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Return—AAAS Boston, Student Revolt Title 202

I felt sure I had accomplished my mission. From inside a darkened aircraft, I had watched for endless hours the radar echoes returning from the ice below. There was nothing to see when looking out, white, white ice. I determined to take the next available flight for Christchurch, New Zealand, on 18 December. From there, by MAC through Hickam Base to San Francisco had also become routine, with sandwiches and coffee every 4 hours, day and night.

I remember my great joy in Christchurch, strolling through its beautiful botanical gardens and seeing lush green plants everywhere, a great relief from the all-surrounding white of the weeks before. In San Francisco I became an ordinary civilian again, having to pay my own air fares, first to New York and then on to Boston from where I was to report on the 136th Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the AAAS.

It was certainly a change to live again in the luxury of a Sheraton Hotel in Boston with my own bathroom which I could use at any time, instead of the weekly shower in the Antarctic and where there existed only the Navy's traditional 'heads' for defaecation. (The heads were long wooden benches with many holes in line, some always occupied).

The 1969 Meeting of the AAAS was very different from the one in New York in 1967 which I described before. [See Title 153] Again I arrived on Christmas Day, and at once filed my first story, welcoming the first ever Lady President, Dr Minas Rees, a famous mathematician from New York University. It was not published (NP), like two others, one about the Space Plans of the 1970s NP, and the other about Arms Control NP. However, the editors of the *Sunday Telegraph,* were more alert, the first student revolt ever at an AAAS Meeting caught their attention and my report was published under the headline "Gas and Biological Arms condemned", 25 CC.

Angry cries of "War Criminals" were hurled by militant students at their own professors and placards with "How can arms makers discuss arms control" were paraded in the auditorium. This was the great difference between the Boston AAAS and all previous ones, that the student revolt had come to the surface in these otherwise purely scientific meetings. As it turned out, speaker after speaker at the Arms Control Symposium argued for reduction of arms expenditure and international disarmament. The students objected most fiercely to arms research at their own university, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where a novel rocket was being designed. Although only a single missile, it was able to carry four nuclear bombs and each one of these could be targeted independently to a different enemy site. This was of course the echo of the famous student revolts which had occurred in Europe in 1968.

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Pandemonium at AAAS

At the next day's symposium on 27 December 1969, devoted to the future of the American Space Program, worse was to follow and a veritable uproar ensued, when students and scientists shouted angrily at each other during the normally so sedate and conservative proceedings. Such scenes had never before been seen, and as they were being televised, serious consequences for the AAAS were forecast in my report "Uproar over Space Costs at US Science Meeting", 30 CC. The meeting degenerated into pandemonium with placards paraded, a man brandishing a knife and another reciting an obscene poem of an anti-white character. With both the chairman and the questioner having independent microphone circuits, shouting at an incredibly loud level, such phrases as "Rockets on the Moon, slums on Earth" echoed round the hall. These scenes produced deep anger in the audience, not about the dissent urged, but by the sound-level and the crudity in which it was presented.

It was by no means a unisex protest that must have been deeply felt by all, as two women presented papier-maché Moon rocks to a distinguished speaker shouting "USA first in space, sixteenth in infant deaths—What means more to you?"

The symposium organised by NASA to gain public support for its schedule of Moon flights during the coming years must have given the organisers a grim foretaste of the cuts in its budget by Congress and the cuts in the number of Apollo flights which indeed had to follow. Only the presentation of the Apollo 11 and 12 films by Colonel 'Buzz' Aldrin, the second man on the Moon, restored some order and were in contrast to the earlier rowdy scenes.

On 28 December, the following day, the opposition to the scientific establishment was more structured and detailed. "The sorry State of Science" was presented by a group of young scientists as serving only industry for profit. Four specific examples were quoted: 'Computers with built-in obsolescence'; 'Molecular manipulation of drugs without achieving greater efficiency'; 'The use of social science to persuade underprivileged people to fit into existing society, instead of bettering it'; and finally 'NASA as a governmental technique to subsidise the aero-space industry'.

In answer, an astronomer from Harvard urged scientists to 'de-mystify' science, so that ordinary people could help in changing it. Another one of my reports "Scientists oppose manned Mars Landing" was published, 38 CC. But a counter-blast "Do not ridicule Science" by Dr J. Myer, a consultant to the White House, was not favoured by the 'copy tasting' editor in London.

