

Viney
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CBW

Czechoslovak Section,
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Dear Matt,

24.1.70

I've been postponing this until I could find time to comment seriously on the last paper of yours you sent me, but now I still haven't and the delay is becoming merely rude. I can't even send you a lame New Year substitute for the Christmas card, now. Yes, I enjoyed exchanging smiles with you, as you say; mine actually was a wink that turned into a cocking of the head, pricking up of the ears and arching of the eyebrows (excuse some of these dreadful-sounding British metaphors) as I gathered some of the news of US flexibility that you went on to describe in your letter of Dec.3. --I was also irked that I couldn't see you afterwards, and meet your wife (she looked nice enough to be your secretary as well), especially as I'd had to refuse your invitation to join your party the previous spring. But my attendance at CBW events these days is always by permission of Czechoslovakia, an activity squeezed into the gaps between radio transmissions. I keep up with things as well as I can, but CBW has now passed somewhat from the hands of the Disarmament Research Unit in the F.O. (no longer much qualified to deal with it, anyway, since Ian Bellamy left for Australia) and back to the "regular" Disarmament Department (formerly Atomic Energy and Disarmament Department), under its energetic new head Hope-Jones. With Prague under a pall I hope to get a bit more time this year and am going to ask the I.S.S. if they would like me to have a shot at doing an Adelphi Paper on CBW and Control before I lose all claim to expertise.

On the points you raise in your letter, Matt: I wouldn't place much faith in what you call Britain's traditional interpretation of the Protocol in respect of harassing gases. 1932 is a long time back. And there's a lot of influential opinion which accepts the original US case for CS in Vietnam as a humane option, and doesn't feel that this case is overthrown by the use of CS to induce guerillas to expose themselves to conventional lethal weapons, nor by the massive use of CS to create lethal concentrations. Are flares a lethal weapon if they enable you to ^{find} a human target? These sort of arguments don't cut much ice, I find, with people who have experienced war without being totally numbed by it. The Steven Roses, of course, are appealing to a different audience - of people who find all weapons disgusting and are happy to inhibit any ^{military} research close to their professional fields; and of people who would happily sabotage their own country's ^{military} capability because they are out of sympathy with the interests they expect their country, ~~is~~ or its allies, to be pursuing in the near future. But that's another story.

I found it hard, by the way, to listen in silence to the Russian who graced your platform at Caxton Hall (where I was married, incidentally, 19 years ago). ~~What~~ But that isn't the reason why I left in the middle of one of his amiable compliments to the peace-loving British: I just had to get back to a studio. I asked the people around in the foyer if they could tell me what Czechoslovak representative had been at the conference proper, since I had just read of Prof. Málék's expulsion from the presidium of the Academy of Sciences (he had been pretty outspoken in 1968). But nobody knew anything.

I don't know if you saw a book review I did for the War/Peace Review: you may have noticed a sentence reflecting the misgivings you had voiced in London the previous spring about a separate British BW initiative perhaps deflecting attention from the greater CW danger at the time when US opinion needed to look both subjects square in the face. I didn't really agree that linking the two in US eyes was more likely to yield more controls than less, in the final resort; but I hope, Matt, you would now agree that the UK move hasn't made progress harder in the chemical field, and that if in the end something is achieved first on the BW side - the more remote, but not (I think) the lesser danger - you won't feel we have all taken a step backwards.

Nobody, I think, will be paying for me to go to any more conferences on CBW; but let us keep in touch - I should be sorry to lose contact with you personally, and it would be a great loss for me professionally (insofar as the word still fits). All the best,
Beryck *BERYCK E. VINEY*

AIR LETTER
PARAVION AEROGRAMME

REMEMBER
TO USE THE
POSTCODE



Green book

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