



THE BOMB

Its Threat
and its Challenge.

Issued by
The Victorian Peace Council,
259 Collins St, Melbourne.

Bulletin No. 4, 1961

Price 3d

FROM AN ORIGINAL IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES
NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT PERMISSION

Victim Peace Council
Research and Information Centre
1962-1964 (MUIA)

SYMBOL OF DEATH: Still today, the image of the mushroom explosion cloud of the atom bomb, with all of the devastation, destruction and death which it symbolizes.

NUCLEAR ATTACK: None of us ought to have any illusions about the effects of nuclear warfare. They are set out graphically in a book published in the U.S. recently, by "The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions" (Community of Fear, by Brown and Real). Here are some extracts ---

"Thermonuclear weapons range in explosive force up to somewhat more than 20 megatons, corresponding to 20 million tons of TNT. These heavy bombs can be carried by B-52 bombers... Polaris, one megaton, Soviet ICBM warheads and Atlas and Titan will probably be able to carry warheads ranging from five to ten megatons.

WHEN A TEN MEGATON WARHEAD IS DETONATED.... the bomb material and surrounding air are heated to extremely high temperatures, and the resultant fireball grows quickly to a diameter of about 5 1/2 miles.

EFFECT ON HUMANS. On a clear day the fireball can produce third-degree burns out to about 20 miles from the explosion. A ten megaton burst in the atmosphere 30 miles above the earth could set fire to combustibles over 5,000 square miles on a clear day.

"A surface burst of a ten megaton bomb would produce a crater about 250 feet deep and a half mile wide.

"It is likely that firestorms will result from a thermonuclear burst over a large city.

RADIOACTIVE FALLOUT. The explosion results in the instantaneous emission of nuclear radiation in quantities that can be lethal at distances up to two miles, but since persons in that area would be killed anyway by the blast and thermal effects, this is not an important factor. Far more dangerous is the radiation from radioactive products which are produced in the explosion and which are scattered over the countryside as "fallout".

"These attach themselves to the inert debris which is swept into the air by the explosion and which forms the familiar mushroom cloud... The lighter particles will be deposited over an area 15 - 30 miles wide and 100 to 500 miles long. The balance is injected into the stratosphere and distributed globally."

WHAT A-BOMBS WOULD DO TO AMERICA: This newspaper headline announced the findings of the U.S. Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, in August 1959. It found that 263 nuclear weapons dropped on 224 specific targets would kill about 50 million Americans and seriously injure about 20 million others.

More than a quarter of the dwellings in the U.S. would be destroyed and nearly 10 million others damaged. About 13 million additional homes would be seriously contaminated by radio-active fallout.

CIVIL DEFENCE MYTH. "As soon as you know an H-Bomb is on the way, run out and paint your windows with a mixture of whitewash and curdled milk to deflect dangerous rays. Soak your curtains and upholstery with a solution of borax and starch to prevent fire."

This gem of counsel is reported by "Reynolds News" to have been given by an English lecturer on civil defence.

It is exceeded for sheer futility only by the advice given by the Victorian Premier Mr. Bolte, after he had attended a Civil Defence school in 1957: "First aid courses should be introduced for various sections of the community "

In Hiroshima in 1945, buildings were completely destroyed whether they were of wood, steel or concrete. Admittedly, people weren't warned, and so didn't have time to soak their curtains in borax and starch. But what's the good of nicely starched curtains standing bravely erect in the pitiful remains of a melted, distorted, incinerated house?

In Hiroshima in 1945, somewhere between 80,000 (the American Estimate) and 260,000 (the Japanese estimate) people were killed by one bomb, a baby bomb by our present advanced standards, Admittedly, people weren't warned, and so hadn't time to get out their first aid kits. But what's the good of first aid kits when people are incinerated, dehydrated, torn apart, blinded, crazed with mortal burns and wounds?

Sir Winston Churchill said, "There is no defence against the H-Bomb."

RADIATION EFFECTS. What about the radiation effects of nuclear weapons explosions?

Scientists have been warning the world for 15 years that military scientists are inflicting untold horror and suffering on hundreds of thousands of people, perhaps many millions of people, through the radiation effects of nuclear weapons tests.

Radioactive fallout is no respecter of persons or countries. Professor Linus Pauling of the United States declares that EVERY HUMAN BEING IN THE WORLD now has Strontium -90 in his bones, while 15 years ago nobody had this radioactive substance in his system. Dr. Pauling said that Strontium-90 irradiated the bone marrow and bone tissues in such a way as to cause leukemia and bone cancer. It got into the food and was built into the bones. (Age, 1-4-60)

The Regional Congress of Japanese Midwives recently published a report on the delayed effects of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki:

"Of the 30,150 children born in the nine years after the bombing, 4282, that is nearly every seventh child, were abnormal; 471 were stillborn and 181 were premature or miscarriages. Of 3630 abnormal children, 1016 suffered from degeneration of the bones, muscles, skin or nervous system, 429 had deformed noses or ears, 254 deformed lips or tongues, 59 had split palates, 243 deformed internal organs, 47 deformities of the brain, 25 had no brain, while 8 had no eyes and eye cavities...."

WHAT are the prospects for the human race, as long as it is prepared to unleash such immediate and long range destruction on a world scale?

