As a public service,

THE LAUCKS FOUNDATION

from time to time calls attention to published material that might contribute toward clarification or understanding of issues affecting world peace. The accompanying reprints constitute Reprint Mailing No. 61.

(Mrs.) Eulah C. Laucks, President
Post Office Box 5012
Santa Barbara, CA. 93108

June 19, 1984

(Reprinted by permission from The Writer, May, 1984, p. 22. Copyright (c) 1984, Theodora Doleski. Ms. Doleski is the author of THE HURT. published by Paulist Press.)

Morning Prayer

Before the silence came,
and the particles falling like snow,
(Hello. Is anybody there?)
we had so much to protect,
our freedom of speech and amber waves
and sports cars with the pop-up lights,
and our precious children.
And the leaders said this was the way,
(Oh say, can you hear?)
even the ones who thought it was wrong
before they became the leaders.
They had special information.
That's what they told us, and we believed.
(Can you hear me? Are you listening?)
But you have to understand.
It was (Please listen. It's important.)
It was all a mistake.
(Hello. This is planet Earth. Is anybody there?)
(Anybody at all?)

— Theodora Doleski

Of several minds: *Thomas Powers*

WHAT TO TELL THE KIDS

I GET UNEASY WHEN SOMEONE MENTIONS MY BOOK

Commonweal:

6 November 1981

"I got you!"
"No you didn't!"
"Yes I did! You're dead!"

That's the way it went in cops and robbers, or cowboys and Indians, or war. I can still remember a lot of the toy guns I had as a kid—a double-barreled cap-firing pirate pistol, a German Luger cast in silvery pot metal and painted black, a big six-shooter with actual cartridges, a tommygun with a drum clip of the sort Chicago gangsters used in the movies. I had toy soldiers, played war with my friends, drew war pictures in school when I should have been studying. In the attic were cartons of old *Life* magazines from the 1940s. I spent hours poring over the World War II pictures on rainy afternoons. One photo particularly sticks in my mind—of a Japanese skull on a tank in the Pacific. The flesh had dried down tight like wrinkled leather and the mouth was open in a scream of anguish. That picture gave me a sort of shivery feeling, but I can't say that it really scared me.

War was very much part of my imaginative life when I was ten or twelve, in the early 1950s. There was a room in the cellar with a moderate stock of canned goods, bottled water, and a sterno stove. That was "in case." I can remember waiting my turn in the barbershop and reading a copy of *Police Gazette* containing two stories of equal fascination—the positive identification of Hitler in Argentina, where he was living as a retired businessman, and the Red Army's timetable for the invasion of Europe. War was exciting and mysterious, like Flying Saucers or the Loch Ness Monster. I remember the day the war in Korea began. It came over the radio. My father was serious, alert, tense, and eager to explain what everything meant. For the next couple of years I read about Korea in comic books. In the summer, in Vermont, I used to go hunting woodchucks with the .22 rifle my grandfather had given me. But my real targets were Chinese soldiers wearing padded uniforms and "Chicoms"—the quilted cotton hats with ear flaps which tied up over the top of the head. They had infiltrated down through Canada to invade the United States. I knew this was ridiculous, but how else was I to get the game going?

I was quite conscious of the Russians as a dangerous horde. I must have heard about the "captive nations" but it didn't register. Their very names—Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia—had a sinister sound. I thought of those places as being part of Russia. No one ever sat me down in a class, or at home, and explained things to me. I had no idea what this was all about. War seemed part of the natural order of things. Communism was a secret movement of malevolent intent. The other side was waiting its chance. It was only a matter of time before another big war got going.

But for some reason none of this frightened me. We had air raid drills in school but it was a kind of a joke. We lined up and marched out into the corridors, sat down on the floor backs to the wall, and put our heads down between our knees. This seems to be a common memory among people who were children at that time. War was in the air, but I had a child's sense of time. Eons passed between one birthday and another. I believed it would all be over by the time I grew up. It was like cancer. "They" would have found a cure by the time I was old enough to get it. Perhaps the fact I played war made me think of it as only a game.

Now things are quite different. War worries me a great deal. I have three daughters of my own, and I wonder what to tell them. One day last summer the oldest, Amanda, asked me what my book was about. I am asked this all the time. It's a form of polite inquiry. People don't mean anything by it. You ask brokers how the market is going, you ask the old how they're feeling, you ask farmers what they think of the sky, and you ask writers what they're working on. I'm working on a book about strategic weapons. How interesting, people say. That's very topical just now. You'd better get it out soon while everybody's still interested. This remark, which has popped spontaneously from more people than you would imagine, used to fill me with despair. It made the job seem hopeless. How can a writer pierce a carapace so thick?

