

from *The Button Battle Book*, an allegorical new effort from Dr. Seuss dealing with the hazards of the arms race and the problems which can arise when opposing sides refuse to communicate.

by Susan Sutton

"There are old men with their fingers on the button, and they're playing with our lives, which we haven't had yet, while they've had full, long ones."

While many of us may choose not to, children today are thinking about nuclear war. Many are afraid, sad, feel powerless, while others, like the child quoted above, feel something closer to rage. Nuclear war is clearly the greatest threat mankind has ever faced, and children are certainly not immune to the possibilities.

The Goldberg Collaborative Study, a survey conducted out of McMaster University, with the help of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) and the Canadian Mental Health Research Group, was given to 3,000 junior high and high school students across Canada, beginning in October of last year. The purpose of the study was to assess students' concerns about their futures, especially in the areas of career and economic issues and the nuclear arms race. While the results of the entire study are not in, they are available for the 60 Edmonton students questioned.

Asked what worries them the most, 50 per cent of the students cited nuclear war as their biggest concern. Seventy-one per cent reported nuclear war to be "a very important worry," second only to "my parents' death" (73 per cent). Thirteen per cent think about the nuclear threat daily, and 21 per cent think about it once or twice a week. In addition, a small percentage had "bad dreams" about nuclear war daily or weekly.

Students were also asked if nuclear war has:

	A lot	Some	Little or not at all
A. "Affected my plans for the future"	9%	20%	70%
B. "Made me wonder if I really want to get married and have children someday"	12%	19%	69%
C. "Made me want to live only for today and forget the future"	11%	14%	74%

Only 29 per cent felt they had "a little control" in prevent nuclear war, while 61 per cent felt they had "no personal control". Similarly, 56 per cent felt their parents had no control, and 33 per cent felt their parents had "little control."

Other survey results indicate that, while high unemployment and career plans are the issues the students talk about most, nuclear war follows close behind.

In a similar study in the United States, researchers found a fourfold increase from 1975 to 1982 of high school students who worry "often" about the chances of nuclear war. The researchers also found a 61 per cent increase in students who agreed that "nuclear or biological annihilation will probably be the fate of all mankind within my lifetime."

The first American studies were conducted in 1965, in response to the Cuban missile crisis. Sibylle Escalona, a psychologist and one of the designers of the study, found a greater degree of fear of war than had been anticipated. Stated Escalona, "The profound uncertainty about whether or not mankind has a foreseeable future exerts a corrosive and malignant influence upon important developmental processes in normal and well-functioning children."

In the summer of 1983, a questionnaire was given to both Soviet and American children by five Ameri-

"We can get rid of nuclear weapons and have peace and stuff. Because if you want something bad enough, and you work at it hard enough, you can do anything."

"There is a film that tells how a war almost broke out between America and the Soviet Union, and after that I didn't sleep for several nights thinking about this, about how war almost broke out, and how our existence is hanging on a thread."

Oleg, age 15, Ukraine

"You couldn't survive a nuclear strike. The nuclear radioactivity remains for a very long time. And even if a person goes underground, no matter how much he wants to live, he wouldn't."

Sergei, age 13, Moscow

"Everyone thinks about their children. And we can help them by struggling against nuclear war — by sending letters, designing banners. These are the things that we can contribute to the struggle against nuclear war. Then they will understand that their children don't want war either."

Oleg, age 14, Yakutsk

"I think that kids like myself, that are not 18, have a lot of influence over what goes on. And we're not going to sit back and leave it up to everyone else anymore."

"I see every adult as having a child in them that they should probably listen to more often."

cans to determine the psychological effects on children of life in the nuclear age. The mean age of the respondents below was 13.2 years.

1. Do you think a nuclear war between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. will happen during your lifetime?

	Soviet	American
Yes	11.8%	38.4%
No	54.5%	16.9%
Uncertain	33.7%	44.8%

2. If there were a nuclear war, do you think that you and your family would survive?

	Soviet	American
Yes	2.9%	16.4%
No	80.7%	41.3%
Uncertain	16.4%	40.8%

3. If there were a nuclear war, do you think that the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. would survive it? (The American children were asked only about the survival of the U.S.)

