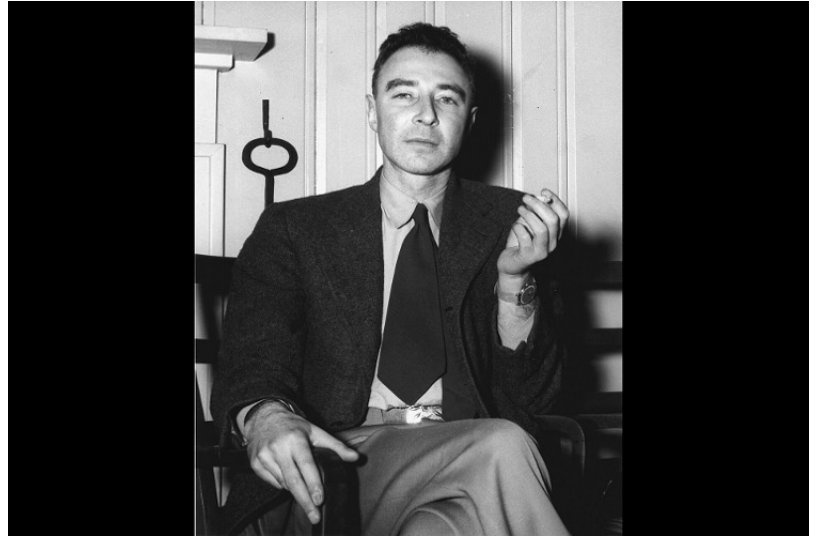




Oppenheimer Rides Again

The story you are about to read is true. The names, the dates, and the places have not been changed to protect anybody. Its re-telling is made necessary by increasingly brazen efforts to turn black into white in the memory of the American people.

This story may well begin with a disclaimer of any interest in the scientific competence of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, the man who was wartime director of the Los Alamos laboratory of the Manhattan Engineering District where the A-bomb was manufactured. Our interest in Oppenheimer, in this year of 1958, is centered not in the famous scientist himself, but in the bearing of the Oppenheimer Case upon the state of public morals in general and upon the state of current loyalty standards in particular.



Public Domain
J. Robert Oppenheimer in 1946

Keeping the Case Alive...

On June 29, 1954, the Atomic Energy Commission released its findings in the matter of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer. These findings were based upon evidence adduced before the AEC's Personnel Security Board (often referred to as the Gray Board) in hearings which extended from April 12 through May 6, 1954, and which run to 992 printed pages.

In its statement, which was supported by a vote of four to one, the Atomic Energy Commission declared: "... we have concluded that Dr. Oppenheimer's clearance for access to restricted data should not be reinstated." Furthermore, the AEC said: "... we find Dr. Oppenheimer is not entitled to the continued confidence of the Government and of this commission because of the proof of fundamental defects in his 'character.' "

The decision of the Atomic Energy Commission formally closed the Oppenheimer Case. But ever since then the AEC has been subjected to an unparalleled campaign of abuse which strongly suggests an efficient organization of propaganda. Its visible aim is to rebuild the reputation of Dr. Oppenheimer, and to put him on a hero's pedestal. And the collateral purpose of some of that propaganda seems to be to make Communism respectable, treason merely a difference of opinion, and any sense of moral values the equivalent of imbecility.

While it is within the legitimate scope of any American's prerogatives to challenge the verdict of any tribunal —be it a court or a commission—those who do the challenging must bear the responsibility for so boldly brandishing the issue in public discussion. In the Oppenheimer matter, this necessitates going over again and again some of the ugly facts of the Oppenheimer career; facts which the scientist himself would probably prefer to have the public forget. Those who elect to distort the facts must be answered, because the public has serious interests at stake. So let's take another brief look at parts of the Oppenheimer record.



II

Enter Jean Tatlock ...

It is a widely held belief that the average Communist's life story is divided into chapters arranged in somewhat the following order: Youthful Idealism Is Challenged by the Depression of the Early 1930's; The Young Collegian Finds in Communism the Answer to His Emotional and Intellectual Needs; He Joins the Party and Goes Through a Dizzying Round of Exhilarating Revolt Against Established Customs and Authority; He Dines, Wines, and Dances in an Exciting Whirl of Activity on Behalf of the Chinese Peasants, the Spanish Loyalists, and the Scottsboro Boys; The Excitement Wears Thin and Boredom Sets In; He Discovers That the Communist Party Is Not Managed by Secular Saints; Bitter Disillusionment Supplants Early Idealism; He Drops Out of the Party and Reverts to Normal American Behavior—Little the Worse for His Brief Association with Communism.

