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April 5, 1957

Dear Dr. Szilard:

I am grateful for your gracious dinner invitation in Chicago last night and for the opportunity to discuss your relationship with Einstein. I could have wished we had more time and I hope we shall have the opportunity to talk again, perhaps on your next visit to New York. I also hope that despite the pressure of work resting on you, you may find the time to locate some of the documents we discussed and to put some of your recollections in writing.

The decision as to how far you are prepared to go in your cooperation must, of course, rest with you. If I urge you to go as far as possible, it is because of the sense of historic responsibility, entirely free of personal elements, which I share with Dr. Otto Nathan. We feel that posterity is entitled to the fullest and most precise account of Einstein's activities, and that the time ^{for} collecting all the evidence is now, while many of the leading participants in the events are still able to document the story in person.

I should like to assure you again that the book in hand bids fair to be of considerable substance. It rests on an accumulation of more than 1,000 documents from many sources, made possible by the generous cooperation of people all over the world. It is essentially a book of fact rather than interpretation, and while Dr. Nathan and I, like the publishers and, indeed, all who have a hand in it, hope that it will achieve wide readership, it is for us a labor of love rather than a commercial undertaking. I believe, in short, that the undertaking deserves your fullest confidence.

Allow me to set down my fresh recollection of our discussion of last night:

1. In the matter of your visit to H. Noel Brailsford in England in 1930, on which Brailsford and Einstein subsequently exchanged letters, you confirmed that you were then discussing a plan of which Einstein knew. You said it was a rather complex plan that did not lend itself to casual discussion. I hope you will be able to give me a précis of it.

2. With respect to the general background of the chain reaction and atomic bomb situation in early 1939 you indicated that:

(a) you were then a guest of the physics faculty at Columbia rather than a member of the faculty.

(b) Your work in March indicated that neutron emission sufficient to sustain a chain reaction might be possible with pure graphite rather than (heavy?) water as a moderator.

(c) Of the scientists concerned, Fermi, in particular, was not convinced that a chain reaction could be created. Wigner, making

allowances for developments to come, was most willing to concede its possibility, as well as that of a bomb.

(d) Bohr, while doubting the chain reaction, thought a bomb was nevertheless possible. There had apparently been no communication between him and Einstein on these matters prior to your visits to Einstein.

(e) At the time in question, only you, Fermi, and the group with Joliot-Curie were actually working on the chain reaction problem.

3. With respect to the actual contacts with Einstein:

(a) Your account of your first visit, with Wigner,⁺ essentially stands. In other words, the question of a letter to Roosevelt had not yet arisen, the sole purpose being to get the Belgian Government to embargo uranium ore shipments to Germany from the Congo. However, at this first visit Einstein did dictate a letter informing the State Department of the plan. You say you may have a copy of it. I hope you will let us have this text.

(b) Your recollection is that it was Sachs who first mentioned the possibility of a letter from Einstein to Roosevelt, which Sachs might transmit. It is your impression that Sachs was not "very close" to the President; and that his main function was to deliver the letter and your memorandum.

(c) You recall that when you first discussed the chain reaction problem with Einstein, he said: "Daran habe ich gar nicht gedacht!"

(d) During your second visit to Einstein, with Teller, Einstein did dictate a letter in German to Teller, addressed to Roosevelt--of which you may have a copy that you can release to us. The two English drafts were prepared subsequent to this meeting, not during it, and then submitted to Einstein for signature. You are not quite certain whether he chose the longer version himself. He may have signed both. It is your recollection that the letter actually sent did not closely follow Einstein's German draft.

4. Shortly before Roosevelt's death, early in 1945 (February or March) you asked Einstein to write once again to Roosevelt. You paraphrased this message in approximately these terms: "I wrote you once before in a matter of great national concern. Dr. Szilard now advises me that there is now cause for similar concern. While I do not know the circumstances, since Dr. Szilard is not free to tell me, I hope you will give him a personal hearing."

After Roosevelt's death, you made efforts to get to Truman (through Mrs. Roosevelt?--or was she to take the letter to her husband?), but these came to naught. Truman's secretary, Matthew Connolly, then referred you to Byrnes, about two weeks before Byrnes was appointed Secretary of State. You recall that Byrnes said in view of the huge investment that had been made and the prospect of shortening the war, there was no alternative to testing and using the bomb.