Dr. Linus Pauling told a meeting in London that between 1½ and 3 million children would be born with congenital defects because of the nuclear test bombs which have already been exploded. (The times, 18.7.60.)

The United Nations Scientific Committee (83 scientists from 15 nations) issued its report in 1958, and, although more reserved in its figures, said basically the same thing.

GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS ON CESSATION OF NUCLEAR TESTS: Since October 1958, negotiators from the United States, the United Kingdom and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have been meeting to work out a basis for banning all further tests of nuclear weapons.

A draft treaty consisting of 17 articles and one annex has been prepared AND AGREED UPON. The treaty provides for the cessation of all further tests, and for control of the ban to be enforced by means of inspection posts throughout the countries concerned.

Under the control system, 170 control posts equipped with the latest devices, and also special planes, ships and mobile inspection teams, are to maintain a constant watch against secret violations of the agreement, immediately inspecting anything open to suspicion.

When it seemed that the ban could be concluded on the basis of the treaty, the U.S. authorities claimed that small explosions, especially if they were conducted underground, could not be detected, or if they were registered on the instruments, could not be distinguished from natural seismic disturbances. They claimed that nuclear test explosions of two or three kilotons or less should therefore be excluded from the ban.

Walter Lippman, a United States writer, pointed out that such tests were important to the U.S. military in developing "strategic" nuclear weapons for "limited" wars, and suggested that the motives for the request by the U.S. were not honest.

The Soviet government replied that it was willing to exclude such small tests from the treaty, PROVIDED THAT THERE WAS A MORATORIUM OF FOUR OR FIVE YEARS ON SUCH TESTS, AND THAT THERE BE A JOINT RESEARCH PROGRAM DURING THAT TIME TO DEVISE EFFECTIVE METHODS OF DETECTING ALL UNDERGROUND AND SMALL-SCALE EXPLOSIONS.

The western powers insisted on the length of the moratorium being reduced and declined the joint research proposal. The U.S. also declared that, if no agreement had been reached at the end of the moratorium, she would consider herself free to resume full-scale tests.

A position of stalemate has been reached. At the close of the Eisenhower Administration, the U.S. had declared that she was free to resume testing. Ex-president Eisenhower complained to Congress that there were enormously strong pressures upon him to resume tests at once.

A stalemate has been reached on the composition of the members of the Control Commission. The American and British delegates at Geneva insist that it consist of three representatives of the Western Powers, two of the Soviet Union and other socialist states and two neutrals. The Soviet Union proposes equal representatives from Western and Socialist powers and one neutral. Here it rests.

Clearly, the major part of the work has been done. All that holds up agreement is petty and disruptive.

Meanwhile, the threat of tests resuming is great and ever-present. The Soviet Union has warned that, if the United States resumes testing of nuclear weapons, she will be compelled to do the same.

ENTER THE FRENCH!

Into this artificial stalemate has come the new factor of the French Tests.

Flying in the face of world opinion (even in the U.S., a Gallup Poll showed that 70% of the people interviewed are against the resumption of testing) the French have conducted a series of tests in the Sahara Desert.

They have done this despite protest, censure and even severed diplomatic relationships on the part of some African States. Scientific investigations in many places show that radioactivity in the air, in food and in animals (AND THEREFORE IN HUMANS) has risen sharply since the French tests.

But, it seems that the Sahara is becoming too hot, in terms of widespread African opinion and censure, for the French. So we've had the kite-flying suggestion that French tests will be transferred to the Antarctic, to Kerguelen Island, 2500 miles south west of Perth.

FALLOUT FOR AUSTRALIA. There seems no doubt that prevailing winds would bring radioactive fallout from such tests across Australia. While we abhor the idea of people anywhere being subjected to any more radioactivity from weapons tests than they have had already, this latest proposal brings the matter into sharp focus for us.

As a great food producing country, we and those to whom we export, stand to receive quickly the destructive effects of these proposed tests.

Let's not be put off by the easy denial of French officials that the tests will not be conducted at Kerguelen Island. Dr. Jacka, of the Antarctic Division of the Australian External Affairs Department, is reported as saying that the activities of the French on Kerguelen Island have mystified Australian scientists for some time. "There are too many people there - about 100 - for it to be a purely scientific base."

WHAT POLITICIANS WON'T DO, THE PEOPLE MUST!

Scientists have been warning us for fifteen years of the dangers to the human race from the use and testing of nuclear weapons.

Technical experts have worked well, and have prepared the basis for a treaty to be concluded.

The conclusion of a tests ban treaty would be a grand first step towards the overall objective, endorsed in principle by the General Assembly of the United Nations, of universal, controlled disarmament of all atomic and conventional weapons.

The Administration of President Kennedy in the United States has asked for the resumption of the Geneva Conference, due for February 7th, to be stayed for two months while it studies the situation afresh.

THIS IS WHERE THE ROLE OF THE PEOPLE BECOMES EFFECTIVE.

Talk about this with your friends and workmates. Write about it to the newspapers. Write, with insistence, to your Federal Member, to the Prime Minister, to World Leaders.

BY SUCH ACTION, THIS AWFUL MENACE TO THE FAMILY OF MAN CAN BE REMOVED, AND THE WAY CLEARED FOR MORE POSITIVE STEPS IN PEACE MAKING.

.....