

# FANTASTIC UNIVERSE.

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## AN EDITORIAL ASIDE

Magazines in this field are often said to reflect the personalities or to echo the individual idiosyncracies of their editors. That they do so is debatable—with, admittedly, one exception—for most of us must keep in mind that we are not editing for ourselves but for you out there who represent a dozen diverse likes and dislikes and who may differ from us on many many issues.

This does not rule out the possibility that we can sit down together, in the American tradition, and explore ideas—challenging and even disturbing ideas—which may conceivably become the facts of Tomorrow. Lester del Rey's latest article, *SKIES OF INFAMY*, is in this category.

Neither this writer nor this magazine necessarily agree with some of Lester del Rey's conclusions, but these are challenging conclusions—challenging views and opinions shared by many scientists—which merit our attention whether or not we may agree with them individually.

In addition to Lester del Rey's article, we bring you this month—the first instalment of Fredric Brown's exciting new novel, *THE MIND THING*, —unusual fantasy and science fiction by Wenzell Brown, Robert F. Young, Jorge Luis Borges (the distinguished Mexican writer), George O. Smith and Robert Bloch, —a special feature on a *TWO-MAN SPACE CABIN*, published here through the courtesy of the Office of Information, USAF Aerospace Medical Center (ATC) at Brooks Air Force Base, —*FANNOTATIONS*, another column by Belle C. Dietz, —*THE ABOMINABLE COALMAN*, a footnote to last month's article on the Abominable Snowman, by Ivan T. Sanderson, —and *ISRAEL'S LUNAR PROBE*, by Shalom Cohen, originally published in the January 9, 1959 issue of *The Jerusalem Post*, of Jerusalem, Israel, and published here by permission of that paper.

The New Year is a matter of hours away as I write this. Needless to say I wish all of you all possible happiness during this coming year—the first in what History may eventually describe as the "Space '60's".....

HANS STEFAN SANTESSON

# SKIES OF INFAMY

by LESTER DEL REY

ROBERT HEINLEIN referred to our times in one of his stories as the year of the jackass. With all due respect, I must disagree. This is obviously the year of Chicken Little, one of the most shamefully misunderstood characters of our literature. In spite of a great outpouring of hot air (in every true and slang meaning of the term), the sky is falling.

In case you don't remember the story, it's worth a careful examination, since the surface version conceals a fine study of the behavior of humanity. In the usual version, Chicken Little was minding his own business one day when something hit him on the head. So he took off on a Paul Revere through the neighborhood,

yelling that the sky was coming down. There being no tranquilizers to soothe them, the other local citizens fell into line—among them being Ducky-Wucky, Henny-Penny, Owly-Howly, and so on. But eventually, they ran across a slicker named Foxey-Loxey, who told them it had been just an acorn that fell. So, without further examination, everyone went home satisfied.

This account is loaded in every possible way to conceal the true moral by making a chump out of the Chick. With every other character concealed under a rhymed pseudonym, his name is uniquely unrhymed, standing as a crude implication that he ran only because he was slightly chicken. More

subtly, he's an egghead, and hence untrustworthy. (Artists even paint him as fuzz-headed and yellow.) The whole job of casting here is odd. All the peaceful barnyard citizens are shown as silly and timid scatterbrains. Only one emerges as a hero, and that is the fox—a traditionally sly, unscrupulous predator. The only way I can explain this switch from the usual wise old owl hero is to assume that the version we have of the tale must have been started by the fox himself.

Who was this fox? Well, by the strictest saucerian logic, we can place him pretty accurately. Just remember that chicks and acorns are not contemporary; by the time acorns are grown, chicks have turned into roosters. Yet Foxy explains everything as being caused by an acorn ridge on the Chick's skull. Why an acorn, except as a concealed symbol for an oak? Aha! And who but an Atomic Energy Commission man would associate the sky falling with Oak Ridge, and then try to conceal the association?

I might almost believe that the whole tale was plotted by the AEC to condition us against taking fallout seriously. Certainly, when people like myself raise a protest, we are promptly told to stop acting like Chicken Little.

Unfortunately, the story as it probably happened is being re-enacted every day, in its real meaning. Someone sees a clear evidence of danger and starts crying out about it, stirring up others to take action. Then the power-predators slyly indicate it's nothing but a trifle. And without ques-

tioning or without even a careful study of the original evidence, the whole subject is supinely dropped. Nobody questions the right of Authority to rule on any question of survival.

