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Memo to: Chapters & Members-at-Large
 from: Executive Secretariat, with
 R. Bush and D. Hill (Princeton)

Federation of American Scientists
 1749 L Street, N.W.
 Washington 6, D.C.
 A-733 June 19, 1949

SUMMARY OF EVENTS, JUNE 12 - 19

Besides the regular staff, D. L. Hill and R. R. Bush (both of Princeton) have been here most of the week, helping to keep up with important developments, attending the AEC hearings, getting information out to the membership, and trying to influence people on the hill. This memo is an attempt to summarize and interpret matters of special interest to FAS.

National Science Foundation. The most important development, from our point of view, is the fact that H.R. 4846 has been reported out of Committee and will be taken up on the House Floor, probably on Tuesday, June 21, or shortly thereafter. Provisions for loyalty affidavits of fellowship holders, the carrying out of military research under the Foundation, and the setting up of security regulations are all included in the Bill. We feel that the Federation should vigorously oppose all three provisions. Letters and wires from scientists to their own representatives in Congress are essential. Aside from these three provisions, it is felt here that the Bill should be supported. The facts on this are completely covered in the Special FAS Newsletter of June 17, just put in the mail, so no repetition will be attempted here. (R. R. Bush)

Atomic Energy Commission. This week's AEC hearings opened on Monday with Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, Chairman of the General Advisory Committee of the AEC, as star witness. The main subject of that hearing was the export of isotopes. With his usual eloquence, Oppenheimer argued that such exports were in the interests of national security and wholly consistent with U.S. foreign policy. He apparently convinced everyone, with the possible exception of Sen. Hickenlooper, that the isotopes were of no military significance. In answer to questions, Oppenheimer further asserted that the Commission had done an excellent job. It was obvious to everyone that Hickenlooper had lost this round. At Wednesday's hearings the AEC found a new ally in the General Electric Company, and Hickenlooper found himself put in the embarrassing position of attacking free enterprise as applied in the development of the Hanford Plant under the management of GE. In L. B. Ententhal's words, "GE batted the ball out of the lot" in its efficient management and shrewd planning in the Hanford project, and Dr. Harry A. Winne, Vice-President of the Gen. Electric Co. responded with outspoken plaudits for the competence and thoroughness of the work of the AEC, with Hickenlooper caught between and squirming uncomfortably as these two handed bouquets to each other. Hickenlooper had complained that there was no efficient checking by the AEC on the plans and operations of GE; to this complaint, Ententhal responded with a statement of the policy of the AEC to award contracts only to fully qualified operators and then to avoid double-management by not "breathing down the necks" of the contractors during the subsequent work.

With much ado about the brown bottle that turned into a clear Ball Mason jar, the case of the lost uranium at the Argonne Nat'l Laboratory came to a possible end before the open hearings of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, Thursday, June 16. Under the testimony of Dr. Zinn, Director at Argonne, and of other staff members there, as well as the testimony of Dr. Thiele, independent expert witness asked by the Committee to investigate the Argonne uranium mystery, the facts were established that all but four grams of the enriched mixture had been recovered, and that there was no evidence for believing that espionage was involved. Under the weight of the consistent and corroborative evidence presented by these men, Hickenlooper was left grasping for straws to support his assertions of "incredible mismanagement", and rested most of his argument for the day on the fact that the container claimed to have been recovered was a clear Ball Mason jar, whereas the press reports of an earlier meeting had quoted the Committee Chairman as saying that the "brown pint-size bottle" had been found. Much of the Committee's time was spent in discussing the color of the jar, with Sen. McMahon maintaining that he had not specified the nature of the missing uranium container in

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his statement to the press when it was found; and finally indicating the probable basis of the misconception as following from his having pointed in an early press conference in his office, to a brown bottle of vitamin pills sitting on his desk when a reporter asked him to state roughly what size and type of bottle was used for storing the uranium.

In response to questions on the efficacy of inventories for a complete accounting of fissionable materials, Zinn replied that the only way to be sure of the exact amount of material in a laboratory is never to use it. He then described an experiment in which the accounting of the exact amount of enriched material could not be completed for two years because of the necessity of waiting until strongly activated materials decay to a level of radioactivity at which they can safely be handled by chemists for analysis. Thus he pointed up the fact that if a spy were anxious to purloin some material without having it detected for a long time he would not remove it from a storage bottle subject to periodic checks.

