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Dr. N. E. Bradbury, Director Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory  
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Los Alamos, New Mexico

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED  
BY AUTHORITY OF DOE/OC  
8/29/83 *Carl W. Son*  
REVIEWED BY *J. Diaz* DATE 10/16/85

Dear Dr. Bradbury:

You were kind enough to ask me to join the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory. I am giving most serious consideration to this possibility and hope that I might be able to spend a year or a little longer at Los Alamos. The main reason that attracts me is the great importance of the work on the atomic bomb. I fully realize the menacing international situation and I believe that the United States must develop its military strength to the utmost if we are not to succumb to the danger of communism. This is the main reason why I consider to interrupt my scientific work in Chicago in spite of the fact that I cannot hope to work as happily and with as much immediate satisfaction in a field of applied science as I am now working in my chosen subject of abstract theoretical physics.

In considering my proposed position in Los Alamos during the past weeks, I have been disturbed by a problem which can be best summarized by the words: "loyalty investigation." The purpose of the present letter is to request your advice on this problem.

I fully realize the necessity of checking improper dissemination of information. I am convinced of the necessity of checking Russian attempts to obtain classified information about atomic developments from our country. But clearance cases that have occurred in the last months have raised questions in my mind concerning the interpretation of the word "loyalty."

I feel certain that in my actions and intentions I am loyal to the United States. More specifically I am certain that I would under no conditions want to live under a communist dictatorship and that I shall in every way try to oppose communist-world domination. This, indeed, is the reason why I consider coming to Los Alamos.

On the other hand, I do not want to lose the privilege of reading any publication about Russia -- favorable or unfavorable. I consider it my right to make up my own mind about political questions and I feel that it is my intellectual duty to study all sides of a question that is as important as the question of communism. I have, for instance, read a year ago a long and detailed book by Mr. Schumann. It seemed to me from the contents of this book that Mr. Schumann is a fellow-traveller. His intention -- so I felt -- was to present an apology for the action of Stalin and his henchmen. I believe, however, that I never could understand the

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nature of the communist system and could never be convinced of the magnitude of communist danger if I did not inform myself of the arguments in favor of communism as well as of the reasons to reject that system. I should certainly not like to put myself into a position where it would be considered improper for me to read literature favorable to Russia or even to read publications which are Russian propaganda.

I furthermore do not want to be in a position where it would be necessary for me to avoid an individual merely because he is a convinced communist. It is of course clear that I never discuss classified material with any unauthorized person, whether I agree with his political views or not. In the past I have associated occasionally with individuals whom I believed to be communists. In the following I want to describe to you these cases.

In 1932 a good friend of mine, Mr. A\*, told me that he intended to join the communist party. Mr. A. and I had studied together in Peipzig and we did some work together on spectroscopy. You will recall that in 1932 Hitler was on his way to power and it seemed to many that the Nazi system and communism were the only two alternatives. Mr. A. held this belief. I did not agree with him but my friendship for him was in no way influenced by our lack of agreement.

At this time the government of Hungary was semi-fascist. The communist party was outlawed in Hungary. The fact that Mr. A. belonged to the communist party was soon discovered and he was arrested. After several months he was free again but his chances for a decent living in Hungary were gone.

I recommended Mr. A. to the Russian physicist Landau whom I had met in Leipzig and later in Copenhagen. As a consequence Mr. A. was offered a position in Charkow which he accepted. After a year he left Russia. By the time I met him again he had changed his mind completely. It was clear to him that his ideas of communism and the system that existed in Russia were two entirely different things. The detailed reasons Mr. A. gave me for his changed stand left no doubt in my mind that he had honestly and thoroughly put behind himself his former ideas on communism. This conversation between Mr. A. and myself took place in the summer of 1936 in Austria. His dramatic conversion contributed much to confirm my own low opinion of the Russian brand of tyranny. It also showed me clearly the tragic and ridiculous position in which members of the communist party outside Russia find themselves.

Another close acquaintance whom I should mention in this connection is Mr. B\*. I knew him in Washington, D. C. from 1936 to 1941. He is a highly educated, intelligent and agreeable man. I have no knowledge that he was ever a member of the communist party but in the years I saw a lot of him I certainly considered him as a fellow-traveller. In 1939 he did his best to justify the action of Stalin in making a pact with Hitler. We had lengthy arguments on this point which left both of us unconvinced. I do not know whether he has changed his mind since.

\* No useful purpose is served by giving these names although I am quite willing to give them to you if you think it necessary

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Dr. N. E. Bradbury

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It is quite possible that some of my other friends or acquaintances had connections with the communist party. I have not discussed politics with all of them and some of them may have been reticent on purpose. In no other cases did I have as clearcut evidence as in those mentioned above.

I certainly do not want to feel that in order to behave properly I must scrutinize the convictions of my friends. I furthermore want to feel free that in case I know of a person that believes in communism I need not avoid him for that reason alone.

You would do me a great favor by informing me whether my behavior in the past as described above disqualifies me from work in Los Alamos according to the existing and expected rules of security. I am of course particularly interested whether similar actions in the future would be found objectionable.

I should like to express my hope that you will be able to reassure me on these points. If this should not be the case I would have to discontinue my work on classified subjects. This I would regret because of my concern about the generally slower progress in atomic development since 1945. With the great majority of physicists back in pure research I believe that even the little help I can give might prove helpful in strengthening our country and improving the chances of the democratic forces in their struggle for survival.

Sincerely yours,

Edward Teller

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