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#### LETTERS

##### A Scientific Idealist

Edward Uhler Condon, lover of peace, science, and people, nemesis of UFO's, stuffed shirts, the House Un-American Activities Committee, and bureaucracy, died on 26 March 1974.

He was fond of pointing out that the sign at the city limits of Alamogordo, New Mexico, proclaiming it "Home of the Atomic Bomb," should have read, "Home of the Atomic Bomb and of Edward U. Condon." The Trinity explosion made Alamogordo a monument to man's fear of his own intelligence—ironically at the birthplace of a man completely devoted to peace, individualism, faith in humanity, rationalism, and freedom of thought. Thus passes one of the few remaining scientific idealists, who persisted in rejecting cynicism in the face of personal experiences of abuse from those who feared truth or controversy.

He will be remembered for his extraordinary contributions to physics, particularly in the early application of quantum theory to the physics of atoms, molecules, and the solid state. He was honored in his time as president of the AAAS and of the American Physical Society. He directed research at the National Bureau of Standards, Westinghouse Electric Corporation, and Corning Glass Works. He lent his name to countless good causes. And he was misunderstood. To set the record straight, let the following be remembered.

Equally at home in industry, government, and university, Condon even undertook a campaign to improve the military service academies. He was, above all, a rational humanist who did not make the sharp distinctions others draw between basic science and industrial science, who did not believe you could measure a man's morals by asking where he worked. He made moral judgments, to be sure, and many felt the ire of his tongue or pen. But he was never underhanded or devious.

UFO buffs accused him of prejudice, of conducting his investigation with a closed mind. But Condon confided to his friends that the attraction of the project lay in the possibility—however small—that a real discovery might be there for him to make. He believed that those too easily convinced might be blinded to the shreds of real evidence about new phenomena. The mystics who challenge science do not understand



that skepticism is not intolerance—it is the discipline of an open mind.

Those who first accused him of potential disloyalty went to prison. Condon was exonerated of "security risk" charges on every appeal save one, when a political decision overturned a recommendation favorable to him. During his tenure as a Fellow of the Joint Institute for Laboratory Astrophysics, he received again a Secret clearance which permitted him to advise a government he honored as the servant, not master, of the people. He served his country loyally and well with his mind, his leadership, and his criticism, and the record proves it.

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### Schizophrenia Exchange Program

The report by Deborah Shapley (News and Comment, 8 Mar., p. 932) on the U.S.-U.S.S.R. schizophrenia research exchange program raises some serious questions about the attitudes of the Americans involved.

The American participants are concerned about the alleged misuse of psychiatry in the U.S.S.R., and especially about the possible misdiagnosis of political dissidents. Szasz (1) has noted that psychiatric justice is not altogether just in the United States and that it is often used to deny citizens their constitutional right to trial. We might also recall that, in October 1964, the magazine *Fact* published a poll of 12,356 psychiatrists registered with the American Medical Association about the fitness of Senator Goldwater to run for the presidency and 2417 responded; 1189 thought that Senator Goldwater was not psychologically fit to run, 657 felt that he was fit, and 571 decided that they did not have enough information to judge (2). Neither those who judged Goldwater fit nor those who judged him unfit had enough information on which to base a judgment. Thus, the concerns of the Americans participating in the exchange program hardly justify ending the exchange any more than the alleged misuse of psychiatry in the United States should justify the Russians' pulling out of the program.

The differences between the criteria for diagnosing schizophrenia in the U.S.S.R. and those used in the United



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