

It was less than two months later, in August 1964, that I had another opportunity to indulge in atomic optimism, namely, at the third United Nations Conference on the "Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy". There was no anti-science or anti-technological sentiment in Geneva, where the First of these Mammoth Conferences (15 volumes of proceedings) had taken place in 1955, followed three years later with the Second (2300 scientific papers producing 34 volumes). The First led to a removal of secrecy about Atomic Fission and the second openly discussed for the first time Atomic Fusion research in the Soviet Union, in Europe and in the USA.

The Third Conference was called "Big Reactors—Big Business" by the assembled world press even before its opening by U Thant, the Secretary-General of the United Nations. They alone were capable of organising such an international monster assembly of 3000 industrial, Government and academic scientists and engineers. With money no object, hotel suites and whole floors had been booked months ahead by the representatives from 71 countries, all anxious to benefit from this mega show of "Atoms for Peace". Huge exhibition halls showed models of all kinds of atomic reactors and their components, for the first time, ready 'for sale'!

All possible uses of atomic energy were either displayed as exhibits or fully discussed at various seminars or exhaustively advertised at the many press conferences given by industrial and governmental sponsors. Equally spoilt by the ultra-rich purchasers of atomic electricity stations were the science correspondents from all well-known newspapers with invitations to parties, lunches and dinners at Geneva's best and most expensive restaurants. The atom was certainly then the 'best friend' of the press.

It was not difficult to report about these atomic halcyon days for the *Daily Telegraph*. Being an extremely conservative, almost chauvinistic newspaper, my obvious priority was to file about the 77-strong British delegation, led by Sir William Penney. All my stories were promptly published the next day. 'Costs of A-Power Plant falling, says Penney', 'Britain hopes to double nuclear Production—Penney's forecast for 1970', 'Reactors: A Choice for Britain' were the headlines for my major articles.

My minor contributions from Geneva, so my records show, were 'U.S. Reactor Race with Russia' and 'Nasser wants Nuclear Power Plant—Invitation for Tenders'. But for me the most interesting uses for nuclear energy were not atomic electricity stations, but other engineering uses.