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NO TIME FOR CHILDREN

"America's families, and their children, are in trouble, trouble so deep and pervasive as to threaten the future of our nation. The source of the trouble is nothing less than a national neglect of children and those primarily engaged in their care—America's parents. . . Our national rhetoric notwithstanding, the actual pattern of life in America today is such that children and families come last." (Report to the President: White House Conference on Children, USGPO, 1971, quoted in *Two Worlds of Childhood: US and USSR*, by Urie Bronfenbrenner, 1973)

Today, nine years after the White House Conference on Children, the same statement could easily be made. While 1979 has been declared the "International Year of the Child" by the United Nations, the US government is letting this magnificent opportunity to initiate dramatic improvements in programs for children pass by with only token gestures of concern. But the children in the United States need help:

"The State of America's children is poor and getting worse, and a host of disturbing social indicators support this view. Despite our position as the richest and most technologically accomplished nation, the United States does not rank among the top ten nations in low incidence of infant mortality. . .

"Over 30% of pregnant women continue to receive no prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy. . . Nor does America's health record improve much for older children. . . The inoculation rate is down to 70% nationally, much lower in urban and rural poverty areas. . . We must confront the problem of child abuse, estimated conservatively at one million cases per year."

New Commitments, Not Laws

"What is needed is not just a piece of legislation. . . but rather a new commitment, both public and private, to improve the national climate toward child-bearing. . . One thing is certain. A society that neglects its children, its most valuable and vulnerable resource, is a society that neglects its future." (Young Children, 1/79)

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child states that "The Child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation" and "shall be protected from practices which may foster racial, religious and any other form of discrimination." Further, "the child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages."

However, "one sixth of American children live 'in deep misery,'" according to the chairman of the Carnegie Council on Children, Kenneth Keniston (quoted in *Freedom-*

(continued on page 2)

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

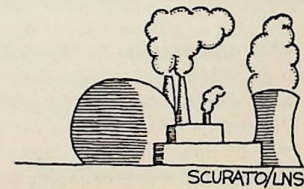
We have already received many advance orders for this issue on the International Year of the Child. Why not place your bulk order today? The bulk rate for 50 copies or more is 10 cents per copy, plus \$1.50 postage.

6,000 copies of our January issue on Weber and Affirmative Action have already gone out. Copies of this, as well as our Inflation issue are still available. If you want copies, please order without delay.

The next issue of Economic Notes will be devoted to Foreign Investment. Why not put in an advance order now for 50 or 100 copies?

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CONSIDERING THE AMOUNT OF RADIATION YOUR COMPANY'S NUKE HAS RELEASED, WHAT OF VITAL IMPORTANCE WILL BE MOST AFFECTED BY THIS DISASTER ?



NO TIME (Cont'd)

ways, No. 1, 1979) and one-third of all American children suffer deprivation due to poverty.

Racial discrimination is still rampant, with all its terrible consequences. Twenty five years after segregation was declared illegal (*Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*, 1954), segregation still is the dominant characteristic of our land. "Neither in the South nor anywhere else in the nation has true integration, even less educational equality, been achieved. And in the industrial North, almost no progress in further integration has been made in a decade." (*NY Times* 5/6/79)

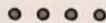
De Facto Segregation in Carter's Backyard

President Carter's lack of commitment to the well-being of all children can be clearly seen in his own county of Sumter, Georgia. In that county, "underfunding" of formerly Black schools, now supposedly integrated, has accelerated the tendency of whites to flee to private, all-white schools. "As schools became increasingly Black over the last 10 years, the property tax rate declined by two-thirds and now is one of the lowest in the states. Most whites. . . now attend private, all-white Southland Academy." (*NYT* 5/6) Pres. Carter, what have you to say about this?

Demanding More Resources for Children

For those interested in struggling to force our government to increase its commitment to the well-being of children, the declaration by the United Nations that 1979 be *The International Year of the Child* can be a most useful instrument.

Parent-teacher associations, unions (National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, and others), church social action committees, and many other organizations now have a handle to use when they demand that more resources be used to help children. **MONEY FOR CHILDREN, NOT FOR WAR!**



TANKS OR CHILDREN?

The Defense Dept. has decided to build, during the next nine years, 7,000 new tanks which it claims will cost an average of \$1.4 million each (before cost overruns, redesigns, etc.). The total (estimated) cost will be \$9.8 billion.

Should the tanks be built? Here are several factors to consider:

1) The General Accounting Office (GAO) in 1976 "questioned whether the XM-1 tank program should continue because of what it said were major uncertainties about the future of armored warfare. The agency said that the Pentagon was making a costly decision based on incomplete and inconclusive information about the role of a tank in an era of changing antitank technology." (*NY Times*, 5/9/79)

2) In April, 1979, the GAO stated that the proposed tank had several operating problems. These included: it "threw its tracks more often than it should when operating in desert conditions. . . the air filtration system leaked, causing dirt to interfere with the engine." The tank also has fuel control and transmission problems.

"A + " in Tanks, "F" in Child Welfare

3) The tank supposedly will be "far superior" to the Soviet's T-72 tank, according to the Defense Dept. Do we need to accelerate the arms race still more? Isn't it time to accept the idea that the US and the USSR are equal in military strength. . . and stop wasting our resources trying to be No. 1?

4) This is the International Year of the Child. Why not spend the \$9.8 billion to guarantee child care for all children who need it?



