

# I. F. Stone's Weekly

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101

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15 CENTS

## Patriotic Reflections on the Eve of A Foreign Invasion

One gets the impression, on plunging again into the over-heated atmosphere of Washington after a blissful two weeks away, that the United States is in a panic, on the verge of an invasion, in imminent peril from the expected arrival of a man named Khrushchev. Full page newspaper advertisements, speeches in Congress, letters to the editor, debate the best way of meeting the menace. Some would have us greet his arrival by staying home behind closed shutters. Others want to organize public meetings of protest. A retired admiral suggests a nation-wide day of prayer, perhaps to ask God to reward us righteous with a new ultimate weapon. Russian intelligence, studying the press clippings from America on the eve of the visit, may reasonably conclude that we Americans are a highly nervous people.

We hope Khrushchev will not be taken in by all this flattery. It implies that he is a foreign wizard in whose subversive wake our drug stores may begin to sell paper-backed editions of *Das Kapital* and our bewitched women's clubs to schedule lectures on dialectical materialism. We suspect that

the Russians would be behaving as neurotically as we are if they, too, enjoyed a free press. We can see a syndicated series by Molotov (like Truman's) warning against the danger of visits to the perfidious capitalists, and insinuating that Khrushchev (like Eisenhower) is about to relinquish Russia's most prized possession, perpetual cold war. We can visualize an opposition paper in Moscow demanding that Khrushchev agree to no relaxation of tension until Eisenhower has set free the captive Eskimos and restored Alaska's rightful place as the 49th State in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. We can hear a Soviet General warning that the exchange of visits must not beguile Russia into lowering its guard (and its Air Force expenditures) because America was still intent on spreading its philosophy of free enterprise to the whole world. We can even imagine the obliging Orthodox Patriarch urging a day of prayer for the peaceful conversion of the Americans to Marxism-Leninism. In short we believe that the great Russian people, freed from the shackles of despotism, could be as screwy as we are.

## *Urgent Bulletin: The No. 1 Task for Those Who Want Peace*

The key to world peace now lies in the question of nuclear testing. Both sides are reconciled to a deadlock over Germany, but a decision on nuclear testing cannot be avoided. The one-year moratorium announced by the U. S. expires Oct. 31, and the AEC, the Pentagon, the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, and a powerful armaments lobby are all pressing for resumption of testing. Either the world moves forward to an agreement in this crucial area, paving the way for further progress on disarmament, or slips back to increased tension and suspicion. This question is the crossroads from which mankind moves either toward war or peace, and now—as the Oct. 31 deadline approaches—is the time for meetings all over the country to alert the public.

The best discussion of where the suspended nuclear talks stand may be found in an able speech Humphrey delivered in the Senate August 18 which the *New York Times* and most papers ignored. It was answered next day by Bennett (*R. Utah*), one-time president of the National Association of Manufacturers, in a speech which deserves to be read for its suffocating self-righteousness and its repetition of the argument that we need testing to develop cleaner and more humane bombs.

The basic facts are these. We can detect all atmospheric tests from afar. Underground tests are of limited usefulness and outer space tests are still in the realm of Buck Rogers. The armed forces want resumption of atmospheric testing because only testing in the open can show the military effects of

new weapons. They have sold the Joint Atomic Energy Committee on negotiating an agreement to limit rather than to stop testing. But negotiations to limit tests can also be dragged out for years. In the meantime the military hope to go on testing. Limitation of tests implies that mankind's only concern is to keep fallout poisons within tolerable limits. Equally important, however, is to stop tests as a brake on a nuclear arms race.

The basic issues between East and West are now quantitative. What is to be the ratio of foreign to native inspectors in the seismic "listening" posts to be set up under any agreement? How many veto-free inspections are to be allowed? The Humphrey speech revealed that the AEC crowd is talking of 366 inspections a year, or one a day, in the Soviet Union and only a slightly lower number in the U. S. This idea of inspectors digging deep holes for suspected underground detonations every day of the week in both countries is pure Mad Hatter. Unfortunately the Administration, according to Humphrey, has yet to work out a position on this question of how many veto-free inspections; the AEC and the Pentagon are campaigning against any agreement whatever.

In the meantime we call attention to unnoticed passages in the Draper report on military security which recommend the supply of nuclear weapons minus warheads not only to NATO powers but "to certain other selected countries" (p. 34) and modern weapons priority equal to NATO's for the Far East (p. 53). Are Chiang and Rhee next in line for nuclear arms?

