

F. A. S. NEWSLETTER

FEDERATION OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS
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ATOMIC WEAPONS --

WHICH WAY U.S.A. ?

Citizens' Soul-searching. A significant conference on "The Atomic Era -- Can it Produce Peace and Abundance" took place in New York late in April under the sponsorship of The Nation Associates. The consensus of 27 speakers was that human society is faced with the momentous choice between total war with total destruction, or fundamental changes in international structure which will make war obsolete. All agreed that war was not inevitable, but that measures to prevent it must go beyond control of atomic weapons to the basic causes of the cold war itself.

Many speakers urged recognition of the revolutionary state of the world which has resulted from the unequal impact of scientific technology. They saw the tremendous upward movement in Asia, and the potential abundance offered by modern technology, as equal to atomic energy in their revolutionary effects. With a single exception, all looked to a strengthened UN as the only existing institution capable of resolving international differences. Many, however, favored a meeting of the Big Three -- after the Western World had developed a more realistic view of the needs of the world at large.

In the specific area of atomic control, there was general agreement that the Baruch Plan requires modification, that the ending of the monopoly on atomic weapons has created a changed atmosphere, and that as countries other than the U.S. and Russia engage in atomic enterprises, they will create an additional force for peace. Various speakers suggested: that the idea of international ownership of atomic resources and producing agencies should be abandoned; that comprehensive international inspection should be retained; that a convention should be adopted outlawing the use of atomic bombs, and declaring the first use of such weapons to be a war crime.

Two interim control schemes were suggested. One called for a stand-still agreement, coupled with UN inspection to insure execution, that all competition in atomic production should cease and existing bombs be put under UN seal for a specified time. Another proposed a 10-year agreement, automatically renewable at the end of the ninth year, under which the U.S. and USSR would surrender their stockpiles to an international authority, large-scale atomic operations would be forbidden, large-scale installations would be dismantled, and previously produced explosives accounted for. Such an interim agreement should come into effect quickly and as a whole.

Other proposals were made relating to the role of the UN, world organization, programs for Asia and Europe, and a settlement for Germany. The establishment was advocated of an international center to accelerate the peacetime development of atomic energy, with research financed by an international fund. Speakers at the conference included Harrison S. Brown, Hugh C. Wolfe, Edward U. Condon, Norbert Wiener, David Bradley, and Louis N. Ridenour. The proceedings of the conference are available as a supplement to the May 20 issue of The Nation, obtainable singly or in bulk from The Nation, 20 Vesey Street, New York 7, New York (single copy, 20 cents).

United Nations. Second among Trygve Lie's "Ten Points for Peace," which the UN Secretary-General discussed directly with the Big Four powers on his recent 5-week "pilgrimage of peace" is: "Resumption of East-West talks within the UN on prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons and control of atomic energy."

Submarining Atomic Power. On May 10 Harry Truman, speaking from the observation platform of his special train in Pocatello, Idaho, assured his early morning audience that he had issued the order for the A-bomb release in 1945 and would do so again -- if he had to. On the same day, David Lilienthal, speaking in St.

Louis, voiced a fear that continued emphasis on military aspects of atomic energy at the expense of its wider applications will merely serve to make the AEC a "front for the Pentagon."

The following week, on the heels of its indefinite postponement of an experimental atomic power plant near Schenectady, the Atomic Energy Commission announced that General Electric will build an atomic engine for submarines paralleling a similar project by Westinghouse. The AEC publicity emphasized that research and development work already done on the intermediate power breeder reactor can be utilized for the naval reactors, and that they in turn will contribute data and experience to the development of future commercial power reactors. To cynics, the AEC peacetime reactor program appeared sunk.

Over-reliance on the A-Bomb? In a letter published by the N.Y. Times (Apr. 30) and Washington Post (May 5), 18 members of the faculties of Harvard and M.I.T. voiced apprehension for what appears to be the almost total reliance of our military planners on the use of the A-bomb and strategic bombing of the enemy as our first line of defense. The 3 main points of their argument are (1) atomic bombing will not act as a deterrent to localized or limited aggression, (2) it would leave our allies such as Britain extremely vulnerable to retaliation, and (3) if successfully executed, wholesale A-bombing of an enemy country would make post-war reconstruction extremely difficult if not virtually impossible. A Washington Post editorial commenting on the letter points out that the more atomic defense is built around strategic bombing, the more this strategy gains public acceptance and the more difficult it is to backtrack. The real danger lies in an increasing dependence on what may be an illusion of strength.