CHILDREN ON WELFARE

- 600,000 children are on welfare.
- 1 of every 4 children is on welfare.
- More than half of the children on welfare are under 8 years of age.
- 87% of welfare recipients are children and their mothers.
- In 1969, NY State eliminated from welfare grants all money for school supplies, books and newspapers, recreation, food away from home, and gifts.
- A welfare family for four receives \$258 per month to cover most expenses beyond rent (plus food stamps and health coverage under Medicaid). This amounts to \$2.08 per person per day. . . However, some of that \$2.08 per person may be used to pay for utility bills and rent. For example, a family of four can get no more than \$218 for shelter. Any rent above that must be paid by the family of its \$258. At least 25% of welfare families pay more in rent than they receive from the Welfare Dept.
- The Federal government estimated that for 1977, \$3,518 was the amount needed to provide adequate nutrition to a family of four for a year. Today a family of four needs at least \$4,220 (assuming 20% increase in those food prices). But a family on public assistance using all its food stamps only has the cash equivalent of \$4,248 a year to meet all its non-rental expenses. This means the family has NO MONEY for clothing, utilities, transportation, furniture, personal items, etc. **IT IS NO WONDER THAT INADEQUATE NUTRITION FOR CHILDREN ON WELFARE IS SO COMMON.**
- A welfare family of four receives \$15.48 per month for utility costs. However, \$43.34 was the average monthly utility bill in 1978.
- Welfare families are budgeted \$4.23 for telephone services. But the minimum monthly bill for a phone is \$8.96.
- Families are no longer eligible for seasonal clothing grants even though the cost of clothing is way up and children still grow. Children without clothing that fits, without jackets and boots for the winter, are children kept home from school when the weather is bad, when children are too cold or too embarrassed to join their friends.
- A family of four is allocated \$7.83 for transportation each month. This allows only 7 round trips per month for one member of the family on busses or subways.
- Families on public assistance in 1979 have only 52% of the purchasing power they had in 1969. Since 1969, the welfare grant has increased 11.85%. Meanwhile, the cost of living has more than doubled.
- One in every eleven welfare recipients in the United States lives in New York City.

Source: *Children on Welfare—Families in Need: The Case for a Welfare Grant Increase*. To obtain a copy of the report, write to The Task Force on Welfare Issues, c/o Council Member Ruth Messinger, 250 Broadway, NY, NY 10007. The cost is \$1.25 per copy.

"An estimated 1.5 million children in the United States are homeless either because they have run away or because their parents have forced them out."
(News from the U.S. Commission on the International Year of the Child)

CHILDREN IN CUSTODY

The long arm of the law grabbed more than 2.2 million children 10-17 years old in 1977. The overwhelming majority of those arrested, however, were in the 14-17 years old category.

One of every five boys aged 14-17 was reported arrested, about 1.7 million arrests. Among girls, the figure was about one of twenty, or almost one-half million. (computed from *U.S. Statistical Abstract*, 1978) The percentage of Black children (and other minorities) who were arrested was far higher than that of whites, due to racist attitudes among police and racist economic and social conditions repressing Black children. Since Blacks are only about one-tenth of the nation's population but are one-fourth of all those arrested, it can be confidently estimated that *as many as one of every two Black males, aged 14-17, was arrested in 1977.* (Many arrests of juveniles are not entered in official records, so these figures understate the actual number of arrests.)

Violent Crimes and Crimes of Property

Very few of the boys who were arrested, contrary to the tale spread by the commercial press, were alleged to have committed violent crimes. Murder, manslaughter, and rape charges were brought against less than 6,000 boys—out of a population of about 8.4 million boys aged 14-17 years old. Robbery charges were lodged against 36,000 boys, and 31,000 boys were charged with aggravated assault.

Larger numbers of boys were charged with burglary (220,000), larceny or theft (295,000), and auto theft (66,000)—all crimes of property.

"Victimless" Crimes

More than 500,000 boys, probably a third of all arrests, were arrested and charged with "victimless" crimes. The charges included drug use violations (114,000), violations of liquor laws (102,000), drunkenness (46,000), disorderly conduct (100,000), running away from home (78,000), and curfew violations and loitering (67,000).

What happens to children who are arrested? In 1970, of the 2 million youth who were arrested, half "were referred to juvenile courts. Of the million referred to juvenile courts, about half were counselled and released with no further action; the other half were handled officially through some form of court hearing." (Robert Gemignani, former Commissioner of the U.S. Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Administration, quoted in *Children without Justice*, a Report by the National Council of Jewish Women, by Edward Wakin, 1975)

Children Are Denied Legal Rights

Children do not have as many legal rights as adults. For example, "the Court has not extended the right to a jury trial to juveniles." (*Children's Rights*, edited by Patricia Varden and Ilene Brody, 1979)

After a child is arrested, assuming charges are not dropped at the police station, an interviewer at the juvenile court decides whether to press charges, release the child, etc. Even though the Supreme Court in 1967 and 1970 held that children at delinquency hearings are to have the rights to counsel and to cross-examine witnesses, many legal authorities claim that these rights are often not observed. Thus, in 1968:

"An individual who is not a judge makes a decision whether to deprive a child of his liberty on the basis of a hearing at which none of the safeguards of the law is observed. The so-called evidence read from a paper is pure hearsay. The person who gathered the evidence is not there to be cross-examined. The eyewitnesses from whom the reporter obtained his information are not present to be ex-

amined or cross-examined. The facts as reported often indicate that no crime was committed, and yet the child is held for trial. The child does not have a lawyer and is not informed of his right to have counsel or his privilege against self-incrimination. He is not permitted to confront his accuser." ("No One Will Listen," by Hon. Lois G. Forer, in *The Children's Rights Movement*, edited by Beatrice Gross and Ronald Gross, 1977)

Girls receive especially unjust treatment from the juvenile "justice" system, as Judge Forer explains:

"Girls are usually charged with incorrigibility, truancy, and runaway, none of which is a crime. They often run away from home to avoid sexual molestation by roomers or by members of the household. In such a situation, the girl is confined in the center while her attacker—an adult, entitled to release on bail, jury trial, and the panoply of constitutional protection—is free. . . . Although more than 85% of juvenile offenses are committed by boys, there is a sizable number of girls who are arrested and incarcerated. They are treated with exceptional harshness. Although girls very rarely commit crimes of violence, 40% of the girls arrested are held in detention pending trial. And many of them are sent to correctional institutions."

