

# Argonne National Laboratory

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LEMONT, ILLINOIS

June 17, 1955

Professor Leo Szilard  
c/o A. N. Spanel  
International Latex Co  
350 Fifth Avenue  
New York City

Dear Szilard:

I was much interested in your remarks in your letter to the Times some months ago, and in this evidence of your renewed and even urgent concern for the problem of disarmament planning in a very large sense. I have heard vague hints that you are busying yourself to some extent with these matters in New York.

Your expression of hopelessness that any initiative could come from government came before the Stassen appointment, and when I first heard of it I allowed myself to hope that the creation of such a post might mark an upturn in the likelihood that there would be creative government thinking. There is obviously plenty of room for it to have been only a political maneuver with no serious intent, and the more I learn of the staff appointments the more I am inclined to take this pessimistic view. I believe nevertheless that Stassen should be encouraged to organize a serious try and to build his staff accordingly. On the atomic side of things it is at present almost non-existent.

To this end I tried during the last week or two to reach Stassen by a combination of phone calls and letters, proposing to make a trip to Washington to talk with him if he would make the time for it. I find it apparently impossible to see him at least until after the end of the month, when he is due to close up FOA and settle down to a single job.

Your Letter to the Editor expressed the need of organizing some privately sponsored private effort, and I wonder if you have made any progress in this direction. If such an effort should have the prospect of using effectively most of the available talent, then perhaps Stassen should not be urged to compete for talent! In comparing the prospects of private and government effort, there still is the question of the possible relevance of access to secret data, a subject in which we have differed over dinner in the past, when you had a tendency, I believe, to belittle and I perhaps to exaggerate the importance of atomic details. I still think it important that the effort should have access to technical secrets - and I even doubt that Stassen's staff does to a sufficient degree.

I would very much appreciate knowing in what direction your thoughts are going on finding a basis for agreement. Do you ever spend any time in Chicago?

With friendly greetings,

*David Inglis*

David R. Inglis



June 25, 1955

Mr. David R. Inglis  
Argonne National Laboratory  
Post Office Box 299  
Lemont, Illinois

Dear Inglis:

Many thanks for your very kind letter of June 17th. I am to some extent in touch with Stassen's office and expect to see Stassen sometime next month.

If you are going to see Stassen and discuss things with his office, perhaps we could get together first for a chat.

In the next few weeks you will find me either in Washington at the Sheraton-Park Hotel, or in New York at the King's Crown Hotel. I do not plan to be in Chicago in the near future.

With kind regards, I am,

Sincerely,

LS:srr

Leo Szilard



Argonne National Laboratory

9700 SOUTH CASS AVENUE  
ARGONNE, ILLINOIS

January 12, 1962

Professor Leo Szilard  
DuPont Plaza Hotel  
DuPont Circle, N. W.  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Szilard:

This is to report further on reactions elicited when I have discussed your proposal with colleagues. Early in December I sent you an advance copy of a letter I wrote after brief discussions with Walter Selove and Frederick Reines. Its main suggestion was that wider support among the intellectual community might be found if we did not arrogate to physicists a monopoly on the requisite sort of wisdom, that is that there might better be eminent thinkers from other disciplines of the working group. That letter was unsigned because I did not have the approval of Reines. He later suggested minor changes in wording, particularly that it was your prejudice not our prejudice toward physicists, and expressed some doubt about my brief reference to your thesis of minority rule. Since you are not the president but rather somebody who can read, I am not bothering to rewrite the letter to incorporate these changes and obtain his signature, but rather trust that the message has been conveyed.

In discussing your proposal several times around the lunch table here at the Argonne, I have found varied reactions, of course many skeptical that such a group could be started, and perhaps half feeling it a good idea if it could be done. A couple of the most seriously interested would not at first express willingness to contribute because they did not feel they wanted to subscribe in advance to unspecified ideas with which others might come up. That is, there is a tendency for thinkers to trust their own thoughts first, and it takes some argument to convince such a person that a group of other thinkers might be so carefully selected as to have intelligence at least equal to his own and by virtue of their full-time or nearly full-time devotion to the problem might have more valid ideas. In these cases the objections vanished when it was fully realized that the main contributions were to be made directly to political candidates and only in those cases in which the donor was convinced that the recommendations from the central group are good ones, that is that the contributing individual retains some control. I would guess that perhaps five out of twenty people I have talked to here would turn out to be serious contributors.

*Jan: I'm skipping the  
Wf. meeting this time.  
Be informed hereby of my  
approval of Szilard's  
Jan*



Professor Leo Szilard

January 12, 1962

Early this week I talked to a student seminar in the afternoon and a faculty seminar in the evening at Ohio State University, both devoted to studying national decisions and the means of avoiding war. In the faculty group of about twenty-five, after discussing the test ban by their request for most of the evening, I conveyed your proposal and felt there was a fairly enthusiastic response on the part of about half a dozen.

There seem to be fairly small groups like this in many universities, and you have probably heard that the Boston group is considering establishing a clearing house in order to try to coordinate their activities. My own impression is that people of this sort may at first be rather cool but warm up to the idea of your proposal by a second or third discussion. These groups, as well as the FAS, the UWF, etc., should provide fertile fields for support, plus means of communication. A big difficulty will be finding sufficiently-qualified members of the central group, as you have doubtless seriously considered. In this chicken-egg relationship, I presume there would be a fairly small fraction of the sort of people just mentioned who would express support before the group is chosen, perhaps indicating enough support to form a basis for recruiting the central group, and that many more would lend their support after the group will have started work. One trouble you may be running into is that the recruiting, even at the high level contemplated, may be in competition with the arms control and disarmament agency and with IDA, both worthy efforts in a similar direction but with very different implementation.

Good luck and best wishes to you and your wife,

With friendly greetings,

David Inglis

DI:jm