

Comments and Communications

Taste Reactions to Antithyroid Substances

The very interesting recent communication by W. C. Boyd (*Science*, 112, 153 [1950]) concerning possible connections between differences in tasting ability, antithyroids, food, and thyroid function has been anticipated, and to some extent exceeded, by publications from the Galton Laboratory in London. It may be useful for readers interested in the subject to get the references of three communications (Harris, H., and Kalmus, H., *Nature*, 163, 878 [1949]; Harris, H., Kalmus, H., *Ann. Eugenics*, 15, (1), 32 [1949]; Harris, H., Kalmus, H., and Trotter, W. R., *Lancet*, 1038 [Dec. 3, 1949] that apparently have been inaccessible to Dr. Boyd in Cairo, Egypt.

On the whole we find ourselves in agreement with Dr. Boyd's conclusions.

H. KALMUS

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

It is now well known that some persons find phenylthiocarbamide (PTC) extremely bitter, whereas others find it tasteless, the nontasting condition being inherited as a recessive. There is no present evidence to show which was the original and which the derived condition, i.e., whether the mutation involved was dominant or recessive. Boyd has recently found that individuals who can taste PTC can also taste 1-5-vinyl-2-thio-oxazolidone, whereas others are negative to both substances, the latter substance being present in such plants as turnip and cabbage.

Boyd suggests that, as tasters and nontasters of PTC occur also among chimpanzees, "this gene pair has existed in man for a very long time," presumably back to a common ancestor of man and chimpanzees.

It may be pointed out that this conclusion does not necessarily follow. An alternative hypothesis is that the tasting and nontasting genes have arisen independently as parallel mutations somewhere in the lines of descent leading to modern man and the chimpanzee. The conception of parallel mutations dates from 1912 (Gates, R. R. *Nature*, 89, 659), and numerous cases in plants and animals were already known a few years later (Gates, R. R. *Mutations and Evolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921). Many more are known now. It is reasonable to suppose that, if a particular mutation can occur at a specific locus of a chromosome in one line of descent, the same change can occur at the corresponding locus of a chromosome in a related line of descent. This renders it unsafe to conclude that any two lines of descent having a particular gene in common necessarily derived it from a common ancestor.

R. RUGGLES GATES

*Biological Laboratories
Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts*

The Big Lie

That the "big lie" which the Soviet rulers are currently trying to foist on the world is being swallowed not only by the uneducated "toilers," but also by the elite of Soviet science, is shown by the following telegram, published in the Moscow newspaper *Izvestia* of August 23, 1950. It is addressed to the U.N. Security Council by the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

A feeling of anxiety over the fates of the world and civilization compels us, Soviet science workers, to address the following letter to you.

We, Soviet scientists, who lived through the bloody war with German Fascism, who saw the ruins of Stalingrad, Sevastopol, Odessa, and other cities, and the destruction of great monuments of world culture, cannot remain silent.

The armed forces of the U.S.A., which invaded Korea, rudely violating all the norms of morality and justice, are committing unheard-of crimes—crimes as barbaric as those of the German-Fascist usurpers. Accomplishments and values of a thousand-year-old culture of the Korean people are perishing, the blood of the helpless peaceful population is being shed.

Under the flag of the U.N., the army of the interventionists is pitilessly destroying in Korea homes and clubs, schools and hospitals, universities and libraries, factories and plants, and is breaking up the people's economy and the culture of a peace-loving country. Thousands of persons have already been left without food and shelter. The whole world is gripped by indignation against these terrible misdeeds of the interventionists, which are increasing daily.

We—representatives of Soviet science—declare that the U.N. Security Council must immediately and decisively stop the international crimes that are being committed in Korea by the ruling circles of the U.S.A., one of the member states of the U.N.

Deepest feelings of indignation are aroused in us by representations of the official delegates of the U.S.A. in the Security Council of the U.N., in which they are trying to put the blame on the heroic people of Korea and are introducing proposals directed toward a further spread of the conflagration of war.

The imperialists of the U.S.A. are perverting the great accomplishments of science to their criminal ends and are utilizing them for mass destruction of mankind.

Together with all the peoples of our country, together with scientists, cultural workers, and