While such is undoubtedly a rough sketch of the experience of quite a number of ex-Communists, it is often a self-serving account devoid of any profound or even honest self-analysis. And, it is certainly not the story of J. Robert Oppenheimer.

In the real-life script of J. Robert Oppenheimer and his association with the Communist apparatus there were elements of stark tragedy. One of these was his long relationship with Jean Tatlock.

According to Oppenheimer's own account, the year 1936 marked a sharp turning in his life. He was thirty-two years of age; his student days were nine years behind him. He was a successful professor at two of the country's most distinguished institutions of higher learning, the University of California and the California Institute of Technology. The impact of the Depression was certainly not a personal problem. There was nothing in Oppenheimer's situation that even remotely hinted that he was about to become deeply and tragically involved with the Communist conspiracy.

Then came Jean Tatlock, who was to figure decisively in Oppenheimer's life for the next eight years. When they were introduced in 1936, she was twenty-one years of age.

Oppenheimer learned at once that Miss Tatlock was a member of the Communist Party; she told him so. Twice during the early years of their liaison, says Dr. Oppenheimer, he and Jean Tatlock had considered themselves "close enough to marriage to think of [themselves] as engaged." Their intimacy continued for some years after his marriage to Katherine Puening Dallet Harrison in 1940.

It was almost inevitable that the security officers of the Manhattan Engineering District, whose duty it was to protect the secret of the A-bomb against espionage, would know about Oppenheimer's private life and about his liaison with a Communist woman. That was part of their job; and, in the carrying out of their sworn obligations to guard the world's greatest secret, they placed Dr. Oppenheimer under a twenty-four-hour surveillance. In their anxiety and in the discharge of their exacting duties, they could not afford to take chances.

Even the most hardened investigators encounter occasional surprises, and the security officers of the Los Alamos laboratory must have experienced one when they found the director of the A-bomb project, during the peak of their anxiety in June, 1943, visiting with a Communist woman hundreds of miles away from his work at Los Alamos. Dr. Oppenheimer was with Jean Tatlock.

When asked by the Personnel Security Board of the Atomic Energy Commission why he left Los Alamos to visit this Communist woman, Dr. Oppenheimer replied, "I felt that she had to see me ... She was extremely unhappy." It was as simple as that; or was it? Maybe Dr. Oppenheimer was so naive that he



Written by [J.B. Mathews](#) on October 6, 1958

didn't know Communist women are sometimes bound by Party discipline to use their male friendships for a double purpose.

At any rate, the security officers of the Manhattan Engineering District did not confront Dr. Oppenheimer with questions of morals or violations of security regulations. They appreciated the fact that they had a problem child—to say the least—on their hands.

Jean Tatlock was a graduate of Vassar College. She took a Ph.D. degree at the University of California. There is no doubt that she was a gifted young woman. She had excellent academic antecedents; her father was a noted professor of English at the University of California.

From the beginning Miss Tatlock had lost no time in inducting Oppenheimer into the wide circle of her Communist and fellow-traveling associates. Even in 1936, at the rather youthful age of twenty-one, she knew the leading Communists of California and saw to it that her new friend, the young professor of science, met them. She was not only a Communist enthusiast of the idealistic variety; she was already on the fringes (at least) of the Communist espionage apparatus.

Professor Thomas Addis, of Stanford University, long known as one of the most prominent Communists in the academic world, was a particularly close friend of Jean Tatlock. Soon after she introduced Addis to Oppenheimer, Addis became something of a Communist mentor to the novice Oppenheimer. It was Addis who persuaded Oppenheimer to give large sums of money, in cash, to the Communist Party, over a period of four or five years—the last such cash contribution having been made after Oppenheimer took up his duties as director of the Los Alamos laboratory.

Oppenheimer's financial contributions to the Communist Party, admittedly ranging somewhere between \$500 and \$1000 annually, sound very much as though they were regular dues payments. When asked whether he knew his cash contributions were "going through Communist channels," Oppenheimer replied, "I knew it."

