

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE MATHEMATICIANS OF AMERICA AND OF SOVIET RUSSIA

THE Soviet Embassy has recently received for transmission to Soviet mathematicians a statement of solidarity signed by a number of their most distinguished American colleagues.

The document carries signatures of ninety-three mathematicians of forty-seven American universities and colleges. Professor Marston Morse, president of the American Mathematical Society, and Dr. George D. Birkhoff, Perkins professor of mathematics at Harvard University, are signers, as are eight past presidents of the society.

The statement reads as follows:

We, the undersigned mathematicians of the United States, send our greetings and express our heartfelt sympathy to our colleagues of the Soviet Union in their struggle against Hitler fascism. What the future of mathematics would be in a Hitler-dominated world we know from the unprecedented destruction of mathematics in Germany after the advent of Hitler. We are deeply impressed by the heroic stand of the Soviet peoples and know that the mathematicians of the Soviet Union are doing their part in this supreme effort.

The bonds between mathematicians in the United States and the Soviet Union are particularly strong since during the past two decades the center of world mathematics has steadily shifted to these two countries. We know many of you personally and more of you through your scientific writings. We know that you are fighting alongside your fellow-countrymen in their brave struggle against the invading tyrant and we assure you that we here are doing everything in our power to aid all peoples struggling against fascism.

With best wishes for a successful fight against the evil forces of fascism, we remain, fraternally, your colleagues in the United States.

Included among the signers are the following members of the National Academy of Sciences:

Professors H. Bateman, of the California Institute of Technology; G. D. Birkhoff, of Harvard University; G. A. Bliss, of the University of Chicago; S. Lefschetz, of Princeton University; G. A. Miller, of the University of Illinois; M. Morse, of the Institute for Advanced Study; W. F. Osgood, of Harvard University; J. F. Ritt, of Columbia University; E. B. Van Vleck, of the University of Wisconsin; O. Veblen, of the Institute for Advanced Study; J. von Neumann, of the Institute for Advanced Study; J. L. Walsh, of Harvard University; N. Wiener, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and E. T. Bell, of the California Institute of Technology.

NEW TYPHUS VACCINE BEING TESTED IN BOLIVIA

AMONG the problems that health authorities keep constantly in mind is that of typhus fever, which

made such ravages during and after the last war. Recently a new vaccine against typhus fever was developed by Dr. Cox, Public Health Service, Hamilton, Montana, which it is hoped will be both effective and suitable for mass production. It has produced a high degree of immunity in laboratory animal tests, but in order to prove its efficiency, a trial must be made on large groups of people. Experiments could not be conducted in the United States because the form of typhus now present in this country is not the "European" type. The first attempts at testing the vaccine took place in the Balkans, Spain and China but were frustrated by the war. When the possibility of making these trials in one or more of the American republics came under consideration, it was decided to approach the matter through the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, the coordinating public health agency of the Americas. One of the chief functions of the bureau is the prevention of the international spread of disease, it being authorized by the Pan American Sanitary Code to undertake scientific research to this end. The bureau communicated with various Latin American countries in which louse-borne typhus is found and with the cooperation of the Bolivian authorities it was decided to send a commission to Bolivia to make a trial of the vaccine among 10,000 Bolivian Indians. In order to conduct the experiment, it is planned that half the members of every household, in the area chosen for the study, are to be vaccinated with typhus vaccine, to a total of 5,000 persons. The disease incidence in the vaccinated and the unvaccinated groups is then to be compared. In cases where the family refuses to have only half of its members vaccinated, it is thought desirable to inject the other half with the pneumococcus pneumonia vaccine, thus using the opportunity to conduct also a pneumonia study. Dr. R. E. Dyer, assistant director of the National Institute of Health, and his colleague, Dr. N. H. Topping, have been in La Paz, Bolivia, to work in cooperation with Bolivian authorities, who are giving their whole-hearted assistance. The experiment may require as long as nine months. It is possible that similar studies may be undertaken elsewhere should circumstances justify them.

THE WARTIME SERVICE OF BIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS

JOHN E. FLYNN, editor-in-chief of *Biological Abstracts*, University of Pennsylvania, writes that with each month of the continuance of the war diffusion of knowledge of current scientific advances becomes more and more difficult and uncertain.

When the war broke out and the blockade was imposed, the receipt by American libraries of scientific