

Peter Bloch

# A long, but sure and painful death is what the neutron bomb provides

President Carter received from Congress during the summer 14 million dollars for the development of a neutron bomb. The Administration chose to orchestrate this appropriation during the summertime to help assure that the dormant peace movement would not be awakened.

The proponents for the development of the neutron bomb argue that it would be an ideal tactical weapon. It would be used with the Army's 60 mile range Lance missiles and with 8" and 155 mm howitzers. The small nuclear weapon, equivalent to about 1,000 tons of TNT would produce minimal fire and blast damage to structures compared to conventional atomic weapons, but the intensive neutron radiation released would be effective in destroying life. Since neutron radiation easily penetrates steel, the military argued that soldiers in a tank would not escape radiation even if the tank escaped destruction from the blast and fire.

The Pentagon justifies the weapon on the ground that it could neutralize the Warsaw Pact nations' advantage in armored infantry in Central Europe.

Many recognize that the neutron bomb is not an effective tactical weapon. Its value as an anti-personnel weapon is in the arena of demoralizing civilian populations. To demonstrate this point, it is necessary to discuss the effects of radiation on living tissue.

Shortly after the discovery of x-rays nearly 80 years ago, it was recognized that radiation could damage living tissue. Precautions were taken almost immediately to safeguard individuals working with radiation. Even as early as the 1920s an international commission established radiation safeguard levels. The medical benefits in the use of x-radi-

ation were enormous. X-ray films are essential for the diagnosis of diseases and have become as necessary to the surgeon as his scalpel. The x-ray exposure necessary for medical diagnostic procedures are extremely small. No evidence of any deleterious effect on people exposed to these low levels of radiation has been observed.

Radiation is also used to sterilize tumors. The radiation is aimed at the tumor and great care is taken to protect normal tissue. A patient undergoing radiation therapy will receive approximately 4000 to 7000 rads spread over six weeks to sterilize the tumor. For reference, a dental x-ray examination requires approximately .5 rads or approximately 10,000 times less radiation than needed for cancer therapy. If vital organs such as the bone marrow are protected, these radiation levels are tolerated and often lead to sterilization of the primary tumor. If however, the radiation is given rapidly and over the whole body, the person will become nauseous and weak and require emergency medical care.

For example, one method of treating a child with leukemia who has a healthy sibling consists of irradiating the whole body to dose levels of 850 to 1000 rads in approximately two to three hours. The radiation destroys the sick child's immunological mechanism permitting a bone marrow transplant from his healthy sibling. Such a course of treatment requires extremely sophisticated medical handling of the patient since the irradiated child may become quite nauseous, have serious attacks of diarrhea and be incapable of fighting off even minor infections. The child is placed in complete isolation for four to six weeks since the

patient has no mechanism for fighting off even minor infections. It is known, that in most cases a dose of 500 rads would lead to death in two months if bone marrow transplants were not available from a sibling donor.

## Military applications.

The long time between irradiation exposure and ultimate death raises serious questions about the efficacy of neutron bomb as a tactical weapon. The Armed Forces Radiology Research Institute, which has been testing the effects of radiation on monkeys for years, finds that monkeys will survive 7 to 132 hours after irradiation to a total dose of 4,600 rads. Thus, a column of soldiers exposed to neutron radiation could function for hours before soldiers in tanks would be incapacitated. Certainly enough time for them to release any remaining missiles in their arsenal. The worst of horror movies would not compare with the behavior of soldiers exposed to neutron radiation who knew with certainty that they would die within days.

The American Military knew since the early 1960s that radiation did not lead to instant death in monkeys and hence that a neutron bomb would not be an effective combat weapon. Why then have they pushed for the development of the weapon now?

According to Dr. Herbert Seoville, Jr., former Director of the Special Weapons Project of the Pentagon, a typical neutron weapon would result in a neutron dose of approximately 650 rads, 3/4 of a mile from the center of the explosion. Even at a mile and a half from the center of the explosion, the radiation levels will be sufficient to kill at least 50 percent of the people. The people exposed to these high levels of radiation

will be incapacitated for weeks by vomiting, diarrhea and general illness due to the damage of the immunological as well as the blood forming networks of the body.