## **Short-Lived Isotopes and Carbon-14 Make Resumed Testing More Dangerous Than It Calculates**

### **Some Major Questions Evaded in the Holifield Committee Report on Fallout**

The first question on which Congress and the public had a right to look to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy for an answer was whether to take responsibility for monitoring the fallout danger from the Atomic Energy Commission and give it to some such agency as the Public Health Service which is not involved in weapons testing.

Several bills proposing steps of this kind are now before Congress, but the Joint Committee report on its fallout hearings evades this question: ". . . it is not the intent of the (Holifield) subcommittee," the report says "to make recommendations at this time as to where such responsibilities should lie."

#### **Joins the White House in Buck-Passing**

The report complains that the fallout monitoring program "as a whole has not received the high level administrative support and impetus which it needs and merits." But in this respect the Joint Committee is as remiss as the Administration. Last March 26 a National Advisory Committee on Radiation set up by the Surgeon General recommended that responsibility for watching fallout be given the Public Health Service. The White House dodged the issue by passing it to the Budget Bureau. The Joint Committee dodges the issue, too.

The second question on which the country had a right to expect answers was on radioactive "hot spots," a subject the AEC evades because these "hot spots" upset the reassuring global averages in which the AEC prefers to deal. These "hot spots" are of two kinds. One are in the bone. Swedish scientists (see this *Weekly* last May 4) discovered that at certain points the amount of strontium 90 may vary by sixty-fold from the average. Since cancer is a cellular disease, the high concentrations at such points may be enough to set its mysterious morbidities in motion. This discovery showed that safe limits based on average concentrations in the bone may prove delusive. No reference was made to these "hot spots" in the report.

The other type of "hot spot" is geographical. There are areas, as in the Dakotas and Minnesota, where the amount of strontium 90 in milk and wheat has reached proportions alarmingly above national averages.

A footnote on page six of the report discloses that the AEC ignored an invitation from the committee to discuss this at the hearings last May. But the Joint Committee was as bad as the AEC. None of the independent scientists who have been working in these "hot spot" areas was invited to testify and the final report is disingenuous when it discusses this question.

The report says "there is no reason to believe that the existence of such 'hot spots' at currently known levels of radioactivity constitute an *overt* hazard to individuals." The word "overt," which we italicized, is tricky.

#### **Prize Double-Talk**

The prize double-talk was the report's next statement which said, "the trend of testimony appeared to indicate that local 'hot spots' have no special significance to individuals so long as criteria are used which have meaning only in terms of a large population." This sentence seems to cancel itself out.

The whole point about "hot spots" is that criteria "which have meaning only in terms of a large population" are by definition no guide to the danger which may exist to individuals in a North Dakota town which is getting several times as much strontium 90 as the national average.

It is in this feeble spirit that the report tackles the key problem of how a resumption of testing would affect fallout. The report admits there is danger if testing is resumed but makes it sound distant and theoretical. It estimates that if testing resumed for 40 years at the level of the past five years, "the predicted average concentration in bone will be about 48 strontium units. This is close enough to the maximum permissible body burden of 67 strontium units recommended by the International Commission on Radiological Protection to suggest that a hazard to the world's population could result during this period."

#### **Greater Danger for the Orient**

This is putting it very conservatively. The 48 strontium unit average is for the U. S. The world northern hemisphere average would be 64. The average in the Orient, where rice rather than milk is a staple of diet, would be 80 strontium units, well above the 67 fixed as a safe population limit by the ICRP.

In addition, as pre-publication objections to the report pointed out (page 31), these estimated doses "do not provide for sources of radiation other than strontium 90 and cesium 37. This is not considered too significant if no more large-scale atmospheric tests are conducted. However, under a program of continued testing, the short-lived isotopes become much more important as contributors to the yearly radiation exposure levels."

The discussion on pages 24 and 25 of the report indicates, for example, that the short-lived isotope Sr 89 may turn out to provide a dose comparable to that of Sr 90 if testing resumes. There are other short lived isotopes such as Iodine-131 which also loom up as new health hazards.

#### **Linus Pauling Was Right**

To these fission poisons must be added the effects of carbon 14. Dr. Linus Pauling's warnings about carbon-14, which were dismissed as alarmist a year ago, are now being treated very seriously. Though Dr. Pauling was not invited to testify (his world-wide campaign against testing has made him persona non grata with the AEC and the Joint Committee), three pages in the fallout report are devoted to Carbon-14.

It appears from papers submitted for the record that (1) "the long term genetic and somatic effects" of carbon 14 may be as great as all the radioactive fission products combined and (2) so-called "clean" (fusion) weapons produce about the same amount of carbon 14 as so-called "dirty" (fission) weapons.

