

SCIENTISTS ON THE NATIONAL SCENE

It is worthwhile now and then to do some soul-searching and to question the very bases of one's actions and motivations. This applies equally well to individuals and organizations. Is there a real need for an active Federation of American Scientists? Is the struggle worth the effort? In the last Newsletter the usefulness of the communications center in Washington was surveyed; now it is necessary to investigate the body of the organization and its functions.

It is often asked here in the nation's capital, "What do the scientists think?" The sad truth is that scientists have not often had the opportunity to think; most issues have not been formulated into questions permitting the expression of a meaningful authoritative opinion of scientists as a group. But whenever it is done, the impression made upon the large body of fairminded people composing the most potent political force in this country is very considerable.

Being in the center of things almost always causes a loss of perspective unless there is continuing contact with groups of interested people in various parts of the country. Similarly a group of people in the same community soon adopt a provincial outlook unless stimuli from the national scene are constantly received. The general feelings and impressions, combined with whatever facts there are available, must be made explicit and must also be related to governmental policy, while the various possibilities are being considered and certainly before the final decisions are made. When weighed in this balance an organization of scientists has considerable effect.

Where will our ideas count?

It is probably already too late to act on the Marshall Plan. The hugeness of the

plan precludes any course but a thorough study into the priorities given to science and technology in the reconstruction process and the influences certain proposed conditions of aid will have upon efficient utilization of the funds. On the subject of National Defense there is a fluid situation. Our former statement must be pointed specifically at current issues. A convincing evaluation on the half-dozen or so measures now being put forward as necessary to national security in an atomic age would have a significant effect.

The scientists are in a strategic position to press for guarantee of the Civil Rights we had hitherto believed were assured us in times of peace. The campaign is for sanity in administrative directives and for clarification of legislative obscurantism on the subject. We should cooperate with all other active scientific and lay groups in the effort to make these rights secure. Documentation of any possible violation should be directed to the FAS office.

Many other issues and problems come up constantly. The only way in which they can be handled is for your Executive Secretary to be aware of study groups and special committees of the local association so he can relay to them the appropriate matters for consideration. There must also be an occasional opportunity to transmit these problems to interested parties at length, in person, which requires a considerable amount of travel.

The existence of a body of organized and informed opinion among scientists makes positive action in public affairs possible. With an office in Washington or New York it can be made effective. Our limited resources force us to consider only those measures which relate directly to the prevention of an atomic war, and our freedom of action to continue along

these lines. At present, we cannot even spare the effort for work upon the various contributory causes of undesirable social conflicts.

Unity is necessary in order to achieve maximum effect. It is now obvious both here and abroad that a multiplicity of organizations of single purpose, but varying function is confusing to anyone on the outside.

INTERPRETATIONS OF USSR ACTIONS IN THE UNAEC

Last December a sampling of opinion was taken concerning the probable reasons for the lack of Russian agreement to the U. S. proposals for the control of atomic energy. Of the ten reasons suggested no single one was overwhelmingly popular, and five different motivations were described as important.

Having a slight edge on the others was the belief that "party leaders are afraid to let inspectors into the country". About 75% of those responding agreed that this was of major significance, but only 20% believed that this was the most important argument for failure to agree.

We have the choice of being completely independent and working within our own resources or becoming an organization with educational aims which can operate on a larger scale with the aid of contributions. It appears that the scientist movement must do one or the other in order to achieve its aims, it cannot continue to do both and succeed.

It is interesting to note that these opinions disagree greatly with those of the observers which have recently returned from the Russian interior. The party leaders seem to believe that Gromyko proposed a system of inspection and this was turned down flatly by the United States. It is paradoxical that in this state of deadlock both sides believe that the other will not submit to inspection.

Studies are being made on the external and internal propaganda of the Soviet Union which may provide considerable illumination on the subject. They may be published in about six months.

CAN BIOLOGICAL WARFARE BE CONTROLLED?

The subject of biological warfare has been much more difficult to deal with than the atomic counterpart. This is primarily because it was never actually used and because the secrecy provisions have remained far more stringent. However, a large share of the war work has now been published in the scientific journals and a recently published book Experimental Air-borne Infection, by Theodor Rosebury.