When the Gray Board asked Oppenheimer, "When did you meet this group of Communists and fellow travelers who were friends of Miss Tatlock?" he replied, "That came on gradually during 1937, maybe late 1936, not all at once." The record makes it clear that Jean Tatlock was the person primarily responsible for surrounding Oppenheimer with Communists.

In addition to Professor Thomas Addis, Oppenheimer came to know, as a result of his liaison with Miss Tatlock, the following Communists:

William Schneiderman, head of the Communist Party of California, whom he met at parties in the homes of Louise Bransten and Haakon Chevalier where the Party line was expounded;

Haakon Chevalier, about whom more later;

Kenneth May, a Communist Party functionary in California, at whose home Oppenheimer attended a party for which there was an admission charge for the benefit of the Communist Party's newspaper on the West Coast — to which party Oppenheimer went in the company of Joseph Weinberg and Clarence Hiskey, who are alleged to have engaged in espionage on behalf of the Soviet Union;

Margaret Ellis, identified as a Communist sympathizer, who tried as late as 1952 to enlist Oppenheimer's support of the convicted Communist spies, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg; and Louise Bransten, a wealthy Communist woman who has been a shadowy figure in the Communist underground of espionage and whose home was used for Communist Party meetings.

There were many others; but these will suffice to indicate that Jean Tatlock did her Communist work



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well.

Miss Tatlock was also instrumental in getting Oppenheimer involved in the sponsorship of such Communist-front organizations as the American Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom, Consumers Union, the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, and the Teachers Union. In a memorandum dated September 14, 1943, Colonel John Lansdale reported a conversation between Oppenheimer and General Leslie Groves, in which Oppenheimer was said to have admitted that he, Oppenheimer, "belonged to every Communist-front organization on the West Coast." Oppenheimer later declared that, if he said this, it was in the nature of a jocular exaggeration.

Exit Jean Tatlock ...

On the morning of January 6, 1944, the following headline appeared on the front pages of California newspapers: "Woman Psychiatrist of San Francisco Drowns Self in Bathtub." Sure enough, it was Dr. Oppenheimer's friend with whom he had been involved for so many years in clandestine sex and Communism. At the time of her death, she was Dr. Jean S. Tatlock, attached to Mt. Zion Hospital in San Francisco.

The police hinted darkly that they did not know or care to reveal all the facts of the tragic death, by announcing that it was "an apparent suicide by drowning."

Unusual behavior on the part of Jean Tatlock's father contributed an element of mystery to the circumstances of her death. The generous interpretation of his actions was that he experienced a severe state of shock on finding his daughter's nude body in the bathtub. Having received no response to his telephone calls for two days the father had gone to her apartment and entered by a window. Before the police arrived, he had removed the body from the bathtub to a couch.

More extraordinary still, the father had immediately set about burning photographs and correspondence belonging to the deceased woman. What important evidence they contained will never be known; but their ill-considered destruction was bound to arouse suspicions. If these suspicions were unfounded, the father had only his own haste to blame.

An incoherent note left by Jean Tatlock contained only one legible sentence: "I am disgusted with everything." Adding further to the element of mystery was the fact that she had not given her father, friends, or professional associates any inkling of suicidal intentions up to the very moment of her death.

III

An Anonymous Woman ...

In a foreword to its *Hearings Regarding Steve Nelson*, dated June 8, 1949, the House Committee on Un-American Activities recorded the following observations concerning Steve Nelson, born Steve Mesarosh in Yugoslavia, and an anonymous woman:

Steve Nelson was so important to the Communist movement and had gained such favor with his superiors that in 1940 he was assigned as organizer for the party in the bay area at the port of San Francisco, Calif. He was also given an underground assignment to gather information regarding the development of the atomic bomb. This assignment was facilitated by Steve Nelson's having met a woman in Spain who had gone to Spain in 1937 to meet her husband, also a volunteer in the International Brigade. Up on arrival in Spain, this woman was informed that her husband had been killed and she was befriended by Steve Nelson. This woman, up on her return to the United States, moved to Berkeley, Calif., where she became acquainted with and married one of the leading physicists



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engaged in the development of the atomic bomb.

"This woman," so scantily clothed with anonymity, was none other than Katherine Puening Dallet Harrison Oppenheimer, wife of Dr. Robert J. Oppenheimer.

As a student at the University of Wisconsin, Katherine Puening had married a Communist Party functionary named Joe Dallet. After their marriage, Katherine joined the Communist Party.

