuclear emotions, and nuclear culture disrupted conceptions of self and shaped how ordinary people felt about themselves and the world they lived in.⁶ As Frank Mort argues, “stories that begin [...] from the interiority of the self – can form an important antidote to those obsessively social narratives.”⁷ Likewise, as the field of microhistory teaches us, exploring history through a single event or through the eyes of individuals tells historians much about the collective and the grand narrative of history.⁸ The purpose of this chapter is not to suggest that emotions are impossible to understand on a large scale. But by examining a group of individuals and their experiences, we can understand that individual as a historical actor and how their emotional experience was influenced and shaped by the lives they led and where they fit into wider societal emotional collectives.

³ Biess, ‘Nuclear angst’, 218; Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 281; Hogg, ‘The family’, 544-546; Grant, ‘Making sense’, 231, 247; Langhamer, ‘Mass Observing’, 209; Eaton, ‘Nuclear anxiety’, 67.

⁴ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 253.

⁵ Hogg, ‘The family’, 537.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 549.

⁷ Frank Mort, ‘Social and symbolic fathers and sons in postwar Britain’, *Journal of British Studies* 38 (1999): 353–384, 382

⁸ Peltonen, ‘Clues, Margins’, 347; Chin, ‘Margins and Monsters’, 347.

After firstly exploring relevant methodology in relation to the individualism of emotions in history, notions of the remembered and present (emotional) 'self', the self within communities and the self within the interview will be explored. Building upon what Summerfield and Karen Halttunen have explored, within an oral history interview, interviewees construct the 'self' in memories within the context of the interview.⁹

While much of this thesis has explored broader collective experiences, this chapter ultimately demonstrates that a true understanding of the emotional history of the British Cold War requires an insight into the lives of individuals. I also argue that in the context of oral history, an understanding of the conceptualisation of emotions is impossible without considering the context in which the original interview was conducted.¹⁰ The interviews which formed the basis of this research were conducted in specific political national and international contexts which seeped into individual narratives. As Stearns and Stearns consider in their exploration of anger in American life through their methodology of emotionology, collective and the individual experiences of emotion are distinct and interconnected. This chapter will reflect on this framework and apply it to the experience of nuclear emotions for British civilians during the Cold War.¹¹

I start by outlining the different ways interviewees framed themselves, their experiences, and opinions within the broader context of Britain and other communities. This section will explore the *individuality* of nuclear anxiety, placing personal experiences into the societal context of their emotional communities. I then argue that nuclear emotions, including nuclear anxiety, need to be relocated within the lived experiences of the individual. As this thesis has explored, many individuals have exceptionally unique livelihoods which shaped their

⁹ Halttunen, 'Self, Subject', 22; Penny Summerfield, 'Concluding Thoughts: performance, the self, and women's history', *Women's History Review*, 22(2) (2013): 346.

¹⁰ Theodore Zeldin, 'Personal History and the History of Emotions', *Journal of Social History* 15(3) (1982): 342.

¹¹ Stearns and Stearns, *Anger*.

experiences of the Cold War through access to knowledge, familial experience, or personal relationships. These specific and unique circumstances shaped how individuals discussed their pasts, responded emotionally, and crafted their personal narratives. Finally, this chapter considers in depth the context of 2016-2019 on the oral history testimony. In this way, this chapter explores the experience of the 'self' in the Cold War and the 'self' within the context of the interview. I conclude this chapter by exploring the present-centeredness of the oral history interviews. This section considers how cultural memory and contemporary context impacts our historical understanding of oral history testimony. I argue that the specific context of the period 2016 to 2019 shaped the contents of the testimony, reflecting on the challenges of excavating emotional responses rooted in the past and the present.

Section I: Motivation, resistance, and personal opinion: The individualism of emotions

Previous chapters have demonstrated how individuals tapped into broader British nuclear culture or imaginaries of the atomic bomb, thus forming the collective British Cold War experience for ordinary people. However, this experience, while often collective and shared, differed and evolved in various ways for different people according to their personal lives.¹² Consequently, individuals formed their own experiences of British nuclear culture and developed their imaginaries of nuclear war and the nuclear bomb during this period.¹³ Langhamer found that in responses to Mass Observation, panellists would “claim their own views were widely shared across place and space.” Although a “minority” of respondents saw themselves as outside a community of feeling, most positioned the “self in relation to the collective.” As previously discussed in chapter one, the sociality of feeling was apparent in these narratives particularly when respondents considered their own and other nations.¹⁴

¹² Crane, 'Writing the Individual', 1382.

¹³ This will be explored and discussed extensively in the next section.

¹⁴ Langhamer, 'Mass Observing', 216.

When discussing the experience of nuclear anxiety, the self and the collective were often discussed within the testimonies collected for this project. Throughout their recollections, individuals would frame their experiences and emotions within the context of other perceived emotional frameworks and within the context of the interview itself. Individuals would discuss ways their emotions or experiences were “different”¹⁵ from others or discuss how “everyone felt like” them.¹⁶ Furthermore, they would frame their emotions within the interview, often highlighting differences or similarities between me as the interviewer and them as the interviewee.¹⁷ This reveals the individualism and ownership of emotion versus willingness to discuss communal experiences.

Within the testimonies, ordinary people often referred to how others felt the same way as them or how their emotional responses were representative of the people around them. Individuals believed that their anxieties were held by other people in Britain. Throughout the interviews, the pronouns “we” or “us” were frequently used, with interviewees often not clarifying if they were referring to their nation, family, local community, or others they were interviewed with. These pronouns also identified distinct emotional communities that individuals were (or perceived themselves as being) part of.¹⁸ For example, Jack Kelly often interchangeably used the term “we” to describe Britain as a nation or as a people, his local communities, or his wife and son.¹⁹ In one particular thought process, Jack recalled how “we” as “the human race” “all hate each other” and are “stupid” for creating nuclear weapons.²⁰ In this way, Jack, as many other interviewees did, spoke for a wider population, framing his feelings within the opinions and emotions of others. Collective anxiety was also explicitly discussed. Jack recalled how “we didn’t worry” because he was “young.” He later clarified that

¹⁵ Interview, Reznik.

¹⁶ Interview, Lincoln.

¹⁷ Summerfield, 'Concluding Thoughts', 349.

¹⁸ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*.

¹⁹ Interview, Kelly.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

he believed that people “of his generation” were “too busy with meeting girls, getting jobs or moving out” to be “concerned” about nuclear weapons. He added that “everyone was worried about it by the 80s.”²¹ In this way, Jack describes his early lack of fear and later experiences of nuclear anxiety as being representative of his generation, placing his experience within a wider normative. Cheryl Lincoln recalled how “everyone was scared of it [nuclear war].”²² Notably, Cheryl also recalled how she “didn’t really speak to anyone about” nuclear weapons and admitted that those around her “probably tried to push it out of their minds and ignore it.”²³ William Stonewell recalled “everyone being a bit anxious about nuclear war.”²⁴ He often used collective experience to frame his own, often tagging on “I think everyone was, weren’t they?” or “it’s what everyone thought, I think” to his recollections.²⁵ Mike Dalton recalled how “*everyone* was just a bit worried about” nuclear war, adding that “most people just tried to get on with their lives.”²⁶ These testimonies suggest that nuclear anxiety existed *beyond* the individuals interviewed and was experienced by others around them.²⁷

This sense of collective emotion and experience was frequently present in the testimonies of those involved in the anti-nuclear movement, who frequently spoke in collective pronouns when recalling their emotions.²⁸ Jodie Winston recalled how “everyone was angry” in her local CND group and discussed how “the future was a concern of everyone’s.”²⁹ Others such as Sandra Hawcroft, Rory Marking, Linda Southport, and Rosie Stanford discussed how those around them in their protest communities “felt the same as them.”³⁰ Throughout these

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Interview, Lincoln.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Interview, Stonewell.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Interview, Dalton.

²⁷ Kathleen Ryan, ‘I didn’t do anything important’: A pragmatist analysis of the oral history interview’, *The Oral History Review* 36(1) (2009): 40.

²⁸ Julie Stephens, ‘Our remembered selves: Oral History and Feminist Memory’, *Oral History* 81 (2010): 84.

²⁹ Interview, Winston.

³⁰ Interview, Hawcroft. Interview Yorke, Branco Marking; Interview, Southport; Interview, Stanford.

interviews, there was a genuine belief that their personal experiences and emotions were similar, if not identical, to others around them. As Douthwaite found, interviewees often “switched” between singular and plural pronouns, particularly when discussing national identity.³¹ These switches demonstrate how memory can embody *both* collective and individual experience. Personal testimony underscores the value of oral records to “adopt binary modes of thinking about collective experience.” It tells us about “dominant notions of collective view” as well as individual reflection and resistance to unitary cultural scripts. Individuals may seek to regulate or tone down collective reminiscences or to try and fit them within their sense of self.³²

Conversely, some individuals discussed how their experiences or emotions were *different* from others around them. While most individuals interviewed for this project often referred to a collective when discussing their Cold War experiences, others would specifically discuss why they were different from others. This reveals the different ways nuclear emotions were experienced, discussed, and framed within oral history testimony. Some emotions and experiences were positioned as *unique* while others were *representative* of the broader population. The ways individuals highlighted the how their live stories diverged from others also uncovers how interviewees self-analysed their emotions in the context of the interview.³³ Stuart Perkins proceeded to tell me that “his childhood was different” from other people before explaining his memories of his mother during the Cold War. He rarely used collective pronouns when discussing his emotions, choosing instead to refer to himself as singular throughout: “I felt”, “I remember”, “I think.”³⁴ At the end of the interview, he explained that his experience “was probably different than other people’s” so he “hoped it helped” my research. Stuart

³¹ Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 57.

³² Stephens, ‘Our remembered selves’, 85, 86.

³³ *Ibid*, 84.

³⁴ Interview, Perkins.

regarded his experience as different from what he perceived as ‘normal’ and this was a motivation for joining the project. Shaun Reznik was born in Czechoslovakia and later moved to Cardiff in the latter years of the Cold War.³⁵ At the beginning of the interview, he told me “his story is not like anybody else’s.” In our email communication before meeting, he explicitly hoped that his “unique experience” would be of interest to me and “contribute to the project.”³⁶ It was within these narratives of exceptionally personal memories in which the self was brought to the foreground of the interviews.

Participants would reflect upon their stance, opinions, emotions, and memories, often questioning themselves, getting side-tracked, and pausing to pick their words before they spoke, deciding how they were going to construct their narrative to me.³⁷ In this way, interviewees embarked on their own form of ‘emotionology’, separating their personal narratives from the collective experiences of others.³⁸ Interviewees would frequently discuss how their experiences and emotions were “normal” or part of a collective community around them. However, when discussing personal or very specific circumstances such as birthplace, family, friendships, or moments of particular significance to them, interviewees would pause to reconstruct the self away from the broader collective.³⁹ While many interviewees discussed “everyone being worried” about nuclear weapons, the reasons as to *why* these individuals were worried were varied, framed within their sense of self and their life experiences in the background of wider collective society and culture.

My presence and identity also shaped the testimonies, and the ways individuals chose to discuss their emotions and memories. As oral historians Summerfield and Eva McMahan

³⁵ Shaun’s unique experience of the Cold War will be considered in detail in the next section.

³⁶ Interview, Reznik.

³⁷ Summerfield, ‘Concluding Thoughts’, 349.

³⁸ Stearns and Stearns, ‘Emotionology’, 813.

³⁹ Lynn Abrams, ‘Liberating the female self: epiphanies, conflict, and coherence in the life stories of postwar British women’, *Social History* 39(1) (2014): 15.

suggest, and as discussed extensively in the methodology of this thesis, oral history is a process of co-production between the interviewee and the interviewer. The speech and counter-speech between the two participants shape the topic, the information provided and the rapport between the individuals.⁴⁰ As Summerfield has also shown, the perception of the interviewer by the interviewee also affects how the interviewee composes themselves and they construct their narratives accordingly.⁴¹ In the interviews, my appearance and identities occasionally framed or shaped the discussions within the interview. Being younger than the interviewees, a woman, English (East Midlands), and an academic appeared to be the most frequent points of contention. For example, as discussed in chapter one, within the interview with Alexander Campbell, his Scottish identity and my English identity was often discussed resulting in an “othering” of one another.⁴² In July 2018, I arranged a group interview with four members of Cardiff CND. George Branco was the first to greet me and he told me that I “didn’t look like an academic.”⁴³ This encounter framed the rest of our interactions, with George often interrupting my questions and his companion’s narratives to explain what things meant. Moreover, he would often stop while recollecting to say that “I’m sure you know about all this” or “you must already know all this.”⁴⁴ In this way, George would change his narratives on the assumption I already knew a particular topic as I was an academic.⁴⁵

Alan Hall and John Whittaker also had similar presumptions about my knowledge of the Cold War.⁴⁶ John cited historians of the Cold War throughout his narrative, but dwelled on them

⁴⁰ Eva McMahan, 'Speech and Counterspeech: Language in Use in Oral History Fieldwork', *The Oral History Review* 15(1) (1987): 187; Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany; New York: State University of New York Press, 1990).

⁴¹ Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure', 65.

⁴² Interview, Campbell.

⁴³ Interview, Yorke, Branco and Marking.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, 'Who's afraid of oral history? Fifty years of debates and anxiety about ethics', *The Oral History Review* 43(2) (2016): 352, 356, 360.

⁴⁶ Interview, Hall; Interview, Whittaker.

briefly as he “was sure I already knew about them.”⁴⁷ Cheryl Lincoln, when discussing her memories of feeling “anxious about nuclear stuff”, stopped to ask me “If I was worried about nuclear weapons nowadays.”⁴⁸ In this exchange, she interrupted her narrative to reflect upon her interviewer’s experiences and opinions:

Cheryl: Well, I- [*pauses*] Well almost in some ways I wished we hadn’t got them. But then you’ve got to have a defence. But if nuclear war happens, Britain might as well say goodbye- I don’t know- Dare I ask you are you worried about nuclear war?

Emily: Yeah, I guess I am sometimes.⁴⁹

After I responded with “sometimes”, she agreed and changed the conversation to discuss modern nuclear anxieties, using my response to frame the ways she discussed it. My presence actively shaped how Cheryl discussed nuclear weapons. A similar interaction took place with Frank Davies and Jonathan Smith when they asked if “I was frightened.” After I responded, Jonathan told me that “today’s kids are scared of everything” and he “had a son my age who was worried about it.” In this exchange, my age framed our discussions due to Jonathan’s perception of “what the young ‘uns are scared of nowadays.”⁵⁰

Not only was each individual’s sense of self asserted within the testimonies, but my *own selfhood* was a point of conflict or rapport within the interviews. My appearance and the stories I also chose to share in the interviews shaped how the interviewees constructed their narratives and interacted with me.⁵¹ These examples have also demonstrated the ways interviewees self-reflected upon their place in the broader Cold War.

⁴⁷ Interview, Whittaker.

⁴⁸ Interview, Lincoln.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Halttunen, ‘Self, Subject’, 22.

Section II: ‘Not like anybody else’s [?]’⁵²: Exploring the individualism of nuclear anxiety

To demonstrate the individualism of emotions, the following section will consider several case studies and how their unique backgrounds shaped their experiences and emotions during the Cold War.⁵³ It will look at the lives of Shaun, Vera, and William, considering how they framed their ‘ordinariness’ alongside their exceptional backgrounds and experiences. While the previous section considered *collective* pronouns and experiences, this section will consider instances where interviewees reflected on the individualism of their experience. These examinations will be in-depth, exploring the individual’s life stories, and how their personal livelihoods affected their memories of the Cold War.⁵⁴ In this way, the experiences of nuclear anxiety and nuclear emotions became individualised, meaning different things to different people. As shown throughout the thesis, interviewees placed meaning on different events and moments in the Cold War that had significance to them as an individual. These meaningful aspects of their lives framed how they constructed their narrative, for example Steve Hall using his hobby of cycling as a lens of recollection or Peter Cattigan discussing the Cold War through his career. These narratives place emphasis on the emotional authenticity and day-to-day lives of ordinary people, revealing the ways the Cold War was created within ordinariness.⁵⁵ Although nuclear anxiety was interlinked with nuclear weapons and the uncertainty of nuclear war, feeding into the two-way current of British nuclear culture and collective memory, these meanings were also tied into highly individual experiences.⁵⁶

The previous chapters demonstrated that nuclear anxiety was entangled with other *nuclear emotions*, such as feelings of sadness, anger, and hope. This section suggests that

⁵² Interview, Reznik.

⁵³ Penny Summerfield, ‘Oral History as an Autobiographical Practice’, *Miranda*, 12 (2006): 1.

⁵⁴ Nathaniel Comfort, ‘When your sources talk back: Toward a Multimodal approach to scientific biography’, *Journal of the History of Biology* 44 (2011): 651; Stearns and Stearns, ‘Emotionology’, 814.

⁵⁵ Langhamer, ‘Ordinary people’, 175.

⁵⁶ Stephen Hilgartner, ‘The social construction of risk objects: or, how to pry open networks of risk’ *Organisations, uncertainties and Risk* ed. in James Short and Lee Clarke (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 37-41.

nuclear anxiety needs to be relocated within the experiences of the individual. The individuals brought together for this project are acknowledged as historical entities and their emotions are acknowledged as personal and unique to them. By examining how these individual experiences intersect with the collective, the ways wider networks, identities and collective memories informed individual life stories can be more deeply understood.⁵⁷

Emotions are subjective and are formed by complicated processes. They are formed by many “threads” including the individual. When many of these form and overlap they give the impression of “societal trends” but the “fluidity of the threads and webs remain” meaning that emotion “may separate and re-form.”⁵⁸ As this thesis has demonstrated, many individuals have exceptionally unique livelihoods which shaped their experiences of the Cold War, such as Stuart Perkins whose mother’s diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia dramatically shaped his childhood memories and perceptions of nuclear weapons. These exceptional circumstances shaped how the individuals discussed their pasts, responded emotionally, and crafted their personal narratives of the British Cold War.⁵⁹

The *ways* individuals discussed their experiences and emotions in the Cold War differed greatly, revealing the diversity in narratives across Britain. It demonstrates the variance in what interviewees applied meaning to in their life stories. Throughout both of his interviews, William Stonewell used ‘official’ narratives to discuss his own experiences. His choice of semantics and vocabulary appeared to be an attempt to display mastery over his emotions by masking them.⁶⁰ As previously explored, William rarely disclosed details about his father and his death. However, he would often cite recent news articles, information he had read from books or seen on television about the history of the Cold War in general, rather than his own

⁵⁷ Crane, ‘Writing the Individual’, 1377.

⁵⁸ Margaret Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion: A new social science understanding* (London: Sage, 2012), 120-121.

⁵⁹ Crane, ‘Writing the Individual’, 1383.

⁶⁰ Interview, Stonewell.

life story, using these official narratives to lead his discussions into his personal experiences.

This passage is one such example:

Hmmm Well, I remember people building nuclear shelters, but I didn't know anyone who actually built one. I mean was it a big thing? I'm not aware of anyone I know or anyone. Well, we saw one recently. It was Britain's secret nuclear bunker, and it was on a Top Gear show although I haven't seen it and it was just a bungalow in some woods [*he continues talking about this visit for approximately 2 minutes*]. You couldn't possibly survive in there long cos you couldn't hold the amount of water and food and erm. And erm [pause] going back to my father. I remember my mother discussing that if the planes took off and there was a war they would- if they ever get that far then to drop the bombs- there was no intention there never was- they never expected to come back again. They always knew- the pilot they always knew it was a one-way mission. Cos if there was a nuclear war then all they'd be no- cos all the air would the airfields would be the first ones to be hit so there would be nothing left to land on and nothing to come back to anyway. So erm they always thought it would be a one-way mission and this was accepted as a one-way mission. [pause] Erm yeah sorry what were we talking about?⁶¹

When asked if he knew anyone who built nuclear shelters, William talks extensively about his recent trip to a nuclear shelter museum outside of London, describing the information it held and a detailed narrative of his experience. This narrative allows him to rationalise and process his personal experiences before deciding to share them with me. Through his expression of official narratives, William was able to discuss the emotionally charged topic of his father in more detail, before moving swiftly on again.⁶² As he spoke about his recent visit to the shelter, he smiled and gestured frequently, speaking in a friendly tone. As he moved on to discuss his father, the ambience of the interview palpably changed. He spoke slowly, pausing often, and rarely made eye contact with me.

This emotional vocabulary contrasts to his conversations about his father which were usually free of emotional lexicons. These stories were usually very brief accounts:

Well, I've got a few memories because I was brought up in an RAF family. My father was a pilot, and as far as I'm aware – I mean I'm not absolutely sure about this because he's obviously not [pause] alive now. He died when I was eleven. He was an er- at one point in his career he was a Vulcan bomber pilot, and erm a

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Crane, 'Writing the Individual', 1383.