But of course piercing that carapace is precisely the point of the undertaking. I think about this a lot and try out my stratagems on the unwary. If there's time, and we're not just glancing off each other on the street or at a party—in short, when I've got someone in a corner for fifteen or twenty minutes—I can usually scare the living daylights out of them. But what do I tell my daughters, who are four, nine, and eleven? Do I want to scare them? Can fear possibly do them any good? How can children live with a knowledge of the world as it really is when adults find it so difficult? Wouldn't it be better to brush by the question with some short, neutral answer—"it's about the Air Force," say—and let it go?

Words have an extraordinary power with children, especially vivid, concrete words. My youngest daughter likes the story of Little Red Riding Hood. She likes the scary parts, but not if they're too scary. One night I overdid it. When we got to the part about the wolf I lingered on the powerful jaws and the teeth—with the long sharp biters in front, and the big grinders in back. She clapped her hand over my mouth. "Don't, Dad," she said. "You're scaring me! Don't talk about the teeth!"

Adults are practiced in denial but children are defenseless. Once something is vivid in their minds it's right there in the room. My father, who is now eighty-nine, once described to me his earliest memory. He was only two or three at the time. He was living with his grandfather in Owensboro, Kentucky, in a big old Victorian house. Around the yard in front was a picket fence. One day my father was out in the yard with his dog. A man was walking by on the sidewalk. He stopped near my father, took out his pocket knife, opened it, bent down over

→

the picket fence, and in a low deliberate voice stressing each word he said, *"I'm going to cut your ears off!"*

That happened eighty-seven years ago. My father can describe it now as if it were before his eyes, with every detail burningly vivid. I don't *want* to tell my children what nuclear war would do to them. I don't want them dreaming about it. I don't want them burdened with terrifying images which never fade. They need to grow up first, and get some practice in ignoring things they can't do anything about. They need to learn to hear without hearing, as adults do.

Children are quick at getting the point. Once their curiosity has been aroused they are relentless in pursuing the full story. They sense where you're vulnerable. My two elder daughters once cornered me on the subject of Santa Claus. "Tell me the truth," said Amanda. "I'll believe whatever you tell me. Is there a Santa Claus or isn't there?" It's hard to see how she could have framed the question more narrowly.

A couple of years earlier she went through a period of wondering about death. She was four or five at the time. Once, when I was giving her a bath, she suddenly said, "I don't want to have to die." I didn't quite get her drift. I explained that everybody dies, we get to live a long time and have lots of experiences but eventually we get old, dying is something we're strong enough to go through, etc. etc. But she interrupted me. She didn't think I was trying to fudge it. I'd simply missed her point. It wasn't the pain of it which troubled her. "It isn't that, Dad," she said. "I don't mind if I get sick, if it just happens. But I don't want to *have* to die."

When my youngest daughter Cassandra turned four she started wondering about death too. One night, when we were alone in the living room, she asked me if everybody dies. I told her the same thing I'd told her sister, wondering what it is about the age of four. She was lying on her back on the couch, waggling her legs in the air, seeming to pay no attention. But when I finished she moved her legs aside and looked me right in the eye and said, "Do they rose after they die?" I was completely caught off guard. I saw the flower in my mind. This was last April; it must have been talk in Sunday school about Easter which brought on the question. She explained: "Jesus rose so we get to rose, isn't that right, Dad? Everybody gets to rose. Will I rose?" I said this was a hard question to answer. I didn't think so but people in the church *did* think so. "Are we in the church?" I said we're *members* of the church. "But are we *in* the church?"

This is a verbatim transcript. The italics were hers. Children get the point. I have a dread of being pinned down in a similar manner where my book is concerned. That is, where the subject of nuclear weapons is concerned. Specifically, what do these weapons do? Is there any defense against them? Is it going to happen? I can't help what I think but I don't talk about this around the house. Perhaps it's silly. Perhaps they don't really see things any more clearly than I did back in the early 1950s. But when other people bring up this subject when my kids are around, as visitors sometimes do, I grow acutely uneasy. I try to change the subject, or skate over the details. I grow irritable. Don't they notice *kids* are around? Don't they realize that there are some things you just don't tell kids?

IN ISRAEL, in 1975, I met a woman with a child who was terrified of war. I can no longer remember if the child was a boy or a girl. I think it was a boy. In his experience war was something which came in the middle of the night, you never knew when. In October, 1973, the child was hustled out of bed to an air raid shelter in the middle of the night. In the morning his father was gone and he was gone a long time. The mother often wept and said the father would be all right, he would be all right. When the boy finally saw his father again, many months later, the father was sitting in a chair on the lawn in front of a military hospital, and there was a blanket over the father's lap. He did not get up. When the mother and the boy left, his father was still sitting on the chair, waving goodbye. Often the boy woke up at night crying. When he was in the car with his mother once he asked, "What will we do if there's a raid? Where will we hide?" He didn't want to go in the car anymore. He put off going to bed at night. He was afraid he might not hear the sirens if he was asleep. He was afraid of the sounds of airplanes. His mother tried to explain everything but explaining was not enough.

