

# Anti-Nuclear Countdown

THE WORKS OF MERCY  
FEED THE HUNGRY.  
CLOTHE THE NAKED.  
GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY.  
VISIT THE IMPRISONED.  
CARE FOR THE SICK.  
BURY THE DEAD.



THE WORKS OF WAR  
DESTROY CROPS AND LAND.  
SEIZE FOOD SUPPLIES.  
DESTROY HOMES.  
SCATTER FAMILIES.  
CONTAMINATE WATER.  
IMPRISON DISSENSERS.  
INFLECT WOUNDS.  
BURNS.  
KILL THE LIVING.

Rita Corbin

by Richard Reeves

H. Jack Geiger is not a particularly good speaker, but two thousand, seven hundred people paid to listen to him on the last Saturday of October. Without gesture, expression or modulation, he droned on:

"The shelters would be turned into crematoriums, all life would be incinerated there. . . I haven't mentioned blindness from retinal burns. . . lung collapses within eleven miles. . . on a clear day in the city (which in this instance was Los Angeles) there would be more third-degree burns cases than there are treatment facilities in the entire world. . .

"What are the total numbers? In a single one-megaton airblast, if you assume a firestorm, there would be nine hundred and eighty-seven thousand killed and one-point-four million seriously injured (in the Los Angeles

area) — twenty-eight percent of the population. The numbers for a single twenty-megaton airblast would be three-point-eight million killed and two-point-five million seriously injured. Seventy-five percent."

That's what some Americans were listening to on a perfect, eighty-degree day in Southern California. More than sixteen hundred of them were physicians, nurses and medical students. Each paid forty-five dollars to attend the one-day symposium on "The Medical Consequences of Nuclear Weapons and Nuclear War." The rest of the crowd at the Bonaventure Hotel paid fifteen dollars each.

Doctor Geiger, a professor of community medicine at the City College of New York, was one of fourteen speakers on the nine-hour program organized by two Boston organizations — Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Council for a Livable World.

Los Angeles was the seventh city in which the traveling program had appeared. In each place, the doctors had pro-

## The Doomsday Campaigners

by D. Yakushkin

Imagine that America switched on its television sets and heard a young serviceman on a missile base in North Dakota declare, "Personally I would not like a nuclear war to break out. I don't want people I don't know to die or cities I never saw to disappear." The young man did not say these words but instead told a correspondent for CBS-TV what he apparently believed more strongly: "I don't want to know anything about the cities the missiles are targeted at. Then I would get too emotionally involved."

The television people included the filmed conversation in a documentary, "The Defense of the United States." It was only one of the program's episodes. There was also a simulated explosion of a Soviet nuclear warhead over the city of Omaha. The simulation cost \$87,000 to produce — tens of thousands of dollars spent to engender fear in ordinary Americans.

Americans are being assiduously served up talk about the inevitable nuclear apocalypse — a kind of twentieth century "day of judgement." This myth enters American homes every hour from the pages of newspapers and from television screens. The mindboggling, ominous "explosion" over Omaha is not a fortituous episode in this mass hypnosis. Another link in the chain is the June issue of The Washingtonian aimed at the capital's elite, which carries an article titled "The Unthinkable."

"The U.S.S.R. regards Washington as the top prize in a nuclear war," says the highly detailed account of "what the Soviet Union will do to achieve its cherished objective." A schematic map shows in detail what devastation a Soviet attack will cause.

One can read even scarier things in America. For example, two staffers at the Hudson Institute, a conservative "think tank," calculate that twenty million Americans would perish in a nuclear war — after which, they say, there will be a reconstruction of the world consistent with Western standards. Won't such a conclusion encourage some hothead at the Pentagon to eliminate with one fell swoop all the complexities of the modern world, with its "Red danger," "arm of Moscow," "Soviet military threat," and so on? One can only hope there exist people in America who,

upon hearing the irresponsible pseudo-scientists, will say, "Oh, that is the ravings of madmen, on whom the fate of the world, fortunately, does not depend."

That is true, but the people in the U.S. on whom a great deal does depend do not always make clear their views on these issues. "There are things more important than peace," the Secretary of State has said. The President himself says nothing definite, and therefore does not reject the ravings. At a press conference he simply evaded a question about whether a limited war in Europe is possible.

It therefore seems natural that the Administration's shameless militarism is successfully used by ultrarightists and ultraconservatives in the U.S. The notorious American Security Council recently subsidized the screening of the film "The SALT Syndrome" with great publicity and five million dollars for distribution throughout America.

The film is about the fabricated weakness of America and the invented superiority of the Russians. In it well-known American politicians and military men speak of the U.S. defense "lag." Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger: "Seldom in human history has one nation reacted so passively to a change in the balance of power in the adversary's power." Secretary of State Haig: "All our previous strategic doctrines were immoral — they were all defeatist."

The enemies of peace and disarmament do not always act brazenly and overtly. They often hide behind the mask of "objectivity." In The Washingtonian the author cites the international conference of physicians held late last March near Washington. Participants discussed the "unthinkable" — the possibility of nuclear war — the author asserts, which they deem close and inevitable.

