

NOT FOR RELEASE!

1155 E. 57th St.
Chicago, Ill.
October 25, 1947

The Honorable Tom C. Clark
Attorney General
Department of State
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Clark:

Enclosed is a copy of an article entitled "Letter to Stalin" which I have submitted to the BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS for publication.

If it were in every respect proper for me to do so, I would write a letter to Mr. Stalin embodying the thoughts contained in the enclosed article and would seek some way of transmitting such a letter to him through the good offices of some prominent person who is known to him. It would be my hope that if my letter were transmitted to Mr. Stalin in such a manner he would perceive the genuine anguish which prompted my writing it and that he might therefore give consideration to its contents.

If such a letter were in fact to be transmitted to Mr. Stalin through some proper and desirable channel I would probably want to postpone indefinitely the publication of the article.

The enclosed article does not touch on any specific dispute or controversy with the United States and the letter which I would send to Mr. Stalin would merely follow its text, possibly shortened by omissions. You may, in the circumstances, think that the transmission of such a letter would not come under the Logan Act of 1799. On the other hand, you might think that the transmission of such a letter might come under the Logan Act or some other similar act and therefore, in accordance with the Logan Act, I am herewith making the formal request for permission or authority of the Government for the transmission of such a letter in the meaning of the Act.

I am enclosing an endorsement of my request addressed to the Secretary of State on behalf of the Trustees of the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists. The original is signed by Professor Albert Einstein of the Institute for Advanced Study, as Chairman and Dr. Philip M. Morse, Director of the Brookhaven National Laboratory, as Acting Executive Director of the Committee.

Very truly yours,

Leo Szilard

Copy:
The Secretary of State

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1155 E. 57th St.
Chicago, Ill.
October 25, 1947

The Honorable George C. Marshall
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

Enclosed is, for your information, a letter sent by me to the Attorney General in which I request the permission of the Government to transmit a letter to Mr. Stalin that would follow the text of an article (possibly shortened by omissions) which I have submitted to the BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS for publication. A copy of the article, entitled "Letter to Stalin", is also enclosed.

I am, of course, not asking for any endorsement of my position by the Department of State and I am directing my request for formal permission to transmit such a letter to Mr. Stalin to the Attorney General rather than to you, in order to avoid causing any embarrassment to your department. I would appreciate very much, however, your examining this case on its merits and advising the Attorney General of your conclusions, since I believe that this might make it easier for the Attorney General to give a favorable reply to my request.

The enclosed article takes the view that if Stalin took the initiative and adopted a new line of approach towards the United States, culminating in a comprehensive offer on his part for a general settlement, he could resolve the present deadlock. On this basis the article makes a number of specific suggestions relating to procedure.

I am enclosing an endorsement of my request addressed to you on behalf of the Trustees of the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists which is signed by Professor Albert Einstein of the Institute for Advanced Study, as Chairman, and Dr. Philip M. Morse, Director of the Brookhaven National Laboratory, as Acting Executive Director of the Committee.

Very truly yours,
Leo Szilard

THE LOGAN ACT

7, F. C. A. Title 18, § 6

5. (Criminal Code, section 5, amended.) Criminal correspondence with foreign governments; redress of private injuries excepted.--Every citizen of the United States, whether actually resident or abiding within the same, or in any place subject to the jurisdiction thereof, or in any foreign country, who, without the permission or authority of the Government, directly or indirectly, commences or carries on any verbal or written correspondence or intercourse with any foreign government or any officer or agent thereof, with an intent to influence the measures or conduct of any foreign government or of any officer or agent thereof, in relation to any disputes or controversies with the United States, or to defeat the measures of the Government of the United States; and every person, being a citizen of or resident within the United States or in any place subject to the jurisdiction thereof, and not duly authorized, who counsels, advises, or assists in any such correspondence with such intent, shall be fined not more than \$5,000 and imprisoned not more than three years; but nothing in this section shall be construed to abridge the right of a citizen to apply, himself or his agent, to any foreign government or the agents thereof for redress of any injury which he may have sustained from such government or any of its agents or subjects. (R.S. § 5335; Mar. 4, 1909, c. 321, § 5, 35 Stat. 1088; Apr. 22, 1932, c. 126, 47 Stat. 132.)

