

Q. *Who is Leo Szilard? I know he has something to do with atomic energy.—George Devine, Cambridge, Mass.*

A. Leo Szilard (1898-1964) was a nuclear physicist and one of the great scientific geniuses of the century. He has been named along with Einstein, Freud, Gandhi, and Churchill as one of the most important men of modern times. Born in Hungary, educated in Germany, Szilard was the co-inventor with the late Enrico Fermi of a chain-reaction system for the release of atomic energy. He pioneered not only in the field of nuclear physics but in mathematics, molecular biology, thermodynamics, literature, and politics. It was Szilard who wrote a letter signed by Albert Einstein in 1939 which induced President Franklin D. Roosevelt to develop the atom bomb. Szilard not only wrote original papers on the cyclotron, the electronic microscope, information theory, automation, and the nuclear chain reaction, but a political and philosophical tract entitled "The Voice of the Dolphins." He is survived by his wife, Dr. Gertrud Szilard, a physician, who resides in La Jolla, Calif., and who is now working on his papers to be published by the MIT Press.