Rep. Price (D., Illinois) called attention to the article, "Is the A-Bomb Safe?", by William Bradford Huie, in the June, 1949, issue of Nation's Business, published by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Price charged that the article contains several bits of information, the publication of which represents security breaches. The article is highly critical of the work of the AEC, contrasting strangely with another article by Huie in the Reader's Digest, Jan., 1949, and strongly recommends that custody for the atomic bombs be transferred to the military. Significant is the fact that the article mentions very favorably Fred Rhodes and David S. Teeple, formerly of Gen. Groves' staff and discharged by McMahon from their jobs on the staff of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, to which they had been appointed under Hickenlooper's chairmanship. These men are now assisting Hickenlooper in his preparation of charges against Lilienthal and the AEC, and Hickenlooper strongly protested at the hearings Thursday Price's thinly veiled insinuation that these men were responsible for the leaks of information revealed in Huie's article attacking the AEC. Price asked Lilienthal whether he considered the article to represent a security infringement, and Lilienthal replied in the afternoon session that the FBI had been requested to investigate any possible security leaks involved in Huie's statements. Included in the article is information that 90% of our uranium is supplied by a "Belgian-British company in the Belgian Congo known as Union Miniere de Haut Katanga".

Conversations with various people from the Argonne Laboratory have painted a picture of a laboratory so obsessed with inventories, chemical analyses, and digging in radioactive grave yards that all of the technical personnel have been pulled away from their usual jobs, and where research has consequently been virtually at a stand-still for the past three weeks.

The over-all picture of the Atomic Energy hearings prevalent in the Capitol at present is that the heavy inroads on the time of the Commission and its employees, as well as on the time of the members of the Joint Committee, may be compensated by an increased public understanding of the intricate problems involved and an appreciation of the true nature of security. In the words of Sen. McMahon, the public must realize that the principal strength of our national science program derives not from "security by concealment", but from "security by achievement."

Members of the AEC have expressed indignation at Hickenlooper's procedure of advancing charges against the AEC without giving them any prior indication of the subject to be discussed at a particular hearing, and thus crippling their efforts to answer accurately and completely the questions placed. Lilienthal has repeatedly requested an opportunity to prepare his files of data in advance of the hearings. Typical of Hickenlooper's tactics is the hearing of the 16th. At its close, Lilienthal asked of his principal questioner what general aspect of the Commission's activities would be examined at the next morning's session; Hickenlooper responded with the suggestion that Lilienthal call his office about an hour later (it was then 4:30 P.M.). At 6:00 P.M. Hickenlooper's office released the information that the following morning they would inquire into "Waste, in particular waste in the administration of the sites at Hanford and Oak Ridge". This information at that late date was especially infuriating to the AEC, for they had just that afternoon permitted their witnesses from Hanford and Oak Ridge to

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to depart, but seemed to prefer them to be absent when he placed specific and detailed questions to the Commissioners.

The swing of the Joint Committee away from sympathy with Hickenlooper was dramatized by the individual statements Thursday of three Republican members of the Committee that they felt that Hickenlooper had over-stated his case against Lilienthal. Reps. Cole (R., New York) and Hinshaw (R., Calif.) indicated that they do not think much of Sen. Hickenlooper's probe thus far, and Sen. Vandenberg (R., Mich.) was quoted in the Washington Post as remarking privately "Hickenlooper overstated his charges against Lilienthal. He hasn't made out a case so far and it doesn't look like he will." Another member of the Joint Committee, Rep. Price (D., Ill.), came forth with the following blast: "It's a complete bust. It was purely political in origin and has consistently laid an egg." It is also reported that Hickenlooper has asked for aid in his crusade from Senators Guy Cordon (R., Oregon) and Homer Ferguson (R., Mich.).

It is thus apparent from the testimony advanced in the hearings and from these statements by members of the Joint Committee that Hickenlooper is failing in his efforts to have the Committee recommend action against Lilienthal. If no further pressure is put on the Committee, the matter may end about there, with a vast amount of public doubt aroused and with the position of a progressive Commission appreciably weakened. It is possible, however, that under sufficient urging, the Joint Committee may be brought to issue a statement lauding the over-all program of the AEC and giving more emphasis to the vision and competence with which the AEC has done its job than to the few relatively unimportant errors it may have made.