The end result is that the U.S. "justice" system sends the attacker home again while it jails an innocent youngster, or better still, returns her to her home to be attacked again. *The logical solution, banning the attacker from his home, is not employed.*

Hell Holes for Juveniles

Detention facilities for juveniles are hell holes, according to innumerable accounts. And children innocent of any crime are placed in these detention centers (jails)—along with children guilty of severe crimes. There are "thousands of children spending months, even years, behind bars for offenses that would not put an adult in jail for an hour." (*Children in Trouble*, by Howard James, 1969)

"A child can be brought to court for being 'incorrigible' or 'unruly' or 'stubborn.' Or a child's offense can be to 'habitually idle away his or her time,' play hooky or run away from home (even when home is hell). Non-criminal but rebellious acts, such as misbehaving in school, refusing to obey parents, staying out late and having 'bad companions,' can land a child in court." (*Children without Justice*, by Edward Wakin)

Let Them Go!

Society would be better off without its system of juvenile "justice," states Milton Luger, president of the National Association of Delinquency Program Administrators: "With the exception of a relatively few youths, it is probably better for all concerned if young delinquents were not detected, apprehended, or institutionalized. Too many of them get worse in our care." (quoted in *Children without Justice*) And Milton Rector, president of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, says: "The boys who aren't caught succeed far better in avoiding a life of crime than those who are caught and brought into the criminal justice system." (Ibid)

The U.S. juvenile justice system clearly violates Principle 2 of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child: "The child shall enjoy special protection . . . by law . . . to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. . . ."

DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

On 20 November 1959, the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The spirit of the document was reflected in the preamble, which said, in part, "mankind owes the child the best it has to give". Many of the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration were re-statements of sections of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other earlier documents, but the international community was convinced that the special needs of the child were so urgent that they called for a separate, more specific declaration.

On 21 December 1976, the General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring 1979 the International Year of the Child. The resolution encourages all countries, rich and poor, to review their programmes for the promotion of the well-being of children, and recalls that the year 1979 will be the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and could serve as an occasion to promote further its implementation.

The full text of the United Nations Declaration of 20 November, 1959, is reproduced below.

PREAMBLE

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have, in the Charter, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, and in the dignity and worth of the human person, and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas the United Nations has, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,

Whereas the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth,

Whereas the need for such special safeguards has been stated in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924, and recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the statutes of specialized agencies and international organizations concerned with the welfare of children,

Whereas mankind owes to the child the best it has to give,

Now therefore,

The General Assembly

Proclaims this Declaration of the Rights of the Child to the end that he may have a happy childhood and enjoy for his own good and for the good of society the rights and freedoms herein set forth, and calls upon parents, upon men and women as individuals and upon voluntary organizations, local authorities and national Governments to recognize these rights and strive for their observance by legislative and other measures progressively taken in accordance with the following principles:

PRINCIPLE 1

The child shall enjoy all the rights set forth in this Declaration. All children, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to these rights, without distinction or discrimination on account of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family.

PRINCIPLE 2

The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.

PRINCIPLE 3

The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality.

PRINCIPLE 4

The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow and develop in health; to this end special care and protection shall be provided both to him and to his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.

PRINCIPLE 5

The child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by his particular condition.

PRINCIPLE 6

The child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality, needs love and understanding. He shall, wherever possible, grow up in the care and under the responsibility of his parents, and in any case in an atmosphere of affection and of moral and material security; a child of tender years shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, be separated from his mother. Society and the public authorities shall have the duty to extend particular care to children without a family and to those without adequate means of support. Payment of State and other assistance towards the maintenance of children of large families is desirable.

PRINCIPLE 7

The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture, and enable him on a basis of equal opportunity to develop his abilities, his individual judgement, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.

The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents.

The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavour to promote the enjoyment of this right.

PRINCIPLE 8

The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief.

PRINCIPLE 9

The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He shall not be the subject of traffic, in any form.

The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age; he shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education, or interfere with his physical, mental or moral development.

PRINCIPLE 10

The child shall be protected from practices which may foster racial, religious and any other form of discrimination. He shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men.

Publicity to be given to the Declaration of the Rights of the Child

The General Assembly,

Considering that the Declaration of the Rights of the Child calls upon parents, upon men and women as individuals, and upon voluntary organizations, local authorities and national Governments to recognize the rights set forth therein and strive for their observance,

1. Recommends Governments of Member States, the specialized agencies concerned and the appropriate non-governmental organizations to publicize as widely as possible the text of this Declaration;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to have this Declaration widely disseminated and, to that end, to use every means at his disposal to publish and distribute texts in all languages possible.

CHILD LABOR

"The use of children as industrial laborers was outlawed under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, yet in 1970 one-fourth of the farm wage workers in the United States are under 16 years old." (Child Labor in Agriculture, Summer 1970, American Friends Service Committee, 1971—quoted in Sweatshops in the Sun, by Ronald Taylor, 1973). The AFSC, after sending investigators into five states, concluded that "the child labor scene in the 1970's is reminiscent of the sweatshop scene in 1938."

How many children under age 16 work as agricultural laborers? No one knows the exact number, partly because so much of the work is done under illegal conditions. However, Mrs. Dale Kloak, chief of the Child Labor Branch, Wage and Hour Division, of the U.S. Labor Dept., said: *"It is estimated at 800,000. I think there is no doubt that this is an area in which there is the greatest exploitation of children." (Sweatshops . . .)* This figure (800,000) does not include the thousands of children who are not officially employed, but who work beside their parents, helping them by carrying and adding crops to their baskets, fetching empty baskets, etc.