This is what troubles me. War is more than kids can handle. Adults have learned to live with things they can do nothing about. Adults tell themselves people will be sensible. Adults bury things and forget they are there, or think about something else, or busy themselves with earning a living, or put their trust in officials who are paid to worry about these matters, or say it will all work out in the end.

But kids get the point anyway. They pick things up. They don't really need to be told. Maybe I got the point too, back in the early 1950s. Maybe it's not worth worrying about, one of those things you can't help. One day last January, when I was trying to write a piece about the world after a nuclear war, I got stumped. Certain details weren't quite clear to me. My daughter Susan was in the room drawing a picture. Without thinking, I asked her what she thought a war would be like. It just popped out. She answered as if she'd been thinking a long time what to say and I wrote it down. She said, "It would probably be very smoky, and not many people, and lots of things ruined, and dark."

All the same, I try not to talk about it. I don't want to be pressed about this.

THOMAS POWERS

Commonweal, [ISSN 0010-3330] A Review of Public Affairs, Religion, Literature, and the Arts, is published biweekly, except monthly Christmas-New Year's and July and August, by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. Telephone: (212) MU 3-2042. Single copy, $1.25. Yearly subscriptions, U.S., $24; Canada, $26; foreign, $29. Special two-year rate: U.S., $43; Canada, $47; foreign, $53. All Canadian and foreign subscriptions must be paid in U.S. dollars by International Money Order or by check on a U.S. bank. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Commonweal, 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.

SCIENCE: 20 April 1984, Vol. 224, No. 4646

Reagan Offers a Chemical Weapons Treaty

But he declines to resume bilateral talks, which might speed agreement

"It is conceivable, in light of the attention given Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Iranian troops, that we will get a new treaty banning the production, possession, and use of such weapons before the November election," says Matthew Meselson, the Harvard biochemist who has long championed that goal. A survey of experts in Washington and elsewhere reveals that Meselson is more optimistic than most about the prospects of a breakthrough. But there appears to be general agreement that a 26 March United Nations report on the use of chemicals in the Iraq-Iran conflict (*Science*, 13 April, p. 130) had the salutary effect of focusing new attention on the need for such a treaty.

President Reagan was quick to capitalize on the topic's new-found popularity. In a nationally televised press conference on 5 April, he reaffirmed his Administration's intention to release the draft of a proposed chemical weapons treaty before the month is out. Citing chemical attacks not only in Iraq but also in Afghanistan and southeast Asia, he said that the shortcomings of existing chemical treaties have recently become "tragically clear." His announcement sent defense advisers for Walter Mondale and Gary Hart, the front-running candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination, scrambling last week to inform themselves on the topic.

Despite Reagan's optimism that his proposal brings "the day closer when the world will prohibit all chemical weapons," substantial disagreements still divide participants in the negotiations. Most involve procedures for verification of treaty compliance, the traditional arms control topic on which U.S. and Soviet opinions diverge. In the forthcoming draft treaty, for example, the United States will insist on the right to see Soviet nerve gas stockpiles and production plants as well as the destruction of those stockpiles and plants. This poses a problem for the Soviets, who store their chemical weapons near sensitive military facilities and produce sensitive military material near their former chemical weapon production sites. The position of the Reagan Administration on this issue is different from that of the Carter Administration, which claimed that stockpiles need not be inspected at their present sites, but instead could be transported somewhere else for inspection and destruction.

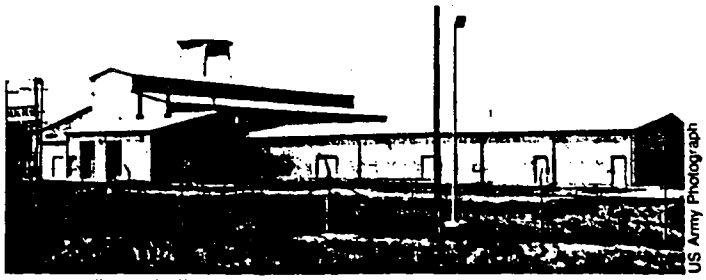
On another controversial issue, the U.S. position is unchanged. The draft treaty is expected to call for random, limited inspections of non-weapons chemical plants, as well as virtually mandatory ad hoc inspections of any activity suspected of being in violation of the treaty provisions. As a means of eliminating fishing trips by either side, the British have proposed—with U.S. backing—that allegations of noncompliance be subjected to scrutiny by a review committee comprised of treaty signatories. Nevertheless, the requirement would still be an unprecedented infringement on traditional national sovereignty, as Pentagon officials frankly admit.

Having anticipated the inclusion of these provisions, the Soviets assailed the treaty within 24 hours of Reagan's announcement, claiming that Washington's real intention was to block agreement "by making patently unacceptable conditions for 'verification' and 'enforcement.' " The treaty, added Vladimir Serov, writing in the Soviet newspaper *Tass*, is "nothing short of a propaganda trick the White House is going to use to camouflage and justify a program for the speedy buildup of its chemical arms arsenal."

