

ABC's "Amerika" undermines UN, fuels world paranoia

by George Beres

Never has the need for what the United Nations represents been greater. Yet, in recent years, true support for the U.N. in this country seems to have been limited to the efforts of dedicated women in behalf of UNICEF.

The United Nations has become the favorite whipping boy of everyone; not just the inhibited, right-wing isolationist, but all who look for an easy scapegoat for the world's troubles.

As we listen to the hawks of the world talk of how 41 years have passed without the start of a third world war, we're all too ready to accept their claim: that it is the nuclear stalemate—the threat of nuclear retaliation—that has prevented that third war.

Has it occurred to anyone that the efforts of the U.N.—no matter how much we ridicule it, and even as we cripple it—may be the reason war has not begun?

Now the time has come for those who believe in, and depend on, what the United Nations symbolizes to take

some action. The urgency is because the U.N., with all the good it has done and all the potential good it represents, is about to come under serious attack by a television network.

ABC-TV has an anti-U.N. program in production. It is called "Amerika." It's not about the Statue of Liberty or Christopher Columbus. It is spelled with a "k" instead of a "c" to represent a Soviet-controlled "Amerika." The program's premise is that the Soviet Union could use the United Nations to accomplish a takeover of the United States.

If this simply were a half-hour Halloween feature, it still might be unsettling. But at least then it might be placed in perspective: a Sleepy Hollow type fairy tale. Unfortunately, it is much more serious. It is proposed as a six-part, 12-hour miniseries to be shown February 15-22.

The impact just one movie-length program can have on an absorbed audience is well documented. One can imagine the effect that the equivalent of six consecutive films, a series, can

The program's premise is that the Soviet Union could use the United Nations to accomplish a takeover of the United States.

have on the attitudes of a nation.

No one suggests that a network has a vendetta toward the United Nations, or that it doesn't believe in peace. What it does believe in is commercial ratings. Its focus is programming that sells—that earns high viewer ratings and makes a profit through commercial advertisers.

ABC-TV probably already has its series of disclaimers ready, explaining after each program how the series is fictional. But there's no way to write a disclaimer to offset the impact of a six-part series on the views of a TV public already infected with a phobia of the so-called Soviet "evil empire" and with a knee-jerk cynicism toward the United Nations.

Such a series will feed the paranoia that already troubles so many of

us. It will offset efforts of our government and of many groups in our society to create better understanding among people of the world—especially between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Censorship has no place in our society. Our government could not stop the program. Our Constitution rightly protects freedom of expression, including that of the TV network.

But freedom of expression does not allow one to shout "Fire!" in a crowded theater. Nor does it justify a TV network lighting a match in the tinderbox of world paranoia.

There is a recourse for those who recognize the tragic implications of such TV brainwashing. Since broadcast operations carry programs to get the high ratings that produce adver-

tising profit, the pocketbook is where they are sensitive. That's where the issue should be dealt with: in the pocketbook.

The program's advertisers should be lobbied by those who see the damage "Amerika" can do to the cause of conflict resolution and peace.

Jim Putney, general manager of the CBS affiliate in Eugene, said one must be aware that registering complaints about a program "likely serves only to fuel public interest in the program."

In an age of risk-taking, that's a valid risk to be taken. The complaint—raised by enough of the thinking public around the country—could stop advertisers from supporting such a show in the future.

The Chrysler Corporation has withdrawn its advertising from the miniseries "Amerika." Beres feels it was influenced by nation-wide negative reactions to the series.

[George Beres is a member of the Social Concerns Committee of the Unitarian Church of Lane County.]

POPULAR MECHANICS.

west side
FOREIGN AUTO

Maintenance & Repair
1069 W. 3rd
484-4930

Larry Weinstein, L.Ac.
announces the opening of his new acupuncture office at
260 E. 15th Street Suite A
Eugene, Oregon 97401
344-5882

Touch of Class Clothing

Quality Resale in Natural Fibers for women and children

50% OFF Winter Clothes
Come see our new shipment of clothes from San Francisco!

We pay more for your used clothing!

2650 Willamette • 343-0095
Mon-Fri. 10-5:30/Saturday 10-5

Ski Bus!

Tickets available at Brother Jonathan's
13th & Oak, 343-6088



\$7.50 Round Trip


Iron Horse Stage Lines
Willamette Pass • Odell Lake Lodge
Phone 688-3253
Also available for charter

What's Happening Office Hours
Monday-Friday
9-4

FREE INITIAL EXAMINATION AND CONSULTATION WITH THIS COUPON

Diagnostic X-Rays \$10
Free Nitrous Oxide (Gas)
Stereo Headphones Available
Gentle Economical Dentistry

Thomas Kopriva, D.D.S.
General Dentistry
340 W. 10th Ave. • 484-9175



• Non-Force Adjustment
• Nutritional Counseling
• Applied Kinesiology

Dr. Arthur R. Ticknor
Chiropractor
Phone (503) 342-4216

Avalon Chiropractic Health Center
1846 Pearl Street, Eugene, Oregon 97401



ENID R. LEONARD, M.Ed.
Certified Hypnotherapist

is pleased to announce the opening of her office

1059 Hilyard Street
Eugene, Oregon 97401
345-9387

Ethical Hypnotherapy Specializing in

- Progressive relaxation
- Self enhancement
- Addictive behaviors
- Weight control
- Stress reduction
- Pain relief

STEREO PROBLEMS?

SEE US AT OUR NEW LOCATION
1457 W. 6th

Authorized Factory Service: Pioneer, Sony, Yamaha, Nakamichi, JVC, Kenwood & most other major brands.

Jim's Jelectronics

FACTORY SERVICE SPECIALISTS
1457 W. 6th 343-7683



What's Happening

Published Every Thursday

Publishers
Elisabeth Lyman
Lucia McKelvey
Sonja Ungemach

Editor
Lucia McKelvey

Advertising Manager
Elisabeth Lyman

Production Manager
Sonja Ungemach

Office Manager/Production
Sheri Longobardo

Assistant Editor
Deborah McGee

Cover Design
Melanie Pratt

Advertising Representatives
Susan Brokaw
Ken Hof
Martha Wagner
Garde Wells
Randy Yost

Contributing Writers
Deborah McGee
Jim Stiak
Michael Sussman
Lois Wadsworth
Martha Wagner

Photographer
David Stein

Distribution
Daybreak News Co.

Typesetting
ProtoType

Camera Work
Graphics Unlimited

Printing
Springfield News

335 West 20th Avenue
Eugene, Oregon 97405
(503) 484-0519

Copyright 1987 What's Happening.
All rights reserved.