Still Using Faceless Informers, P. 3

Exclusive: Is Underground Testing As Harmless As We Have Been Led to Believe? See Page 2

I. F. Stone's Weekly

VOL. VII, NO. 2 JANUARY 12, 1959 WASHINGTON, D. C. 15 CENTS

Another Underground Triumph for Dr. Teller?

We hope the scientific community will demand that the White House reveal full details about the seismic study on which its alarming but vague announcement about underground nuclear testing rests. Who were the seismologists on the panel referred to in the White House statement? Why were their names not made public? Were they agreed on the conclusions which promise to make test cessation more difficult? Was there a formal report? Did some members dissent? The two days of executive hearings scheduled by the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy for January 12 and 13 are to include testimony, according to the advance release, from "representatives of the panel." Will these be representatives of all points of view? Or only of those on which the Administration relies? Despite the heavy blanket of secrecy, informed scientific circles in the capital report that there were differences of opinion on the panel. Why all the secrecy, anyway, when it was agreed at Geneva that in the future there would be full publicity about methods for detecting nuclear tests? Why can't this new data be released?

Is Successful Negotiation Feared?

There is something fishy about the timing and the content of the White House announcement. Is this another underground triumph for Dr. Teller? A year ago the AEC's scientists were telling us falsely that underground tests could not be detected at all beyond a few hundred miles. Now they tell us that it is more difficult to detect them than the experts at Geneva thought. Are they jumping to conclusions they have long sought in order to block a test cessation they have always opposed? Did they catch the President in one of those flashes of angry impulse which appear like summer lightning in the torpid climate of the Eisenhower regime? Was there a backlash of anger over Berlin or a sudden flare-up of presidential activity because of the new Soviet rocket? Did some fear Mikoyan might have come bearing gifts—perhaps a major Soviet concession on inspection? That such a concession is possible was indicated in the second installment of the notable account published by the London *Observer* (Dec. 21 and Dec. 28) of Krushchev's interview with Philip Noel-Baker, Britain's veteran fighter for disarmament. "Repeatedly he," i.e. Krushchev, the report of the interview says, "emphasized that his Government still hoped eventually to negotiate a comprehensive settlement, and an all-round disarmament agreement with the West. Then, he would even accept an effective international inspectorate in Soviet installations to prevent the manufacture or concealment of nuclear weapons." Did reports of this kind alarm the bitter end opponents of an agreement?

Twice before the Eisenhower Administration has met major Soviet concessions with a sudden change of policy to avoid agreement. One occasion, which Noel-Baker calls "The Moment of Hope" in his indispensable book on "The Arms Race," came on May 10, 1955, when the Russians gave in and agreed to the Anglo-French memorandum linking reduction in conventional arms with reduction in nuclear. The Russians agreed to the suggested military manpower ceilings of between one and one and a half million men, thus meeting the argument that we could not afford to give up nuclear weapons because of their superiority in conventional armies. This Russian reversal was at first welcomed but then after a silence of months the West dropped the whole idea, substituting the aerial inspection razzle-dazzle Nelson Rockefeller worked out for Eisenhower's presentation at the Geneva summit conference. The second occasion when our government shifted policy just as agreement seemed possible came in the spring of 1957 when Stassen had persuaded the Russians—and Eisenhower—to enter into a test cessation agreement apart from other issues. It was then that Dr. Teller was dramatically rushed to the White House by Admiral Strauss to plead for another five years of testing to perfect a "clean" bomb.

Planning to Hear Only One Side?

The only witnesses named in the Joint Committee's announcement of its executive hearings this week are Dr. Teller and three other AEC-Pentagon executives, all of them opposed to a test cessation agreement even before this new discovery that detection of underground tests may be more difficult than hitherto supposed. They are Gen. Herbert B. Loper, assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Atomic Energy; Brig. Gen. Alfred D. Starbird, director of the Division of Military Applications of the Atomic Energy Commission, and Dr. Norris Bradbury, director of the Los Alamos Laboratory. All four have professional stakes in the continued testing and development of nuclear weapons. While the White House announcement is coached purely in terms of new scientific observations on the difficulty of detecting tests, the Joint Committee says it will hear testimony "on the status of the Geneva negotiations *and the effects of a test ban on the nuclear weapons program.*" (Italics added). This is to reopen the whole subject mid-way in the negotiations and to give opponents of any agreement a chance to speak in private, free from rebuttal by other scientists.