R. S. § 5335 from Act Jan. 30, 1799, c. 1, 1 Stat. 613.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "LETTER TO STALIN" WHICH HAS BEEN SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION TO THE BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS BY DR. LEO SZILARD. IN THIS ARTICLE DR. SZILARD MAKES AN APPEAL FOR STALIN TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE AND ADOPT A NEW LINE OF APPROACH -- NEW BOTH IN SUBSTANCE AND METHOD -- TOWARD THE UNITED STATES, CULMINATING IN A COMPREHENSIVE OFFER ON STALIN'S PART FOR A GENERAL SETTLEMENT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION OF THE WORLD.

THE PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED.

I take the step of writing this "Letter" because I am deeply concerned about the deterioration of Russian-American relations, and also because I believe that the general sentiment which moves me to this action is shared by the majority of the atomic scientists who take an active interest in matters of public policy.

The steady deterioration of Russian-American relations has many disturbing aspects, but perhaps none is as serious as the lasting effect which it may have on the minds of the American people, as well as the minds of the people in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

Here in America more and more men will say to me in private conversation that war with Russia is inevitable. These are men who are capable of thinking independently and are not guided by whatever editorials they may read in their newspapers. To me their attitude is a symptom of grave danger because once the American people close their minds on this subject war, in fact, will have become inevitable.

There are those who argue that there is no danger of an early war because at present Russia is too weak to start one and there is no precedent for the United States embarking on a preventive war. That there is no such precedent is, of course, true; but neither have the American people ever before been in a position where they had to fear that if they remain passive during a protracted period of uneasy peace they

may live to see the day when war -- if it breaks out -- will be brought to their homeland.

I do not mean to say that the United States may start a preventive war against Russia within the next six months; what I mean to say is that if the present trend continues for six months, a fateful change might take root in the minds of the American people and the situation would then be beyond remedy. Thereafter it would be merely a question of time -- a few short years, perhaps -- until the peace would be at the mercy of some Yugoslav general in the Balkans or some American admiral in the Mediterranean who may wilfully or through bungling create an incident that will inevitably result in war. If the present trend continues for six months, more likely than not, the further course of events will be out of the control of the two governments involved.

The main reason for the present trend is the fact that two years have passed since the end of the war and no appreciable progress has been made toward a settlement. Russia and the United States have reached a deadlock.

All this does not come as a surprise to most of us who had worked in the field of atomic energy during the war and had time to adjust our thinking to the implications of the bomb. It was clear from the start that the existence of the bomb and the manner in which it was used would not make the settlement easier but rather more difficult. We knew that the world could be saved from another war only if both the United States and Russia were able to rise above the situation and ~~that~~ before this can come to pass one of them will have to take the lead.

Situations of this general type are not without precedent in history; they occur also on occasion in the lives of individuals, and the story of one such occurrence made a very deep impression on me. In 1930, twelve years after the end of the First World War, I met a classmate of mine and we talked of what had happened to ~~each of~~ us

since we had separated. He had been a lieutenant in the Austrian Army, and in the last days of the war in the Carpathian Mountains he was in charge of a patrol. One morning they heard by way of rumor that an armistice had been concluded, but being cut off from communications they were unable to obtain confirmation. They rode out on patrol duty as usual, and as they emerged from the forest, they found themselves standing face to face with a Russian patrol in charge of an officer. The two officers grabbed their guns and, frozen in this position, the two patrols remained for uncounted seconds. Suddenly the Russian officer smiled and his hand went to his cap in salute. My friend returned the salute, and both patrols turned back their horses. "To this day," my friend said to me, "I regret that it was not I who saluted first."

Perhaps by writing this "Letter" today I may make some slight amends for my friend's tardiness, for in these troubled times it is not without some personal risk for an American scientist to write a "Letter" such as this one.