‘sniffer’ pilot so er- I mean obviously I was very young at the time, erm It doesn’t matter. It doesn’t matter. What about you Joyce?⁶³

Even when his wife prompted him to discuss his father more (“Your dad died in 1973 didn’t he? He must have lots of Cold War stories”), William responded blankly with “Yes”, ending the conversation and changing topic.⁶⁴

The insights William provided about his father were entangled within official narratives such as “this one programme” about “Windscale” he watched or places “he visited” which were “about the Cold War.” In this way, he did not divulge emotional responses relating to his father, instead providing an absence of them.⁶⁵ Large sections of William’s testimony was spent detailing official knowledge he had learned about the Cold War including Vulcan planes, Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM), and nuclear politics. He spoke enthusiastically through these recollections. He often positioned his narrative amongst the experience of other British civilians, often citing his experience as “ordinary.” Other nuclear emotions were exposed throughout his narrative as he recollected his childhood with clear fondness, laughing at memories with his family. This composure was broken only when William circled round to speak about his father.⁶⁶ Although I am not a psychologist and do not want to make sweeping assumptions about William’s emotional memories of the Cold War, it appears that on the surface that they were deeply linked to his father and his Cold War connections.⁶⁷ William was exceptionally knowledgeable about the historical period but rarely discussed his personal experiences. In this way, the official narrative appeared to be a way to connect with his father.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ K’Meyer and Crothers, ‘Ethical Dilemmas’, 93.

⁶⁵ What is *not* said in oral history interviews as almost as important as what is *not* said. The same can be said about emotional responses, when an emotional response is expected i.e., sadness in this instance, but it is *not* expressed, this has meanings in itself.

⁶⁶ Summerfield, ‘Culture and Composure’, 65.

⁶⁷ Valerie Yow, ‘Ethics and Interpersonal relationships in oral history research’, *The Oral History Review* 22(1) (1995): 52.

After my second interview with William, he gave me a monthly aviation magazine, *FlyPast*, which contained an article (which he had bookmarked for me) on Victor planes and nuclear testing (Figure 5.1).⁶⁸ When he gave it to me, he told me that it “probably had more information on the planes” his father flew and that his father “probably” knew some of the people cited in the article. He concluded that he “hoped the article” would give me more information “than he could.”⁶⁹ William was unable to discuss his father and told me his mother “rarely” talked about him, and instead gave me more detail through official information in a magazine. Subsequently, William’s exceptionally personal circumstances and relationship with his father shaped his emotions and the *very way* he discussed the Cold War. These personal contexts shaped the emotionology of nuclear emotions and *how* they were discussed by interviewees.⁷⁰



Figure 5.1 Flypast magazine given to me by William Stonewell.

Personal relationships also shaped Cold War memories and emotional experiences for Vera Ryman. Vera was born in 1933 in London. Her first husband, Ronald, was an atomic physicist at Woomera, Australia. They married in 1953 and spent much of their early marriage

⁶⁸ Tony Bulter, ‘Sniffers’ *Flypast*, April 2018, 52-57.

⁶⁹ Email correspondence with William Stonewell, May 2018. Permission to use these quotations were granted by William.

⁷⁰ Stearns and Stearns, ‘Emotionology’.

apart until they had their first daughter in 1955. In “about 1962”, Ronald returned home but Vera noticed a distinct change in her husband after he returned from Australia:

He was unfortunately in the fallout when they were testing the bombs. He was ten miles from it, and when I went to meet him. He was on the fallout, he was supposed to have come... [Indistinct] was supposed to get him but he was a bit late, and when I went to see him in London, to see the plane from London, the atomic energy commission wrote me a thing. And said “oh he’s been in Singapore; he’ll be a bit later” when he came in... because of the fallout he was a bit later and then went to tropical medicine in London and they thought there was fallout, but these things don’t show up till later. And he was never the same again. He started with schizophrenia, so I nursed him for so long. He had to give his job up. We nursed him. But between you and me he didn’t know what he was doing. He didn’t know.⁷¹

Vera did discuss her anxieties around the possibility of nuclear war, but the impact it had on her former husband had a profound effect on her. She discussed the “horrors” of the blasts and her “fears” about nuclear war but dwelled substantially on her husband. She discussed her anxieties at home as Ronald became “violent.” Vera concluded that “it wasn’t his fault” as he “didn’t know what he was doing.” Instead, she blamed “the fallout” which “showed up” in him.⁷²

After her divorce in the 1970s, Vera moved north with her daughter to Manchester for further education, before moving to Kendal in the north-west of England. She spoke more about her job and experiences bringing up her children than her first husband, only briefly discussing this interaction while reflecting on when she moved to Kendal. For Vera, the perceived effect nuclear fallout has on civilians and her personal experience with her first husband’s psychological diagnosis after working with atomic weapons defined her experience of the Cold War and her emotional response. Due to Ronald developing schizophrenia “because of the fallout”, Vera’s nuclear anxieties were situated within the aftermath of nuclear war and its subsequent psychological impact. Vera’s unique experience being married to an

⁷¹ Interview with Vera Ryman, recorded by the Kendall Oral History Group, 2015.

⁷² *Ibid.*

atomic physicist who developed a medical condition defined her experience of nuclear anxiety and nuclear emotions.⁷³

Shaun Reznik's experience is another example of exceptionality. It further reveals the need for historians to consider the individual in scholarly understandings of the Cold War. Shaun identified as being "British" but was born in 1970 in former Czechoslovakia (now Slovakia). Shaun's childhood was defined by this experience living on "the other side" of the Iron Curtain and his subsequent "realisation" of how different it was "over here" in Britain.⁷⁴ Because of the nature of Shaun's experience, it will be retold in full. Shaun recalled how from six years of age; he was prepared for a nuclear attack at school:

Shaun: I was born into huge propaganda. That's where my story begins. It was very militaristic at the time. You see what happened after you finish nursery school after like age four or five you start to be erm indoctrinated into- into the propaganda. Erm [pause] and serving the Czechoslovakian state. That's what it was. You would start being in a group called Sparkle [Figure 5.2]. You would have an ID and it had your commitment to what you would do. So, to tell the truth. To play. You like to work. Hard work. Someone who is not shy of work. Yeah. And also, how you would commit to becoming a Pioneer. Which was the next step. So yeah, I was six and this is what would happen. [pause] We would erm [pause] and this is where it turns dark. We were six. We had these exercises. It was all written nicely in cute words but what it meant; we would have these school exercises. [pause] we would erm go



Figure 5.2 Image of Sparkle ID and Badge, given to me by Shaun Reznik.

⁷³ Alexis-Martin, Waight and Blell, *Nuclear Families*.

⁷⁴ Interview, Reznik.

out to the countryside. And erm it was a nice view of the city, so it was good for kids. We were told to bring handkerchiefs, but we were not told why. Do you know why? So, we went to this exercise and every city had a small military base. A barracks. So, they brought a couple of soldiers to show us [pause]. They would show us these routes and tell us to duck to crawl. And sometimes would bring a helicopter to fly over and we were told to hide in the woods. And that was a bit of fun. An adventure. Soldiers playing with us and everything. But erm [long pause] what happened next. We were told to get these handkerchiefs and soak them in the water. And we were told we had to prepare for nuclear war. A catastrophe. And erm [long pause] they told us to put them on our faces and they threw smoke grenades and told us to walk through and to try not to breathe.

Emily: Was it scary?

Shaun: Well, I was six and told to do that. Of course. The teachers told us our lives were in danger and we had to do it. So, we did. And that was Sparkle. But when I was about seven that's when things got really really dark [long pause]. We would have these dentists checking our teeth, but it was all military. They would just pull out your baby teeth and measure you. They would measure our faces. [pause] they measured and gave us our numbers and I was number four. It was for gas masks. We were told about the atomic missiles. And you need gas masks for them. And duck below the table. They would take us out and throw gas at us while we had the masks. [pause] they used tear gas on us once. [pause] just chucked it at us. I remember one girl who didn't have her mask on properly. She said she was number three, but she was number two. She was crying heavily, and everyone was panicking. [long pause] it erm It wasn't very nice. I remember the teachers yelling at her. [pause] I don't know. They blamed her [pause] it was that mentality. I don't know.⁷⁵

After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, when Czechoslovakia was dissolved into Slovakia and the Czech Republic, Shaun moved to Britain to complete a degree in Political History at Cardiff University and has remained there ever since. Shaun's school, national identity, and birthplace defined his Cold War experience. For Shaun there was not just a fear of being "blown up by nuclear bombs", there was a fear of "the regime" and "getting caught." He recalled how he and his brother were "not allowed" to "say certain things" or "play certain games" and his mother "always kept a close eye on them."⁷⁶ In Shaun's testimony, he clearly found his memories of his time in Sparkle difficult to discuss. He paused often, shuffling through his papers, and apologised frequently. Throughout his narrative, the trauma of his childhood was overt with him frequently pausing and struggling to continue. Near the end of

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

his narrative, he spoke slowly and deliberately to stress how “wrong” it all was.⁷⁷ Despite this, he fondly and nostalgically recalled many other parts of his childhood and “felt happy” to share them. Throughout, Shaun positioned his life story as an “ordinary experience” until his composure was broken while discussing this particularly painful memory.⁷⁸

Shaun recalled how “back then” he was “locked” in an “idea of socialism” and to “overthrow the imperialist swines” but he now finds his childhood “hard to talk about” and it “changed his life.”⁷⁹ At school, he felt that they treated nuclear weapons as “conventional weapons” when they “simply weren’t.” Memories of militaristic routines and “games” using dangerous gas made him feel “scared.” Although this poignant memory was not strictly “British”, Shaun now felt he identified with British identity and “what was happening there affects what happens here.” In 2019 national identity has become more complex and multicultural and it is important historians acknowledge the fluidity of these changing identities.⁸⁰ Furthermore, the “difference in livelihood” between Britain and Czechoslovakia made him “realise” how “militant the regime was.” Shaun’s nuclear anxiety was deeply rooted in his childhood experiences at school and the regime under which he lived. His memories and emotional experience were therefore framed by his life in the Soviet Bloc and his relocation to Britain. For Shaun, nuclear anxiety was exceptionally personal and entrenched in “traumatic” childhood experiences which made the possibility of nuclear war “feel very real every day.”⁸¹

Nuclear anxiety and nuclear emotions were complex and multifaceted emotional responses during the Cold War in Britain. Although many historians have explored nuclear anxiety and nuclear fear, the emotional experience is more complicated than historiography

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Summerfield, ‘Culture and Composure’, 65.

⁷⁹ Interview, Reznik.

⁸⁰ Mandler, ‘National Identity’ 272.

⁸¹ Interview, Reznik.

has previously considered. Nuclear anxiety formed the many *nuclear emotions* that British civilians experienced throughout the period. While anxiety was an important aspect of the emotional landscape, other emotions were palpable in the interviews. In the testimony explored in this section, feelings of sadness, nostalgia, and happiness were explicitly expressed. Furthermore, while experiences of nuclear anxiety were often attributed to a collective memory or rooted in shared culture, politics, or identities, it was a highly personal experience to each civilian in Cold War Britain.

While looking at emotional trends across all the interviewees who participated, this research concludes that ordinary people in Britain experienced a tapestry of nuclear emotions, which was largely influenced by anxiety. These multiple nuclear emotions are all interwoven and intermingle to form the emotional landscape of Cold War Britain. Nuclear anxiety is entwined in the centre of this. However, the reasons *why* each individual experienced it and had various intensity differed from person to person. While this thesis contributes to the expanding historiographical field of the emotional history of the Cold War, it contests current literature for being too simplistic.⁸² Emotions are exceptionally complex, personal, and individual experiences.⁸³ Through examining the experiences of nuclear emotions in Britain using an understanding of the collective experience and cultural memory, the emotional history of Cold War Britain and its nuclear weapons programme can be understood.⁸⁴ Individual emotions must be recognised as the driving force behind this, as well as the interplay between individual emotions and the collective standards of the nation or emotional community.

⁸² Hughes, 'Nuclear Culture,' 504.

⁸³ Biess, 'Nuclear Angst,' 218; Eaton, 'Nuclear anxiety', 67; Schatz and Fiske, 'International Reactions', 14.

⁸⁴ Peltonen, 'Clues, Margins', 347.

Section III: Feelings about nuclear weapons 2016-2019: Donald Trump, Brexit, and the Cold War

As this thesis has demonstrated, experiences and emotions of the Cold War were anchored within present-centeredness. Interviewees would often cite contemporary events to frame their memories or provide a comparison or reference of understanding to me. As previously explored, interviewees drew upon public versions of the aspects of their lives they are talking about, using cultural memory and collective identities, to construct their own particular personal accounts.⁸⁵ Langhamer identified a complex interplay of past experience, present feeling, and future thinking in individual experiences of the Cold War.⁸⁶ Grant suggests that as the Cold War was a period that was difficult to remember, contemporary influences shaped and warped how interviewees constructed their memories.⁸⁷ These modern experiences may be used to refer to the past as a point of comparison, demonstrating the unpredictability of emotions as a past or contemporary feeling.⁸⁸

Furthermore, the interviewee's present-day sense of self and identity influenced their recall. Memories of specific events are refracted through layer upon layer of subsequent experience and through the influence of dominant ideology.⁸⁹ As Douthwaite and Jones demonstrate, those who remember the Cold War, exercise an element of 'present-centeredness' in the interview, framing their memories of the Cold War within contemporary nuclear anxieties.⁹⁰ Jones found that interviewees asked about the Gulf War, interpreted the period through the context of the Cold War. Individuals drew upon memories of the Second World War, the Cold War, and broader shifts in contemporary British society and politics to compose

⁸⁵ Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure', 68.

⁸⁶ Langhamer, 'Mass Observing' 208-209.

⁸⁷ Grant, 'Making sense', 243.

⁸⁸ Samuel and Thompson, *Myths We Live By*.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 66.

⁹⁰ Douthwaite, 'Voices', 8; Jones, 'Cold War Fears', 253.

their narratives.⁹¹ As previously explored, memories about Britain in the Cold War were framed by pre-existing popular memories of Britain's mythic past and experience of conflict.⁹² The memories that interviewees shared about the Cold War remain contested, as individual experience contributed to, and is moulded by, collective interpretation and the active process of remembrance of the past is affected by the present.⁹³ This section suggests that observers' responses about the Cold War era were interpreted in light of contemporary events which took place between 2016 and 2019 and builds upon pre-existing assumptions about annihilation and war. The present-centeredness of interviewees is an important lens of analysis when considering the experience of nuclear emotions and the construction of memory.

Steve Haycock reflected on feelings of nuclear anxiety and commented that he felt that emotions of nuclear anxiety only existed in the Cold War. He situated his nuclear anxiety in both the past and the present. By examining how he achieved this, the modes of co-production of the past and the present are revealed:

One advantage I think the Cold War period had over the present day is that people actually *had* a real emotional response to nuclear weapons. Now, most people don't give them a second thought. But in reality, the risks now are much greater, because of proliferation, especially India, Pakistan and North Korea, and the threat of nuclear terrorism.⁹⁴

Steve commented that people "actually had a real emotional response" to nuclear weapons in the Cold War, concluding that people do not anymore (in 2018). He commented that he believed that people should be more worried, as the risks "are much greater." When situating his own nuclear anxieties, he placed himself as an exception, as one who *does* experience nuclear anxiety today *as well as* in the Cold War. He made specific references to nuclear threats in the contemporary climate, such as the development of nuclear weapons by India, Pakistan, and

⁹¹ Jones, 'Cold War Fears', 258.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁹⁴ Interview, Haycock.

North Korea and uses this reflection as a way to discuss his personal childhood fears of air raid sirens. Steve actively reflected upon contemporary anxieties of nuclear war throughout the interview, framing his past-self through his sense of present-self.

An awareness of how the present-day informed past nuclear anxieties was a common topic of discussion in the interviews and interviewees would often reflect on contemporary events unprompted. I asked Jack Kelly if he ever felt there was a nuclear threat during the Cold War, and he responded: “Yeah, I- I didn’t feel very threatened back then but when you looked back at it now and think back on it now you think it was a real threat, but I didn’t really perceive that.”⁹⁵ Analysing Jack’s choice of vocabulary seems to imply that his present-day awareness of the Cold War has led to him “feeling threatened.” While he did not feel anxious “particularly at the time” because “he had other things to worry about”, he admitted near the end of the interview that when he “looks back” he can “see how close we got to nuclear war.”⁹⁶

Likewise, Mike Dalton situated his past nuclear anxieties within his contemporary worries:

Emily: How often would you say that you thought about nuclear weapons during the Cold War?

Mike: Erm, not much. I mean- I mean it would always be there, but I wouldn’t dwell over it so not much. But nowadays? [pause] Erm I don’t know really. [pauses] I suppose because I’ve lived through it all me life, I suppose it doesn’t scare me as much as I think it would scare someone in their teens or twenties. Erm cos you know it never happened in my time, but now? [pauses] I mean I guess if there was ever gonna be a time, it would be more likely now than it would have been then.⁹⁷

Mike commented that because nuclear weapons were “always there”, he didn’t “dwell on” them during the Cold War, however, he rooted these feelings within his emotional past and vice versa. Mike, unprompted, reflects that nuclear war is more likely to happen now than during the Cold War. He expresses explicit anxiety over this later in the interview stating that “when

⁹⁵ Interview, Kelly.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Interview, Dalton.

it happens, we will all be gone” and “there is nothing we can do.”⁹⁸ Mike constructs his past self and emotional responses through his present self and feelings. In this way, nuclear anxiety is co-produced in the past and the present. Mike wonders about the prospect of nuclear war and compares his position now to his memories, each explicitly informing one another.

Throughout the interviews, numerous contemporary or recent events informed and shaped the content of the interviews. As discussed in chapter one, Scottish interviewees reflected on the Scottish referendum of 2014. The nuclear question raised by this referendum continued to haunt civilians in Scotland in 2018, as Alexander said to me: “It won’t be long until you have your nukes back on your land.” In 2016, Donald Trump (of the Republican Party) was elected the President of the United States. Under his term, America has stepped up its nuclear weapons programme and withdrawn from the INF. Furthermore, the President has often discussed nuclear weapons, describing the American programme as in ‘tip-top’ shape in 2019 and often threatening to press the nuclear button against North Korea over Twitter.⁹⁹ When reflecting upon the 1980s, and Reagan in particular, Jack Kelly compared the two American Presidents, commenting that “Trump styles himself on Reagan” and that “he’s almost a dictator.” Jack also reflects on the possibility of a second Cold War, concluding that “we will never understand the likes of China or North Korea or Russia or Donald Trump who is supposed to be our greatest ally.”¹⁰⁰ Conversely, Mike Dalton when reflecting on this same period commented that he didn’t think “Reagan was as bad as Trump” and nuclear war “is

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ ‘Donald Trump boasts US nuclear weapons are in ‘tip-top shape’ in thinly-veiled threat to Iran’, *The Sun*, 21 September 2019, accessed October 2020, <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/9974575/donald-trump-boasts-nukes-iran-threat/>; ‘Donald Trump boasts that his nuclear button is bigger than Kim Jong-un’s’, *The Guardian*, 3 January 2018, accessed October 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jan/03/donald-trump-boasts-nuclear-button-bigger-kim-jong-un>; ‘Trump suggests ‘nuking hurricanes’ to stop them hitting America – report’, *The Guardian*, 26 August 2019, accessed October 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/aug/26/donald-trump-suggests-nuking-hurricanes-to-stop-them-hitting-america-report>

¹⁰⁰ Interview, Kelly.

more likely to happen now than then” because “of people like him.”¹⁰¹ Often, interviewees would reflect on the possibility of a second Cold War or Donald Trump unprompted.

While discussing his memories of *Protect and Survive*, Chris Bradbury began to talk about how “unpredictable” Donald Trump was and how he thought he was a “madman.” The link between these two subjects was a feeling of frustration as Chris discussed his “frustration” that people “didn’t realise” how futile nuclear war would be, even when *Protect and Survive* was published. This same “frustration” applied to his feelings about Donald Trump and his “worries” about how “we are being held ransom by nuclear weapons again.”¹⁰² Towards the end of her interview, Cheryl Lincoln stated outright that she was “more worried about nuclear war now” than during the Cold War. I asked her why and she responded:

Yes. I mean not actively worried, you know, but I do think about it. That stupid man Donald Trump will react quickly. Because he does, I’m sure he reacts before he thinks. Frightens me to death he does [*laughs*] I mean I know he’s not aiming to hurt us, but I just think he will he won’t try to make peace, he will just say- We’re bigger than you-¹⁰³

Donald Trump and his nuclear weapons rhetoric came up in almost every single interview unprompted. In all contexts, it was either presented through humour or with explicit uncertainty or nervousness. In this way, the American President at the time of the interview and his dialogue on nuclear weapons shaped the content of the interviews. Had they been conducted before 2016, the content may well be different.¹⁰⁴

Alongside fears surrounding Donald Trump, Kim Jong-un, the Chairman of North Korea, was also a topic of anxiety for many of the interviewees. North Korea has embarked on a nuclear weapons programme since 2006 but in 2016 it claimed to have developed hydrogen

¹⁰¹ Interview, Dalton.