In a reply to the letter, former Secretary of War Robert Patterson asserts that the real value of an atomic stockpile and a Strategic Air Force lies in their deterrent value to Soviet aggression, and that if they are to serve this purpose, we must keep ahead of the Soviet Union on both counts.

Outlaw the Bomb? Petitions to outlaw the atomic bomb circulated by the French Partisans for Peace headed by Joliot-Curie, are reportedly attracting great support abroad. The Vienna radio on May 27 said 100,000 had signed such petitions there. The campaign, aimed at national legislatures, had its origin in a left-wing peace rally in Stockholm, which urged world-wide support for "absolute interdiction" of atomic weapons. According to the AP, a resolution was adopted which demanded rigorous international control to assure suppression of the bomb, and added: "We consider that the government first to use the bomb, no matter against what country, would be committing a crime against humanity and should be treated as a war criminal."

World Red Cross Appeals for A-Ban. The International Committee of the Red Cross has asked all signatories to the Geneva Convention on the rules of war to take "all steps to reach agreement on a prohibition of atomic weapons and, in a general way, of all non-directed missiles." Otherwise, the Committee's letter, made public May 2, said, "the foundations on which its mission is based will disappear," because "law, written or unwritten, is powerless when confronted with total destruction that the use of this arm implies." The World Red Cross in effect offered to act as a medium for bringing the powers together to reach an atomic truce. The preliminary response of the U.S. State Department was "only the Soviet Union stands in the way of agreement on this important matter. Any agreement which is based only on the good faith of the signatory nations is not better than the good faith of the individual nations concerned." An

(Continued on page 4, Column 1)

THE SECURITY FRONT

Security Legislation. Authority for summary dismissal would be given to the State and Commerce Departments in the omnibus appropriation bill passed by the House May 11. Military agencies already have this power under other acts. The authorization contained in the Rooney rider (Commerce) and the McCarran rider (State) had been deleted from the bill by a parliamentary maneuver (see May 3 Newsletter), but were re-inserted. The bill is now in the hands of the Senate Appropriation Committee. Unless it is acted on by June 30, all regular federal agencies will be without funds. The summary dismissal provisions, lumped into Sec. 1113 of H.R. 7786, have not attracted the protests from unions and citizen's groups they deserve. The FAS has opposed the Rooney rider because it constitutes an unwarranted blanket extension of security beyond specific projects and personnel requiring it.

Summary of Clearance Procedures, a mimeographed bulletin of the Scientists' Committee on Loyalty Problems, has been brought up-to-date and reissued. The bulletin includes details of government loyalty and security procedures, and general advice for individuals who may require it. Copies are available from SCLP, 14 Battle Road, Princeton, New Jersey.

Charges that Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer had attended a secret, closed Communist Party meeting are not being taken seriously by responsible persons. According to official government records, it was known that Steve Nelson, a Communist Party organizer, had visited the Oppenheimers in 1941 to report on the circumstances of the death in action of Mrs. Oppenheimer's first husband while both he and Nelson were fighting on the side of the Spanish Loyalists in the 1930's. This social contact was known to Gen. Groves and the FBI before Dr. Oppenheimer was cleared for top-secret activities. Among the many defenders of Dr. Oppenheimer was Rep. Nixon (R. Calif.), a member of the House Un-American Activities Committee, who said he has "complete confidence" in the loyalty of Dr. Oppenheimer. Numerous editorials have deplored the smear attack, pointing to the harm being done to our national security by such tactics in discouraging scientists from working for the government.

Security Risks and Disloyalty. The long battle between the Regents and the faculty of the University of California over non-Communist oaths erupted again at a meeting of the Regents May 26. According to the San Francisco Chronicle, Regent John F. Neylan, who has spearheaded the drive for a stringent loyalty oath for the faculty, stated that he would seek dismissal of any faculty member who fails to sign the new contract form which requires the signer to take cognizance of the non-Communist policy of the University. He attacked Dean Joel Hildebrand of the College of Chemistry for employing in his department a man held to be a "bad security risk" by AEC security boards. The man in question, named publicly by Neylan, is a research assistant completing his degree this June. According to the Chronicle, records show no charge of Communism or disloyalty, only his wife's association with an alleged Communist and his writing of a letter in 1940 protesting the prosecution of two labor leaders for having bought phonograph records in the Washington Book Shop (later listed as subversive by the Attorney-General). The accused denied all charges saying, "I never was a Communist and never was disloyal. I believe the findings of the loyalty board were unjust. I still don't know who my accusers are. I have never had a chance to face them."

Professor Wendell M. Latimer, dean of Chemistry until this year, approved employment of the accused as a teaching assistant. He said, "The AEC has very strict rules about security risks, which naturally include guilt by association, but such associations do not mean a man is disloyal nor disqualify him for a job. (The accused) is an excellent student and ready to take a permanent job. He has all kinds of excellent recommendations, as a student and as an American. But this kind of thing -- who can tell what will happen?"

Atomic Secrecy. The protests against the gag imposed by the Atomic Energy Commission on public discussion of thermonuclear reactions have grown since the report ("Keep Your Trap Shut") in the last Newsletter. The American Civil Liberties Union, in a letter to the AEC, urged the Commission to relax its censorship rules so that the nation can obtain needed information

on the H-bomb. The May issue of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, in a widely quoted editorial, gives a particularly clear statement of the issues involved. It points out that scientists, because they are the best informed on these matters, have a responsibility in informing the public. Past experience indicates that they will not speak out lightly or irresponsibly. Dr. R. F. Bacher, in a speech at Long Beach, Calif., again emphasized the importance of keeping the public informed so that they can have an adequate understanding of our atomic policy.

As the month ended, it appeared that the AEC was reconsidering its policy. Commissioner Gordon Dean, in a speech delivered May 28 in Columbus, O., indicated it might be wise in the interest of national security to declassify certain scientific and technical information which the Russians must have possessed in order to achieve an atomic explosion. According to a syndicated article by Michael Amrine, published June 3, a major change in atomic secrecy policy is in the making as a result of conferences between officials of the AEC and their congressional "watchdog," the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy.

Commission on National Security? On May 22, the Washington Post launched a campaign for the appointment of a Presidential commission on national security. In an editorial, "The Road Back to America," the Post said, "For weeks the Capital has been seized and convulsed by a terror. It is a terror akin to the evil atmosphere of the alien and sedition laws in John Adams' Administration. The rising distrust, the roaring bitterness, the ranging of Americans against Americans, the assault on freedom of inquiry, the intolerance of opposition -- all this malaise, it seems to this newspaper, has its roots in a deep and troubled state of the Nation's mind. Fear and frustration abound -- fear of the unseen struggle in which we are locked, and frustration because of our inability to get directly at it."

The Post went on to point out that we face unique dangers in the present crisis but asserted that the current hysteria is no answer to them. Rather it saw the methods of the extremist anti-Communists as "burning down the house of the American way of life in order to get at the rats in it." It quoted approvingly George Kennan's remark that "the atmosphere of public life in Washington does not have to deteriorate much further to produce a situation in which very few of our more quiet and sensitive and gifted people will be able to continue in government."

With these things in mind, the Post urged the creation of a commission on national security "to survey the major aspects of national security -- the internal menace of the fifth column, civilian defense, development of new weapons, the size and use of military expenditures, economic restoration of our friends and allies." It envisioned this commission as "unpartisan" and consisting of individuals in whom the public has the highest confidence. "It would catalyze the decencies of America. In the light of full and trusted information -- which proper composition of the commission would ensure -- new laws can be worked out by the Congress wherever necessary for our internal security."

The editorial and its suggestion evoked a good deal of discussion and reaction throughout the nation. By and large, comment was favorable, although interpretation varied depending upon the special bias of the commentator. The President saw little merit in the idea, remarking that there was no need for a supergovernment of any kind. The Post replied tartly that it has no intention of suggesting a supergovernment, that presidential commissions to deal with special problems are an old and respected mechanism in American constitutional processes.

