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*CCB files*

30 December 1953



MEMORANDUM FOR Mr. C. D. Jackson  
Special Assistant to the President

SUBJECT: The Red Dean of Canterbury

1. On November 19, 1953 you forwarded to me a letter from George Catlin (herewith returned) attaching a clipping from the London "Evening Standard" of November 4, printing an abstracted version of the Dean's statement to that paper of the reasons why he was "firmly convinced that the U. S. forces conducted bacteriological warfare in North Korea and China." You requested that consideration be given to ways of negating the impact of the Dean's statement.

2. The Working Group of which I am Chairman discussed this problem on November 24, December 1, and December 8. Several possible courses of action were considered, including direct answers to the Dean by U. S. clergymen or other appropriate personnel, answers to the Dean by British personnel, attacks on the substance of the letter but avoiding personalities, attacks on the personalities of the International Scientific Commission and the substance of their report. The advice of the British Embassy was solicited as to the desirability and usefulness of instituting a propaganda attack or a libel suit against the Dean.

3. On November 20 Dr. Joseph Needham, a member of the International Scientific Commission on Germ Warfare, entered the controversy with a letter to The New Statesman and Nation, making clear that repudiations of "confessions" by American Air Force personnel had in no way shaken his belief that the U. S. had conducted germ warfare.

4. On November 21, Sir George P. Thomson, Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, answered Needham. Thomson was a Nobel Prize winner for physics, 1937; Scientific Adviser to the Air Ministry, 1943-1944; Scientific Adviser to the British Delegation to the Atomic Energy Commission of the United Nations, 1946-1947. His public stand was of special interest, since it represented not only the addition of a new top-notch scientific ally, but it marked the first occasion on which Needham had been openly opposed by a fellow member of Cambridge, a step that is taken only rarely.

5. There was then a brief exchange of letters between Needham (November 28 and December 12) and Thomson (December 5), copies of which are attached. The final opinion of the American Embassy, London, is that Needham's shifting of ground "can hardly have any result but to decrease further what remaining prestige he might have in scientific circles."

*CCB 7229.2 (30 Dec 53)*

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6. It is important to note that in its issue of December 12, 1953, the New Statesman and Nation took an open stand that the Communist propaganda concerning Germ Warfare is false.

7. Through the Department of State the British Embassy reported that the original letter of Dean Hewlett Johnson was "not worth any attention" and that the Dean was "thoroughly in disrepute".

8. [REDACTED]

9. In view of the exchange between Thomson and Needham, wherein an outstanding British scientist attacked in a timely fashion the credibility of the substance of the germ warfare charge, the editorial stand of the New Statesman and Nation and the opinion of the British Embassy cited above, I feel that we can allow the specific matter of the Dean's letter to rest unanswered, if you concur.

10. [REDACTED]

Meanwhile, if you think it desirable, Major Kelleher has volunteered to prepare an article attacking Soviet propaganda in general and particularly showing how the Dean has been used by the Communists as a stooge and a dupe.

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*[Signature]*  
Charles R. Norberg

## ENCLOSURES:

1. Letter from George Catlin attaching clipping re Red Dean
2. Foreign Service Despatches from London (11/25 #1913; 12/16 No.2150; 12/17 No.2170)
3. Clipping from The New Statesman & Nation, 11/28 (Joseph Needham)

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