figures with the trend for a base period of 1940–1945. But Edythalena Tompkins and Morton L. Brown, of HEW's Bureau of Radiological Health, have recalculated the rates and have discovered that 1950 is the only year that gives Sternglass his result. If 1947, 1948, 1949, or 1951 are used, a different pattern of states with "excess" deaths emerges. Similarly, if the base period is changed to 1935–1945 to coincide more nearly with the base period Sternglass uses in other discussions, then there seems to be no effect. To top it off, the AEC contends that the fallout cloud from Alamagordo did not even go eastward. On this point, Sternglass appears on shaky ground. His authority for saying that the cloud went eastward is a popular book written by a *Time* magazine correspondent, but a perusal of that book reveals that it has parts of the cloud drifting in several different directions—none of them eastward.

Sternglass' efforts to prove a causal link between fallout and infant mortality has run into even sharper criticism than his statistical analyses. In his *Esquire* article, Sternglass announced that "the causation problem now appears to be solved." He cited Swedish experiments in which mice injected with what Sternglass described as "small amounts" of strontium-90 experienced genetic damage. But shortly afterward Karl Gustav Lüning, the leader of the Swedish experiments, publicly disputed Sternglass' interpretation of his data. "The effects are very small," he said, "and the doses given the mice were at least 1000 times stronger than a human can obtain after a nuclear test." On another occasion, Sternglass cited studies by the British epidemiologist, Alice Stewart, as suggesting a causal relationship, only to have Dr. Stewart turn around and write an article disputing his theory.

How could Sternglass achieve such wide exposure for his views when so many scientists believe he is wrong? Part of the answer probably lies in the fact that Sternglass makes good press copy—he has a startling theory that relates to important public issues. Another explanation is that Sternglass is in tune with a number of deep public moods—the revulsion against the military, the desire to end contamination of the environment, and the tendency to disbelieve the rosy reports emanating from government agencies.

A third explanation blames the scientific community for not denouncing Sternglass earlier. "They won't come

NEWS IN BRIEF

• **COLUMBIA SUIT TO REVOKE Ph.D. DEGREE:** Columbia filed a lawsuit—the first of its kind in the university's history—to revoke a doctoral degree in economics after a Canadian economist complained that his work had been plagiarized. Following more than a year of academic investigation by Columbia scholars, the university charged in the New York State Supreme Court that Constantine Thanos, former deputy governor of the Bank of Greece, plagiarized his thesis from the work of J. A. Galbraith, a professor of economics at McGill University in Montreal. The investigative panel, headed by Columbia economist Harold Barger, concluded that Thanos' degree, granted in 1962, was awarded on the basis of a thesis that bears more than a coincidental similarity to Galbraith's work, completed several years earlier.

• **HERBICIDE DISPOSAL EXPERIMENT:** A controversial experiment in the natural open-air destruction of a persistent herbicide (2,4-D) has been approved by local Oregon officials who had initially blocked the federally sponsored attempt by Oregon State University (OSU) to test a new poison disposal method until the safety of the project could be assured. The project, headed by Robert L. Goulding of OSU's Environmental Health Sciences Center and funded by a $68,000 grant from HEW, will measure the effectiveness of the poison disposal method on a 5600-acre tract of private land near Alkali Lake, about 340 miles southeast of Portland. Large quantities of previously undisposable liquid will be spread in small plots on the land and scientists will observe whether the combined effects of sunlight, air, and microorganisms in the soil will degrade the agricultural poison. The herbicide manufacturing plant that produced the toxic liquid is reported to have more than 500,000 gallons of toxic materials stored at the Alkali Lake site awaiting disposal.

• **SOVIET, EAST EUROPE EXCHANGES:** U.S. scientists interested in current scientific research activities in the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe are invited to apply to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) for Soviet Eastern European exchange program grants. Under existing agreements, NAS, in cooperation with the Soviet Academy and the academies of sciences in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia, will offer 1- to 12-month visits during the 1970–71 academic year. Applications should be filed before 24 November with the Office of the Foreign Secretary (USSR/EE), NAS, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C.

• **CASE HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM DEFOLIANT CONTROVERSY:** A study of the military use of defoliant chemicals in the Vietnam war and the attitudes of U.S. scientists concerning its use has been published by the House Science and Astronautics Committee. The study, which was prepared at the request of Representative Emilio Q. Daddario (D–Conn.), is a historical record of a 3-year ongoing debate over the use of weed-killing chemicals as a warfare weapon. The report centers upon the process by which the American Association for the Advancement of Science undertook to assess the ecological effects of the military use of chemical defoliants and herbicides in Vietnam. The report was prepared by the Science Policy Division of the Legislative Reference Service in the Library of Congress and may be obtained from the House Science and Astronautics Committee, 2321 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.

• **SCIENCE-FOREIGN AFFAIRS STUDY:** A House foreign affairs subcommittee, chaired by Representative Clement J. Zablocki (D–Wis.) is conducting an 18-month study of the operations of government in dealing with international issues and problems of a scientific nature. One of the main purposes of the study is to determine how U.S. foreign policy can be improved to keep in stride with international technological and scientific innovations; the study will focus in particular on the way in which the State Department uses diplomacy to solve international scientific problems. The study is being conducted by the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress at the request of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on National Security Policy and Scientific Developments. The first phase of the report, which includes an annotated bibliography of published materials on the topic, is expected to be completed by the end of the year.