



The Phyllis Schlafly Report

VOL. 17, NO. 1, SECTION 1

BOX 618, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002

AUGUST, 1983

Classroom Courses in Nuclear War

The Curricula Of Fear, Guilt, and Despair

A new subject is being taught in junior and senior high schools across the country. It comes under a variety of different course names, but the curricula are clearly designed to produce Fear, Guilt and Despair (FGD) in the minds and hearts of the students.

Most of these new courses are masquerading under the pretense of educating students about nuclear war. When you examine the textbooks and materials, it is evident that the purpose is not to impart knowledge but to change the students' attitudes and behavior to conform to the authors' prejudices and politics (especially pacifism and U.S. nuclear disarmament), and that the authors have designed FGD as the major tactic to achieve that result.

You don't have to take my word for it. Just take the words of the students who took these courses, and

"I am very scared, very, very scared. Because with a nuclear war you don't have a chance to survive." "These days, I just try not to think about my future, because I have a hard time seeing one. There aren't any jobs and there isn't any money for me to go to college. I want to do something with my life, but who cares about me? Besides, we're all going to get blown up anyway." (CR)

"Some of the discussions we had got 'pretty heavy,' and it was hard to handle! It's hard to spend 45 minutes a day talking about dying, and it's depressing!" "Several students began to cry. 'No, no,' they yelled, covering their ears. 'We'll all be dead. It's no use. We're doomed.'" (DMNA)

"I went into this class planning not to allow it to change my thinking toward the arms race and military spending. However, to my disappointment, at the end of the class, I have to admit to a degree it has been effective. My point of view of staunch need for arms has changed to a wishy-washy feeling." (DMNA)

"I have learned that there is seldom a right or wrong but rather a right or left." "I'm conscious of having changed in the strength of my convictions on

whose reactions are recorded in "Student Journals" which they were forced to write and turn in to the teacher as part of the course assignments.

The nuclear war courses require each student to keep a "journal" in which he records his thoughts and attitudes about the course, plus conversations with his parents, friends and neighbors about controversial issues. Keeping a journal is a key element because it enables the teacher to track the student's change in attitudes.

All the quotations below are from the Student Journals as quoted in the printed materials for the nuclear war curricula listed on the last page of this Report. These student reactions are presented without apology or embarrassment by the curricula authors, who apparently are well pleased with the results of their courses and are trying to peddle them to all schools in the country.

many of the ethical dilemmas we've confronted. But in other ways I'm less sure of myself and more introspective. Where do I draw the line between right and wrong?" (FHAO)

"I feel as though something I have had all my life has been taken away from me, something that can never be totally restored..... I almost feel that I need it back because I feel so awful without it. We all, in our struggling humanity, have to clutch to our eyeballs to keep out the cold light of despair." (FHAO)

"The most meaningful parts of the book [Elie Wiesel's *Night*] to me were when the boy stopped believing in God, and when the father was dying. I think that maybe my faith is waning a little, just from reading about it. Unfortunately, this book will always be tucked in my memory." (FHAO)

"We probed questions that had no right or wrong answers and I became more and more confused as to how I stood on several issues." "Even in this seemingly perfect country we are cruel. We are hateful. We are obsessed with ourselves." "What I did learn will probably change the way I think and look on life for the rest of my life." (FHAO)

How Pacifist Propaganda Is Put Over On Pupils

Although most parents send their children to school to learn knowledge and skills, some courses are taught for very different purposes. The curricula currently mushrooming in junior and senior high schools to teach about nuclear war are designed to change attitudes and behaviour, and thereby to affect national policies, rather than to impart knowledge and skills.

The goals of the nuclear war curricula are (a) to promote U.S. nuclear disarmament, (b) to belittle the Soviet threat, and (c) to propagandize for federal spending for social goals at the expense of national defense. To achieve these goals, the student is required to spend long hours hearing dramatic and dreary descriptions of the horrors of nuclear war, nuclear explosions and radiation.

The *Decision Making in a Nuclear Age* textbook explains how this course forces the students "to consider not only limitless, but abstract, death, but also his or her very own death." The textbook urges the teacher to force students to "talk about the despair that comes up when thinking about the nuclear world."

