

5650 Ellis Avenue

June 9, 1952

Father John J. Cavanaugh
Office of the President
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

Dear Father Cavanaugh:

Last Saturday I phoned your office to say that I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss with you certain ideas relating to matters of public interest some time when your time permits. It is quite possible that upon closer examination these ideas might turn out to be impracticable, but to decide this one way or another would require a somewhat leisurely examination of them.

I could come out to Notre Dame the second half of this week or over the weekend if this is convenient to you, but Tuesday evening, June 17th, I have to be in New York, and after that my plans are uncertain, except that after July 3rd I shall be headed generally towards the West, spending perhaps some time at Aspen and also at Pasadena.

Very sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard

LS/sds

The University of Chicago
Chicago 37, Illinois

February 28, 1955

Father John Cavanaugh
c/o Notre Dame University
South Bend, Indiana

Dear Father Cavanaugh:

Our paths have not crossed lately, which I very much regret, for it is always a great pleasure to talk to you. Today I am writing for a particular purpose.

Enclosed you will find a Letter to the Editor which appeared in the New York Times on February 6, and which was reprinted in the Denver Post as a Guest Editorial.

This letter proved to be somewhat of a boomerang. Having appealed to others to do something, it seems that people now expect me to do something. I may have no choice now but to try to get something useful under way, until I can prove that it cannot be done or at least that I, myself, cannot do it. Therefore, a memorandum has been prepared, which you will find enclosed, and which sets forth my tentative thoughts on the subject of what we ought to try to do. I am sending this memorandum to some of the Foundations who might be interested in order to determine whether financial support would be forthcoming for such an enterprise from some of them. There ought to be no difficulty in finding some university, or some tax-exempt research organization, to accept the administration of the funds if the right people can be found.

It would be my hope that General Hugh B. Hester will agree to function as Secretary of the Commission described in the Memorandum.

I should very much appreciate getting your general reaction to all this and, in particular, I should be grateful if you would let me know whether you would consider participating in this work, assuming that the set-up meets with

your approval. Would you be able to free yourself for a period of seven months from whatever you are now doing? I need not say that if anything should come of this and if we actually could get to work, I should consider it a great privilege to have your collaboration.

Please let me know what thoughts come to your mind, and I shall try to keep you informed on what is happening.

After March 6th, I expect to be in New York where I shall be staying at the King's Crown Hotel, 420 West 116th Street, telephone University 42700. That is, at present, the best address at which you can reach me fast. Letters addressed to the University of Chicago, Chicago 37, Illinois, will reach me with some delay.

With best wishes,

Very truly yours,

Leo Szilard

Enclosures

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME FOUNDATION

Notre Dame, Indiana

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

March 8, 1955

Dear Leo:

The day before your letter came, I had been talking to a member of the staff of the Ford Foundation about the likelihood and awfulness of World War III. If anything can be done to prevent its coming, that "anything" must be the most important temporal act of man.

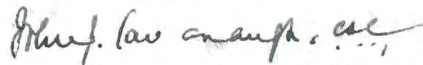
Have you considered the effect of a Roman Catholic priest on the Commission you have in mind? Wouldn't many people, even in this Country, object? What about the Russians, the Communists generally, and so-called liberals?

I am engaged in the disheartening business of trying to collect funds with which to make the University of Notre Dame a better institution. I could go to my Superiors, asking them to consider freeing me for a year or so for the purpose you have in mind, but I would much prefer to hear from you again after you will have had time to reflect upon the questions I asked just above. There is a kind of odium connected with the presence of a clergyman on such a commission. The odium may be greater when the clergyman is Roman Catholic. Your chances of succeeding should not be minimized because of this sort of thing.

Be sure that I am filled with admiration because you interest yourself in such an extremely important undertaking. If I could help to bring peace to the peoples of the world for many years, I would be happy beyond words.

My very best wishes to you. When you can, please write to me again.

Faithfully yours,



(Rev.) John J. Cavanaugh, C.S.C.

Dr. Leo Szilard
King's Crown Hotel
420 West 116th Street
New York, New York

COPY

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King's Crown Hotel
420 West 116th St
New York, N. Y.

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Faithfully yours, (Rev) John J. Cavanaugh C

King's Crown Hotel
420 West 116th Street
New York, New York

The University of Chicago
Chicago 37, Illinois

Rev. John Cavanaugh, C.S.C.
Office of the Director
University of Notre Dame Foundation
South Bend, Indiana

March 14, 1955

Dear Father Cavanaugh:

I am very much touched by your letter of March 8th. It seems to me that having a Catholic priest on the Commission probably has some disadvantages. It also may have some advantages. These are things which are impossible to weigh, and I believe that if you give too much consideration to public relations and attempt to be too perfectionistic we will have difficulty in keeping our eye on the main problem. At this time of writing, I do not know where the funds for the enterprise will come from and whether we will be successful in obtaining them. The large foundations are probably too conservative to support a somewhat unconventional mode of operation, and the conventional modes of operation are not likely to be successful.