The editorial re-crystallized a problem, a portion of which the FAS had sought to dramatize last summer when it proposed a Special Commission on Science and National Security. The effects on science and scientists of the hysteria to which the Post calls attention have, of course, been of steady concern to the FAS for three years. The Condon episode, numerous unwarranted loyalty and clearance difficulties experienced by scientists, the O'Mahoney rider on AEC fellowships, the recent Smith amendment to NSF legislation -- all these bear testimony to the general problem the Post now high-lights. Relevant, too, is the Federation proposal to establish a special commission on the effects, both foreign and domestic, of the H-bomb and the Soviet achievement of an atomic explosion.

As the tempo of attack by the "primitives" and rabble-rousers quickens, there are signs that the more reasonable elements of the population are becoming aroused. But the voice of reason will have to be raised oftener and more loudly if we are not all to be swept to destruction by the witch's broom of fear.

REVIEWS - -

SCIENCE IS A SACRED COW, by Anthony Standen; E. P. Dutton and Company, 221 pp; \$2.75.

It appears from the glowing reviews exhibited on the back cover of this book that intelligent criticism of the actions and statements of certain scientists is badly needed. Unfortunately Mr. Standen's understanding of science, scientists, and scientific method is inadequate to provide this. His avowed purpose is to expose the sophistry in science resulting from the attempts of certain individuals to over-extend the scientific method into realms where it does not belong. In fulfilling his mission, Mr. Standen engages in some sophistry of his own. Writing at the intellectual level of the New York Daily News, which devoted some of its limited editorial space to a thumping endorsement of this book, Mr. Standen attempts to rationalize the philosophy of the National Patent Council in much the same way that Soviet writers have tried to rationalize the Marxist philosophy of science.

The real value of studying science, in Mr. Standen's opinion, lies not in the thinking habits which it implants in the minds of its students, but in the basic knowledge provided on the operation of television sets and dishwashers. He attacks the science educators -- "the hucksters of science" -- for claiming that their survey courses help the student to a better understanding of the scientific method and man's relation to his physical environment. There is certainly much that can be done to improve the teaching of elementary science, but the shallow, confused, and rambling discussion in this book will contribute very little to this end.

Another point which Mr. Standen makes is that all scientists do not have equal intelligence, especially in these days of mass education when large numbers of mediocrities are turned out by our universities. Having made his point, however, he goes on condemning Science and Scientists indiscriminately. Yet it is apparent from his criticism that he has never read (or at least understood) the real thinkers of science and that his whole argument, except for brief recourse to the Greek philosophers, is founded on the usual rehashed ideas of the popularizers of science.

In order to expand these few notions into a full-sized book, Mr. Standen insists on taking his readers through the entire range of the sciences (all four of them) in a worm's-eye view which should rank with the worst of the popular expositions that he detests so much. Physics gets a pat on the head as the only field of science at all worthy of the name. After straightening out a few points about the wave theory of light and quantum mechanics, the author proceeds to take a few good pokes at biology and psychology. Biology is just a mass of undigested facts with a few generalizations like the Theory of Evolution. The insidious campaign of biologists to include man in the animal kingdom and treat him as such, damns them in the eyes of the author. Psychology or the study of the soul gets a brief treatment in a somewhat similar vein.

The real sneers, however, have been saved for the social scientists: Here for the first time, he accuses scientists of trying to take over and run things. All of his vituperation and innuendo are concentrated on the people who he claims have been trying to put "should" and "ought" into science.

In a somewhat incongruous penultimate chapter, the author recommends the study of mathematics for its own sake and for a fuller appreciation of the real truth.

The alarming fact about this book is not that it is so bad, but that so many lay reviewers think that it is so good. This is perhaps the most telling argument in favor of Mr. Standen's thesis that our scientific educators are failing in their job. I do not believe as do most of the reviewers that Mr. Standen is either funny or brilliantly amusing. He is earnest and deadly serious.

- - W. J. Horvath

MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT, edited by Eugene Rabinowitch; published by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 128 pp; \$1.00.