Pessimism regarding the control of BW has run very high because of the ease of producing large quantities of highly virulent organisms. Closer inspection, however, reveals significant difficulties in other phases such as personnel and equipment requirements, weather, propagation of epi-

demics, uniformity of distribution, etc.

Preliminary thinking in Washington indicates that the following control measures should be explored:

1. Establishment of an International Roster of Scientific Personnel.
2. Establishment of immunological stations on each continent ready to mass-produce serums under World Health Organization's auspices.
3. Free international interchange of personnel between research institutes working on infectious diseases.

4. Design and production in mass quantities of physical equipment for diminishing propagation efficiency of the epidemic diseases.

5. Development of improved defense measures against low-flying aircraft.

One or two of these measures by themselves are likely to be inadequate safeguards but the institution of five or more is likely to render impotent any prospective attempt at BW. The subject needs thorough study and criticism at this time.

DISCUSSIONS ON CONTROL CONTINUE AT LAKE SUCCESS

Late last year there was considerable unpublicized discussion in government circles about the usefulness of continuing the activities of the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission. The F.A.S. was the only organization which became active in supporting the continuation of the U.N. work. This was the key point in the policy statement released December 6th (?).

For various unstated reasons the UNAEC decided that it should complete the tasks on its agenda. The U. S. delegate, Frederick Osborn, according to his recent speech in Cambridge, is extremely pessimistic as to the outcome. He has recently been as-

signed also the U. N. Commission on Conventional Armaments which is now deadlocked. The UNAEC is currently looking into problems of the administration of the ADA and the development of the Russian proposals.

Gromyko stated in absolute terms that the USSR would accept nothing less than a separate convention to eliminate atomic bombs. In spite of this strong statement, Skobeltsyn is participating for the first time in the sub-committee discussion! It is the judgment of reporters and observers that UNAEC desperately needs some smaller jobs which can be handily completed in the next year or two.

THE FUTURE OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

There have been no verifiable rumors concerning amendments to the McMahon Bill or the reappointment of the Commission. The Commissioners have been out stumping the country publicizing the peacetime uses and the problems they are up against regarding secrecy, national security, personnel, patents, etc. This action tends to ensure reappointment.

In the report recently sent to Congress the emphasis lay upon the development of breeder piles, the systematization of the production of atomic bombs, and even more

stringent secrecy provisions. The power pile project is being moved from Oak Ridge to Chicago at the expense of great turmoil among the technical personnel at Oak Ridge.

The dates for atomic power installations have again been put back. The first experimental project may be operating in 2-3 years, a large scale prototype in ten years, and a substantial amount of power in twenty years, but the total is not expected to be so great as to cause abnormal obsolescence to power stations now being installed.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

As of February 5th the "compromise bill" discussed at the AAAS meeting in December has not been introduced, but has been printed for committee study. One can feel in the air that there are some political

prestige problems inside the Republican high command, and also a lessened enthusiasm in the Administration. The prospects are not very clear at present.

THE WASHINGTON VORTEX

What happens to our time and effort? Because things get done slowly we in the Washington office worry about it, and have been making an assessment of the last few months. There are just two of us: Mary Bernard, secretary, bookkeeper, and custo-

dian of the files, and myself. We lean heavily too on the services of Dorothy Higinbotham, research secretary for the ASAE. This is the way my time is spent for a typical month's operation:

Collecting information on atom, BW, Russia, science, etc.	80 hours
Contacts with national news service and publications	40 hours
Correspondence	30 hours
Memos and Newsletters to members and associations	30 hours
Meetings and Committees (FAS, WAS, NRC, etc.)	20 hours
Speeches and Conferences	10 hours
Secrecy and Clearance Problems	10 hours
Stimulating studies on social implications	20 hours
Miscellaneous (including looking for contributions)	20 - 40 hours

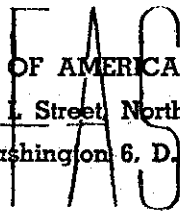
As you can see by the allocation of time your Executive Secretary must be one of the most informed people in Washington, being thoroughly conversant with a multitude of subjects. This is a necessity, for otherwise we would lose the confidence of the

press representatives and the respect the people in the government. Many excellent opportunities are lost continually, particularly in the educational field, because we can't possibly hold up our end.

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