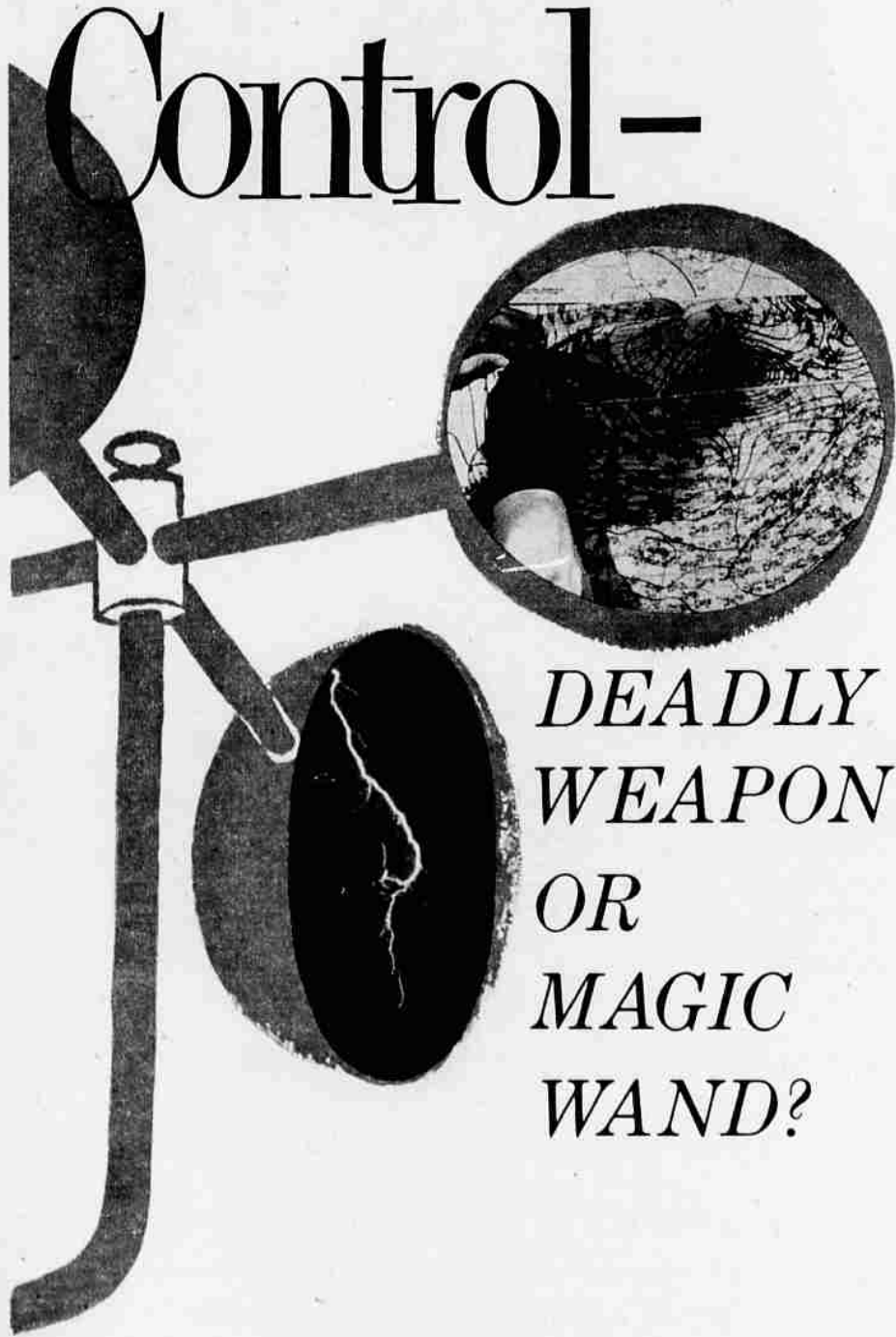


Weather Control—



*DEADLY
WEAPON
OR
MAGIC
WAND?*

Man's attempt to harness the forces of nature poses grave dangers as well as many predictable blessings.

Meteorologists foresee day when the dreaded tornado becomes a thing of the past.



by James C. G. Conniff

Art by Jim Teason

WHILE YOU SLEEP, faces in the green glow of instruments are watching through long arctic nights for answers. Some are American faces. Some are Russian faces. The answers they find may determine the kind of sleep you get for a long time to come. What is done with those answers may in the near future either fulfill a dream as old as Noah—or put an end to things a lot more precious than jokes like "Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it."

These are the task forces of an incredible assignment: nothing less than human control of the world's weather. The Reds, backed by unlimited funds, have been at it for 20 years. But on a starvation budget we have just gotten started with a number of "small research projects."

What are we after up there? The same thing the Russians are. By artificial manipulation of the arctic wastes, we hope to warm things up back home and put the weather on a predictable basis. That means guaranteeing next week's weather, next month's, and next year's.

The responsibility we shoulder in the process is staggering. It is a pretty snug planet, after all, once you start tampering with the weather. There's more to controlling climate than assured vacation weather in Florida, palm trees and lower heating bills in Chicago, bikinis and orange blossoms for Duluth in December, less humid Summers coast-to-coast, and Spring arriving two months earlier in New England.

In undertaking the gigantic projects

required to bring about all these changes, any conscientious scientist must ask himself: but what about the neighbors?

From 1946 on, we Americans have had part of the answer to that question. That year Dr. Vincent Schaefer of General Electric, with Dr. Irving Langmuir, inaugurated scientific weather control by seeding rainclouds, first with dry ice, then with silver iodide crystals, to make them precipitate. It worked fine and still does. But our courts continue to wrestle with lawsuits that result when one valley's needed rain becomes another's drought or deluge.

Will that kind of grief, only magnified many times, complicate early tries at global weather control? Almost inevitably. We saw it two years ago in Russia's proposal to dam Bering Strait. At first it looked good to everybody. The Reds counted on the project to warm Siberia for farming that would ease consumer shortages. They also looked for year-round ports on the Pacific, which got our hopes up. Improved trade opportunities might soothe the Soviet itch for world domination.

But on closer study, the plan revealed a number of adverse "side effects." An Arctic Ocean dam across Bering Strait would be an awesome engineering feat of undeniable benefit to Siberia, meteorologists agreed, but it would also invite long-range disaster for certain neighbors by boosting the flow of arctic water across the top of the North American continent. This would so intensify the bitterly cold Labrador Current that the Canadian maritime provinces' already short growing season would be cut sharply, with serious crop loss. A further effect would probably



Will science provide perpetual weather like this for the entire temperate zone?