¹⁰² Interview, Bradbury.

¹⁰³ Interview, Lincoln.

¹⁰⁴ Stephan Frühling and Andrew O’Neil, ‘Nuclear weapons and alliance institutions in the era of President Trump’, *Contemporary Security Policy* 38(1) (2017): 47-53.

weapons and has stepped up the expansion of its nuclear weapons.¹⁰⁵ This combined with fears of a Second Cold War and increasing nuclear weapons development in Russia, America, China, and Iran has led to a re-emergence of nuclear anxiety for many ordinary people in Britain. William and Joyce Stonewell, when asked if they had ever discussed nuclear war together in the Cold War, moved into discussing North Korea unprompted:

Joyce: Well, I guess having said that you know we have talked about North Korea, haven't we? And erm its proximity to Japan and in fact, one of the kids is gonna go to Japan erm that- that- has created some [*William – yeah, some general anxieties*] some discussed about it but not every day-

William: Yeah, yeah and in fact, one of my friends is going to South Korea soon for career training so that- that [*Joyce – that will be interesting*]. I'm not sure if I would do that. You know if someone gave me a free ticket to South Korea now, I'm not sure if I would go. Although apparently the rest of the world is more paranoid than the South Koreans, they're just getting on with their lives cos its next door- so what else can you- Its 30 miles away from the border so what can you do? You just have to carry on really and erm hope nothing happens really but erm yeah, we would be worried to go cos there would definitely be one of the worst areas to be hit.¹⁰⁶

Joyce firstly reflects on the prospect of her child going to Japan in the future, and how that has prompted discussion about nuclear war. William confirms that they were experiencing “general anxieties” due to the proximity of North Korea to Japan. William then supports this by stating that he “wouldn't accept a free ticket” to South Korea because it's a likely target in a nuclear war. William and Joyce project their anxieties of nuclear war in the form of concern for their relatives and friends. Instead of reflecting upon whether or not they had discussed nuclear weapons in the Cold War as they were asked, they reflected upon contemporary anxieties, bringing current affairs and worries into a conversation about their past selves.

Cheryl Lincoln also demonstrated a similar sense of present-centred nuclear anxiety about North Korea. I ask Cheryl whether or not she worried about nuclear war, and she instead discussed her current feelings about it:

¹⁰⁵ Tim Beal, *North Korea: The struggle against American power* (London: Pluto Press, 2005).

¹⁰⁶ Interview, Stonewell.

I'm always worried about it. I still am. Not like desperately, you know. But I think about it. I mean the other day when they were going on about Korea and China. I thought hang on – I hope they're not gonna start something because these days, the world is very small isn't it [*laughs*] If you know what I mean. They can get here as quick as they could get to anywhere else.¹⁰⁷

When asked about nuclear anxiety in the past, Cheryl began to use her contemporary worries to frame her memories. She described how she was and *is* worried about nuclear war, bringing her nuclear anxieties into the present and projecting them onto her past self.

Cheryl also frequently used her memories of the Second World War to frame experiences of the Cold War. She discusses how she thought of nuclear war while watching the snooker:

Cheryl: [*long pause*] It's funny, I was watching the snooker on here and there's a man playing, he was very good, and his name is [*pauses*] Oh. I've forgotten. Oh yes, his name was Kim Jong-Young. And I- But now I can't remember. I'm getting the two of them mixed up. [*pauses*]

Researcher: Oh, and that made you think of nuclear war?

Cheryl: Yes! Yes. It does. It makes you think about it. Anything makes you think about it. Every time- Any time you hear anything you think "Oh god, not another war, please." [*laughs nervously*] But things like rationing and that wouldn't bother me, we've coped with that. But [*pauses*] having seen the damage on television and that, seeing the damage of what the bombs did on Hiroshima and that you know. There's no hiding from it is there? The shelters wouldn't do any good.¹⁰⁸

Cheryl recalls how when she heard a name similar to Kim Jong-un, it evoked an emotional response for her. Nuclear emotions are explicitly constructed using the past and present in this dialogue. Firstly, Cheryl discusses how watching the snooker caused her a feeling of nuclear anxiety in the present. She then uses this as a way into a discussion about her memories of Hiroshima and how she felt at the time. Finally, she reflects on shelters, referring to World War Two Anderson Shelters, utilising her experiences and memories from the Second World War to conclude her assessment. Cheryl roots her Cold War nuclear anxieties within her memories of the Second World War, including rationing and shelters, *and* her present nuclear anxiety from watching the snooker. This particular example showcases how interviewees constructed

¹⁰⁷ Interview, Lincoln.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

their narratives of the Cold War using pre-existing and deeply embedded memories about the Second World War and contemporary shifts in society and culture.¹⁰⁹

This increase of concern over nuclear war and nuclear weapons in 2016-2019 is represented in Figure 5.3. The graph reflects Google trends over time between 2015 and 2021. The numbers represent search interest relative to the highest point on the chart for the given region and time. A value of 100 is the peak popularity for the term. As shown, in April 2017, the term ‘nuclear war’ met a score of 100, peaking again to 64 in April 2018. This demonstrates the heightened concern over the possibility of nuclear war at the time the interviews took place.

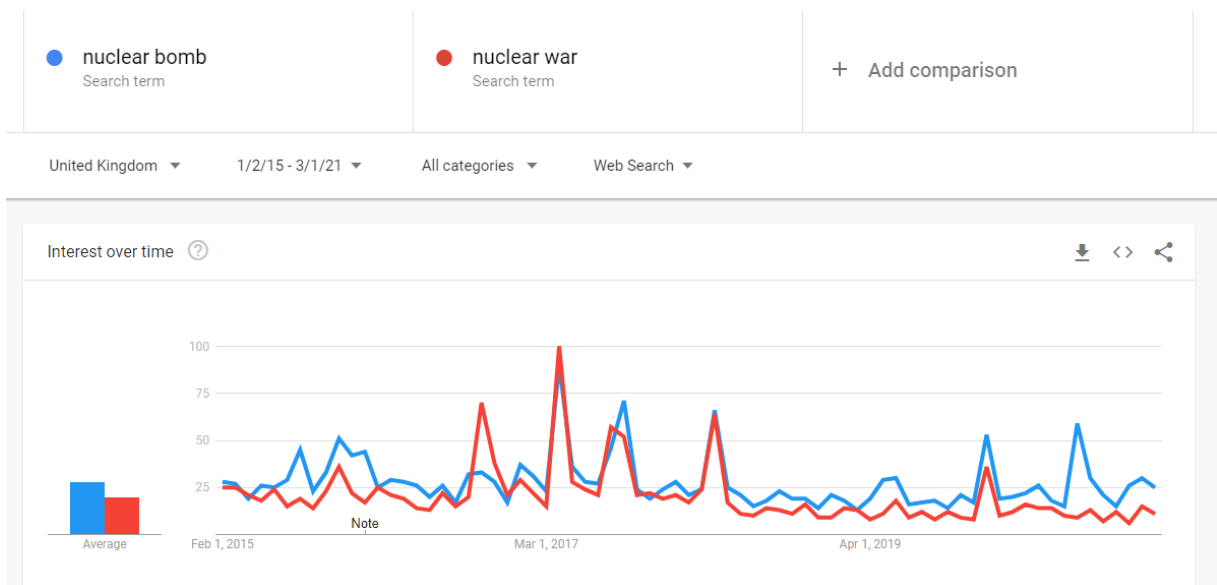


Figure 5.3 Google Interest, trend over time 1/2/2015 – 03/01/2021 [created March 2021]

In 2016, Britain held a referendum which would decide its future within the EU. The referendum asked whether the UK should withdraw from the Union and 51.9% of voters opted to leave. Subsequently, this has become known as ‘Brexit’. Brexit has notoriously divided Britain and has appeared in local and national news almost every day since the vote. The deadline for the UK to leave the EU was originally 29 March 2019, but it was extended

¹⁰⁹ Jones, ‘Cold War Fears’, 258.

numerous times, finally coming to fruition in 31 January 2020.¹¹⁰ Although Brexit appears to have no apparent or obvious connections to nuclear weapons or nuclear anxiety, the referendum was brought up in testimony.

Brexit often became a point of comparison or a way to help interviewees describe what the Cold War was like. Roger Leech, for example, commented that nuclear weapons “were on the news every day, a bit like Brexit.”¹¹¹ Chris Bradbury commented that Brexit was a “direct point of comparison” to the Cold War, stating that it has “become more acceptable to take a hard-line” and there is a lack of “personal safety” due to the political turmoil, “just like it was in the Cold War.”¹¹² Most significantly, it became a comparison of uncertainty. Roger Leech asked me if I “felt uncertain about Brexit.” When I responded with “Yes”, Roger continued: “Well that’s what the Cold War was like. We didn’t know what was going to happen tomorrow. It seems a bit silly to compare leaving the EU with being blown up but [laughs] I guess it just feels similar.”¹¹³ Similarly, Shaun Reznik recalled feeling “uncertain” and “scared” during the Cold War but commented he “felt more uncertain” about the future “with Brexit happening.”¹¹⁴ In this way, the *uncertainty* of Brexit became comparable to the uncertainty of the possibility of nuclear war.

The current climate of 2016-2019 shaped the content of the interviews, the emotions expressed, and the ways people chose to discuss the British Cold War and nuclear weapons. Peter Cattigan summarised his feelings about this very eloquently: “There were moments I was worried nuclear war was going to happen but not all of the time. After Cuba, I never really thought it was going to happen. But now. I am much less certain about our future now. It has become very unpredictable. There are unpredictable countries like Iran and China. And terrorist

¹¹⁰ Clarke, *Brexit*.

¹¹¹ Interview, Leech.

¹¹² Interview, Bradbury.

¹¹³ Interview, Leech.

¹¹⁴ Interview, Reznik.

organisations could have them [nuclear weapons]. It's all very worrying. But with Brexit? I feel more uncertain about the future now. More than ever.”¹¹⁵ These memories of the Cold War, told in parallel to present nuclear anxieties provide a “window” into the “making and remaking of individual and collective consciousness, in which both fact and fantasy, past and present” has a part in forming it.¹¹⁶

Arguably this can also be correlated with current nuclear anxieties in historiography, revealing how present-centred shapes *how* the Cold War is discussed academically. This makes my position and perspective unique, having been born in 1993, outside the Cold War, and therefore having no direct memories of the period at all. According to Google Ngram, the term ‘nuclear anxiety’ appears most frequently in texts during the mid-1980s and then drops off just before the 1990s, as the Cold War reaches its climax and ends abruptly with the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union two years later (Figure 5.4). Notably, after the year 2000, the term also sees a sharp increase in use.¹¹⁷ Nuclear anxiety is arguably not just something written about, it is *experienced* in historical research.

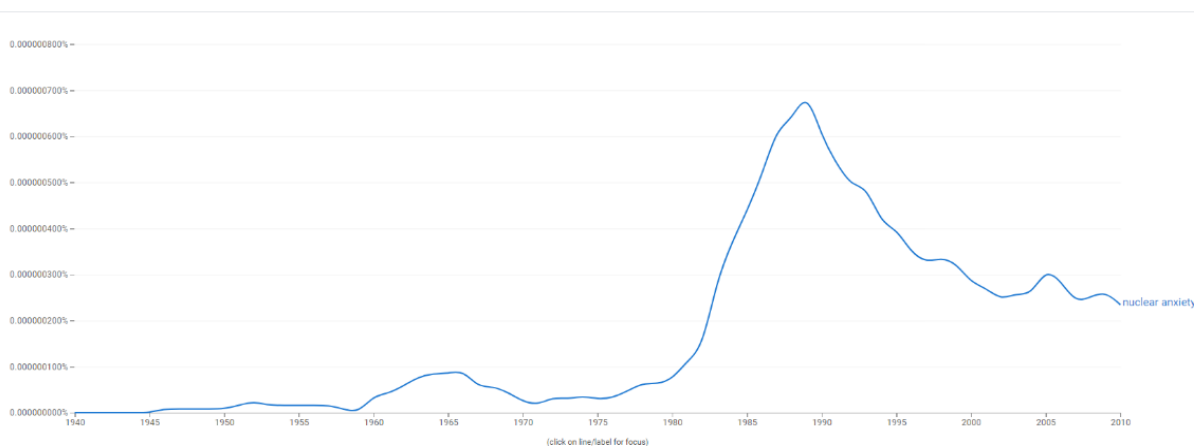


Figure 5.4 Google Ngram search for the term ‘nuclear anxiety’ [created February 2021]

¹¹⁵ Interview, Cattigan.

¹¹⁶ Samuel and Thompson, *Myths We Live By*, 21.

¹¹⁷ It should be noted that of course, the frequency of this word in the context of all texts analysed by Google Ngram results in a very low percentage (less than 0.1%) overall.

As historian Peggy Rosenthal reflects, she could not view Hiroshima without “scholarly detachment.” She continues:

Practically everyone in any academic field who has studied some aspect of the nuclear weapons phenomenon has wrestled with the problem of maintaining scholarly objectivity because no one pursues such a project for ‘merely academic’ reasons. Pondering anything about nuclear weapons day after day, year after year is a strain. People don’t do it without the motivation of a deep concern about this phenomenon.¹¹⁸

This is particularly evident in historiography during the 1980s and the increased international tensions that occurred in this period. Many historians, politicians, and strategists published on the ‘moral’ use of nuclear bombs, attempting to “free us from their danger.”¹¹⁹

Several historians have also used their own experience of nuclear anxiety to frame their conceptions of the term. For example, William Perry opens his book with a ‘nuclear nightmare’ he had. He describes his text as a recollection of his “nuclear fear” which he hopes will spur the reader to “take action” against nuclear weaponry.¹²⁰ Attempting to measure and understand nuclear anxiety in others also appears to affect the researchers own nuclear anxiety. Brown, in her innovative text *Plutopia*, frequently reflects on her own experiences and worries as she interviews others about the plutonium mining cities in America and the Soviet Union, piecing together anxiously affective interviews with her own (influenced) imaginations:

I embarked on this project because I wanted to learn about the pioneers of the nuclear security state. I considered the citizens of plutopia, on the frontier of the nuclear arms race, to be the cultural founders of the early twenty-first century [...]. In the course of writing this book, however, I came to know people who could not share a meal with me because of medical dietary restrictions. I met individuals who lifted their shirts to show me the cross-hatching of scars left from multiple surgeries. Watching these courageous people who insisted on asking questions, sought their

¹¹⁸ Rosenthal, ‘Nuclear Mushroom’, 64.

¹¹⁹ Geoffrey Goodwin, *Ethics and Nuclear Deterrence* (London: Croom Helm, 1982); Gregory Kavka, *Moral Paradoxes of Nuclear Deterrence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

¹²⁰ William Perry, *My Journey at the Nuclear Brink* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), xiii, 192-197. Another notable historian who uses his own experience to shape his conceptions of nuclear anxiety is Paul Boyer: Boyer, *Bombs Early Light*, xvii.

own answers, and spoke even when their supervisors attempted to silence them, I came to visualize a different kind of nuclear pioneer.¹²¹

Carol Cohn reports a similar experience. During her research on American defence intellectuals and their language, Cohn found she began ‘speaking and thinking’ as they did, and her “reality slipped away.” As she “spoke the language” she could “no longer hear it” and found it “difficult to get out” and restore her previous way of thinking.¹²²

Finally, Hunt has noted that by labelling responses as ‘fear’ or ‘anxiety’ we “reveal our own normative position.”¹²³ Arguably, the experience of nuclear anxiety even shaped the ways historians reflect upon the Cold War. A historical subject who experienced nuclear anxiety may be researched by a historian. Subsequently, nuclear anxieties are channelled into the historian, who then writes on the matter. This of course can circle back round, resulting in renewed nuclear anxieties for the public readership. Nuclear anxiety and nuclear emotions are almost always a subjective term, undetachable from a researcher’s own experiences and comprehension of emotions. Throughout this thesis I have analysed and assessed the emotions of numerous interviewees. In stating their emotive states, I reveal my own perceptions of what particular emotions are and what they mean. In this way, emotions research entangles the historian as much as the subjects researched.¹²⁴

Returning to the interviews, the subjectivity of emotions, the individual sense of self, and production of the past and the present emerge in the testimony. This reveals how memories of the Cold War are constructed and framed by past and present experiences, as well as contemporary ideology and cultural memory. Many interviewees, particularly those in the peace movement, would encourage me to participate in their work or attend their local events.

¹²¹ Brown, *Plutopia*, 338.

¹²² Cohn, ‘Sex and Death’, 712-713.

¹²³ Alan Hunt, ‘Anxiety and Social Explanation: Some Anxieties about Anxiety’, *Journal of Social History* 32(3) (1999): 510.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

For these individuals, the Cold War and the threat of nuclear war remained an important and daily issue. These civilians would hand me flyers to upcoming protests, stickers to display, or invite me along to talks. In this way, while we spent most of our time discussing the *past*, they would raise their very present anxieties with me and invited me to join them (Figure 5.5). While

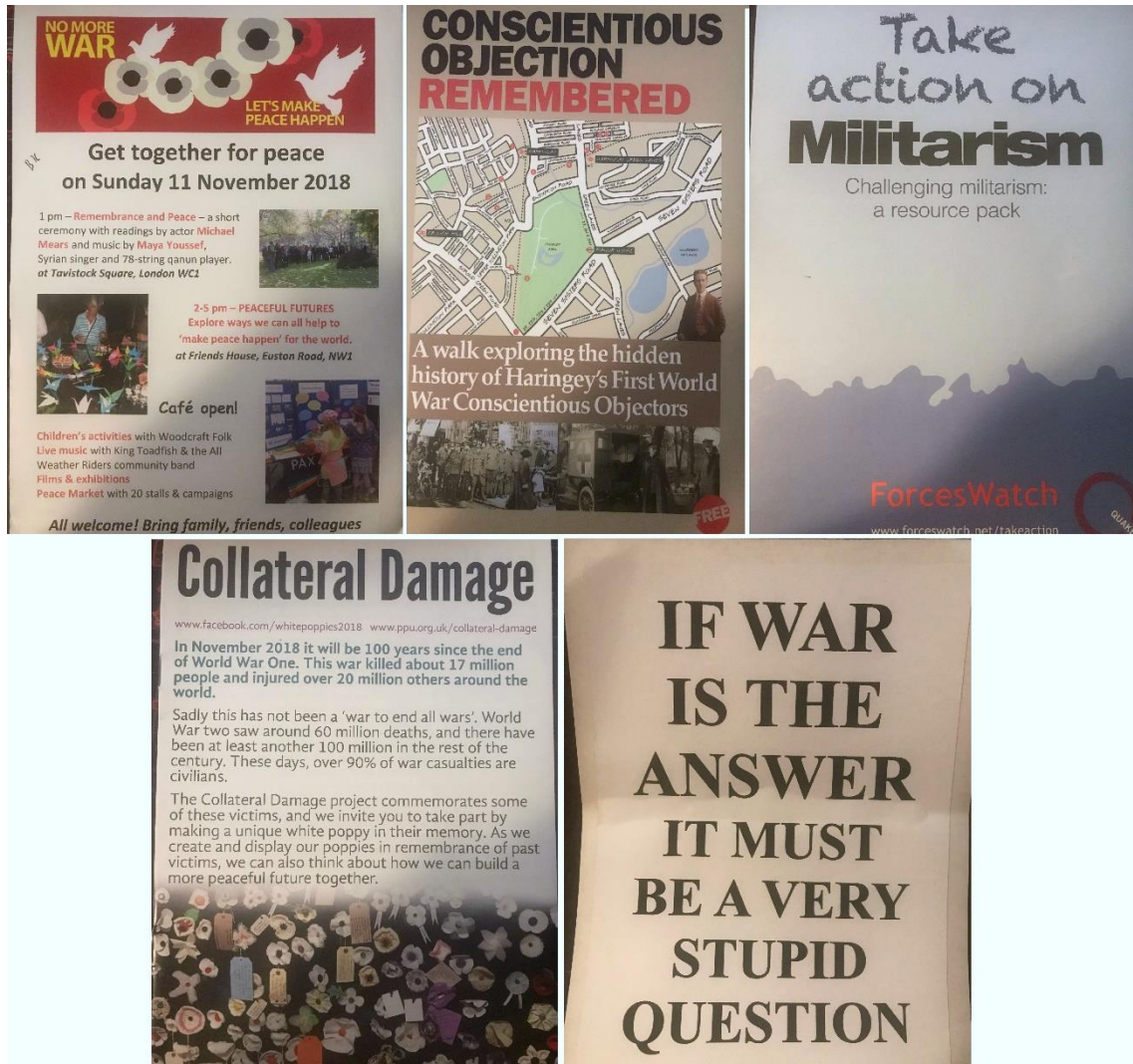


Figure 5.5 Flyers and leaflets given to me by interviewees.

most interviewees felt that the Cold War had ended (although a Second Cold War may begin), for those in the peace movement, it had never ended. This reveals the complex juxtaposition of the past and the present within oral history testimony. This point is eloquently put by George Branco, a member of CND, who asked me the title of my thesis. When I told him, he sighed and commented that “historians are so obsessed with dates and timelines. So much is still

happening. So much happened before. Historians trap themselves within the dates they set.”¹²⁵ Within these narratives, the interviewee’s sense of past and present was difficult to uncover.¹²⁶ At the end of the interview with Jodie Winston, she asked if she could add something to the end of the recording. I agreed and she said: “Everyone should do something for peace and be aware of what is happening. And vote Jeremy Corbyn. Can I say that? Can you put that in?”¹²⁷ This testimony reveals that the memory of the Cold War was complex and there was not a single monolithic ‘Cold War’ experience across the interviewees.