No full evaluation of the fallout report is possible until the printed record is available, which may not be for several weeks. But a close reading of the report itself indicates that resumption of testing would create a more immediate danger than the committee's calculations indicate. The report also shows what a toothless old watchdog the Joint Committee has become.

## Some Antidotes From England to the Official Propaganda Campaign in Our Press

### Manchester Guardian Protests False Version of Laos Crisis by U.S. Embassy

Propaganda from Washington and Laos is building up a false picture of events in that far country. The facts are that though we talk a great deal about believing in free elections, we balked at them in Indochina. The U. S. used its influence to prevent the free elections promised in Vietnam by the Geneva agreements, and when free elections were held in Laos we used our influence to oust the freely elected government and to put in a new one which last January suspended constitutional guarantees altogether and resumed the political warfare the Geneva agreements were supposed to have ended. Though Laos was to be a neutral state, it is the one country where (1) the U. S. pays the whole bill for the native army and (2) has never been able to find out exactly how many soldiers it subsidizes. Much of our military aid has been siphoned off, as the recent Porter Hardy subcommittee report on Laos showed, into the pockets of a little clique of Laotian smoothies. Laotian difficulties are being utilized here to poison the atmosphere for the Khrushchev visit. We present some antidotes from the British press to the overblown reports in ours, beginning with an unusual editorial the Manchester Guardian published on August 11 protesting falsification of the facts by the U. S. Embassy. An excerpt from the editorial What Really Happened, follows—

"The information office of the U. S. Embassy in London has sent to newspapers what it calls a 'backgrounder' on the events in Laos. It gives a fair summary of the agreement in 1957 between the Royal Laotian Government and the quasi-Communist Pathet Lao forces; the political clauses, as it points out, provided for a coalition Government with two Pathet Lao leaders in it, and for elections for 20 new seats in the Assembly. The 'backgrounder' continues:

The Neo Lao party won nine seats in the election, held in May of 1958. The coalition Government containing the two Pathet Lao members resigned, an anti-Communist Government came into office, and the Pathet Lao Ministers were dropped from the Cabinet. In August, 1958, the Canadian and Indian delegations on the International Control Commission agreed to adjourn the commission after accepting the 1957 arrangements, the settlement called for in the Geneva agreements. . . . This is disingenuous, to say the least. It suggests surely that

### British Press Gives Very Different Picture of That War "Raging" in Laos

"Let us clear up this nonsense about a civil war in Laos. There is none. Any war going on is political—and that is real enough. But not a shot has been fired by the Government troops or the Communist rebels for 10 days. . . . The toughest battle being fought in Laos today is the one I am waging to capture facts.

"Government casualty figures vary between 30 and 300—it depends which spokesman you see and at what time. Totals that look reliable and solid at 11 a. m. have vanished like a jungle vapour and reshaped themselves by mid-day.

"When the Laos propaganda machine starts whirring, Samneua, a northern township of 2500, begins to sound like Dienbienphu (France's last stand in Indo-China). But Samneua is two days' march from where the last rebel raids were reported."

—*Dispatch from Vientiane by a reporter sent to the scene by the London Daily Express, August 12.*

"A senior French officer who is in close and frequent con-

### Two Views of How the Trouble Started

"The U. S. said the conflict erupted when Communist dissidents in the northern provinces balked at integration into the Government, as agreed to last year. The insurgents then escaped into Communist Vietnam . . . regrouped their forces and returned to invade Laos."

—*New York Times, Review of the News, Aug. 23.*

"It is less than two years since the Pathet Lao, 6,000 hard-fighting Communist guerrillas, came marching defiantly out of the jungles of Northern Laos to 'lay down their arms'. . . . Those 6,000 men . . . it had been uneasily agreed, should be 'integrated' into the Royal Laotian Army.

"Gen. Ouane Rattinkoun, ruthless Chief of Staff of the Royal Army, herded the battalions of hand-picked terrorists into two 'protective camps' and for more than a year blandly looked the other way whenever anyone naively recalled the pledge of 'integration' . . . the disarmed guerrillas were held in what were virtually concentration camps . . . one of the two detained battalions managed to escape, and these fanatics are undoubtedly the hard core of the current skirmishing; it is as yet nothing more." —*London Sunday Times, Aug. 16.*

the Government changed as a result of the elections, and that the Commission accepted the change. What happened was this. The Neo Lao Hakxat (Pathet Lao functioning as a political party) together with a left wing ally called the Santi-phab party, won 13 out of the 21 seats contested. This was taken, both in Laos and in Washington, as a bad sign for the general elections that were to have been held this year, and an indication that unless something was done Laos might go the way of Czechoslovakia. However, the coalition government did not resign until July 22, and the new anti-Communist Government took office in August. As for the international commission, it adjourned on July 19 (not August)—that is, before the change of government. At that time, since elections had been held and Pathet Lao Ministers were in the Cabinet, the Laotian Government could reasonably argue that the agreements had been carried out. *But no sooner had the commission gone than the situation was radically altered.*" (Italics added).

tact with the Royal Laotian Army today discounted reports of large Communist forces in Northern Laos and declared the problem there would be solved by political, not by military action. The officer, who has returned from a liaison mission to Sam Neua province, said that there were no Communist units in the field larger than a platoon, and that there were few even of this strength.