I've never understood the official mind, with its assumption that whatever it wants for its own power drives it automatically good and true. But I find it even harder to understand the blind acceptance of such authority on the part of all others. Reading the newspapers clearly proves that anyone with a little power is automatically sure of omniscience and that the mass acceptance of such omniscience is real.

A few years ago, a group who stood to gain publicity from an expose told us some minor officials were guilty of heinous thoughts, and used the testimony of sworn, self-confessed liars to prove the officials were guilty of perjury. Because we were told they were evil men (which they may have been, for all I know by our modern reporting), they were sentenced to jail. A few months ago, a young professor publicly admitted to perjury for reasons of greed and fear. Our publicity-seeking officials became warmly human and told us he was a sweet boy. So we forgave him, brought no trial against him, and admired our charity.

Oh well, maybe consistency is the virtue of small minds and perhaps we merely elect officials to save ourselves the need of too many decisions. Who, except the vague and abstract society-at-large, is hurt? But the same principles seem to apply when there is clear and imminent danger.

*The AEC is my shepherd; I shall not live.  
It maketh me to lie down in radiant pastures; it leadeth me beside deathly waters.  
It destroyeth my bones; it leadeth me in the paths of frightfulness, for its name's sake.*

*Yet, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will hear no evil;  
for thou art with me; thy bomb and thy SAC, they comfort me.*

*Thou preparest a fable before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou ancientest  
thy words with oil; my cup runneth over.*

*Surely strontium and fallout shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will  
dwell in the house of the AEC — but hardly forever.*

— Lester del Rey

Recently, there was an accident in the air and a plane crashed. It would have been a routine thing, except that somehow word got out correctly that the plane had been carrying an armed H-bomb which was still lying in the area. The news was hot with this for about three hours. Then the official word came forth. The bomb was quite safe. It could not go off. No danger existed, and brave men of the government were rushing forth to save the area by removing the non-existent danger at once. The newscasters breathed a fervent sigh of relief and buried the story, letting it die away.

No questions were raised. Nobody asked what in hell the bomb was doing over that area in the first place? Nobody wondered about our handling of planes carrying such deadly cargo—cargo which could contaminate an area with dangerous fall-out from Boston to Baltimore in a single blast. The sky fell that time, but Foxy told us it was only an acorn, and we didn't even ask why acorns fell from the clear sky.

I waited patiently for the questioning voices, because this incident tied in with so many other official assurances. When a Nike missile base was established near my home, we were told that there was absolutely no danger—nothing could possibly happen. When it blew up last year, we were assured that it was all a strange accident, but that it could never happen again. When SAC was set up to "protect" us against bombs (by bombing the other country, of course, since nobody can stop an explosion's damage), we were told that there could be no danger to the civilians. The routes flown weren't even over us.

Now, it seems, the skies up there may be filled with planes carrying H-bombs around to "protect" us. Nobody asks how many or why, of course. We're told it's official business. (A democracy must be a country where government—the crass part—is no business of the people—the demos.)

Besides, everyone knows that no plane ever gets in an accident, that no bomb designed carefully to explode can ever explode, that something meant to wipe out millions of the enemy obviously can't hurt even one of us, and that the accident which could never happen can't happen again.

The broader implications here are a trifle more frightening. If this bomb did fall, even harmlessly, on us in spite of the fact it couldn't happen, how about other assurances? We've been told over and over again that SAC is our only defense against missile aggression (even though missiles travel some 15 times as fast as any plane), but that positively and absolutely, no trigger-happy pilot of a plane could decide to go on a private bombing run and start a nuclear war. Maybe we're sending up hundreds of deadly bombs regularly, but it's safe, man, safe! Our pilots are screened, and everyone knows that none could crack up after screening, because Authority implies it. We have precautions for turning off the bombs from the ground, and everyone has been assured that machinery never accidentally malfunctions in SAC. Nor, of course, could any ingenious, traditionally-mechanically-clever man defeat precautions. For that matter, we shouldn't even question what might happen if an American H-Bomb fell on Russia without exploding!

I waited for someone to start investigating the causes and the further possible dangers revealed in the bomb that landed where no bomb could fall. Silence. Authority had told us everything was fine, so we went back to studying the price of tranquilizer stocks. It wasn't that we were numb to danger, either, as proved by other news; it was simply the magic power of Authority to rule.