Reagan himself alluded to this buildup at his news conference, saying that "we must be able to deter a chemical attack against us or our allies and without a modern and credible deterrent, the prospects for achieving a comprehensive ban would be nil." This year, as in previous years, his Administration is seeking funds for a plant capable of producing the Bigeye bomb, to be filled with a persistent nerve gas known as VX. A plant capable of producing 155-millimeter artillery shells, to contain a less persistent gas known as GB, is nearly finished in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Congress turned down so-called "production" funds last year, however, Administration officials now refer to the appropriation as "pre-production" money because it will not cover the final assembly and filling of any munitions.

The forum where U.S. and Soviet differences on a chemical weapons ban will be aired is the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, a fractious body that devotes much of its time to haggling over trivial, extraneous matters. Within the past year, for example, the essential business of negotiation there has been interrupted by a disagreement about whether the sessions should be recorded, an argument about whether its members should divide themselves into "ad hoc working groups" or "ad hoc committees," and a dispute about whether the mandate of the committees should be "negotiation" or "elaboration" of a formal treaty.

Frustration over the slow pace of the conference's deliberations has resulted in some congressional pressure for a resumption of U.S.–Soviet bilateral negotiations, which lapsed in the waning days of the Carter Administration and were formally spurned by Reagan. On a recent visit to Moscow and Geneva, Senators Joseph Biden (D–Del.) and William Cohen (R–Maine) raised this possibility in talks with Soviet officials in the Academy of Sciences, the Institute of United States and Canada, and the ministry of foreign affairs. Both report that the idea was favorably received.



Pine Bluff: Almost ready for nerve gas production.

(Reprinted by permission of The Manchester Guardian Weekly)

The Kremlin rulers facing some nasty choices

MANY moons ago, in the teeth of a general election campaign, the then Mr Harold Wilson was delivering a hustings' panegyric on the vital role of Britain's naval dockyards. "And why am I saying all this?" he inquired. "Because you're in Chatham," barked an immortal heckler. (Chatham, for the benefit of our farthest flung readers, was a principal naval dockyard for centuries, till its closure last year.) Such earthy political cynicism has many applications. It was there, last year, when Mr Ronald Reagan denounced the "evil empire" of the Kremlin — to a Southern audience of born-again Christians. It was there on Monday this week when a born-again Mr Reagan brought his television message of "goodwill, serious intent and sobriety" to Western capitals; a message of "credible deterrence and peaceful competition" with the erstwhile evil empire.

Cynicism should be neither the beginning nor the end of reaction to the President's speech. In one context, it falls at the start — in Stockholm — of fresh efforts to construct a dialogue for peace with the Soviet Union. Textually it is blessedly free of ritual vituperation. There is a sense, too, in which the pomp and circumstance of the occasion may mark a calmer climate in which all manner of useful things may actually happen. So Mr Reagan was much better to deliver the address than to say nothing and let the old mills of rhetoric and suspicion grind on unchecked. However . . . There are many howevers.

This is election year in America. We, in Europe, may occasionally forget that. Nobody in America is allowed for a second to indulge in such forgetfulness. Every White House policy now (and, indeed, for months past) has operated on two levels. Is it right? And: How will it play in Peoria? The answers, of course, are written in public opinion polls. They show Mr Reagan benignly on top of the economic wave, and thus with glowing prospects of re-election. Threats to that triumph, at this moment, stem not from concern over unemployment or budget deficits: they centre, fundamentally, on foreign policy. The President gets good ratings (still) for his Grenadan adventure. But on Central America, on the Lebanon, on working with allies, and — most fundamentally — on establishing East-West relationships, he is perceived as extraordinarily vulnerable. Rightly or wrongly, the American voters think they have a slightly wonky world figure in the White House. Naturally enough, the Democratic Party has jumped to attention. The Reverend Jesse Jackson hopped aboard a plane to Damascus. Mr Walter Mondale (the candidate who matters most at this stage) would, on election, seek an immediate freeze on further nuclear deployment and ask for the institution of annual summits with Mr Yuri Andropov.

No one can accuse Mr Reagan of catching his death of cold dallying in front of wide open windows of vulnerability. This week's speech signals a decisive march back to the electoral centre ground. Mr Reagan, the man of strength and experience, is now the man ready to talk. Mr Reagan, the flutterer of alliance dove-cots, is now the great healer and soother. Mr Reagan, the spouter of instant denunciation, is now the fellow who speaks softly and keeps his big stick in the saddle-bag. The aim, on the one hand, may well be to engage Moscow in meaningful discussion: that is both beneficial in itself, and a giant electoral plus. But, even if that fails, there are bonuses all along the track. Did not Mr Reagan seek renewed detente in the most open and statesmanlike fashion? Should Fritz Mondale now go crawling on his knees, begging Andropov for a few sweet gestures?