Some New Revelations

Now we want to turn to another aspect of this question and call attention to certain matters which have so far escaped public attention. Dr. Teller, former AEC Commissioner Murray, consultant to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy;

(*Continued on Page Two*)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Subsoil Nuclear Blasts May Not Be As Safe as Dr. Teller Would Like Us to Believe

The Evidence Indicates Two Underground Tests Were Not "Contained"

(*Continued from Page One*)

and Senator Gore of Tennessee, a member of the Committee whom Lyndon Johnson named as the Senate's observer at the Geneva talks on testing, all favor (Dr. Teller as a second line of defense) continuation of testing underground. The new tack may be to settle for underground testing if world public opinion is too strong to allow for continued aerial testing with its attendant atmospheric pollution.

The Basic Assumption May Not Be True

But all this depends on the assumption that testing can be contained harmlessly underground without attendant atmospheric or ground-water contamination. The first official Livermore Laboratory report (UCRL 5124) on the underground nuclear detonation "Rainier" of September 19, 1957, claimed it had been contained "within a radius of about 60 feet," that "the likelihood of ground-water contamination is believed to be zero" and finally that "because of the effectiveness of containment and the negligible seismic effects, it was clear that detonation, even at much larger magnitudes, could be safely fired in many locations." This *Weekly* last year forced the AEC to admit that the seismic effects were not "negligible" and that seismic detection, far from being confined to a radius of some 200 miles, had occurred 2300 miles north in Alaska and some 1200 miles east in Arkansas. We now want to show that "the effectiveness of containment" is also open to question.

A New Report Which Has Gone Unnoticed

We want to call the attention of the scientific community to a more recent but unnoticed report by the Livermore Laboratory on that first underground explosion (UCRL 5281). It is obtainable through the Office of Technical Services at the Department of Commerce. It is called "Temperatures and Pressures Associated With the Cavity Produced by The Rainier Event." This shows that the Rainier explosion was not contained underground "within a radius of about 60 feet" but vented underground through one or more major fractures in the earth. "None of these fractures communicated with the surface" so there was no escape of residual radioactivity to the atmosphere. The report does not disclose how far the noxious gases escaped underground through these fissures nor does it discuss the problem of contaminating underground water sources by such underground "accidents." But it is clear that Livermore Laboratory in its original report and Dr. Teller in his public pronouncements overstated the extent to which one could be sure of safely "containing" underground explosions.

Secondly we want to call attention to the circumstances surrounding the bigger 20-kiloton underground test, "Blanca," at the same site in Nevada on October 30, the final explosion of last Fall's series. Gladwin Hill's dispatch in the *New York Times* next day was written in the same vein of AEC ballyhoo as his deceptive account in 1957 of the first underground test to which we called attention last year. Mr. Hill said the tunnel blast "brought only a fleeting jar to observers four miles away," that "the holocaust of radiation and the explosive force of 20,000 tons of TNT were *almost entirely* [our italics] bottled up within the mountain" and that "the only visual evidence was a thick column of dust" which "surged slowly up from the mountainside" and "was mostly dissipated within ten minutes." He went on dithyrambically to say that this new test "indicated an incalculable scope for pursuing weapons tests free of the radiation hazards that have alarmed the world" and that "on the peaceful side" it marked "a major step toward the underground testing of immensely more powerful explosions involving hydrogen bombs." Then he went on to describe how "The explosion's force was bottled up by curving the inner end of the tunnel back on itself, like the crook of a cane, during construction. The explosion caved in the tunnel ahead of the chamber where it occurred, thus 'corking' its own force."

