

letters

I do not say that **PHYSICS TODAY** shares any responsibility for a rejection of nuclear energy (especially since **PHYSICS TODAY** has been generous in allowing me to present my views in its columns). I do think that a magazine for physicists and by physicists could have done better in reviewing these strongly anti-nuclear books.

ALVIN M. WEINBERG

Director

Institute for Energy Analysis

6/84

The lead book review in June marks a despicable departure from what I view as the function of a book section in a journal sponsored by a professional scientific society. It is written by a very political non-scientist, reviewing three books attacking scientists, each authored by politically active non-scientists. The review is extremely supportive of these attacks, and introduces not a shred of evidence of objectivity in expressing this support. It lumps nuclear power and nuclear weapons together as a single evil entity, and maligns the former with an intensity unusual even for anti-nuclear activist organizations.

The only information in it definite enough for a scientist to evaluate is *wrong*. It states "Mancuso's refusal to cover up the risks of radiation led to AEC termination of funds for his work." Actually it was only after he received his termination notice that Mancuso began the analysis, with new collaborators, that led to his higher risk estimates. That work has received well over 20 scientific critiques, including some by long-time collaborators on the project, and it has been rejected by all national and international scientific groups charged with responsibility in radiation health. The withdrawal of his support was investigated by a congressional committee and by the General Accounting Office, and they found it to be justified.

Everything else in the review is political demagoguery without even an ounce of moderation. How can the community of physicists tolerate such trash in their journal?

BERNARD L. COHEN

University of Pittsburgh

6/84

Hospitality Abroad

You recently published a letter (January 1984, page 109) from two disgruntled American scientists who were unhappy with their conditions of employment at a prominent foreign institution. They stated that your practice of publicizing such complaints "render[ed] a great service to the scien-

tific community." I disagree.

The Societies of the American Institute of Physics have many foreign members; each is part of the scientific community. The printing of letters that find fault with foreign institutions is inequitable when you have not published letters critical of US laboratories; yet there are scientists in this country—academic, governmental, and industrial—who also believe that their employment conditions or professional opportunities were not what was promised or that promotion experience was less than had been assured. Do you have an announced policy regarding your basis for selecting and publishing letters that are critical of institutions?

I believe that publication of such critical letters is problematic. The negative impression produced by the opinions, justified or not, of complainers cannot be overcome by appending a defensive reply. There may be a need for a general forum for employment complaints of all types, but the pages of **PHYSICS TODAY** are inadequate—if you permit complete and open discussion—and inappropriate.

PETER L. SMITH

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2/84

Laser cooling

My article, "Laser cooling of atomic beams" for *Physics News* in 1983, which was reprinted in **PHYSICS TODAY** (January 1984, page S-26), had an unfortunate omission. In discussing the history of laser cooling I mentioned the 1975 proposal¹ of Hänsch and Schawlow for cooling a gas of atoms, but neglected to include the independent and nearly simultaneous proposal² of Wineland and Dehmelt for cooling trapped ions. Their ideas led, in 1978, to the first observation³ of laser cooling of trapped ions. I regret any confusion or misunderstanding that may have resulted from this omission.

References

1. T. W. Hänsch, A. L. Schawlow, *Opt. Commun.* **13**, 68 (1975).
2. D. J. Wineland, H. Dehmelt, *Bull. Am. Phys. Soc.* **20**, 637 (1975).
3. D. J. Wineland, R. E. Drullinger, F. L. Walls, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **40**, 1639 (1978); W. Neuhauser, M. Hohenstatt, P. Toschek, H. Dehmelt, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **41**, 233 (1978).

WILLIAM D. PHILLIPS

National Bureau of Standards,

Washington, D.C.

2/84

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At the risk of being labeled as a "Marshak ally," the letter by S. N.



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