The *Choices* textbook explains how students must be forced to "read about the effects of nuclear explosions . . . [and] discuss the long-term effects on those who are not immediately killed by the explosion." This textbook tells the teacher that, although "disturbing," "the students have been given many unpleasant facts, but it is crucial to realize the destructive nature of nuclear weapons."

It's no wonder that a Yankelovich survey concluded that young people are "unhappier today and under greater tension than they were a generation ago, or perhaps even a few years ago." The survey linked this shift specifically to the perceived threat of nuclear war and the sense of futurelessness.

Decision Making in a Nuclear Age is candid about admitting the propaganda purpose of the study materials. The book admits that one of the "important assumptions [which] guided the writing of these materials" was that "the United States and the Soviet Union share responsibility for beginning and perpetuating the hostilities which have for some time threatened to destroy Planet Earth." That assumption is false and anti-American. The United States conclusively proved, as a matter of historical fact, that nuclear weapons in our hands are the greatest instrument of peace that man has ever produced; when we held a total monopoly, and could have taken over any other country without the slightest risk to ourselves, we did not use nuclear power for aggression, but used it for world peace and even spent our tax dollars to rebuild the countries that had declared war on us. No country has ever worried about American aggression, while the Soviet Union has taken over every country it could.

Among the other nuggets of propaganda included in *Decision Making* is an attempt to convey the

impression that Alger Hiss and the Rosenbergs were innocent even though they were found guilty by juries and those guilty verdicts were upheld in appeal after appeal.

Nuclear Games in the Classroom

Since the curricula are also designed to change attitudes and behavior, they make use of a variety of unusual teaching techniques which force the student to expose his private thoughts and lay them on the table so the teacher and the class can change them by discussion, intimidation, and peer pressure. One major technique, which we discussed earlier in this Report, is the Student Journals required by all the courses.

Another technique used in the nuclear war curricula is the "whip." This is the device of asking the student to complete a phrase by speaking the first words that come to mind. For example, when the phrase is spoken, "When I think of nuclear war . . .", the expected reply is, "Death!"

"Simulation games" are widely used in the nuclear war curricula to teach pacifist and anti-defense propaganda to the students. The Token Game is one of several games featured in the NEA-sponsored nuclear war curriculum called *Choices*.

The class is divided into groups, and each group of students is given 20 tokens which represent all the money in the federal budget. The class is given a list of categories on which federal money is spent, and then told to divide up the tokens in the way the students think the money should be spent.

After the students have made their choices, the teacher reveals the way the federal budget is really allocated so that the students can compare this with their own preferences. It isn't hard to figure out that the student will be led into making a "choice" to reduce current military spending and increase spending on NEA-favored projects.

But that isn't all. The teacher's "answer sheet" says that 9 out of 20 tokens are now spent for national defense in the federal budget. That is false; the military budget is only one-fourth of the federal budget (and so, if you know your old math, should have only 5 tokens out of 20).

Another game featured in the NEA textbook called *Choices* is the Dollar Game. The teacher divides the class into two groups, holds up a \$1 bill, and announces that the dollar will be given to the side that makes the highest bid, but that both sides must surrender their "bid" money regardless of whether they make the high bid. The students are supposed to figure out that, as soon as the bids go over 50¢, the teacher will gain and both sides will lose.

The textbook explains that "this game demonstrates that bargaining, compromise, and negotiation with 'the other side' help everyone in the end." (Now, if Ronald Reagan would just try that game on Andropov, we could solve the whole problem of nuclear war!)

Another game used in the nuclear war curricula is to instruct the students to write a "Dear Abby" letter about "the five things that worry me most in the world today." The letters go to the teacher, not to Abby; so this is just another way of a teacher's probing into the private thoughts of the student on matters that are none of the school's business. Some of the textbooks instruct the teacher to "collect the letters, redistribute them for students to answer. Then read the letters and responses aloud." This obviously elicits group criticism of the students' secret worries.

After a lesson devoted to minimizing the "Soviet Threat" (in quotes to convey the notion that the U.S.S.R. isn't really any threat), the *Crossroads* course urges students to write a letter to the Soviet government about how they feel about the threat of nuclear war and the arms race. Students are told to address the war letter, "Dear Soviet official." The directions for what to do with the letters clearly show the interlocking relationship of these curricula: "These letters will be sent to the Soviet government later through a massive letter-writing project called 'Facing History and Ourselves,' located at 25 Kennard Rd., Brookline, MA 02146."

Other techniques used in the nuclear curriculum are "role playing" (students are assigned roles to act out in a variety of conflict situations; it is suggested that "occasional bursts of real anger may in the long run be more helpful to reaching a meaningful understanding than burying a resentment and letting it smolder unattended"), and "brainstorming" (for which the teacher should "appoint a recorder to take very accurate notes of the student comments").

An exciting classroom game recommended in the course called *Crossroads* is called "Duck and Cover." Here are the instructions to the teacher: "Ask students to crouch under their desks and put their hands over their heads. Ask them if they think this would protect them if a bomb were dropped over their city. Then write 'Duck and Cover' on the board. Ask who learned its meaning. Discuss their answers."

In case you think that is a joke, it isn't. It's presented in all seriousness as the first activity for Day Six of the *Crossroads* course.

The only feeble attempt at humor I found in examining a half dozen of these dreary, depressing courses on nuclear war was a comic strip in the NEA-sponsored curriculum called *Choices*. One person in the cartoon says to the other: "Just imagine, God created all this in only six days." The other person responds, "Hah! Big Deal! We can wipe it all out in six minutes."

If you are not laughing, maybe you should investigate the course on nuclear war which will be taught in your children's school this fall.

Scaring Children About Nuclear War

If you thought the courses on nuclear war were designed only for senior and high school students, you are in for a shock. They are planned for K-12 (that

means Kindergarten through Grade Twelve).

This means that nuclear war has joined sex education as the only two subjects which are taught over the entire 13-year span of pre-college education. Nothing else is taught for so many years — not reading, writing, English, math, or science.

Plans are moving rapidly to have all the nuclear war curricula in place when schools open this fall. The teachers' manuals are massive, complete with bibliographies, film listings, and study guides.

For example, a Cambridge, Massachusetts outfit called Educators for Social Responsibility has shown its responsibility (or lack of it) by developing an elaborate "Planning & Curriculum Resource Guide Dealing With Issues of Nuclear War in the Classroom" called *A Day of Dialogue*. One of the most interesting parts of this study manual is the descriptive reading list on nuclear war prepared for grade school and high school students.

Books for Kindergarten through Grade 3: "Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes": a story about an 11-year-old Japanese girl who, nine years after Hiroshima, is found to have leukemia resulting from radiation exposure. "Potatoes, Potatoes": a story about a mother's attempt to shield her two sons from war and their eventual involvement in it. "The Stranger": a fable about people who in fear bring out their cannon against a giant-stranger, but when they finally get to know him, invite him to stay.

Books for Grades 4-6: "Let's Cry for Peace": stories of two children, including a brief history of the peace movement with poems and songs appealing for peace. "The War Party": a young Native American looks forward to his first battle, but when he participates in it, is horrified by its brutality.

Books for Junior High School. "In the Sky Over Nagasaki: An A-Bomb Reader for Children": on the effects of the Nagasaki bomb written from the point of view of a camphor tree that survived. "Living Beneath the Atomic Cloud: Testimony of the Children of Nagasaki": vivid descriptions by children who were 5 to 12 years old at the time of the bombing.

"Children of the A-bomb": descriptions by Japanese who were junior high school students when the Hiroshima bomb was dropped. "The Watch on Patterick Fell": a story about how demonstrations force the shut-down of nuclear power plants and waste disposal facilities in the England of the future.

Books for High School Students: "Cambridge and Nuclear Weapons": outlines the devastation which would result from a nuclear attack and suggests that prevention is the only valid form of defense. "Psychosocial Aspects of Nuclear Developments": on psychosocial aspects of the arms race, US-USSR relations, and the accident at Three Mile Island.

