

Dr FG #148

H. JACK COIGER, M.D., is the Arthur C. Logan Professor of Community Medicine, City University of New York Medical School; President of Physicians for Human Rights; Vice-President of the Committee for Health in Southern Africa; and a founding member and Past President of Physicians for Social Responsibility, the U.S. affiliate of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, which was the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985.

He received his M.D. degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in 1958 and trained in internal medicine on the Harvard Service of Boston City Hospital from 1958-54. During this period he also received a degree in epidemiology from the Harvard School of Public Health, was a Research Fellow at the Channing and Thorndike Laboratories, Harvard Medical School, and a Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Joint Training Program in Social Science and Medicine, Harvard University.

Before assuming the Logan Professorship at CUNY Medical School in 1978, he was Chairman of the Department of Community Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine (1968-71), Visiting Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School (1972-73), and Chairman of the Department of Community Medicine, School of Medicine, State University of New York at Stony Brook, N.Y. (1973-78).

Most of his professional career has been devoted to the problems of health and poverty. He initiated the community health center model in the U.S., combining primary care and community-based public health interventions, and was a leader in the development of the national health center network of 600 centers serving some six million low-income patients. From 1965-71 he was Director of the first urban and first rural health centers in the U.S., at Columbia Point, Boston, and Mound Bayou, Mississippi. For this and related work he received the first annual Award for Excellence of the American Public Health Association for "exceptionally meritorious achievement in improving the health of the American people" (1973); the Distinguished Service Award, Mississippi Association for Community Health for the Poor (1973); the National Health Achievement Award in Community Medicine, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association of North America (1979); the Distinguished Service Award, National Association of Community Health Centers (1981) and the Robert H. Felix Distinguished Service Award of St. Louis University School of Medicine for "visionary leadership and service to community health and medicine" (1986).

Dr. Coiger's work in human rights, in the U.S. and internationally, spans more than four decades. He founded one of the earliest chapters of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in 1943 and was Civil Liberties Chairman of the American Veterans Committee from 1947-52. In the 1960s he was a founding member and National Program Chairman of the Medical Committee for Human Rights (MCHR) and Field Coordinator of its Mississippi program; Chairman of the Health Committee of the Delta Ministry of the National Council of Churches, and consultant to the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Student Health Organization. In the 1970s he was a leader of the Emergency Committee to Save Chilean Health Workers.

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He is a founding member (1986) and President of Physicians for Human Rights, a national organization of health professionals whose goals are to bring the skills of the medical profession to the protection of human rights, to defend imprisoned health professionals, to stop physical and psychological abuse of citizens by governments, to prevent the participation of doctors in torture, and to provide medical and humanitarian aid to victims of repression. He has led PHR Medical Human Rights Missions to the West Bank/Gaza Strip and has helped to plan and direct more than 28 PHR missions to Burma, Chile, Czechoslovakia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Iraq, Israel, Kenya, Panama, Paraguay, the Sudan, South Korea, Tibet and the Soviet Union. His most recent publications in this field are "A New Medical Mission to El Salvador," a Special Report in the New England Journal of Medicine (1989) and "Apartheid Medicine: Health and Human Rights in South Africa" in the Journal of the American Medical Association (1990). He is now helping to develop an international consortium of medical human rights organizations from the U.S., United Kingdom, Netherlands, Denmark, Israel and other nations, and planning an International Journal of Health and Human Rights.

He is national Vice President of the Committee on Health in Southern Africa (CHISA) and was a member of the AAAS-Institute of Medicine Mission to South Africa on the Health Effects of Apartheid in 1989. He was an organizer of the Conference on Health Care for Post-Apartheid South Africa in Maputo, Mozambique in 1990 and is currently working on projects to develop primary care networks, public health education and interventions in the AIDS epidemic in South Africa.

Dr. Geiger was a founding member of Physicians for Social Responsibility in 1961 and was a co-author of the first major publications in the U.S. on the medical consequences of nuclear war (New England Journal of Medicine, May 31, 1962). During the past two decades he has published more than 25 scientific articles and book chapters on medical and biological effects of nuclear weapons, lectured widely on this subject in the U.S. and Europe, and appeared in "The Last Epidemic" and other documentary films. For this and related work he received the Award of Merit in Global Public Health of the Public Health Association of New York (1982). He led a PSR delegation to the Soviet Union to explore the health consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986, and now serves as Associate Editor of a new journal, The PSR Quarterly: Journal of Medicine and Global Survival.

He is currently chairman of the PSR Physicians Task Force on the Health Hazards of Nuclear Weapons Production and is directing a major review of all Department of Energy epidemiological, environmental and occupational health studies and practices, subjects on which he has testified recently before two U.S. Senate committees and a number of DOE advisory panels. Since 1983 he has been a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Three Mile Island Public Health Fund.