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THE RONALD ALFRED SILOW COLLECTION

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RONALD ALFRED SILOW COLLECTION.

Biographical Information.

Silow, R.A.

Ronald Alfred Silow was born on February 21st 1908. He was educated at the Latymer School in London. He gained First Class Honours in Agricultural Botany at Reading and then went on to do his MSc at Wales, returning to Reading to gain his DSc in Genetics.

He was Geneticist at the Empire Cotton Growing Corporation's Cotton Research Station, in Trinidad in the West Indies and was Visiting Professor in Plant Genetics at Virginia University in USA. He was also Agricultural Research Council Officer at Cambridge University and Director of Science for the British Council in China. He later worked as Technical Officer of the Plant Industry Branch of the Agricultural Division of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations in Rome. From 1955 to 1963 Dr.Silow was Chief of the Atomic Energy Branch, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Here he initiated and developed activities on the uses of atomic energy in food and agriculture. In 1964 R.A.Silow was appointed first Deputy Director of the Joint Division for Atomic Energy in Agriculture, established by the International Atomic Agency and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Dr.Silow also campaigned for more effective international control against chemical and biological warfare.

In October 1975 Dr.Silow stated that he had repeatedly warned the FAO Administration that Dr.M.S.Swaminathan, a leading adviser to FAO and the U.N. System in Food Science and Agricultural Development, was presenting to the UN System data and claims widely known to be false leading to the wastage of much manpower and money intended by member governments for economic development. Dr.Silow also claimed that though it was said within the FAO that Swaminathan had cleared himself, recent evidence showed that Swaminathan's misleading of his Government and the FAO culminated in the falsity of his defence in August 1973 against the criticisms levelled against him by the Official Committee in India that enquired into the suicide in May 1972 of Dr.Vinod H.Shah, one of Swaminathan's scientific staff, in protest against the irregularities in science at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi where Swaminathan was Director. Swaminathan had claimed that he had bred a new variety of wheat with 15-25% more protein and 148% more lysine in that increased protein than in its parental variety.

After the death of his wife from breast cancer in 1988, Dr.Silow launched the Bertha St.Aubyn Silow Foundation to raise cash for breast cancer research. Ronald Silow died on July 2nd. 1990, at the age of 82. He left his entire estate of £300,000 to the Imperial Cancer Research Fund to help pay for tests into a drug which could prevent breast cancer: Tamoxifen.

His special areas of activity were: Genetics, particularly of cotton and pasture plants, and species crosses; speciation, evolution and domestication of crop plants; crop breeding - particularly cotton; international scientific relations; organisation of agricultural research and scientific education and research in Europe, North and South America, Australasia and the Far East.

With Sir Joseph Hutchinson and S.G.Stephens he published *The Evolution of Gossypium*. Oxford, 1947.



R.A. Silow Collection.

Envelope 1:

Cambridge Evening News. Cutting: "Cancer Fund Concert": for Bertha St.Aubyn Silow Foundation. 9.9.89.

Cambridge Evening News. Cutting: "Concert will aid research into cancer." 15.9.89.

Cambridge Evening News. Cutting. Announcement of the death of R.A.Silow, 2.7.90.

Cambridge Evening News. Cutting: "City man leaves £300,000 for tests." (The bequest was to Imperial Cancer Research and the money was to help pay for tests into a drug which could prevent breast cancer).

Grieg, A.B. Letter, from 31 Ollerton Road, London, to the family or executor of the late Dr.Silow saying: she was the widow of his nephew Geoffrey, who died in 1950 and she wished to send a donation to R.A.Silow's memory. n.d. Photocopied holograph, 2ff.

Hand lens. used by R.A.Silow.

Silow, R.A. Bronze printing plate: "Dr.R.A.Silow, Chief, Atomic Energy Branch. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome." Another bronze printing plate: "Ronald A.Silow."

Silow, R.A. Card: "ICRR II, Harrogate, 1962. F.A.O."

Silow, R.A. Cutting, headed: "Distinguished Guest": In September 1961 Dr.R.A.Silow, Chief, Atomic Energy Branch, FAO, conferred with Mr.J.E.Flanagan, Jr., on a 1962 presentation of a six-week course on radionuclides in foods. n.d.

Silow, R.A. Letter, from 10 Westberry Court, Grange Road, Cambridge, to Mr. and Mrs.Rochford, thanking them for their donation to R.A.Silow's Bertha St.Aubyn Silow Foundation for research into the control and prevention of breast tumours and breast cancer. 17.10.89. Photocopied holograph, 1f.

Silow, R.A. "The need and opportunity for greatly intensified action against losses in stored grain." May 1968. Pencilled holograph, 14ff.

Silow, R.A. Portrait photograph, black and white. 18 x 24cm.

Stewart-Jones, Marjorie R. Letter, from 3 Cissbury Road, Broadwater, Worthing to Dr.Clarke expressing sympathy for his loss at the death of his uncle and their old friend: Ronald Silow, 19.7.90. holograph, 2pp.

United Nations Organization Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice. New York, United Nations, 1962.

R.A.Silow Collection.

Envelope 2.

Brown, Lester R. Increasing world food output: problems and prospects. Washington, United States Department of Agriculture: Foreign Agricultural Economic Report, no.25. 140pp.