All of which leaves the Kremlin with some nasty choices. Moscow has seldom, in the past, found itself an indirect participant in American election campaigns. There can be no great relish, now, for the role. Should it, as the opportunities occur, help Mr Reagan or Mr Mondale? The likeliest choice, of course, is no choice at all; rather a snail and a slouch through the months to November. That, in one context, is nothing to look forward to. But Mr Reagan may make it inescapable unless, very briskly, he begins hard attempts at progress on the issues, as well as general goodwill and sobriety.

Additional pressure for bilateral U.S.-Soviet talks has come from conference members such as Ethiopia and Bulgaria. Charles Floweree, the former chief U.S. negotiator in the bilateral talks, also recommends their immediate resumption, noting that "the sine qua non for progress on multilateral treaties in the field . . . is prior agreement by the United States and the Soviet Union on its major provisions." Similarly, retired Rear Admiral Tom Davies, a former assistant director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) responsible for chemical weapons, says that "for any important treaty, there has to be a bilateral agreement" first.

But a senior Reagan Administration arms control official says that none of his colleagues favor the resumption of such talks at present. "As the Iraqis have proved, a lot of folks have the ability to produce chemical weapons," the official says. "These talks are best conducted in a multilateral context." Insiders say that the Administration's willingness to prepare a draft treaty is itself a significant step forward. Pentagon officials such as Richard Perle, the assistant secretary of defense for international security, had flatly opposed it. But Perle lost out in a fight with Ted Gold, who runs the Pentagon chemical weapons program, as well as Secretary of State George Shultz and ACDA director Kenneth Adelman, all of whom favored the idea.

Experts who follow the negotiations closely make varying predictions about the prospects for success. Meselson is encouraged by a series of recent Soviet concessions in the multilateral talks, including an agreement to provide detailed information about current stockpiles and an agreement to allow continuous on-site inspection of stockpile destruction. "This is the only area of arms control in which there has been real progress under the Reagan Administration," he says.

Julian Perry Robinson, an authority on chemical weapons who teaches at Sussex University in England, is more cautious. "There is no way the details of verification will be agreed upon this year," he says. "There could only be an agreement to defer agreement on the sticking points. And then at the very least it will be 4 to 5 years before a treaty could be ratified." A House Foreign Affairs committee aide predicts that "the dispute will not be resolved by technical features, but by a willingness to accept a certain amount of risk. There will always be a latent chemical weapons production capability, and until both sides exhibit a bit more flexibility, any agreement is unlikely."—R. JEFFREY SMITH

The following is quoted from the Editorial "A Civilized Presence", Los Angeles Times. March 18, 1984:

"We are convinced that the only successful strategy for dealing with the turmoil in Central America is one based on a realistic appraisal that events in both Nicaragua and El Salvador are too far along for the clock to be turned back to a more peaceful time. Too many citizens of both nations have opted for armed revolution as the only way to change their government and society. Rather than trying to defeat the rebellion in El Salvador or trying to roll back the revolution in Nicaragua, the United States must find ways to live with them.

"That is why the Administration's emphasis on military aid to U.S. friends in the region—whether the governments of El Salvador and Honduras or the counterrevolutionaries in Nicaragua—is doomed to fail in the long run. Even if we were to supply enough military aid to stem Central America's revolutions in the short term, the problems of the region are so severe now, and the political bitterness and estrangement so great, that another bloody explosion would be inevitable in a few years."

Quote from "Not So Wild About Harry" by Richard Cohen. The Manchester Guardian Weekly/The Washington Post, May 27, 1984:

"President Reagan meets almost every foreign policy challenge with an anecdote and a bugle-call."

FRONTIERS

RELIGION SCIENCE EDUCATION

Moments of Silence

CHANGES are coming. They might be seen to be already on the way, if we could recognize their initial form. Meanwhile, for humans, there are preludes to change. Change is letting go and taking on; the preludes indicate readiness for this. One kind of readiness seems apparent in what David Bradley, a novelist, contributed to the *Nation* in a final issue of 1983 (Dec. 24), repeating his reflections after attending a Christmas service to please his mother. He says toward the end: "I feel tears behind my eyes, in a place that no one sees, and I sense that I am not alone in that. And we stand there silent, listening to the bells." But the readiness for change is shown by the following:

> I am looking for a leader. . . . The thought frightens me. Never before have I felt in need of a leader. I have always believed that I knew what needed to be done, and had a pretty good idea of how to go about it. Oh, when it came to matters of public policy I was among the masses that the politicians assume are treading along in the rear. But I wasn't, really. I complained. I cursed them for being fools. My idea of a good leader was someone who did what I would have done if I had the time or the opportunity or the interest. But now, I realize, that is no longer so. It has all gotten beyond my understanding. I no longer know what we should do. I no longer know what I would do. And I feel fear, not only because of my helplessness but because I know what helpless people often do; they mistake a charlatan for a savior. They follow the man with the shiny boots and the simple solutions. If we do not know, and know we do not know, we tend to follow those who say they do know.