One of us (D.L.H.) interviewed Senator Knowland (R., Calif.) and Senator Miliken (R., Colo.) and attempted to impress upon them that the more basic side of our national security has been thus far neglected in the AEC hearings. They were quick to recognize that the principal concern of Hickenlooper has been with such negative aspects of security as the inventory of materials, clearance of employees, and restriction of information. The Joint Committee, because of Hickenlooper's tactics, has been unable to place proper emphasis upon the much more important positive aspects of security through our development of atomic energy — that is, upon conditions by which a vigorous program of general research may grow up in the hands of a large, enthusiastic, and resourceful body of scientists. Both Senators agree that one of the principal benefits to be expected from the present investigation is an increased public recognition of the conditions necessary for maximum progress in the development of atomic energy, and they were sympathetic to the need for emphasizing in subsequent hearings the importance of "security through achievement" in contrast to "security through concealment".

Much of the AEC's defense has been on the basis of "calculated risks" taken to further the progress of the program, and it seems probable now that most of the Democratic members of the Joint Committee will endorse this general attitude of the AEC. It seems most important now for the FAS members to apply pressure by letters and wires on the Republican members of the Committee to speak forth strongly on the positive aspects of security in AEC policy. (D.L.H.)

House Un-American Activities Committee. The most recent hearing of a scientist before the HUAAC was that of Frank Oppenheimer on June 14. After a closed session before the Committee, Oppenheimer issued a statement to the press in which he admitted that he and his wife had joined the Communist Party in 1937 "seeking an answer to the problems of unemployment and want". He stated that they had resigned three and one half years later long before the establishment of the Manhattan Project, because the CP was not the vehicle through which to accomplish the progressive changes we were interested in". He further asserted that he had never been asked to do anything illegal. A strong letter of praise for Oppenheimer's work on the Manhattan project, written by General Groves, was appended to the press release. According to newspaper reports, Oppenheimer answered all questions about himself but refused to answer any questions about other people. The Committee announced that the case was being dropped after the hearing. Oppenheimer had given his resignation to the Univ. of Minnesota where he had been an associate professor of physics. The resignation was accepted by the University.

The press treatment was on the whole factual and as fair as could be expected.

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Several editorials and columns were sympathetic. Although this case broke the day after J. Robert Oppenheimer strongly supported the AEC in testimony before the Joint Committee there are no indications here of a sinister plot to discredit the latter's testimony.

This case of Frank Oppenheimer is the third case in recent months of scientists charged with communist sympathies, past or present, that has resulted in the loss of a university job. The first was Ralph Spitzer whose contract at the Oregon State College was not renewed because of charges, the only public evidence for which was an article he wrote in Chemical and Engineering News (see FAS Newsletter, A-711). The second was G. Rossi Lomanitz whose contract at Fisk University was not renewed because of unanswered charges of past communist affiliations made before the HUAAC (See FAS memo A-729). These three cases raise a number of serious questions for scientists as well as other citizens: Do present communist sympathies or associations, even if established, represent sufficient grounds for refusing a teaching position in science? If such sympathies are relevant, how should they be established? Do past sympathies represent a similar basis for refusing teaching positions? The position taken by the FAS Administrative Committee, in opposing loyalty oaths and non-communist affidavits for AEC fellows, was that political views are in no way relevant to work in non-secret areas of science. Thus, without in any way supporting communist views or aims, it would seem that as a matter of policy the Federation should oppose consideration of political beliefs as a condition for holding university teaching jobs.

But because of the particular circumstances in each of these three cases, the Federation at the moment does not plan specific protests to be made in any of them, at least not protests which would demand reinstatement. However, the pattern is clear and alarming: Three scientists have lost their university jobs following charges of communist sympathies. If the trend continues, the FAS may have to establish broad policy decisions and plans for action on the general problem of scientific freedom. (R.R.B.)

FBI and the Climate of Opinion. As a result of the three dramatic "spy trials" (Coplon, Hiss, Communist leaders), the public has become aware of the tremendous role of the FBI in matters of concern to all citizens. In particular, the FBI files made public in the Coplon trial have caused more than a few gasps, but probably for the first time extensive doubt in the wisdom of the methods of the FBI has been expressed. Condon's violent attack and demand for an apology from J. Edgar Hoover undoubtedly started a lot of people thinking. Mr. Hoover made no reply, Attorney Gen. Tom Clark rushed back to Washington, and President Truman made a rather cool endorsement of Mr. Hoover in a press conference this week. Newspapers reported that Hoover had resigned, but this was denied by Clark and the President. Columnists and editorial writers have suggested everything from a "full field investigation" of the FBI to a revision of its standards for what to include in reports. The public is certainly not ready to discredit Mr. Hoover and the FBI, but it may demand some sort of an inquiry. The impression of people we have talked to is that the Condon-Hoover clash will remain dormant until after the Coplon trial, in order not to prejudice the results. What will follow is not clear.