It works in reverse, of course. Some cranberries from a few sections were found to contain traces of a weed-killing drug which has induced cancer in laboratory animals. Immediately, be-

cause the danger was stated by Authority, everyone was in a hullabaloo. The general danger from eating one dish of perhaps-contaminated berries was minute. But until it was announced that the contaminated berries were off the market, grocers found it difficult to sell even two-year-old cans of cranberry sauce during the peak season.

It doesn't have to be government Authority, of course. If a man has some kind of a degree in any field, his voice is as the thunder of mountains, unless a bigger degree or greater power is brought against him. Recently, the ancient attempt to blame tobacco for something or other has ripened into an established branch of research. Last week, it was announced by these "disinterested" authorities that they had discovered that the tissue of smokers showed evidence that cancer might be formed, and several of my more sane friends tried again to cut down on their smoking. This whole news fascinated me, since I'd like to know why this hitherto-unpublicized but now-alleged ability to detect a danger of cancer in the tissues hasn't been seized on by cancer researchers, and why if it can be done, medicine isn't using it to detect cancer before there is any danger. But nobody asked any questions about that. Instead, more people switched to filters, which are implied to cut down on smoking by-products (though few are actually as effective as the normal unburned tobacco in removing tars and nicotine). It says right on the package that there is less tar—but not whether less than others or less than a tar pit. The Authority of the maker, who surely must know his own product, I suppose.

Don't get me wrong. I think Fleming was absolutely justified in condemning every cranberry until even the most unlikely bit of needless danger could be isolated; I may wonder at his timing, but certainly he was doing only what he should have done.

Nor can I find anything wrong with a study of the toxicity of tobacco smoke, however ridiculous the strange statistics adduced. If cancer is even a remote possibility, then serious steps should be taken to avoid the danger.

But why can't we be consistent? Why do the newspapers play up anything involving the subject when presented by authorities of various kinds, but actually bury news when government authority suggests that there really isn't any danger—even though that danger is recognized by every detached student of the subject? And why do the people here in this democratic bastion meekly submit to the utter tyranny of official information controls, even when there is nothing more than the weight of a press release suggestion to back up such misuse of authority?

Cancer is the villain in both the above scares. Likewise, it is the personal villain (as opposed to racial villain of genetic damage) of the horror that is falling from the sky on us. This horror, of course, would continue to fall for at least ten more years if no bombs were tested and no reactors continued working. But already the "acorns" from the sky are threatening to grow into great oaks among us.

In the highly optimistic *Hearings of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy* of 1957, Dr. E. B. Lewis estimated that one-tenth of the so-called maximum permissible concentration of strontium-90 would cause 55,000 deaths by leukemia in a population like that of the United States.

When the strontium-90 *already in the sky* falls (in from three to ten years) we'll have enough to insure that youngsters by the age of twenty will average from one-twenty-fifth to one-tenth this "maximum"—or, in other words, will be reaching the level where more than 5,000 will die from leukemia. And this is based on the most optimistic estimates I can find which give facts, rather than mere

routine assurances. If a few more tests are made, or if some reactor gets out of control—or most probably, if reactor wastes are not somehow impossibly isolated—people by 1975 may average one-fifth of the so-called "maximum". This wouldn't be enough to bother reporting as a danger, apparently, since it would result in perhaps less than a million deaths from leukemia.

In 1958, in Los Angeles, the sky really fell. One day in October, the radiation level there reached 92% of the optimistic maximum permissible exposure. But that wasn't big news. It was released by the Authorities with the charming reassurance that it was only a sudden event that would clear up. (Nobody explained where all the fallout was to vanish to, to permit that removal of danger.) Citizens who had been aroused by the first news relaxed happily on the reassurance and went back to considering the price of oranges grown on the soil where the fallout occurred.

Wheat grown in Minnesota, vegetables grown in New Jersey, and numerous other food products from across the country have more than once been proved to have more than the so-called safe percentage of radiation from the sky. Milk has been found at times to be far above the levels judged safe. But as one gentleman in the milk business explained to me, "we took care of that news". Everybody should drink more milk for its calcium (which is related to strontium chemically, so that strontium-90 tends to replace calcium in plants and animal tissue). Authorities have told us that nature was wrong, that milk is really the perfect food for adults, and that our teeth need it. Nobody asks about the Eskimos who had no milk but had fine teeth. Instead, the Voice of Authority prevails. So maybe it isn't surprising that nobody finds the danger of cancer to a mere million people alarming when Authority says all will be well. After all, we need to

save our worries for the Authority-condemned tobacco and isolated cranberry offenders, where there might even be as much as a few thousand cancer cases produced!

