

*K.T. B comments on Day of Trinity*

These are some comments for the record made after reading a book by Lansing Lamont, the book entitled Day of Trinity. Lamont interviewed a great many people concerning the development and test of the Atomic bomb. In a considerable number of cases apparently what he has written does not check too closely with the information given him as, in order to make the situation dramatic, he injected some of his own ideas and imagination. In other cases he seems to have followed the actual events pretty well. In any case, for the record here are my comments:

In his discussion of the meeting of the Maud Committee which I attended in London he states that I stood at the back of a tiny room in London's Burlington House where the meeting was held. The British are much too hospitable for such a situation and I was provided a chair at the conference table just like anybody else. This meeting was held on the 9th of April 1941 according to Ronald W. Clark who wrote The Birth of the Bomb published in 1961 for Phoenix House Ltd., London. The British book written on Britain and Atomic Energy 1939-45 written by Margaret Gowing speaks as if the sense of urgency acquired by American scientists waited until July when the draft of the Maud report was available in Washington. I think that Lauritsen was sent to England partly because of the report I made upon my return about May 4th or 5th, to the United States when I saw Dr. Briggs at the National Bureau of Standards, and Dr. Bush at his office in Washington. A few weeks later I spoke to Professor Arthur Compton who was visiting M.I.T. and was head of one of the NDRC committees on atomic energy. He asked me to see him and one or two members of his committee. I did not know before that just what he was doing for the war effort. I saw two of the three top people in the atomic energy game in the United States within days after returning to this country from my two-month long visit in England. I might say that I was not in England "ostensibly" to survey Britain's radar development. I was there to visit and survey their work as the prime directive, and I was only brought in touch with the atomic energy problem through the invitation of John Cockcroft. If he had any word from the United States suggesting that I might be invited, he has never told me anything to that effect.

Concerning the statement on page 46 that I got a mysterious call from Robert Oppenheimer to meet him at the National Academy of Sciences, Washington, my recollection is that Bob Bacher who was a colleague at the Radiation Laboratory at M.I.T., and a good personal friend later, asked me to come down to Washington, and we met with Oppie at the National Academy of Sciences. Bacher was working weekends on nuclear measurements for some branch of Van Bush's empire.

*At dinner at my house in 1966  
Cockcroft said that I was invited to the Maud  
meeting entirely on Cockcroft's responsibility*