Early in the Spanish Civil War, Dallet had been ordered to Spain by the Communist Party. Whether Dallet was killed in battle or executed by his Communist bosses is a question which has not been answered satisfactorily.

On learning of her husband's death, Katherine Dallet tried to go to Spain. She was in Paris at the time, having been summoned there by someone whose identity is not disclosed in the record. Once in Paris, she was shown a telegram which stated that Joe Dallet had been killed in action. She was then informed that Steve Nelson "was coming back from Spain in a day or two" and that she "might want to wait and see what Steve had to say." Steve objected to her going to Spain, and she desisted in the effort. Instead, she spent a week in Paris and "saw Steve most of the time." The House Committee's Foreword is apparently in error in stating that its anonymous woman and Steve Nelson met in Spain.

But, the House Committee was right in the matter of major importance:

When the Radiation Laboratory at the University of California at Berkeley became an important center of research in nuclear physics at the beginning of the war, the Communist espionage chiefs sent Steve Nelson to California on the highest of missions; namely, to report on developments in nuclear physics.

Once in California, Steve Nelson renewed his acquaintance with Katherine, who in the meantime had married and divorced a Dr. Harrison and then married Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer.

In her testimony before the Gray Board, Mrs. Oppenheimer said that, according to her recollection, Steve Nelson visited in the Oppenheimer home twice, that the visits were strictly social, and that Nelson was accompanied both times by his wife and child. Dr. Oppenheimer estimated that there were "several" such visits. The Oppenheimers were hazy about the dates of Nelson's visits but admitted that some of them occurred after Dr. Oppenheimer had "some connection" with the A-bomb project.

When the Gray board asked Dr. Oppenheimer, "What did you have in common with Steve Nelson?" the Doctor made the astonishing reply, "Nothing, except an affection for my wife." Elaborating on this extraordinary answer to the Board, Oppenheimer stated with an unparalleled blandness, "They (Nelson and Mrs. Oppenheimer) had close affectionate relationships and I was a natural bystander." The Gray Board did not pursue the matter further.

How "close affectionate relationships" could develop between one of the most sinister figures in the history of Communist espionage and the wife of the director of the atomic bomb project, with the director himself in the role of "natural bystander," and all as a result of a week together in Paris in 1937 plus two social encounters of the Nelson and Oppenheimer families in 1941-1942, poses a puzzling question. There must be gaps in the story which, if filled in with facts, would make sense which is now entirely lacking.

A Liar in 1943 or 1954?

In the middle of the War (1943), Oppenheimer told Colonel Boris T. Pash, chief of the Counter Intelligence Branch of Military Intelligence, a story of attempted Soviet espionage at the Los Alamos



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Laboratory by Haakon Chevalier.

Colonel Pash was one of the high officers of Military Intelligence charged with the protection of the atomic-weapons project against spies. His was not a routine or perfunctory assignment. The security of the United States was his solemn business. To lie about Soviet espionage deliberately, painstakingly, in great circumstantial detail, and for no ostensible purpose, to Colonel Pash would be unthinkable for any loyal American. Nevertheless, that is exactly what J. Robert Oppenheimer declares that he did in 1943 while he was director of the Los Alamos A-bomb project.

What was Oppenheimer's purpose in trying to confuse the high security officers of this country at a moment when millions of American fighting men were taking the risks of death in all parts of the world?

How, millions of Americans will ask, can thousands of scientists and newspaper editors condone Oppenheimer's behavior in the face of his own statements in 1943 and 1954? They are, on the record, guilty of a "softness" toward vital issues of loyalty and basic integrity which involve the very existence of the United States.

Was Oppenheimer's "cock and bull story" about espionage told for the purpose of diverting the attention of the A-bomb security officers from the real espionage which, we now know, went on in the Los Alamos laboratory? This question is raised by Oppenheimer's own unsatisfactory explanations.

Counsel for the Personnel Security Board of the AEC asked Oppenheimer the following question: "Isn't it a fair statement today, Dr. Oppenheimer, that according to your testimony now, you told not one lie to Colonel Pash, but a whole fabrication and tissue of lies?" To this question Oppenheimer replied, "Right."

Again counsel queried, "Why did you go into such great circumstantial detail about this thing if you were telling a cock and bull story?" To this, Oppenheimer offered the lame answer, "I fear that this whole thing is a piece of idiocy." That reply explains nothing, coming, as it does, from the man of history and destiny, upon the slender thread of whose competence and integrity the future of the nation depended.

