

5650 Ellis Avenue

February 12, 1952

Mr. Richard B. Gehman  
71 Irving Place  
New York 3, New York

Dear Mr. Gehman:

Many thanks for your kind letter which reached me today. Tomorrow I am leaving for Boston and I expect to be in New York Monday the 18th of this month. I will stay in New York at the Kings Crown Hotel, telephone University 4-2700, and we might perhaps arrange for me to see you at your convenience. I do not yet know just how long I will stay in New York, but I might be there throughout the week.

Should my plans change and should I stay in New York at someplace other than indicated I shall try to contact you.

Sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard

LS/sds

5350 Ellis Avenue

February 28, 1952

Mr. Richard B. Gehman  
71 Irving Place  
New York 3, New York

Dear Mr. Gehman:

Enclosed you will find the text of the speech which was actually given by me at the Nation dinner. This is the one which I believe you wanted to have.

I would very much appreciate your returning it to me after you are through with it, together with the other material which I left with you.

Looking forward to seeing you in Chicago,

Sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard

LS/sds  
Enclosure

RICHARD B. GEHMAN — SEVENTY-ONE IRVING PLACE — NEW YORK THREE

10 AM

Answered  
3-18-48

3rd and 4th  
18, 19th

Dear Dr. Szilard,

TIME magazine recently instituted a series of one-page word portraits of important men and women, and when one of the editors asked me to suggest a subject, I immediately recalled that our mutual friend, Dr. Harrison Brown, had often mentioned you to me as a likely magazine article. Chloe Fox, whom I also know, agrees.

The story is to be very brief; it will take up one page of TIME and will run about 1200 words. I will be glad to give you a look at it before I send it off to the editors. To gather the material, I shall come to Chicago some time within the next two weeks, and hope to see you then. Perhaps you will allow me to take you to lunch or dinner.

If you are agreeable, may I hear from you at your convenience?

Sincerely,

*RBG Gehman*

Dr. Leo Szilard

11  
lower level  
Chappaqua  
Ferguson

5650 Ellis Avenue

April 9, 1952

Mr. Richard B. Gehman  
71 Irving Place  
New York 3, New York

Dear Mr. Gehman:

Many thanks for your letter from Pittsburgh. I am anxious to see your manuscript when you get it ready. I wonder whether you could send me two copies--one to my Chicago address at 1155 East 57th Street, Chicago 37, Illinois; the other to Denver, c/o The Department of Biophysics, University of Colorado, 4200 East Ninth Avenue, Denver 7, Colorado. Could you send them Air Mail Special Delivery? I might go to Colorado for ten days starting this coming Saturday, and if I do go your letter to Chicago will not reach me.

Sincerely,

Leo Szilard

LS/sds



# HOTEL WEBSTER HALL

4415 FIFTH AVENUE

"IN THE BEAUTIFUL SCHENLEY FARMS DISTRICT"

PITTSBURGH 13, PENNA.

*Hollander*

Dear Dr. Szilard,

The story on your life for Time was delayed for several weeks while the Time people gathered additional material from people here and there. I'll have something to send you within a few days. I'm sorry that I haven't written previously, but I've been jammed up with my musical show, which is in rehearsal here. At your convenience, will you please return the Collier's story I gave you in New York?

Sincerely,

*Gelman*

Dr. Leo Szilard

April 8, 1952

Dear Doug,

I dispatched my profile of Dr. Leo Szilard to Max Wilkinson, my agent, today, and you should get it from him within a day or two. I don't mind telling you that I've never had more trouble with a subject in my life, principally because of the length and because of the breadth of his personality. To get a genius into 1300 words and not make him sound phony or ludicrous is a terrifying job. Any suggestions for revisions you have will be met with interest. I don't object, as some writers do, to editorial comments, no matter how brutal they are. I've tried to concentrate on the personality, but it seems to me that since Szilard is not well known, it is necessary also to get in an outline of his importance and accomplishments. But if the first draft is not satisfactory--- when I say first draft I mean about fifteenth--- I'll be glad to have another whack at it. Attached is small expense account.

Sincerely,

*Rich*

Richard Gehman

Douglas Auchincloss - TIME

I'll be at this address for another month.

5650 Ellis Avenue

May 8, 1952

Mr. Richard B. Gehman  
71 Irving Place  
New York 3, New York

Dear Mr. Gehman:

I wish to thank you for your very kind letter (undated) which I received in duplicate in Chicago and Denver some time ago. I am glad that it seems you were able to use some of the comments which I made. I wonder what Time Magazine is going to make out of it. If they decided not to print it, that would be fine also. I am very grateful for your urging me to write my autobiography. I have the intention of doing this, but every bit of urging helps.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,

Leo Szilard

LS/sds

Mr. Richard Gehman  
Hotel Webster Hall  
4415 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh 13, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Gehman:

I just received your very kind letter of April 8th. In the following you will find certain remarks referring to passages in the manuscript which I have marked with numbers on the margin.