5. You recall that probably in 1943 Einstein received a letter from Dr. Vannevar Bush, asking him whether he would be interested in participating in work for the national defense. Einstein replied in the affirmative, expressing the hope that such work might put him in professional association with you. Apparently Einstein received no further communication from Bush.

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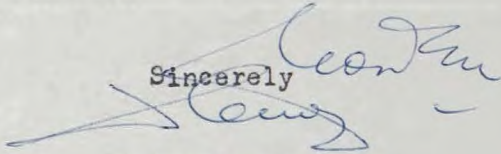
6. Following your unsuccessful intercession with Byrnes, you were associated with James Franck, Glenn Seaborg, Eugene Rabinowitsch and one other in a memorandum to the Secretary of War (published in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists), which suggested that the Japanese be approached through diplomatic channels and invited to witness a demonstration of the bomb. Subsequently, a large number of scientists working on the bomb project in Chicago signed a petition to the President which you drew up and the text of which is still officially classified as secret. This petition opposed use of the bomb on moral grounds. Was Einstein aware of or in known sympathy with either effort?

7. As for the question of "East-West meetings," there is now some uncertainty of whether we are here dealing with one or two projects. Barr and Wofford confirm that the Foundation for World Government made a grant toward a project you had originated, under which the case for East and West should be argued by panels of distinguished lawyers. You tell me this grant was made to the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists. Apparently, however, the project was not carried out and the money returned. Have you any protocol of this plan you could release, and did you ever have dealings with Einstein on it? Barr, in a letter to Einstein, assumed that Einstein was much interested in it.

Oram told me about a project under which prominent scientists from East and West would meet for discussion on a Caribbean island. You say this was an official ECAS project, and that Einstein, a few months before Czechoslovakia turned Communist (February 1948) wrote to Secretary of State Marshall about the project. No reply was received. Harrison Brown then undertook to contact the Soviet Embassy, with negative results, and this project too did not proceed.

Any further details you can add and, of course, any documentation would be much appreciated. For many of the incidents mentioned in this letter I have, of course, independent documentation. With respect to Points 1, certain parts of 2 and 3, and all of 4 and 5, where the evidence rests largely with you, and where you may be willing to release documents in your possession, I am confident we may be able to reach full agreement. Meanwhile I am in your debt for your courtesy and shall be very happy to hear from you whether the record here given conforms with your statements to me, and where it needs changes or additions.

Sincerely



Heinz Norden

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HEINZ NORDEN
35 BOULDER LANE
HICKSVILLE, N.Y.
WR 5-3013

May 27, 1957

Dear Dr. Szilard:

The time is approaching when I shall have to undertake the final revisions of those sections of the Einstein book which I had the privilege of discussing with you in Chicago on April 4; and I am wondering whether you may not kindly assist me on some of the points covered in my letter to you of the following day.

Some of those points I have succeeded in clarifying further. Thus I have had confirmation of the letter from Dr. Vannevar Bush to Einstein, inquiring as to his availability. It appears that Einstein had some doubts on this score, because he had already been retained in a consulting capacity by the Navy.

As for the two "East-West" projects you originated, they too are pretty well cleared up. Harrison Brown has been kind enough to provide many details about the proposed Jamaica meeting. It appears that it was he rather than Einstein who wrote to Secretary Marshall. As for the "Council" plan of 1950, I now have your memorandum to Einstein of March 27, 1950, as well as your letter to the Foundation for World Government of April 24, 1950.

I think I may also say that I have ~~no~~ about as much information about the famous Einstein letter of 1939 and the circumstances surrounding it as I can reasonably expect to obtain at this time.*

There remain three points on which I earnestly solicit your further cooperation.

First and foremost is your very courageous action in communicating with Einstein early in 1945, with a view to getting to President Roosevelt. The key document in this incident would, of course, be the letter Einstein wrote at that time which, I believe you said, is in your possession and was never really used. I very much hope that you will allow me to include it. If so, the best way would be to send me a photostatic copy.

In any event, I would need your express authorization to say anything about the incident, since I am mindful that you will wish your role to be thoroughly understood. It would be my suggestion that you give me a brief written account.

