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Einstein, Albert, 1954-1956.

Erstein

March 16, 1954

Telegram

Professor Albert Erstein
Institute for Advanced Study
Princeton, New Jersey

PERMIT ME TO JOIN YOUR HOST OF FRIENDS AND ADMIRERS IN SENDING
YOU MY WARMEST FELICITATIONS ON YOUR SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY.
YOU HAVE BEEN A BLESSING TO MANKIND.

ABBA HILIEL SILVER



STATEMENT BY NINE TOP SCIENTISTS FOR OUTLAWING WAR

(Issued on July 9, 1955)

In the tragic situation which confronts humanity, we feel that scientists should assemble in conference to appraise the perils that have arisen as a result of the development of weapons of mass destruction, and to discuss a resolution in the spirit of the appended draft.

We are speaking on this occasion, not as members of this or that nation, continent or creed, but as human beings, members of the species of man, whose continued existence is in doubt. The world is full of conflicts; and, overshadowing all minor conflicts, the titanic struggle between communism and anti-communism.

Almost everybody who is politically conscious has strong feelings about one or more of these issues; but we want you, if you can, to set aside such feelings and consider yourselves only as members of a biological species which has had a remarkable history, and whose disappearance none of us can desire.

Appeals to No Single Group

We shall try to say no single word which should appeal to one group rather than to another. All, equally, are in peril, and, if the peril is understood, there is hope that they may collectively avert it.

We have to learn to think in a new way. We have to learn to ask ourselves, not what steps can be taken to give military victory to whatever group we prefer, for there no longer are such steps; the only question we have to ask ourselves is: what steps can be taken to prevent a military contest of which the issue must be disastrous to all parties?

The general public, and even many men in position of authority, have not realized what would be involved in a war with nuclear bombs. The general public still thinks in terms of the obliteration of cities. It is understood that the new bombs are more powerful than the old, and that, while one A-bomb could obliterate Hiroshima, one H-bomb could obliterate the largest cities, such as London, New York and Moscow.

No doubt in an H-bomb war great cities would be obliterated. But this is one of the minor disasters that would have to be faced. If everybody in London, New York and Moscow were exterminated the world might, in the course of a few centuries recover from the blow. But we now know, especially since the Bikini test, that nuclear bombs, can gradually spread destruction over a very much wider area than had been supposed.

The Power of New Bombs

It is stated on very good authority that a bomb can now be manufactured which will be 2,500 times as powerful as that which destroyed Hiroshima.

Such a bomb, if exploded near the ground or under water, sends radioactive particles into the upper air. They sink gradually and reach the surface of the earth in the form of a deadly dust or rain. It was this dust which infected the Japanese fishermen and their catch of fish.

No one knows how widely such lethal radioactive particles might be diffused, but the best authorities are unanimous in saying that a war with H-bombs might quite possibly put an end to the human race. It is feared that if many H-bombs are used there will be universal death — sudden only for a minority, but for the majority, a slow torture of disease and disintegration.

Many warnings have been uttered by eminent men of science and by the authorities in military strategy. None of them will say that the worst results are certain. What they do say is that these results are possible, and no one can be sure that they will not be realized. We have not yet found that the views of experts on this question depend in any degree upon their politics or prejudices. They depend only, so far as our researches have revealed, upon the extent of the particular expert's knowledge. We have found that the men who know most are the most gloomy.

Here, then is the problem which we present to you, stark and dreadful, and inescapable: shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war? People will not face this alternative because it is so difficult to abolish war.

The abolition of war will demand distasteful limitations of national sovereignty. But what perhaps impedes understanding of the situation more than anything else is that the term "mankind" feels vague and abstract. People scarcely realize in imagination that the danger is to themselves and their children and their grandchildren, and not only to a dimly apprehended humanity. They can scarcely bring themselves to grasp that they, individually, and those whom they love are in imminent danger of perishing agonizingly. And so they hope that perhaps war may be allowed to continue provided modern weapons are prohibited.