Today Russia and America find themselves standing face to face, each of them fearful of what may be the other's next political move. The American people want peace. The Russian people want peace also.

As I see it, Russia wants peace not only for the next five or ten years, she wants peace for good. And if I am correct on this point then peace can yet be saved; it can be saved by you, yourself.

THE APPROACH SUGGESTED.

It is within your power to ^{resolve} ~~remove the block which caused~~ the deadlock and thereby to permit a change in the course of United States foreign policy, but you can do this only if you decide to throw off the self-imposed shackles of the old-fashioned, and also of the new-fangled forms of diplomacy.

Russia and the United States are deadlocked on almost every point on which they have negotiated in the recent past. On every such point, Russia may have very good

reasons for not yielding, and the United States may also have very good reasons for not yielding. ~~Nothing is more important than~~ I am not going to suggest that you should now yield on this point or that one, or that you should now "appease" the United States.

What I am suggesting in this "Letter" are a series of interconnected steps which are within your power to take. Because they are most unusual steps, these suggestions may appear quixotic to many and ridiculous to some. What I am suggesting in this "Letter" may come somewhat as a shock to you. It may also come as a shock to some of my fellow-Americans who will read these lines. But this is not the time to hold back for fear of being exposed to ridicule or unwarranted accusations.

My first specific suggestion is that you speak directly and personally to the American people. What you may say to them, and you might wish to speak to them once a month, will be news, and because it will be news, it will be carried by the radio stations in the United States and will be reprinted in the newspapers. Naturally you would want to speak in Russian, but your interpreter could convey your speech sentence by sentence in English. Your speech could be recorded and released simultaneously in Russia and America.

The American people listen to their presidents because what the President says to them may affect their lives, and they will listen to you for exactly the same reason. But there is one important difference; you will be speaking to them as the head of a foreign state; your speech will be without effect with them unless it is one hundred percent sincere. The sincerity of your expression, as well as the other tokens of sincerity which you may be able to present to the American people, will determine whether your speeches will strike home.

If your speeches to the American people were given full publicity in Russia, you would go a long way towards convincing the American people that you mean what you are saying to them.

And you would go a long way towards convincing the American people that they may expect fair play from you if you invited the President of the United States to address the Russian people just as often as you speak to the American public and accorded just as much publicity to his speeches in Russia as is given to yours in America.

All the machinery through which the American public is being kept informed in the United States is at present at your disposal, and it will remain at your disposal if there will be no attempt to use it for purposes of propaganda.

That you would be heard by the American people is certain; but how your speeches would affect them would depend both upon the substance and the tenor of these speeches.

What indeed should be the substance of your speeches?

What I suggest, in the first place, is that in your speeches you present to the American people a clear picture of a general settlement within the framework of a post-war reconstruction of the world, a settlement that would enable Russia and the United States to live in peace with each other.

At first you will be able to give such a picture in rough outline only; gradually you may be able to fill in more and more of the details. You might convey the details, perhaps, by issuing from time to time supplementary official reports.

By the time you have filled in the details, you will have given the American people more than merely a picture of a possible post-war world; you will have presented them with something that will amount to an offer for a post-war settlement.

You might well ask at this point, because it is indeed a crucial question, whether such a unilateral offer on your part, if it is generous, would not put you at a disadvantage from the point of view of later negotiations. You could easily make

it clear, however, that your offer has to be taken as a whole, that you are perfectly willing to modify any one single point to meet the wishes of the United States Government, but that for every point that the United States wants to have modified in her favor, you may ask that some other point be modified in Russia's favor. As long as this is clearly understood, you need not, and should not, hold back for the sake of later bargaining.

Such are the means through which you may be able to convince the American people that --in your view as well as in fact -- private enterprise and the Russian economic system and also mixed forms of economic organization can flourish side by side; that Russia and the United States can be part of the same world; that "one world" need not necessarily be a uniform world. Until such time as you shall convince the American people as well as the Russian people of this all-important point, we shall remain headed towards war and not towards peace.