I need scarcely say that I regard this as a very important matter. Inclusion of this incident would provide the final capstone to the picture of how Einstein felt about the bomb--even though it was not mentioned in your colloquy with him nor in his letter. It would also cast important new light on your own role--and I would of course ask that you cover, in any memorandum you may send me, your efforts to see Truman and your interview with Byrnes.

Second is the matter of the Chicago petition to the President. Have

* Except for the letter you stole dictated on your first visit (with Higney). Did you find that in your files?

you succeeded in getting this declassified yet? Of course I am concerned with this action mainly because it may possibly have affected Einstein's attitude. To your knowledge, did he know about it, or about the preceding memorandum to the Secretary of war? It is quite clear that Einstein was opposed to the use of the bomb. But just when did this opposition crystallize? Could it have been before Alamogordo and Hiroshima? Perhaps we shall never know, but I want to leave nothing undone that might throw light on it.

Third comes the matter of your call on Noel Brailsford in England in 1930. I should like very much to pierce your reserve on this subject, in all humility, not in disrespect of your feelings, but because it may supply a further link. It is very clear that in 1931 and 1932 Einstein was concerned with creating some kind of "elite" group of scientists and scholars who, by public statements, might lend weight to the pacifist and disarmament movement. He actually asked Langevin to be the head of it, and he wrote Weizmann about it too. I have a suspicion that your mission may have been connected with this endeavor.

Since I got to know Mr. Brailsford and his young German wife quite well in Germany in 1947, I have naturally written him, but I have not yet received a reply. I would dearly like to get your account.

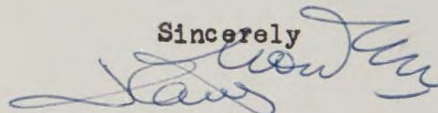
May I ~~also~~ reiterate that I should be also most appreciative of any and all other information about Einstein's activities in this field which you may care to relate to me, over and above the points I have enumerated.

In conclusion, may I summarize the considerations that prompt this importunity. There is above all a sense of historic responsibility. The book in hand is first and foremost a documentation. I am doing everything in my power to make it an exhaustive and unbiased one. Even should I fall short of this ^{former} goal, the book is bound to become a basic source of Einsteiniana for many years to come, because nothing like it has been done before, because of the wealth of material presented, and because unquestionably the personality of Einstein will continue to command much attention.

I have no axe to grind except that of historical accuracy and craftsmanlike presentation. Nor is there any glory in it for me. I have been little more than a conscientious bricklayer. The work has already taken twice as long as I expected and has exacted enormous sacrifices.

I am afraid, dear Dr. Szilard, that this is the last appeal I shall be able to make to you. I do hope that you will find it possible to abandon whatever reservations you may have felt up to this point and to help me to the limits of your ability in what is surely a worthy enterprise.

Sincerely



Heinz Norden

P.S. I was most interested to learn that all the papers of the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists--more than 45 boxes--have been deposited with the University of Chicago Library. Unfortunately, I have neither the time to research them myself, nor the funds to have someone else do it for me!

I*M*S

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Professor Leo Sziland
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

June 13, 1960

Dear Professor Sziland:

Possibly you recall that several years ago you were kind enough to discuss with me some questions that had arisen in connection with a documentation of Einstein's work for peace and world government—a book which, incidentally, will shortly be published.

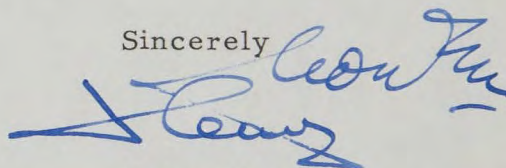
I read now that you have been, most deservedly, honored with the Atoms for Peace Award, and should like to offer you my heart-felt felicitations. I have long thought that of all the people who had anything to do with The Bomb, you most clearly and uncompromisingly sought to tame the monster.

I have also heard that you recently appeared in a memorable TV interview, and I wonder whether it would be at all possible to obtain a transcript of what you said on that occasion.

Finally, I heard the distressing news that you are not in the best of health. Please accept my best wishes for your well-being.

For the past two years I have been in Germany where I have built up a sizable American marketing and research organization. It would be a great pleasure to see you again, should your way ever bring you to Frankfurt.

Sincerely



Heinz Norden
(Managing Director)

HN/mk