In the late 1980s, the Cold War drew to a close. Under the more democratic regime of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union and the signing of disarmament and testing limitation treaties with America, the Cold War started to thaw. In 1989, the Berlin Wall which had separated East and West Berlin and become a symbol of the Iron Curtain separating Europe was pulled down. Finally, in 1991, the Soviet Union was dissolved, and the Cold War finally ended after over forty-five years of international tension. This became culturally known as a period of joy and hope for the future by some interviewees. Alice Fallon recalled crying with “tears of joy” when the Berlin Wall was brought down as she had briefly worked and lived in Germany, with many of her friends living there.¹²⁸ Rosie Stanford reflected that she felt “happy” when the wall was brought down, but for her and her women’s peace movement it also brought “uncertainty.” When the wall came down it was a “crisis for her” as the “other side” no longer existed, and she wanted to “make links” with people to “break down the stereotype of the enemy” and “bring people together.”¹²⁹

Conversely, her husband, Peter Stanford, recalled feeling “worried” when the wall came down as “Germany was reuniting” and he was “anxious” about its future. Peter’s memories of

¹²⁵ Interview with Yorke, Branco, and Marking.

¹²⁶ Grant, ‘Making sense’, 231.

¹²⁷ Interview, Winston.

¹²⁸ Interview, Fallon.

¹²⁹ Interview, Stanford.

Germany in the Second World War shaped his feelings about the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and brought with it a sense of “anxiety for the future.”¹³⁰ William Stonewell recalled feeling “excited” about the fall of the wall, and a “hope” that Russia would “become like America” but “obviously it didn’t end up that way.” He concluded his memory by saying that “people weren’t sure what tomorrow would bring” but “it would be different to how it had been.”¹³¹

Mike Dalton, who was only nineteen by this time, recalled:

Erm, it was quite exciting but, I wasn’t studying history then, but I was very interested in history. And I knew how up until now was important. But it was more like what was gonna happen next? You know where do we go from here? It’s been such a status quo for 40 years; it was quite an exciting time. But no one knew what was going to happen. It was exciting but it was worrying too in a way.¹³²

As the Cold War came to an end, Mike recalled conflicting feelings of excitement and uncertainty. The conflict had come to define generations of politics and the “uncertainty of what tomorrow would be like” continued to manifest in the background of ordinary lives. In this way, while the Cold War had ended the presence of nuclear weapons and feelings of nuclear anxiety persisted in the British consciousness.

This section has suggested that the memory of the Cold War was complex and there was not a single linear ‘Cold War experience’ within Britain. Nuclear anxiety, nuclear emotions, and Cold War experience were rooted within the present-centeredness of the interviewees, shaped by tensions and events between 2015-2019. This demonstrates the challenges of how we can understand the emotional experience and memory of the Cold War through oral history. As Summerfield notes, there is no comfortable resolution to this dilemma. Dominant cultural memories shape and ‘fill the gaps’ of memories as individuals use public accounts and contemporary identities to compose their memories.¹³³ These examples expose

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Interview, Stonewell.

¹³² Interview, Dalton.

¹³³ Summerfield, ‘Culture and Composure’, 69; Grant, ‘Making sense’, 231.

the importance of considering the context of the interview when examining the emotions and experiences of individuals.¹³⁴ Throughout the thesis, the testimony has revealed that nuclear anxiety intermingled with many nuclear emotions. It has also uncovered the dominance of nuclear anxiety within the emotional landscape of the lived experience of the Cold War. However, the *context* of the interviews likely influenced these emotional expressions as many interviewees reflected upon their contemporary uncertainties. This reveals the difficulty with historicising emotions and nuclear anxieties and suggests the importance of present-centeredness in historical understandings of the period.

Chapter conclusion

This thesis has argued throughout that nuclear anxiety, and nuclear emotions, were socially experienced by ordinary people in Cold War Britain, shaped by politics, national identity, family, culture, emotional standards, and pre-existing, deeply rooted assumptions and imaginaries. To understand nuclear emotions and more deeply uncover the experience of ordinary life in the Cold War, these emotions must be historicised and understood within the context of the interview and the lives of individual civilians. This chapter has attempted to uncover just that and demonstrate the meanings, stories, and experiences that can be uncovered by taking an individualised approach to the Cold War.

I have argued that the experience of nuclear anxiety, and nuclear emotions, was highly individualised by the person recalling it. Specific personal experiences or circumstances shaped how the Cold War was recalled and their own experience of nuclear anxiety as an emotion. This chapter has shown how interviewees sense of self entered the interview space and framed the ways memories were discussed. Likewise, my own sense of self as the interviewer altered

¹³⁴ Jones, 'Cold War Fears', 259.

the content of the interviews. As explored in chapter one, my identity as “British” resulted in specific conversations with interviewees who defined themselves as Scottish. My age, gender, and assumptions about my research also shaped the testimony. My interviewees asked *me* questions, seeking to build rapport and learn more about the researcher questioning them about their lives. These contexts are important to understanding *why* certain conversations take place and how memory and emotion are revealed, or “performed”, in the interview setting.¹³⁵

As noted throughout, this thesis is concerned with the events, moments, and experiences which were deemed meaningful to the interviewees. Through an analysis of emotion and considering the nuclearity of the era, *why* these memories were meaningful can be understood. The accounts and testimony gathered for this research have demonstrated the truth of the experience of the British Cold War – or, at least, as true as the narrator sees it. Likewise, pauses, omissions, and forgetfulness can reveal “the most precious information” in “what they choose to hide, rather than what they tell” and what moments *lacked* meaning to their lives.¹³⁶ Dramatized and “performative” accounts of memory also tell us much about what interviewees deemed as important in their lives, values, and identities.¹³⁷ I have therefore tried to excavate nuclear anxiety, and nuclear emotions, through the life histories of civilians. These life histories are important and can be viewed, as Samuel and Thompson suggest, as “shaped accounts in which some incidents are dramatized, others contextualised” and others “passed over in silence, through a process of narrative shaping in which both conscious and unconscious, myth and reality, play significant parts.”¹³⁸

Throughout the interviews, and within the context of the interview, nuclear anxiety was presented as both a personal and a collective emotion, shared and contextualised within the

¹³⁵ Summerfield, ‘Concluding Thoughts’, 346, 351.

¹³⁶ Portelli, ‘Oral History’, 38.

¹³⁷ Stephens, ‘Remembered selves’, 82.

¹³⁸ Samuel and Thompson, ‘Introduction’ in Samuel and Thompson *Myths We Live By*, 5.

interview. Nuclear anxiety as an emotional experience was societal and it tapped into broader British nuclear culture and popular imaginaries.¹³⁹ This formed the nuclear emotional landscape of the period 1945-1989.¹⁴⁰ At the same time, many interviewees framed their experiences as highly personal. Through examining case studies of individuals and the reasons and contexts for their experiences of nuclear anxiety, it can be argued that current historiographical understandings of the emotional history of the bomb remain limited. Echoing Hughes' argument about current scholarship on British nuclear culture, our historical understanding of nuclear emotions remains "too general, too passive, too monolithic" and "too simplistic."¹⁴¹ Individual emotions must be recognised as the driving force behind broader emotional norms and collective experience, as well as the interplay between individual emotions and the collective emotions of the nation or community.

I have also demonstrated how the content of the interview was co-produced by past memories, present contexts, and future thoughts. The international tension and the re-emergence of nuclear anxiety in Britain in 2016-2019 shaped the content, and likely the emotional narrative, shared in the interviews. Oral history and emotions are exceptionally subjective and complex. Had this project taken place ten years from now, or five years into the past, the content of the testimonies may well have been exceptionally different. Present-day nuclear anxieties and the re-emergence of nuclear culture fed into the memories of individuals and allowed them to compare their past and present feelings and selves.¹⁴² I have argued that different types of memories reveal different meanings, such as interviewees born after the Second World War using it to contextualise their memory or citing memories that do not belong to them.¹⁴³ This thesis has supported the extensive developing field of the emotional history of

¹³⁹ Hogg, 'The family', 541; Grant, 'Making sense', 237.

¹⁴⁰ Hogg, 'The family', 549.

¹⁴¹ Hughes, 'Nuclear Culture,' 504.

¹⁴² Jones, 'Ending Cold War Fears', 266.

¹⁴³ Douthwaite, 'Voices', 281.

the atomic bomb, demonstrating that indeed, ordinary people in Britain did experience feelings of nuclear anxiety. I have developed the arguments made by Hogg and Grant, demonstrating how nuclearity, embedded mindsets, and cultural memory shaped and influenced the experience of the Cold War.¹⁴⁴ This thesis also supports the findings of Douthwaite and Langhamer, who have started important work beginning the excavation of the emotional history of the British Cold War.¹⁴⁵ However, I argue that nuclear emotions are substantially more complex than scholarship has previously attributed. The exceptionally personal experiences must be acknowledged and understood to truly map the emotional nuclearity of the period. Only through the life stories of individuals can we understand the impact the nuclear bomb and the Cold War had on people's identities, sense of selves, relationships, and memories.

¹⁴⁴ Hogg, 'The family', 541; Grant, 'Making sense', 237.

¹⁴⁵ Douthwaite, 'Voices'; Langhamer, 'Mass Observing'.

Conclusion

Redefining nuclear anxiety

“I did experience nuclear anxiety, as you call it. Definitely. I mean not every second of everyday sort of thing. I didn’t live in complete fear or anything. But sometimes it would just pop into my head. And I would just think; we might all be blown up in a nuclear war tomorrow.”

- Interview with Joyce Stonewell, 2018.

By adopting a methodological approach informed by the ‘emotional turn’ and recent research on the Cold War, this project set out to address the deficiency of emotional scholarship amid the rapidly expanding historiography on the Cold War and British nuclear culture. This thesis complicates scholarly understandings and expectations about civilian experiences of the British Cold War between 1945 and 1989 and demonstrates how historians can understand more deeply the experience of postwar Britain and how civilians navigated the ‘nuclear age’. Contributing to the strides Langhamer, Douthwaite, and Grant have made in our understanding of the emotional history of the Cold War, this thesis uses the voices of civilians to demonstrate the fluidity, complexity, and usefulness of emotions as a lens of analysis.¹ It explores how the emotional landscape of Britain was shaped and shaped by, diverse and varying experiences of civilians in postwar Britain. Through an analysis of thirty-eight oral history interviews with forty-five individuals, alongside archival sources, anti-nuclear memorabilia, local and national press articles, and cultural mediums, I argue that nuclear anxiety was an important aspect of lived experience in postwar Britain. Both remembered experience and geography are central to understanding this conceptualisation.

As this thesis began with the words of an interviewee, it seems only fitting to end in the same manner. I started with a reflection on Lifton’s ‘psychic numbing’ and Boyer’s ‘nuclear consciousness.’ I argued that these theories did not satisfactorily explain the emotional experience of the British Cold War. As Joyce Stonewell reflected above, she considered how

¹ Grant, ‘Making sense’; Douthwaite, ‘Voices’; Langhamer, ‘Mass Observing’.

she *did* experience nuclear anxiety but “not every second of every day.” Instead, it would “pop into” her head. Based on the experience of Joyce and the other interviewees who took part in this research, I argue that the experience of nuclear anxiety was more akin to Cordle’s idea of *suspense* and experienced as ‘flashpoints.’² Through oral history and the history of emotions, the thesis has revealed that British civilians *did* experience nuclear anxiety during the period 1945 to 1989, but it reveals that this experience was complex, multifaceted, and intermingled with other *nuclear emotions*. The ability to shed more light on the shifting fluctuations of the emotional nuclearity of Cold War Britain is only one of the benefits of the methodological approach implemented by this research. By viewing nuclear anxiety as the focal point of the study, it has also substantiated Langhamer’s focus on “ways of narrating, and managing, the emotional self” in the immediate nuclear age, lending credence to her assertion that ordinary people genuinely felt they had entered a “new atomic age” and nuclearity was a “powerful influence” on the feelings and experiences of civilians.³ Moreover, by taking inspiration from Langhamer’s approach to nuclear emotions, this thesis has suggested that historians of the Cold War stand to benefit from being more attentive to the “feelings and experiences of ordinary British people.”⁴

I have offered a fresh perspective to current historiography on the British Cold War by using a diverse collection of oral history testimony from across the country. This thesis is one of the first to use a history of emotions methodology alongside oral history to understand the experience of ordinary people more deeply during the Cold War. I have applied Rosenwein’s theory of emotional communities to the interviews to the experience of nuclear anxiety to uncover the systems of feeling.⁵ Families between 1945 and 1989 found themselves in

² Cordle, ‘In Dreams’, 104; Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 129.

³ Langhamer, ‘Mass Observing’, 208-209.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁵ Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 203; Stearns and Stearns, ‘Emotionology’, 813.

intermingling emotional communities as parents and children set boundaries in the domestic space to protect one another. Anti-nuclear groups such as CND created their own emotional communities in which specific emotions were applied.⁶ I do not claim to have uncovered *all* the emotional communities of Cold War Britain, but I instead argue that this feeling of belonging to distinct emotional groups greatly impacted individual experiences of nuclear anxiety and is integral to historicising the emotional history of the Cold War. Through this analysis of emotion, I argue that emotions reveal what civilians identified as *meaningful* in their life histories.

Nuclear anxiety was a crucial aspect of the postwar British experience. Nuclear anxiety, and nuclear emotions, are not a stable concept. As Alan Hunt argues, “emotions are much more than internal feelings and behavioural practices of individuals; rather emotions form the structures of feelings through which social relations are lived and contested.”⁷ Emotions are not just simply something that are experienced, they are something we do as humans. Monique Scheer writes that emotions are practices within society. Emotions are a practical engagement with the world and understanding emotions as practices means “comprehending them as emerging from bodily dispositions conditioned by a social context, which always has cultural and historical specificity.”⁸ This thesis has shown how nuclear anxiety shifted and changed throughout the Cold War. These structures of feelings were used as a means to make sense of and give meanings to the “period of historical significance” civilians had lived through.⁹ As highlighted throughout chapters one, four and five, civilians fluidly reinterpreted their sense of *place* in the Cold War as national identities were shaken by the changing postwar world.

⁶ Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 238.

⁷ Alan Hunt, ‘The Civilizing Process and Emotional Life: The intensification and Hollowing Out of Contemporary Emotions’ in *Emotions Matter: A relational approach to emotions* ed. Alan Hunt, Dale Spencer, Kevin Walby (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012): 159.

⁸ Scheer, ‘Understanding emotion’, 193.

⁹ Interview, Moore.

The conclusions drawn in this thesis contribute to three themes in British postwar historiography: The Cold War, the nuclear experience, and British society during the period 1945-1989. It has explored five interlinked motifs of everyday life during this period including perceptions of nation, politics and conflict, culture, families and relationships, and civilian selfhood. The focus of the thesis on intergenerational groups has shown how the Second World War and contemporary context shaped how civilians interpreted and experienced this period of history.¹⁰ The emotional landscape was forged by inter-generational beliefs about foreign aggression, national identities, the Blitz, and mindsets built from the Second World War. Chapters one, two, and four demonstrated how this ‘mood’ directly impacted civilian opinions on Britain’s place in the increasing international tension between America and the Soviet Union.¹¹ The thesis demonstrates that nuclear anxiety was a key aspect of modern British experience, contributing to the wider field of modern British history.¹²

These conclusions engage with scholarship on memory studies and the Cold War by showing how Britons used popular memory and shared assumptions to make sense of new threats and modern conflicts. It aligns with the arguments made by Hogg on the nuclearity of the period, demonstrating how nuclear weapons came to have a powerful influence on the feelings and experiences of ordinary people.¹³ As Langhamer demonstrated for 1945, the period which followed this saw new structures of emotional politics which allowed individuals to position themselves within the wider cultures and imaginations around them, which subsequently coloured individual experiences, actions, perceptions, and judgements.¹⁴ The thesis has shown how cultural imaginations and dominant understandings of the past, present, and future shaped discourses recollected by individuals. Interviewees would position the Cold

¹⁰ Douthwaite, ‘Voices’, 281.

¹¹ Langhamer, ‘Voices’, 220.

¹² Feldman and Lawrence, *Structures and Transformations*, 2-3.

¹³ Hogg, ‘The family’, 549.

¹⁴ Langhamer, ‘Mass Observing’, 216.

War and nuclear weapons *within* their sense of selves, rationalising their historical past and utilising popular memories to frame their experience. In this way, the conclusions support Grant's arguments on "the concept of popular memory" in the Cold War.¹⁵ In the same vein, this thesis strengthens the arguments made by Hogg on the numerous assumptions and imaginations used to frame the Cold War experience.¹⁶

Ultimately, these methods and conclusions contribute to an emerging British historiography moving away from a single notion of British nuclear culture and towards a more critical history of responses to the nuclear age.¹⁷ Chapter three demonstrates that civilian interactions with nuclearization shaped their perceptions of the Cold War mood. These cultures contributed to the shaping of the emotional landscape of the period and were used in the testimony as vehicles of feeling. As Douthwaite writes civilians were not static receivers of the Cold War, nor were they oblivious to the political secrecy of the period.¹⁸ Furthermore, although scholarship on British nuclear culture has demonstrated that nuclear anxiety was reflected in culture, there has not been extensive work on the reception of this culture. The thesis has demonstrated how British nuclear culture further embedded the *everydayness* of the Cold War into civilian life and contributed to how they felt about Britain's place in the increasing international conflict.

By focusing on numerous civilian communities, this thesis further elucidates the arguments made by Hogg on British nuclearity during the Cold War. This thesis is the first of its kind to use oral history in researching the emotional experience of Britain through a diverse sample of society. Chapter one emphasises the differences between civilian communities living in the different nations of Britain, showing for the first time how national identities and

¹⁵ Grant, 'Making sense', 229-230

¹⁶ Hogg, 'The family', 535.

¹⁷ Hughes, 'Nuclear Culture', 504.

¹⁸ Douthwaite, 'Voices', 3.

geographical place shaped emotional experience and perceptions of the Cold War. Chapter two underscores this by exploring how politics, opinions, and knowledge shaped lived experience. Through the oral testimonies of anti-nuclear communities, this thesis contributes to the growing scholarship on the anti-nuclear experience.¹⁹ Thus, this thesis challenges Cold War historians to nuance research on the civilian lived experience of the period. Chapter four and five are unique in their analysis of feelings and emotional structures of the family and the self. These chapters argue that while we can make broad conclusions on the emotional landscape of Britain, *individual* contexts reveal that the reasons *why* civilians were anxious, and these differed immensely from person to person.

