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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS
620 WEST 168TH STREET, NEW YORK 32, N. Y.
DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

February 17th, 1954

Mr. Alden H. Emery,
Executive Secretary,
American Chemical Society,
1155 16th Street, N.W.,
Washington 6, D.C.

Dear Mr. Emery,

Thank you for your reply of January 27th. Whether one regards Mr. Hanson's letter as a whole or not, it raises a grave question as to his fitness as an adviser to a Society such as ours with international as well as national overtones and responsibilities. His letter was emotional and, on the basis of my information, contrary to fact. I ask that you bring these circumstances to the attention of the Committee on Admissions, particularly as the subject now seems to have been aired in the "Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists" and the French, at least, will know that the Committee was badly advised.

It seems to me a fallacy to consider that "basic science as we know it" cannot "exist under Communism". True, we know that charlatans such as Lysenko can obtain a political monopoly and so snuff out an entire science, and that the resonance theory is out of favor at the moment with the communists. All this is certainly repugnant to us. But even though machine guns can force an outward compliance with the fashionable views most of our Russian colleagues must continue to think clearly. Otherwise there could not be the volume of Russian chemical research which I see taking up more and more space in every number of Chemical Abstracts. And the reputed Russian successes in atomic energy indicate, to our sorrow, that this field of basic science exists there as we know it. What, then, can you prove by excluding communists from a "free scientific organization" which might lend encouragement to the independent minded and could certainly not be harmed by a few party-liners?

While I am respecting your wish to keep this correspondence personal and am treating it mainly as a Society matter, the recent newspaper reference to the "Bulletin" article would seem to put the matter on a different plane. I would have no objection to the publication of our correspondence in Chemical and Engineering News, where it would call the attention of our members to international implications in which we find ourselves involved whether we like them or not. We need more objective thinking in these matters, and scientists are the people to do just that.

Cordially yours,

MH:jm

Michael Heidelberger