### Dr. Leo Szilard Dead at 66

Death came quietly yesterday to Dr. Leo Szilard, 66. whose urging caused Dr. Albert Einstein to suggest work on the atomic bomb, and who devoted the rest of his life to efforts to prevent the loosing of the invention on mankind. Page 32.

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# Man Behind the A-Bomb—Dr. Leo Szilard Dies

On March 3, 1939, Dr. Leo Szilard and Dr. Walter H. Zinn conducted a nuclear experiment at Columbia University, which Dr. Szilard later described in these words:

"Everything was ready and all we had to do was to turn a switch, lean back and watch the screen of a television tube. If flashes of light appeared on the screen, that would mean that neutrons were emitted in the fission process of uranium, and this, in turn, would mean that the large-scale liberation of atomic energy was just around the corner. We turned the switch and we saw the flashes. We watched them for a little while and then we switched everything off and went home. That night I knew the world was headed for grief."

Then Dr. Szilard helped guide the world into the atomic age with its grief and terror, but always trying to turn the awesome nuclear discovery into a promise of a richer and better era.

#### DEVOTED

With a group of other scientists, he persuaded Dr. Albert Einstein to write to President Franklin D. Roosevelt about the possibilities of nuclear fission, expressing the belief that it could lead to construction of bombs and warning that Nazi Germany warning that Nazi Germany was already working on the process.

Later, he participated with Munich Pact with Hitler.

Enrico Fermi in starting the first sustained nuclear chain reaction at the University of Chicago.

The rest of his life was devoted to efforts to keep humanity from destroying itself with the atomic and hydrogen bombs.

His battles for peace ended early yesterday morning when the brilliant, muchhonored scientist was found dead in bed in his home at La Jolla, Calif. He was 66.

Dr. Szilard was a short, heavy men, with a massive head, whose moods ranged from ebullience to irascibility and who had a gift for the epigram which deflates an ego, including his own as often as not.

Dr. Szilard was born in Budapest, Hungary, and became one of an enormously talented band of Hungarian Jewish scientists who left their native land to pursue their studies in the great German universities. They included the late physicists Dr. Theodore von Karman and Dr. John von Neumann; Dr. Edward Teller, father of the atom bomb; Dr. Eugene P. Wigner, this year's Nobel laureate in physics, and Dr. Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, eminent biologist.

With the rise of Hitler, they left Germany, one by one. Dr. Szilard went to England, where he began work in nuclear physics, but left because of the "betrayal of Czechoslavakia" in the Munich Pact with Miller.

He came to the United States in 1938 and resumed his researches at Columbia University, working there until 1940. He, Dr. Fermi and other scientists were greatly frustrated by the refusal of military leaders to listen to their warning that the Germans were working on nuclear fission. They chose Dr. Einstein to present their case to Mr. Roosevelt because they thought his name would attract attention. Dr. Szilard composed the letter which Dr. Einstein signed. It began:

"Some recent work by E. Fermi and L. Szilard. which has been communicated to me in manuscript. leads me to expect that the element uranium may be turned into a new and important source of energy in the immediate future. Certain aspects of the situation which has arisen seem to call for watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action on the part of the Administration. I believe therefore that it is my duty to bring to your attention the following facts and recommendations."

A warning followed, which sounds naive today:

"This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it is conceivable—though much less certain—that extremely powerful bombs of a new type may thus be constructed."

Dr. Szilard, Dr. Fermi and other scientists next found themselves working on the



Dr. Leo Szilard

project at the University of Chicago, wheere their efforts led to the development of the atomic bomb.

Even before the first two atomic bombs were used, Dr. Szilard was urging international control of the new energy. In March, 1945, he wrote a memorandum to President Roosevelt, advocating reciprocal control by the United States, Russia and Great Britain. "We would then perhaps have a chance of living through this century without having ouar cities destroyed," he said.

#### PERSISTENT

In November, 1947, he tried to send a letter to Russian Premier Josef Stalin, urging him to "speak directly and personally to the American people" on Russian proposals for postwar esettlement. The State Department refused him permission to communicate with Stalin and he published it as an open letter in the "Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists."

He, Dr. Einstein, Harold C. Urey and others had already formed the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists to plead for international control of "the unleashed power of the atom."

One of his proposals to insure peace was that the the United States and Russia each give the other the population of a major city as hostages against a nuclear war.

Many other scientists considered his warnings extreme and his solution bizarre, but Dr. Szilard was not swayed by the crowd. One of his pithy comments concerned democracy and education:

#### OUTSPOKEN

"I'm all in favor of the democratic principle that one idiot is as good as ont genius, but I draw the line when someone takes the next step and concludes that two idiots are better than one genius."

He appeared continually on

television discussions about peace, quarrreled with Dr. Teller about U. S. atomic policy and continued to think up ways of averting an atomic war.

In 1961, he founded a "Council for a Liveable World" of which he was vice-president at his death. In 1962, writing a guest column for John Crosby in The Herald Tribune, he suggested a lobby for peace, with a membership of 100,000 persons with an average annual income of \$7,500. Each would give 2 per cent of his income to promote peace.

Dr. Szilard was not only brilliant, but had the strength of his convictions. When an ailment was diagnosed as cancer of the bladder, he vetoed his doctors' decision to operate and prescribed X-ray treatment for it. He survived the cancer.

Dr. Szilard became an American citizen in 1943 and was appointed professor of biophysics at the University of hicago in 1946. He took a leave from the university in 1959 to work on a public health grant in New York City. He had also held a professorship at Brandeis University since 1953.