Work For Survival, Not For Pocket Money

Most children who work in the fields do not do so to earn pocket money, contrary to the propaganda spread by defenders of cheap agricultural labor. The work is not "character building," nor does it encourage "good attitudes toward work."

The fact is that

"the great majority of children working on farms do so because they must if their families are to survive. There is a terrible difference between doing the chores or earning some pocket money and having to work so your mother and father and brothers and sisters can eat, afford a place to live and a few clothes to wear. That difference is the difference between children's work and child labor." (Ibid.)

Dangerous, Especially to Children

Farm labor is dangerous work, in addition to being dirty and backbreaking. It is the third most dangerous occupation, after mining and construction. Each year thousands of farm laborers suffer poisoning from pesticides used on the crops. In California, for example, 1,400 farm worker pesticide poisoning cases a year have been confirmed. *"Over a 16-year period there have been 151 pesticide deaths; 85% of these were children under 16 years old."* (Ibid.) A study of 789 tractor fatalities in 13 states *"found that 12% of those killed were between 5 and 14 years old, too young to be legally driving or working around such machinery."*

Legal to Work at 12

Child labor laws seem to deliberately encourage agricultural child labor. Children, according to federal law, may currently work in agriculture beginning at age 12—at 85% of the federal minimum wage of \$2.90 per hour, or \$2.46 per hour. The following conditions govern the legal labor of children aged 12 and 13:

- 1) They may not work during school hours.
- 2) Their parents must give written consent.
- 3) They may work only on smaller farms (those that employed fewer than 500 man days of labor in any calendar quarter of the previous year).
- 4) Children may not work around certain dangerous machinery.

Children of 14 and 15 years of age also may not work during school hours and are forbidden to work around certain machinery. However, these are the only limitations they face. They, as well as the younger children, have no limitations placed on the maximum

number of hours they may work. The \$2.46 per hour minimum wage also applies to these older children (as long as they officially are full-time students).

Violations of Child Labor Laws

Child labor laws, though they are permissive, nonetheless are routinely violated. For example, *"in California the federal investigators found 82 schoolage children working on 25 farms producing raisins, figs, or tomatoes. A state labor investigator estimated 30% of the 35,000 workers in the raisin-grape harvest were under 12 years old and therefore were working illegally."* (Ibid.)

Single-Payroll-Entry Hoax

Why are so many children employed, and why are the child labor laws routinely violated? First, because it is in the employers' interests to hire the cheapest labor . . . and small children obviously cannot protect themselves well against adult employers. Second, the penalties for violating the law are negligible, and the odds of being caught or prosecuted are small. Third, the parents allow the exploitation of their own children by employers because piece rate wages are starvation level wages. Since most families work on a piece rate system, based upon the output of the entire family, the extra money earned for the family by the children is desperately needed.

Only one adult per family usually is officially employed:

"The phenomenon is not unique to New York, or even the East Coast. Anywhere families harvest crops and are paid by the piece rate, the employer—whether labor contractor, crew leader, or grower—is apt to record only a single payroll account and social security number. The families prefer as few deductions as possible and the single-payroll-entry system cuts down the farmer's bookkeeping tasks. It also offers recorded proof that any applicable minimum wage laws are being met and it allows farmers to brag a bit about how much their workers can earn." (Ibid.)

Help from UFWU

The most powerful opposition to child labor comes from the United Farm Workers Union, led by Cesar Chavez. Where the UFW has been able to win contracts, employment has been restricted to union members. And union members must be at least 16 years old. The UFWU's position is that farm wages must be high enough to allow a worker to support his/her family. *This is the key economic factor to swing the scale against the exploitation of children.*

In this, the International Year of the Child, it is appropriate to note Principle 9 of the declaration of the Rights of the Child:

"The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He shall not be the subject of traffic, in any form.

The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age; he shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education, or interfere with his physical, mental or moral development."

President Carter, Congresspeople, Judges, Prosecutors: do your jobs! Stop the exploitation of our children! Guarantee a living wage for farmworkers!



NUCLEAR ENERGY BASICS

The nation's most publicized nuclear power plant accident occurred on March 28, 1979 at the Three Mile Island plant located only 15 miles from Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania. The accident, which almost led to the evacuation of all persons within miles of the plant—due to fears of a “meltdown”—has caused public concern for the safety of nuclear facilities to crescendo.

Nowhere has the media made any concerted effort to provide the US public with the information needed to adequately evaluate US nuclear energy policy, in particular, from the perspective of its impact on our lives and health. The intent of this article is to give some small amount of information about this complex subject.

Half-Life of Radioactive Materials

Certain types of matter are unstable or “radioactive.” This means that the atoms which make up the matter spontaneously eject—or “radiate”—particles and energy waves. As this occurs, the matter gradually disintegrates. The rate at which this occurs is called the “half-life” of the material. *“The half-life of an element is the period of time it takes for the radioactivity of any amount of that element to be reduced by half.”* (*Nuclear Madness*, by Dr. Helen Caldicott, 1978) The half-life of different materials varies greatly, from seconds to thousands of years. For example, the half-life of plutonium—one of the most cancer-causing substances known—is 24,400 years. Once created, plutonium remains poisonous for at least a half million years.

Strontium-90, on the other hand, has a half-life of 28 years. Thus, starting with 1 pound of strontium-90, in 28 years there will be ½ pound of radioactive material; 28 years later there will be ¼ pound, etc. It takes about 560 years for the radioactivity of a given sample of strontium-90 to be reduced to one-millionth of its original potency. In other words, many radioactive materials carry their potency for many, many years.