(1) Should read "in New York".

(2) This passage takes away credit from others to whom credit is due. At most, you might be justified in writing, perhaps, this much: "(Although he did not begin to work in nuclear physics until 1934, he filed a patent in 1928 for the invention of the cyclotron and was one of the first to recognize the possibility of the chain reaction and to show the way how it can be accomplished)". Even better would be to omit altogether.

(3) Would it not be better to write: "Why", said Szilard, "That would be rather boring now that I understand it completely".

(4) How would the following suit you? "Szilard worked hard at this problem for several months without getting anywhere. At Christmas time he took a month vacation, determined just to loaf. While on <sup>his</sup> vacation an idea occurred to him in the entirely unrelated field of statistical thermodynamics, and he had the problem solved before the vacation was over. Einstein didn't think it could be done until Szilard showed him how he did it. Von Laue, too, was quite skeptical when Szilard handed him the manuscript, but the next day he telephoned the young man that his work had been accepted as a doctorate thesis."

(5) Would it not be better to say: "Lord Rutherford, ~~it was reported,~~ <sup>said</sup> at the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science that liberating" etc.

(6) How would the following minor correction suit you? "Six years earlier, when it was believed that atoms could be disintegrated only by voltages of from 8 to 10 million volts which were at that time unavailable, Szilard had recognized that one could get by with much lower voltages by constructing a cyclotron. <sup>and applied for a patent for it.</sup>"

(7) "One of the products of this half year of idleness was the recognition of the theoretical possibility of a chain reaction and of the laws which it must obey."



(8) How would it be to tone this down a little and say, for instance: "This discovery provided later on the key to the problem of the chain reaction, ~~for~~ the neutrons emitted in the fission of uranium are fast and can thus be distinguished from the slow neutrons of beryllium which were used to induce the fission process".

(9) Would the following be an improvement? "that once when he had to fill out a 13-page security questionnaire <sup>in</sup> ~~he~~ answered <sup>to</sup> a question about his hobbies *he* ~~and~~ put down 'baiting brass hats' ".

(10) "After he became convinced in February 1940 that the chain reaction would in fact work in a graphite-uranium system, he spent six months of hard work getting the Government to ask him to withhold his paper which pointed out this fact and which he wanted to withhold".

(11) It would be more correct to say: "The Government set <sup>up</sup> ~~up~~ a committee to deal with the problem of the chain reaction".

(12) Here I would propose the following change: "He and many of his colleagues, following his leadership, were opposed to the plan of dropping atomic bombs on Japanese cities. With ultimate victory no longer in doubt, they thought such action politically unwise and morally unjustifiable. There was a memorandum by Szilard addressed to the President which was handed to James Byrnes, a memorandum addressed to the Secretary of War -- the so-called Franck report -- and finally a petition to the President. All this to no avail".

(13) This passage could be modified as follows: "Following Hiroshima scientists who worked on the atomic bomb were asked to remain silent by the Manhattan District which was in charge of this work. They complied because they thought that this request had something to do with secret international negotiations on the control of atomic energy, but it turned out that the request for silence was due to the desire of the War Department to pass the Atomic Energy Act 'without unnecessary discussion in Congress'. Szilard went to Washington, got a copy of the

May-Johnson Bill which had been just introduced, and showed it to his friends in the Law School of the University of Chicago".

(14) This passage could be improved to read: "against the May-Johnson bill. This fight they won, and another bill introduced by Senator MacMahon which provided for civilian control of atomic energy became the law of the land".

(15) It is common practice in all American universities for men who are not medical doctors to call themselves ~~XXXX~~ 'Mister' so as to distinguish themselves from the members of the medical school.

(16) "He wrote a letter to Stalin calling for a public discussion of an over-all settlement which would include international control of the atomic bomb, <sup>When</sup> ~~but~~ the State Department, evidently unaware of his ~~superhuman~~ <sup>superhuman (?)</sup> ~~superman~~ status, refused to sanction his transmitting it ~~W~~ Szilard published the document as an open letter".

(17) It should read: "entropy".

(18) Perhaps "foresaw" would be better than "correctly predicted".

(19) In Germany the degrees given by German universities are not Ph.D.s but D.Phil. The passage could perhaps read: "His doctor's degree at the University of Berlin".

(20) How would the following sound to you as a replacement?  
"Biology has to offer deeper mysteries".

(21) This passage as it is now in your text sort of breaks the continuity. How would it be to reverse its order and to write: "Szilard says little about his work today except: 'We have developed a technique for observing various phenomena in a growing population of bacteria'. He is doing this work in the Institute of Radiobiology and Biophysics of the University of Chicago, and he is not burdened with any teaching duties. Is that a good thing? Szilard isn't sure. He says, "Einstein told me once that it is not good for a man to be put in the position where he ~~ix~~ has a moral obligation to lay golden eggs. He himself had his happiest days when he was an examiner in the patent office in Berne, Switzerland.