Such a population would be sufficiently demoralized to sue for peace at any price.

Vietnam was a testing ground for the use of anti-personnel weapons. One of the more insidious weapons of that war was the plastic pellet anti-personnel bomb. Plastic beads imbedded in tissue cannot be detected by x-ray procedures. This complicates and often makes it impossible for surgeons to find and remove them from the unfortunate victim. The Military considered the plastic personnel weapon a great improvement over metal shrapnel bombs used in earlier wars because the presence of the metal in the person could be easily detected by x-ray films permitting surgical removal in most cases.

Similarly, it seems clear that the military has no intention of using a neutron bomb as a tactical weapon in combat, but to demoralize the civilian population.

The neutron bomb, I believe is the ultimate anti-personnel weapon since it results in a slow death lasting for several months and one that puts enormous strains on the medical community. This summer the military obtained funds to develop such a weapon, but when the issue of deployment of the weapon is raised, I hope enough voices will say that such a weapon is a reprehensible insult to the human race—enough to stop its production and to prevent its use.

*Peter Bloch is Associate Professor of radiological sciences at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.*



Joshua Dressler

# Free to choose your own destruction Laetrile, helmets and libertarians

How can one be a Libertarian and a Socialist simultaneously? The answer is that one *cannot*, but many socialists have apparently been flim-flammed into preaching the libertarian creed.

On first blush it is easy. The Libertarian Party's philosophy is that government should not enact "paternalistic" laws. They believe that the less government and the more power the people retain for themselves the better. Libertarians favor legalization of marijuana and homosexuality, and free access to all literature, including pornography. Fine. They also oppose governmental intrusion into people's lives.

Fine, socialists think. But this is a knee jerk reaction. We often oppose *this* government; we often struggle to limit government censorship, discrimination, surveillance, and police statism. But, as socialists, we do *not* oppose the concept of substantial public power in economic affairs.

The libertarian philosophy, in its purest form, does just that. Libertarians not only reject governmental intervention in the private sphere, but also in the economic sector. They oppose taxation, social welfare, and other regulation of business. They favor a society in which corporations are unfettered.

Coalition with libertarians on certain issues may be possible and necessary. But espousal of their creed is not. Their creed is not only anti-socialist, but dangerous. Two examples should suffice.

Many people have in the past fought against laws requiring motorcyclists to wear helmets. Some of these people have believed that this precaution would not reduce injuries. Still others have suggested that helmets actually *increase* injuries,

because they restrict peripheral vision of the driver. If they are correct, of course, then motorcycle helmet legislation is certainly inappropriate.

Libertarians, however, have a different approach to the matter. That helmets increase or decrease driver safety is entirely immaterial. They simply—and simplistically—oppose the government telling people they must protect themselves.

Unfortunately, libertarians have been a powerful lobby on this matter. They have persuaded many people, including progressives, to take a stand against governmental "intrusion into our private lives." They have convinced the people who dislike seat belt warning buzzers, and those who simply distrust government, to take a stand against helmet legislation. The result has been clear. Legislators have dropped such proposals, and a few states have even repealed such laws.

Significantly, in states that have repealed helmet laws, the number of deaths and brain injuries to helmetless—but "free" motorcyclists have increased drastically. Many of those who previously opposed such laws now have changed their minds. Not the libertarians. Since the issue to them was never safety, but rather "freedom of choice," they consider their work to have been a success. For motorcyclists; however, it has been a defeat. The average motorcyclist did not want the right to kill himself or herself. Libertarians, however, apparently do not ride the motorcycles.

Or consider Laetrile, and the Food and Drug Administration ban on this alleged cancer cure. There are those who

think it is a tremendous breakthrough in cancer cure, and they offer evidence to support it. Others, aware of the cowardice and conservatism of the American Medical Association have sided with Laetrile backers, even though their support has meant that they have given comfort and aid to those trying to reap incredible profits from the drug. To libertarians, again, they have seen the issue as another opportunity to foist their "freedom of choice" dogma on the innocent. They speak of giving the terminally ill cancer patient the right to choose between Laetrile and traditional techniques.