In its final decision in the Oppenheimer case, the Atomic Energy Commission, on June 29, 1954, made the following observation:

"It is not clear today whether the account Dr. Oppenheimer gave to Colonel Pash in 1943 concerning the Chevalier incident or the story he told the Gray Board last month is the true version,

"If Dr. Oppenheimer lied in 1943, as he now says he did, he committed the crime of knowingly making false and material statements to a Federal officer. If he lied to the Board, he committed perjury in 1954."

Colonel Pash, who is a skilled investigator and interrogator in such matters, is still convinced that in 1943 Oppenheimer told him the truth about the Eltenton-Chevalier attempted espionage and, by implication, committed perjury before the Personnel Security Board in 1954.

Colonel Pash believes that Oppenheimer had an ulterior motive in telling him, quite belatedly, about the Eltenton-Chevalier matter on August 26, 1943, his purpose having been to throw Military Intelligence off guard in its investigation of himself.

Colonel Pash further believes that there was never any real break between Oppenheimer and the Communist Party.



IV

Who Stopped the Investigation? ...

It is time for the people of the United States to ask, and demand an answer to, a vastly more important question than “who promoted Peress?” In the summer of 1943 Military Intelligence, under the direction of Colonel Boris T. Pash, had embarked upon a full-dress investigation of the Communist connections of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer. This investigation was not related in any way to Oppenheimer’s tale of the Eltonton-Chevalier attempted espionage. It was based upon the substantial evidence of Oppenheimer’s own intimate connections with Communists and the Communist Party. Colonel Pash communicated the results of his preliminary investigation of Oppenheimer-grave in their import-to the Pentagon in Washington.

Under date of June 29, 1943, Colonel Pash forwarded specific recommendations to the Pentagon, including the following: “That every effort be made to find a suitable replacement for subject and that as soon as such replacement is trained that subject be removed completely from the project and dismissed from employment by the United States Government.” Surely, that was a drastic recommendation. But it was to prove, eleven years after it was sent to the Pentagon, as having been fully supported by the evidence and developments.

Other items in Colonel Pash’s official communication of June 29, 1943, on the subject of Oppenheimer’s connection with the Communist Party, include the following:

“Information available to this office (Military Intelligence) indicates that subject (J. Robert Oppenheimer) may still be connected with the Communist Party.

“Bernadette Doyle, organizer of the Communist Party in Alameda County, California, has referred to subject and his brother, Frank, as being regularly registered within the party.

“It is known that the Alameda branch of the party was concerned over the Communist affiliation of subject and his brother, as it was not considered prudent for this connection to be known in view of the highly secret work on which both are engaged.”

There was much other information of similar purport. But what happened? Suddenly and swiftly, somebody in Washington intervened, and this investigation of Oppenheimer by Military Intelligence was stopped cold. In sworn testimony given on April 30, 1954, before the Personnel Security Board of the Atomic Energy Commission, Colonel Pash revealed, for the first time, that the investigation “was discontinued on instructions from Washington ... sometime in the middle of August (1943).”

Yes, Who? ...

Who, in the Pentagon or elsewhere in Washington, ordered Colonel Pash to halt his investigation into Communist connections of J. Robert Oppenheimer—after so much material information had been discovered and reported?

Who, in the Pentagon or elsewhere in Washington, was responsible fifteen years ago for calling off the investigation which might have brought to an end the espionage activities of Klaus Fuchs and the Rosenbergs? Who, in the Pentagon or elsewhere in Washington, was the traitor bent on protecting Communists who had penetrated the A-bomb project?

Unless the documents have been destroyed or “misplaced,” as happened in the case of the report on the Karyn Forest Massacre of the Polish officers by the Communists, it would be a simple matter to



Written by [J.B. Mathews](#) on October 6, 1958

ascertain who it was that decreed the halting of the Oppenheimer investigation in August of 1943. To fix the responsibility for that decision is ten thousand times more important than finding the circumstances of the shining of G. David Schine's shoes and his visits to the Stork Club, on the investigation of which the Pentagon spent huge sums of money. Why not find out, and let the American people know, who was responsible for ignoring and nullifying the preliminary report of Military Intelligence on the Communist connections of J. Robert Oppenheimer? Or is this one of the many facts about Communist subversion that must be kept from the American people by the imposition of the Truman-Eisenhower gag rule?