In "Minutes to Midnight" Professor Rabinowitch has put together an intelligently edited and very readable account of the attempts to bring about international control of atomic energy. Here we find the significant parts of the speeches, reports, and public pronouncements which comprise the outward manifestations of the struggle to achieve international control. The whole story is presented competently and honestly in terms of the information available, without trying to be cutely omniscient about behind-the-scenes maneuvering.

The outline of the book is largely chronological, starting with the Szilard and the Franck reports, and the Stimson Memoirs. It presents the Acheson-Lilienthal report in considerable detail,

together with other plans which came out at the same time, and then discusses the fate of these ideas in the UN. The book concludes with some of the alternative plans which have been suggested and which have had much less concentrated attention.

From the account of the pulling and hauling in the UN debates, this reviewer gained a refreshed perspective on the positions taken by the opposing sides. One impression that grows is that the USSR seemed to have certain valid arguments against the majority plan, which they did not adequately exploit. Thus the Russians should reasonably look with suspicion on a very powerful international control commission, from which their only appeal would be to the Security Council where they -- without veto -- would certainly be in the minority. Not to do this would require a confidence in the objectivity and integrity of the other members of the Council which the Russians can hardly be expected to have. Now the Russians might well have developed this point with telling force. Instead, they plodded ponderously from one non-sequitur to another, succeeding ultimately in stopping debate by a roadblock of unreason. If it was their original purpose to prevent any kind of agreement, then they accomplished their purpose in such a manner as to produce the greatest harm, probably to themselves, and certainly to the UN of which they are a part. On the other hand if they had any desire for atomic security, their behavior can only be described as colossally stupid. In trying to reason with the Russian delegates, the members of the UNAEC must have had the same feeling of frustration as that of a man trying to explain nuclear physics to his mother-in-law.

The evidence presented in this book well demonstrates that the international control of atomic energy could lead to peace only insofar as it set a pattern for other more fundamental agreements and cooperations. But this attempt has failed. The world is now desperately in need of bold fundamental ideas which would have a real appeal to the integrity in men and thus stimulate their enthusiasm and hope for creating a stable world.

In producing this book Prof. Rabinowitch has performed an important service in public information. Even for the person who can maintain card files and clippings, it is a real service to have the significant material brought together in one volume, competently annotated and edited. For the average reader, "Minutes to Midnight" is invaluable. - - W. M. Schwarz

ATOMIC ATTACK, published by the British Association of Scientific Workers, 15 Half Moon St., Picadilly, London W1, England, March 1950, 22 pp; one shilling.

This well-written pamphlet clearly and bluntly emphasizes that Britain would suffer more than the U.S. or Russia in an atomic war. In a foreword, Nobel Laureate P. M. S. Blackett asserts that adequate protection for Britain cannot be achieved: "The cost of the necessary passive defense measures, dispersal, underground factories, shelters, etc., is widely outside the economic possibilities of this economically hard-pressed country." The overall conclusion: ensure that the fatal Third World War does not take place.

The Federation of American Scientists consists of scientists and some interested laymen concerned with the impact of science on the modern world. The FAS Chairman is W. A. Higinbotham, of Brookhaven; the Vice-chairman, Hugh C. Wolfe, of Cooper Union. Policy, determined by the elected Council, is carried out by the Executive Committee and by the Secretariat, which prepares this occasional Newsletter and is otherwise appropriately active on the Washington scene. Applications for membership may be sent to the Washington Office. Non-member subscription to the FAS Newsletter is \$3.00 per year.

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Red Cross (Continued from Page 1).

Associated Press dispatch on May 15 reported favorable comment on the Red Cross appeal by Izvestia, "in the Soviet Union there always will be support of any measure if it is really directed toward outlawing the atomic weapons."

Elder Statesman. An appeal to world powers to destroy their atomic bombs was drafted by Orlando of Italy and endorsed on May 27 by the heads of both branches of the legislature and other top Italian personalities of various political parties.