	Soviet	American
Yes	6.1%	21.9%
No	78.9%	37.8%
Uncertain	15.0%	39.8%

4. Do you think nuclear war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. can be prevented?

	Soviet	American
Yes	93.3%	65.2%
No	2.9%	14.5%
Uncertain	3.9%	19.9%

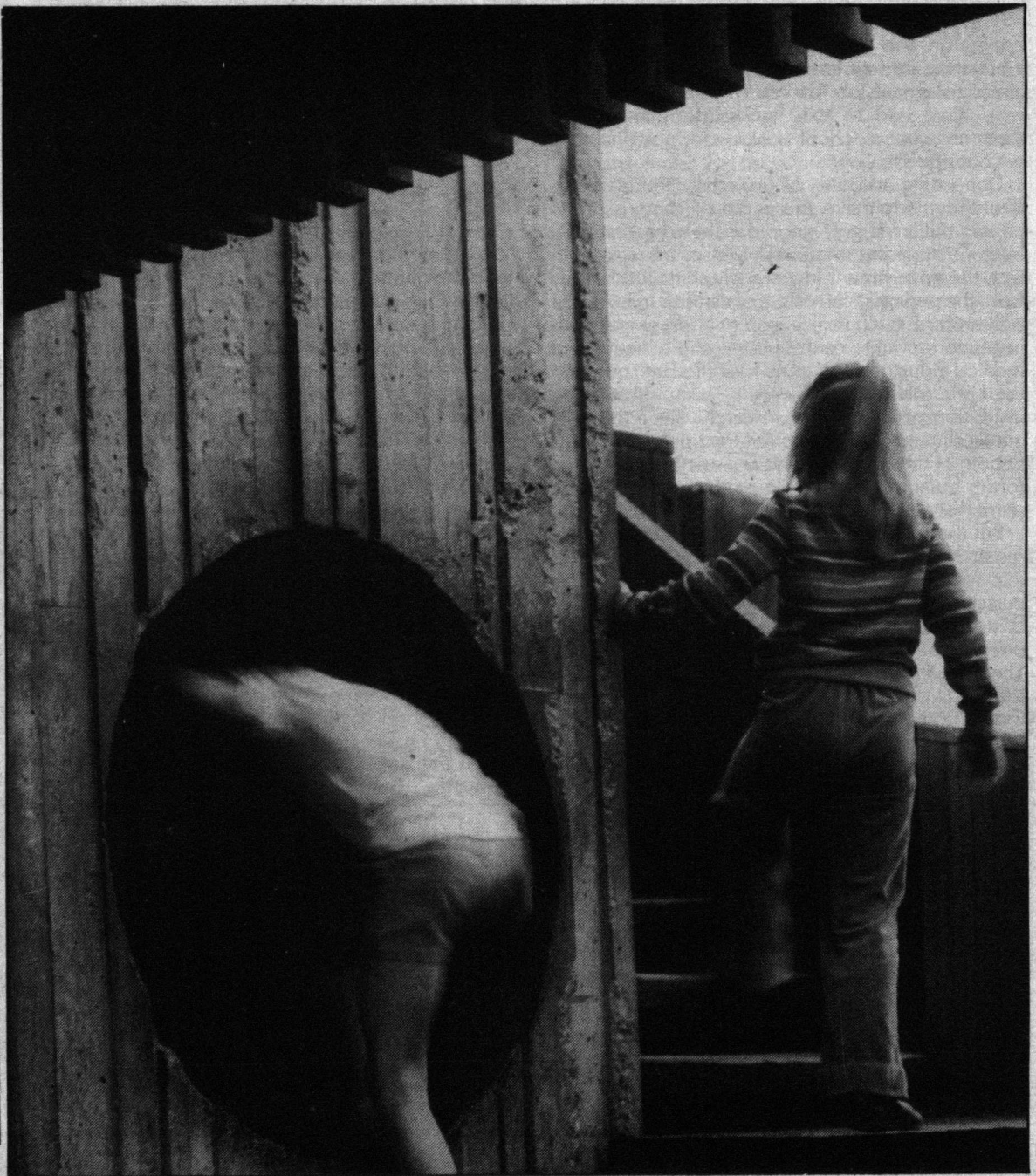
Among the conclusions reached from this study was the fact that Soviet children are even more worried about nuclear war than American children, but are also more optimistic that nuclear war can be prevented than their American counterparts. Researchers believe this optimism is related to the fact that many Soviet children take part in activities directed to prevent nuclear war.

Brock Macdonald, a local psychologist and member of PSR, agrees with their conclusion. Says MacDonald, "The more kids are involved, the more they know, the more they feel they can do something. Even if their parents are involved in the prevention of nuclear war, they feel more positive, more effective."

MacDonald also said that children are more willing to talk about nuclear war than adults, and are more willing to work to prevent war. "Kids don't have their defences up like adults do, and they're not as convinced as adults that the situation is hopeless," said Macdonald.

Although the final results from the Goldberg Collaborative Study have yet to be tabulated, it is clear from data available that children today are very concerned about the threat of nuclear war, and also that they are more than willing to do something about it.

Photo: Bill St. John



TRAVEL CUTS Going Your Way!
DREAMING OF FAR AWAY PLACES???

Whether you are returning home for holidays or embarking on a new adventure, **USE OUR LOW STUDENT FARES TO ASIA AND SAVE \$\$\$.**
 Name your destination: **Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Manila, Jakarta...**
 Tell us your plans. **A limited or lengthy stay; an around the world excursion; a one way fare...**
 TRAVEL CUTS offers the **lowest student fares** and unlimited travel options for you. Call your local office today for the fare to suit your needs!
The travel company of CFS

TRAVEL CUTS EDMONTON
 10424-118 Avenue
 Edmonton, Alberta T5G 0P7
 403-471-8054

TRAVEL CUTS EDMONTON
 Student Union Bldg. Univ. of Alberta
 Edmonton, Alberta T5G 2J7
 403-432-2592

Garneau Studio

GRAD PORTRAIT SPECIAL

Inquire:
 433-4491 • 433-4492
 10909-86 Ave.