Here is a man, an artist, unafraid to reveal his ignorance, able to put into simple words the facts that apply to very nearly all of us. Perhaps you wouldn't want to send him to Washington, for after all, what good could so candid a man do there? That is the last place to go for an intelligent truth-teller. But he is a man whom you'd hope would speak up in a town meeting, and would come to all the meetings. And Government is not likely to have much meaning until, once again, the town meetings administer our public affairs.

Another sort of prelude is afforded by the January *Atlantic* article, "What Is It About?" by Thomas Powers. He means the stuff and reality of nuclear war. He starts out by noting that Americans seldom have any real idea of what being in a war is like.

> We live in a heavily militarized country, but we rarely see a military uniform on the street. We missed the worst of the two big wars of the century. We never had to live on turnips, pack our belongings in wheelbarrows and flee an army, huddle in the dark underground while the dust sifted down and the earth shook. . . .

He tells a story:

> A civilian analyst who spent four years on Carter's National Security Council once described to me a study he'd done on the use of tactical nuclear weapons in the opening hours of a big war on the Central Front, in Europe. Lots of such studies had been done in the past, but they all killed too many civilians—millions of them; there was no way to limit the war. But one day—it happened to be his daughter's fourth birthday—the analyst got to thinking about Soviet rail lines to the West. How many nukes, he wondered, would it take to isolate Soviet forces at the front? So he got out a lot of military maps and spread them all over the floor. "Whenever you see someone in the analysis business using maps, you can be sure he's a serious person," the analyst said, implying that the rest was just talk. He got out his bomb-effects computer, which looks like a round slide rule, and started drawing circles around rail junctures. Right away it began to look good. He was excited. He really had something. "It's so cheap," he said to himself. Instead of casualties in the millions there might be "only a hundred thousand dead"—far fewer than it would take, presumably, to touch off an all-out nuclear exchange.
>
> After a couple of hours of preliminary work, he left to take his daughter out for a birthday lunch, and it hit him, as they stood in line at McDonald's, what he'd been thinking about all morning: 100,000 dead, *like that*. Images warred in his mind—himself on his knees with his maps and templates, his daughter dead—and he felt ill with the enormity of what he did for a living. Later, of course, he went back to his maps and his plan and wrote a paper on it.

A brief event, in Minneapolis last year, at a meeting of Russians and Americans arranged by the Institute for Policy Studies—they were talking about arms control and how to get détente going again—illustrates the change in thinking that is required, but has hardly begun:

> In the midst of the discussion, one of the American delegates, W.H. Ferry, a consultant to foundations who has been writing about the dangers of the arms race for twenty years, took the floor to make a short statement. I believe I am reporting it whole: "I raise the question here of what this is all about. What issue could possibly warrant the use of nuclear weapons? Are they issues of territory, or human rights? What is it that justifies this confrontation?"
>
> This was followed by a long moment of silence. Perhaps no one could believe Ferry had concluded so soon. No one made any attempt to answer his question. It was never referred to again, by Russians or Americans. It elicited no interest whatever.

The article by Thomas Powers is an inquiry into *why*.

Here we should like to repeat Erich Kahler's generalized treatment of this question, in terms of two ways of thinking, one common enough, the other rare. The analysis illuminates the "meaning" of history, title of the book we quote:

> Reason is a human faculty inherent in the human being as such, rationality is a technical function, a technicalization and functionalization of the way reason proceeds. . . . It is only rather recently, in consequence of the general process of specialization, and of the ensuing transformation of consciousness, that rationality has become completely indepen-

dent of, indeed radically opposed to human reason.

Kahler uses a man like Powers' acquaintance—the civilian specialist in the use of nuclear weapons—to dramatize his point:

> As far as human reason comes in at all, it is effective only in the narrowest, personal scope of concern for keeping his job and pursuing his career, and even the care for the destiny of his children is repressed and held back from any connection with the dire implications of his work. . . . in the field of war technology, rationality juggles the lives of millions of human beings as mere proportional figures. The most dainty comforts are produced alongside of colossal destructivity. The prevalence of reason in human affairs would presuppose a comprehensive evaluation of all factors, in a given situation. But in the anarchical condition of an incoherent collective consciousness, functional rationality has reached a point of autonomy where it simultaneously serves the most contradictory ends, among them purposes which human reason must regard as monstrous.

Ferry proposed a revival of *reason*. The conferees at Minneapolis could not understand what he meant—had no interest in his proposal. This defines the frontier of our time.

MANAS PUBLISHING COMPANY
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 32112
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90032

$10 a Year **30 Cents a Copy**

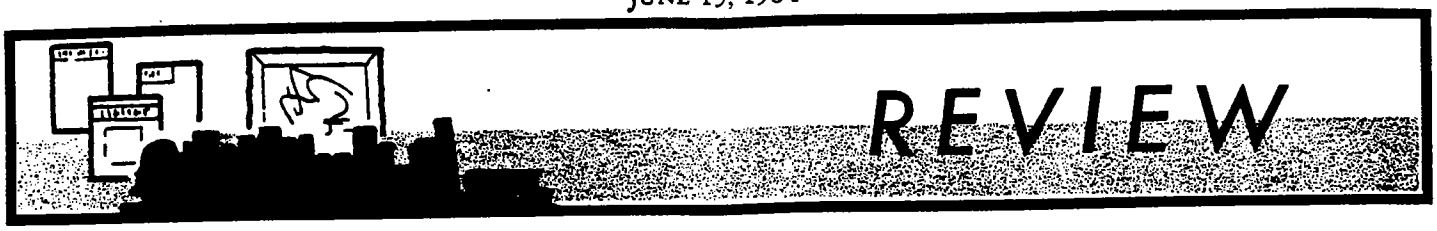
COMMONWEAL *June 15, 1984*

Going on 60

From Commonweal twenty-five years ago: "It may be foolhardy, but I am going to keep at my one-man crusade for relating theology to modern problems. . . . I am asking . . . for latterday Summas which will bring the truths of faith alive for modern man. That cannot be done, it seems to me, until these truths are related to the other concerns, political, scientific, professional, artistic and moral, which engross us.

". . . Today, theology, in order to make any impression, must begin by showing that religion is relevant to man's other concerns. For it is not until a man is convinced that the teachings of the faith are relevant that he begins to worry about whether or not they are true."

—John Cogley, "Theology for Everyone"
June 12, 1959



ANOTHER SCHELL BOOK

A TWO-PART article in the *New Yorker* for Jan. 2 and 9 by Jonathan Schell, author of *The Fate of the Earth* (which also first appeared as articles in the *New Yorker*), provides musings on our present relation to the possibility of nuclear war. His title is "Reflection," which means his thinking about the moral reality of our situation, whether or not we are aware of it. His purpose is to make us more aware.

What have the proponents—a nicely unemotional word—of nuclear war to look forward to? Extinction, Mr. Schell says. He can't prove that, and let us be glad of it, since nowadays one proves only by experiment. But there is something worse than extinction—the loss of the meaning in our lives before we become extinct. He seems to believe that there isn't any meaning to account for or lose after we are dead—a point that some might argue. The following is characteristic of Schell's dialectic:

> Sometimes it is suggested that it is ignoble to give the highest priority to our effort to save mankind from destruction, because in doing so we supposedly place our animal wish to stay alive, above our higher, more specifically human obligation to live a morally decent life. But just the opposite is the case. It is precisely all those things *for which* people have throughout history been willing to sacrifice their lives that we have, indecently, now placed, in their entirety, at risk. And it is our desire to save those things—not merely the desire to save our own necks—which moves us to choose to save our species.

Well, one hopes that is the reason—as it surely is for Mr. Schell and some others. He goes on:

> It is also sometimes suggested that fear will inspire us to combat the nuclear peril, but that reasonable-sounding idea seems to me equally mistaken. Fear, a more or less reflexive response that we share with other species, drives each of us, as an individual, to save himself in the face of danger. Fear cannot distinguish between a fire in one's own house and a nuclear holocaust—between one's own death and the death of the world—and is therefore useless even to begin to suggest the meaning of the nuclear peril. Its meaning can be grasped only to the extent that we feel the precise opposite of fear, which is a sense of responsibility, or devotion, or love, for other people, including those who have not yet been born. . . . Fear isolates. Love connects. Only insofar as the latter is strong in us are we likely to find the resolve to prevent our extinction.

This, we may think, is a law of nature wholly neglected by some of the determined advocates of peace—or at least of nuclear peace—which can never be more than a state of suspended animation between peace and war. That, indeed, Mr. Schell suggests, is our present condition. That is the culture in which we live and jerk spasmodically about. He also suggests a cure:

> We must repent the crime before we commit it, and in that repentance find the will not to commit it. This displacement of repentance from the aftermath of the crime to the time preceding it would be, to paraphrase William James, the moral equivalent of deterrence. The only difference between it and the strategic sort is that whereas in strategic deterrence we are deterred by what the enemy may do to us, in moral deterrence we are deterred by what we may do to him—and to countless innocents, including all potential future generations of human beings.

That, indeed, is our only defense against nuclear war—our unwillingness, if we have it, to be a part of it. Meanwhile, we are thinking about this choice—if, that is, we are: we are becoming quite used to not deciding much of anything, which may have the effect of making our condition far worse.