It sounds sensible, and it has duped a lot of progressives, but in fact it is a highly dangerous and counter-productive doctrine. Cancer patients want a cure to cancer, not freedom of choice. If Laetrile works, and traditional techniques do not, they want the drug. Who would not? If both Laetrile and traditional means will work, they want the right to choose, as well they should have the right. But, if Laetrile is a hoax, they certainly don't want—or need, nor should they have—the "choice" of a worthless drug that kills its users and profits its pushers.

Indeed, in states that have recently lifted the ban on Laetrile there are reports of *non*-terminally ill cancer victims who opted for Laetrile over traditional surgery which would have stopped the cancer. They died. Maybe the reports are wrong. Maybe they were incurable. That is not the point. The point is that such stories could be correct. If Laetrile is worthless, and I stress "if," socialists should call for its ban. Let the libertar-

ians continue to cry for "choice." Let us call for "health."

The question ought to be with Laetrile, and motorcycle helmet laws, whether the drug or the legislation will work. The government has the duty to conduct careful, cautious, open-minded, and intelligent investigation into all of the scientific, medical, and other objective data on the topic, and then to act accordingly. Our duty is to make sure it makes the proper judgment, not to prevent any judgment at all.

To strip the government of the power to make such laws is also to strip it of the right to prevent the sale of dangerous cars, and to prevent the sale of products with Tris, and to ban sale of flammable children's clothing. It would also strip government of the right to keep incompetent doctors and lawyers out of the profession, and con artists out of our living rooms.

This is no small issue. Libertarians today continue their battles in various parts of the nation to prevent flouride from being used in our public waters, and to insure us saccharin in our Tabs. If they succeed we may avoid the dangers of flouride and fatness. Or we might see our teeth rot and our cancer rates escalate.

What is most horrible, though, is not even the spectre of such dangers, but that the libertarians will be satisfied if we had the "freedom to choose" our own destruction. Let us reject that choice.

*Joshua Dressler is associate professor of law at Hamline University Law School in St. Paul, Minn. His column appears regularly.*



# The Supreme Court: Forward or Bakke?

"... No state shall ... deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws ..." (Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution)

At the heart of two recent Supreme Court cases—*Defunis Vs. Odegaard and Bakke vs. University of California*—lies the question "who is being denied equal protection?" *Defunis* was denied admission to the University of Washington's law school. *Bakke* was refused entrance to the UC Davis medical school. Both schools have "preferential admissions" programs that aim to admit a specified number of minority students, some of whom would be rejected if the schools considered only test scores and grade point averages. *Defunis* and *Bakke*, both white, accused the universities of "reverse discrimination." They charged that they were denied equal protection of the law because of their race.

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear the *Defunis* case in 1974. After hearing both sides the court held that because *Defunis* had been admitted to the University of Washington law school and was about to graduate, his suit was moot.

*Bakke's* case goes to the Supreme Court this month. The Yolo County Superior Court in 1976 declared the University of California's preferential admissions program to be discriminatory against whites and unconstitutional. But it also ruled that *Bakke* was not entitled to be admitted to UC Davis medical school. Both parties appealed to the California Supreme Court. When the state Supreme Court upheld the lower court, the University appealed. Since *Bakke* has still not been admitted, the Supreme Court will probably rule on his case.

Ironically, *Defunis* and *Bakke* have both benefitted from the preferential admissions programs. *Defunis* was far down on the list at the U. of W. Even if 36 minority applicants had not been admitted, the law school would have rejected him. Pressure from his suit caused the university to admit him.

In fact, *Defunis's* original suit asked for preferential treatment for himself. As a state resident, he claimed that he should be given preference over out-of-staters, even over those with higher scores and grades. His lawyer advised him that he might get more mileage out of the "race" argument, so *Defunis* shifted legal gears.