Fred K. Hoehler, who has been retained as a consultant by the New World Foundation that was set up by the will of Mrs. Emmons Blaine McCormick and disposes of twenty million dollars, has approached me, in response to the Letter to the Editor that was published in the Times. I saw him in Chicago and learned from him that the fund is not yet operating and that the will has not been probated, even though it has not been contested either. There are three trustees - Mrs. Gilbert Harrison, Chairman, Dr. Roger I. Lee, and Mr. Richard Bentley. Fred Hoehler has arranged for me to see Mrs. Harrison, and if she is strongly in favor of the project, I might see Dr. Lee and later on perhaps Mr.

Bentley. However, all they could give me at present would be personal letters, saying that they would vote for a grant for the project if and when they get organized.

I have written to Mr. James Perkins at the Carnegie Corporation, 522 Fifth Avenue, New York, to Dr. Shepard Stone at the Ford Foundation, 477 Madison Avenue, New York, and to Dr. Warren Weaver at the Rockefeller Foundation, 49 West 49th Street, New York, and to Dr. Donald Young, the Russell Sage Foundation, 505 Park Avenue, New York, but somehow I do not expect that any of these Foundations would take on such an unconventional project. If you know anyone in any of these Foundations to whom you would care to make comments about the proposed project, please feel free to do so. I sent all of them the same Memorandum which I sent to you.

I have heard favorably from General Hugh B. Hester, with whom I talked over the telephone, and I received answers from Marshall MacDuffie in New York and Colin Clark at Oxford, of which you will find copies attached. I have not yet heard from Colonel Faymonville and Stringfellow Barr.

I shall try to keep you informed of what is happening so that you may be in a position to judge when you might want to discuss this project with your Superiors. You would not want to do this now I presume except on the most tentative basis. Please let me know if any thoughts occur to you that ought to be pursued at this stage of the game.

With very best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard

Sheraton-Park Hotel
Washington 8, D. C.

July 11, 1955

Rev. John J. Cavanaugh
President
University of Notre Dame Foundation
Notre Dame, Indiana

Dear Father Cavanaugh:

I am spending most of my time in Washington, D. C. trying to explore the possibility of setting up the kind of inquiry about which we had some correspondence.

I have not reached the point where I could ask you to take any positive steps in this matter, but I want to report to you what I am trying to do. Here in Washington I have been trying to maintain some contact with the Administration, particularly Governor Stassen's office, and also with certain Members of Congress in order to make sure that the undertaking which is being discussed shall not be without some political support.

Enclosed you will find the latest write-up on procedures and enclosed you will also find a memorandum of about 13,000 words.

This letter is a very rough draft, not meant for publication in its present form. The details given in it might have little validity and they are put there for one purpose only -- to try to define the right spirit for a general approach to the problem. It is easier to do this by giving details than by formulating abstract principles.

In the meantime I continue to explore who might be available to serve on the Commission, even though in the end we may not need more than five to seven men serving in that capacity. Enclosed you will find a tentative list. I have so far not contacted all those whose names are listed.

Rev. John J. Cavanaugh

- 2 -

July 11, 1955

So far I have found complete unanimity of opinion that it would be very desirable that you should participate, if your personal circumstances permit this, yet I am not raising this question with you at the present time since we have not reached the point where we are ready to actually set up this inquiry. I wish, however, to raise the following question in principle: In order to explain to the Russian Government the value of a privately sponsored inquiry and the need for their cooperation in order to make it successful, it will probably be necessary for two or three of us to visit Moscow. This of course would not be done without advance preparation, but still the likelihood is that the matter cannot be settled by correspondence alone. There would be no point in having more than three men go there and the trip will probably not materialize before September or October. Assuming now that all is favorable and the trip can be arranged, would you be in a position to make such a trip? All I am asking at this moment is your tentative response and it would be premature for you to officially raise the question with your organization, as you may ultimately need to do.

I plan to spend the rest of July at the Sheraton-Park Hotel in Washington.

The University of Chicago has given me the whole year free to try to set up this inquiry, but I hope to find out much sooner whether such an inquiry can be set up with a good chance of success.

With kind personal regards.

Very sincerely yours,

IS:srr

Leo Szilard

Enclosures

P. S.

I am enclosing a news item which I find is of some help to me at this point in Washington, D. C.

IS

File

Sheraton-Park Hotel
Washington 8, D. C.
August 2, 1955

MEMORANDUM

TO: Father John Cavanaugh
Pierre Auger
Jan Tinbergen
Issiah Berlin

FROM: Leo Szilard

It has been proposed by several of those who are helping in the effort to set up the Inquiry about which I wrote you, that a two weeks meeting be held sometime in the fall for potential members of the "working group" and others who are interested.

This meeting would discuss issues as well as procedures. It was thought that such a meeting would make it easier to form a sound opinion of whether the proposed Inquiry should actually be set up. The meeting would also show if a substantial number of the participants can agree on some one set of premises that the "working group" could take as the basis of their deliberations, and would also be willing to be a member of such a "working group."

I wish to raise, by virtue of this memorandum, the question of whether you think you might be able to participate in such a meeting, provided the time set is convenient to you and the funds supplied are adequate to cover expenses.

This memorandum will be sent to you marked "please forward." If you haven't received my previous communication, perhaps you can arrange to have it forwarded to you. It contained, among other things, a rough draft of a rather voluminous paper, and your secretary might therefore have refrained from forwarding it.