"Nuclear Madness—What You Can Do": by Helen Caldicott, who is described in the bibliography as "a passionate opponent of nuclear power and weapons." "Hibakusha": a description of the effects of the bombing on Japanese survivors. "Black Rain": a

novel about a family who lived through the Hiroshima bombing. "Unforgettable Fire": drawings and paintings by survivors of the A-bomb in Hiroshima, collected 30 years later.

If children are forced to read books like this, it's no wonder they begin to believe they have no future. According to Educators for Social Responsibility, of the students returning their questionnaires, 87% thought there would be a nuclear war in the next 20 years, 90% felt that the world would not survive a nuclear war, 81% said that worry about nuclear war affected their job plans, and 81% said it affected their hopes for the future. The nuclear war curricula themselves have produced this tragic result.

Maybe we shouldn't be surprised at today's shocking rates of teenage suicide, depression, loneliness, pre-marital sex, and drug abuse. The nuclear war courses have taught teenagers to abandon hope because they have no future.

Teaching Students to Write Letters

The following are two sample letters provided in *A Day of Dialogue*. The first letter is designed for students to write to a Soviet citizen. In order to get the letter to its destination, students are told to forward their letters to *Facing History and Ourselves*, 25 Kennard Road, Brookline, MA 02146. (This letter-writing project shows the linkage between FHAO and the other nuclear war curricula.) The second letter is designed for students to write to their local newspapers.

★ ★ ★

Dear Soviet Citizen:

We don't hear very good things about the Soviet Union here. Just the bad things, like the invasion of Afghanistan, or the possible invasion of Poland. We only know about the government — not the people. While writing this letter, I tried to see the Russians as real people; people who have hopes, worries, fears. I hope that as you are reading this letter, you will try to do the same for me — see me as a person, not a country, or an event. There are bad people in the U.S. But there are plenty of good ones too.

As for my future, it's hard to say. Will I marry? Will I have children? Will I devote my life to a profession or something I strongly believe in? I can't say. It's hard for me to seriously think of the future, when there is the terrifying reality that I and all of those around me may not even exist in the future. I am, of course, referring to nuclear war. It is overwhelming to me, as it must be to you, that every human being on this planet must live each day to its fullest, because the next day may never come.

To the editor:

In the past years, I have come to the conclusion that I, a 17 year old girl, am as mature or more so than all the other "grown-ups" I have encountered in my life. Not only is this truth tragic but most of all, it is extremely scary. We single out mere mortals to enforce laws made by mere mortals. We entrust our lives to these people who experience greed, jealousy, love, hate . . . same as the rest of us.

If you can realize that all people have human instincts, we then can conclude that our leaders can make mistakes. Therefore, we do not need to fear voicing our opinions and speaking out.

I am speaking out. In fact, I am shouting out. Fear and helplessness overwhelms me when I read articles of the possibility of nuclear war.

The fear-guilt-despair curricula examined for this Report were: **Decision Making in a Nuclear Age** (DMNA), Box 590, Cambridge, MA 02139; **Choices**, produced by the NEA and the Union of Concerned Scientists, 26 Church St., Cambridge, MA 02238; **Facing History and Ourselves** (FHAO), 25 Kennard Road, Brookline, MA 02146; **Crossroads** (CR), produced by "Jobs With Peace," 77 Summer St., Room 1111, Boston, MA 02110; and **A Day of Dialogue** (DOD) produced by Educators for Social Responsibility, 639 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139.

Phyllis Schlafly has her B.A. from Washington University, her M.A. from Harvard University, her J.D. from Washington University Law School, and an honorary LL.D. from Niagara University. She is the author of nine books and over 1,000 network television and radio commentaries. Before her marriage, she was a librarian. She taught all her six children to read before they entered school. Two are lawyers, one is an orthopedic surgeon, one has his Ph.D. in mathematics and is the author of a book on Rubik's Cube, one is an electrical engineer, and the youngest is in college.

The Phyllis Schlafly Report

Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
ISSN0556-0152

Published monthly by The Eagle Trust Fund, Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002.

Second Class Postage Paid at Alton, Illinois.

Subscription Price: \$10 per year. Extra copies available: 50 cents each; 4 copies \$1; 30 copies \$5; 100 copies \$10.