

F. A. S. NEWSLETTER

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M. Stanley Livingston, Chairman

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No. 75 - 4

April 18, 1955

PROPOSAL BEFORE SENATE for UN STUDY of A-EFFECTS

WASHINGTON CHAPTER SPONSORS OPEN MEETING

"NUCLEAR RADIATION HAZARDS and their POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS"

Senator Clinton Anderson and Representative Chet Holifield
of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy

Professor John S. Toll Professor H. Bentley Glass
Physicist, U. of Maryland Geneticist, Johns Hopkins

THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 8:00 P.M.
GRAND BALLROOM, Sheraton-Park Hotel

Social Hour

Admission 50¢

On Apr. 13, Sen. Frederick G. Payne (R, Me.) introduced a Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 22) requesting US initiative in urging the UN "to study and determine the effects on living organisms of radioactivity released by nuclear explosions." The Payne resolution would have the President instruct the US chief delegate to the UN to take whatever steps are "necessary to propose and urge the formation of an international scientific commission within the UN" to determine the immediate and long-range effects of worldwide increases in background radiation "on human beings and other living organisms."

FAS ENDORSEMENT

The Payne resolution received immediate endorsement from the FAS Executive Committee. In a press release Apr. 14, the Committee noted that "Senator Payne's resolution is thoroughly consistent with the Federation's own proposal released on March 6th urging the US government to propose the establishment of a UN Commission to study and assess the potential dangers in atomic and thermonuclear bomb tests."

AEC VIEWS

Recent statements by AEC and other authoritative spokesmen have minimized the danger from radiation resulting from A- or H-bomb tests. In an NBC-TV program on Mar. 29, Dr. Robert Holmes, director of the US Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission in Japan, reported the results of an official 10-year study of the survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs. Except for a small increase in the incidence of leukemia, and an increase in the incidence of minor cataracts which do not impair vision, the overall health status of survivors and their offspring 10 years after the bombings was not considered to be affected in any major way.

The AEC reiterated its position in detail during a hearing before the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy on Apr. 15. Concerning possible genetic effects, E. L. Green, AEC geneticist, testified that the average level of radiation resulting from all bomb debris to date (about 1/10 roentgen) may have increased the natural mutation rate by about 0.1% or 0.2% per generation. Though radiation induced mutations are generally deleterious, Green concluded that visibly apparent damage of genetic origin "as a consequence of present levels of radioactivity from tests will be so rare and spread out over so many thousands of years that a detectable effect on birth and survival rates is unlikely."

Consideration to other radiobiological effects was given at the hearing by J. C. Bugher, director of the AEC's Div. of Biology and Medicine. While citing a probable bearing of large doses (100's of roentgens) on somatic effects, Bugher summarizes the AEC position by observing, "While no risk is ever absolutely zero, we are forced to conclude that deleterious effects from existing levels of radioactivity on the people of the US, to the extent that they occur at all, are very, very small."

OTHER VIEWS

Different emphasis has been placed in recent statements by eminent geneticists and other scientists. Radiologist R. Lanier and biophysicist T. Puck of the Univ. of Colorado pointed out in a press statement on Mar. 13 that "particularly for genetic damage, which may not show up for several generations, there is no known safe minimum dosage." Similar views have recently been expressed by Nobel Prize winners Linus Pauling and Frederick Soddy (see NL 55-3). Writing

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"Now If You Could Just Control Your Inventions, Huh?"



FAS PERSONAL:

HAIL AND FAREWELL TO 1749 L!

This is the last issue of the Newsletter which will carry the address 1749 L St., N.W. There's little more in an address than in a name -- yet it is not easy to part with either one. It is some nine years since FAS moved into a tattered, ramshackle little building off bustling Connecticut Avenue. 1749 L was never plush, and the crowded rooms have not improved in appearance or convenience with time. Fading paint, creaking floors and an inadequate unmentionable have triumphed over inertia -- and sentiment. FAS will move on May 7 to 1805 H St., N.W., Washington 6, D.C., where the paint is fresh, the floors are solid and -- we are told -- the unmentionable need no longer go unmentioned. The move is fitting, and essential, for an organization bursting at the seams with new members. But old FAS hands may drop a tear in their beer and swear that -- progress, efficiency and sanitation be damned -- what the 'll, there was no place like 1749 L.