*Bakke*, a 35-year-old engineer, first considered charging the University of California with age discrimination. But Peter Storandt, assistant dean of the medical school at UC Davis, urged him to challenge the preferential admissions policy. Sixteen out of 100 positions are reserved for qualified minority students, and many had lower grades and test scores than *Bakke*. Davis also admitted eight white students with lower test scores than *Bakke* and 35 white students with lower grades. But *Bakke* didn't challenge their right to become doctors, only the right of the minority students.

The Supreme Court justices will consider, along with other questions, whether minority students are qualified. To the American public this is probably the most important issue. Following are some arguments that minorities are qualified for professional schools:

- Special consideration is given to other groups of applicants: relatives of alumni; athletes; veterans; residents of certain geographical areas (private schools tend to favor out-of-staters, state schools tend to favor in-staters and most schools give special consideration to rural applicants); the physically handicapped; and recent immigrants whose English is unpolished.

Columnist Carl Rowan has noted that critics "don't complain about 'reverse discrimination' if it's a 230-pound tight end with a C average who gets in ahead of a bookworm."

- Low test scores, more than any other factor, consign minority applicants to low ranking. But a recent study of the Association of American Medical Colleges shows that blacks successfully completing the first two years of medical school had lower Medical College Admissions Test scores than whites who had flunked out. This indicates that the tests are either biased or imperfect predictors.

- Other examples also indicate the limited value of existing tests. A New York court threw out a civil service test on grounds that it disproportionately excluded minority groups from school principal jobs. While new tests were developed, principals were evaluated by on-the-job performance. By the summer of 1974, rates of appointments (per applications) were: blacks—94 percent; Puerto Ricans—97 percent; whites—93.4 percent.

The Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) has an Early Identification Program that identifies women and minority high school students with a potential interest in engineering and gives them moral and material encouragement. There are summer orientation sessions and arrangements with CETA for part-time jobs. From 1973 to 1976 the number of black engineering students at IIT jumped from 26 to 179. While IIT's overall attrition rate is 15 to 20 percent, the rate for black students is only three percent.

- If tests have a limited predictive value, what do they predict? Certainly not compassion, honesty or commitment to serving the people. Are we then to take seriously the California Supreme Court's opinion that white doctors are as likely as minority doctors to meet the medical needs of minority communities?

Opponents of the *Bakke* decision have begun organizing. Last April the National Committee to Overturn the *Bakke* Decision held a founding convention of 80 people (representing 60 organizations in San Francisco). Over 100 organizations are now affiliated with the committee. Also, several of the anti-apartheid demonstrations in California last spring raised the demand to overturn the *Bakke* decision.

Supporters of affirmative action find themselves arrayed against two foes. *Bakke*, of course, is the obvious opponent. But activists charge that they have to fight the university as well. The University of California is allegedly *Bakke's* adversary. But administrators appear unwilling to make a vigorous defense of their own preferential admissions program.

The NAACP petitioned the California Supreme Court to let minority representatives present testimony, along with the two parties in the case. The court refused. The National Lawyers Guild, the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund and other civil rights groups have asked the U.S. Supreme Court not to hear the case at all, because of an inadequate trial record.

University attorneys have used only written evidence. Many witnesses were available, but the lawyers have not used oral testimony. Most significantly, they have made no effort to show previous discrimination by the university. The university has resisted demands from minority groups that it hire a minority co-counsel.

For more information, write: NCOBD Box 3026, South Berkeley Station, Berkeley, California 94703. Telephone: (415) 549-3297. For 10¢ NCOBD will send its brochure on the *Bakke* case.

## H.H. Wilson

### Teacher of Democracy at Princeton

By Richard L. Sklar

H.H. (Hube) Wilson died last summer. He was 68 and recently retired as professor emeritus at Princeton University, where he had been teaching in the Department of Politics since 1947. I studied with him at Princeton, at first because he stood up to the red-baiting witch hunters and cold warriors when it took courage to do that. Soon I developed an immense respect for his intellect and absolute professional integrity.