This reliance on authority isn't new, of course. It was the great characteristic of the Middle Ages. During the happy and enlightened period of unusual democracy and peace under this rule of Medieval authority, however, there were clear ideas of what constituted authority, and those ideas were enforced. An authority then was someone who had gone through the difficult task of setting himself above others through some highly respected institution, usually related to the Church, since all universities then were so related. To the best of the standards of the times, an authority was one who had established his superiority in knowledge and in spiritual understanding. It's a test of authority few could pass today.

When I try to find out what is accepted as authority now, I find the going tougher. Certainly knowledge or proved training in moral and ethical values has little to do with it. It seems to be strictly a matter of Name or Institution Status. If the name is established with respect and envy as of maximum status, or if the speaker professes to represent an Institution whose initials are accepted generally, that man is an Authority. Charles Van Doren became an Authority for television science programs, though he had been a professor of English, by winning a small fortune on a national quiz program. Any press release clerk for NASA becomes more of an Authority on rockets than is the (relatively unknown) designer of the Atlas. Ed Sullivan (whose recent views on the subject I happen to respect, incidentally) is more of an authority on the Russians today after a tour than are the few reporters who have been studying the Russians for years. The *New York Times* was naturally chosen to cover the first atom-

ic explosion test; the man sent by the paper naturally had to receive a prize for his reporting of such an event; and hence, William Laurence is more of an authority on atomics than is any atomic scientist except perhaps Teller.

The rule of Status—whether from personal name or from institution—is the only test I know for authority. And when both the name and the institution confer status on a single individual, there can be no doubt of his qualification. He need have had no experience or education in science, have spent very little time conferring with scientists, not bother to list his advisors, or even bother to read the generally available literature. He becomes front-page Authority.

Governor Nelson Rockefeller obviously has everything to make him such an authoritative spokesman. And naturally, with the terrific potential inherent here, much fuss is made about any word he may give to such a simple thing as our atomic-age destiny.

It began with the suggestion to build bomb-shelters. Every home was to have such a shelter. Now this was a humanitarian and kindly idea, if a trifle difficult and expensive. So a flurry of discussion of this completely eclipsed our discussion of a testing moratorium. Did anyone who could reach the public sit down and figure out what a practical shelter would involve? Or did the public question this? Obviously not. Most people were simply reassured by later dropping of the whole issue. A couple I know who are usually level-headed and who know a fair amount about science are building a shelter.

For my own amusement, I've tried designing a practical shelter. Assuming that it cannot be designed to withstand a close blast—it can't—I've tried to provide for full protection against initial radiation and later fall-out for a reasonable period, until the air is clear enough to breathe and the

ground is safe enough to travel across. It would be impossible in a city, but given a proper site where adequate air intakes could be designed and some underground stream could be set up as a means of making full washing of the air possible, I find that a family of five could increase their chances of survival by about 50% for somewhat more than forty thousand dollars. Anything less is of no more help than simply going down to the basement. (And, of course, it would be necessary that they be in the shelter at the time of the blast.) The proposed scheme as outlined in several papers might actually increase the danger by setting up a ventilation system to increase fall-out concentration within the shelter. On the other hand, if maximum safety is required, I'd be happy to undertake the design of a shelter for up to ten people that would almost guarantee survival beyond the primary target area; the price, given a site outside a crowded city, should not exceed a million dollars by more than 40%.

Interestingly, no insurance company will offer a better deal on life insurance, even with the most elaborate shelter. But I suppose their research lacked the depth that only a true Authority can bring to any old subject at all.

Lately, Mr. Rockefeller has gone on to greater things by suggesting that we must not give up our testing of bombs. In this he has naturally been supported by the man who ordered the first bomb dropping while he was president, and who naturally defends the past policy he helped shape. Currently, we have equally strange bed-fellows in the case of Adlai Stevenson and President Eisenhower, who now both seem to feel more pollution of our tumbling skies must be approached with grave caution. When the Authorities are divided in such a case, what is the Authority-follower to do?

The answer is obvious. We must all



return to our original expert on falling skies, our old fox from the hallowed halls of the AEC. This is still the strong Atlas back which supports the atomic universe to the minds of most of us. (Oh, my aching, aching back!) After all, who but the AEC can know enough about this complicated mess to give a sure answer? They have the full facts—or at least they've made sure no one else can get all of them.