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AAAS—Hunger, Pollution and Anti-Science Title 204

A record number of 6000 scientists had registered for the AAAS Meeting in Boston, and the Organisers were correct in choosing problems of contemporary society for discussion at the main symposia, but they lacked the foresight as to the distribution of the audiences. A vast ballroom with seats for 2000 had an audience of perhaps one dozen elderly members, where the subject was 'Engineering and Management skills developed by the Space Program'. For a talk by the famous anthropologist Dr Margaret Mead, an ordinary room for about 200 had been scheduled, but it was soon overflowing and, as more and more tried to enter, riot-like scenes broke out. Strong detachments of security guards barred entry and harassed officials tried to calm down the crowds by promising a repeat lecture by Dr Mead.

The discussion after Dr Mead's lecture centred on pollution and hunger in the midst of plenty, as well as the many social evils of the affluent American society. These were debated hotly, emotionally and scientifically, and both from the platform and the floor, indictments were hurled at the United States Congress and at the scientific establishment to allow protein deficiency diseases among the children of American Indians and, in certain places, an infant mortality as high as 51 per 1000, worse than in many underdeveloped countries.

Pollution came also under severe criticism with 7 million cars junked each year, 25000 million glass bottles and 50000 million aluminium cans to be got rid off. Margaret Mead said: "If America wanted to play the political part in the world she wanted to assume, we cannot isolate ourselves from the rest of the world and we have to show that there is no longer any hunger and malnutrition in the USA." My report was published as "Call for National Body to fight US Pollution". It was a politically soothing line! (32 CC)

This AAAS Meeting was of great significance, as it showed the beginning of world-wide and wide-spread anti-science feeling. I had of course come across it in individuals, but never before in large and vehement groups. Many in Boston proclaimed their convictions by wearing convention buttons of a blue Earth with the phrase "Love it or leave it". I discussed this anti-science movement with a learned professor who compared it with the Anti-Christ movement of the Middle Ages. When Martin Luther (1483-1546) equated the Pope with Anti-Christ, it greatly contributed to the Reformation, and one was forced to question if the existing scientific establishment was not also ripe for a reformation. I found this an interesting thought and relevant to the period.

I was back in London on 3 January 1970 after nearly 12 weeks on American territory. The year 1969 had indeed been an *annus mirabilis* for me, having travelled more than 181000 kilometers. [See Title 169]

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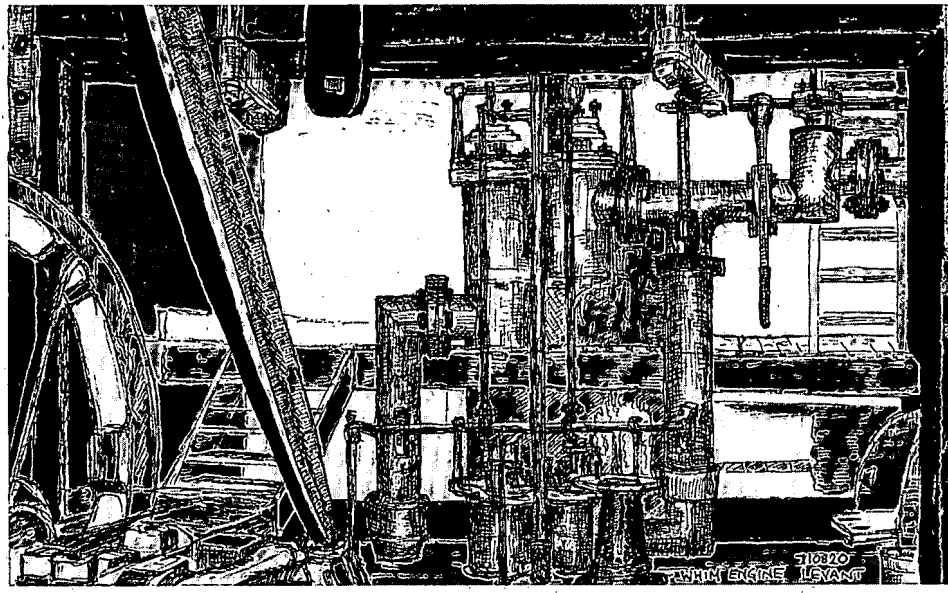

Title 205

As long as I owned various models of Landrovers, from about 1946 until 1972, I used to spend my holidays in Cornwall, where one of my pleasures was the drawing and colouring of old **Tin-mine Ruins**, which could only be reached by Landrover. In one of these I found the remnants of a Whim steam engine, built by Harvey in 1840, rebuilt in 1860 and working until 1930. It had a 24 inch diameter cylinder. I was so pleased to find it that I drew it immediately on 20 August 1971. *Author's copyright.*