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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS
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DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

HH 58 AS

February 21st, 1949

Loyalty Board,
Bronx Veterans' Administration Hospital,
130 West Kingsbridge Road,
Bronx 63, New York

Gentlemen:

My former pupil, collaborator and friend, Professor Elvin A. Kabat, has shown me the list of charges drawn up against him. I am shocked that some of them are even considered seriously enough to enumerate. I refer particularly to subscription to the American-Soviet Medical Journal, membership in the American Association of Scientific Workers, and participation in the American-Soviet Scientific Society. If you ban curiosity as to Russian scientific accomplishment and membership in one of the most active and progressive scientific societies in the United States, the American Association of Scientific Workers, you will not only separate a high proportion of your ablest scientists from your service, but will automatically prejudice another high proportion against joining or staying in the Government services. If you look with suspicion on any organization to which a communist has ever belonged it would be necessary to ban members or former members of Congress from service under the Veterans' Administration, nor could you employ a man such as Senator Austin because he has talked with Vishinsky.

I have known Dr. Kabat ever since he came to me as a student in 1933. He holds many liberal and advanced ideas, in accordance with the finest American traditions. He is brilliant, outspoken, and has often been tactless, especially when he was younger, and it is quite possible that for these reasons some of his statements may have been misunderstood, possibly deliberately.

Dr. Kabat served with me jointly as responsible investigator in a highly secret and dangerous project during the war, and I can testify without reservation as to his fidelity in the guarding of records, his zeal and fervor in the service of his country, and his complete willingness even to risk his life on dangerous missions. I submit that these more recent evidences of maturity and patriotism should outweigh any suppositions based on the possible extravagant talk of an immature young man twelve years ago. I should like to point out, too, that Dr. Kabat has a wife and two children, potent factors in assisting a swing to the right.

I consider these accusations as manifestly absurd and as of cruel potential damage to the career of one of our most promising and brilliant young scientists. I congratulate the Veterans Administration on still having available to it the talents of this investigator, and trust that this fruitful connection may continue.

Very truly yours,

MH:jm

Michael Heidelberger, Ph.D.,
Professor of Immunochemistry, Columbia University
Member, National Academy of Sciences
Formerly, Consultant to the Secretary of War