Some observers hold the view that the spy and atom hysteria is about to decline. The House Un-American Activities Committee seems to have tempered its methods and abridged its aims (No scientists are now under subpoena, as far as we know, and no hearings will be held before June 24). Lloyd Paul Stryker, lawyer for Alger Hiss, seems to have discredited the government's star witness, Whittaker Chambers. In general, the public may be getting weary of lurid spy stories and unfounded charges of "mismangement." On June 16, Pres. Truman held a press conference at which he vowed to fire any member of the Executive Branch of the government who got hysterical over spy hunts. He said the best recommendation he could make was to re-read the history of the Alien-Sedition case of the late 18th century. When asked about this parallel, the President said that the country did not go to hell then and would not now.

To summarize, the situation appears to be improving slightly, but if this is true it is indeed the result of vigorous resistance on the part of those who deeply cherish our democratic ideals and are able to maintain some perspective. Any degree of relaxation at this time could be fatal, for the present state of affairs can be made the be-

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did not point out is that the country did not go to hell in the past precisely because of the hard fight which prevented it. (R.E.B.)

General Meeting of the FAS in Cambridge. A public meeting on "The Current Situation" was held on June 16th during the meetings of the American Physical Society, in Harvard's "new" Lecture Hall. The announced speaker, Dr. E. U. Condon, was forced to withdraw on the afternoon of the meeting. The meeting was nevertheless held and attended by about 150 persons. The topic was selected because it was impossible to predict which issues in these fluid times would be current on June 16. E. M. Purcell (Cambridge), the meeting chairman, outlined the situation, and Higinbotham (Brookhaven) and Wolfe (FAS Chairman) discussed at length some of the implications, and what the FAS was doing. Requirements of oaths and affidavits of fellowship holders, and especially its logical extension to other recipients of government aid, received major consideration.

The current example of this in the National Science Foundation Bill, then just reported to the House — was dismissed by the speakers and in the discussion that followed. Those expressing opinions endorsed the FAS's strong stand that loyalty oaths and affidavits were inappropriate for fellows working in non-secret fields, and dangerous because of what it can lead to. It was proposed from the floor that the meeting express itself on this subject; the Chairman urged instead that each person do so individually to his own Congressman.

The meeting arrangements were handled by the Cambridge chapter, including, among others, R. Williams, E. M. Purcell, and M. S. Livingston. (A.H.S.)

The Administrative Committee of the Federation met in Cambridge on June 16-17, 1949. Members present were Wolfe, Friedlander, Roberts, and Livingston. The Executive Secretariat was represented by Shapley. A preliminary session (with Higinbotham present) was held after the FAS general meeting to consider the action suggested by Grobstein regarding the National Science Foundation. The Committee approved a statement (A-732) strongly urging passage of the bill, but equally strongly calling for deletions of the section requiring an affidavit as one of the qualifications for fellowship holders. The Committee was especially disturbed by the introduction into the affidavit of the concept that "beliefs" were disqualifying. Instructions for immediate action were forthwith telephoned to Washington.

The Committee also discussed the aims and purposes of the Scientists' Committee on Loyalty Problems, an FAS Committee, and revision of its membership. It heartily endorsed the idea of an open letter to President Truman urging him to appoint a special commission to consider problems involving science and security. It approved with slight modification a draft of the letter by Grobstein, and decided it should be transmitted by the FAS, with names of individuals who concur. The Committee also noted that the idea had already been enthusiastically received by many prominent scientists. This proposal was considered an important positive contribution to counteract the present atmosphere of hysteria. The Committee approved immediate steps to invite others to concur, assigned Brookhaven the task of preparing a list, and the Exec. Secretariat to see to the rest of the not insignificant amount of work required to carry out the action.

The Committee also approved in substance a draft of a letter by Wolfe to TIME Magazine. In the letter it was stated that scientists should assume part of the blame for the AEC compromise on the fellowship issue. Ways and means of making known the results of SLEP's evaluation of AEC clearance procedures for provisional employees (applicants) were also discussed. The Committee authorized payment of travel expenses for committee members, the Secretariat, and individual members on special assignments (such as coming to determine the national office), provided that such expenses cannot be paid by other sources, such as local associations. The next meeting was scheduled for the New York area about August 1st. In the mean time, the Committee felt, the FAS should remain on the present emergency basis as long as necessary. It approved the working policy of the Exec. Secretariat that action now is more important than keeping down expenses. It expressed again the urgent need for new members and decided to discover the status of the membership committee tentatively assigned to Cornell at the last meeting. (A.H.S.)

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