But the cruel truth about which the Soviet, American, and British doctors cautioned the world was pointed out only to warn mankind against the consequences of nuclear war, and not for the purpose of bringing it closer. The physicians discussed the subject without the ulterior motive with which the enemies of peace in the U.S. prod mankind toward the brink of war — and toward catastrophe!

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duced maps and numbers showing the predictable devastation of a nuclear bomb exploding over City Hall. The symposia are supposedly designed to prepare the local medical establishment to deal with the ultimate epidemic.

But, of course, the doctors, most of them, and the hospitals, most of them, would be wiped out too. So, the real purpose of the programs is not medical but political — and that was underscored in Los Angeles by the appearance of John Kenneth Galbraith, whose doctorate is not in medicine.

The crowds keep growing. The first symposium, in Boston, drew seven hundred people. The biggest, before Los Angeles, drew twelve hundred in Seattle.

This is the beginning. I will be very surprised if the two thousand, seven hundred in Los Angeles do not become the American equivalent of the hundreds of thousands demonstrating against nuclear weapons in West Germany and France and the rest of Western Europe. And then they will become millions across the United States.

"Ban the Bomb" faded in the 1960s, and the governments of the West, particularly the United States government, were free for a while to build and deploy any horror the mind of man could conceive without significant public debate. The governments of the East, particularly the U.S.S.R., have always been free to do whatever they could because they are willing to jail and kill to prevent debate.

The dialogue has begun in Western Europe, where many think it is insanity to allow their cities and fields to become testing ranges or battlegrounds for Russian and American weaponry. It was sobering and enlightening to watch the demonstrations in Europe last month and listen, as I did, to young Frenchmen say they believe that President Reagan wants to confront Russia on their territory.

No, I said. Yes — or maybe — Reagan said a week later; maybe we could fight a nuclear war and limit the destruction to Europe. We must be crazy if we think many Europeans won't oppose that — and if we think Russian propagandists will not energetically exploit the bomb talk coming out of Washington these days.

It is going to be a difficult time in the great nations, the nations where speech is free. A free people want the choice of whether to use the tools of mass death to preserve their way of life. Some will argue "never;" others will argue that death is the price of free life. But the debate was inevitable in our time — in all times, now that the atom has been split — and it will soon be tearing the country apart.

Richard Reeves is a syndicated columnist. This article has been reprinted from the Oregon Journal.

## A Gaffe in Time

It is difficult to avoid making cheap points when State Department officials have to put out statements "clarifying" on the record remarks by the President of the United States. At the very least Mr. Reagan's laid-back style of executive management, which may have served well enough in the Governor's Mansion in Sacramento, is looking increasingly incompetent in the White House. If the gentleman can make such unforced errors when talking to a group of newspaper editors, what is the guarantee that he will think straight under any real pressure?

But this is not the root problem of the present Administration's relations with its natural friends and allies. And, in any case, Mr. Reagan can perhaps be forgiven for not realising that some unstartling remarks about the nature of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe would reverberate so loudly off the sounding board of the West German peace movement. He was reported as if he saw limited nuclear exchanges in Europe as a likely form of hot war between the United States and the Soviet Union. The text of what he said was that he "didn't honestly know" whether or not a tactical exchange would at once escalate to the point where one of the major powers felt forced to "push the button." He was simply making a banal if unguarded restatement of what has been the position ever since tactical nukes were first deployed in the field. More Ken Livingstone than Doctor Strangelove.

The basic problem is the accumulating evidence that the President of the United States is surrounding himself with advisors whose sophistication in international affairs is inadequate and whose prejudices and perception about the world are not those of most Europeans (or most allies).

The quality of the thinking of those who have been close to the President emerged in the recent remarks by Major General Schweitzer, who was at the time head of the defense group of the National Security Council. He has been dismissed for not clearing his remarks in advance, but the vision of the Soviet Union and its military intentions which the general has presumably until now been providing to those in charge of American security is so counterfactual as to be plain dangerous. . . Soviets on the move. . . Republic in its greatest danger since its founding days. . . Soviet superiority in all three legs of the strategic nuclear triad. . . church leaders not being helpful by opposing anti-Communists in Latin America. . . drift to war," and much more besides. The question is not whether he should have been sacked, but how he came to be appointed in the first place.

The celebrated military-industrial complex in the United States is quite



"Tell me General, if there were to be a nuclear war in Europe, where would the modern-day equivalent of Pearl Harbour be?"

open about what it is doing. It wants substantial new military programs — bigger and harder protected land-based missiles, the B-1 strategic bomber, anti-ballistic missiles. In order to create the political climate required to get the required Congressional funding, it has to bring American public opinion to believe that a major strategic nuclear gap has opened in the Soviets' favor and that this is the most dangerous hour in the history of the Republic. There are, of course, politicians and civil servants in Washington who take what we should regard as a more realistic view of world trends: who know that supporting corrupt regimes simply because they are anti-Communist is a costly and dangerous policy; that tribalism is more important than communism in Africa; that the Soviet Union desperately needs arms limitation; and that the Kremlin is harassed enough over what to do now in Poland and Afghanistan. But somehow the American system buries them under layers of tyros, each thinking that he is a new Metetrnich come to judgement. The Reagan Administration must be brought to see that being anti-American and being deeply critical of American policy and practice are not at all the same thing.

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