The thirty-eight interviews with forty-five individuals that contributed to this research cover life stories from birth until the present day and therefore enrich the range of British oral history archives on ordinary life in Britain.²⁰ This thesis has consistently argued that its contributions have been enabled by a combined cultural, social, psychological, emotions, and oral history methodology. This has shown that emotions and oral histories, as well as wider scholarship on the Cold War, has much to gain from an inter-disciplinary approach. However, it is also appropriate to reflect on what this thesis *did not do* as part of the conclusion and there are certainly weaknesses to the study which should be acknowledged. Firstly, this project utilised the life stories from a broad sample of interviewees. The purpose of this particular oral history sample was to demonstrate the diversity of emotional responses across Britain. Despite this, many voices representative of the British experience were missed. The oral history sample consisted of all white interviewees, with only a few who were born outside of the UK. Furthermore, of the few that were religious, only Christianity was captured by the sample. As a result, many religious and ethnic communities were not represented in this project. Although

¹⁹ Young, *Femininity*, 654

²⁰ Langhamer, 'Ordinary people' 175-195.

efforts to reach these groups were made, their stories of life during the Cold War remain undisclosed. This points to a large and important gap in current historiography of the period. Rural experiences were also neglected in this project, and although this was a methodological choice, this gap should still be acknowledged.²¹ Although the “four-nations” of Britain were explored, cultural and national deviances were missed by this study, for example between north and south Wales. Finally, despite being gathered from diverse networks, the sample was largely middle-class. Class was also not considered within the conclusions and arguments made in this thesis because interviewees very rarely reflected upon their sense of class. Nevertheless, a closer analysis of how social class contributed to the Cold War experience would enhance future historical research on the period.

In the introduction, this thesis set out three core conclusions. It has argued that current historical understandings of nuclear anxiety are insufficient. Recent definitions echo Hughes’ assessment of the study of British nuclear culture and the term is used too generally and too simplistically.²² I have uncovered the multifaceted and complex experience of nuclear anxiety and argue that while it is a *useful* term, scholars must reassess and reconceptualise its utility in historicising the emotional history of the Cold War.²³ I have contested Boyer’s concept of ‘nuclear consciousness’ and Lifton’s use of ‘psychic numbing’, arguing that nuclear anxiety was more akin to *suspense* and ‘flashpoints’ of emotion rather than constantly present. Interviewees also did not deny the nuclear threat and occasionally readily accepted this reality.²⁴ This thesis has shown that nuclear anxiety was rooted in national and regional identities of civilians, employing Kearney’s “four-nation theory” to uncover how Welsh,

²¹ For example, Luke Bennett, “Cold War Ruralism: Civil Defense Planning, Country Ways and the Founding of the UK’s Royal Observer Corps’ Fallout Monitoring Posts Network.” *Journal of Planning History* 17(3) (2017): 205–225; Brian Wynne, “May the Sheep Safely Graze? A Reflexive View of the Expert-Lay Knowledge Divide.” In *Risk, Environment, and Modernity: Toward a New Ecology* ed. Scott Lash, Bronislaw Szerszynski, and Brian Wynne (London: SAGE, 1998).

²² Hughes, ‘Nuclear Culture’, 504.

²³ Smith, ‘Nuclear Anxiety’.

²⁴ Boyer, *Bombs Early Light*, xix-xx; Lifton, *Connection*, 173; Cordle, ‘In Dreams,’ 103.

English, British, Scottish, and Northern Irish identities dynamically shaped individual experience.²⁵ Across five chapters, I have shown how experiences of nuclear anxiety were shaped by a diverse range of influences including family relationships, urban spaces, reception and interaction with British culture, and political opinion, to take a small sample. Ultimately, I have shown that nuclear anxiety was *not* a static, singular experience and instead was entangled in other emotions. These I have argued should be referred to as *nuclear emotions*; defined as emotions and feelings, directly and indirectly, prompted, provoked, inspired by, and influenced by nuclear weapons. While nuclear anxiety sits at the core, I argue that it is these overlapping and intersectional emotions that reveal the hidden human experiences of the British Cold War.

I have suggested that nuclear anxiety existed as both a collective culture and a highly individualised experience. The individual and collective experiences of nuclear anxiety resulted in a two-way flow of emotions in the oral history interview whereby individuals would either draw on shared perceptions to frame their own narrative or would reject them in favour of presenting a unique and individualised emotional experience. The emotional response of nuclear anxiety was linked profoundly to broader cultural memories, collective imaginations of nuclear war, and British nuclear culture. This became part of the civilian lived experience and I have excavated and explored these moments of nuclear anxiety from these *collective* and *individual* memories.

The conclusions of this thesis demonstrate the potential for histories of memory to drive historical research on cultural and social change. As the Cold War drifts further into our pasts, it has become all the more important to capture the voices and experiences of civilian lives. The interviewee is “engaged in a continuous revision of self” and “the individual voice contains a multiplicity of voices... it holds within it the shared meanings of languages and cultural

²⁵ Kearney, *British Isles*.

narratives.”²⁶ Testimony was shaped by the past, the present, and feelings about the future. In particular, I have demonstrated how contemporary contexts and present-centeredness shaped the memories of Britons. This, alongside my own sense of self and identity as a researcher, framed the context of the interview. In this way, I acted as a “barefoot historian”, stepping through the stories of self and discussions of subject with my interviewees. I hope that this methodology has shown the fruitfulness of historical experimentation of self and subject and the benefits of personal reflection.²⁷

Reflecting on Andrew Moore’s words which began this thesis: The Cold War and the threat of nuclear attack was “like Mount Everest.”²⁸ It hung over the lives of British civilians and shaped their lived and emotional experiences of the Cold War. This thesis has offered a snapshot of civilian perspectives of this period of history through oral history and an analysis of emotion. It is my intention, and my hope, that my work will swing open the doors to this valuable and interesting field of study.

²⁶ Chamberlain, ‘Narrative Theory’, 402-404.

²⁷ Halttunen, ‘Self, Subject’, 22.

²⁸ Interview, Moore.

Appendix I – Biographical details of oral history interview participants

Surname, forename(s) (Title)

Date of interview

Year of birth

Primary associated city

Biographical detail²⁹

Bradbury, Chris (Mr)

20 March 2018 & 7 September 2018

1957

Liverpool

Born in Liverpool. Lived there most of his life. Interested in theatre. Worked in administration and teaching. Lived in London briefly. Quaker. Catholic. Parents were from Liverpool. Father has Irish roots. Described family as working class. Joined CND as a student. Involved in PAX Christi.

Branco, George (Dr)

10th and 11th July 2018

1935

Cardiff

Born in Cardiff where he grew up during the Second World War. Got a scholarship to study Maths. Completed a master's in economics. Went on to do a PhD. His father was a conscientious objector. Avoided joining the army by staying in education. Worked as a chemical engineer in London for a few years. Married. Returned to Cardiff in 1979. A member of the Communist Party. His mother went on the first CND demonstration in 1958. He joined 6 months later and held important roles in the committee and council of CND. Held office in the 1960s. Became Chair in the 1970s. Became Vice-President of Cardiff CND. Has written several books on protest.

²⁹ Biographical detail provided is not comprehensive and depends on the direction that interviews took and the details provided by the interviewee. Therefore, not all interviewee's family ancestry, career, or relationships were recorded.

Brenett, Lewis (Mr)

2 August 2018

1969

Glasgow

Born outside Glasgow. Spent most of his childhood there. Spent two years in Canada with his father. Completed a university degree. Moved to Belfast in the early 1980s with his partner, who is Irish. Moved back to the UK eighteen years later. Interested in the environment and peace movements including CND but never joined. Interested in politics while he was in school.

Campbell, Alexander (Mr)

7 November 2018

1938

Glasgow

Born in and lived in Glasgow. A long-time member of CND. Interested in politics from a young age. Has been arrested numerous times for laying in front of vehicles carrying nuclear material or weaponry. Remembers the Second World War. Has joined numerous peace groups. Participated in the filming of the *War Game*. Continues to actively protest today.

Cattigan, Peter (The Lord)

30 July 2018 & 4 March 2019

1939

London

Started work as a teacher. Became an MP in 1970. Conservative Party. Married with two children. Rebelled under Thatcher's government. Interested in history. Invited to sit in the House of Lords in 2010. Politician, historian, journalist, and author.

Cox, George (Mr)

1 August 2018

1958

Belfast

Born outside of Belfast in 1958. Single child. Completed a psychology degree at Queen's University. Worked as a therapist in Belfast. Met Jessica as a teenager and married when they were in their early twenties. Had a daughter in the mid-1980s.

Cox, Jessica (Mrs)

1 August 2018

1960

Belfast

Born in London in 1960 to an Irish family. Was the youngest of 5. Moved to Belfast as a child. Trained as a masseuse and worked locally. Met George and married in her early twenties. Had a dream of moving away from the city. Had a daughter in the mid-1980s with George. Eldest sister and eldest brother were involved in anti-nuclear groups and were arrested. Didn't know about this until she was older.

Dalton, Mike (Mr)

7 February 2018 & 3 May 2018

1970

London

Born in South London. Moved to Liverpool in 2006. Irish family. Mother worked as a cleaner. Older brother. Family was not very political. Interested in history. Worked in university administration. Worked in photography prior.

Davies, Frank (Mr)

22 October 2018

1945

Glasgow

Born outside of Glasgow. Military family. Joined the RAF when he was 15. Trained on ground radio and engineering. Married with children. Often listened to Cold War communications. Later in life was posted in various different RAF bases around the UK. Moved to Yorkshire later in life.

Fallon, Alice (Mrs)

1 February 2019

1943

Belfast

Born in Belfast in 1943. Had state education and completed a BA in Business Studies in 1964. Worked as an accountant for most of her life. Her parents were married in 1939 and her father was fought in the Second World War, returning home in 1946. Her mother was a housewife

and her father worked in administration. Had some family who had worked in Kenya. Not a particularly political family. Her parents usually voted Conservative. Moved to London in 1973 near Carnaby Street. Worked in Germany from 1982 and returned to Belfast in 1985.

Fraley, Carole (Miss)

24 May 2018

1936

London

Born in Wakefield, New Zealand. Lived in New Zealand throughout World War Two. Moved to London after the war. Travelled around the world due to her father's work. Father worked in the UN. Joined many peace groups such as CND, PAX Christi, and Amnesty International. Quaker. Attended many CND marches and protests. Family not political, but in the presence of politics. Chose not to marry. Member of a group called Collateral Damage.

Hall, Alan (Mr)

15 April 2019

1942

Glasgow

Born in Glasgow. Lived there his whole life. Works as a genealogist. Very interested in family history and local history. Impact of the Second World War particularly sticks in his memory. Military family. Married with children and grandchildren.

Hall, Steve (Mr)

8 February 2019

1943

Cardiff

Born in Cardiff. Respectable working-class background. Not a political family. His father was a member of Fabian Society in the 1930s. Read the *News Chronicle* and *Picture Post*. Described himself as "quite left-wing." Interested in bikes, bike racing, and history. Brother was called for National Service during the Suez Crisis. Mother worked in a kitchen. Often travelled for bike competitions with his local Cardiff bike club. Completed a social work course in 1973. Worked in social and health care. Married twice. Went on many holidays across the Iron Curtain with his second wife. Has a son and a daughter.

Hawcroft, Sandra (Dr)

5 September 2018

1954

London

Born in Cambridge. Moved to South-West London as a child. Did Economics at Oxford and a PhD at Cambridge. Worked on gender and class. Returned to London and joined the civil service. Stopped work in 2001 due to chronic fatigue. Quaker. Joined CND in the 1970s. Father worked for the Atomic Authority. Married with children. Member of a group called Collateral Damage. Hosts several peace art shows.

Haycock, Steve (Mr)

21 February 2018

1963

Glasgow

Born in Manchester but moved to Glasgow in his teens. Recalled air raid siren tests as a child in the 1970s. Political, left-wing family. Immersed in nuclear culture. Joined CND in the 1980s. Works for the CND Peace Education Programme. Became very active in CND post-Cold War.

Hodges-Walker, Susan (Mrs)

24 May 2018

1951

London

Born in London. Completed teacher training in Doncaster. Returning to London. Married with two children. Joined CND but was not always active. Joined shortly after having children. More involved in wider peace and anti-war movements. Family from New Zealand. Member of a group called Collateral Damage.

Kelly, Adam (Mr)

22 October 2018

1970

Belfast

The son of Jack and Wendy Kelly. Born in Northern Ireland. Knew about the Cold War vaguely as a child but nothing particularly stuck out to him. Was more concerned about the IRA growing up. Now works as a teacher.

Kelly, Jack (Mr)

22 October 2018

1946

Belfast

Born in Bangor but moved to Belfast for work in the 1960s. Worked in a factory. Was briefly made redundant in the 1980s but found work again a few years later. Married Wendy in 1969. Had a son a year later.

Kelly, Wendy (Mrs)

22 October 2018

1948

Belfast

Did not disclose where she was born. Met Jack in Belfast and married in 1969 before having a son a year later. Worked as an administrator in a government department in health and social security.

Leech, Roger (Mr)

30 January 2019

1944

Cardiff

Born in Grangetown area in Cardiff. Described childhood as 'noisy' due to living near heavy industrial factories and the docks. Went to a grammar school. Studied engineering at St. Andrews University and Cardiff University. Studies nuclear physics and particles. Worked in Geneva on nuclear physics research. He returned to Cardiff in the late 1970s. In the 1980s he spent some time working in Sellafield before returning to Cardiff. Lifelong interests in music, meditation, and woodworking. Has published several fiction and non-fiction books.

Lincoln, Cheryl (Mrs)

1 May 2017 & 4 December 2017

1933

Liverpool

Lived near Liverpool most of her life. Briefly moved to Wolverhampton for 6 years in the 1950s. Worked for Enoch Powell. Returned to Liverpool. Married and has children and

grandchildren. Worked as a teacher. Her husband was in the army. Remembered the Second World War more than the Cold War.

Marking, Lucy (Mrs)

10th and 11th July 2018

1939

Cardiff

Born in Birmingham. Left to do teacher training in Bristol. Moved to Bath afterwards to work as a teacher and met Rory. They married and moved to Cardiff together. Her mother and sister had also lived in Cardiff. Had family roots in South Wales. Spent some time at Greenham Common in the 1980s. Is a long-time member of Cardiff CND. Described her father as a fascist. Grew up in an anti-Communist family. Her first husband was a Communist. Went to the second Aldermaston march through the Young Communist League. Had several children. Divorced in the early 1970s and remarried to Rory.

Marking, Rory (Mr)

10th and 11th July 2018

1959

Cardiff

Born in Bridgend and grew up there. Moved to Bath for university in 1977 to do Maths. Took a placement year working at the Atomic Energy Authority at Harwell. Returned to Cardiff afterwards and has lived there since. Became interested in the anti-nuclear movement while at university. Joined Bath CND and later joined Cardiff CND in the early 1980s.

McEwan, Alice (Mrs)

25 October 2018

1946

Glasgow

Born in Glasgow. Worked as a teacher. Married George in the 1960s. Spent most of her life in Glasgow but visits Lincolnshire to see her husband's family often. Her parents often worried about a nuclear attack.

McEwan, George (Mr)

25 October 2018

1945

Glasgow

Born in Lincolnshire. Moved to Glasgow for university. Met Alice there and married her. They have two children. Worked as an engineer. Interested in the RAF. His mother was afraid of German planes. Father had fought in the Second World War in the RAF.

Merritt, Archie (Mr)

2 April 2018

1951

Belfast

Born in Belfast and grew up there. Served in the ROC in the city between 1972 and 1991. He served in Randallstown, Ballymena and Limavady posts before being promoted to a group officer for monitoring posts in county Londonderry and Newtownstewart in County Tyrone. Married young and had two children. His family moved with him for a while before settling outside Belfast.

Moore, Andrew (Mr)

5 November 2018

1929

London

Born in London. Served in World War Two. Became a Roman Catholic Priest. Joined the Christian CND in the 1960s. Eventually, he left his role in the church to pursue protesting in CND full time. Had an influential role in CND. Married Sylvia in the late 1980s.

Moore, Sylvia (Mrs)

5 November 2018

1953

London

Born and educated in London. Has been active in peace organisations for most of her life. Married Andrew in the late 1980s. Involved in many peace groups such as CND and PAX Christi. Writes for a peace newspaper in London.

O'Reilly, Colman (Mr)

7 January 2019

1950

Belfast

Born in 1950 in Northern Ireland and moved to Belfast as an adult for work. Worked in theatre. He moved away from the city in the late 1980s to London.

Perkins, Irene (Mrs)

15 June 2018

1957

Liverpool

Born in Liverpool. Parents discussed the Second World War. Spent some time in South Africa as a child. Returned in 1963. Felt her parents sheltered her. Worked in administration. Often read the newspaper. Involved in CND but not active. Four siblings. Family in Wales. Met her first husband in 1979 and had her first daughter in 1980. Family referred to Reagan as 'Raygun'. Conflicted with her parents about her peace involvement.

Perkins, Stuart (Mr)

15 June 2018

1955

Liverpool

Born in Liverpool. Father was in the military. Mother was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. He cared for her as a child. Worked on the docks. Married Irene later in life. Involved in CND but not active. Interested in shipbuilding and boats. Only child. Mother was very worried about nuclear war.

Powell, Harry (Mr)

12 April 2018

1967

Liverpool

Born outside of Liverpool. Lived there most of his life. Parents were not political. Married with children. Had family in Cheshire. Worked in administration. Interested in photography. The Cold War mostly passed by him.

Stonewell, Joyce (Mrs)

21 January 2018 & 18 February 2018

1965

London

Born in Lincolnshire. Moved to London in the early 1980s. Family was not political. Described family as strict. Older brother. Studied History and French at university. Worked in facilities management. Met William while living in London. Married William and has three children. Not involved in any political groups. Moved to Lincolnshire with her husband in the 1990s.

Stonewell, William (Dr)

21 January 2018 & 18 February 2018

1964

London

Born in Shropshire. Military background. Father was in the RAF. Family travelled around due to his father's work. Lived in Singapore for two years. Trained to be a doctor in London. Father worked on sniffer planes. Father passed away when he was young. Two younger sisters. Met Joyce in London in the 1980s. Married with three children. Described family as 'right-wing'. Moved to Lincolnshire with wife in the 1990s.

Reznik, Shaun (Mr)

28 February 2019

1970

Cardiff

Born in Bardejov, Czechoslovakia (now Slovakia). Childhood was defined by the Cold War. From age 6, would prepare for a potential nuclear attack through school drills. Moved to the UK, Cardiff, to complete a degree in Political History after the Velvet Revolution. Grew up with his parents and older brother. His mother was a housewife and his father worked in a factory. Hopes to back to University. Married a Ukrainian woman he met at University. She was affected by the Chernobyl accident. Recently has his first child. Works in local government administration.

Roberts, Suzie (Mrs)

14 March 2018

1958

Cardiff

Born in North London and moved to Cardiff in 1965. Moved back to London for University in 1977. Worked as a nurse. Often went on family holidays around Wales. Interested in history. Often used her radio as a child to try to pick up military shortwave transmissions.

Smith, Jonathan (Mr)

22 October 2018

1949

Glasgow

Born in Yorkshire. Moved to Glasgow as a child. Returned to Yorkshire later in life. Good friends with Frank Davies. Interested in history. Married with children and grandchildren. Military family. Briefly lived in Germany.

Southport, Greg (Mr)

23 January 2019

1944

Cardiff

Born in Bath. Brought up in a Quaker household. Parents were both conscientious objectors, as were grandparents. Went to a grammar school. Failed his O-levels. Moved to Birmingham. Met Linda there and married. Moved back to Cardiff in the late 1960s. Worked in recycling. Described his anti-nuclear beliefs as 'lazy'. Became more active when he met Linda. His company paid for many of Linda's travel expenses. Participated in 'cruise-watches'. Became locally involved in CND. Supported the Greenham women in the late 1980s. Returned to Bath in the 1990s.

Southport, Linda (Mrs)

23 January 2019

1944

Cardiff

Born in Crosby, near Liverpool. Did not work for most of her life. Spent it protesting and working for the peace movement internationally instead. Parents were pacifists and were from

different church backgrounds. Her parents worked with Quakers and refugees. Linda was active in peace movements when she was 15. Joined CND young. Started a local CND group. Visited Greenham Common a lot in the 1980s. Hosted many of the women travelling from Wales to the camp. Joined several civil disobedience actions. Met Greg and married. Moved to South Wales together in the late 1960s. Had a daughter who chose to go to Greenham instead of doing her O-levels. Her daughter was arrested for helping to damage the fences at Greenham. Worked internationally for the peace movement.

Stanford, Peter (Mr)

16 April 2018

1937

Liverpool

Born in Hull. Went to two boarding schools. Moved to Leeds as an adult. Worked in local government and volunteered to help the homeless. Moved to Manchester and met Rosie in 1960. They married and had two children. Moved to Liverpool. Worked in Bootle. Retired to Formby. Lived for a year in the Czech Republic. A member of CND but not particularly active.

Stanford, Rosie (Mrs)

12 March 2018 & 16 April 2018

1944

Liverpool

Born in Manchester. Christian family. Father was a Methodist Minister and a conscientious objector. Was a member of several many groups such as Snowball, Mothers for Peace, and CND. Met Peter in Manchester in 1960 and married. Had two children. Moved to Liverpool and worked in Formby. Was a very active protestor and was arrested several times. Her son moved to Japan.

