

book is the question and answer format through which Melman tries to answer opponents and skeptics.

For some, the work will be too Utopian and unrealistic. Melman expects that economic conversion can, at the same time, not only solve the problems of the US economy and the militarization of American society but can also create economic decentralization – the democratic control of economic planning and worker control of industry. The author also envisages the worker pension investment funds resulting from economic conversion, challenging the capital dominance of US corporations.

Although the book is entirely focussed on the US economy it will be of special interest to some Canadian readers. In Chapter three, Melman raises important questions about the peace movement, its goals and strategies. This decade has produced a peace movement that is in Melman's words a "political supermarket." Peace organizations have a long list of short-term objectives: the promotion of arms control measures or the banning of individual weapons. The Canadian peace movement's campaigns share these characteristics – Refuse the Cruise, Stop Star Wars, Make Canada a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. Melman argues that such actions do not affect, and cannot change, the "warfare state." Single-issue and single-weapon campaigns can at best only result in incremental changes to the tactical plans of those who create and supply the war-making capabilities of the state. The peace movement, Melman says, must recognize the economic imperatives of the militarized society and advocate complete and general disarmament and economic conversion.

This book will also be of interest to Canadians curious about Free Trade and the future of the North American economy. The Canadian government has taken a number of initiatives in recent years to promote and enlarge the

North American defence industrial base. Both inside and outside the terms of the Free Trade Agreement, Canada is likely to increase its military industrial production in cooperation with the United States.

Although Canada is not a militarized society and is unlikely to become one in the near future, Melman reminds us that we are keeping close company with one. He makes a good argument that the US economy must, and can, undergo radical transformation if it is to survive as a modern and prosperous nation. – *Steve Lee*

Mr. Lee is a research associate at the Institute

The Social Impact of the Chernobyl Disaster

David R. Marples

Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1988, 313 pgs., \$29.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper

■ With this book, David Marples, a professor of Slavic and East European studies and research associate with the Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta, has produced his second in-depth look at the nuclear power plant disaster which took place at Chernobyl on 26 April 1986. While Marples' first book examined the immediate effects of the disaster, his second attempts to assess the longer-term and wider impact the accident had on the people of the Chernobyl region and on the Soviet Union in general. The author is largely successful. It is readily apparent that the book has been extremely well researched and documented, and most of the sources listed are Soviet.

Following an introductory chapter by Victor Snell, of Atomic Energy of Canada, outlining the causes of the accident, the book examines the health, environmental, economic, and political repercussions. In these pages the author describes the disaster as possibly the "pioneer of glasnost under General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and then subsequently its first casualty." Criticism is directed throughout the book toward the manner in which information on the accident was kept from the Soviet public, and particularly

from those directly affected by the disaster. For example, no announcements about the accident, and the potential dangers that accompanied it, were made until thirty-six hours after the mishap had occurred. At that point, a thirty kilometre radius "special zone" was created around the reactor and the evacuation of 162,000 people began. This last is a conservative estimate: Marples says as many as 500,000 were evacuated. Marples demonstrates that the overriding attitude of officials at the time of the accident and in its aftermath was that nothing particularly unusual had happened. Concerns over the effects of the accident have been dismissed by scientists and officials as scaremongering. They claim that this has raised the level of radiophobia, or "abnormal doubts" about the harmful effects of the accident. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union, the author states, remains a "fanatically pro-nuclear power" nation. The book is informative and provides many insights, especially on conditions within the special zone. At times, however, the reader is bogged down by the number of officials and organizations involved in the accident and its clean-up, their relationship to each other, and the geographical context in which events took place. Appropriate use of lists, organizational charts and maps would have been a welcome addition to the book. The Soviets have concluded that the Chernobyl disaster was the result of human error – that technology cannot be held responsible. The author notes that reverence for the machine is ingrained in the Soviet psyche, unlike in the West where it is assumed that machines can and will go wrong. This assertion seems entirely misplaced given the number of examples in the West and other regions of the world where belief in the inherent good and infallibility of technology has led to tragic results. Chernobyl and its aftermath provide a clear illustration that the dangers that result from this belief have no boundaries. – *Michael Holmes*

Mr. Holmes is a research assistant at the Institute

BRIEFLY NOTED

New Weapon Technologies and the ABM Treaty

Herbert Lin

London: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988, 92 pgs., US \$12.95 paper

■ If you spend more than a little time with people knowledgeable about the Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty and its implications it is not long before they start talking about lasers in terms of watts/steradian and quoting bits of obscure treaty language like "in an ABM mode" and "based on other physical principles." They are not being deliberately cryptic; much of the future of the arms control process, as we have come to know it over the last three years, depends on the outcome of negotiations between the US and USSR over just such details.

This little book by physicist Herbert Lin is a guide through the technical labyrinth. It contains clear definitions of scientific terms, an overview of the problems and controversies created for the existing Treaty by the advance of technology, and a set of alternative political and technical solutions to the apparent superpower impasse.

Canada, NATO and the Bomb: The Western Alliance in Crisis

Tom Keating and Larry Pratt

Edmonton, Alberta: Hurtig, 1988, 246 pgs., \$14.95 paper

■ Pratt and Keating discuss the role of the North Atlantic alliance and Canada's place in it. The authors conclude that leaving NATO would not be in Canada's interest and make a case for increased Canadian contribution to the alliance – which they see as vital in "making it possible to pursue a mutually advantageous relationship with the Soviet Union." They also believe the proposal to purchase nuclear-powered submarines to be strategically unsound and state that a mixed fleet of surface ships and diesel subs would make a "more cost effective contribution to collective defence."

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Reviews of French language publications can be found in *Paix et Sécurité* "Livres" section.