

FIGHTING CHANCE

John 8: 31-32

Proverbs 22: 3

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BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Many people have come to think of biological weapons as new high-technology products that are becoming possible as a result of the revolutionary advances in molecular biology and biochemistry. Secret laboratories in the mysterious Soviet Union crank out new vicious and virulent strains of these microscopic killers, while "peace" activists hint darkly that American military laboratories are doing the same thing.

For clearing the air about these new worries and at the same time sending an icy chill up the spine of any normal person, the speech by Dr. Conrad Chester to the fall DDP meeting would be hard to beat. I do not know how much of this speech Dr. Chester will choose to publish. Moreover, for reasons that will become obvious, I choose not to publish the technical details of his remarks. In the interests of prudent civil defense, however, the general nature of these facts should be known.

There are in existence some very resistant and very virulent strains of bacteria that produce toxins that are deadly to human beings. Perhaps the best known is the bacterium that causes botulism. Most home canners know about this bacterium. *Clostridium Botulinum* is widely dispersed in nature. It is notorious for its growth in home canned vegetables that have been inadequately sterilized. If canned goods that are infected with botulism are eaten, the results are often fatal. The botulism bacterium is easy to grow; its toxin is extremely lethal; and it is easily obtained throughout the United States. Botulism toxin would make an excellent biological warfare agent if there were not something "better" - something more stable, more toxic, and generally far more dangerous than botulism. That "something" has been deployed as a biological warfare agent for about 50 years. It is anthrax.

Anthrax has been deployed as a military agent by the United States, the Soviet Union, and some other countries. Its deployment was eventually banned by treaty - a treaty that,