Stanford, Tracy (Miss)

16 April 2018

1970

Liverpool

Born to Rosie and Peter Stanford in Manchester. Moved to Liverpool as a child. Moved to France when she was 18. Studied at Bradford University. Was taken to CND protests as a child. Became active in CND when she became older. Studied social administration at Manchester. Returned to Liverpool in 1966. Did social work. Met Peter. Married with two children. Son

moved to Japan. Daughter lives in Manchester. Joined CND in the 1970s and took part in direct non-violent action. Often visited Greenham and Molesworth. Part of other organisations like Greenpeace, Mothers for Peace (Women for Women for Peace), and Amnesty International.

Winston, Jodie (Mrs)

10 November 2018

1927

London

Born in South London. Moved to Essex during the Second World War. Returned afterwards. Lived in Wimbledon for most of her life. Joined CND when it formed in 1958. Created a local CND group. Active in the Peace in Vietnam Group. Political household. Member of a group called Collateral Damage. Described herself as very left-wing. Lived in a place with great poverty. Hoped to change the world. Continues to be active today. Married with children.

Whittaker, John (Mr)

14 October 2018

1947

Glasgow

Born in Glasgow and lived there most of his life. Moved to the Isle of Bute in the 1990s. Joined CND in his teens. Membership lapsed while he worked abroad. Renewed it when he returned to Scotland. His work prevented him from being political. Worked around the Balkans, Middle East and Africa. Married twice. Has several children. Interested in history. Family were all from Fife. Went to University in Edinburgh in the 1960s. Has family in Zambia and the Balkans. Retired in 2011. Interested in publishing.

Yorke, Charlie (Mr)

10th and 11th July 2018

1953

Cardiff

Born in Cardiff and grew up there. Went to Liverpool in 1971 for university. In 1974 moved to London before returning to Cardiff later. Set up a student CND group in Liverpool. Worked for a variety of organisations. Had a paid role in CND for a while. Now works at the Co-op. Moved to Wrexham in the 1990s and has stayed since. Held important council roles within CND. Joined the Green Party in Wales. Political parents who were in the Communist Party. Was taken to CND protests as a child by his parents. Joined independently in the late 1960s. Parents disapproved of him working for CND as a career.

Appendix II – Relevant documentation from oral history interviewees

Email from oral history interviewee

Rosie Stanford to Emily Gibbs, Email subject line: 'More Information', 13 March 2018.

Dear Emily

I really enjoyed meeting you yesterday and my family were very interested too. My husband and daughter would both be happy to meet you sometime after Easter. A Tuesday morning is probably the best time if that's alright with you at a similar time to when we met, as Tracey is usually over in Liverpool then. She said that you should be talking to her about the effect of nuclear fear on family and society. You are welcome to come to our home.

I have just come across the email below from the founder of the Snowball Campaign, which I thought you'd be interested in. She continues to be an extraordinary campaigner against nuclear weapons all these years on. And she is still using that legal approach that I described to you. Most of those who were sent this email have a life-time experience of campaigning against nuclear weapons locally and would also be interesting people to interview. Most are around my age so lived through the Cold War years.

I'll wait to hear from you again.

All good wishes for your research

Rosie³⁰

³⁰ The email has been edited to protect the identity of the interviewee.

Poem written by an oral history interviewee.

Given to Emily Gibbs by Peter Stanford on 16 April 2018.

PEACE ON EARTH

(Alconbury Air Fair - July 1985.)

The American serviceman stopped chewing his gum

When he saw what the Englishwoman had done

Speechless at first, then puce, he cried

"Arrest that woman! Arrest her I say!"

And he stood there bellowing vain that none

Could assuage but the police - who complied,

Arrested the woman and took her away.

What great crime had offended the President's man?

What affront had triggered his rage?

I'll tell you briefly, for what it's worth.

The woman had stuck a small blue label

To the side of an Air Force truck.

It said

"Peace On Earth."

Appendix III – Reflecting on anxiety during the Coronavirus Pandemic, 2020-2021

At the beginning of this thesis, I speculated that if I had conducted this same research at a different point in time, the responses interviewees provided may have been different. As this thesis is being written up, the world has been gripped by a new anxiety – the Coronavirus pandemic.³¹ In the spring of 2020, the news of this new illness spread quickly. By April, Britain was a completely different place. Working from home was the ‘new normal’, shops, pubs, cinemas, and other public places were closed, face masks became mandatory, and death tolls were posted in newspapers every day. In June 2020, Joyce Stonewell emailed me to inquire how my writing was going. We exchanged a few pleasantries and she reflected upon our interview. Joyce commented on how “she probably would have said completely different things in her interview now.” She discussed a new “COVID anxiety” which she likened to our discussions of nuclear anxiety. Rather than imagining a world devastated by nuclear war, the media imagined a world stricken by Coronavirus, the “new normal” of staying indoors, a shattered economy, and a new generation altered by the experience of the pandemic.

Writing during this period of panic and anxiety compelled me to reconsider my own understanding of nuclear anxiety. In fact, I would argue that to an extent, the pandemic forced me to live through a period of anxiety, in much the same way the Cold War was. I became obsessed with the news and what would be announced by the government next. I watched the daily briefings with my loved ones. Even the way I emailed shifted as I now opened all communication with “I hope you are well.” Ordinary life changed drastically and quickly over the space of a few months. The oral history interviews I conducted for this project would now be exceptionally difficult to arrange and record, as face-to-face contact has been widely discouraged. These shifts in everyday life, and the prospect of death, became a reality. In much

³¹ ‘COVID-19: Milestones of the global pandemic’, *BBC News*, 29 September 2020, accessed February 2021, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-54337098>

the same way, I thought, as the Cold War. In chapter five, I reflected upon how Brexit was a cause of great anxiety for many interviewees. One even strongly felt that Brexit brought him “more uncertainty” than the Cold War “ever did.”³² In her emails to me, Joyce told me that “coronavirus will probably be a new period of anxiety we will look back on”, asking if I would be part of the “inevitable” historical movement to capture the memories of the pandemic. She continued that this period of “uncertainty” was “similar” to how “she and others felt during the Cold War”, although “that period of time probably seems unimportant to most nowadays.”³³

Although it would be foolish to compare the 2020 coronavirus pandemic to the British Cold War, there certainly are comparisons worthy of reflection. Images of gas masks abandoned at the site of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident are reminiscent of the medical and fabric face masks discarded in shopping centre car parks. The spirit of civil defence has been rekindled as individuals across the country mobilised to volunteer their time in research, vaccination efforts, and testing sites. Families became ‘bubbles’ sheltered by the home, an image akin to the *Protect and Survive* pamphlet, and the government placed responsibility on the British population in their health messages: Stay at Home, Save Lives.³⁴ Even the international ‘race’ for the COVID-19 vaccine can be compared to the ‘Space Race’ of the Cold War.³⁵ Reflecting on Joyce’s comparison of 2020 to the Cold War, I cannot help but wonder how historians of emotions will approach this period in the future. In the same way that contemporary nuclear anxieties between 2016-2019 shaped how interviewees reflected upon the Cold War, the 2020-21 Coronavirus pandemic may have a similar impact.

³² Interview, Cattigan.

³³ This view was expressed within an email conversation between Joyce to me in 2020. It has been referenced with permission.

³⁴ ‘New TV advert urges public to stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives’, Department of Health and Social Care press release, UK government, 10 January 2021, accessed February 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-tv-advert-urges-public-to-stay-at-home-to-protect-the-nhs-and-save-lives>

³⁵ ‘Coronavirus: Russia calls international concern over vaccine groundless’, *BBC News*, 12 August 2020, accessed February 2021, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-53751017>

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Oral History Testimony

Interview with Cheryl Lincoln, 1 May 2017.

Interview with Cheryl Lincoln, 4 December 2017.

Interview with William and Joyce Stonewell, 21 January 2018.

Interview with Mike Dalton, 7 February 2018.

Interview with Joyce Stonewell, 18 February 2018.

Interview with William Stonewell, 18 February 2018.

Interview with Steve Haycock, 21 February 2018.

Interview with Rosie Stanford, 12 March 2018.

Interview with Suzie Roberts, 14 March 2018.

Interview with Chris Bradbury, 20 March 2018.

Interview with Archie Merritt, 2 April 2018.

Interview with Harry Powell, 12 April 2018.

Interview with Rosie, Peter, and Tracy Stanford, 16 April 2018.

Interview with Carole Fraley and Susan Hodges-Walker, 24 April 2018.

Interview with Mike Dalton, 3 May 2018.

Interview with Irene and Stuart Perkins, 15 June 2018.

Interview with Charlie Yorke, George Branco, and Lucy and Rory Marking, 10 July 2018.

Interview with Charlie Yorke, George Branco, and Lucy and Rory Marking, 11 July 2018.

Interview with The Lord Peter Cattigan, 30 July 2018.

Interview with Jessica and George Cox, 1 August 2018.

Interview with Lewis Brenett, 2 August 2018.

Interview with Sandra Hawcroft, 5 September 2018.

Interview with Chris Bradbury, 7 September 2018.

Interview with John Whittaker, 14 October 2018.

Interview with Frank Davies and Jonathan Scott, 22 October 2018.

Interview with Jack, Wendy, and Adam Kelly, 23 October 2018.

Interview with George and Alice McEwan, 25 October 2018.

Interview with Andrew and Sylvia Moore, 5 November 2018.

Interview with Alexander Campbell, 7 November 2018.

Interview with Jodie Winston, 10 November 2018.

Interview with Colman O'Reilly, 7 January 2019.

Interview with Linda and Greg Southport, 23 January 2019.

Interview with Rodger Leech, 30 January 2019.

Interview with Alice Fallon, 1 February 2019.

Interview with Steve Hall, 8 February 2019.

Interview with Shaun Reznik, 28 February 2019.

Interview with The Lord Peter Cattigan, 4 March 2019.

Interview with Alan Hall, 15 April 2019.

Oral history interview ephemera

Materials donated or recorded in the course of the oral history interviewing process

Article on 'Sniffers' (Sniffer Planes) by Tony Bulter in *FlyPast* Magazine, April 2018. Donated by William Stonewell.

'Build Peace, Not WMD', Copy of a Painting by Sandra Hawcroft, 1982.

CND 'Trump Cards' Produced by West Region CND in the 1980s. [Specific year/date unknown], given to me by Chris Bradbury.

Email. Rosie Stanford to Emily Gibbs. Subject line: More information. March 2018. Used with permission.

Email. Joyce Stonewall to Emily Gibbs. Subject line: how are you? June 2020. Used with permission.

Flyer for Collateral Damage Peace Walk, November 2018. Donated by Sylvia Moore.

Flyer for Collateral Damage, November 2018. Donated by Sandra Hawcroft.

Flyer advertising a walk remembering conscientious Objectors, 2018. Donated by Jodie Winston.

Deeley, Norman. *The Wrong side of the law: A tragedy in five acts* (Ayrshire: Carn Publishing, 2005). Donated by John Whittaker.

Leech, Rodger, 'The World Holds its Breath', withheld chapter, 2018.

Mercury: The Real Peace Movement. Donated by interviewee, Rosie Stanford. Published by YPTN, London, 1984.

Peace on Earth. Poem by Peter Stanford, 16 April 2018. Donated by Peter Stanford.

Photographic scans of Sparkle ID and Badge [from around the 1980s]. Donated by Shaun Reznik.

Poster reading 'If war is the answer, it must be a very stupid question'. Donated by Linda Southport.

Resource Pack. 'Take Action on Militarism'. Donated by Andrew Moore.

Schlosser, Eric. *Command and Control: The story of nuclear weapons and the illusion of safety*. London: Penguin, 2013. Donated by William Stonewell.

Stanford, Peter, 'Peace on Earth', Poem, 1985.

The Church and the Bomb Booklet series. Donated by interviewee, Rosie Stanford. Published by Christian Action, Herts, 1982.

Sound and Interview transcripts

Interview with Lindis Percy, recorded by Lucy Ashwell for the Observing the 1980s project, 1998.

Interview with Margaret Laver, recorded by Ambleside Oral History Group, 28 October 2008.

Interview with Barbara Harrison, conducted by Sarah Hewitt, 2011.

Interview with Doris, conducted by Sarah Hewitt, 2011.

Interview with Vera Jeffers, conducted by Sarah Hewitt, 2011.

Interview with Elsie, recorded by Jessica Douthwaite, 2015.

Interview with Angela Browning, recorded by Kayleigh Mildren for the History of Parliament Oral History Project, 10 March 2013.

Manuscript Sources

Anti-Nuclear action Leaflet, 'Nuclear Power?: No Way!', BCL, LPA, 0/0 PL/49710 collection.

Britain: An official handbook, 1980, British Central Office of Information, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, NLS, GII.11, 80.

Child in CND, March 1984, Brain Steward (photographer), 23 April 1984, The Scotsman Publications, Held at NLS LI1011733, Scan ID: 000-000-586-143-D.

Clip from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1982, Scotland's Record, Church of Scotland, Digitised by UOSH, NLS MS 22302, UNLS001/106.

Contacts between John F. Kennedy, President of the USA, and Harold Wilson, UK Prime Minister, 6 November 1962, NA FO 598/29.

Edinburgh CND News, Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Edinburgh Branch, April 1982, NLS QP.la.1254 SER.

'Noah Nova' poem, *Irish Radioactive Times*, May 1982, BCL, LPA, 0/0 PL/49710 collection.

R. A. Williams, *Children in the Nuclear Age* (London: Teachers' Committee for Nuclear Disarmament, 1962), Working Class Movement Library, Salford, Peace – Box 6.

'Resist Nuclear power poster', BCL, LPA, 0/0 PL/49710 collection.

SCRAM Energy Bulletin, No. 26, October/November 1981, Digitised 2017, Laka Archive, SCRAM collection.

SCRAM Energy Bulletin Series, NLS, 0140-7341.

'The Irish Sea: A Nuclear Cesspool CND Pamphlet', BCL, LPA, 0/0 PL/49710 collection.

Trident demonstrators at a meeting in Clydebank shopping centre, Pathfinder Pack on the Conservative Party and CND, from *The Herald* newspaper archive, 11 March 1984, held at the NLS 0249, 001344, Scran ID 000-000-115-591-C.

Television and Film

Abrams, J. J., Tom Cruise, Christopher McQuarrie, Jakes Myers [producers] *Mission Impossible: Fallout*. Directed by Christopher McQuarrie. United States; Skydance Media; Bad Robot Productions; TC Production; Aibaba Pictures, 2018.

Broccoli, Albert [producer] *The Spy Who Loved Me* [James Bond series]. Film. Directed by Lewis Gilbert. United Kingdom; United States: Eon Productions, 1977.

Broccoli, Albert and Michael Wilson [producers] *A View to a Kill* [James Bond series]. Directed by John Glen. United Kingdom; United States: Eon Productions; Danjaq; United Artists, 1985.

Broccoli, Barbara and Michael Wilson [producers] *Goldeneye* [James Bond series]. Directed by Martin Campbell. United Kingdom; United States: Eon Productions; United Artists, 1995.

Gilbert, Bruce [producer] *By Dawns Early Light*. Film. Directed by Jack Shoulder. United States: Paravision International; HBO Pictures, 1990.

Goldberg, Leonard, Richard Hashimoto, Harold Schneider, and Bruce McNall [producers] *WarGames*. Film. Directed by John Badham. United States: United Artists; Sherwood Productions, 1983.

Harris, James and Richard Widmark [producers] *The Bedford Incident*. Film. Directed by James Harris. United States; United Kingdom: Columbia Pictures, 1965.

Kubrick, Stanley [producer] *Dr Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. Directed by Stanley Kubrick. United States: Hawk Films, 1964.

Rhodes, Mick [producer] *Q.E.D.: A Guide to Armageddon*. Documentary Series. Directed by Mick Jackson. United Kingdom: BBC, 1982.

Lumet, Sidney, Charles Maguire, and Max Youngstein [producers] *Fail Safe*. Film. Directed by Sidney Lumet. United States: Columbia Pictures, 1964.

Massey, Graham and John Purdie [producers] *Threads*. Film. Directed by Mick Jackson and Peter Wolfes. United Kingdom: BBC; Nine Network Australia; Western-World Television Inc., 1984.

Watkins, Peter [producer] *The War Game*. Film. Directed by Peter Watkins. United Kingdom: BBC, 1965.

Unknown, *Waking Point*. Home Office. British Government Civil Defence Film. 1951.

Newspapers

Belfast Telegraph

Daily Mail

Daily Mirror

Edinburgh Evening News

Evening Standard

Glasgow Herald

Liverpool Echo

Manchester Guardian

South Wales Echo

The Economist

The Independent

The Guardian

The Observer

The Times

Printed Material

Campbell, Duncan, *War Plan UK: The truth about civil defence in Britain*. London: Burnett, 1982.

Civil Defence Corps Recruitment Poster, National Campaign, 1953.

Domestic Nuclear Shelters, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Prepared for the Home Office by the Central Office of Information, 1981.

Domestic Nuclear Shelters: Technical Guidance, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Prepared for the Home Office by the Central Office of Information, 1981.

Ehrlick, Anne et al. *London under attack: The Report of the Greater London Area War Risk Study Commission*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.

Green, Owen, *London after the Bomb: What a Nuclear Attack really means*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Letchford, Ronald (ed.), 'Meet Mr Bomb', *Mad Magazine*, 1983.

Prins, Gwyn, *Defended to Death: A study of the nuclear arms race from the Cambridge University Disarmament Seminar*. Suffolk, Penguin, 1983.

Protect and Survive, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Prepared for the Home Office by the Central Office of Information, 1980.

Russel, Bertrand, *Has Man a Future?* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961.