In April, 1960, Dr. Szilard, Dr. Zinn and Dr. Alvin M.

Weinberg shared the \$150,000 Atoms for Peace award of the Ford Motor Company Fund.

At the University of Chicago, Dr. Szilard did research in the biophysics of aging and, in 1959, announced a theory that an individual's lifespan is predestined by the number of "aging hits" on the human cell. Of that and another theory developed at the same time, he quipped that "It will take my colleagues at least 15 years to prove them wrong."

He was a trusted adviser of Dr. Jonas Salk and was appointed a non-resident fellow of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in 1962. He retired from the University of Chicago a few months ago and moved to La Jolla as a resident fellow of the institute.

His most recent work was a paper "On Memory and Recall," resulting from his theoretical work on operation of the central nervous system. It is to be published in three parts in The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. The first part is to appear in the June issue.

His wife, Dr. Gertrud Weiss Szilard, was his physician and attended him at the time of his death.

### לאו סילארד – פיסיקאי וביולוג

בימים אלה מת בגיל 66 ליאו סילארד, מאבות הפצצה האטומית אשר תרם רבות למדע הן בשטח הפיסיקה והן בביולוגיה מולקולרית. הוא נולד בתונגריה, עבד ופעל בי נרמניה, אנגליה וארצות הברית. 0

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פעה

אחד

תוד

ולובי

מיצי

מער

עצמו

לפני 25 שנה. בתחילת שנה 1939. ביצע את אחד תניטויים ה־ ראשונים שהראו אפשרות לקיום גרעין תאראציום. הוא העלה מיד הצעה לשמור את הענין בסוד. ואף כתב שורה של מכתבים לחוקרים באנגלית ובצרפת בהם הסביר את השקפתו. לזכות ראיית תנולד שלו אפשר לזקוף במידה רבה את העובד את שרמינות הנאצית לא הגישו

ליצור פצצת אטום במלחמת העולם השניה.

כשהחלו האמריקאים בשנת 1942 ב"מבצע מנהטן" ויצור הפצצה ה־ אטומית, עמד סילארד יחד עם אני



פרופי ליאו מילארד

ריקו פרמי בראש המבצע. סילארד, שהיה מתנגד מרשבע של ארגון ותכון מינחלי במדע, טען כי כל העיונות נבטו התפתחו עוד לפני הציונות נבטו התפתחו עוד לפני בעוצה בכך שלא התחילו בו מוקדם מדי. מרגע שמתחילים לארגן מבי צע כזה, אמר, חייבים החוקרים להשתחף בכל כך הרבה ישיבות, שאין להם עוד פנאי לפתח רעיון יחדש, יחדש.

עם תום מלחמת העולם, עבר סילארד במפתיע לביולוגיה. היה זה מקרה נדיר ביותר, לפחות בזמן ההוא, שפיסיקאי בעל שם, מבוגר וסילארד היה אז כבן 47) יעבור לשטח חדש לחלוטין בשבילה הגר רם להחלטתו, כפי שהסביר לאחר מכן, היה השינוי שחל באופי המח-קר בפיסיקה גרעינית. חזית המחקר

עברה לפיסיקה של אנרגיות גבוהות ושם יש צורך בוועדות, מתקנים יקרים, תקציבים, החלטות על סדר עדיפויות בניסויים -- כל מה שר היה שנוא עליו. "בעבודה המדעית שאני אוהב", אמר, "אפשר להעלות רעיון חדש היום ולבצע את הגיסוי מחר. כיום אי אפשר לעבוד כד המיקרוביולוגיה. בפיסיקה". צעיר יחסית, קסמה לו במיוחד. בישתר למקצועו החדש היתה "צעי" רה" ורעננה. כשנשאל פעם כיצד הצליח ללמוד ביולוגיה, שטח ש-היה זר לו לחלוטיו השיב: "הש" תתפתי בקורס קיץ ללמוד הטכניקה של העבודה בוירוסים, ואת החלק התיאורטי הרי אפשר ללמוד תוד ירמיים".

מבין המאמרים שפרסם בביולוגיה מולקולרית החשיב במיוחד שלושה: אחד מעוסק בתופעת החזדקנות ו שנים אחרים העוסקים בהצעת מגר גנון של "זכרון מולקולרי" אשר מסוגל להסביר את יצירת הנוגדי נים אצל היונקים וכן את תופעת האינדוקציה של אגזימים אצל הייד

בספרו "קול הדולפינים", קובץ סיפורים קצרים, הביא בצורת סאר טירות כמה מדעותיו בבעיות החבר רת והמדינה. בעיקר בבעיות פירוק התימוש בה עסק רבות כחבר ווער דתרהמומחים הבין גושית.

במוסקבה, הרצה פעם בהיותר סילארד במועדון סופרים סובייטי על עבודתו בשטח הביולוגיה ה־ מולקולרית. לאחר ההרצאה נשאל על ידי אחד השומעים: "האם יש לעבודתך איזה שימוש מעשינ" ו־ סילארד השיב: "עד כמה שנראה לי כעת, אין לכך כל שימוש מעשי, אולם כך בדיוק הייתי משיב לוא שאלת אותי בשנות השלושים על השימושים המעשיים לתוצאות שר בתקבלו בפיסיקה גרעינית". "אם כך", אמר הרוסי, "אולי מומב שי תפסיקו את המחקר כבר בשלב