

October 28, 1953

Rudnik

SHALL WE SPEAK ^{up} NOW?

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Shall we speak ^{up} now or is it still too ^{low} early? How much worse must the situation become before people will be willing to make their effort to sit down and try to think it through?

In writing this ^{up}, I am breaking a self-imposed ^{low} silence which I have observed ^{perhaps} for over three years now to be ^{or to} precise. Ever since February 10, 1950. ^{on that} date I discussed with Hans Bethe, Frederick Seitz and Harrison Brown the "Hydrogen Bomb" on the Round Table Broadcast of the University of Chicago. It was an improvised discussion and as such discussions go, more suitable for raising questions than finding solutions.

All four of us had refrained from expressing an opinion in the semi-private debate which preceded the official decision to develop the "Hydrogen Bomb"

^{But after the} decision having been made and publicly announced, we were disturbed to see how little the public understood how ^{the public left} this ^{important} decision

may affect their lives within a few years to come. Unsuspected by the public, the United States has embarked on a development which was likely to put before long into the hands of the Government ^{the power to} destroy all

human life on this planet. The same of course, would be true of the Government of Russia. We believe this to be true ^{and we said so} in the broadcast.

The public was so unaware of the fact that the cost of developing the "Hydrogen Bomb" cannot be appraised in terms of actual cost, to build these bombs and

airplanes suitable for the delivery, that I must think of the cost of the defensive measures which we shall be forced to take if there is arms raised

in Thermo Nuclear Bombs. After the decision to develop the "Hydrogen Bomb" was announced, the Secretary of Defense, ^{Johnston} kept talking of reducing

the defense budget which at that time was around 15 million dollars. We estimated that the arms ^{race} raised in "Hydrogen Bombs" will force us to raise our defense budget to about 40 billion dollars.

The public's reaction to this broadcast was ^{now} expected and violent. Our statement that the Governments of a nation like ours or Russia's may ^{before} long have the power to destroy all human life on earth reverberated around

the world. The reaction of the press was with exception behind both the United States and the iron curtain. There was no comment from any official

source. ^{to her as I know} No Government spokesman has then or ever since ^{taken up} this

issue until about a month ago when Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles said,

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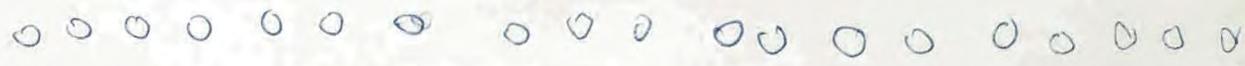
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In the numerous conversations which Harrison Brown and I had with publishers and editorial writers in the weeks following this broadcast, ^{it very quickly} became evident that no one was interested in finding out whether the facts supported our conclusions. ^{ed} That they were interested in finding out was ^{what} our purpose was in stating these conclusions. ^{them}

On this occasion, it was brought to me for the first time how far here in the United States we have gone along the road where intellectual leadership has all but vanished and where the public's decision of the most vital issues which confront us



When a scientist speaks in public on an issue which he feels the public should be informed, ^{then} stating what he believes to be true is good and sufficient reason for him ^{to} stating ^{it} this. But the public is not accustomed to listening to scientists except perhaps ^{to} those who hold some important administrative office ⁱⁿ in which case they may have long ceased to be scientists and ^{may have} become politicians. Even business men who have become prominent by having made a spectacular success of their business are rarely heard. The voice the public mostly years these days are the voices of those who ^{hold} some important elected office, hold some high office in the administration, as well as generals or admirals who take an interest in politics. All of these men are politicians in the sense that ^{if} ~~even~~ they say something in public - even though it may be true what they say - they don't say it because it is true. ^{They say it for a purpose.} But no man can speak for a purpose in public on major issues without impurity for ^{very} long. He will soon end up speaking for a purpose not only in public but also in private. ^{And can't much longer will it take} Not long afterwards he will not only speak for a purpose but ^{he will} also think for a purpose. ^{After a while he may succeed} in convincing ^{others} there is and then he will succeed in ^{convincing} himself.

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