FAS SEEKS FUNDS TO SUPPORT KAMEN PASSPORT TEST

A suit filed in US District Court on behalf of Dr. Martin D. Kamen, associate professor of chemistry at Washington University in St. Louis, charges that procedures by which American citizens are denied passports by the State Department for alleged communist activities or affiliations restrict liberty and freedom to travel without "due process of law." The case could develop into as critical a test of long-criticized passport procedures as the Peters case is becoming for the Federal security program. For this reason, FAS is giving active support to Kamen's plea and FAS' Passport Committee, under the chairmanship of Geoffrey Chew, is now soliciting funds to help defray legal costs.

THE LONG ROAD Kamen first requested a passport in Sept., '52, to travel to Australia, England, and Israel to lecture and attend scientific conferences. His request tentatively was refused on the grounds that he had associated with known Communists, had belonged to an organization now on the Attorney General's list, and had furnished classified information to Soviet officials. Kamen replied to these charges in a letter requesting reconsideration of his application but was finally denied a passport in Dec. '53 -- 15 months after his original application. Reports indicate long delays of this kind have been characteristic of other similar cases.

Kamen next was heard by the Passport Appeals Board, established as a result of an uncontested special Federal Court decision 3 years ago in the Bauer case but not staffed until Dec., '53, when action was forced by an earlier suit by Kamen. At the appeal hearing Kamen and his counsel presented evidence which effectively demonstrated that the incidents and associations cited by the State Dept. could in no way be construed as evidence for any communist affiliation or activity. Nevertheless, the passport request was once again rejected, this time by Walter Bedell Smith, then acting Secretary of State. A petition for rehearing was also denied, thus exhausting all means for administrative review provided under State Dept. regulations.

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE RAISED The "complaint," filed on Mar. 14 in the US District Court of the District of Columbia, is the first step in judicial review of the case.

It charges that in denying Kamen a passport, "his personal liberty and freedom to travel, work, and consult with others has been restricted, and his opportunity to acquire and disseminate knowledge essential to his professional advancement and the advancement in the field in which he works has been restricted." The State Dept.'s action is characterized as "arbitrary, capricious and unlawful" because sufficient evidence to support the allegations on which denial of the passport was based was never presented. Consequently the Dept. action is asserted to violate the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment. A mandatory injunction directing the State Dept. to issue a passport is requested.

The legal problem involved stems from the State Dept.'s opinion that a passport is a privilege, and not a right, and therefore is to be granted strictly at the Secretary of State's pleasure. While historically this is true, it is pointed out that the conditions of international travel have changed without corresponding changes in attitudes towards passports. Before World War I, foreign travel was much freer than it is today and a passport was seldom required. During the first World War, some sort of official permit became necessary for international travel and today it is illegal, with few exceptions, to leave the country without a passport. In one previous case -- the Bauer case -- where a passport controversy reached the Federal courts, it was decided that no citizen could be deprived of his passport without due process, thus establishing the passport as a right.

* * * * *

CAUSE FOR CONCERN Concern that administrative passport difficulties may continue in the future is felt in many quarters because of the State Department's selection of Miss Frances G. Knight as the new head of the Passport Office, replacing Mrs. Ruth B. Shipley who is scheduled to retire Apr. 30. Rep. Celler (D, N.Y.) has attacked the appointment, and Martin Merson has reported (*The Reporter*, Oct. 7, '54) that Miss Knight was a member of what Cohn and Shine called their "loyal American underground" which passed information to Senators McCarthy and Bridges.

CONTINUING ATTACKS ON SECURITY PROGRAM

Attacks upon the Eisenhower security program are increasing in number and severity. Criticisms by former Senator Harry Cain, currently a member of the Subversive Activities Control Board, have received considerable publicity. Cain has repeated his attacks during radio and TV interviews, singling out the Attorney General's "subversive" list as a "heinous thing." He asserts that the list "ought to be liquidated" and future decisions made by "somebody of competent jurisdiction" rather than by "unadjudicated executive determination."

COLLECTED CRITICISMS More comprehensive and sweeping in their implied recommendations are 2 recently published collections of criticisms of the security program.

In a series of 16 daily articles commencing Mar. 28 in the *Providence (R.I.) Journal* and *Evening Bulletin* (available free from the Promotion Dept.), Ben H. Bagdikian surveyed the entire history of the security program, including many examples of injustices, waste, incompetence, and confusion. Although admitting that the security program has achieved some successes, Bagdikian concludes that the good in the program has come at an exorbitant and unnecessary cost.