I am told that these days the opposite thesis is presented by authoritative writers in Russia. And if this opposite thesis should be upheld by you as correct, if there is indeed some inexorable law which in the long run makes war between your country and ours inevitable, then those in the United States who are now working for the preservation of peace might begin to feel that they are merely delaying the war, which will be all the more terrible the later it comes.

THE RESPONSE EXPECTED

Naturally you would want to know how the American people would respond if you should decide to take the initiative and adopt a new line of approach towards the United States culminating in a comprehensive offer for a general settlement. Would you really be able to break the present deadlock and thereby bring about a change in the course of United States foreign policy?

There is a vast body of men and women in the United States who view with genuine concern the rapid deterioration of Russian-American relations. Many of them have

grave doubts in their heart as to the general wisdom of the present course of United States foreign policy, while they regard with equal misgivings the Russian counterpart of this policy. If they do not at present take a stand in favor of changing the course steered by their own government, it is first of all because they do not see with sufficient clarity any practicable alternative course under present circumstances. Moreover they may believe that any attempt to bring about a change must necessarily come to naught as long as the speeches of your delegates will continue to follow a line of reasoning which is unacceptable to the large majority of the American public.

If you succeed in the difficult task of formulating in your own mind a practicable solution of the post-war issues and in conveying your picture of such a solution to the American public, then gradually, as you make statement after statement and issue report after report, a complete picture of an acceptable post-war settlement may unfold before the American people. By the time you will have filled in the details, and thus have implicitly extended a comprehensive offer, you also will have removed the block which had caused the deadlock.

This should have a direct and immediate effect on the foreign policy of the United States. Most Americans believe that those who are at present in charge of guiding American foreign policy were driven to this policy because none other appeared practicable to them in the circumstances. It is generally believed that they are men of good will, who can be expected to change the present course the very moment they see a satisfactory way out of the present impasse, provided that such a change can also be expected to find public support.

You may or may not concur with this opinion. But in any case it is clearly within your power to give the American people a choice between two alternative courses of foreign policy. And if they do have a choice, the American people will exercise their choice -- this I fervently hope -- in favor of a course which may lead to peace. They will exercise their choice through all the mechanisms by which public opinion influences government policies in America. And those who are at present in charge of steering the course of American foreign policy may, to borrow a phrase of Mr. Stimson's,

"either change their minds or lose their jobs."

PREREQUISITES.

If you should decide to adopt such a new line of approach toward the United States you might wish to initiate first of all an exchange of views between a group of Russians and a group of Americans who are genuinely concerned about the deterioration of Russian-American relations and who are not encumbered by the responsibility of representing the views of their governments. Such an exchange of views should give Russians a better understanding of America's needs and Americans a better understanding of Russia's needs. It should also facilitate the formulation in your own mind of some practicable solution of the problem which faces the world today and give you a better appreciation of the particular manner in which such a solution might be presented to the American public.

Under the present conditions of political stress it will not be easy to find for a form/such an exchange of views which is proper and which will permit self-respecting, patriotic American citizens to participate. Nor may it be easy for you to find Russians willing to display in such discussions their own personal opinions as distinguished from the official Russian position.

Also, I am sadly aware of the fact that in writing this "Letter" I am trying to cope with a difficulty of communications which is almost insurmountable. We in America have a crude and over-simplified picture of how political decisions come about in Russia. You in Russia have a similar picture concerning America. My whole "Letter" here is based on the thesis that in America the attitudes and opinions of the individuals who constitute the American public are an important factor -- and in certain circumstances may become the controlling factor -- for political decisions. My fellow-Americans

who may read this "Letter" know that this thesis is correct and those of them who may disapprove of my "Letter" will do so on other grounds. But in presenting this thesis to someone who does not know America by personal experience, I can not be sure that he will even know what I am talking about. Perhaps, in the course of an extended conversation there would be some chance of getting this crucial point across. A "letter" of this sort is certainly not the very best way of accomplishing this exceedingly difficult task.

