

writes Sibylle Escalona of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. In a pamphlet entitled "Children and the Threat of Nuclear War," produced in cooperation with the National Institute of Mental Health, Dr. Escalona presents some observations of the impact of this threat on 4-to-18-year-olds, and suggests some ways of dealing with their concern.

Very Young Aware of Danger

According to Dr. Escalona, children as young as four are "aware of a danger to life. . . . Fallout, Russia, radiation, H-bomb are all part of their vocabulary." Some youngsters have been afraid that falling snow and rain carried fallout. Others have expressed the fear that planes flying overhead might drop bombs. Confusion over the difference between testing and warfare bombing has been another source of anxiety.

Dr. Escalona writes that adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the nuclear threat. She points out that adolescence can be a stormy period, with wide swings from joy to sorrow, frivolity to seriousness. A stabilizing factor in the adolescent's struggle toward maturity is the promise of a satisfying future. The possibility that this future might be destroyed can cause serious disturbance.

Some youngsters respond with great pessimism, concluding that the world is doomed. They may become careless about their school work and unwilling to take on responsibilities.

For others, the response is a rejection of adult values and authority. Dr. Escalona quotes one adolescent saying to his father: "If we stay up all night and do the twist,

whom do we hurt? It's you who made the bomb that's going to blow us up in the end."

Even teenagers who attempt to avoid anxiety by ignoring or laughing at the possibility of nuclear war do not escape damage. Helpless and fatalistic feelings are still disturbingly present, says Dr. Escalona, and they are undermining to basic security.

Dr. Escalona emphasizes the role of parents in helping children deal with the nuclear threat.

For the 4-to-6-year-olds she suggests protectiveness, reassurance, limited explanations and an attempt to clear up misunderstandings.

Parents of 6-to-12-year-olds should encourage discussion, answer questions and let them know that efforts are being made to combat the danger. Children in this age group, says Dr. Escalona, tend to rely on the adult world and to borrow strength from it.

Parents of adolescents can "take them into partnership" and discuss this important world issue with them as equals. Or they can guide them to articles, authorities and outside discussions that will enable them to learn the facts of the nuclear age.

Dr. Escalona concludes:

"Our children must learn to develop attitudes and beliefs and patterns of living that make possible some sort of peaceful regulation and control of human affairs. . . . At this time especially, *child rearing is a way of making history*. Helping children to help themselves may require of us that we come to terms with broader social issues."

• Science News Letter, 83:106 February 16, 1963

PSYCHOLOGY

Expedition Depression

► DEPRESSION is expected to be the most frequently occurring psychological problem on the U.S. expedition to Mt. Everest, SCIENCE SERVICE learned in Berkeley, Calif.

Dr. James T. Lester Jr., who is chief investigator of the expedition's psychology project, said this depression manifests itself by lack of interest in what is going on, as well as loss of energy.

The 20-man expedition arrived in India at Katmandu.

The expedition was aided by 800 porters to the base camp. From this point on, the equipment is being carried by 40 Sherpa guides.

Dr. Gilbert Roberts of Berkeley is serving as expedition physician.

Dr. William E. Siri, University of California physicist and scientific director of the expedition, said the expedition is not only to climb the mountain but also to conduct a research program on how men, breathing air of low oxygen content, function under stress. (Mt. Everest, the world's highest, stands at 29,028 feet.) The scientific program also includes obtaining ice samples of the last 40 years for research on natural tritium and measuring solar radiation.

Laboratory camps at 17,800 and 21,500

feet equipped with heat, electricity and oxygen are planned. Observations on climate are expected to be taken up to 26,000 feet.

Equipment includes a new kind of oxygen mask believed to be the best ever devised. Extremely efficient, it does not have the valves usually troublesome in other types and has no back-pressures as in previous designs.

A U.S. designed tent, called "draw-type," in four and 16 men sizes, is being used. Tested in fall rehearsals during a climb on Mt. Rainier, this tent was the only type not blown down by strong winds.

Dr. Siri said this is probably the best equipped expedition ever to go to the Himalayas. He believes other expeditions starved because they did not bring enough of the right kind of food, especially proteins, to sustain a climber. Climbers often lose 40 to 50 pounds on a trip.

The current expedition emphasizes palatable, nourishing foods, especially meat and orange juice. Each climber is provided with 5,200 calories per day.

The expedition is in contact with amateur radio operators in Livermore, Calif. No air drops have been planned.

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SCIENCE SPECIALS



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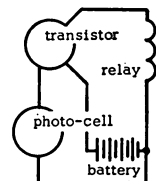
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