V

One trembling reed with which the Left Wing is now trying to hoist into view a halo for the head of Oppenheimer is an appeal to certain deep-rooted emotional prejudices of the American people.

Paul Block's Prevarication ...

In a dispatch datelined Washington, April 15, 1958, the United Press carried the following item: "Mr. Block said Dr. Oppenheimer's security clearance was revoked in 1954 by the Atomic Energy Commission on two charges—that he was 'excessively loyal to his friends' and that he sometimes displayed 'a disdain for the Cops.' 'I submit,' said Mr. Block amid heavy applause from the editors, 'that these are two solid, sterling American traits.' "

The reference was to Paul Block, Jr., publisher of the *Toledo Blade*, who was introducing Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer to an audience of 160 editors of the International Press Institute.

It would be hard to find another instance in which a prominent journalist has ever sunk to a lower level of falsification of solemnly recorded facts. Anyone who has read the Proceedings of the Personal Security Board (headed by Mr. Gordon Gray) and the decision of the Atomic Energy Commission in revoking Oppenheimer's security clearance knows that Paul Block, Jr., did not correctly state the charges on which the AEC acted.

Mr. Block's language in introducing Dr. Oppenheimer was, in effect, a mendacious attack up on the AEC. Naturally, this brought joy to the Communist and leftwing press. The *National Guardian*, faithful mouthpiece of the Communist line, clucked happily over the incident.

Following Mr. Block's meretricious presentation, Dr. Oppenheimer went ahead with his address without voicing even a feeble protest at what he, above all other persons, must have known was undiluted falsehood.

How Oppenheimer Treated One Friend ...

In the summer of 1949, J. Robert Oppenheimer testified before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in executive session. By what appears to have been a leak, the gist of his testimony appeared in the Rochester (N.Y.) *Times-Union*. Oppenheimer's executive session testimony bears directly upon the question of how "excessively loyal" he was to his friend, Bernard Peters, who was then a professor at the University of Rochester.

According to Oppenheimer's leaked testimony, Professor Peters was not only a member of the Communist Party but a dangerous one at that.

On learning of Oppenheimer's testimony, Dr. Edward U. Condon wrote a letter to Oppenheimer from Idaho Springs, Colorado, under date of June 27, 1949. Condon's letter is sizzling with anger. "One is tempted to feel," wrote Condon, "that you are so foolish as to think you can buy immunity for yourself



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by turning informer.”

Condon further wrote Oppenheimer, as follows: “You know very well that once these people decide to go into your own dossier and make it public that it will make the ‘revelations’ that have been made so far look pretty tame.” Little did Condon know that almost exactly five years later Oppenheimer’s own dossier really would be made public.

And Another ...

A further instance of J. Robert Oppenheimer’s being “excessively loyal to his friends” is found in the Eltenton-Chevalier incident, which we have discussed at length above. Chevalier was one of Oppenheimer’s closest friends. It was a queer expression of excessive loyalty on Oppenheimer’s part to concoct a “whole fabrication and tissue of lies,” which charged this close friend with espionage and treason. Yet this is what Oppenheimer later told the Gray Board under oath he had done. Furthermore, this “whole fabrication and tissue of lies” about Chevalier was told to one of the high officers of Military Intelligence, which can hardly be classed as a courageous “disdain for the cops.”

The man is full of disdain, alright, of the most arrogant variety. But what J. Robert Oppenheimer’s actions and falsehoods indicate he has the strongest disdain for are: truth, loyalty to either friends or country, morals of any kind, and any intangible which might be described as human decency.

VI

Yet, in April of this year, a prominent Ohio newspaper publisher declared that there is “right now an evergrowing demand in these United States, and particularly in the scientific community, that Dr. Oppenheimer be returned to active work for his Government.” And the Ohio publisher is correct about this swelling chorus of Oppenheimerism.

Clearly, this extraordinary movement is not motivated by pragmatic considerations of national security. Nor is the claim advanced that Dr. Oppenheimer, although with a past of questionable character, is endowed with a scientific know-how which is indispensable to our national survival. On the contrary, the drive of the Oppenheimer boosters has as one objective the rescinding of an ethical judgment pronounced by the AEC; a rescission which would entail lowering of loyalty standards to the point where persons of fundamental character defects might be admitted without question to the confidence of our Government.

The Oppenheimer Clique ...