The *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* devotes its entire April issue to the single topic, "Secrecy, Security, and Loyalty." The issue contains 15 articles centering on "an analysis of the present discontent with the government's security-loyalty policies, the impact of these measures on the community of science and on other, wider aspects of national life -- on competitive free enterprise, on employment opportunity in industry, on the morale of our State Dept., and consequently on foreign policy." The thesis is defended that the present program "flings its net too widely and indiscriminately [and] makes demands for maximal loyalty which are neither necessary for security nor admissible to the idea of freedom." (Copies of this issue are available at \$1 from U. Chicago Press, 5750 Ellis Ave., Chicago 37, Ill.)

ACADEMY IN PICTURE The *N. Y. Times* (Mar. 27) finds evidence that "the Administration has at last awakened to the need of protecting national scientific interests." The comment was occasioned by the appointment by the National Academy of Sciences of a committee to counsel with the government on loyalty programs involving non-secret, federally-supported research by scientists in private institutions. The appointment of the committee had been requested in a letter from Sherman Adams to Detlev W. Bronk (see NL 55-2). J. A. Stratton, MIT vice president, is chairman of the committee, consisting of: R. F. Bacher, physicist, Cal. Tech.; Laird Bell, Chicago attorney; W. O. Fenn, physiologist, U. Rochester; R. F. Loeb, Columbia U. professor of medicine; E. B. Wilson, Harvard U. chemist; and H. M. Wriston, President of Brown University.

This hopeful sign of administrative awakening to the serious and damaging defects in its security program must be balanced against other signs of continued intransigence. Marquis Childs reports (Apr. 1) that proposals for a thorough review of the system have been discussed in at least two Cabinet sessions, but that Attorney General Brownell's view has prevailed "that changes in the program such as those recently announced will make it workable." These same changes are regarded in other quarters as inconsequential. Similarly, Drew Pearson (April 9) reports a remark of Asst. Attorney General Burger to the effect that anyone criticizing the security program was Communist-inspired. When asked whether Senator Cain and Vannevar Bush should be so considered, Burger is quoted as replying, "I'd just like to know who is feeding them their information."

CRITICAL PETERS CASE Meanwhile, the case of John P. Peters, Yale medical physiologist dismissed as a US Public Health Service consultant on security charges, remains the potentially most threatening blow to the protective armor

built by the Administration around its security program. Arguments in the case, which strikes at the root of current and past procedures to bar individuals from federal employment without full judicial safeguards, are scheduled to be heard by the Supreme

(Continued on Page 4, end of Column 1)

OOPS! NO CENSORSHIP INTENDED

A Bureau of Foreign Commerce release of April 16th clarified regulations on the export of unclassified technical data. Here previously there had been strong undertones of censorship. The amendment excludes from export control unpublished technical data on "general scientific and educational activities." Since 1951 the Bureau has licensed export of technical data which are "not generally available" in 53 categories. A Jan. 15 revision of the regulations had been interpreted by some government and industrial organizations as applying to all technical data. Following protests from scientific organizations, the Bureau has explained that the regulations were intended to be restricted to applied technology and industrial know-how of strategic significance.

The old regulations, according to the National Education Association's College and University Bulletin for March, might have barred "the teaching of foreign students; the participation by foreign students . . . in university seminars, discussions, and research programs; correspondence between university members and their foreign counterparts; . . ."

It is little known that this export control of unclassified data in the 53 categories has not hitherto been interpreted with such strong emphasis on technology and "strategic significance." The 53 items are a strange potpourri, including general categories such as compasses and gyroscopic equipment, electron microscopes, siloxanes, isopropyl ether, as well as specific processes and products.

C D MERRY-GO-ROUND

The series of alarms and counter-alarms that characterizes US civil defense efforts has been comparatively subdued since the release of the H-bomb fallout data. CD Administrator Peterson has solved the riddle of whether to dig in or to evacuate by saying we should do both. Certain metropolitan areas are still disputing the practicability of pre-attack evacuation in the one or two hours advance warning that radar screens of the near future can give. New York City can see only 2/3rds of its citizens getting out in an hour; Milwaukee, more realistic, doubts that 2/3rds could get out in 2 hours; Los Angeles has discarded evacuation as basic policy for the time being. However, some statements of this sort may represent maneuvering for the Administration's extensive federally aided road building program.

