

matched, constantly warring superstates. Nevertheless, for those of us who go back 40 years the words of Auden, memorializing Yeats, have a familiar ring:

“In the nightmare of the dark  
 All the dogs of Europe bark,  
 And the living nations wait,  
 Each sequestered in its hate;  
 Intellectual disgrace  
 Stares from every human face,  
 And the seas of pity lie  
 Locked and frozen in each eye.”<sup>3</sup>

Orwell was dead right about one thing. None of the three warring superstates that dominated his bare and hungry world was willing to resort to the atomic bomb, after its effects had once been demonstrated. Although atomic weapons continued to be improved upon, produced, and stockpiled, they were never used in the continuing warfare between the superstates. War was necessary to the physical and psychological survival of the totalitarian regimes, but not a war that would completely destroy the societies they dominated. Self preservation drives, largely for evil, outweighed the territorial instincts in 1984.

In 1980 the Journal published a series of papers that looked critically at the military and its atomic arsenal. If all of Orwell's festered imaginings have not materialized, some of the mad reasoning that sustained his world seems to sustain ours as well. In the words of Orwell's traitor, Emmanuel Goldstein, “The strategy that all three powers are following, or pretend to themselves that they are following, is the same. The plan is, by a combination of fighting, bargaining, and well-timed strokes of treachery, to acquire a ring of bases completely encircling one or the other of the rival states, and then to sign a pact of friendship with that rival and remain on peaceful terms for so many years as to lull suspicion to sleep. During this time rockets loaded with atomic bombs can be assembled at all strategic spots; finally they will be fired simultaneously, with effects so devastating as to make retali-

ation impossible. It will then be time to sign a pact of friendship with the remaining world power, in preparation for another attack. This scheme, it is hardly necessary to say, is a mere daydream, impossible of realization.”<sup>1</sup>

But there were other things about which Orwell was dead wrong. For some of us, creature comforts have increased over time; equity has not been achieved but remains a goal; science has not been stultified but has advanced by leaps and bounds. Imperfect as they are, international agencies exist: some like Amnesty International can expose the totalitarianism that Orwell abhorred; others bring food to the starving or help those at the bottom to help themselves up; still others struggle to conserve the environment and the planet's resources which we seem intent upon exhausting, and to preserve the peace which we seem intent on destroying. Although the human intellects and energies and the financial resources which these altruistic efforts consume are dwarfed by those consumed by the military machine, their existence holds out some hope. Perhaps in 1984 not only will self-preservation outweigh self-destruction, but the good in our own 1984 will begin to balance the evil.

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#### REFERENCES

1. Orwell G: *Nineteen eighty-four*. New York: Harcourt Brace 1949.
2. Yeats WB: *The Leaders of the Crowd*.
3. Auden WH: *In memory of W. B. Yeats* (d. Jan. 1939).

### ERRATUM

IN: Chamberlin RW, Szumowski EK: A follow-up study of parent education in pediatric office practices: Impact at age two and a half. *Am J Public Health* 1980; 70:1180-1188. The title of Figure 1, p 1185, should read “Physician Teaching Effort,” instead of “Physician Teaching Effect” as it appeared in the Journal.