

to our allies, and credible to our antagonists.

Several major foundations who believe it important that the citizens of a democracy be thoroughly informed are funding this conference. Speakers are expected to include: Lester Brown, Helen Caldicott, William Colby, Patt Derian, Noel Gayler, Mary Grefe, Perdita Houston, Betty Lall, Robert McNamara, William Perry, Ruth Sivard, Walter Slocombe, Larry Smith, Paula Stern, Alice Tepper-Marlin, Malcolm Toon, Paul Warnke, Faye Wattleton, Marina von Neumann Whitman, and Representatives James Leach and Samuel Stratton.

After listening to such an array of specialists in the defense and various related fields, heads should be filled with new knowledge, minds informed by new categories of understanding. The American people, and not only its women, must realize we need not be either Red or dead: We can be smart.

June Bingham, biographer of Reinhold Niebuhr and U Thant, is a member of the CRIA Board of Trustees. She is married to Congressman Jonathan Bingham of New York.

EXCURSUS 2

Eric Pooley on ORWELL AND THE BOMB

"Had the atomic bomb turned out to be something as cheap and easily manufactured as a bicycle or alarm clock," wrote George Orwell in 1945, "...the whole trend of history would have been abruptly altered." Orwell believed that a simple, "democratic" bomb would remove distinctions between great and small states and weaken state power over the individual, but perhaps also "[plunge]...us into barbarism."

Nuclear weapons are not, we are pleased to tell ourselves, as available as alarm clocks. And a world in which large and small states stand equal has become almost impossible to imagine, as Orwell predicted. What is not so certain, however, is his prediction that the enormous cost and complexity of "inherently tyrannical" atomic bombs would help to promote a world divided between "two or three super-states," each insulated and unconquerable, ruling over people robbed "of all power to revolt."

Recent developments suggest that the tyranny of the atomic minority might well be transformed by the kind of nuclear revolt Orwell dismissed as unlikely some forty years ago. Such a revolt has long been conceivable, and it is becoming increasingly probable, at least in this "super-state." The Reagan administration plans to increase nuclear exports and break down barriers to the reprocessing of spent commercial fuel for military use. If successful, it will become markedly easier for others to build a bomb and become, in one barbaric moment, a partner in nuclear terror.

In September, 1976, the *New York Times* reported that eight thousand pounds of plutonium and highly enriched uranium were "unaccounted for": lost, inadvertently destroyed, or stolen from American nuclear facilities. The report came at a time when the spread of nuclear weapons through commercial fuel reprocessing was receiving a great deal of presidential attention, apparently for the wrong reasons.

One month after the *Times* report, President Ford began the American campaign against reprocessing that culmi-

nated in Jimmy Carter's Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978. (The Act requires all countries who buy U.S. nuclear fuel to ask our permission before reprocessing it. We have yet to deny a request.) Ford declared that "avoidance of proliferation must take precedence over economic interests...the United States should no longer regard reprocessing as a necessary and inevitable step." Accordingly, he cut government funding for a reprocessing plant then being built in North Carolina.

At that time America lagged far behind Britain and France in reprocessing technology. So when Ford added that reprocessing should be used in the future if it is "found to be consistent with our international objectives," Europe knew what he meant. "Just you wait," said one Belgian official. "A few years from now the Americans will have caught up with our reprocessing technology and then they'll come out in favor of commercial reprocessing."

A few years have passed, and scientists at the federally funded Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in California have announced a secret new process, which uses lasers to extract plutonium from spent commercial fuel. And in March, Energy Secretary James Edwards told an audience of nuclear experts that "we are going to be needing some more plutonium for our weapons program and the best way I can see to get it is to solve your waste problem—reprocess it."

Reprocessing will not "solve" the waste problem. It will reduce the volume of waste drastically but leave behind the materials highest in radioactivity. It will multiply the dangers of proliferation and violate an International Atomic Energy Agency principle that civilian facilities should never take part in military programs. U.S. disregard for this principle is a slap in the face to European nations who for years have listened to American nonproliferation rhetoric. And it is a grave danger to us all.

Introduced for military use, the laser extraction process will surely be used to separate plutonium for the fast breeder reactors which James Edwards believes will provide "enough electricity to serve this country and the free world for a thousand years to come." The high cost of plutonium extraction helped to silence such rosy predictions in the late 1970s.

Domestic nuclear sales have ground to a halt in the United States, and the industry is pressuring the Reagan administration to increase exports of nuclear technology. James Malone, the State Department official whose job it was to increase nuclear sales abroad, was dismissed in March, when hard-sell administration plans were leaked, the laser extraction process was announced, and Senator Gary Hart (D-Col.) then announced *his* plan to reintroduce a congressional ban on reprocessing. The administration decided that it needed another man to bring Congress around to the right point of view.

No one in the administration is saying it yet, but reprocessing services are likely to be a featured item on the menu at Reagan's Nuclear Carry-Out—if, that is, Congress can be brought into line. The aggressive export policy and the new laser process are both intended to reinvigorate a beleaguered industry, and both reflect an unconscionable lack of concern for human safety.

Orwell's old question about atomic bombs—"How difficult are these things to manufacture?"—has been asked increasingly often as its answer has become ever more frightening. Nuclear weapons are getting easier to make all the time. Acquisition of fissionable material, always the most difficult part of the process, will be simplified if spent fuel is reprocessed in the United States.

