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DOCTOR SZILARD INTERVIEWS DOCTOR WATSON....

A.

They seem to me to be looking after themselves a little better than this great country.

Q.

Yes, but you know the United States resists being saved.

A.

Yes, that is so - they're too proud to be saved. I think the United Kingdom will either be the very first victim, and be the victim not of their own folly but of the folly of others. A - since we parted, at Baden, I have looked at our colleagues, in the Soviet Academy at first hand, in their own domain, and I think on the whole that they are - they are very much inclined to believe & - to agree with you and with myself - that the world is worth saving.

Q.

You mean the Soviet Academy of Science?

A.

Yes. I was there in September - in the end of September and early October. I was also seeing some of my old friends in Poland - in Budapest - and I came back a little more cheerful about the

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A.

future of the world than when I had - when I started on my - my minor odyssey. But nobody can save any country except the country itself. And all we can do, I think, is to talk - and I believe that talk is still the most important defensive weapon that exists. I'm delighted that you are encouraging your old associates and colleagues to talk. I'm sure that you're not always agreeing with them - and I feel that our talk will be a little dull, because as far as I can judge, I always agree with what you've already said. We can't find anything to disagree about.

(CUT)

MACK - ROLL #4/1

6/2

Q.

When the day was over, we all sat down to eat a formal dinner. And when the dinner was over, there were toasts - and I rose - and I said the following - I said, I rise to drink to the health of Sir Robert Watson Watt - and I wish to say in the name of the Americans and in the name of the Russians who

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Q.

participated in this Congress, that tonight, in the spirit of good fellowship, we won't hold it against him that he's a Britain. Now, I know that saving a country's habit-forming - so I want to ask you now, which country are you about to save, and how are you going to go about it?

A.

I know of no defensive weapon that's left to us except talk. But the - the need for talk is perhaps very different in the different countries. Of course, I want to save the U.K. first. I think it's going to be difficult to save because of geography. But I'm still hopeful. For other countries - North America seems to me to be a rather difficult area to save.

Q.

You mean they resist being saved, or what?

A.

Yes, I think they have a feeling that they ought to - to be martyrs for the benefit of something rather obscure and unknown - I don't know quite what they're going to die for.

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Q.

I really think you're talking about America as it was five or six years ago? I think the mood in America has changed.

A.

Certainly, it has, but I don't think its changed fast enough to - a- to be decisively - a - life-saving.

Q.

Well, aren't you too pessimistic about this? I think the trouble is not with the mood - I think that our intentions are very good now. I think that our thinking may not be as good as our intentions.

A.

I believe that it's the machinery that's deficient rather than the minds. I think that it's the failure to utilize, appropriately, the right minds in a coherent defensive - a- effort - an effort of thought. And there, I think, is where - a - most of the European countries - including the Soviet Union - are getting something of a lead over the ~~the~~ United States.

Q.

Yes, we just talked about this point. And I think

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Q.

said that one of the troubles with the American political system is that it's terribly difficult to reach a decision in Washington. I'm not even talking about the right decision - just any decision.

A.

Yes.

Q.

And once a decision is reached, it's difficult to make it stick.

A.

Yes.

Q.

This might - this trouble might come, really, perhaps from those who wrote the Constitution. Because the Constitution was devised to keep the government from doing anything. And this goal, it has very successfully achieved. Now, times have changed. It is more necessary, today, for government to govern, than it was...

A.

Yes.

Q.

...two hundred and fifty years ago. So it will

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Q.

take perhaps some evolution of government machinery in Washington to remedy.

A.

I'm glad to hear you say this because I have never understood how anyone could make the American Constitution work. It was - it was devised, not to facilitate government but to - to impede and imbalance in government, which, I think, must always exist if there is to ^{go} have to be progress.

Q.

Yes. But you say it is in the nature of the Americans to be flexible.

Q. (cont'd)

And they don't stick to the letter of the Constitution. The Constitution gets reinterpreted when necessary.

A.

Yes. Well, I think that the - the disease of not thinking continuously enough along one - a - reasonably clear - a- and well directed line, is shared on both sides of the alleged un- undefended frontier between the United States and Canada.

Q.

I wonder what you think about this? I just had a conversation with Collins about this -- I think

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Q.

that the next four or five years will be very crucial. That is - the problem of the bomb has to be solved either by getting rid of the bomb or learning how to live with the bomb. In the next four or five years, the decision will fall....