An Illusory Hope

This hope is illusory. Whatever agreements not to use H-bombs had been reached in time of peace, they would no longer be considered binding in time of war, and both sides would set to work to manufacture H-bombs as soon as war broke out, for, if one side manufactured the bombs and the other did not, the side that manufactured them would inevitably be victorious.

Although an agreement to renounce nuclear weapons as part of a general reduction of armaments* would not afford an ultimate solution, it would serve certain important purposes.

First: any agreement between East and West is to the good in so far as it tends to diminish tension. Second: the abolition of thermonuclear weapons, if each side believed that the other had carried it out sincerely, would lessen the fear of a sudden attack in the style of Pearl Harbor, which at present keeps both sides in a state of nervous apprehension. We should therefore, welcome such an agreement, though only as a first step.

Most of us are not neutral in feelings, but, as human beings, we have to remember that, if the issues between East and West are to be decided in any manner that can give any possible satisfaction to anybody, whether Communist, whether Asian or European or American, whether white or black, then the issues must not be decided by war. We should wish this to be understood, both in the East and in the West.

There lies before us, if we choose, continual progress in happiness, knowledge and wisdom. Shall we, instead, choose death, because we cannot forget our quarrels? We appeal, as human beings, to human beings: remember your humanity and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death.

Resolution

We invite this congress [to be convened], and through it the scientists of the world and the general public, to subscribe to the following resolution:

"In view of the fact that in any future world war nuclear weapons will certainly be employed, and that such weapons threaten the continued existence of mankind, we urge the Governments of the world to realize, and to acknowledge publicly, that their purposes cannot be furthered by a world war, and we urge them, consequently, to find peaceful means for the settlement of all matters of dispute between them."

Prof. Percy W. Bridgman.
Albert Einstein.
Prof. Leopold Infeld.
Prof. Hermann Joseph Muller.
Prof. Cecil F. Powell.
Prof. Joseph Rotblat.
Bertrand Russell.
Prof. Hideki Yukawa.
Prof. Frederic Joliot-Curie.

These signers include 7 Nobel Prize winners—one of whom (Prof. Infeld) is in Communist Poland.

*Professor Muller makes the reservation that this be taken to mean "a concomitant balanced reduction of all armaments."

*&Professor Joliot-Curie makes the reservations that governments should renounce war "as a means of settling differences between states" and that "limitations of national sovereignty should be agreed to by all, and be in the interests of all."

ESTATE OF ALBERT EINSTEIN

55 East 10th Street
New York 3, New York

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
East 105th Street and Ansel Road
Cleveland, Ohio

May 11, 1956

Dear Rabbi Silver:

Last summer some of the most distinguished scientists of the world joined in signing the two attached statements, in which they called attention to the destructiveness of modern weapons. They urged the governments of the world "to refrain from the use of power as an ultimate means of statesmanship" and "to find peaceful means for the settlement of all matters of dispute between them." Otherwise, they warned mankind would face the risk of universal death since a war waged with the new weapons might quite possibly put an end to the human race.

In the period since these statements were published, nuclear and other weapons of annihilation have multiplied both in numbers and destructive capacity. Yet there is little evidence that the governments have become sufficiently aware of the terrifying responsibility they bear for the survival of mankind and of the urgent need for immediate and decisive steps toward the abolition of war. Nor is there any indication that the peoples of the world yet realize the deadly character of the weapons now available and of the danger of extermination in case of war.

Under the circumstances, an informed public opinion -- the ultimate source of government action -- is more necessary than ever. No efforts should be spared to spread as widely as possible the warning which the scientists issued last year. Having discussed this problem for some time with a number of persons in order to discover the most suitable means for publicizing the scientists' views, I have decided to address myself directly to a few outstanding citizens, in the hope of enlisting their cooperation. As Albert Einstein's executor, I have, ever since his death, felt a special responsibility in the matter. Albert Einstein, long before the atomic age, was most emphatic in advocating the abolition of war and the establishment of a supranational agency for the settlement of conflicts among nations. One of his last acts in life, was to affix his signature to one of the two statements mentioned before. Since I am convinced that he would have wanted to lend his most active support to an educational campaign throughout the world to disseminate the disclosure of the unprecedented effectiveness of nuclear arms, I should like to see the prestige of his name used in a new effort towards universal disarmament and the abolition of war.