"Most of the attacks on army posts, he said, had been carried out by groups of 10 to 15 men armed with old weapons. In the initial panic and confusion several posts had been abandoned unnecessarily by Government troops, who had fled with their wives and children to Sam Neua. Since then, he said, the royal Government had been doing a certain amount of 'face-saving.'

"This officer describes the rebels as 'disgruntled people' who were acting with political motives but who did not add up to significant military forces. There was no real evidence that their arms had recently entered the country."

—*London Times, Aug. 12, dispatch from Vientiane.*

## State Labor Federation Convention Attacks House Committee as Un-American

### Wide Protest Forces Walter to Call Off Calif. Teacher Hearings

California has just demonstrated that public opinion can stop the House Un-American Activities Committee despite its recent victory in the Supreme Court. In the wake of the Barenblatt decision which seemed to give it a free hand, especially in dealing with teachers, the Committee has been forced to call off its teacher hearings in California.

The latest blow, at the State Convention (Aug. 13) of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, was passage of a resolution protesting the teacher inquisition and declaring the Committee "one of the greatest violators of civil liberties." Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Bee* Newspapers (Sacramento, Fresno and Modesto), and the State's Methodist and Episcopal Churches had all joined in protest. Only California's liberal Congressmen remained silent.

#### A Tricky One-Sided Release

Chairman Walter seized on a letter from Arthur F. Corey, state executive secretary of the right-wing anti-Communist California Teachers Association (rival of the more militant but weaker A.F.L. teachers union in California) to cover his retreat. Walter announced the calling off of the hearings August 21 in releasing a letter to Corey welcoming a suggestion that the Committee hand over the names of suspects to local school boards for action under the State's Dilworth Act. Corey's letter was withheld and Walter's reply gave the impression that Corey was in sympathy with him.

Corey denied this when reached by telephone in California and supplied the text of his letter by airmail to the *Weekly*. The text showed Corey did not ask Walter to call off the California hearings but to pass on the names of suspects to local school boards for private hearings under the Dilworth act and then to excuse from appearance before the Committee those teachers who had answered the questions of the local boards.

At the same time Corey did protest "the damage already threatened to individual rights" by the advance publicity, questioned whether the proposed hearings "have any recognizable relationship to legislation" and deplored the "issuance

#### Another Security Case Victory

Mrs. Rachel M. Brawner, the mother of nine children, had been a short order cook for six and a half years in the cafeteria at the Naval Gun Factory here in Washington. In November, 1956, she was suddenly excluded from the premises on security grounds. No one told either her or the cafeteria firm which employed her what the security requirements were, or how she failed to meet them. The Cafeteria and Restaurant Workers Union brought suit in Mrs. Brawner's behalf. District Judge Edward M. Curran issued a summary judgment dismissing the complaint against the employer on the ground that there was no breach of contract since the Navy had blocked compliance.

But the U. S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia decided August 21 that while Judge Curran was right in dismissing the suit against the employer, he was wrong in dismissing her claim against the government. Judge Edgerton (with Fahy concurring and Danaher dissenting) held on the authority of the Supreme Court's recent decision in the Greene case that Mrs. Brawner could not be denied access to her place of employment on security grounds without a hearing.

of alarmist public statements" by the Committee.

Corey's letter said the disloyal teacher was "a rarity" and "even the Dilworth Act constituted unnecessary legislation. However," he continued, "since these laws are on the statute books, they provide one means by which the damaging effects of the Committee's past course of action can be minimized." Corey's letter was dated the 18th—Walter's reply, calling off the hearings altogether, incorrectly put the date back to the 17th, perhaps to hide the speed with which he seized on it for a climb-down.

The Southern California branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, which had sued to enjoin the hearings, moved at once to amend its petition and bar the Committee from passing on the names of teachers to school boards. Walter's letter says mysteriously that in most cases the Committee can only transmit names since to pass on specific evidence to the school board, even in confidence, would jeopardize "sources of information or security procedures."

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