

## GENERAL SCIENCE

# Oppenheimer's "Security"

The Atomic Energy Commission's special review board, in a two-to-one decision, has recommended that J. Robert Oppenheimer's security clearance not be reinstated.

► A SPECIAL Atomic Energy Commission security review board has declared that J. Robert Oppenheimer is "loyal" and "discreet," but has recommended two to one against restoring his suspended security clearance. (See SNL, April 17, p. 224.)

The board's chairman, Gordon Gray, president of the University of North Carolina, and Thomas A. Morgan, former president of the Sperry Corporation, voted against restoring Oppenheimer's access to information deemed classified by the government.

A minority report was filed by Dr. Ward V. Evans, chemistry professor at Loyola University in Chicago, who stated that the board's failure to clear Oppenheimer would be a "black mark on the escutcheon" of the United States. "Only time will prove whether he was wrong on the moral and political grounds" for which he opposed a crash development of the H-bomb program, Dr. Evans stated in his dissenting opinion.

The three members agreed that Oppenheimer's opposition to this program "involved no lack of loyalty to the United States or attachment to the Soviet Union."

Oppenheimer's attorneys immediately appealed his case, asking that the review go directly to the five Atomic Energy Commissioners for a decision, instead of reaching them through the AEC personnel security review board.

Lloyd K. Garrison of New York and John W. Davis are the lawyers who requested that Oppenheimer be allowed to waive his right of appeal through regular channels in order to ask for direct consideration by the present AEC commissioners.

In its decision, the board's two-man majority said that they had come "to a clear conclusion, which should be reassuring to the people of this country, that he (Oppenheimer) is a loyal citizen."

## Majority's Conclusions

Other considerations, however, led Gordon Gray and Thomas Morgan as the board majority to conclude that reinstating Oppenheimer's security clearance would be "a danger to the common defense and security of this country" and thus not "clearly consistent with its interests."

These considerations were:

"1. We find that Dr. Oppenheimer's continuing conduct and associations have reflected a serious disregard for the requirements of the security system.

"2. We have found a susceptibility to influence which could have serious implica-

tions for the security interests of the country.

"3. We find his conduct in the hydrogen bomb program sufficiently disturbing as to raise a doubt as to whether his future participation, if characterized by the same attitudes in a government program relating to the national defense, would be clearly consistent with the best interests of security.

"4. We have regretfully concluded that Dr. Oppenheimer has been less than candid in several instances in his testimony before this Board."

## Dissenting Opinion

In his dissent, Dr. Evans said that the board's "failure to clear Dr. Oppenheimer will be a black mark" for this country.

Oppenheimer's witnesses before the special board, he said, "are a considerable segment of the scientific backbone of our nation, and they indorse him."

Dr. Evans stated that he was worried "about the effect an improper decision may have on the scientific development in our country," because the science of nuclear physics is new here and "most of our au-

thorities in this field came from overseas. I would," he said, "very much regret any action to retard or hinder" the development of nuclear science.

Dr. Evans declared that, even though Oppenheimer's judgment was "bad in some cases and most excellent in others," it was better now than it was in 1947, and that, therefore, he could not "damn" Oppenheimer at this time and "ruin" his career.

## Unanimous Findings

In appraising the significance of their unanimous findings concerning Oppenheimer's loyalty, all three members of the special review board agreed that:

"The facts referred to in General Nichols' letter (informing Dr. Oppenheimer of the board's findings) fall clearly into two major areas of concern.

"The first of these (23 in number) involves primarily Dr. Oppenheimer's Communist connections in the earlier years and continued associations arising out of those connections.

"The second major area of concern is related to Dr. Oppenheimer's attitudes and activities with respect to the development of the hydrogen bomb.

"The board has found the allegations in the first part of the Commission's letter to be substantially true."

By his own admission, the board states, he seems to have been an active fellow traveler. According to him, his sympathies with the Communists seem to have begun to taper off somewhat after 1939, and very much more so after 1942.



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