

# Science in the News

## Repeal of the "Non-Communist" Affidavit in the Education Act To Be a Lively Issue in Congress

A bill has been introduced in the Senate that would repeal the controversial provision in the National Defense Education Act which requires every student recipient of a federal loan to execute not only the traditional oath of allegiance but also an affidavit disclaiming belief in or support of any organization advocating illegal overthrow of the government. The bill to repeal the disclaimer or "non-Communist" affidavit was offered on 27 January by Senator John F. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Senator Joseph S. Clark (D-Pa.), who were joined in sponsorship by Senator Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.).

The new proposal (S. 2929) is a modification of the Kennedy-Clark measure introduced last session (S. 819), which recommended repeal of both the loyalty oath and the disclaimer affidavit required in Section 1001(f) of the Education Act. Although there has been widespread protest throughout the academic community against the disclaimer, there has been little opposition to the loyalty oath.

### Objections to Affidavit

These are some of the objections to the affidavit.

It is unnecessary. As Kennedy has pointed out, why should a student be required to swear that he is loyal as well as that he is not disloyal?

It is discriminatory, implying that students are less reliable than others who receive government assistance, such as businessmen, farmers, homeowners, and veterans and their dependents.

It is ineffective, for no Communist would hesitate to take either the oath or the affidavit.

It is unconstitutional, because the

First Amendment of the Constitution guarantees freedom of belief. President A. Whitney Griswold of Yale University said recently in a *New York Times* article that the disclaimer affidavit "extends beyond the basic laws of the land into the realm of belief and conscience, where definitions are vague and actions become matters of debate."

It defeats the very purposes of the Education Act, as President Nathan Pusey of Harvard has pointed out, "by keeping especially conscientious students from the Act's benefits."

It results in government interference in institutional affairs, for educational institutions are obliged to secure the required affidavit as a prerequisite to granting a loan or recommending a candidate for a fellowship. This is considered by many to be government interference in an area of administration that belongs without restriction to free institutions of higher learning.

### Protests Widespread

Some 60 colleges and universities have formally protested against the disclaimer provision in the National Defense Education Act. Six institutions have refused from the beginning to participate in the Act's program because of it. They are Bryn Mawr, Haverford, Mills, Princeton, the University of Richmond, and Swarthmore. Fourteen others participated and then withdrew: Amherst, Antioch, Bennington, Goucher, Grinnell, Harvard, Oberlin, Radcliffe, Reed, Sarah Lawrence, St. John's (Md.), Wilmington (Ohio), Yale, and Wellesley. Approximately 40 institutions—the most recent, Vassar, on 13 February—have protested against the affidavit although they have remained in the program.

In addition, statements of opposition have been released by about a dozen professional associations, including the AAAS, the American Association of

University Professors (which led a pioneering campaign against the measure), the American Council on Education, and the National Education Association.

Even students themselves are organizing to combat the issue. The Harvard *Crimson*, a college daily, has published a 15-page pamphlet of protest titled "Worse Than Futile." The pamphlet, which has an introduction by Senator Kennedy, has been distributed at 1200 colleges and universities.

Harvard has a faculty-student repeal committee which has been leading a letter-writing campaign at Harvard and at other institutions. It is reported that the committee persuaded more than 2000 undergraduates to send cards and letters to their congressmen during examination week last month. The University of Chicago, Antioch, and Radcliffe are said to be planning similar campaigns.

The public figures who have endorsed repeal of the measure include T. Keith Glennan, director of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; Arthur S. Flemming, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, whose agency administers the Education Act program; and President Eisenhower, who showed how important he considers the issue by discussing it in his budget message on 18 January. The President said that the disclaimer affidavit is "unwarranted, and justifiably resented by a large part of our education community, which feels that it is being singled out for this requirement."

### Issue in Both Houses

Despite this weighty public support, Kennedy's new bill, S. 2929, will meet lively opposition on the Senate floor, where it will probably be discussed early in March. The proposal was reported out on 2 February by the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee, which approved the measure by a vote of 12 to 3—the same majority by which it approved S. 819 last session. The latter was recommitted to committee after a debate during which Senator Russell B. Long (D-La.) said:

"Are we going to make conditions such that it will not be possible to convict a man who is a Communist, who is taking money from the Government and taking advantage of all the things which the Government offers? Somewhere along the line there may be an opportunity to prosecute him. We have

### AAAS Meeting Site Changed: New York, Not Philadelphia, To Be Host This Year

The location of the 1960 AAAS annual meeting, to be held 26-31 December, has been changed from Philadelphia to New York.