Although he was young at heart and in appearance, he was older than he seemed, having begun his academic career later in life than most. When I got to know him, I learned that he worried about turning into an academic "vegetable," as he said. He did not wish to (and never did) compromise his principles or change his style to make it at Princeton.

What he did at Princeton is a memorable chapter in American academic history, one that may have no real parallel in the social science departments of Ivy League institutions. For the entire era of cold war politics and anti-communist hysteria, he told his large and popular classes that the official crusade against domestic communism was a hoax, perpetrated upon the American people with cynical disregard for the principles of political liberty. He also understood the nature of the threat that corporate power poses to political democracy and lectured on that subject without pulling his punches when nearly everyone else was silent about it. He analyzed the sell-out of big labor bosses to the corporations and he called the military, media, and "Madison Avenue" moguls to account for the harm they inflict upon democratic values. In brief, he taught an unforgettably exciting course about the way things were and where we were going.

All he wanted to do, he said, was to "shake up" the students who took his classes. He did not have any answers for them, only questions. He tried to

explore problems of power in our society. He lectured formally, quietly, and deliberately. But when he spoke the rafters shook.

He was not widely known beyond Princeton because he never reduced his great course to the book that his friends and students wished to see. Perhaps it was too real and unique to ever become something other than a course. What he did write was direct, practical, and against perversion of the democratic process, as in this excerpt from his 1963 Foreword to an illustrated, critical book about the House Committee on Un-American Activities:

The record of the House Committee on Un-American Activities speaks for itself. No more devastating indictment could be drawn than that provided by its own publications. Serious scholars who have examined the operations and personnel of the Committee from 1938 to the present are agreed that its major contribution has been the degradation of the congressional investigative function. This is the more serious because it is conceivable that the power to investigate may become the most important legislative function as power concentrates in the Executive and secrecy envelops the bureaucracy.

He also studied British society and wrote an academic book about the fight over the introduction of commercial television in Britain during the 1950s. It was so well done, with such appreciation for the moral dilemmas of British conservatives, that it was actually discussed in the House of Lords.

He was an opponent of corporate capitalism and subscribed to his friend, the late Robert S. Lynd's dictum on the ineluctable conflict between capitalism and democracy. Too individualistic to be doctrinaire, too modest to be dogmatic, too intelligent to propound certainties about the shape of things to come, he worried his way through lectures that were never pretentious and always profound. He was larger than life in a small but haughty world.

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## More Letters

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before the end of the trial in June, 1976.

District Court President Jurg Solberger found the group guilty of this one charge since they couldn't prove murder. But fines were minimal and he explained, "This verdict is no acquittal" (of Nestle). He said the company must thoroughly reconsider its promotional practices to avoid future risks of being accused of immoral advertising.

Nestle has apparently not changed its marketing practices and continues to behave without due regard for the health of millions of infants.

This case is one example of the international struggle to pressure multinational corporations to change advertising and distribution practices. We hope you'll join this effort by boycotting Nestle.

**Rebecca Cantwell**  
Clergy and Laity Concerned  
New York City

### Israel left

Editor:

I very much enjoyed reading Mandel's piece on the work camp in Nazareth (*ITT*, Sept. 14) but correction is in order: David Mandel is not a member of *Sheli* but of *Shasi*.

*Sheli*, a "dovish" Zionist election coalition consists of Meir Pail's *Moked*, Arie Eliav (of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestine Peace) and Uri Avneri of *Ha'Olam HaZeh* (a sort of sensationalist weekly).

*Shasi* (Israeli Socialist Left) is a Marxist non-Zionist group and a constituent of what David calls the DFPE, an election coalition with the Israeli CP, Israeli Black Panthers and other Jewish and Arab groups and individuals and Arab non-CP local council heads who have all agreed to a 6-point platform.

—Renee Hoffinger

Member of *Shasi* (in "exile") and proud owner of a red and black T-shirt like the one Mayor Toufik Ziad is clad in.

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