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letters

reprints of Darrow's article in 1991, 2001,...

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LEWIS ELTON

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2/82

Repression in Turkey

In an editorial (January 1974, page 128) you invite physicists to use the pages of *PHYSICS TODAY* for matters to be brought to the attention of physicists, and you mention the magazine's worldwide circulation. I am not by any means certain that scientists would appreciate learning of the following, but I feel a duty to write it as it is.

In the period 1962-64 I was visiting as a physics lecturer at the then internationally funded Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. Seventeen years later I have received a communication from a former physics graduate student (living now in Cambridge, England) who desires my help. Because I think it reasonable for academics to realize to what extent repression is practiced upon physicists (and others) outside the USSR, I quote from her letter:

My sister, who is an experimental physicist, was a lecturer at Adana University until seven months ago. That is when she was arrested and detained for 90 days. During that period she was kept without food for 3 days and subjected to harsh interrogation (although not actually tortured). I now have documents compiled by Amnesty International with details of much worse cases of harsh treatment and torture in Turkey. Some actually die after such treatment. All this happens during detention, when no one, not even a lawyer, is allowed to visit. She was charged with being (formerly) a member of the Communist Party; yet she was only a member of a progressive women's organization. She is now in the civilian prison run by the military, together with 120 women, most of whom are political prisoners, the rest ordinary criminals. They are in a ward designed for 40 people; three in one bed. I managed to see her in prison behind wires when the temperature was 40°C in the shade. We ourselves couldn't bear the heat without taking showers every so often.

Her husband is finding it hard to accept that they should be treated in this manner. He is a professor of physics and was the dean of the faculty until her arrest; he resigned in protest. It is the military authorities who are in charge of all appointments or sackings. Recently they also put the former Prime Minister Ecevit in prison for criticizing the regime's decisions. We have been writing to scientists and to Amnesty International groups, but she is still in jail.

Last year I was notified of a Fulbright Teaching award to the USSR, but I have decided, for many reasons, against taking it. Also, happy as my memories are of the wonderful and friendly people of Turkey who would always enjoy the chance of a chat over a cup of "cay," I do not believe that any of us should fail to object to the above kind of repression.

J. DAVID NIGHTINGALE

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2/82

Wrong Brillouin

Alfred Kastler has called my attention to the fact that my article on Rayleigh scattering in January (page 42) incorrectly attributes the Brillouin effect to Marcel Louis Brillouin, the father of the actual discoverer, Leon Brillouin. While my original manuscript referred to the paper by L. Brillouin [*Ann. Physique* (9) 17, 88 (1922)], this was removed in the editing process, and the name of the wrong Brillouin was inserted. I did not see proofs of the published version, and might not have caught this error anyway, as I did not notice it until Kastler wrote to me.

It might be of interest to quote from Kastler's letter:

The father, Marcel Louis Brillouin, born in 1854, was Professor of Theoretical Physics at the Collège de France in Paris where he retired in 1932 and died in 1948 at the age of 94. On the well known picture of the participants of the first Solvay conference 1911 (see, for example, the "Einstein Centenary" Volume, 1979, edited by A. P. French, page 146) he is sitting on the table, the second from the left, between Nernst and Solvay, Max France in 1940 at the invasion of the German army, living in the USA till his death in 1969. It is Leon (and not Marcel) who has made the theory of light scattering by the thermo-elastic waves in Planck staying behind him. His son Leon Brillouin, born 1889, succeeded his father in the chair of the Collège de France in 1932. He left

dense media and has shown that it gives rise to the 'Brillouin doublet.' ... Leon Brillouin is also known for the B. W. K. method in quantum mechanics, for the 'Brillouin function' in paramagnetism and especially for having introduced the concept of 'Brillouin zones' in crystals.

ANDREW T. YOUNG
San Diego State University
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2/82

High-school text complaint

In all the debate about teaching high-school physics, teacher prestige and qualifications, and university-high-school cooperation, let's not overlook the average high-school textbook. What in heaven's name is the relationship between the calculus my son is taking in his senior year of high school and that abysmal mandated high-school physics text he is also using? He was, in fact, being turned off from physics and engineering, and it was only my giving him a Sears and Zernsky *University Physics* text that kept him from completely turning off and going into history.

When I took high-school physics in 1947, we used a non-calculus college physics text. Somehow that was not beyond the comprehension of either the teacher or the students.

JEROME K. STEPHENS
Warren, Ohio

3/82

Individualism vs. socialism

I've enjoyed reading the articles and letters addressing the topic of nuclear weapons in recent issues. There is, however, one point which has been conveniently ignored by both sides during the debate: the difference between the philosophic bases upon which the Soviet and American governments are based.

Capitalism is rooted in individualism, and is retaliatory in nature, as can be seen in our code of laws. Socialism is altruism applied to government; its collectivist and egalitarian aspects can be traced to that basic premise. All socialist states, whether communofascist or redistributionist, depend on the initiation of force to achieve their goals. This basic difference is generally omitted in the course of "scenario building," and the result is that the conflict is viewed as though both nuclear powers had similar goals.

During the second World War, no American strategist would have considered the extermination of the Jews as a tactic and many were surprised when

Germany's National Socialist government embarked on that very program. Today we tend to think that the Soviet Socialist government would not target civilians because we ourselves see no strategic benefit in such a course. The fact is that we have different goals and different philosophies. The possibility that the Soviet state might regard us as the National Socialist state regarded the Jews cannot be dismissed by any who have compared the original documents on which those systems were built.

It is possible, therefore, that the option of surrender may no more exist for Americans than it did for the Jews during the last war.

Our best option seems to be to follow the advice of Edward Teller and Andrei Sakharov and increase our defenses to the point at which we can sustain a first strike and still defeat the aggressor. Any less of an effort will simply serve to reinforce the tendency to fire on warning and thus increase the possibility of an accidental war.

J. H. PHILLIPS
Austin, Texas

3/82

Refereeing justice

Having published about 80 scientific papers and refereed a few more, I have been following with considerable interest the recent discussion on refereeing. I have received a good number of rejections myself and would like to offer some observations and perhaps suggest several ways in which the system can be improved.

I would first like to propose that referees and editors be made subject to "rules of law." These rules would delineate what they (the editors and referees) can and cannot do to guide them in their respective tasks. As in any legal system, the object here is to make the judgments (and, hence, standards) more uniform. It is, of course, not easy to write a code of wise refereeing and editing law; I imagine this code as evolving (growing) with time and repealable by the society sponsoring a given journal. (I leave the question of what rights the nonmember, nonspecialist, "man-in-the-street" may have in this matter to greater legal minds. I will only add that as a referee I was not always sure whether or not I was contravening freedom of speech.) To make my case more plausible I will note a few problem areas I have encountered with referees and possible ways to improve the existing situation. In the present forum this list can certainly not be exhaustive. Let me concentrate on what have struck me as more obvious and recurring injustices. Some of my suggestions are already common prac-

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