Many elements may have a radioactive state: gases like radon, xenon, krypton (called noble gases), and solids like radium, uranium, iodine, strontium, and cesium. What is common to all is that as they “disintegrate” they let off rays and energy waves which have incredibly destructive powers. Depending upon the material and the circumstances, they radiate alpha, beta, and gamma rays (the first three letters of the Greek alphabet) and/or neutrons. Gamma rays are similar to x-rays.

All Radiation Is Dangerous

When the rays and neutrons strike the cells of the body, they either damage or destroy them. Children, both born and unborn, are hurt most by radiation.

There is no “safe” amount of radiation. The more radiation a person absorbs, the greater the odds are that the radiation will

cause serious damage. What kind of damage? Radiation may cause 1) cancer, or 2) genetic mutation—if it does not kill immediately.

“Natural” radiation comes from cosmic rays filtering through the atmosphere—so all of us inevitably absorb some radiation. The amount is 0.3 of a thousandth of a RAD (a measure of radiation absorbed by a body) per day. Even this amount of radiation causes cancer in some people and has been responsible for genetic mutations (some beneficial; some harmful) from the beginning of life.

Nuclear Explosions

The tremendous killing power of a nuclear explosion occurs because all the nuclei in a bomb decompose (radiate) in one-millionth of a second. This generates tremendous heat and radioactivity. Thus, one atom bomb (10-20 pounds of uranium-235 or plutonium-239) exploded over a modern city can kill 100,000 people and devastate many square miles. *“A thousand times more powerful than an atom bomb, one hydrogen bomb can kill millions of people within seconds.”* (Ibid.)

SALT II, if it is approved by the US Senate, will reduce the total number of missiles (carrying nuclear bombs) of each of the two nuclear superpowers to 2,250 by the end of 1981. (*NY Times* 5/10/79) This certainly would be an important step forward for mankind, but only a small one. *“Between them, the United States and the Soviet Union, alone, have deployed some 50,000 nuclear bombs which stand ready to exterminate virtually all life on earth.”* (*Nuclear Madness*) Sanity demands that these 50,000 nuclear bombs be dismantled!

Manufacturing Radioactivity

In the process of manufacturing nuclear bombs—and also nuclear power—hundreds of radioactive elements are manufactured. These then represent a danger to humankind since exposure to them brings cancer and mutation. The radioactive elements include iodine-131, strontium-90, and cesium-137.

“Iodine-131 has a half-life of 8 days. Both this element and strontium-90 travel up the food chain, and, when ingested by humans, are absorbed through the bowel wall. Iodine-131 migrates in the blood to the thyroid gland and may cause cancer there twelve to fifty years later; strontium-90, which chemically resembles calcium, is incorporated in bone tissue, where it may lead to leukemia.” (Ibid.)

“Noble” Gases

The public relations statements of the General Public Utilities Corporation that “only noble gases were escaping” from the Three Mile Island disaster were a cover-up of the hazards of the radioactive noble gases like xenon and krypton that were escaping. (*Science*, 4/20) These gases give off alpha particles which, when they are breathed, may cause lung and other cancers.

It was these escaping “noble” gases which led Professor Ernest Sternglass of the Univ. of Pittsburgh to calculate that there may be 300 to 2,500 deaths in years to come by virtue of the inhaled radioactive gases that were not measured the first two critical days of the Three Mile Island accident.

Uranium Mining Brings Death

A whole cycle of death may result from the production of nuclear weapons and nuclear power. For example, after uranium ore is mined, the waste ore, called “tailings,” must be disposed of. (It should be mentioned that it is estimated that “20-50% of the American, German, and Canadian” (Ibid.) uranium miners of the

(continued on page 7)

SAVE JUNE 4!!!

June 4 is the big day! William Winpisinger, President of the Intl. Assn. of Machinists, and other speakers will address an LRA-sponsored rally to support the Transfer Amendment and Economic Conversion. If you support full employment, a sharp reduction in inflation, money for the cities, an expansion in social services, and an end to cold war military spending, come to LRA's rally in New York City. Put Monday evening, June 4, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm on your calendar. Come to the Auditorium of the High School of Fashion Industries, 225 W. 24 St., NYC.

If you cannot come, please send a contribution to Labor Research Association. We need your support.

NUCLEAR ENERGY BASICS (Cont'd)

past have already died, or will die, of cancer.) About 100 million tons of tailings have accumulated in the Southwest in the past 30 years. They contain the radioactive materials thorium (half-life: 80,000 years) and radium. If humans are exposed to the tailings, the results can be tragic:

"In the mid-1960's, city contractors hit upon the idea of using such tailings for cheap landfill and concrete mix. Construction firms used the waste ore to build a variety of structures, including schools, hospitals, private homes, roadways, an airport and a shopping mall. In 1970, a local pediatrician noticed an increase of cleft palate, cleft lip, and other congenital defects among newborn babies in the area." (Ibid.)

Funds were obtained to study the reasons for the rise in birth defects, but a year later, claiming budgetary problems, the federal government eliminated the program.

Welders, Beware!

Repair of nuclear plants is very hazardous—and very expensive—because of radioactive leaks.

"Some years ago, a pipe failed at the Indian Point I plant, located on the Hudson River 24 miles north of New York City. As a result, the plant was rendered inoperable for six months and 1,700 certified welders—almost every certified union welder in the Consolidated Edison Company—were needed to repair the damage. It was necessary to hire that many because within a few minutes each worker would receive the dose of radiation deemed allowable for a three-to-six month period." (Ibid.)

Nuclear Sewage

The production of the 50,000 nuclear weapons, and of atomic power, results in by-products: nuclear waste. The waste may be highly contaminated or it may be "low level" waste, such as clothes. In any case, how to dispose of the contaminated material is a problem not yet solved by the military—responsible for most of the waste—or the civilian nuclear power plants.