Pious but Pessimistic. In the apparent absence of official interest in new studies of the problems raised by the A- and H-bombs, the establishment of unofficial groups has been discussed in a number of circles. On June 3, the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America announced the formation of a Commission of Christian Scholars to study the moral implications of area bombing and the military use of nuclear bombs and other weapons of mass destruction. The Commission, headed by Angus Dun, Protestant Episcopal Bishop, includes W. W. Waymack, former AEC commissioner, and Chester I. Barnard, a member of the original Acheson-Lillenthal commission and now president of the Rockefeller Foundation. The group begins its work in a somewhat pessimistic mood. Bishop Dun remarked that its assignment was one "in which failure is almost certain."

French Atomic Energy Workers. From the atomic energy center, located at Fort de Chatillon, comes an appeal addressed to "our colleagues in all nations," to throw their "influence behind all those who demand the banning of weapons of mass destruction." Signed unanimously by the workers at Chatillon, the message received by FAS May 9, continued, "It is our firm belief that the use of these weapons in a conflict could reduce neither its horror nor its duration, but on the contrary would lead to the annihilation of millions of human beings and of the material and cultural achievements of civilization."

Dr. Frederic Joliot-Curie, one of the world's leading nuclear physicists, was dismissed April 28 from his post as head of the French Atomic Energy Commission, and expelled from the French Institute of Scientific Research. Dr. Joliot-Curie, a member of the French Communist Party, had stated that the French Commission was concerned only with peacetime uses of atomic energy and that nothing of military importance would be divulged to the Soviet Union. He had also stated that "Communist scientists will never contribute a particle of their science to a war against the Soviet Union."

The officers of the American Association of Scientific Workers, in a telegram to Premier Bidault, protested the removal as a "severe loss to science," and expressed regret that the "nature of the French Atomic Energy Commission appears to have been altered in conformity with mounting international tensions."

Reaction in the U.S. press was generally favorable to the ouster. Abroad a considerable number of protests were registered.

National Science Foundation Act of 1950 was signed by the President on May 10 at Pocatello, Idaho. Calling the establishment of the NSF a "major landmark in the history of science in the U.S.," Mr. Truman said the fact that the world has not found post-war security underscores the need for the NSF. "The (NSF) will stimulate basic research and education in nearly every branch of science, and thereby add to the supply of knowledge which is indispensable to our continued growth, prosperity, and security." It is known that the President has received many suggestions for the 24-man, part-time National Science Board, and that these are being given careful consideration in the White House and Budget Bureau. The Director cannot be selected until the Board has been nominated, approved by the Senate, and has met at least once. Despite Drew Pearson, there are no rumors worth spreading regarding the possible appointments.

Science in the State Department. As we go to press, a long-awaited report appears in the form of the Department of State's "Science and Foreign Relations." With the unanimous approval of an Advisory Committee of the National Academy of Sciences, the Berkner Report, to encourage free, international scientific inquiry and exchange of information, recommends the establishment of a Science Office headed by a "front-rank scientist" and the appointment of scientific attaches in our diplomatic missions abroad. It further recommends greater governmental activity in the fields of both pure and applied science to counter the present pre-occupation with technology and relative neglect of basic inquiry. Pointing out the American tendency to underestimate the importance of foreign scientific progress, the report goes on to state that scientific progress in America requires that we have free access to and be fully aware of scientific thought everywhere, and that this access implies a two-way flow of information.

The report's value lies not so much in any specific recommendation as in its indication that there are important forces within the government (the report was approved by two high-ranking science policy committees in the State Department) that see a danger to American science and the national welfare in present misguided attempts to build scientific secrecy into a major bulwark of American security.

New AEC Commissioners are expected to be nominated momentarily. The terms of the present incumbents (Pike, acting chairman; Smyth, Dean, Murray, and one vacancy) expire on June 30, and the President's new appointees should by then have been confirmed by the Senate.

Lame Duck. Former AEC Commissioner Strauss has repeated in recent speeches that it would be disastrous for the U.S. to dispose of atomic bombs under any international agreement. He lists as "atomic fallacies" that: (1) U.S. disarmament will produce USSR disarmament; (2) the H-bomb would wipe humanity off the planet; (3) secrecy has driven the best scientific brains out of the atomic project and is hindering research progress; (4) public atomic energy information is insufficient.

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