In June 1955, the Board of Directors selected sites for the Association's annual meetings for the years 1959-62 and decided on Philadelphia for 1960. Accordingly, a request to the local convention bureau for adequate accommodations was made, and acknowledged, shortly thereafter. Unfortunately, at a later date, another large convention was booked in Philadelphia for 26-31 December, on the assumption that there would still be adequate facilities to accommodate the AAAS. This other commitment, which made one large and two smaller hotels unavailable for the AAAS meeting, was not brought to the Association's attention until the time of the recent Chicago meeting.

In January a survey of the remaining hotel facilities and other possible meeting rooms throughout Philadel-

phia made it clear that, while a meeting could be held there, it would be an extremely inconvenient one: The exhibits would have to be located either in the Convention Hall, 2 miles from the downtown hotels, or in the lobby and lower-level Garden Terrace Room of the Benjamin Franklin Hotel; the AAAS presidential address and reception would have to be held in the Academy of Music, blocks away; and at least half the concurrent sessions on days when the schedule was heaviest would have to be assigned to medical classrooms, company recreation rooms, courtrooms, and perhaps department-store fashion rooms. Quite possibly there would have been a scarcity of hotel bedrooms.

Though last-minute changes in location are never desirable, the Association decided to look for a more adequate and convenient meeting site. Fortunately, the Grand Central zone of New York City was open, and the AAAS Executive Committee

has voted unanimously to hold the 1960 meeting there.

All the facilities of the Commodore, Biltmore, Roosevelt, and Belmont Plaza hotels, and a large part of the facilities of the Waldorf-Astoria, are available for this year's convention. In the first four, uniform flat rates of accommodation will be as follows: single room, \$8.50; room with double bed, \$14; room with twin beds, \$15.50. The Waldorf has reserved at least 400 rooms at the following flat rates: single room, \$10; room with double bed, \$16; room with twin beds, \$18. Since the five hotels are well equipped and grouped in the area around Grand Central Station, a particularly convenient and comfortable meeting is assured.

Rockefeller Center, the many new buildings of Park Avenue, and the Fifth Avenue shops are all within easy walking distance, and those who attend this year's meeting will find a wide variety of things to see and do before and after the sessions.

the opportunity to provide for it now."

This is one of the more usual opposition arguments. Defenders answer by saying that laws already exist under which it is possible to prosecute a person who advocates overthrow of the government. Nevertheless, Senator Karl E. Mundt (R-S.D.) is expected to offer an amendment under which there would be no inquiry into belief as such—thus meeting the issue of constitutionality—but under which an active Communist party member could be prosecuted.

Opposition to repeal of the disclaimer affidavit is expected to be greater in the House than in the Senate. Although eight repeal bills have been introduced in the House, there has been no action. All of the bills have been referred to the House Education and Labor Committee, whose chairman, Representative Graham A. Barden (D-N.C.), said emphatically a year ago: "I will resist with everything that is within me the removal of that provision." He also commented that the academic community was "interested in the money, then they want to raise a great howl about taking

an oath of allegiance to America."

Another influential member of the House committee, Representative Carl Elliott (D-Ala.), who is chairman of the Special Education Subcommittee, to which the repeal bills have been assigned, stated publicly only a few weeks ago that he "wasn't worried" about the few schools opposed to the affidavit and had no plans to schedule hearings.

In contrast, the administrator of the federal student-loan fund, John F. Morse, said as long ago as mid-November that if more colleges dropped out, this could lead to "destruction of a magnificent program." He expressed sympathy with the reasons given by institutions for withdrawing, but he pointed out that the Education Act was passed for the benefit of needy students, not for the benefit of institutions, and observed: "Wealthy institutions may well provide these benefits from other sources, but there are a number of institutions which, if they were to take the stand Harvard, Yale and others have taken, would literally force students out of college."

The precedent for the Education Act's non-Communist affidavit may be found in the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, from which the present controversial provision was copied. The foundation administers its own fellowship funds—and loyalty-oath provisions—whereas educational institutions must process the applications for Education Act funds. To date, more than 12,000 applicants have signed the NSF affidavit to qualify for graduate science fellowships, and there has been no organized protest from the scientific community.

### President Explains New United States Test Ban Proposal

*The following is the text of a White House statement on the new United States proposal for a ban on nuclear weapons tests. The proposal, which the Soviet Union is reported to have labeled "unacceptable," was formally presented at the Geneva test-ban conference on 11 February.*