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Steve Krivit  
3225 Ellenda Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90034

Dear Steve:

About your note on Robert Bass and his statements about Gerischer.

About 1991 was a time in which everyone was up or down on Cold Fusion. The majority of people thought it was nonsense, and even the people who were in the Cold Fusion game, with the exception of Fleischmann, myself, and perhaps ten others, were very doubtful.

Heinz Gerischer was the leading electrochemist in Europe. Great respect was given to him because he was also president of the Max Planck Institute. He was a tall and dominating man who acted with great authority about everything.

I remember meeting Gerischer, - whom I had known since 1949, - in Italy at the 1991 meeting on Cold Fusion which took place in Como, a most beautiful place overlooking a lake.

Upon meeting him in the grounds of the bit house in which the meeting was to be held, I expressed surprise at his presence. He explained to me that of course it was all nonsense and he just came to see the nonsense. Quite clearly you couldn't... etc., etc.

So Gerischer stayed with the meeting and he was flabbergasted because paper after paper was positive and he couldn't deny that there was a considerable amount of evidence. Indeed, at the end of the meeting he did give a speech which essentially said that he had been convinced.

Gerischer died rather young, - in 1993, - and I don't know whether he retained this convinced view towards the end. I fancy not because it would have become unpopular.

Now, you ask for this note and I can't help you. All I remember is what I've stated above.

Now, to your other question about who these guys are in the picture, which Trish has sent you. Starting from the right is I who have my face crinkled up in a sort of "by Joe, this is all very remarkable..." Of course everybody knew that the Geister-phone which Potter is playing with was just a fake. There was nothing inside it, but he was pretending he was hearing ghostly noises. Then

comes Martin Fleischmann (peeping up from behind). He seems to be rather doubtful about the whole thing (as he often was about most things).

The third one from the right, the handsome chap who looks so young is John W. Tomlinson who was one of my early graduate students. He had a good career in New Zealand and became Vice Chancellor of the University of Wellington, but unfortunately he died of Alzheimer's about three years ago. He must have been in his 70's.

The chap who can be seen peeping between Tomlinson and Potter (Potter is the one testing out the Geister-phone) is J.W. Bowler-Reed, my graduate student. Bowler, - as we called him, - was rather a cut above the rest of us in class. He had a Bentley, - the ultimate high point for young Britons, - and used to parade it around a lot. It was probably twenty or thirty years old, but then Bentley's last a long time. Bowler continued to write to me throughout his life and only died perhaps two years ago.

In the middle is the inimitable Ed Potter who lives now in Australia. He is inimitable because of the long history of his association with me. Potter was very much from the lower class, - not the middle class, - and his father worked on the railways repairing the track. When there was a question of Potter going to the University, his parents and all his friends were very much against it. They said it would be "breaking his class." Nevertheless, he greeted the opposition, got the scholarships which I had arranged for him and came to Imperial College and got his Ph.D. with me.

Potter is one of those I've kept up a correspondence with for the last sixty years. At the moment we're having a correspondence about his wife who's got Alzheimer's although she is still very much on her feet.

Is Potter a friend of mine? I hope they're all friends of mine, especially the ones that have been writing to me for so long.

The next chap on the left is a tall man overlooking the whole lot. It's Rex Watson.

Rex Watson, who unfortunately died about four or five years ago, - should have much more attention and fame than was given him.

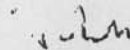
He became director of the so-called "secret" British Research Station in Porton Downs. Unfortunately he did run into bad press when he was testing out the efficacy of bullets and allowed his colleagues to shoot sheep with the new bullets, but apart from that he ran the institute for many years. He worked with me in 1949-1952 and got his Ph.D. on the electrolysis of alkaline solutions..

The part about him which is so much forgotten, - he was the first person to build a workable fuel cell. He worked with Bacon to whom the 1956 fuel cell (which ran a tractor) is always associated, but Bacon never did laboratory work and had two people who did the work on the bench and actually constructed the cell. One was an electrochemist, - that was Watson, - and the other was an engineer. Much credit to Rex Watson. I always quote him.

The two people on the extreme left are both Egyptians. The chap in the forward position with his head bent to the left is Fouad and Fouad didn't actually work with me. He worked with J.F. Hemingshaw with whom Fleischmann worked. I can't tell you much about Fouad whom I didn't know well. I only remember that he amused us once on a trip we made to an island off the British coast and Fouad got separated from the rest of us but came in while we were all having dinner with a bicycle. The front wheel bent around in the backward direction. It was the look on his face which amused us.

Then the one on the extreme left is Azzam, one of my earlier students who got his Ph.D. with me about 1949. He had a varied career working for the Egyptians as a diplomat and then working for the Atomic Energy Commission in Vienna. I haven't heard from Azzam for years and I suppose he's dead.

Sincerely,



John O'M. Bockris  
Distinguished Professor  
Texas A&M University (1982-1997)

JOMB/ts