This letter is being sent to the five American scientists who signed the two statements issued last summer, and to a small number of additional scientists and other personalities who are named on the attached list. I

(cont'd)

should appreciate learning from you whether you are prepared to cooperate with other members of this group for the following purposes: (a) to make sure that the American people become thoroughly acquainted with the scientists' views about the potential impact of a future war upon mankind, as similar efforts are being made in the other countries for the same purpose; and (b) to set forth the course of action which the nations of the world must adopt to guarantee the security of their people and the survival of civilization. Among the steps that might be considered by such a group would be the issuance of a new statement which would forcefully reiterate the views pronounced by the scientists last year and for which the widest possible circulation would be sought; the publication of little pamphlets which would analyze the problem of arms and war in non-technical language; the distribution to members of Congress of new scientific information in the field of arms and war, whenever such material becomes available; and cooperation with similar groups in other countries.

Any comments which you would like to make about the project suggested in this letter will be greatly appreciated. It would be helpful if you could also indicate whether and when you might be able to attend an exploratory meeting with those to whom this letter is addressed, either in New York or in some more centrally located city. I shall attend to the necessary correspondence and to whatever preparations may become desirable until the group itself is able to designate one of its members or an outside person to act as its representative. This letter is not being publicized in any way and every effort will be made to avoid publicity until the group will have an opportunity to decide what steps, if any, it wishes to take.

Sincerely yours,

Otto Nathan,

Otto Nathan

"We, the undersigned, are scientists of different countries, different races, different denominations and different political convictions.

"The only thing that binds us--on the surface--is the Nobel prize which we have the honor to possess. It was with enthusiasm that we became servants of science. We believe it a way to happy life. We are terrified to see that this science gives mankind instruments to destroy itself.

"Full use in wartime of all weapons available would contaminate this earth with radiation sufficient to destroy entire nations.

"This kind of death can hit the neutrals as well as the combating parties should a war break out between the major powers.

"Who can guarantee that such a war would not develop into such a deadly fight?

"Thus, a nation which engages in a deadly war invites disaster for itself and endangers the whole world.

"We do not deny that perhaps today fear of these lethal weapons maintains peace.

"But in spite of this, we believe that a government betrays itself by thinking that fear of these weapons will prevent wars for a long time. Fear and tension have often led to wars. We also believe it is wrong to speculate that smaller conflicts would continue to be solved by the use of conventional weapons.

"In extreme danger, no nation will refrain from using a weapon which science can help to produce.

"All nations must come to the conclusion to refrain from the use of power as an ultimate means of statesmanship. If they won't do this they will cease to exist."

(signed)

KURT ADLER, Germany
MAX BORN, England
ADOLPH BUTENANDT, Germany
ARTHUR H. COMPTON, United States
GERHARD DOMACK, Germany
HANS VON EULER-CHELPIN, Sweden
OTTO HAHN, Germany
GEORGE DE HEVESY, Denmark and Sweden
WERNER HEISENBERG, Germany
RICHARD KUHN, Germany
FRITZ A. LIPMANN, United States
PAUL MUELLER, Switzerland
HERMANN J. MULLER, United States

LEOPOLD RUZICKA, Switzerland
FREDERICK SODDY, England
HERMANN STAUDINGER, Germany
WENDELL M. STANLEY, United States
HIDEKI YUKAWA, Japan

Doctor Emily Greene Balch
Wellesley, Massachusetts

Doctor Chester I. Barnard
52 Gramercy Park North
New York 10, New York

Professor George W. Beadle
San Pasqual Street
Pasadena 5, California

Mr. Laird Bell
135 South La Salle Street
Chicago, Illinois

President Sarah G. Blending
Vassar College
Poughkeepsie, New York

Professor Felix Bloch
Department of Physics
Stanford University
California

Professor Percy W. Bridgman
Jefferson Physical Laboratory
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts

Professor Harrison Scott Brown
California Institute of Technology
Pasadena, California

Mr. Charles C. Burlingham
860 Park Avenue
New York, New York

Doctor Henry J. Cadbury
Pendle Hill
Wallingford, Pennsylvania

Professor A. J. Carlson
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Dean David F. Cavers
20 Oakland Street
Lexington, Massachusetts

Mr. Grenville Clark
Dublin
New Hampshire

Professor Arthur H. Compton
625 South Skinker Boulevard
St. Louis 5, Missouri

Professor Edward U. Condon
2938 Avalon Avenue
Berkeley 5, California

Mr. Norman Cousins
The Saturday Review
25 West 45th Street
New York 36, New York

Mrs. Helen Gahagan Douglas
983 Park Avenue
New York 28, New York

Professor L. C. Dunn
635 West 247th Street
New York 71, New York

Professor John F. Enders
300 Longwood
Boston 15, Massachusetts

Doctor Abraham Flexner
995 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York

Professor James Franck
1155 East 57th Street
Chicago, Illinois

Dean Erwin N. Griswold
Harvard Law School
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Doctor Robert M. Hutchins
1 East 54th Street
New York 22, New York

Professor Howard Mumford Jones
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Mr. Waldemar Kaempfert
The New York Times
229 West 43rd Street
New York 36, New York

Miss Helen Keller
c/o American Foundation for the Blind,
15 West 16th Street Inc.
New York 11, New York

Miss Freda Kirchwey
37 Washington Square West
New York 11, New York

Professor Alfred L. Kroeber
University of California
Berkeley 4, California

Professor P. Kusch
375 Riverside Drive
New York 25, New York

Doctor Ralph E. Lapp
Arlington Towers
Arlington, Virginia

Professor Fritz A. Lipmann
100 Revere Street
Boston 14, Massachusetts

Professor Helen M. Lynd
75 Central Park West
New York 23, New York

President John A. MacKay
Princeton Theological Seminary
Princeton, New Jersey

Professor Archibald MacLeish
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Professor Kirtley F. Mather
Geological Museum
22 Oxford Street
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts

Doctor Alexander Meiklejohn
1525 La Loma Avenue
Berkeley 8, California

Mrs. Agnes E. Meyer
1624 Crescent Place, North West
Washington, D. C.

Doctor Alfred E. Mirsky
Rockefeller Institute
66 Street and York Avenue
New York 21, New York

Doctor Philip C. Morse
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Professor Hermann J. Muller
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

Mr. Lewis Mumford
Amenia, New York

Doctor J. Robert Oppenheimer
Institute for Advanced Study
Princeton, New Jersey

Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam
100 Maryland Avenue
Washington 2, D. C.

Professor Linus C. Pauling
3500 East Fairpont Street
Pasadena 8, California

Professor Ralph Barton Perry
985 Memorial Drive
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts

Mr. Clarence E. Pickett
American Friends Service Committee
20 South 12th Street
Philadelphia 7, Pennsylvania

Dean James A. Pike
Cathedral Heights
New York 25, New York

Mr. Sumner T. Pike
Lubeck
Maine

Doctor Edward M. Purcell
5 Wright Street
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt
211 East 62nd Street
New York 21, New York

Professor Harlow Shapley
Harvard College Observatory
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
East 105th Street and Ansel Road
Cleveland, Ohio

Professor Cyril S. Smith
5735 South Kenwood
Chicago 37, Illinois

Professor Wendel M. Stanley
220 The Uplands
Berkeley, California

Professor Harold C. Urey
4900 Greenwood Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

Professor Oswald Veblen
Institute for Advanced Study
Princeton, New Jersey

Professor George Wald
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Mr. James P. Warburg
70 East 45th Street
New York 17, New York

Mr. Ernest T. Weir
Grant Building
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Professor Victor F. Weisskopf
36 Arlington Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Professor Norbert Wiener
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Professor Sewall Wright
3905 Council Crest
Madison 5, Wisconsin

