

“Wars Begin in the Minds of Men:” Psychiatry and the Antinuclear Movement



Presented by: History of Medicine & Health Care Program, Department of History, Department of Anthropology and Archaeology and Calgary Institute for Humanities.

FACULTY OF ARTS

Tuesday Nov 14, 2017 11:30 – 13:30

Biological Sciences 587

Amid disturbing sabre rattling between the United States and North Korea, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. Few had heard of the Melbourne-based peace group, but it has a distinguished genealogy that traces back nearly a half century to a worldwide network of physician-activists. In fact, to its credit that movement has another Nobel Peace Prize: the 1985 award to International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW). Like educators, scientists, and other professionals, medical workers sought to leverage their professional authority in furtherance of the cause of peace. Focusing on the work of psychiatrists and psychologists in the UK, US, and USSR, this paper examines the Cold War story of one approach to that objective. Through their research and their direct political action, what was the case that mental health professional attempting to make against the nuclear arms race? Drawing on multinational archival research and publications from some of the leading psychiatrists of the post-war era, this paper argues for the centrality of the now-forgotten field of "nuclear psychiatry" to understanding the global antinuclear movement's campaign.

Paula A. Michaels is currently an associate professor of history at Monash University (Melbourne, Australia), where she specializes in modern European history and the social history of medicine. She is a graduate of Northwestern University (BA) and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (MA, PhD). Michaels is the author of two prize-winning books: *Curative Powers: Medicine and Empire in Stalin's Central Asia* (2003) and *Lamaze: An International History* (2014). She is also co-editor of the forthcoming *Paths to Parenthood: Emotions on the Journey through Pregnancy, Childbirth and Early Parenting* (Palgrave Macmillan 2018) and is currently working on a book-length study on gender and trauma since World War II.