More than 74 million gallons of highly radioactive liquids used in manufacturing bombs are now in storage tanks.

"Many of these wastes are so hot that they boil spontaneously and continuously. Most can be found at the Hanford Military Reservation in Washington and at the Savannah River facility in South Carolina. The major portion of these wastes lies in huge, carbon-steel tanks which cannot withstand the waste's corrosive properties for more than 25 years . . . Many of these tanks have already sprung deadly leaks. From 1958 to 1975, twenty of Hanford's older, single-walled carbon-steel tanks developed cracks through which 430,000 gallons of high-level waste leaked into the soil. . . The Hanford Reservation is located several hundred feet above the Columbia River. With no means to halt its descent, the escaped waste is migrating through the soil toward the water table and the Columbia River system, which supplies drinking water to cities in the Northwest." (Ibid.)

Many other examples of accidents involving nuclear wastes can be cited.

What Radioactive Rays Do

Radioactive rays may cause cancer. A cell that has been damaged by a radioactive ray, instead of dividing in two and form-

ing new cells, "goes crazy," rapidly reproducing itself billions of times. Each new cell is identical to the damaged cell, including the damage caused by the radiation, and each new cell also reproduces itself billions of times. The result is a "tumor." Cancer spreads through the body when bits of the tumor break off and travel through the bloodstream to other parts of the body, where they continue dividing and forming more cells. The cancerous cells use up the body's nutrients, starving and crowding out the normal cells. The final result, if the cancer is not halted either by removing the tumor or killing the cancerous cells, is death.

Genetic Mutation

Radiation can also cause genetic mutation. This occurs if the rays hit and damage the body's reproductive cells, the gonads (ovary of women and testicle of men). If any of the genes, which carry the body's characteristics to future generations, are altered by the radioactive rays, genetic diseases occur. These include dwarfism, diabetes, muscular dystrophy, hemophilia, certain forms of mental retardations, cystic fibrosis, and mongolism. The variety and number of genetic disturbances which can be caused by radiation are tremendous—affecting every aspect of the human body.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO AVERT NUCLEAR CATASTROPHES?

- 1) Pressure the Senate to sign the Salt II accord.
- 2) Immediately begin negotiations with the Soviet Union to destroy all nuclear weapons. The Soviets have expressed willingness to do this; now it is up to the US to accept the proposal
- 3) Take the profit out of the entire nuclear industry. Nationalize the nuclear power industry. Shut down nuclear power plants at the first sign of trouble. Place the industry under democratic control, with the workers involved having the determining voice in all matters involving safety.

EXPLOITED TEENAGERS

"Low pay, distasteful working conditions and autocratic bosses are hardly a new story to the millions of teenagers that the fast-food industry depends upon to peddle the billions of hamburgers, fries and shakes it sells every year. But . . . few youngsters realize when they apply for a fast-food job that they will be doing better than average if they don't get disgusted and quit within four months.

"Some critics, in fact, contend that the fast-food chains, by and large, actually count on frequent turnover. Just about every job in these restaurants changes hands three or four times a year. In most businesses such turnover would be catastrophic. In the fast-food business it means almost everyone is paid the minimum wage and almost no one ever gets a merit raise or joins a union."

In fact, many firms pay less than the minimum wage—and only a small minority are punished. *"While some fast-food operations are exempt from the minimum-wage and overtime-pay provisions of federal law, most chains are covered and are subject to enforcement actions for failure to comply. Thus . . . last summer a Florida operator of Lum's and Ranch House restaurants was ordered by federal court in Miami to reimburse \$100,000 to 1,290 employees who weren't paid required minimum and overtime wages. . . Similar cases dot court records in all parts of the country." (Wall St. Journal 3/15)*



CHILD CARE NEEDS

There *are* federal funds available in the U.S. to provide services for the pre-school children of working parents, but the funds are ridiculously inadequate to the need. In 1976, the last year for which complete figures are available, 36.5% of all children under the age of six had mothers who were in the work force—i.e., some 6,439,000 children were in need of day care. (*Child Care Data and Materials*, Senate Finance Committee, USGPO, 1977)

A large proportion of these children were cared for adequately by informal arrangements among friends, neighbors and family. But high mobility and the tendency to live in isolated nuclear families means that such informal arrangements are not easily available to several million parents

Freezes and Inflation

For children who do need child care the federal government provided about \$954 million in 1977—enough to provide care for only about one million children. (*Childcare and Preschool: Options for Federal Support, Background Paper*, Congressional Budget Office, USGPO, 1978) Since 1977, funding freezes and inflation have reduced this total significantly.

An additional federal subsidy for day care is in the form of a tax write-off for child care that is of use only to families with incomes high enough to take advantage of it. In 1977, \$500 million of federal subsidy to day care flowed through this route, two-thirds of it to families with incomes over \$15,000 a year.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with this kind of tax write-off in itself. But there is something wrong with the inequitable distribution of it—and with the propaganda which maintains that only poor people are benefitting from federal aid to day care.

Starvation Budgets for Public Services

The results of inadequate public funding are immediately clear to anyone who views the day care system in the U.S.—starvation budgets for individual programs, endless waiting lists, and millions of desperate parents paying out far too high a proportion of their incomes for child care in the private sector. Of course, day care is no different in this regard from other vital public services like public housing, medical care, public transportation, programs for the unemployed, and welfare.

Unemployment in the U.S., for instance, is structural, chronic, and continually rising. Yet all programs for the unemployed—from unemployment insurance to manpower training to CETA to welfare—are based on the assumption that unemployment is either temporary, or somehow the result of the unemployed person's own moral, educational, or perhaps racial deficiency.