Obviously, the specific suggestions made in this "Letter" are foreign to the ways in which problems of this sort are dealt with in Russia, or for that matter, anywhere else in the world. And this, in itself, might make implementation very difficult. The main question to decide, however, is not whether implementation is difficult but rather whether the measures advocated here would be effective if implemented.

THE END

POSTSCRIPT:

Having presented a number of suggestions outlining in detail--perhaps in too great detail--a course which you might wish to adopt, I feel that I ought to go one step further at the risk that what I am going to say may seem out of proportion with the main theme of this "Letter."

The vast majority of the atomic scientists who take an active interest in matters of public policy are free from any anti-Russian bias, and they do not include Communists, either in the narrow or wider sense of the term. If I were called upon to do so -- I would try and gather a group drawn from their ranks who would be glad to sit down with a group of Russians whom you may select. If the Russian representatives were instructed to be frank with us and to express their private opinions rather than merely to defend the official Russian positions, we, too, would be frank with them and would feel free to express our personal opinions as distinguished from the official American positions. Under such circumstances there could ensue an exchange of views of no mean ^{significance.} ~~distinction~~. And such a free interchange

of thought might make available a valuable fund of ideas and suggestions upon which the two governments might draw if a stage of governmental negotiations should be reached later. Naturally we would be pleased to see Russian scientists also included in such a group, particularly those whom we happen to know and have learned to respect. We have, of course, no intention of prying into their secrets just as we would not want them to search into ours. There would be no disclosure of any kind relating to the subject of atomic energy.

The group of atomic scientists which I would try to gather would not be composed of men and women who wield great political influence. Nor would they be able to say what terms for a general post-war settlement might be acceptable to the United States Government; but they should be able to say what kind of peace makes sense to ~~themselves~~ themselves, and whatever makes sense to them may also make sense to the American people, for they are part and parcel of the American people. Such a group of scientists is, of course, not wholly ^{undoubtedly} representative of the American people and would therefore/wish to enlarge itself by drawing in men from many other walks of life -- men who are concerned about the welfare of America and who are also concerned about the welfare of the rest of the world, including Russia.

It is my earnest hope that by means of such discussions it may be possible to make available in the service of peace the same kind of imagination and resourcefulness which went into the development of the field of atomic energy during the war.

CLARIFICATION.

Meetings of this sort could not be held except with the approval of the State Department, for without such approval it might be both improper and unlawful for American citizens to participate. It is hard to believe, that faced with the present situation the State Department would oppose the holding of such meetings, but it is difficult to know whether the State Department would not prefer the meetings to be open rather than private and confidential.

Both open and private meetings have their own peculiar advantages and drawbacks. "Open" meetings mean that the press is admitted, and their presence might result in a

greater understanding on their part of the real issues and the real difficulties.

The general feeling underlying the suggestions contained in this "Letter" is, I know, shared by the majority of the atomic scientists, but the specific thoughts embodied in this "Letter" reflect only my own opinion as well as my own readiness to "do my bit", and I am not speaking at present on behalf of any other person or persons.


October 25, 1947

1155 E. 57th St.
Chicago, Ill.

The Honorable Tom C. Clark
Attorney General
Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Clark:

Enclosed is a copy of an article entitled "Letter to Stalin" which I have submitted to the BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS for publication.

If it were in every respect proper for me to do so, I would write a letter to Mr. Stalin embodying the thoughts contained in the enclosed article and would seek some way of transmitting such a letter to him through the good offices of some prominent person who is known to him. It would be my hope that if my letter were transmitted to Mr. Stalin in such a manner he would perceive the genuine anguish which prompted my writing it and that he might therefore give consideration to its contents.

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I am enclosing an endorsement of my request addressed to the Secretary of State on behalf of the Trustees of the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists. The

The Honorable Tom C. Clark: -2

original is signed by Professor Albert Einstein of the Institute for Advanced Study,
as Chairman and Dr. Philip M. Morse, Director of the Brookhaven National Laboratory,
as Acting Executive Director of the Committee.

Very truly yours,

Leo Szilard

Copy:
The Secretary of State

November 3, 1947

c/o Alice Smith
BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC
SCIENTISTS
Room 6
Social Science Building
The University of Chicago
Chicago 37, Ill.