Cambridge Evening News. Cutting: "Founder of charities for cancer dies at 82." 10.7.90.

Clark, Grahame Domestication and social evolution. (*Phil.Trans.R.Soc.Lond. B.* 275:5-11 (1976).)

European Atomic Energy Commission. Application of atomic energy in agriculture. (Annual report 1967). Wageningen, ITAL, 1968. 115pp.

European Information Centre for Food Irradiation. Food Irradiation: Quarterly International Newsletter, vol.8, nos.1-2, July-December 1967; Vol.8, no.4, April-June 1968; vol.9, no.1-2, July-December 1968.

Excerpts : Excerpts from an unknown publication, examining Dr.Swaminathan's claims concerning Sharbati Sonora. n.d. Photocopies. pp.145-150.

FAO/IAEA Symposium: Improving Plant Protein by Nuclear Techniques, Vienna, 8-12 June 1970. Table II. Amino acid content...nitrogen content and protein value (%) in some protein-rich wheat species. (The table includes Sharbati-Sonora, with a note by R.A.Silow, "sown in India.") Photocopy, 1f.

Hanlon, Joseph "Top food scientist published false data." (*New Scientist*, 7.11.74, pp.436-437). Photocopy. (This article mentions that Dr.Swaminathan's claims for lysine and protein increases in a new strain of wheat were important in winning him the Ramon Magsaysay Award and in shifting food research funds "to the highly controversial area of radiation mutations.")

The Hindu "New varieties of wheat: Swaminathan answers criticism." (*The Hindu*, 28.8.73). (Includes notes by R.A.Silow). 1p. Photocopy.

Hindustan Times "ICAR chief made inflated claims about wheat variety." (*Hindustan Times*, 27.8.73). (Includes notes by R.A.Silow). 1p. Photocopy.

International Project in the field of Food Irradiation. Food Irradiation Information, no.12, November 1982. (Final issue). 152pp.

Nature "Did Dr.Shah die in vain?" (*Nature*, 253:577). Photocopy.

New Scientist Letters: Swaminathan Controversy. (*New Scientist*, 26.12.74, pp.948; 30.1.74, p.281; 6.2.75, p.339.) (Include notes by R.A.Silow). 4pp. Photocopies.

The Patriot (Delhi) "Report busts inflated IARI research claims." 27.8.73. (Includes notes by R.A.Silow). 1p. Photocopy.

R.A.Silow Collection: Envelope 2: contd.

Ryle, Martin Is there a case for nuclear power? London, Menard Press, 1982. 6pp.

Science & Culture "Ethics in scientific journalism." (*Science & Culture*, 1975, 41:43-47.)
Photocopies.

Shah, V.H. "Findings on the statements and allegations made by late Dr.V.H.Shah in his letter dated 5.5.72." Chapter 7. (Includes note by R.A.Silow: "Re dates.") pp.40-41. Photocopies.

Shah, V.H. "Suicide of Dr.V.H.Shah of IARI(M): Discussion under Rule 176, 18.5.72." pp.205-206, 209-210, 245-246. Photocopies.

Silow, R.A. "Leading FAO adviser unjustly blames British editor for unauthorized re-publication of that adviser's false data." (Here Dr.Silow stated he had for years repeatedly warned the FAO Administration that Dr.M.S.Swaminathan, a leading adviser to FAO and the U.N. System in Food Science and Agricultural Development, was presenting to the UN System data and claims widely known to be false leading to the wastage of much manpower and money intended by member governments for economic development. Dr.Silow also claimed that although it was said within the FAO that Swaminathan had cleared himself, recent evidence showed that Swaminathan's misleading of his Government and the FAO culminated in the falsity of his defence in August 1973 against the criticisms levelled against him by the Official Committee in India that enquired into the suicide in May 1972 of Dr.Vinod H.Shah, one of Swaminathan's scientific staff, in protest against the irregularities in science at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi where Swaminathan was Director. Swaminathan had claimed that he had bred a new variety of wheat [Sharbati Sonora] with 15-25% more protein and 148% more lysine in that increased protein than in its parental variety). 29.10.75. Photocopied holograph, 13pp. (page 14 is missing).

Silow, R.A. List of publications by R.A.Silow up to 1950. Photocopied typescript, 4pp.

Silow, R.A. Photocopies of post office return receipt cards showing that R.A.Silow's letter dated 3.9.71 to S.Majumdar was received in the Ministry of Agriculture; that R.A.Silow's letter dated 31.10.72 to the Prime Minister was received. Photocopies, 2ff.

Silow, R.A. "Sharbati Sonora - one of the most extensive cases of non-validity in the history of science: an officially-documented case study of its exposure." n.d. (post 1972), photocopied holograph, 58pp.

Silow, R.A. "Top food scientist published false data. One of the most extensive cases of non-validity in the history of science." 15.11.74. Photocopied Holograph, 11pp.

United Nations. International action to avert the impending protein crisis. Report to the Economic and Social Council of the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development. New York, United Nations, 1968. 106pp. (Includes notes and marginalia).

United Nations. Department of Political and Security Council Affairs. Effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons and the security and economic implications for states of the acquisition and further development of these weapons. Report of the Secretary-General transmitting the study of his consultative group. New York, United Nations, 1968. 76pp. (Includes a note from Dom Rosa thanking R.A.Silow for lending him this book, n.d.)