

BY KID'S MOUTH

In the summer of 1983, a team of three American psychiatrists was granted an opportunity to travel to the Soviet Union and study the psychological effects of the threat of nuclear war on Soviet children. The project was sponsored jointly by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and the Research Program for the Study of Human Continuity, Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School in Boston.

The American psychiatrists Drs. Eric Chivian, John Mack and Jeremy Valetzky visited the Soviet Young Pioneer camps. One of them was near Moscow and named after the first Soviet and world man in space Yuri Gagarin, the other was on the Black Sea coast, in the Caucasus.

The investigators conducted videotaped interviews with approximately 50 children, 11-15 years old.

"We wanted to investigate," said Dr. Eric Chivian, the leader of the team, "what Soviet children know about the subject of nuclear weapons

and nuclear war. We had complete freedom to select any kid for the interview."

"If there were a nuclear war, what would happen?" Dr. J. Mack asked.

Oksana from Moscow, age 11: "If atomic bombs were dropped a fairly long time ago, but children are still being born with the effects of radiation. If war starts, we might all be without parents."

Alexei from Tambov Region, age 13: "The entire earth will become a wasteland. All living things will perish: no grass, no trees."

Andrei from Moscow, age 15: "How many people atomic bombs killed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I don't even know, but these nuclear weapons will kill a hundred times more."

Doctor Chivian on his question, "Do any of you ever think that there might be a nuclear war in your lifetime?" received the following answers:

Boris from Minsk, age 13: "We hope that will never happen. The consequences are terrible."

Irina from Estonia, age 13: "We don't like to believe things like that. The Soviet Union and our Party struggle for peace."

The similar written questionnaires by American psychiatrists were also performed in six different California high schools. The same questions American children answered in a very close way. However, more American children - 38.5 per cent (in comparison with 11.8 per cent of Soviet kids) - think a nuclear war will happen in their lifetime. The overwhelming majority of Soviet children (93.3 per cent) think nuclear war between the USA and the USSR can be prevented. This percentage among American children is about 65.

"By Kid's Mouth the Truth Is Telling". This film is now being shown on television and at cinemas throughout the United States. Excerpts from it have already been shown on the NBC programme "Today".

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