

Anti-nuclear activist urges end to arms race

By DOUG FICK
Of the Emerald

Activist David MacReynolds urges people to unite and fight non-violently to end the nuclear arms race and nuclear power in the United States.

MacReynolds, a member of the American Socialist Party and the War Resisters League, is a longtime opponent of nuclear power and the arms race. He and six other American pacifists recently protested U.S.-Soviet arms build-up.

MacReynolds appeared on campus Monday and Tuesday in conjunction with a series of nuclear alternative events sponsored by various environmental and anti-war groups in the area.

MacReynolds says he believes that the "inherent problem of madness" of the human race has spurred a U.S.-Soviet fight for nuclear superiority that can have no winner.

"Today, in one-half hour, the Soviet Union can lay this country to waste. It is comforting, however, to realize that we can destroy the Soviet Union.

"We must realize that our safety relies upon our ability to kill every Soviet citizen simply because they are Russian," says MacReynolds.

The vast U.S. and Soviet nuclear arsenals have created an environment in which a human error or rash judgement could begin a disastrous nuclear exchange, he says. He cites a recent incident at a U.S. military command station in Colorado as an example. The station's computers indicated that Soviet missiles had been launched at the United States, but a computer check during the last stages of preparation for a counter-attack revealed the Soviet "missiles" were actually the rising moon.

The effects of the moon had not been programmed into the computers.

"We nearly had WW III because of the rising of the moon," he says.

MacReynolds also emphasizes the negative social and economic consequences of the arms race.

The belief that military spending creates jobs and spurs the economy is a fallacy, he says.

Weapons production is an irregular business, and job security in that industry is lower than in any other. Workers, he

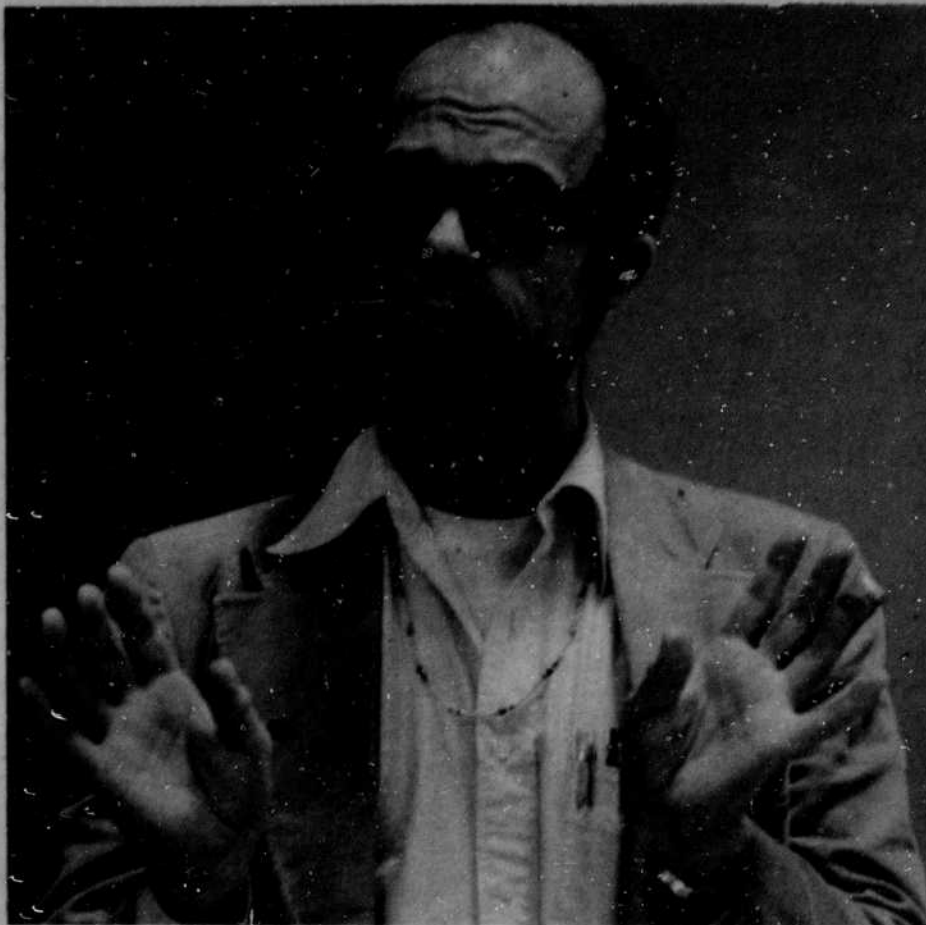


Photo by Erich Boekelheide

David MacReynolds

says, have little or no insurance against lay-offs because their jobs depend upon weapons contracts which are awarded on an irregular basis."

MacReynolds says inflation is rooted in the military budget. The military uses manpower and money to produce products that cannot be used by the general public and the economy does not benefit from military spending.

He stresses that the military monopolizes individuals whose talents could be used more beneficially in the private sector.

"If you want to cut inflation, you have to think seriously about cutting the military budget."

Significant progress toward total nuclear disarmament can only occur if the United States begins to disarm unilaterally, he says, adding he is confident that if the United States voluntarily cuts back its nuclear stockpile, the Soviet Union would also make arms cut-backs.

MacReynolds says he has little faith in the effectiveness of disarmament negotiations which are conducted under a "restrictive feeling of distrust and paranoia."

Progress made during U.S.-Soviet disarmament negotiations is unfavorably offset by increased military spending, he says. Because the support of military leaders is essential to the success of treaty negotiations and ratification they use their influence to demand increased military spending and

new nuclear weapons systems.

MacReynolds cites the Salt II treaty as an example, stressing that the Carter administration's efforts to gain ratification of the treaty have included promises of increased military spending and deployment of the new MX missile system.

"The only encouragement to the Russians is that the people who are building the MX missiles are the same people who built the DC 10."

MacReynolds supports the Salt

II treaty even though he believes it is not a positive step toward disarmament, but a token show of American support for détente.

MacReynolds is also concerned with the effects of nuclear power.

"The worst possible accident that could have occurred at Three Mile Island is better than the best possible result of a nuclear weapon detonation," he says.

The dangers of nuclear power are not as great as those presented by nuclear weapons, he says. Human error, waste disposal and the difficulties presented by decommissioning nuclear reactors are the greatest dangers of nuclear power.

MacReynolds says high costs, poor use of labor and safety flaws were graphically illustrated by the Three Mile Island accident, and as a result the popularity of nuclear power in this country is declining.

The primary threat of nuclear power, he says, is the exportation of nuclear power to other countries.

"Jesus Christ, what you are doing is selling nuclear reactors

to nations that can make weapons out of them."

The nuclear power and nuclear weapons industries can be shut down if protestors are prepared to provide job alternatives for those presently employed in the nuclear industry, he says.

MacReynolds said the facilities producing nuclear technology can be successfully converted to produce other products using the same labor.

Most nuclear production facilities, he argues, could be easily converted to produce trains and urban mass-transit systems.

MacReynolds, an avowed socialist, believes a significant United States nuclear power and weapons policy change cannot occur under this country's capitalist system.

The fight to end nuclear power and the arms race must be a non-violent fight, he insists.

Violence, MacReynolds says, will cause a loss of public support for the protest movement.

"What you want to build is a decent society...and guns don't build a decent society."

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