Internet Sources

'Brexit: Europe stunned by UK leave vote', *BBC News*, 24 June 2016, accessed October 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36616018>

Boffey, Daniel. 'Empire 2.0: the fantasy that's fuelling Tory divisions on Brexit', *The Guardian*, 8 November 2018, accessed January 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/nov/08/empire-fantasy-fuelling-tory-divisions-on-brexit>

'Boris is not Churchill and Brexit is not the Second World War', *Sky News*, 31 July 2019, accessed January 2021, <https://news.sky.com/story/sky-views-boris-johnson-is-not-churchill-and-brexit-is-not-the-second-world-war-11773843>

- ‘Coronavirus: Russia calls international concern over vaccine groundless’, *BBC News*, 12 August 2020, accessed February 2021, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-53751017>
- ‘COVID-19: Milestones of the global pandemic’, *BBC News*, 29 September 2020, accessed February 2021, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-54337098>
- ‘Donald Trump boasts that his nuclear button is bigger than Kim Jong-un’s’, *The Guardian*, 3 January 2018, accessed October 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jan/03/donald-trump-boasts-nuclear-button-bigger-kim-jong-un>
- ‘Donald Trump boasts US nuclear weapons are in ‘tip-top shape’ in thinly-veiled threat to Iran’, *The Sun*, 21 September 2019, accessed October 2020, <https://wwwthesun.co.uk/news/9974575/donald-trump-boasts-nukes-iran-threat/>
- Fischer, Benjamin B. ‘A Cold War Conundrum: The 1983 Soviet War Scare’, Central Intelligence Agency, 1997, accessed May 2019 <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/a-cold-war-conundrum/source.htm>.
- Gordon, Tom. ‘Jo Swinson defences willingness to press nuclear button’, *The Herald*, 22 November 2019, accessed October 2020, <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18053904.jo-swinson-defends-willingness-press-nuclear-button/>
- IndyRef2 will be the focus of election campaign says SNP’s Westminster leader’, *ITV News*, 13 October 2018, accessed October 2020, <https://www.itv.com/news/2019-10-13/indyref2-will-be-focus-of-election-campaign-says-snps-westminster-leader/>
- ‘INF nuclear treaty: US pulls out of Cold War-era pact with Russia’, *BBC News*, 2 August 2019, accessed October 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-49198565>
- ‘Iran nuclear deal: Key details’, *BBC News*, 11 June 2019, accessed October 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-33521655>
- ‘Is Scotland finally set to bid farewell to the union?’, *The Guardian*, 11 August 2019, accessed October 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/aug/11/snp-scotland-independence-referendum-brexit>
- Kristiansen, Hans and Matt Korda. ‘Status of World Forces’, *Federation of American Scientists*, accessed August 2020, <https://fas.org/issues/nuclear-weapons/status-world-nuclear-forces/>
- Merrick, Rob. ‘Sickening’: Jo Swinson condemned for unhesitatingly saying she would use nuclear weapons’, *Independent*, 20 November 2019. Accessed January 2021. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/jo-swinson-nuclear-weapon-button-war-lib-dems-election-debate-a9210456.html>
- ‘New TV advert urges public to stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives’, Department of Health and Social Care press release, UK government, 10 January 2021, accessed February 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-tv-advert-urges-public-to-stay-at-home-to-protect-the-nhs-and-save-lives>
- ‘North Korea’s missile and nuclear programme’, *BBC News*, 9 October 2019, accessed October 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-41174689>

- ‘Protect and Survive: Official advice on how to withstand a no deal Brexit’, *NewStatesman*, 25 July 2018, accessed October 2020, <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/brexit/2018/07/protect-and-survive-official-advice-how-withstand-no-deal-brexit>
- ‘Putin bill to suspend Russia’s participation in nuclear treaty’, *The Independent*, 3 July 2019, accessed October 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-russia-us-nuclear-inf-treaty-trump-intercontinental-ballistic-missiles-a8987281.html>
- ‘Russia v the West: Is this a new Cold War?’, *BBC News*, 1 April 2018, accessed October 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-43581449>
- Sabbagh, Dan. ‘Cap on Trident nuclear warhead stockpile to rise by more than 40%’, *The Guardian*, 15 March 2021, accessed 16 March 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/mar/15/cap-on-trident-nuclear-warhead-stockpile-to-rise-by-more-than-40>
- ‘Scottish referendum: Scotland votes ‘No’ to independence’, *BBC News*, 19 September 2014, accessed October 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-29270441>
- ‘Some excerpts from the new ‘Protect and Survive: Brexit edition’’, *The Poke*, accessed September 2020, <https://www.thepoke.co.uk/2017/03/23/excerpts-new-protect-survive-brexit-edition/>
- ‘Sturgeon wants Scottish independence referendum by 2021’, *BBC News*, 24 April 2019, accessed October 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-48026430>
- Tomorrows World, Children predict the year 2000, *BBC*, 28 December 1966, accessed January 2020. Archived: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/children-predict-the-year-2000-1966/zmts7nb>
- ‘Trump suggests ‘nuking hurricanes’ to stop them hitting America – report’, *The Guardian*, 26 August 2019, accessed October 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/aug/26/donald-trump-suggests-nuking-hurricanes-to-stop-them-hitting-america-report>
- WW2 People’s War Archive, *BBC*, accessed January 2020, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/categories/c1165/>
- Younge, Gary. ‘Britain’s imperial fantasy has given us Brexit’, *The Guardian*, 3 February 2018, accessed January 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/03/imperial-fantasies-brexit-theresa-may>

Secondary Sources

Journal articles, book chapters, books

- Abrams, Lynn. *Oral History Theory*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2010.
- Abrams, Lynn. 'Liberating the female self: epiphanies, conflict, and coherence in the life stories of postwar British women', *Social History* 39(1) (2014): 14-35.
- Alexis Martin, Becky, Emma Wright, Mwenza Blell. *Nuclear Families: A Social Study of British Nuclear Test Veteran Community Families*. University of Southampton, 2019.
- Andrew, Christopher. 'Taking the Long View' in *Out of the Cold: The Cold War and its Legacy* ed. Michael R. Fitzgerald and Allen Packwood, 173-184. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
- Atashroo, A. Hazel. 'Weaponising peace: the greater London Council, cultural policy and GLC peace Year 1983', *Contemporary British History* 33(2) (2018): 170-186.
- Alexander, Sally. "'Do Grandmas Have Husbands?'" Generational Memory and Twentieth-Century Women's Lives.' *The Oral History Review*, 36(2) (2009): 159-176.
- Anderson, Benjamin. *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso, 2006.
- Baylis, John and Kristian Stoddart. 'The British Nuclear Experience: The Role of Ideas and Beliefs (Part One).' *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 23 (2012): 331-346
- Baylis, John and Kristian Stoddart. 'The British Nuclear Experience: the role of beliefs, culture and status (Part Two).' *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 23 (2012): 493-516.
- Baylis, John and Kristian Stoddart. *The British Nuclear Experience: The Role of Beliefs, Culture, and Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Beal, Tim. *North Korea: The struggle against American power*. London: Pluto Press, 2005.
- Bennett, Luke. "Cold War Ruralism: Civil Defense Planning, Country Ways and the Founding of the UK's Royal Observer Corps' Fallout Monitoring Posts Network." *Journal of Planning History* 17(3) (2017): 205-225.
- Bienvenu, Joe O., Lisa A. Wuyek, and Murray B. Stein. 'Anxiety Disorders Diagnosis: Some History and Controversies' in *Behavioural Neurobiology of Anxiety and its Treatment*, edited by Murray Stein and Thomas Steckler, 3-19. Berlin: Current topics in Behavioural Neurosciences, 2009.
- Biess, Frank. 'Everybody has a chance: Nuclear Angst, Civil Defence, and the History of Emotions in Post-war West Germany.' *German History* 27(2) (2009): 215-243.
- Bingham, Adrian. 'The Monster? The British popular press and nuclear culture, 1945-early 1960s.' *British Journal for the History of Science* 45(4) (2012): 609-624.
- Bishop, Thomas. 'We are now a Nation of Minute-Men': Survivalist Masculinity, Fallout Shelters and Cold War America' in *Imagining the End: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Apocalypse*, edited by Thomas Bishop and Jeremy Strong, 19-21. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2015.
- Bluntschli, Johann K. *The Theory of the State*. Kitchener, Ont.: Baroque, 2000.

- Bond, Lucy. *Frames of Memory after 9/11: Culture, criticism, politics, and law*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Bourke, Joanna. 'The emotions in war: fear and the British and American military, 1914-1945.' *Historical Research* 74(185) (2001): 314-330.
- Bourke, Joanna. 'Fear and Anxiety: Writing about Emotion in Modern History', *History Workshop Journal* 55(1) (2003): 111-133.
- Boyer, Paul. *By the Bombs Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.
- Brown, Kate. *Plutopia: nuclear families, atomic cities, and the great Soviet and American plutonium disasters*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Brühöfener, Friederike, 'Politics of Emotions: Journalistic Reflections on the Emotionality of the West German Peace Movement, 1979-1984.' *German Politics and Society* 33(4) (2015): 97-111.
- Bynum, E. David. 'Oral Evidence and the Historian.' *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 8(2/3) (1971): 82-84.
- Byrne, Paul. 'The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: The resilience of a protest group.' *Parliamentary Affairs* 40(4) (1987): 517-535.
- Cantor, David and Edmund Ramsden. 'Introduction' in *Stress, Shock and Adaption in the Twentieth Century* edited by David Cantor and Edmund Ramsden, 1-18. New York; Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2014.
- Carey, Michael J. 'Psychological Fallout.' *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist* 38(1) (1982): 20-24.
- Carroll, Sam. 'Danger! Official Secret: The Spies for Peace: Discretion and Disclosure in the Committee of 100.' *History Workshop Journal* 69(1) (2010): 158-176.
- Chalmers, Malcolm and William Walker. *Uncharted Waters: The UK, Nuclear weapons, and the Scottish question*. East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001.
- Chamberlain, Mary. 'Narrative Theory' in *Handbook of Oral History* edited by Thomas L. Charlton, Lois E. Myers, and Rebecca Sharpless, 384-410. Lanham, Md: AltaMira Press, 2006.
- Champion, Tony. 'People in cities: the numbers.' *Government Office for Science* (UK: June 2014): 25-26.
- Chin, Chuanfei. 'Margins and Monsters: How some Micro Cases lead to Macro Claims.' *History and Theory* 50(3) (2011): 314-357.
- Ciglioni, Laura. 'Italian Public Opinion in the Atomic Age: Mass market Magazines facing Nuclear Issues (1963-1987).' *Cold War History* 17(3) (2017): 205-221.
- Clarke, Harold D. *Brexit: why Britain voted to leave the European Union*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Cohn, Carol. 'Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defence Intellectuals', *Signs* 12(4) (1987): 687-718.
- Comfort, Nathaniel. 'When your sources talk back: Toward a Multimodal approach to scientific biography', *Journal of the History of Biology* 44 (2011): 651-669.

- Conze, Eckart, Martin Klimke, and Jeremy Varon (eds.). *Nuclear Threats, Nuclear Fear and the Cold War of the 1980s*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Coogan, Tim P. *The IRA*. London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006.
- Cook, Simon J. 'The Making of English: English History, British Identity, Aryan Villages, 1870-1914.' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 75(4) (2014): 629-649.
- Cook, John R., and Patrick Murphy, 'After the bomb dropped: the cinema half-life of the War Game (1965).' *Journal of Popular British Cinema* (2000): 129-132.
- Chappel, James. 'Nuclear Families in a Nuclear Age: Theorising the Family in 1950s West Germany.' *Contemporary European History* 26(1) (2017): 85-109.
- Cordle, Dan. 'In Dreams, In imagination, suspense, anxiety, and the Cold War in Tim O'Brien's The Nuclear Age.' *Critical Survey* 19(2) (2007): 101-120.
- Cordle, Dan. 'Protect/Protest: British nuclear fiction of the 1980s', *The British Journal for the History of Science* 45(4) (2012): 653-669.
- Cordle, Dan, 'That's going to happen to us. It is: Threads and the Imagination of Nuclear Disaster on 1980s Television.' *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 10.1 (2013), 71-92.
- Cordle, Dan. *Late Cold War Literature and Culture: The Nuclear 1980s*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
- Cosgrove, Lisa. 'Crying out loud: Understanding Women's Emotional Distress as both lived experience and social construction.' *Feminism and Psychology* 10(2) (2000): 247-267.
- Crane, Susan, A. 'Writing the Individual back into Collective memory.' *The American Historical Review* 102(5) (1997): 1372-1385.
- Davies, Hunter (ed.). *Sellafield Stories: Life with Britain's First Nuclear Plant*. London: Constable & Robinson Ltd, 2012.
- DeGroot, Gerard. *The Bomb: A Life*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2004.
- Denzin, Norman, K. 'Emotion as Lived Experience.' *Symbolic Interaction* 8(2) (1985): 223-240.
- Diamond, Greg and Jerald Bachman. 'High school seniors and the nuclear threat, 1947-1984: political and mental health implications of concern and despair.' *International Journal of Mental Health* 15(1/3) (1986): 210-241.
- Dixon, Paul. 'Northern Ireland and the International Dimension: The End of the Cold War, the USA and European Integration.' *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 13 (2002): 105-120.
- Douthwaite, Jessica. 'Voices of the Cold War in Britain, 1945-1962.' PhD diss., University of Strathclyde, 2018.
- Douthwaite, Jessica. '...what in the hells this? Rehearsing nuclear war in Britain's Civil Defence Corps.' *Contemporary British History* 33(2) (2018): 187-207.
- Eaton, Oline. 'We must be ready every day, all the time: Mid-twentieth-century nuclear anxiety and fear of death in American Life.' *The Journal of American Culture* 40(1) (2017): 66-75.

- Edwards, Rosalind, and Val Gillies. 'Insights from the historical lived experience of a Fragmented Economy of Welfare in Britain: Poverty, Precarity and the Peck Family, 1928-1950.' *Genealogy* 4(1) (2020): 1-14.
- Eley, Geoff. 'Memory and the historians: Ordinary life, eventfulness and the instinctual past' in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War* edited by Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson, xi-xxi. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
- Engster, Daniel. 'Care Ethics and National Law Theory: Toward an Institutional Political Theory of Caring', *The Journal of Politics* 66(1) (2004): 113-135.
- Eschle, Catherine. 'Gender and the subject of (anti)nuclear politics: revisiting women's campaigning against the bomb.' *International Studies Quarterly* 57 (2013): 713-724.
- Eschle, Catherine. Nuclear (in)security in the everyday: Peace campers as everyday security practitioners, *Security Dialogue*, 49(4) (2018): 289-305.
- Errante, Antoinette. 'But sometimes you're not part of the story: oral history and ways of remembering and telling.' *Educational Researcher* 29(2) (2000): 16-27.
- Epstein, William. 'Why States Go – And Don't Go – Nuclear.' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 430 (1977): 16-28.
- Evans, George E. 'Approaches to Interviewing', *Oral History* 1(4) (1972): 56-71.
- Febvre, Lucien. 'La Sensibilit   et l'histoire: Comment reconstituer la vie affective d'autrefois?' *Annales d'histoire sociale* 3 (1941): 5-20.
- Feldman, David, and Jon Lawrence. *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Fine, Gary A. and Michaela de Soucey. 'Joking Cultures: Humour themes as social regulation in group life.' *Humour* 18(1) (2005): 1-22.
- Fleming, Thomas. *Berlin in the Cold War: The Battle for the Divided City*. New York: Berlinica Publishing LLC, 2010.
- Francis, Linda E. 'Laughter, the best Mediation: Humour as Emotion Management in Interaction.' *Symbolic Interaction* 17(2) (1994): 147-163.
- Frisch, Michael. *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History*. Albany; New York: State University of New York Press, 1990.
- Fr  hling, Stephan, and Andrew O'Neil. 'Nuclear weapons and alliance institutions in the era of President Trump', *Contemporary Security Policy* 38(1) (2017): 47-63.
- Fry, R. Amelia and Alice M. Hoffman. 'Oral History.' *The Journal of Literary History* 7(3) (2007): 275-285.
- Fuhrmann, Matthew. 'Taking a walk on the supply side: the determinants of civilian nuclear co-operation.' *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(2) (2009), 181-208.
- Gaddis, John L. *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*. Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Gamson, William A. and David Stuart. 'Media Discourse as a Symbolic Contest: The Bomb in Political Cartoons.' *Sociological Forum* 7 (1992): 55-86.

- Garagozov, Rauf. 'Painful Collective Memory: Measuring Collective Memory Affect in the Karabakh Conflict.' *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 22(1) (2016): 28-35.
- Gay, Peter. *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Goodman, Leo A. 'Snowball Sampling', *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics* 32(1) (1961): 148-170.
- Goodman, Lisa A. John E. Mack, William R. Beardslee and Roberta M. Snow. 'The Threat of Nuclear War and the Nuclear Arms Race: Adolescent Experience and Perceptions.' *Political Psychology* 4(3) (1983): 501-530.
- Goodwin, Geoffrey. *Ethics and Nuclear Deterrence*. London: Croom Helm, 1982.
- Goodwin, Jeff, James Jasper, and Francesca Polleta. *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- Goldenring, John M., and Ron Doctor, 'Teenage worry about nuclear war: North American and European Questionnaire Studies.' *International Journal of Mental Health* 15(1/3) (1986): 72-92.
- Gorry, Jonathan. *Cold War Christians and the spectre of nuclear deterrence, 1945-1959*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Gowing, Margaret. *Independence and Deterrence: Britain and Atomic Energy Vol. 2, 1945-1952*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Grant, Matthew. 'Images of survival, stories of destruction: Nuclear war on British screens from 1945 to the early 1960s.' *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 10(1) (2013): 7-26.
- Grant, Matthew. 'The Imaginative landscape of nuclear war' in *Understanding the Imaginary War: Culture, Thought and Nuclear Conflict, 1945-1990* ed. Matthew Grant and Benjamin Ziemann, 92-115. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.
- Grant, Matthew. 'Historicising Citizenship in postwar Britain.' *The Historical Journal* 59(4) (2016): 1187-1206.
- Grant, Matthew. 'Making sense of nuclear war: narratives of voluntary civil defence and the memory of Britain's Cold War.' *Social History* 44(2) (2019): 229-254.
- Grant, Matthew, and Benjamin Ziemann (eds.). *Understanding the Imaginary War: Culture, Thought and Nuclear Conflict, 1945-1990*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.
- Greenwood, Sean. *Britain and the Cold War 1945-1991*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000.
- Guise, George. 'Margret Thatcher's influence on British science.' *Notes and Records* 68 (2014): 301-309.
- Gusterson, Hugh. 'Nuclear Weapons and the Other in the Western Imagination.' *Cultural Anthropology* 14(1) (1999): 111-143.
- Halttunen, Karen. 'Self, Subject, and the Barefoot Historian', *The Journal of American History* 89(1) (2002): 20-24.
- Hanley, Patricia C., and Daniel Christie. An inventory designed to measure the impact of the Threat of Nuclear war on Adolescents: Dimensions of Fear, Futurelessness and Powerlessness. Published Report, 1-24. Ohio: Ohio State University, 1988.

- Hanley, Patricia C., and Christie Daniel. 'Some Psychological Effects of Nuclear War Education on Adolescents during Cold War II.' *Political Psychology* 15(2) (1994): 177-199.
- Harford, Barbara and Sarah Hopkins. *Greenham Common: Women at the wire*. London: Women's Press, 1984.
- Harrington, Shawn, Orrin Morrison, and Antonio Pascual-Leone. 'Emotional Processing in an expressive writing task on trauma', *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice* 32 (2018): 116-122
- Hecht, Gabrielle. 'Negotiating global nuclearities: apartheid, decolonisation, and the Cold War in the making of the IAEA.' *Osiris* 21 (2006): 25-48.
- Hennessy, Peter. *The Secret State: Preparing for the Worst 1945-2010*. London: Penguin, 2010.
- Hesse, Petra. 'Children's and adolescent's fears of nuclear war: is our sense of the future disappearing?' *International Journal of Mental Health* 15(1/3) (1986): 93-113.
- Hewison, Robert. *In Anger: Culture in the Cold War*. London: Weindenfeld & Nicolson, 1981.
- Herzog, Rudolph. *A short history of nuclear folly*. London: Melville House, 2012.
- Hill, Christopher R. 'Nations of peace: Nuclear Disarmament and the Making of National identity in Scotland and Wales.' *Twentieth Century British History* 27(1) (2015): 26-50.
- Hilgartner, Stephen. 'The social construction of risk objects: or, how to pry open networks of risk' *Organisations, uncertainties and Risk* edited by in James Short and Lee Clarke, 39-53. Boulder: Westview Press, 1992.
- Hodder-Williams, Richard. *Public Opinion and British politics*. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1970.
- Hogg, Jonathan. 'The family that feared tomorrow: British Nuclear Culture and Individual Experience in the late 1950s.' *The British Journal for the History of Science* 45(4) (2012): 535-549.
- Hogg, Jonathan. 'Cultures of nuclear resistance in 1980s Liverpool.' *Urban History* 42(4) (2015): 584-602.
- Hogg, Jonathan. *British Nuclear Culture: Official and Unofficial Narratives in the long 20th century*. London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.
- Hogg, Jonathan, and Christoph Laucht. 'Introduction: British nuclear culture.' *The British Journal for the History of Science* 45(4) (2012): 479-493.
- Hogg, Jonathan, and Kate Brown. 'Introduction: social and cultural histories of British nuclear mobilisation since 1945.' *Contemporary British History* 33(2) (2019): 161-169.
- Holloway, David. 'Nuclear Weapons and the Cold War in Europe' in *Imposing, Maintaining, and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain: The Cold War and East-Central Europe, 1945-1989* edited by Mark Kramer and Vit Smetana, 437-455. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013.
- Holmes, Katie. 'Does it matter if she cried? Recording Emotion and the Australian Generations Oral History Project.' *The Oral History Review* 44(1) (2017): 56-76.
- Hone, Christopher. 'Risks to Ireland from incidents of Sellafield.' *Journal of Radiological Protection* 33 (2013): 247-249.

- Horwitz, Allen. V. *Anxiety*. Baltimore; Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 2013.
- Howard, Juley, and Faith Moulin. *Righteous Anger: One woman's action for peace 1983-1993*. UK: FeedARead Publishing, 2017.
- Hughes, Jeff. 'What is British Nuclear Culture?: Understanding *Uranium 235*.' *The British Journal for the History of Science* 45(4) (2012): 495-518.
- Hunt, Alan. 'Anxiety and Social Explanation: Some Anxieties about Anxiety', *Journal of Social History* 32(3) (1999): 509-528.
- Hunt, Alan. 'The Civilizing Process and Emotional Life: The intensification and Hollowing Out of Contemporary Emotions' in *Emotions Matter: A relational approach to emotions* edited by Alan Hunt, Dale Spencer, Kevin Walby, 137-160. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012.
- Jacobs, Bo. 'Atomic Kids: Duck and Cover and Atomic Alert Teach American Children How to Survive Atomic Attack.' *Film and History* 40(1) (2010): 25-44.
- James, Sarah E. 'A Family Affair: Photography, the Cold War and the Domestic Sphere.' *Photoworks Annual* 20 (2013): 166-177.
- Jamison, Brian P. 'Will they blow us a'tae hell? Strategies and obstacles for the disarmament movement in Scotland' in *Scotland and the Cold War* edited by Brian P. Jamison, 113-145. Glasgow: Bell & Bain, 2003.
- Jessee, Erin. 'The Limits of Oral History: Ethics and Methodology Amid Highly Politicized Research Settings', *The Oral History Review* 38(2) (2011): 287-307.
- Jones, Matt. 'Ending Cold War Fears: expectation and interpretation in Mass Observers' responses to the Gulf War, 1990-1991.' *Contemporary British History* 32(2) (2018): 253-275.
- Kansteiner, Wulf. 'Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies.' *History and Theory* 41(2) (2002): 179-197.
- Kavka, Gregory. *Moral Paradoxes of Nuclear Deterrence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Kearney, Hugh. *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Kendall, Bridget. *The Cold War: A New Oral History*. London: BBC Books, 2017.
- Kessler, Ronald C., Wai T. Chiu, Olga Dermler, and Ellen E. Walters, 'Prevalence's, severity and comorbidity of 12-month DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication.' *Archives of General Psychiatry* 62 (2004): 617-627.
- K'Meyer, Tracy, and A. Glenn Crothers. 'If I see this in writing, I'm going to shoot you': Reluctant narrators, taboo topics, and the ethical dilemmas of the oral historian', *The Oral History Review* 34(1) (2007): 71-93.
- Komorowski, Juilis. 'The End of the Road for action against Trident? Scot's law and the Trident programme' in *Scotland and the Cold War* edited by Brian P. Jamison, 145-187. Glasgow: Bell & Bain, 2003.

