

letters

correct, and his comment is welcome for the clarification it brings.

As to the second point, see the article "La Grande Synthèse" by Max Born in the Festschrift *Louis de Broglie, Physicien et Penseur*, Michel (Paris) 1953. On page 165 Born says: "Ce fut Einstein, probablement en 1925, qui a attiré mon attention sur la thèse de Louis de Broglie, en me disant quelque chose comme ceci: 'Lisez-la, bein qu'elle puisse paraître folle [it looks crazy], elle est tout à fait solide.'" The word "folle" [crazy] is here a high compliment, and not at all a denigration of de Broglie's idea. In the wording of my article I had intended to convey this. I am grateful to Bacry for helping to clarify the point.

BANESH HOFFMANN
Queens College
Flushing, New York

5/9/79

Nuclear weapons disposal

We are all familiar with the catastrophe that would befall mankind should the super-powers unleash nuclear weapons on each other. The results are aptly described by the word "overkill." Less catastrophic, but still serious, are the dangers of nuclear power reactors: core meltdown, disposal of radioactive wastes, and chronic effects of exposure to radiation, to name a few. Because of these threats to mankind, some concerned individuals are calling for an end to both nuclear power reactors and nuclear weapons.

I am sure most people agree with the need for multilateral nuclear arms limitation, and eventual reduction, and hope that such treaties will be achieved in the near future. Indeed, the survival of mankind may depend on such treaties.

But, after the treaties, how do you destroy the weapons? Although I am neither an expert on nuclear weapons nor nuclear fuel cycle technology, it seems to me that nuclear weapons can only be effectively and permanently destroyed by converting their fissionable material into reactor fuel and "burning" it within the core of a reactor.

This leaves the opponents of nuclear power in a serious dilemma, for by opposing reactors, they are choosing to keep weapons, which will last for at least several half-lives of the uranium or plutonium of which they are made. While long-term management of nuclear "wastes" is cited as a reason to oppose nuclear power, the management of these "wastes" is insignificant compared with the long-term management of weapons and weapons-grade material.

Our grandchildren and their grandchildren will have to manage one or the other, or both. Personally, I hope they

are managing power reactor "wastes" and eliminating nuclear weapons by converting them into useful power.

RICHARD J. McDONALD
University of California
Davis, California

4/17/79

Birzeit University

I have noted in the March issue (page 130) that Birzeit University located on the West Bank is again advertising for a physicist to come teach for them. This is to warn my colleagues that there is a lot that one should know about that deal before going. I was there for the 1975-76 academic year, and I would be happy to tell any prospective employee exactly what the story is.

It may be of general interest to report that while I was there, at about 11:00 am on 10 March 1975 I was an eye witness to the invasion of our campus by armed Israeli soldiers. They machine-gunned the power lines to the campus, then went into the dormitories, dragged out students—some of whom were physics students—and beat them brutally with wood clubs. That not being enough, they broke every piece of glass in the dormitory including the mirrors over the lavatories.

ORLO K. HUDSON
San Antonio, Texas

3/27/79

BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY RESPONDS: The statements that Orlo Hudson makes in his letter are indeed correct. However, we would like to mention that, despite the fact that we operate under unusual and sometimes difficult circumstances, no foreign member of the faculty of 100 has been hurt or harmed in any way. About a quarter of our faculty of 100 are foreign, and we are confident that we can maintain the international atmosphere for which the university is known as we continue to grow.

ISA MASRIEH
Birzeit University

5/25/79

More on human rights

It seemed fitting that a discussion on human rights of scientists appears in the letters column of the March issue dedicated to Albert Einstein. Einstein was himself a refugee whose science was attacked solely because of his religious beliefs.

Unfortunately, the communication from Lincoln Wolfenstein (page 13) distorts and confuses the issue. First, groups like Scientists for Orlov and Shcharansky are independent. Their positions reflect a grass roots feeling amongst thousands of scientists. Their positions are officially opposed by the US government and the scientific establishment in this country.

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