Whether used for bombs or breeders, plutonium in greater amounts than ever before will be stored and ship-

ped around the country. Nuclear material is most vulnerable to theft during transport. A mind-numbing array of nuclear terrorism scenarios and do-it-yourself bomb plans has circulated in the past decade; the possibilities for disaster presented by the reprocessing plans need not be catalogued.

In 1974 the CIA accused Israel of stealing highly enriched uranium from the Nuclear Materials and Equipment Corporation at Apollo, Pennsylvania. Norman Moss reports in *The Politics of Uranium* that NMEC was fined \$1.1 million because it could not account for the missing uranium. For terrorist organizations and hostile countries with far less to lose than Israel, shipments of reprocessed plutonium are tempting bait, a chance to make a bid for the nuclear big time.

If every nuclear materials handler were fined for "Inventory Differences," the industry would quickly go bankrupt: In March, the *Guardian* reported that an internal Nuclear Regulatory Commission study showed 375 questionable inventory statements from seventeen plants over thirty-two months. The newspaper reported that the U.S. Navy's nuclear fuel services plant in Tennessee "has regularly shown a monthly deficit of two pounds of highly-enriched uranium, enough to allow someone to make four nuclear bombs a year."

Reprocessing surely will increase what is already an intolerable risk. The administration's stake in continued social stability should be enough to alert it to the danger, but government-funded breakthroughs and State Department leaks are evidence to the contrary. It appears that our government's lack of prudence may give us yet ghastlier proof of George Orwell's prescience.

Eric Pooley is a free-lance journalist, now traveling in Europe with the help of a Samuel T. Arnold Fellowship of Brown University.

EXCURSUS 3

Alfons Heck on HARD TIMES IN THE FRG

On February 3 of this year Chancellor Helmut Schmidt used the most powerful weapon granted him by the West German constitution: He asked his government—a coalition of his own Social Democratic party (SPD) and the Free Democratic party (FDP)—for a vote of confidence. It was the first time in nearly eight years in office that the chancellor had demanded such a vote. And it highlighted dramatically his concern for the rising unemployment in his country. Schmidt accused the government of dragging its feet in finding an effective remedy. Some foreign observers felt the chancellor was firing a cannon to kill a fly, and some German politicians of the opposition suspected he wanted to assert his undisputed leadership of the country. Maybe so, but Schmidt did not risk a resignation and the fall of his government for mere prestige and egomania. Every poll shows that he remains West Germany's most respected statesman by far, despite the serious decline of his party.

Schmidt knows his Germans. If there is one thing they fear more than inflation, it's unemployment. Adolf Hitler came to power largely because there were more than five million Germans out of work in 1933. Today, the Federal Republic has one of the best unemployment compensation

programs in the world, and nobody faces deprivation comparable to the 1930s. But the figure of nearly two million unemployed—just short of 8 per cent of the labor force—contains, as Schmidt put it, "social dynamite."

For one thing, to be unemployed in Germany still carries more of a social stigma than it does almost anywhere else. But more important, such a large number of idle workers signifies the end of an era and the beginning of economic insecurity. "Gone for good is the *Wirtschaftswunder* and ahead of us lie years of painfully high unemployment," said minister of commerce. Count Otto Lamsdorff. There is a general consensus on that, but also a degree of inertia when it comes to settling on ways to combat it. Ironically, West German exports reached their highest levels last year, but unemployment kept rising all the same. A high index of productivity has the side effect of requiring less labor, especially when the demand for goods is slackening. That, in simplified terms, is the German problem. Less efficient countries in the European Community are even harder hit, and so is the American economy, which recently recorded another monthly trade deficit of \$5 billion. There is a definite relation between the current world-wide recession and high U.S. interest rates. "Even the Americans should be able to see that," said Hans Otto Poehl, chief of the Deutsche Bank, bitingly.

Unlike President Ronald Reagan, Helmut Schmidt has qualifications as an economist. He was minister of finance before he became chancellor in 1974. It is reported that he is not impressed by David Stockman's uncertain figures. But just like the American president, Schmidt, despite his Socialist party affiliation, is a capitalist. Some of the so-called "employment measures" now being considered by his government would suit Mr. Reagan just fine. For one thing, Schmidt does not intend to use for unemployment benefits any of the additional 7 billion deutschmarks in tax revenues he hopes to raise. Such social services are already sufficiently covered. The money is to be used principally for capital expenditures and investments in manufacturing plants and business. This, Schmidt believes, is what created jobs in the past and will create more jobs in the future. No other measure has such impact.

West Germany has an excellent apprenticeship system that produces highly qualified workers; it is not faced, as is the United States, with millions of people who are virtually unemployable due to lack of skill or motivation. There is hardly a German who would accept welfare as a life-long career. The Germans believe, however, that many of the four million guest workers (the figure includes dependents) will call for exactly that. Most guest workers, in fact, work hard at low-prestige jobs; but many, if not most, Germans have no intention of regarding them as equals. Feelings against them rise with each point in the unemployment rate. But the government knows only too well that without guest workers the German economy would collapse. They are integral to it and are there to stay.

What Chancellor Schmidt successfully conveyed with his startling request for a vote of confidence—which he received by a unanimous vote of all 269 coalition members—was a sense of urgency. "Schmidt is still in Bonn," said many of his countrymen. "He'll stop the slide."

At this point that is little more than wishful thinking, but Germans are more confident of their chances for a quick economic recovery than are many Americans. Still, the measures of the employment program will not have much of an immediate effect, and they are going to be both slow and painful. Although Schmidt and his coalition partner Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who is the foreign minister as well as the leader of the Free Democratic party, have agreed on a very general plan for action, the details still