The result is that *public services are given only the most inadequate funding, are made as temporary as possible* (however inappropriate short term service may be), *are offered only under the most punitive and degrading conditions, and are seen by both the public at large and the recipients themselves as humiliating and demeaning.*

- One preschool child in five lives in a single-parent household.
- One Black preschool child in two lives in a single-parent household.
- One white child in three, and one Black child in two, under age six, has a working mother.
- Five million families have at least one child with a physical, mental or emotional handicap.
- Ten million children live in abject poverty.

Source: Children's Defense Fund

Publicly funded day care in the U.S. suffers from the same disease as other public services:

• **Inadequate funding**—Funding is grossly inadequate to the need, as we have already shown. In those publicly funded programs that do exist, tight budgeting means inadequate pay and long working hours for the workers. Even in NYC, which has the highest standards in the country, the average day care worker's salary is only about \$9,500 a year while in most other areas of the country day care workers' salaries hover down around the legal minimum wage level. (Unpublished Documents of the New York Agency for Child Development, Author's files)

• **Temporary**—A tight net of complex "eligibility" rules and regulations for the parents assures that none of them will remain "eligible" for very long, so that publicly funded day care programs become a sort of revolving door for the children. For instance, maximum income eligibility for day care is set at 100% of the state's median income in NYC and as low as 51% of median income in some upstate counties. In NYC, a family of four with a gross income of only \$17,200 a year is ineligible for day care.

Most parents leave long before their incomes reach that level, since they would have to pay a fee of \$2,080 a year at salary levels just below that limit. As a result of these and other regulations the annual turnover rate of children in NYC day care reached 82% by 1977, although it should be no more than 35% to 40%. (*NY State Comprehensive Social Services Program Plan/1979*, NY State Dept. of Social Services: Albany, 1978)

• **Punitive**—The same eligibility rules and procedures thoroughly humiliate any parent who applies for publicly funded day care. At present a parent in NYC who wishes to apply for day care must travel to a central city office which looks like a welfare office, must wait long hours and be treated with considerable insolence, must offer proof of and sign affidavits of income, subject to criminal penalties for lying, and must "volunteer" to cooperate in prosecuting absent spouses. If the need for day care is based on emotional or health factors, rather than the parent's need to work, parents must produce, for the public records, proof that they are incapable of caring for their children.

• **Demeaning**—The result of all these policies is that publicly funded day care comes to be considered demeaning—lumped together in the public mind with welfare. Even staunch day care advocates find themselves forced to title their programs "learning centers" or "child development centers," to avoid the taboo word "day care."

Sexist Bias

In addition to the problems that it shares with other public services, day care suffers from an additional stigma. It is seen by many solely as a "women's issue," and a "women's program"—a virtual kiss of death in today's viciously sexist climate. One result of this sexism is that day care arouses the vocal opposition of extreme right-wing groups who consider it a first step to "women's lib." Another result is that, while over the past few decades thousands of professional and non-professional women have developed early childhood education into a high art, the importance of their special skills is continually underestimated.

Sexist bias against day care assures that day care salaries are kept low. Day care directors in New York City, for instance, 95% of whom are women, are required to have masters degrees in early childhood education. Each director is responsible for a facility worth up to a million dollars and a staff of several dozen people. But they earn, on the average, \$4,000 less than classroom teachers in the public schools. (Unpublished Documents of the New York Agency for Child Development, Author's files)

(continued on page 9)

JOBS FOR YOUTH??

Only one of every four high school students in New York City who wants a part-time job is able to get it, according to the Educational Planning Institute, which recently did "the most comprehensive" study "ever done on the availability of part-time work for teenaged youths." The study, for the New York State Dept. of Labor, said that "250,000 city high school students—more than 70%—want jobs after school but cannot find them." Furthermore, the study indicated that "although Black and Hispanic students comprise the larger percentage of those students wanting part-time jobs, the percentage of white students holding these jobs was greatest among the three groups." (NY Times, 5/6/79)

Anita Moses, the institute's director, stated: "Part-time work is the first step up on the ladder to adulthood. . . Beside providing an income, it helps students develop needed social skills. They discover that they have responsibilities and abilities in nonacademic areas. They find that they have to deal with non-related adults on a sustained basis. They find they have to act more grown-up in order to do well." (NY Times, 5/6/79)

One big problem faced by most youths was clearly related by one student: "We look in the paper for jobs, we put in applications, but employers hardly ever call us. They say they won't hire us because we're inexperienced, but how can we get experience if no one hires us?"

MONEY FOR OUR TEENAGERS, NOT FOR THE MILITARY is an appropriate slogan for 1979, the International Year of the Child.

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POVERTY

- 15.8% of all children lived in poverty in 1976, while only 11.8% of the general population were poor.
- 10.1 million children live below the government's arbitrary "poverty line"—and other millions often lack the basic physical necessities of life.
- Children 18 years old and younger accounted for well over two-thirds—7.7 out of 10.9 million—of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (welfare) recipients in 1977.

Source: Children's Defense Fund

CHILD CARE (Cont'd)

Reasons for Hope

The picture in publicly funded day care is not as bleak as it may sound from these statistics. Most publicly funded day care programs are small and run by non-profit community groups under contract with local government agencies, and their small scale and community control contribute significantly to their quality. Also, the very facts of sexism and racial prejudice produce a sort of backhanded advantage, in that generations of highly competent women and minority group members—shut out of other professions—have poured vast intelligence and energy into the day care program.

Furthermore, day care groups are comparatively well organized and militant in many parts of the country, and have shown themselves capable of struggling stoutly for their programs. The result is that publicly funded day care, for the tiny minority who can gain access to it, is of far better quality than America has any right to expect it to be.

--by Tony Ward

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ASBESTOS

Last month we announced that LRA is offering a new service to its readers: answering questions about occupational safety and health problems. One reader asked about crumbling asbestos tiles above his workplace and their possible impact on his health. We were happy to answer his question. We reprint it below for all of our readers. If you need an answer, ask the expert at LRA!!

LETTER TO OUR READER

Exposure to excessive concentrations of air-borne asbestos dust is dangerous to one's health. The toxic effects include fibrosis (certain type of damage) of the lungs and shortness of breath, which in turn leads to cardiovascular damage (heart, circulatory system). In addition, asbestos dust exposure greatly increases lung and bronchial cancer risk, as well as the risk of cancer of the peritoneum (membrane or sac that lines the gastrointestinal organs—stomach).

These harmful effects take years to develop. That is why it is important to stop excessive exposure in the first place. Cigarette smoking enhances the risk of asbestos-caused cancer.

Invisible Danger

It is the very fine particles that float in the air (not the particles that readily settle on work surfaces) that are hazardous, especially since these may be invisible to the eye as they float.

Concentrations are measured by specialized air sampling techniques (*Revised Recommended Asbestos Standard*, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health publication). The guideline for safety is 2 asbestos fibers five microns or greater in length per cubic centimeter of air.

Whether the dust you are exposed to is actually asbestos or calcium sulfate (plaster)—a relatively low order toxic substance—can only be determined by microscopic and chemical means.

Both the composition and content of dust from the broken tiles above your desk should be checked by contacting:

Arthur Carter, Chief	or Milton Terry, Mgr.
Division of Industrial Safety	Regional Office
Dept. of Industrial Relations	OSHA
455 Golden Gate Avenue	1540 Market Street
San Francisco, CA	San Francisco, CA

This hazard is of particular importance to shipyard workers and construction workers, among others.

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CHILD HEALTH

- One in every 65 American infants dies each year.
- One in every 43 non-white American infants dies each year.
- Washington, D.C., the nation's capital, has the highest infant mortality rate in the nation, resulting in one in 33 non-white infants dying annually.
- 10 million children—one in seven children—have no regular source of primary health care. For them, regular checkups are unknown.
- Two of every five American children are not fully immunized against the major preventable childhood diseases.
- One out of every two children under 15 has not seen a dentist in over a year.

Source: Children's Defense Fund

A REAL PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

Children of workers start out with two strikes against them in present-day America.

Crimes Against Children

A large proportion of children are deprived of needed care and help while both parents are away at work to make ends meet.

Too few children get the benefits of country life, of summer camps, of vacation programs that enrich their lives.

Too many of them are "tracked" into dead end secondary school programs.

Too few of them have access to the kinds of education and training needed to "make it" in this age of computers and sophisticated electronics.

Increasing numbers are socially isolated in nearly segregated (all-white or all-Black) schools and neighborhoods.

Increasing numbers face the worries of youth joblessness as they enter their teens.

They are bombarded by a corrupt television culture glorifying crime, drugs, and violence.

They are taught by the media and in school texts that the "beautiful people" are the rich and powerful, the generals and bankers; while their own folks, who produce all the values of modern society, are "non-people," or even worse, the villains whose demands for a living wage and steady employment disrupt economic stability and progress.

They are taught the alleged inferiority of Blacks, Hispanics, Indians, and Asians—and racial and ethnic rivalry and hostility are encouraged.

All of these evils weigh doubly and triply on the lives and futures of minority children.

A labor program for the International Year of the Child would seek to correct these evils, reverse these trends. The country can well afford to do so! The resources and money are available! The labor of the millions who need jobs and the vast sums wasted in the military budget and in other destructive ways need only be brought together to bring about vast improvement.

A Program for Children

- The right to child care for all working parents, with construction of all needed facilities and training of all needed personnel.

- Vigorous enforcement of the 1954 Supreme Court decision that supposedly foreshadowed the end of segregated education. Tax laws and other measures should be used to end segregation through racist private schools.

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- Free school lunches and breakfasts, without the stigma of charity, for all who want it.

- Access of workers' children to education courses and specific training for the occupations and careers that are growing today and will continue growing in tomorrow's economy.

- Free health and medical services, without conditions, for all children.

- Expanded sports, recreation, and summer vacation programs for all children, with priority for those currently deprived, living in central cities and in impoverished rural areas.

- Access to higher education for workers' children, without payment of tuition, contingent only on satisfactory school work.

- Affirmative action programs at all levels of the educational system, including access to higher education, appointment of faculty and administrators, to end the gross inferiority of education opportunities now open to 15 million Black, Hispanic, Indian, and Asian children.

- Revision of history and sociology curricula and textbooks to emphasize the decisive role of labor in building our country and in defending it against attackers.

- A youth job program on sufficient scale to ensure all children that they will have access to gainful employment on leaving school, with the government guaranteeing all the jobs needed that aren't provided by private industry, at adequate wages for the work.

L.R.A. has not attempted to cost out such a program. Whatever it costs, depending on the details, could readily be financed out of (a) the military budget; (b) closing the \$169 billion of tax loopholes enjoyed by the rich and the corporations; (c) reducing the high interest ripoff on the national debt.

--by Victor Perlo

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MIGRANT EDUCATION

- While the average student has an 80% chance of entering the 12th grade, the migrant student has an 11% chance of doing so. Most principals consider economic pressures to be the greatest cause of students' dropping out.

- 83% of the students reported attending no more than two schools during the year; they follow the crops and the seasons but may not attend school.

- It takes 3 years for the average migrant student to move from third to fourth grade, after which time he/she never is able to catch up.

Source: *People Who Follow the Crops*, US Commission on Civil Rights, 1978

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LABOR EDUCATION

More than 100 people from 28 unions attended LRA's recent series of five classes on "Winning and Enforcing a Good Contract" taught by Attorney I. Philip Sipser. The classes were a big success. If you would like to see similar labor education classes established in your area, please contact Labor Research Association.