In the climate of apathy which now prevails with respect to loyalty and security standards, the AEC’s decision in the Oppenheimer matter stands out as a beacon light of fairness, probity, and courage, with few to applaud. The Oppenheimer cheering section, on the other hand, is led by well-known pro-Communists and others of the Left who are monopolizing, and trying to make capital of, the issue.

As could easily have been anticipated, the widely syndicated left-wing cartoonist, Herblock, was an early joiner. For it was Herblock who originally coined the term “McCarthyism,” which quickly became the chief epithet in the Communist vocabulary for use against anyone who called for erecting American defenses against the Soviet threat.

The unscrupulous newspaper columnists, Joseph and Stewart Alsop, entered the Oppenheimer cheering section, drawing an analogy between the Oppenheimer Case and the Dreyfus Affair. We accuse, wrote the Alsops in the leftwing *Harper’s Magazine*, “the Atomic Energy Commission in particular, and the American government in general, of a shocking miscarriage of justice in the case of Dr. J. Robert



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Oppenheimer.”

The *New Republic*, from far over on the left, raised a raucous cry in defense of Oppenheimer and damned his alleged detractors. The consistently leftwing Federation of American Scientists joined the swelling Oppenheimer chorus and declared that our security system is “motivated more by the risks of politics than the risks of disclosure of information.” And just why Cyrus Eaton has not yet added his two million dollars’ worth we don’t know.

As naturally as water seeks its level, Edward R. Murrow enlisted in the Oppenheimer cause for the duration. On his “See It Now” program, Murrow interviewed an incoherent Oppenheimer, and the notorious *Fund For The Republic* produced 110 copies of an expanded version of the telecast for distribution to education institutions, civic organizations, and local discussion groups.

Charles P. Curtis, Boston lawyer who was a member of the Communist front called the “Committee of One Thousand,” published a full-length book entitled *The Oppenheimer Case*, in which he likened Oppenheimer’s trial to that of Joan of Arc. The *Fund For The Republic* bought and gave away five hundred copies of this four-dollar volume, with some its tax-exempt money.

Oppenheimerism ...

The extent and persistence of the malevolent criticism directed against the verdict and the personnel of the Atomic Energy Commission show that we are confronted with a phenomenon of Oppenheimerism. But the most important part of that phenomenon is not the direct immediate purpose of putting Oppenheimer back on the Government payroll, nor even the discrediting of all investigations concerned with loyalty and national security. It is the attempt to demonstrate that neither loyalty nor morality has any place in the consideration of a man’s value, or in the measure of the respect which should be accorded him by his fellow men. It is a part of the widespread effort to destroy the very ideals and traditions that have made our country great. For it is these ideals and traditions, however disastrously they are now being eroded, which still maintain America as the chief obstacle to Soviet conquest of the world.

Dr. Oppenheimer’s counsel, Mr. Lloyd K. Garrison, told the Gray Board: “There is more than Dr. Oppenheimer on trial in this room ... The Government of the United States is here on trial also. Our whole security process is on trial here ...”

Mr. Garrison was right in his contention that more than Oppenheimer was on trial before the Gray Board in 1954. There was far more on trial than even Mr. Garrison indicated. It is also true in 1958 that more than Oppenheimer is on trial, in the continuing public discussion of the scientist’s case. A whole generation and its moral standards are on trial today.

And the outlook is not encouraging. The facts concerning J. Robert Oppenheimer, which we have outlined here, are available to anybody, editor or educator, who is willing to study the official records. They are incontrovertible, and deadly in their total revelation. Yet in February of this year the first high school in the “planned community” of Levittown, Pennsylvania, was christened the J. Robert Oppenheimer School. Harvard University, not satisfied with having just had Oppenheimer on its board of overseers for five years, selected him last year to deliver the William James lectures. The Sorbonne in Paris invited him to an exchange professorship. Columbia University rounded out its bicentennial celebrations with Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer delivering the final lecture of a year-long series. This spring the Weizmann Institute of Science in the State of Israel honored him with a fellowship. And so it goes, on an on, week after week.



Written by [J.B. Mathews](#) on October 6, 1958

The wooden leg (as a result of military service) which James Russell Lowell considered to be the most wonderful thing a man could have in his time for gaining public acclaim, is out of date today. Apparently the most useful characteristic in our generation, for any would-be god who really wants to be lionized and idolized, is feet of clay.

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