- Kramer, Mark. 'Ideology and the Cold War.' *Review of International Studies* 25(3) (1999): 539-576.
- Laplanche, Jean, and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac Books, 1988.
- Lang, Johannes. 'New histories of emotion.' *History and Theory* 57(1) (2018): 104-120.
- Langhamer, Claire. *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Langhamer, Claire. 'Who the hell are ordinary people?' Ordinarity as a category of historical analysis.' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 28 (2018): 175-195.
- Langhamer, Claire. 'Mass Observing the atom bomb: the emotional politics of August 1945.' *Contemporary British history* 33(2) (2018): 208-225.
- Laucht, Christoph. 'Britannia Rules the Atom: The James Bomb Phenomenon and Post-war British Nuclear Culture.' *The Journal of Popular Culture* 46(2) (2013): 358-377.
- Laucht, Christoph and Martin Johnes. 'Resist and Survive: Welsh protests and the British nuclear state in the 1980s.' *Contemporary British History* 33(2) (2018): 226-245.
- Law, John. *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2004.
- Lee, Steven P. *Morality, Prudence and nuclear weapons*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Lifton, Robert J. *Connection: On death and the Continuity of Life*. New York: Touchstone Books, 1979.
- Lifton, Robert J., and Eric Markusen. *The genocidal mentality*. New York: Basic Books, 1988.
- Litchman, Sarah A. 'Do it yourself Security: Safety, Gender, and the Home Fallout Shelter', *Journal of Design History* 19(1) (2006): 39-55.
- Lock, Helen. "'Building up from the Fragments": The Oral Testimony Process in some recent Africa-American written narratives.' *College Literature* 22(3) (1995): 109-120.
- Lowe, David, and Tony Joel. *Remembering the Cold War: Global Contests and National Stories*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Lubot, Rebecca C. 'A Dr Strangelove Situation: Nuclear Anxiety, Presidential Fallibility, and the 25th Amendment.' *Fordham Law Review* 86(3) (2017): 1175-1198.
- Mandler, Peter. 'What is "National Identity?": Definitions and Applications in modern British historiography.' *Modern Intellectual History* 3(2) (2006): 271-297.
- Marsh, Catherine, and Colin Fraser (eds.). *Public Opinion and Nuclear Weapons*. London: Macmillan, 1989.
- Masco, Joseph. "'Survival is your business": engineering ruins and affect in nuclear America.' *Cultural Anthropology* 28 (2008): 361-398.
- Masco, Joseph. *The Nuclear Borderlands: The Manhattan Project in Post-War New Mexico*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013.
- Masco, Joseph. 'Terror as Normality.' *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 69(6) (2013): 26-32.

- Matt, Susan. 'Current emotion research in history: Or, doing history from the inside out', *Emotion Review*, 3(1) (2011): 117-124.
- McDonnell, Janet A. 'Documenting Cultural and Historical Memory: Oral History in the National Park Service.' *The Oral History Review* 30(2) (2003): 99-109.
- McGarry, John and Brendan O'Leary. *Explaining Northern Ireland*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.
- McMahan, Eva. 'Speech and Counterspeech: Language in Use in Oral History Fieldwork', *The Oral History Review* 15(1) (1987): 185-207.
- McSweeney, Bill. *Ireland and the threat of Nuclear War*. Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1985.
- McIntosh, Ian and Sharon Wright. 'Exploring what the notion of 'lived experience' offers for social policy analysis.' *Journal of Social History* 48 (2019): 448-467.
- Miles, Taylor. 'St Stephen's in War and Peace: Civil Defence and the Location of Parliament, 1938-1951.' *Parliamentary History* 38(1) (2019): 135-148.
- Morris, Robert. 'Document to Database and Spreadsheet' in *Research Methods for History* ed. Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire, 152-175. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.
- Mort, Frank. 'Social and symbolic fathers and sons in postwar Britain', *Journal of British Studies* 38 (1999): 353-384.
- Mould, Richard F. *Chernobyl Record: the definitive history of the Chernobyl catastrophe*. Bristol: Institute of Physics Publishing, 2000.
- Mullen, Tom. 'Scottish Independence Referendum, 2014', *Journal of Law and Society* 41(4) (2014): 627-640.
- Nechvatal, Joseph. 'La beauté tragique: Mapping the Militarization of Spatial Cultural Consciousness', *Leonardo* 34(1) (2001): 27-29.
- Newcomb, Michael D. 'Nuclear attitudes and reactions: Associations with depression, drug use, and quality of life.' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50 (1986): 906-920.
- Noakes, Lucy, and Juliette Pattinson, 'Keep calm and carry on: The cultural memory of the Second World War in Britain' past' in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War* edited by Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson, 1-24. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
- Norricks, Neal R. 'Talking about Remembering and Forgetfulness in Oral History Interviews.' *The Oral History Review* 32(2) (2005): 1-20.
- Norricks, Neal R. 'Humour in Oral History Interviews.' *Oral History* 34(2) (2006): 85-94.
- Novick, Peter, *The Holocaust and Collective Memory*. London: Bloomsbury, 2000.
- Novikau, Aliaksandr. 'What is "Chernobyl Syndrome?" The Use of Radiophobia in Nuclear Communications.' *Environmental Communication* 11(6) (2017): 800-809.
- Palmer, Jerry. *Taking Humour Seriously*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Parkhill, Karen A., Karen L. Henwood, Nicholas F. Pidgeon and Peter Simmons. 'Laughing it off? Humour affect and emotion work in communities living with nuclear risk.' *The British Journal of Sociology*, 62.2 (2011): 337-339.

- Parkhill, Karen A., Nick F. Pidgeon, Karen L. Henwood, Peter Simmons and Dan Venbles. 'From the familiar to the extraordinary: local residents' perceptions of risk when living with nuclear power in the UK.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35(1) (2010): 39-58.
- Passerini, Luisa. 'Work, Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism.' *History Workshop* 8 (1979): 82-108.
- Passerini, Luisa. 'Memory', *History Workshop*, 15 (1983): 195-196.
- Peltonen, Matti. 'Clues, Margins, and Monads: The Micro-Macro Link in Historical Research.' *History and Theory* 40(3) (2001): 347-359.
- Peplar, Michael. *Family Matters: A history of ideas about family since 1945*. London: Longman, 2002.
- Pernau, Margrit, and Imke Rajamani. 'Emotional Translations: Conceptual History beyond Language.' *History and Theory* 55 (2016): 45-65.
- Perry, William. *My Journey at the Nuclear Brink*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015.
- Portelli, Alessandro. 'The Peculiarities of Oral History.' *History Workshop* 12 (1981): 96-107.
- Portelli, Alessandro. 'What makes Oral History Different' in *The Oral History Reader. Third Edition*, edited by Rob Perks and Alistair Thompson, 32-42. Milton Park; Abington: Routledge, 2016.
- Pressler, Michael. 'Atomic Warfare and the Nuclear Family: Domestic Resistance in Hollywood Films about the A-Bomb', *Film Criticism* 27(3) (2003): 40-52.
- Preston, John. 'Protect and Survive: 'Whiteness' and the Middle-class in Civil Defence Pedagogies.' *Journal of Education Policy*, 23(5) (2007): 469-482.
- Preston, John. 'The Strange Death of UK Civil Defence Education in the 1980s.' *History of Education* 44(2) (2015): 225-242.
- Proctor, Samuel. 'Oral History comes of Age', *The Oral History Review* 3 (1975): vi+1-4.
- Ptacek, Carmen. 'The Nuclear Age: Context for Family Interaction.' *Family Relations* 37(4) (1988): 437-443.
- Raudalen, Magne and Ole J. Finney. 'Children's and Teenager's views of the future.' *International Journal of Mental Health* 15(1/3) (1986): 114-125
- Reynolds, Rauf. 'Trauma and the Relational Dynamics of Life History Interviewing.' *Australian Historical Studies* 43(1) (2012): 78-88.
- Reddy, William. 'Against Constructionism: The Historical Ethnography of Emotions.' *Current Anthropology* 38(3) (1997): 327-351.
- Reddy, William. *Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the history of emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II*. Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1991.
- Riera, Monica, and Gavin Schaffer (eds.). *The Lasting War: Society and Identity in Britain, France, and Germany after 1945*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

- Ritchie, Nick. 'Relinquishing nuclear weapons: identities, networks and the British bomb', *International Affairs* 86(2) (2010): 465-487.
- Ritchie, Nick. 'Nuclear identities and Scottish Independence.' *The Non-Proliferation Review* 23(5) (2016): 653-675.
- Roberts, Walter (ed.) *Nuclear Weapons and Christian Conscience*. London: Merlin Press, 1963.
- Rootes, Christopher. 'The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: from Moral Crusade to Mobilisation of Anxiety' in *Public Opinion and Nuclear Weapons* edited by Catherine Marsh and Colin Fraser. London: Macmillan, 1989.
- Rosenthal, Peggy. 'The Nuclear Cloud as Cultural Image.' *American Literary History* 3(1) (1991): 63-92.
- Rosenwein, Barbara H. 'Worrying about emotions in history.' *American Historical Review*, 107(3) (2002): 821-845.
- Rosenwein, Barbara H. *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007.
- Rosenwein, Barbara H. "Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions." *Passions in Context: Journal of the History and Philosophy of the Emotions* 1/1 (2010): https://www.passionsincontext.de/uploads/media/01_Rosenwein.pdf
- Ryan, Kathleen. 'I didn't do anything important': A pragmatist analysis of the oral history interview', *The Oral History Review* 36(1) (2009): 25-44.
- Saito, Hiro. 'Reiterated Commemoration: Hiroshima as National Trauma.' *Sociological Theory* 24(4) (2006): 353-376.
- Samuel, Raphael (ed), *Village Life and Labour*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.
- Samuel, Raphael. 'British Dimensions: 'Four Nations History.' *History Workshop Journal*, 40 (1995): iii-xxii.
- Samuel, Raphael, and Paul Thompson (eds.). *The Myths We Live By*. London; New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Sandmire, David, Nancy E. Rankin, Sarah R. Gorham, Daniel T. Eggleston, Cecelia A. French, Emily E. Lodge, Gavin C. Kuns, David R. Grimm. 'Psychological and automatic effects of art making in college-aged students.' *Anxiety Stress Coping* 29(5) (2016): 561-569.
- Schatz, Robert T., and Susan T. Fiske. 'International Reactions to the threat of nuclear war: the rise and fall of concern in the eighties.' *Political Psychology* 13(1) (1992): 1-29.
- Scheer, Monique. 'Are emotions a kind of practice (and is that what makes them have a history)? A Bourdieuan approach to understanding emotion', *History and Theory* 51 (2012): 193-220.
- Schlosser, Eric. *Command and Control: The story of nuclear weapons and the illusion of safety*. London: Penguin, 2013.
- Schregel, Susanne. 'Nuclear war and the city: perspectives on municipal interventions in defence (Great Britain, New Zealand, West Germany, USA, 1980-1985).' *Urban History* 42(4) (2015): 564-583.

- Schwebel, Milton. 'The Construction of Reality in the Nuclear Age.' *Political Psychology*, 11(3) (1990): 521-552.
- Scott, Len V. *Macmillan, Kennedy, and the Cuban Missile Crisis: political, military and intelligence aspects*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999.
- Shaw, Tony. 'The Politics of Cold War Culture.' *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3(3) (2001): 59-76.
- Shaw, Tony. *British Cinema and the Cold War: The State, Propaganda, and Consensus*. London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006.
- Shaw, Tony. 'The BBC, the State and Cold War Culture: The Case of Television's The War Game (1965).' *English Historical Review* CXXXI(494) (2006): 1351-1384.
- Sheftel, Anna, and Stacey Zembrzycki. 'Who's afraid of oral history? Fifty years of debates and anxiety about ethics', *The Oral History Review* 43(2) (2016): 338-366.
- Shopes, Linda. 'Oral History and the Study of Communities: Problems, Paradoxes, and Possibilities.' *Journal of American History* 89.2 (2002), 588-598.
- Sidman, Murray. 'Anxiety.' *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 108(6) (1964): 478-481.
- Simpson, Julian M., and Stephanie J. Snow, 'Why we should try to get the joke: Humour, Laughter, and the History of Healthcare.' *The Oral History Review* 44(1) (2007): 77-93.
- Singer, Eric S. 'Civil Defence in the city: federal policy meets local resistance in Baltimore, 1957-1964.' *Urban History* 42(4) (2015): 547-563.
- Smith, Tom W. 'A Report: Nuclear Anxiety.' *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 52(4) (1988): 557-575
- Stafford, James. "'Stay at home": the politics of nuclear civil defence, 1968-1983.' *Twentieth Century British History* 23(3) (2012): 383-407.
- Stearn, Sheldon. *The Cuban Missile Crisis in American Memory myths verses reality*. California: Stanford University Press, 2012.
- Stearns, Peter. 'Shame, and a Challenge for Emotions History', *Emotion Review* 8(3) (2016): 197-206.
- Stearns, Peter, and Carol Z. Stearns. 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards.' *The American Historical Review* 90(4) (1985): 813-836.
- Stearns, Peter and Carol Stearns, *Anger: The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's History*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- Stephens, Julie. 'Our remembered selves: Oral History and Feminist Memory', *Oral History* 81 (2010): 81-90.
- Stewart, Graham. *A History of Britain in the 1980s*. London: Atlantic Books, 2013.
- Stoddart, Kristian. *Losing an Empire and finding a role: Britain, USA, NATO and nuclear weapons, 1964-1970*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Stone, Michael, H. 'History of Anxiety Disorders' in *The American Psychiatric Publishing textbook of anxiety disorders* edited by Dan J. Stein and Eric Hollander, 3-12. Washington: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2002.

- Stoner Saunders, Frances. *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*. London: Granta Publications, 1999.
- Summerfield, Penny. *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives: Discourse and subjectivity in oral histories of the Second World War*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988.
- Summerfield, Penny. 'Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews.' *Cultural and Social History* 1 (2004): 69-70.
- Summerfield, Penny. 'Film and the Popular Memory of the Second World War in Britain, 1950-59' in *Gender, Labour, War, and Empire: Essays on Modern Britain* edited by Philippa Levine and Susan R. Grayzel, 157-175. Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Summerfield, Penny. 'The generation of memory: Gender and the popular memory of the Second World War in Britain' in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War* edited by Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson, 25-46. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
- Summerfield, Penny. 'Concluding Thoughts: performance, the self, and women's history', *Women's History Review*, 22(2) (2013): 345-352.
- Summerfield, Penny. 'Oral History as Autobiographical Practice', *Miranda* 12 (2016): 1-15.
- Taylor, Barbara. 'Historical Subjectivities' in *History and Psyche: Palgrave Studies in Cultural and Intellectual History* by Alexander Taylor, 195-210. Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2012.
- Tevzadze, Natia. 'National Identity and National Consciousness.' *History of European Ideas*, 19(1-3) (1994): 437-440.
- Thane, Pat. 'Family Life and "Normality" in Postwar British Culture' in *Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s* edited by Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann, 193-210. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Thearle, Lelia and Helen Weinreich-Haste. 'Ways of dealing with the nuclear threat: coping and defence among British Adolescents.' *International Journal of Mental Health* 15(½) (1986): 126-127.
- Thompson, Edward P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991.
- Thompson, Martyn P. 'Reception Theory and the Interpretation of Historical Meaning.' *History and Theory* 32(3) (1993): 248-272.
- Thompson, Paul. 'Problems of method in Oral History', *Oral History* 1(4) (1972): 1-47
- Thomson, Alistair. 'Fifty Tears On: An International Perspective on Oral History.' *The Journal of American History* 85(2) (1998): 581-595.
- Thomson, Alistair. 'Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History', *The Oral History Review* 34(1) (2007): 49-70.
- Thomson, Alistair. 'Memory and Remembering in Oral History' in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* edited by Donald A. Ritchie, 77-95. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

- Todd, Selina. 'Class, experience, and Britain's Twentieth century.' *Social History* 39(4) (2014): 489-508.
- Towsey, Mark. *Reading History in Britain and America, c.1750-1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Tracy, Sarah J., Karen K. Myers, and Clifton W. Scott. 'Cracking Jokes and Crafting Selves: Sensemaking and Identity Management among human service workers.' *Communication Monographs* 73(3) (2006): 283-308.
- Tyler-May, Elaine. *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*. New York: Basic Books, 2008.
- Veatch, Thomas C. 'A Theory of Humour.' *Humour-International Journal of Humour Research* 11(2) (1998): 161-216.
- Veldman, Meredith. *Fantasy, the Bomb, and the Greening of Britain: Romantic Protest, 1945-1980*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Vinen, Richard. *Thatcher's Britain: The politics and social upheaval of the 1980s*. London: Simon & Schuster, 2009.
- von der Goltz, Anna. 'Other '68ers in West Berlin: Christian Democratic Students and the Cold War City.' *Central European History* 50(1) (2017): 86-112
- Warner, Daniel. 'Working Class Culture and Practice amid Urban Renewal and Decline: Liverpool, c.1945-1985.' PhD diss., University of Liverpool, 2018.
- Welsh, Ian. 'The NIMBY Syndrome: Its Significance in the history of the Nuclear Debate in Britain.' *The British Journal for the History of Science* 26(1) (1993): 15-32.
- Weart, Spencer. *Nuclear Fear: A History of Images*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Weart, Spencer. *The Rise of Nuclear Fear*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012.
- Wetherell, Margaret. *Affect and Emotion: A new social science understanding*. London: Sage, 2012.
- Willis, Kirk. 'The Origins of British Nuclear Culture, 1895-1939,' *Journal of British Studies* 34(1) (1995): 59-89.
- Willis, Kirk. 'God and the Atom: British Churchmen and the Challenge of Nuclear Power, 1945-50', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 29.3 (1997): 422-457.
- Wittner, Lawrence. 'Gender Roles and Nuclear Disarmament Activism, 1954-1965', *Gender and History* 12(1) (2000): 197-222.
- White, Helen. 'Thoughts on Oral History', *The American Archivist*, 20(1) (1957): 19-30.
- Worley, Matthew. *No future: punk politics and British youth culture, 1976-1984*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Wynne, Brian. "May the Sheep Safely Graze? A Reflexive View of the Expert-Lay Knowledge Divide." In *Risk, Environment, and Modernity: Toward a New Ecology* edited by Scott Lash, Bronislaw Szerszynski, and Brian Wynne, 44-83. London: SAGE, 1998.

- Young, Allison. *Femininity in Dissent*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Young, Ken. 'Special Weapon, Special Relationship: The Atomic bomb comes to Britain.' *Journal of Military History* 77 (2013): 569-598.
- Yow, Valerie. 'Ethics and Interpersonal relationships in oral history research', *The Oral History Review* 22(1) (1995): 51-66.
- Yow, Valerie. 'Do I like them too much: effects of the oral history interview on the interviewer and vice-versa.' *Oral History Review* 24(1) (1997): 55-79.
- Zahra, Tara. 'Imagined Non-communities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis.' *Slavic Review* 69(1) (2010): 93-119.
- Zelan, Joseph. 'Interviewing the Aged', *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 33(3) (1969): 420-424
- Zeldin, Theodore. 'Personal History and the History of Emotions', *Journal of Social History* 15(3) (1982): 339-347.
- Zittoun, Tania. 'Dynamic Memories of the collective past', *Culture and Psychology*, 23(2) (2017): 295-305.
- Zonabend, Françoise. *The Nuclear Peninsula*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Zwigenberg, Ran. 'The Atomic City: Military Tourism and Urban Identity in Postwar Hiroshima.' *American Quarterly* 68(3) (2016): 617-642.