There his job was to examine patents, and what he did in physics was not his duty but his pleasure, and that is where he did the work which revolutionized physics.

(22) I think you had better drop the afterthought. It is not original with me and its definition circulated widely during the war after the fall of France.

There are also the following further comments as an after-thought:

(2a) I believe the following is closer to the truth and also sounds better: "After a free lunch with Szilard, the expert called the financier and said, 'Your friend is quite right; there is a loophole in the law. But if this becomes known Congress will change the law, so next time your friend wants to see me tell him just to name his favorite charity instead and I'll send a check for \$1,000.'"

(8a) It had better read, "when bombarded by slow neutrons."

(15a) It would be a little smoother, I believe, to write: "Szilard's penchant for saying whatever comes into his head did not endear him to some people. When the MGM movie 'The Beginning of the End' came out, most atomic scientists were rather unhappy about the story and asked Szilard for advice on what to say about it. His answer: 'Just say, Hiroshima was the crime; this is the punishment'".

(19a) How would it be simply to say, "After World War II he switched from physics to biology and joined the faculty of the University of Chicago at half of his previous salary".

(21a) Would it not sound better to say, "I am a bachelor by birth"?

All these are, of course, merely suggestions for what they are worth. I am sorry that you had so much trouble in writing this piece and hope you will find the above comments useful.

Sincerely,



Leo Szilard

m

5650 Ellis Avenue

June 5, 1952

Mr. Richard B. Gehman  
71 Irving Place  
New York 3, New York

Dear Mr. Gehman:

Many thanks for your letter (undated). It really doesn't matter much whether or not Time prints this item, but I am not sure that at this time I would favor to have anything appear in the Saturday Evening Post on the history of the atomic bomb. Since, on your urging, I have decided to try and put down something on paper this summer, I would rather wait and see how this comes out before wishing to see anything closely related appear in any of the magazines. Do you think I am wrong about this?

Sincerely,

Leo Szilard

LS/sds

Dear Dr/ Szilard,

In order to keep my name relatively unsullied, I must inform you that since I sent the alterations on the piece to Time, I have not heard from them. I don't even know if they plan to use it at any time. If, for some reason, they do not---and I should know some time this week---I am going to attempt to sell the idea, in much expanded form, to the Saturday Evening Post. I have already talked to an editor there and they are interested. I cannot understand Time's silence, nor can my agent. You will hear from me within a couple of days, since I have returned from Pittsburgh and will be here for some weeks.

Sincerely,

*Gehman*

Dr Leo Szilard



# HOTEL WEBSTER HALL

4415 FIFTH AVENUE "IN THE BEAUTIFUL SCHENLEY FARMS DISTRICT" PITTSBURGH 13, PENNA.

Dear Dr. Szilard,

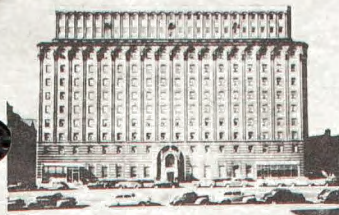
The manuscript came back this morning, and I noted all the changes and will make them accordingly. My difficulty was mainly lack of space, as I indicated. It was not that I did not enjoy doing the piece, but I was mainly annoyed by the necessity of condensing so much information and so many anecdotes into that impossibly small number of words. I have not yet heard anything from TIME, but I am sending today for the original and will incorporate the comments.

Again let me urge you to get to work on that autobiography. A man of your wit and ability certainly should not deprive the reading public of what certainly would be one of the most absorbing human documents of our time. If there is anything I can do to help, please let me know. I am taking the liberty of sending my piece about you to a publisher I know in New York in the hope that he will urge you to do the autobiography soon.

My very best to you,

*Bill  
Gehman.*

Dr. Leo Szilard



# HOTEL WEBSTER HALL

4415 FIFTH AVENUE

"IN THE BEAUTIFUL SCHENLEY FARMS DISTRICT"

PITTSBURGH 13, PENNA.

Dear Doctor Szilard,

Here is the Time article, and as you will see from the attached letter to Doug Auchincloss of Time, it was the toughest of my career. That's one reason why it took so long. Will you please pencil your comments directly on the manuscript? There will be plenty of time to make changes. If you have additional comments or suggestions, I will be more than glad to hear them, as you know.

Again let me urge you to get to work on that autobiography. A subject such as you deserves more than 1300 words in a twenty-cent weekly magazine.

My best to you. Dede and I most enjoyed that afternoon and evening in New York. I'll be at this address for another month, working on my musical comedy.

Sincerely,

*Dick Gehman*

Dr. Leo Szilard