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ION OF INTEREST

(Hungary is not its favorite topic.) Surely congressional investigative vigor could be directed toward more obvious subjects, the contents of the pork barrel, for instance.

Greenberg has presented a largely balanced account of the Smale case, even though his treatment of the professor was a bit too indulgent.

ROBERT M. LUKES

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While I abhor HUAC's restrictions on free speech and association, I believe that scientists should be fully alert to oppose repression from *any* source. In this context, I would like to question the choice of sites for international meetings. Rapprochement and lessened tension are wonderful things; but must we hold scientific congresses in countries where political doctrine dictates the scientific approach, where "unorthodox" scientists suffer loss not only of support but of liberty and even of life, and where scientific publications must begin with panegyrics to deified leaders or theories? It is true that the situation in the U.S.S.R. has improved within the past decade, and also that Moscow is an interesting place to visit. Still, we might consider to what extent free scientific inquiry and discussion are possible in a country which is under consideration as a location for a meeting.

PETER SUEDELD

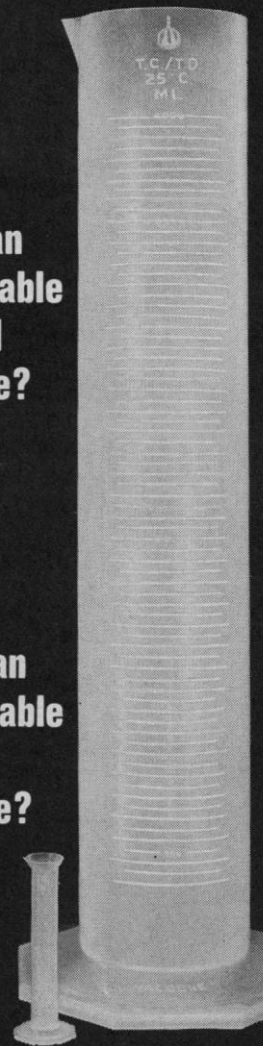
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Visa Barriers

I, too, have had a similar experience to that reported in "Scientific exchange: case of a French visitor" (19 Aug., p. 848). When I applied recently for a visa to attend a congress in the U.S., my application was held up for some time while my political antecedents were intensively investigated on the grounds, according to American Embassy officials in London, that they found my passport contained visas indicating that I had traveled to eastern European countries and that it listed my job as "research biochemist." I was told it was now the policy of the U.S. Embassy, in dealing with visa applications, to regard all biochemists as likely to have left-wing tendencies, and therefore to investigate closely the polit-

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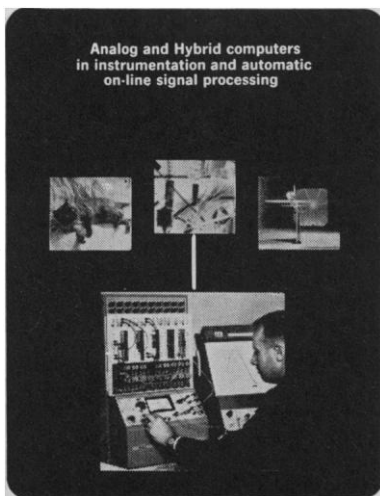


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ical background of any biochemist who applied for a temporary visa to visit the States. I did get my visa after some delay and a substantial exchange of correspondence, which included my supplying a list of all organizations, social and political (from the school chess club onwards), to which I had ever belonged. This list did not include the Communist Party, but did include the British Labour Party.

At Montreal I was held up for some time by a suspicious immigration official who objected to my entering; the grounds were that the conference I was planning to attend was being sponsored by M.I.T. but was being held in Boulder, Colorado, not in Massachusetts. It was only after a lengthy exchange that he conceded that it was possible for a conference to be run in this way and, therefore, legitimate for me to enter the U.S.

Such activities by both Embassy officials abroad and immigration officials at points of entry to the U.S. are extremely prejudicial to free scientific exchange, especially as it now appears that whole scientific disciplines are likely to become suspect in such a bizarre manner. It is encouraging that the U.S. scientific community has thought it worthwhile to protest.

S. P. R. ROSE

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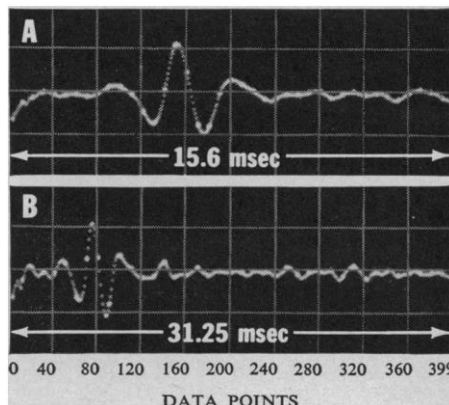
Praise for a Public Servant

Abelson's editorial (26 Aug., p. 939) is a concise summary of the accomplishments and requirements of the National Bureau of Standards. The scientific community supports, I am sure, his concluding hope that Congress will provide sufficient funds and will regard the quality of the Bureau's effort as highly as we scientists do. Glamorous and high priority issues have continuously detracted attention from the needs and achievements of the Bureau, while some programs of vital interest to large industries, such as our ceramic industry, have been curtailed and talented men sacrificed by budget squeezes. The Bureau represents an unparalleled asset to science, industry, and government that should be supported in its modest frame with the concern it deserves.

NORBERT J. KREIDL

Department of Ceramic Engineering,
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