The "Cork" Didn't Stay Put

But there seems to be some doubt about the "corking." The Associated Press dispatch from the scene (see the *San Francisco Chronicle,* Oct. 31) spoke of an underground blast "that ripped a huge hole in the mesa at the Nevada test site and triggered a fallout scare in the Los Angeles area." The AP story said "The charge fired at 7 a. m. rent the calm of a desert sunrise with a tremendous explosion that sent a 500-foot wide column of debris soaring 1,000 feet above the mesa." It went to to report that "newsmen 4½ miles away from the 'Blanca' test first felt a jolting earthquake-like shock, then saw the great fountain of rock and sand rise majestically upward from a point of the mesa's slope directly above the blast chamber. Great rocks along the mesa's rim above the yucca flat were dislodged and thundered downward. A jet pilot flying overhead said the entire mesa shook, then was dimmed by rising dust."

The AEC Makes An Admission

Someone at the *New York Times* seems to have been puzzled by the differences between these accounts and directed an inquiry to the AEC. The Late City Edition, Oct. 31 carried a short item from Washington which shows that this elicited an interesting admission:

"Washington, Oct. 30—The underground atomic explosion in Nevada today broke through the surface 'slightly', Atomic Energy Commission sources said tonight. This statement apparently explained the thick column of dust near the entrance of the shaft in which the device was exploded. A BREAK-THROUGH HAD NOT BEEN EXPECTED. [Our emphasis—IFS] Commission sources said that this development had not been evaluated."

Will some member of the Joint Committee ask the AEC at this week's secret hearings about that unexpected breakthrough? The evidence shows (1) that the first small 1.7 kiloton shot was not "contained" as originally thought but that noxious gases vented underground, and (2) that the first "Hiroshima" size underground test, "Blanca" burst a hole in the side of the mesa. Did it carry radioactivity with it? Did it add to the heavy fallout alarming Los Angeles at the time? If unexpected break-throughs can occur with a mere 20-kiloton explosion, can we trust the optimistic forecasts about underground hydrogen bomb blasts measurable in megatons, i.e. 1,000 kilotons? Are underground tests as safe and containable as we have been led to suppose?

Reprints of this Issue Available in Lots of 100 at 3c Each — Smaller Quantities 5c

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

2,000,000 U. S. Employes and 3,000,000 Defense Workers Still Subjected to McCarthyism

The Government Beats A Cowardly Retreat on the Faceless Informer Issue

Government employes have been trying for ten years to get the Supreme Court to decide whether in loyalty cases the government could use "faceless informers", i.e. unidentified accusers not subject to confrontation and cross-examination. The first test, the Dorothy Bailey case, began in July, 1948, but when it finally reached our highest tribunal in 1951, the Court split 4-4 and the issue was left unresolved.

When the next appeal, the Peters case, reached the Court in 1955 (after the then Solicitor General, now Circuit Court Judge, Simon Sobeloff refused as a matter of conscience to sign the government's brief defending faceless informers), a majority could only be mustered for deciding the case on a minor issue. Over the protest of Justices Black and Douglas, the Court evaded the question of anonymous accusation.

Later that year, when the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in California held that the Coast Guard could not bar seamen from employment on undisclosed security charges—the first Circuit Court decision against faceless informers—the government decided not to appeal even at the cost of leaving the law uncertain. Now, on the verge of a new test in the Charles Allen Taylor case, the government has suddenly beat another cowardly retreat, ordering the victim cleared and asking the Court to dismiss the appeal as moot.

Police State Practice

Mr. Taylor's counsel, Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., and Harold A. Cranefield, have announced their intention to fight nonetheless for a decision. The case is not really moot by any common sense standard so long as the blot remains on Mr. Taylor's reputation and so long as 2,000,000 Federal employes and more than 3,000,000 persons employed on Defense Department contracts remain subject to such procedures.

Mr. Taylor was a tool maker at Bell Aircraft in Buffalo from 1941 until 1956 when he was suddenly deprived of his clearance and discharged from his job on a charge of having been a member of the Communist Party 13 or 14 years earlier. As in the Bailey case, everything on the record in the ensuing hearings was in Mr. Taylor's favor; his sworn denials were supported by 11 witnesses.