In an *Atlantic* (February) review of Kosta Tsipis's *Arsenal: Understanding Weapons in the Nuclear Age*, Thomas Powers says:

> The Reagan Administration has embarked on a major program to build new weapons, but it would be unfair to blame this new turn in the arms race wholly on Reagan. Much of his program had been proposed by Carter, who adopted programs begun under Ford and Nixon, who inherited the weaponry of Johnson and Kennedy, which had been conceived in the time of Eisenhower and of Truman, who learned about the bomb the day he took office. The curious aspect of Reagan's policy is its note of urgency. The American failures of recent years had nothing to do with the strategic balance, likewise the successes of "the other side" in Vietnam, Angola, Ethiopia, and Nicaragua. We failed in those places—if failure it was—not because we were weak but because we were divided. Americans simply could not agree on whether American interests were involved, or whether those interests were important enough to justify war. They cannot agree now about the proper American role in Lebanon or El Salvador.
>
> The paradox is that Reagan is apparently trying to compensate for this very real constraint on American power—one entirely intellectual and spiritual in nature—by the purchase of strategic weaponry that scares the living daylights out of everyone—allies, enemies, and ourselves alike. What has missile accuracy to do with revolution in Central America? Can laser-beam weapons bring peace between Syria and Israel? Will Russia cease to oppose us when we can pinpoint her submarines at sea? Was it lack of cruise missiles that lost the war in Vietnam? Will the Stealth bomber restore Polish freedom? The weapons builders get their dues in Kosta Tsipis's fine book. It is clear that their weapons can find, hit, and above all destroy whatever they are aimed at. They can do anything but make us safe.

Schell quotes Powers in his *New Yorker* series (Jan. 2):

> In his recent book *Thinking About the Next War* he [Powers] reports that he found two convictions to be nearly universal: first, that even with the arsenals in place—in fact, *because* the arsenals are in place—nuclear weapons will *never* be used and, second, that the military men "*know* we shall never get rid of nuclear weapons": that their abolition not only is "not on the horizon" but is not even "*over* the horizon." That is also the view of the Harvard authors of *Living with Nuclear Weapons*, who ask, "Why not abolish nuclear

→

weapons? Why not cleanse this small planet of these deadly poisons? They answer categorically, "Because we cannot," and go on to explain that the discovery of nuclear weapons "lies behind us" and "cannot be undone." In this prognosis, the hope of abolishing nuclear weapons has been extinguished, and the short-term stopgap of deterrence has completely usurped the place of full nuclear disarmament, which is frankly ruled out.

So there we are, stuck in the intermediate zone, damned if we do and damned if we don't stay there. And we stay there, the generals say, because we *must*. But that is not so. We can leave that limbo as individuals at any time.

An air of hopelessness attends all statements of policy which require everybody to agree before it becomes effectual. No wholly human being ever assented to this view. We are still free as individuals, whatever the generals say. That a free individual may be killed along with the conformists is of course likely or inevitable, but a free man chooses freedom not because he fears death but because he cherishes his independence, living or dead.

How many hands would you need to count on your fingers the humans who take this view? Their argument, however, does not depend upon numbers. It would be false if it did. It would have no "independence." Laconically, Thoreau gave the position voice. "Of what consequence," he asked, "though our planet explode, if there is no character involved in the explosion?" And casually he added: "I would not run round a corner to see the world blow up."

But a great many people not yet capable of Thoreau's aplomb have been marshalling their energies. As Jonathan Schell puts it:

> It turned out that while the nuclear-war fighters were looking at the contradictions of deterrence and worrying about a loss of credibility people on the outside were looking at those contradictions and worrying about the loss of mankind itself. Having made their conscious choice in favor of human survival, they could hardly be content with a policy that left mankind perched on the edge of doom and prescribed that in certain not altogether unlikely circumstances we jump. . . .
>
> The world was awakening, but what it was awakening *to* was not a ready solution to the nuclear predicament but, rather, the impasse that the world had reached in the first years of the nuclear age. When the world woke up, it was therefore only to find itself manacled to the bed on which it was lying, for the "impossibility" of any real relief from the nuclear peril—and the impossibility, in particular, of the abolition of nuclear weapons—had been affirmed by decades of strategic thinking. It was perhaps not surprising, then, that many people wanted to go back to sleep—in effect, saying, "Wake us up again when you have some answers." For trailing after the elemental human questions raised by the peace movement was a whole new set of questions, concerning what should be done.
>
> Can the goal of a nuclear-free world actually be reached, or is it in fact impossible—a "fictional utopia," as *Living with Nuclear Weapons* tells us? If the Harvard book is right, what then is the outlook? If it is wrong, and the path is open, what then is the path? . . .
>
> In 1984, the peril, while still in a sense invisible and abstract, nevertheless surrounds and pervades our lives. It is the sky overhead and the ground underfoot. We are immersed in it and pervaded by it. In sum, we now live in a *nuclear world*, and our reactions, our thoughts and feelings, conscious and unconscious, have reference to that world. They have a flavor of experience, which the reactions of people in 1945 could not have.

This seems particularly well said. These *New Yorker* articles will doubtless be turned into another book, of which good use will be made.