The N. Y. State CD Commission on Mar. 18 rapped "an apparent tendency of the federal government to withhold important information from state and local defense authorities." AEC Chairman Strauss admitted a week later that AEC's release of the information on the widespread lethality of the H-bomb test of Mar. 1, 1954 had been held up for 3 months because some unspecified other government agency heads had feared that this release would "adversely affect certain international situations."

In the way of positive action, the President on Mar. 18 submitted to Congress a request for \$12 million to make a study on how to evacuate, shelter, and feed refugees from the 92 critical cities. The Executive Branch also announced on Apr. 6 that about 30 agencies that are essential in wartime have been assigned emergency relocation centers within 200 miles of Washington; eventually replacement staffs will man these centers, ready to take over operation of the agencies if need arose. Erection off Cape Cod of the first of a series of radar stations that will be placed about 150 miles out in the Atlantic is to start in May. The House of Representatives meanwhile on Mar. 30 voted to give the FCDA authority to spend \$30 million to purchase and distribute radiation detection equipment and to train people in its use all over the country.

DISARMAMENT TALK

Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey said on Apr. 3 that he plans to introduce a resolution calling on the Foreign Relations Committee to study disarmament problems. In London, hopes have risen very slightly at the current meeting of the UN Disarmament Commission subcommittee. The Soviets have offered a plan which, reportedly, includes the destruction of stocks of nuclear weapons. Still unresolved are questions of production and control of such weapons, and of reduction in size of armed forces and of conventional armaments.

HUGHES NEW FAS CHAIRMAN

Donald J. Hughes, senior physicist at Brookhaven National Lab. and recent Fulbright Fellow at Oxford, was elected FAS chairman for 1955-56. Hughes has been a member of the Chicago and Brookhaven FAS chapters, and Council delegate from '52-54. Elected vice-chairman was Lothar W. Nordheim, professor of physics at Duke University and FAS member-at-large since '47.

Members-at-large chose the following as delegates to the Council: S. K. Allison (Chicago), W. W. Beeman (Madison), L. F. Carter (Ft. Ord, Cal.), W. E. Cohn (Oak Ridge), M. E. Deutsch (Cambridge), D. Halliday (Pittsburgh), J. M. Keller (Ames, Ia.), R. F. Koch (Cambridge), J. K. Major (New Haven), D. Pines (Princeton), H. Pomerance (Oak Ridge), and A. H. Shapley (Boulder, Col.). Present delegates whose terms run until 1956 are: L. B. Borst, C. D. Coryell, T. H. Davies, J. Halpern, V. F. Weisskopf, A. S. Wightman and H. C. Wolfe. Remaining officers and members of the Executive Committee will be chosen by the Council at its meeting next week.

COUNCIL TO MEET IN WASHINGTON

The FAS Council will meet in Washington, D.C. on April 27 (8 PM) and Apr. 30 (7:30 PM), in the Conference Room of the American Psychological Association Building, 1333 - 16th Street, N.W. Member-observers are welcome at this meeting, which will consider organizational policy on current issues, as well as taking stock of FAS resources in this period of organizational growth. As a result of the recent drive, managed by the Mohawk chapter, the Council will receive a report that the membership has grown from some 1500 at the end of 1954 to over 2000 now.

U.N. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE APPROPRIATION

On March 18 the House of Representatives approved a supplemental appropriation of \$4 million for the technical assistance program of the United Nations, covering the first 6 months of 1955. This amount is just half that requested by the President. Harold Stassen (Foreign Operations Administration director) and Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. (US chief delegate to the UN) have urged the Senate to restore the full \$8 million requested by the Administration (N. Y. Times, March 29). There has been no pledge from the United States to the United Nations program for fiscal 1956.

The OPPENHEIMER-MURROW FILM can be obtained by FAS groups interested in sponsoring showings by writing to the Fund for the Republic, 1 E. 54th St., New York, N.Y. The film is one hour long and contains, in addition to the telecast on "See It Now" of Jan. 4, supplementary material from Murrow's interview with Oppenheimer.

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The FAS is a national organization of scientists and engineers concerned with the impact of science on national and world affairs. The Newsletter is edited by members of the FAS Washington Chapter.

- MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION -- Dues: Regular - \$5 (with income below \$2500 - \$3); Supporting - \$10; Patron - \$25. New membership and an introductory subscription to Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists - \$8.50 (with income below \$2500 - \$6.50).
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RE: U. of WASHINGTON vs. OPPENHEIMER

Meeting in San Francisco, the American Society of Biological Chemists, according to the N. Y. Times (Apr. 16), supported the academic boycott imposed by a number of individual scientists against the Univ. of Washington, following refusal by its President of a faculty recommendation to invite J. Robert Oppenheimer to lecture there. On Apr. 8 the University faculty senate announced that it had disagreed with President Schmitz's decision by a 56-40 vote. Earlier, the board of directors of the AAAS had sent a letter to President Schmitz expressing concern and asking for further facts beyond those available in the press. Schmitz had replied that his decision was based entirely on his study of the security proceedings in which Oppenheimer was involved last spring and the present status of the physicist's "governmental relationships." Schmitz indicated that he had no plan to reconsider his decision and asserted that no question of academic freedom or freedom of expression was involved.

The Biological Chemists, while endorsing boycott actions already taken, agreed that the boycott should now be ended because its "primary purpose, namely the reaffirmation of academic freedom, has been achieved." The Society, praising the Washington faculty stand, emphasized that President Schmitz had "wholeheartedly agreed to explore with the faculty ways and means of preventing" similar future incidents.

SECURITY (Cont. from Page 2).

Court during the week of April 18. Peters' attorneys filed a brief on April 14 which meets head-on the claim in an earlier government brief that the executive appointment power is purely administrative and not limited by Constitutional guarantees of due process. The Peters rebuttal takes the position that "proceedings under the loyalty program are not a part of routine personnel management; and further that the Government's power with respect to its personnel is subject to constitutional limitations in certain situations." The brief charges, according to the Washington Post (Apr. 15), that present handling of the security program is not only undermining employee morale but has world wide impact.

FROM SCIENTISTS Scientific protest and desire for security improvement continue to be registered. On Apr. 15, A. M. Brues, biological and medical research director at Argonne National Lab. and president of the Amer. Assoc. for Cancer Research, told the Association's annual meeting in San Francisco that there might be less difficulty if the security system were "something to be used exclusively by people with logical minds and for the purpose for which it was designed." Brues suggested that "it was high time that the security system be evaluated by an impartial board, hoping that the sand has not run out so far that an impartial, or at least rational, group cannot be found."

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55 - 4

A - EFFECTS (Cont. from Page 1).

in the British publication, Atomic Scientists Journal (Mar. 1955), physicist Joseph Rotblat observes that while the total dose received thus far by a resident of the US resulting from bomb-induced activity may be equivalent to only a single chest X-ray, this is misleading since "with genetic effects what matters is the gonad dose calculated for the whole population."

The general view taken by geneticists is that although the mutation rate due to present levels of radioactivity may be small, the effects of additional contamination are additive and may take several generations to become apparent. Further, the mutation rate for humans cannot be deduced from the rates applying to lower forms since mice, for instance, were recently reported to have a mutation rate 10 times that of fruit flies.

NATIONAL ACADEMY STUDY

Clearly stemming from the conflicting emphases, if not opinions, in recent authoritative statements is the Administration's endorsement of the National Academy of Sciences' undertaking an appraisal of radiation effects. The study, financed by the Rockefeller Foundation, will be by a committee and staff yet to be named. Chairman Strauss has given assurances that the AEC will extend its full cooperation, the NAS April 8 release said.

According to Roland Sawyer (Christian Science Monitor, Apr. 8), "It is understood in Washington that the plea by the FAS was decisively influential in initiating conversations which have led to the decision by the NAS, the Rockefeller interests and the AEC to go ahead with what is hoped will be a definitive study of the effects of radiation."

U.N. STUDY STILL NEEDED

The projected study by the NAS is a welcome step in the direction of the UN action urged in Senator Payne's resolution. The Academy can make an important technical contribution to international action but -- it is important to note -- cannot replace it. Radioactive contamination and its effects are a worldwide problem. Not only have the US and Russia detonated H-bombs, but Great Britain and other countries may soon be doing so as well. Investigation of the resulting effects is therefore a problem of international concern and effective control, if required, can only come through international agreement.

According to the N. Y. Times of Apr. 16, AEC Chairman Strauss testified that the AEC did not exclude the future possibility of an international undertaking to appraise the effects of atomic radiation but such a study "might be frustrated by world politics." The US has everything to gain in the contest for world opinion by supporting UN evaluation in addition to making its own study. Only when all nations, sitting in common council, concur in the evaluation of safe permissible levels of background radioactivity will they be willing and able to proceed to joint steps to ensure that these levels are not exceeded.

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