The government presented no witnesses against him. Instead it read into the record anonymous synopses of informer reports, one of which indicated considerable confusion since it accused Mr. Taylor of being a member of the Trotzkyist Socialist Workers Party when he is charged with being a Communist. The Hearing Board, according to the petition to the Supreme Court, "refused to indicate whether it had ever examined the confidential informants, what if anything it knew about their past criminal or other records, what degree of hearsay was involved." Such procedures put the burden of proof on the accused, requiring him to prove a negative. This is police state practice.

A Sudden Reversal

As recently as October 13, the Industrial Personnel Security Review Board of the Defense Department not only upheld the charges against Mr. Taylor but accused him of perjury. But when the Supreme Court took the rather unusual step of allowing the Taylor case to be appealed directly from the District Court, skipping the Court of Appeals, the government became alarmed. On January 2, his counsel, Mr. Rauh, received a letter from A. Taylor Port, director of the Security Review Office, saying that Secretary of Defense Neil H. McElroy had decided that Mr. Taylor's clearance for access to secret information had suddenly been found to be "in the national interest."

There was no apology, no offer of a public statement clearing Mr. Taylor, no retraction of the perjury charge, and of course no promise to recompense him for the cost and agony of almost two and a half years of litigation. Nor was there any promise to change the hearing procedures. One suspects that "the national interest" as reinterpreted by the Defense Department is its own bureaucratic interest in avoiding a possible Supreme Court defeat. To declare the case moot would be to let official trickery elude justice.

Correction and Apology

In the first line on page one last week, the word "veto" turned up as "vote," painfully depriving the sentence of sense. It should have read, "A minority of Southerners can exercise a veto. . . ."

Like Fighting A Fog

If the Taylor appeal is dismissed as moot, the Court will still have before it the companion case of William L. Greene, which also tests Defense Dept. security procedures. The government may hope it can evade the faceless informer issue in that one. Mr. Greene's tragedy is spelled out in an American Civil Liberties Union brief filed on his behalf.

Mr. Greene's career was wrecked in 1953 by withdrawal of clearance on security charges. He had been making $18,000 a year plus bonuses; he was quickly reduced to minor jobs at low pay under a cloud of suspicion. He, too, was denied the right to confront accusers, to see the actual findings of the Hearings Board against him, or even to read the report by FBI men on his own interrogation.

But Mr. Greene is not accused of being a Communist, a charge at least open to proof or disproof. He fights a typical McCarthyite miasma: that he associated with alleged Communists; that he was a member of the Washington Bookshop; that his ex-wife was a Communist; and that he put money in a good music station allegedly controlled by pro-Communists. Mr. Greene does not "deny" these "charges"; he merely asserts that he joined the bookshop for discounts, that he did not know his ex-wife was a Communist, and that he invested in the station solely because he liked good music.

The government may hope to evade the anonymous informer issue by claiming that what is involved in the Greene case is the evaluation of political reliability, on which it should be allowed to act without interference by the courts. The case shows that, though McCarthy is dead, McCarthyism is still being practiced by the U. S. government. How much longer will the Supreme Court evade the issue? The issue revolves around what Judge Edgerton, dissenting nine years ago in the Bailey case, called "the ominous theory that the right of fair trial ends where defense of security begins."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In Politics as in Supermarkets, There Are Lessons Here for Old Bolsheviks

One of the Sights on Capitol Hill That Mikoyan May Have Missed

We're glad Mikoyan saw the Jefferson chandelier and the Dolly Madison mirror in Nixon's office, but we're sorry he missed other sights on Capitol Hill which would have taken some of the strangeness from the scene and made our visitor feel more at home.

An example was the revolt of the liberal Democrats against the House Rules Committee which Speaker Rayburn put down with an efficiency Mikoyan might not have believed possible in our looser form of government.

