

WEST BADEN COLLEGE

WEST BADEN SPRINGS
INDIANA

February 10 1955

Professor Leo Szilard
University of Chicago
Chicago Illinois

Dear Professor Szilard:

May I express my grateful appreciation of your letter in Sunday's New York Times (2/6/55). I can but hope it will have a most effective influence and lead to the successful realization in the near future of the concerted effort of our best minds and wills which you propose.

Our human situation today is quite enough to convince anyone of the need of that effort. The point has been driven home for me with special force by the Christmas Message of His Holiness, Pius XII (Osservatore Romano, January 3/4, 1955). May I say that in my opinion it merits serious reading and reflection on the part of those who wish to lay the bases for a solution of the problem of international disunity, in the many-sided and all embracing form which it has taken for our generation. On my own first acquaintance with the papal utterance, through the radio and the press, I was little impressed, and even felt a touch of embarrassment by what seemed not to be an adequately realistic approach. The suggestion, as an excerpt out of context, about throwing a bridge of peace between the opposing sides of a divided world seemed sadly impractical. The superficiality was in fact all on my side; and since having the full text, I have begun to see that there are ways of beginning from our end at least the abutments of a bridge, and not without the confidence that there are minds and wills on the other side ready to correspond, in any measure that could possibly lie in their power. This, I hope you will see, is very much in keeping with your proposal; for your proposal is very much in keeping with the mind of the Pope.

Since a step to be taken without delay, toward the formation of groups devoted to the purpose in view, must be the assembling of lists of suitable names, may I make one nomination. Father John A. LaFarge, S. J., now associate editor of America (329 W. 108th St., New York 25), whose autobiography, The Manner is Ordinary (1954), would best indicate his qualifications, in character, experience and competence, would certainly pull his weight in the team; and his place in it would draw out the sympathies of a large and somewhat influential public.

May I assure you of my keen eagerness and warm sympathy for the project you have initiated.

Sincerely yours,

Edgar R. Smothers, S. J.

Edgar R. Smothers

King's Crown Hotel
420 West 116th Street
New York, N. Y.
February 22, 1955

Rev. Edgar R. Smothers, S.J.
West Baden College
West Baden Springs, Indiana

Dear Father Smothers:

I am grateful to you for your letter of February 10th. After receiving your letter, I have written to Father LaFarge and suggested that we meet in New York, where I expect to spend most of my time, for a while at least, after March 5th.

I have read the Pope's message, as reported in the New York Times, but if you have a spare copy of the full text, which you do not need to have back, I would appreciate your sending it to me. Please do not go to any inconvenience in this regard, since I can get it probably in New York in any case.

Sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard

LS:hw

WEST BADEN COLLEGE

WEST BADEN SPRINGS

INDIANA

February 27 1955

Professor Leo Szilard
King's Crown Hotel
420 West 116th Street
New York N. Y.

Dear Professor Szilard:

Thank you for your letter of February 22. I am glad that you thought well of my suggestion and wrote to Father LaFarge. If there should be a delay in hearing from him, that would be because of a brief absence he was to take from his desk in New York. I hope he will see you soon.

To my regret, I cannot find an expendable copy here and now of the Pope's Christmas message. If we have one soon, I shall take pleasure in addressing it to you.

May I venture to enclose a statement on the conduct of war which I tried some years ago to bring to the attention to a few people in positions of influence. I have no evidence that it accomplished anything; but I did receive gratifying approval of its doctrinal soundness from two Catholic moralists of distinction; so I have some confidence in it. Conceivably, something like it might ~~find~~ find a place in the sort of plans you may eventually have in hand.

With every good wish, I am,

Sincerely yours,

Edgar R. Smothers S.J.

Edgar R. Smothers, S. J.

9.
The University of Chicago
Chicago 37, Illinois

Denver - March 8, 1955

Rev. Edgar R. Smothers, S.J.
West Baden College
West Baden Springs, Indiana

Dear Father Smothers:

Many thanks for your letter of February 27. I read with much interest the copy of the letter to the President which you enclosed.

One day after the bomb was dropped at Almgordo, I drafted a petition to the President, asking him to withhold his approval of the use of the bomb against the cities of Japan, and this petition was sent to Washington, signed by 63 of my colleagues in the Uranium Project of the University of Chicago. The names of those who signed it are more impressive than the number of those who signed. I believe you will find that what you might call a religious attitude in the deepest sense of the word is quite frequently encountered among the comparatively small minority of scientists on whose creative work the progress of science rests.

It seems now that I shall not get back to New York until March 14th, but I hope to see Father LaFarge soon thereafter.

With very best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard