

The Specific Reacting Capacities of Different Tissues of an Immunized Animal."

DR. REUBEN L. KAHN AND HIS WORK

The rise of Reuben L. Kahn in the world of science is the story of making dreams come true by devotion to an ideal. Dr. Kahn would not admit this. He would insist that his contributions are the result of the educational opportunities opened up to him in America, where he was brought by his parents from Kovno, Lithuania, when twelve years old. From his childhood he dreamed of being a great physician, but after completing the first two years of medical studies at Valparaiso University, in Indiana, from 1907 to 1909, he decided that his life work was in the field of the basic medical sciences. After obtaining his B.Sc. degree at Valparaiso in 1911, he spent two years in Mendel's laboratory at Yale University, where he learned the mechanics of research. On receiving his M.S. degree in physiological chemistry from Yale in 1913, he accepted a position as serologist in the New York City Health Department. His work in that department attracted him to bacteriology. In 1915-16 we find him a graduate student with Dr. William H. Park. His doctor's thesis was based on complement fixation with protein fractions. He was awarded the degree of doctor of science from New York University in 1916. It should be mentioned in this connection that during his student days many of his friends, who saw promise in him, suggested that he go to laboratories abroad for further study. His reply was that because of his indebtedness to America for the opportunities it opened to him, it was his duty to contribute what he might to the development of American science. He was convinced that equally great opportunities existed in this country and that it was no longer necessary to go abroad to seek them.

During 1917-19, we find Dr. Kahn as first lieutenant and captain, respectively, in the Sanitary Corps of the U. S. Army. He published several papers during that period, dealing with the detection of *Bacillus coli* in water. But his more significant studies began to come from the laboratories of the Michigan Department of Health, organized soon after the world war, where he accepted, in January, 1920, a position as chief of the serologic laboratory. After publishing a number of articles on the phenomenon of complement fixation, he turned his attention to the phenomenon of precipitation, with special reference to the serodiagnosis of syphilis. This work led to the development of the Kahn test. These studies form the basis of a number of other precipitation tests for syphilis which followed. In 1928, Dr. Kahn was invited to become director of laboratories of the university hospital and assistant professor of bacteriology at the University of Michigan.

The interest of the League of Nations Health Committee in the Kahn test can be readily understood. A function of that committee is to advise nations as to the knowledge available in the field of public health. Dr. Kahn attended, as the sole American representative, the competitive serologic conferences at Copenhagen (1928) and Montevideo (1930) at the invitation of that committee. He was kept in Europe more than three months in order to demonstrate his test in various medical centers. After the Montevideo conference he gave a special course in serology at the invitation of the Uruguayan government.

Dr. Kahn's interest in the reactions of the fixed tissues in immunized animals has its beginning in his failure to perfect a diagnostic blood test for tuberculosis. This led him to investigate tissue reactions in tuberculosis and more especially the nature of the tuberculin test. The marked divergence of opinion as to the mechanism of this test forced him to the conclusion that insufficient fundamental work had been done in the realm of tissue reactions in infected animals.

The first series of studies appeared in March, 1933, in the *Proceedings* of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine, under the general heading of "Studies on Sensitization." The second series of papers, to which the entire October, 1933, issue of the *Journal of Immunology* was devoted, appeared under the general heading of "Tissue Reactions in Immunity." Space does not permit a summary of these studies, but their significance is widely acknowledged. Dr. Kahn recently had occasion to present these studies, as well as "The New Serology of Syphilis," before the immunologic sessions of the Volta Foundation at the invitation of the Royal Academy of Italy.

In his paper before the Section on Medical Sciences (N) he described a method for measuring the specific reacting capacities of different tissues of an immunized animal *in vivo* and the quantitative results given by the skin, muscle, brain and peritoneal tissues, as well as by the blood plasma. This paper will soon appear in SCIENCE.

It was the writer's pleasure to invite Dr. Kahn to appear on the program of Section N. The widespread satisfaction in his being presented with the award has been manifested by the numerous congratulatory messages he has received from colleagues in his field. His friends know that much worthy work will yet come from his laboratory.—Walter M. Simpson.

OFFICIAL DELEGATES AT MEETING

In accordance with the established custom, letters were sent to the foreign societies of a character similar to the American Association, inviting them to send

delegates to the Boston meeting. Many of them responded, expressing appreciation of the invitation, and some named delegates. The following foreign associations were represented at the Boston meeting by the persons named:

*British Association for the Advancement of Science:* Arthur Edwin Kennelly (Harvard University), and Francis Ernest Lloyd (McGill University).

*French Academy of Sciences:* William Morris Davis (Harvard University).

*Bohemian Royal Society of Science:* Henry Baldwin Ward (University of Illinois).

Many American institutions also named official delegates, while others expressed regrets at their inability to participate under existing conditions.

### RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT BOSTON

Wide-spread interest was naturally manifested in the meetings of sections and societies convened at Boston, as well as in private discussions, concerning national and international questions confronting the country at the present time. Many communications and even formal resolutions, on such subjects, were presented for the consideration of the council. In accordance with the rules of procedure, these were subjected to careful study by the executive committee and were later considered by the council. Two resolutions approved for publication were unanimously adopted by the council in the following form:

#### UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG SCIENTIFIC MEN

WHEREAS, experience has shown that it is sound economic policy to accompany or, if possible, precede any large planning and construction program by scientific investigations dealing both with the general principles involved and the particular and local conditions of the problem; and,

WHEREAS, a large number of competent scientists and engineers, particularly among younger men, are at present unemployed; and,

WHEREAS, the scientific and technical skill acquired by these men through years of costly training constitutes a vital national asset which is in danger of dissipation by their diversion into other pursuits; and,

WHEREAS, the incidence of unemployment upon the technically skilled and especially upon the rising generation among them is of very great severity; therefore be it

*Resolved,* That the American Association for the Advancement of Science respectfully urges upon those in responsible charge of recovery and reconstruction funds, public and private, and especially upon those legislative and administrative bodies who determine the general conditions of such work, that provision be made for adequate scientific and technical cooperation in the planning and execution of these projects.

It was further voted that the officers of the associa-

tion be authorized to cooperate with public and private agencies in promoting the objects of the foregoing resolution.

#### A DECLARATION OF INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

The American Association for the Advancement of Science feels grave concern over persistent and threatening inroads upon intellectual freedom which have been made in recent times in many parts of the world.

Our existing liberties have been won through ages of struggle and at enormous cost. If these are lost or seriously impaired there can be no hope of continued progress in science, of justice in government, of international or domestic peace; or even of lasting material well-being.

We regard the suppression of independent thought and of its free expression as a major crime against civilization itself. Yet oppression of this sort has been inflicted upon investigators, scholars, teachers and professional men in many ways, whether by governmental action, administrative coercion, or extra-legal violence. We feel it our duty to denounce all such actions as intolerable forms of tyranny.

There can be no compromise on this issue, for even the commonwealth of learning can not endure "half slave and half free."

By our life and training as scientists and by our heritage as Americans we must stand for freedom.

#### BUSINESS SESSIONS

The executive committee met in Boston on Tuesday afternoon and evening and Wednesday morning, in preparation for the first session of the council. The committee also met on Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings on adjournment of the council. The chairman, Dr. J. McKeen Cattell, presided at all sessions. The council met at three on Wednesday afternoon for a short session and on Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings. President Russell occupied the chair at each session of the council. The items of business recorded in the minutes of the council included the consideration of the resolutions already referred to and also the following items:

1. The audited reports of the treasurer and the permanent secretary for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1933, were accepted, also the report of the permanent secretary on the membership for the corresponding period. A summary of these reports is to be found in the following section of this record of the meeting.

2. Budgets of the treasurer and permanent secretary for the fiscal year closing September 30, 1934, were presented and approved.

3. The council voted to appropriate \$400 to maintain membership of the association in the Union of American Biological Societies, with the proviso that this sum should cover all obligations to the close of the year 1934.

4. The annual report of the committee on source books in the history of science, showing progress made

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