It is a pity Mikoyan wasn't outside the Speaker's office when the half dozen leaders of the liberal revolt arrived, with that anxious air of uncertainty he himself must have seen and felt in the Kremlin on many occasions.

The Self-Service Principle in Politics

Mikoyan would have been surprised to see that such matters can be handled with the slick dispatch he admires in our supermarkets and automats—and on the same mechanized principle that the customer serves himself.

Only one member of the delegation, Chet Holifield of California, was allowed into the Speaker's office—the others had to wait outside—and when Holifield emerged he had to wrap up his own package.

It wasn't much. The delegation was there on behalf of some 150 new liberal Congressmen who didn't want the legislation they had promised their constituents bottled up in the Rules committee. Rayburn did not bother to issue a statement of his own. All the rebels had to take away with them and give the press was a statement by Holifield *saying that Rayburn had said* he wouldn't let any essential legislation be bottled up. Rayburn had not only rejected their demand for re-imposition of the old 21-day rule but refused to commit himself on any of the other parliamentary devices for curbing the Rules committee.

Our Own Cult of Personality

All this was larded over in the Holifield statement with thickly spread flattery, of a kind that Mikoyan must remember from the Cult of Personality era, about what a wonderful fellow the Speaker was—and *so* kind to liberals: he may have barked a little but he didn't bite.

And so the Great Liberal Democratic Revolt of 1959 in the wake of the Liberal Sweep in the elections of 1958 was ended peacefully, and in the good old democratic tradition, with a count of heads, i.e. Rayburn's head. And despite his promise to keep an eye on the Rules committee, there were no hard feelings. The papers a few days later carried pictures of Rayburn with Chairman Smith of Rules and Chairman Mills of Ways and Means and all three were smiling.

Somebody might explain to Mikoyan that these three men are in the innermost circle of the little Politbureau that runs the House of Representatives. A full explanation might do much to rid our visitor of irrational fears about free elections and two-party systems. He could be shown that we have developed techniques for making them as manageable as the cruder one-party dictatorship.

Levers Not to Be Found in Polling Booths

The Soviet system isn't the only one in which a pyramided structure and wheels within wheels enable a select few to make the real decisions. Fewer than half a dozen men in the House of Representatives wield levers far more powerful than those which voters are allowed to pull in their voting booths.

Rayburn, Smith, Mills and Cannon of Appropriations can easily cut down to size those notions about civil rights and more money for slum clearance, schools and social welfare voters thought they were voting for last November.

At home, campaigning, their Representatives were all lion-hearted fellows. But once they get here they soon learn they must speak softly. The way to get ahead in the House is to curry favor with the inner clique. "Revolts" are allowed, to keep the scene livelier, but only if the rebels let the leadership understand they didn't really mean it.

None of this is in the Constitution, of course, but Mikoyan will recall that there was nothing in Stalin's Constitution, either, about Stalinism.

The Filibuster Rule Fight Began at Press Time—We Report on It Next Week

I. F. Stone's Weekly, 5618 Nebraska Ave., N. W. Washington 15, D. C.

Please renew (or enter) my sub for the enclosed $5:*

Name .....

Street .....

City .....**Zone**.....**State**.....

Enter gift sub for $2 (6 mos.) or $4 (1 yr.) additional:

1/12/59

(To) Name .....

Street .....

City .....**Zone**.....**State**.....

Shall we send gift announcement? Yes ☐ No ☐

I. F. Stone's Weekly

5618 Nebraska Ave., N. W.

Washington 15, D. C.

NEWSPAPER

Entered as Second Class Mail Matter Washington, D. C. Post Office

I. F. Stone's Weekly. Entered as Second Class Matter at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Post-dated Mondays but published every Thursday except the last two Thursdays of August and December at 5618 Nebraska Ave., N. W., Washington 15, D. C. An independent weekly published and edited by I. F. Stone; Circulation Manager, Esther M. Stone. Subscription: $5 in the U. S.; $6 in Canada; $10 elsewhere. Air Mail rates: $15 to Europe; $20 to Israel, Asia and Africa.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED