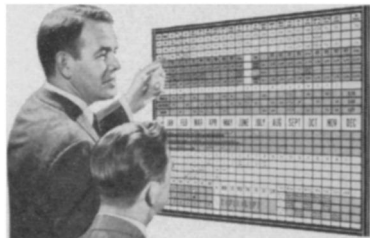
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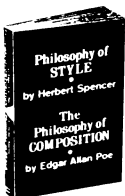
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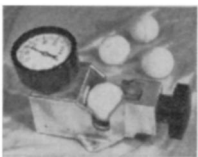


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MEDICINE

Polio Now Conquered

➤ **ONLY A DECADE AGO** an anxious world learned that one of its great childhood killers and cripplers, the polio virus, had been conquered.

On April 12, 1955, the Salk vaccine was declared "safe, effective and potent," after evaluation studies conducted by Dr. Thomas Francis Jr. for The National Foundation-March of Dimes.

Today, the disease which had been striking some 40,000 persons each year has virtually vanished from the United States.

Parents no longer worry that a "summer cold" may lead to death or permanent paralysis, common among polio victims.

With the start of mass vaccinations under March of Dimes auspices in 1955, the incidence of polio began to turn downward, slowly at first and then with increasing momentum as more and more children received the Salk vaccine.

Since 1955, the number of cases of polio in this country has dropped more than 99%. As a result, during 1964 only 121 cases of polio were reported, a rate of less than one per million population.

Sixteen states and the District of Columbia did not report a single case. In fact, the largest outbreak of the disease in 1964 involved two gorillas and an orangutan at Yerkes Primate Center, Orange Park, Fla.

"The decline of paralytic polio during the last ten years is a historic triumph in preventive medicine," Dr. Luther L. Terry,

surgeon general of the U.S. Public Health Service said.

He paid tribute to Dr. Jonas Salk "for his pioneering labors," Dr. Albert Sabin "for the development of the oral vaccine," and Dr. John Enders and the many others "whose scientific research led to the development of the two vaccines."

Besides the individuals responsible for the conquest of polio, Dr. Terry also recognized the contribution of The National Foundation-March of Dimes "to public understanding of polio, to the care of its victims and to the victory" of the Salk vaccine.

The battle against polio really began in 1934 with the first of the nationwide Franklin D. Roosevelt birthday balls to support clinical research and patient aid at Georgia Springs Foundation.

Creation of The National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis-March of Dimes organization in Roosevelt's name in 1938 led to an all-out offensive against the disease.

However, the grueling 17-year-old fight paid off quickly and at relatively low cost, said Basil O'Connor, president of The National Foundation.

It is not just coincidence that on April 12 Americans also observed the anniversary of the death of the man who gave polio prevention its greatest push, President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

• Science News Letter, 87:258 April 24, 1965

MEDICINE

Salk Says Man Is Challenge

➤ **THE MAN** who developed polio vaccine just a decade ago, Dr. Jonas Salk, challenged scientists and humanists alike to be concerned with man himself—and not necessarily the things with which man is concerned.

In a speech to the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., Dr. Salk noted that man is greatly affected by the speed of changes in an environment which he himself created.

Two sets of forces are constantly guiding man's life—one set from within which he cannot see but can feel, and another set from the outside that he can both see and feel.

The meeting ground of inner and outer forces is both a problem and a challenge to scientists, Dr. Salk told the reporters.

The director of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, La Jolla, Calif., emphasized the need for a basic science to underlie man as a whole and man in his social organization.

Biology, medicine and life itself must be tied together, he said.

When scientists express interest in a specific disease, they must first ask what its biological basis is—what is right and what is wrong with any particular patient suffering from its effects. It is this "point of

view" of looking at questions to find answers that concerns Dr. Salk.

He believes that specific attitudes—toward segregation, education, or anything else—are introduced at certain points in a person's life.

The child of six is malleable, he pointed out. Later he is fixed, except at some point in adolescence when he questions his own beliefs.

The prospect for a breakthrough in either cancer or heart disease is remote, Dr. Salk said, because these are tied to evolutionary mechanisms and aging—rather than outside bacteria or viruses as was the case in polio.

Eventually, he said there will be a vaccine to prevent the common cold.

As to obstacles in human transplants, the scientists noted that the body will not tolerate substances introduced after birth, but will tolerate those introduced before. The problem, therefore, is to simulate or copy after birth the phenomenon of acceptance that exists before birth, so that a transplant given by one person will be accepted by another.

The scope of biology and its effects seems limitless to Dr. Salk. He said he did not know what there is about man that is not biologically determined.

• Science News Letter, 87:258 April 24, 1965