

Who's afraid of a 'nuclear winter'?

by Ned Rosinsky

Carl Sagan's "nuclear winter" is typical of the scare stories circulated over the past several years by an anti-nuclear activist group known as Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR). Like the Pugwash Conference that spawned it, PSR brings together Soviet advocates of (Western) disarmament with their American counterparts.

From the U.S. side, Averell Harriman, the Democratic Party's aging Nazi eugenicist and "Soviet handler," chaired the committee which sponsored a fund-raising concert for PSR last month, while Cyrus Vance and Paul Warnke have spoken at PSR "anti-war" conferences. Soviet collaborators include Dr. Evgeni Chasov, the late Leonid Brezhnev's personal physician and a Communist Party Central Committee member, who, along with other Soviet doctors, joined with PSR to found the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War in 1981.

Dr. Helen Caldicott, PSR's founder, makes no bones about the fact that in a confrontation she would sympathize with Moscow. In December 1980 she went to the U.S.S.R. with the U.S. Peace Council and was interviewed in *Pravda*, in an article entitled "The Voice of Peace-loving America." Caldicott declared: "The U.S.A. now has accumulated an awesome quantity of nuclear bombs, but the Pentagon continues their production. Our politicians have long ago turned into obedient puppets of the military-industrial complex. The noisy jabber about the 'Soviet threat' begins every time the Pentagon adopts a new system of mass annihilation into its arsenal. We received a telegram from President Brezhnev in reply to our appeal to end the arms race." Caldicott stated in newspaper interviews in the United States: "The Russians are OK to work with. . . . The U.S. has many many military bases around the world, while Russia does not," and "The U.S. has 200 major military bases in 45 nations. The U.S.S.R. has none." (Dr. Caldicott perhaps forgot the Soviet divisions in Eastern Europe and Afghanistan.)

PSR was launched in the late 1970s by Caldicott, author of *Nuclear Madness*. She started her public career in her native Australia by campaigning against uranium mining. Caldicott described her successful organizing among the

miners in a speech at the conference of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, Canada this year (*EIR* Aug. 30): "I arrived in my black velvet pants. The first thing I had to accomplish was to make sure they looked at me. . . . Then I immediately started in by talking about their testicles"—and the alleged dangers to these organs as a result of their uranium mining activities. The miners voted up a resolution to close down their mine.

Caldicott also explained in Vancouver her opposition to nuclear missiles: "Are men insecure sexually? It is significant that missiles are clear phallus symbols. These phallus symbols rise and then explode with a big bang. This is very significant."

Caldicott makes clear that her chief target is U.S. industry: "The single most effective way of overcoming the world's energy crisis is through oil conservation in the United States."

Until 1980 most PSR activity was directed against nuclear energy and "nuclear radiation," using extreme scare campaigns like one against the minute amounts of radioactive materials found in smoke detectors in New York City. Then the organization launched a series of conferences on the medical effects of nuclear war, using worst-case scenarios: no prior warning, accurate targeting of central city areas, no prior civil defense in place. A PSR pamphlet, which might have been issued for U.S. circulation by the Soviet Department of Strategic Disinformation, claims that "medical disaster planning for nuclear war is meaningless; there is no effective civil defense; recovery from nuclear war would be impossible; in sum, there can be no winners in a nuclear war." PSR has also attacked specific plans to allocate beds in community hospitals to the military on a contingency basis in case of large scale military need.

What is PSR's program for disarmament? It recommends Jonathan Schell's book, *The Fate of the Earth*, which declares simply: "We must lay down our arms, relinquish sovereignty, and found a political system for the peaceful settlement of international disputes."

Caldicott admits her indebtedness to Pugwash founder Bertrand Russell in her book: "My personal commitment to human survival was sparked when I read Bertrand Russell's autobiography." PSR's collaborators and members include many past and present Pugwashers. The founding document of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War includes statements by Joseph Rotblat, a co-founder of Pugwash and Pugwash Secretary-General from 1957 to 1973, and from Patricia Lindop, also a Pugwash activist. PSR advisory board member Robert Jay Lifton, a psychiatrist at Yale University who specializes in psychological profiles of disasters such as the Hiroshima bombing, was one of the chief editors of the IPPNW founding conference document.

PSR forums have featured such Pugwash activists as Victor Weisskopf, George Kistiakofsky, George Rathgens, and Kosta Tsipis. Other collaborators include anti-nuclear environmentalists such as Barry Commoner, George Wald, Jack Geiger, and Linus Pauling.