The Atomic Energy Commission has been somewhat silent recently as a result of the current anti-war atmosphere, so far as bomb testing is concerned. But on the level of industrial abuse and reactor air pollution, their stand has not changed, as seen through their actions. The Atomic Energy Commission believes firmly in the Commission of more Atomic Energy, whenever, wherever and however. And in this, they are strongly backed by an unknown but huge number of institutions and suppliers who are dependent on the AEC for funds, supplies of atomic products, and permission to exist, including 99% or more of our colleges and scientists working in the field.

Well, let's examine our greatest Authority. The AEC is the largest completely independent institution in the world. It spends literally billions of dollars of tax money per year, and it controls much more through leasing out its materials and processes. It provides both legislative and executive branches of the government with whatever facts about atomics its directors choose to release, at whatever time-lag it chooses. Its directors are subject to neither the control of Congress nor of the President, except in extremely weak and indirect ways. It is responsible for most of our military atomic development, but is not part of or directly subject to any military authority. Yet it can override any attempt at legislative control through appropriations by a show of necessity for defense, in which the

military services must back it; no Congressman can hold out against this without more information than the AEC need furnish him to use against it!

It has power undreamed of by any president. It and it alone decides who shall work in atomics. There is no real appeal. Any applicant for work in this field must receive a clearance, no matter how brilliant his studies, which involves anything about him the AEC chooses to consider. The nuclear programs in schools are mostly run under AEC grants and supplied with both knowledge and radioactives by the AEC. Congress, when attempting to legislate on atomics, must work with material screened for them through the AEC, and with "independent" scientists as advisors who are first okayed by the Commission and subject to review by any whim or fancy if they step out of line.

The AEC put on one of the most elaborate and costly propaganda campaigns possible in its "Atoms for Peace" roadshow. It furnishes exhibits and lecturers for the schools, down to the elementary level. Its advertising budget—from tax dollars—would equal that of any commercial enterprise.

It has the power to declare almost anything so secret that no hint of it will appear. Research which does not fit the direction chosen by the AEC can be stopped by a mere use of the rubber stamp. Dr. Oppenheimer, for instance, could not even secure permission to read some of the papers he wrote!

And who runs the Commission? Well, in theory, five members appointed by the President and approved by the Senate. (Their suitability for the job from now on will naturally be decided on the basis of AEC advice.) In practice, there have been many accusations that the single chairman of the Commission can override the others.

But what qualifications must these

men have? Generally, they must have the qualifications of being available and of being acceptable for some reason or other to the President. The background of Admiral Strauss, who did much to firm up the power of the AEC, was that of naval administration. When appointed, he probably had heard that reactors produced some kind of waste, but he needn't have known even that much. On the other hand, Dr. Teller is a trained scientist, but his chief work at times seems to be political. When the London Conference headed toward a disarmament plan, it was Dr. Teller who stepped in and made our national policy while defeating the disarmament plans. His plea was that we needed time to make the bombs clean—less deadly. (Nobody seemed to wonder if a plan to prevent the use of bombs might not void the need to make them less deadly.) Needless to say, Dr. Teller has no background in either foreign policy or national political responsibility, outside of the AEC.

There is also a Committee on Reactor Safety—the body which should in theory protect us all. That group of fifteen men is chosen by the Commission itself.

Even the purpose of the AEC is a strange one. It is primarily responsible for contributing to the maximum defense and security (against outside threats, not necessarily against internal abuse). Only after this is it to promote world peace, improve general welfare, raise the living standard, and strengthen competitive free enterprise. How? As it decides.

So far, it has failed abysmally in every one of these objectives, if we are to judge by the verdict of the very Authorities who are its strongest spokesmen. According to such men as William Laurence, the Russians only got the hydrogen bomb as a result of spying out our secrets, not from spying on nature. In 1946, when the AEC was set up, we had no H-bomb, so the leak must have been after that. In

any event, the restrictive policies of the AEC in terms of security regulations may have been necessary, but the result seems to have been to put Russia ahead of us with weapons which we are totally incapable of defending ourselves against. The latest word is that Russia has a larger stockpile of H-weapons than we have—and has a stock of missiles capable of delivering them in ways we cannot either detect or prevent in time.

World peace? Dr. Teller was the one to prevent our leading the world toward disarmament, and we left it finally up to Khrushchev to take that ball from our hands as both a peaceful and propaganda medium. General welfare? The AEC consistently and constantly has been the last to admit any danger from radiation, and has been wrong so far in every estimate they have made. Furthermore, they have contributed very little—most applications of atomics to general welfare have come from work begun prior to their existence. Standard of living? At the present time, not one reactor is capable of turning out power at a rate that can compete with other forms of energy, after 13 bitter years of promises. Private enterprise? Only by the most elaborate system of subsidies, guarantees and government insurance has the government persuaded any private enterprise to show any interest in atomic power plants.

And how about knowledge, the extraordinary source of all riches?

That is more pie in the sky, it seems. It was England and Russia who developed the first and most advanced power plants, not we. And if the releases of the Commission are to be taken as the sum of their knowledge, then we are the last country in the world to discover anything. Russia leads in fusion-power research.

After most other countries were publishing the facts, we learned only by accident that bomb tests could be detected by earth shocks for 6000 miles. (This could have led to meth-

ods of strengthening our security, but the information was not available to our armed forces.) Most other countries were publishing accurate estimates for fallout rate long before we got any of the facts. It wasn't until after the facts became too strongly established to deny that the AEC finally admitted that more fallout had occurred in one year than it had estimated for ten, and that our entire theory of fallout was wrong.

The study of concentration of radioactive elements from fallout into the bones of children, and of ultra-dangerous hotspots, came from work done in England and Sweden (which doesn't even have a bomb). The AEC first denied and then grudgingly admitted some of the validity. Later it was forced once more to revise its "maximum" safe levels downward. While every other civilized country was alarmed about the danger of strontium-90, we were talking about "sunshine units" and the fact that absolutely no harm could be caused us. We were the last country in the world to admit that there was no really harmless level of radiation, and the admission was forced by Congressional studies, and then minimized. The AEC was talking about safe levels when every other body studying the matter had dropped such nonsense.

And when the *Lucky Dragon* crew was caught in fallout (where our theories showed it should be so mild as not to matter), we had a wonderful chance to make a study of the effects of fallout. What did the AEC do? They kept the story pretty well buried for a year, and they made no effort to rush experts to Japan, either to study or to alleviate the suffering of the crew. The doctors treating the men couldn't even get information on what they were dealing with or the nature of the dangers!

From the response of the AEC to that and to other dangers that have cropped up, it would seem that in promoting our security and common wel-

fare, the AEC hasn't even made a thorough study of the detection and treatment of fallout victims! This may not be true, but if so the information has not been made available in any meaningful form to doctors, so it is effectively nonexistent.

Partly as a result of Congressional and private pressure, there has now been established a public safety study on radiation under the Department of Health, Welfare and Education. It's too early to tell whether they can buck the AEC—but I would like to dream of a highly unlikely success for them. So far, though, they haven't developed any Authority for public following.

Our skies are filled with death. There are an estimated ten to twenty years to elapse before all the strontium-90 falls from our air and the maximum is reached, even if no further fusion or fissions occurs; this represents a vast horror to come. Meantime every reactor spouts out death. (This is particularly true of the reactors that are air-cooled through huge stacks, but applies to all in a large degree.) Krypton-85 is a gas, and it is also an inert element, which cannot be compounded into non-gaseous forms. It is steadily leaking out from every atomic reactor. At the present rate, by the year 2000 it seems that the concentration of this deadly, indisposible gas in the air will have reached approximately the so-called maximum permissible concentration. After that, of course, all life is doomed.

Nero fiddled while Rome burned, and Nero has been held in infamy ever since, whether the story was true or not. Even if true, his forced slum clearance may have saved more from pestilence than it harmed. But I wonder whether even Nero would have felt himself ready to fiddle while the skies were filled with the rising hot winds of universal death, and while no need for such a holocaust could be proved?

Or would the populace, even when only warned by a few shouting voices, have permitted such a doom? And such infamy?

Here and there today, the voices are being raised. Scientists and reporters of new findings don't make the headlines, but the accounts of the facts are slowly accumulating to show that the sky is raining death on us. Chicken Little is crying out again. And down in Washington, the fox is

smiling in his AEC lair and muttering little cheerful words about a bumper crop of acorns.

Personally, I'm hardly an Authority and the weight of Authority is all against the facts I find. But I don't see even one oak tree within miles and miles, so I have a suspicion that the sky really is falling.

Judge for yourself—and for all future generations.