



“Physics in Canada”

Book Review

“La Physique au Canada”

Critique de livre

“A Lesson for the Future of Our Science: My Testimony on Lord Patrick M S Blackett”, by Antonino Zichichi, World Scientific, 2016, ISBN: 978-981-4719-41-4, price

My interest in this volume flows from having been a graduate student at the Blackett Laboratory of Imperial College 1964-1966, when Patrick Blackett [1897-1974] was a professor, including passing this distinguished physicist in the corridor on our floor, and attending a 2 week NATO ASI in 1981 at the Erice, Sicily, “Ettore Majorana” International Centre for Scientific Culture (ICSC), which uses restored convents and monasteries atop the mountain overlooking Trapani, where Zichichi was born in 1929. One aspect of Blackett’s WWII contributions in developing the beginnings of Operational Research to help the wartime efforts is discussed in Chapter 5. This helped in the liberation of Malta which lies south of Sicily, and then of Sicily. Zichichi, a former student of Blackett, wrote this Testimony after being invited to give a lecture at ICSC in April 2014. He has been instrumental in the naming of the Blackett Institute at Erice and gives a well illustrated overview of Blackett’s research contributions to particle physics, to his role in the development of scientific organizations, and to many illustrious thinkers that he (AZ) met along the way - especially “Professor Blackett and his friend Bertrand Russell”. The latter, as well as Galileo, Gödel, Dirac, Einstein, Fermi, Occhialini, Planck, and Weisskopf are each indexed about twenty times. Zichichi suggests that Russell harboured the thought: *Physicists, that vile cursed race pf beings*. p. 80). This book contains a rich collection of information which should be useful in preparing an account of particle physics from the early days through to the Standard Model, especially with respect to the massive experiments at places like CERN involving hundreds or even thousands of personnel. Also Zichichi philosophises about “Our Science”, including concepts such as the “1st level of Galilean Science”. This book is at least as much about Antonino Zichichi as it is about Blackett. Finally, the reader should consult the current Wikipedia entries on Antonino Zichichi and on Blackett. The latter is particularly good.

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