The Honorable Tom C. Clark,
Attorney General,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Clark:

Pursuant to my letter of the 25th of October may
I inform you of the following:

THE BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS has now
definitely scheduled to print my article entitled "Letter to
Stalin" in its November issue. I would not want this article
to appear in that issue if you should find it possible to
grant the permission requested in my letter of the 25th of Oc-
tober and the BULLETIN has agreed to withdraw the article from
the November issue if they are advised by Monday, November 10th,
3 P.M., E.S.T. that such a permission is in fact forthcoming.
This deadline is, I understand, five days beyond their usual one
and will set the publication date for the 25th of November.

If it is unlikely that a favorable reply can be
given to my request, it would seem advisable to inform the
members of the Atomic Scientists movement of the steps I have
taken in connection with this matter by releasing the text of
this request dated October 25th for publication in the same is-
sue of the BULLETIN which carries the article. I have therefore
submitted it for publication to the BULLETIN but I did this with
the proviso that it shall be omitted from the November issue
which may carry the article itself, if I am advised by your of-
fice -- prior to the above-mentioned time of the deadline --
that a favorable reply is likely to be forthcoming by the time
of the publication of the article on November 25th even though
a final decision may not be reached by you at the time of the
deadline.

It would be appreciated if all communications in
connection with this matter were addressed by your office to me
marked for the attention of Mrs. Alice Smith at the above given
address, Telephone Midway 10052, or else Extension 1785 at Mid-
way 0800, Chicago.

I do not expect to be in Chicago at the time of the deadline, but messages sent to me in care of Mrs. Alice Smith will automatically guide the action of the BULLETIN inasmuch as Mrs. Smith is its associate editor.

Very truly yours,

Leo Szilard

November 8, 1947

The Honorable Tom C. Clark
Attorney General
Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Clark:

Pursuant to the letter which I sent you under the dateline of October 25, may I state that a revised version of the article entitled "Letter to Stalin" is scheduled to go to press at 3 P.M. EST, Monday, November 10, and that part of my letter addressed to you is also scheduled to be published in the same issue of the BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS.

While this issue of the BULLETIN will probably not come out until November 25, I understand that the BULLETIN may make an early release any time after the issue has gone to press.

Very truly yours,

Leo Szilard

Enclosed copy of revised article.

NOV 11 1947

My dear Mr. Attorney General:

The Assistant Solicitor General, in a conversation with The Legal Adviser of the Department of State, has asked for the Department's views concerning a request which has been received by the Attorney General from Doctor Leo Szilard for permission or authority of the United States Government to transmit to Marshal Stalin a letter prepared by Doctor Szilard. The Secretary of State has received from Doctor Szilard a copy of the text of the letter which in general terms sets forth Doctor Szilard's views concerning relations between the United States and Soviet Russia and which suggests to Marshal Stalin certain courses of action which Doctor Szilard favors.

The request made by Doctor Szilard for permission or authority to transmit the letter appears to have been made with a view toward the possible applicability of the so-called Logan Act (1 Stat. 613).

An examination of the text of the letter reveals that it purports to deal with matters affecting the foreign policy of the United States which have been and are now under active discussion between the Governments of the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as among the States members of the United Nations. It is not believed that the transmission of the letter would be of help in resolving the problems under discussion. It is, of course, the right of every citizen to give public expression of his personal views concerning the conduct of American foreign policy as well as his opinions regarding the measures which he feels would further the interests of the United States and the cause of world peace. The Department does not feel called upon to comment concerning the validity of Doctor Szilard's views or his right to give public expression to them.

It is

The Honorable
Tom C. Clark,
Attorney General.

It is the view of the Department that the granting of permission or authority to Doctor Szilard to transmit the letter in question to the Chief of State of the Soviet Union would be construed as an approval of the views expressed in the letter which, as has been stated above, are not of a nature to assist in the solution of the problems with which the letter deals. It is therefore concluded that it would not be in the national interest to grant the request.

Sincerely yours,