A.

Yes.

Q.

which of these two solutions are adopted. Now, I believe, that during this period, the scientists could play a very important role - but they cannot play this role if they are as busy as they are.

A.

No.

Q.

So I've been thinking in terms of trying to induce some thirty, forty scientists, who would take an interest in these problems, each to take off one year, in the next ten years, go and live with it for one year, and devote his full time to public affairs. And from the few conversations which I had, I have the impression that here, I have proposed something which many of my colleagues would think is right - and some perhaps will actually

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6/2

Q.

follow this.

A.

I think this is absolutely...

Q.

For instance, if you take the President's Science Advisory Committee - it has eighteen members. Of these, perhaps nine members are really very active and the other nine are not so active. But the nine members who are active still do this only on a parttime basis.

A.

Yes.

Q.

Now, the term - they are appointed for a three year term. If they serve the first year parttime, the second year full time, the third year again parttime - there would be at all times three members of the President's Advisory Committee, fulltime, in Washington. And I think this would make a very great difference in the effectiveness of that Committee. Again, other scientists, who are not working for the government, could be much more effective, in speaking up publicly - on public issues - if they had enough time to think through

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Q.

the problems what - which they want to speak. ^{A.} ~~This~~ is very much the kind of thing that I've been hoping to see. In my own amateurish way, I've already begun, personally, to free myself from my own professional activities - and I propose to spend my remaining years - if I'm allowed to - doing practically nothing but talking and writing - and I hope, primarily, thinking about what we're going to do about this world of ours. I made a kind of a faltering start by going over to Moscow, in the last Fall, to talk with some of our mutual friends, whom we have met in international ~~light~~ discussions - and I came back more alarmed about our use of scientific minds than I had been before. I was very much impressed by the - what I may call the mechanical efficiency of the utilization of research minds in - in the Soviet Union. I've - I'm stopping my approval, - iff I can put it that way - at the purely research institutes. But these profoundly impressed me. I don't know about the technological applications?

Q.

Well, I don't know - in American, as soon as a scientist shows real talent he 's made to be - to be

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6/2

Q.

be an administrator - and ceases to work. Isn't this also happening in Russia?

A.

I think not so on such a devastating scale. I think there are quite a substantial number of very good research minds who are left with a great degree of freedom to choose their - their line of advance within pure research, without diversions into committees and conferences - and - and I should say administrative things - which take a lot of time - and not a great deal of brainpower.

Q.

On the other hand, you see, in America, in the last four years, scientists - many scientists have really taken time off to advise the government...

A.

Yes.

Q.

..and the President's Advisory Science Committee was a really very useful instrument to help the government to do the right things - where scientific matters were of relevance. Do you have the impression, that in Russia, scientists are also very active in advisory positions, as far as the Russian Government

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6/2

Q.

is concerned?

A.

I couldn't speak at all authoritatively on this - but I think they - they do get an opportunity of exercising what we used to be called - The Scotsman's privilege - of answering a question by asking another. And I'm never sure that our American scientists ask enough ~~suq~~ question. I think they are busy providing answers to what may be the wrong questions - that they don't ask the right ones?

Q.

We talked about it before, I think, with Teller or with Bethe - where I said that this slogan - the scientist should not be on top but on tap - has done great damage - because it is interpreted that the scientists should just answer questions.

A.

....most - I've been fighting for, in all my scientific life.

Q.

You see, the trouble is that in most cases they're asked the wrong questions...

A.

Yes.

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6/2

Q.

And they give the wrong answers. Now, I never heard of the Scotsman's privilege to answer a question with a question. But really, they....

A.

This is an established privilege.

Q.

Of course you are a Scotsman.

A.

Yes - and - if I may venture a little into - into a self-advertisement - my radar work arose from my answering a question by asking another. I was asked what I thought about death rays - and I asked whether they wouldn't like to have a radio location instead of radio.

END OF REEL #6

DOCTOR SZILARD INTERVIEW DOCTOR WATSON

REEL #7/1

Q.

You are a Scotsman.

A.

Yes - and if I may venture a little into - into self-advertisement - my radar work arose from my answering a question by asking another. I was asked what I thought about death rays - and I asked whether they wouldn't like to have radio locations instead of radio destruction. And this, I think, was a constructive application of this odd habit.

Q.

Now, let me ask you - is your influence at home strong enough to make me an honorary Scotsman so I can enjoy the Scotsman's privilege?

A.

I think that we would certainly welcome you into the circle of the cross-questioners. In fact, I think you are naturally born that way. I think you must have some Scot's blood in - in the Szilard line.

Q.

Well, not to my knowledge. Well, of course, you never know.

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7/1

A.

Well, there were probably some mercenary troops from Scotland in your native land.

Q.

This matter of birth is very uncertain, you know.

A.

Yes.

(CUT)

ROSSI - ROLL# 24/1

MACK - ROLL #5

7/2

A.

Well, if the saving of Great Britain can be achieved by coherent and continuous thought, then I am reasonably optimistic about saving Great Britain. The difficulty of saving it, of course, is a geographic one. And even, I'm even a little optimistic about saving the Soviet Russia. Because I think there is - are very substantial amount of coherent thoughts going on there of a non-destructive kind. I had a talk with some of her Academicians friends - say when I was in Moscow, a few months ago - and I come gratified by their state of mind - alarmed by the

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7/2

A.

contrast between what seemed to me to be the effectiveness of their use in pure research as compared with another country that I had examined.

Q.

Did you say alarmed? Why should it alarm you?

A.

Alarmed, because I think that - that pure research is the raw material of technology - and the better the research - if there is continuous and coherent thought - then the better the technology. And I didn't examine how destructively the technology in the Soviet Union was likely to be applied.

Q.

Well, I wouldn't be alarmed about Russian progress in science because I think that in the next five or ten years we will have reached the situation where America can destroy Russia, to any desired degree - and Russia can destroy American - to any desired degree -- and neither countries could knock out the power to retaliate of the other. We have then reached a situation that there will be no arms race.

7/2

A.

You are in fact being a little more optimistic than when we last talked. I think you wouldn't have given us any great assurance of five years then. I'm delighted to hear that we have time to think.

Q.

I think I'm a little more optimistic.

A.

Yes, I feel, a little. I know less about it than you do, but I am certainly more optimistic than I was, at this time, last year.

Q.

Well look, where I don't agree with you is where you say that Britain's trouble is - is geographic. Because the long-range rockets, which we are going to get, can easily fly over England. It is not - it will not be any more difficult to reach any city in the United States than to reach any city in England.

A.

That's true.

Q.

What you say about the coherent thought of England - I don't know whether I can go along with this. It seems to me more likely that either, as in the past, will muddle through.

7/2

A.

Yes, we've made - we've had that good fortune perhaps?

Q.

Now, you might say that England will muddle through - and we're just going to muddle. This is possible, of course.

A.

I wouldn't say that. After all, I'm a guest in this country - I must be polite. But I have a feeling that we did a little more than muddling through - and I - if I must advertise the Scottish virtues - I believe that victory, in World War II, was assured, not so much by what was two Scotsmen had done - after we made a pretty bad mess of the First War of her present century. We didn't distinguish ourselves in the Boer War - and immediately afterwards, two Scotsmen, who were well-known in politics, but not I think clearly understood in respect of their real scientific thinking - were A.J. Balfour and I.B. Holbein -- they were bitter political enemies, but they were bosom friends personally - and they got together despite the changes of party in power -- they worked together

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7/2

A.

continuously from 1902 right through to - a- 1920 or thereabouts - and the completely revolutionized the continuity of defense thought in Great Britain. Every element of administrative machinery that was good in World War II, in the British war effort, came from these two people.

Q.

You are talking about the First World War?

A.

No, I'm talking about what happened as a result of the - of the Boar War. It began to be reasonably effective in the First World War - but the full - the full results were only achieved between World War One and World War Two.

Q.

Well, I'm not sure that I would agree with you. It seems to me that the First World War was won because of American help -- and the Second World - World War was won because the allies were outbanged by the Germans.

A.

Yes. Certainly, we - the British made sure of not losing either war -- and the Americans made sure of winning both of them.

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7/2

Q.

You might put it that way. Shall we stop here?

A.

I think...

Q.

Isn't it enough? I think you have enough.

(CUT)

7/3

A.

I'm deeply concerned because I can't convince myself that in North America - either North of south of the undefended frontier - from the two countries in which I now live - I'm not sure that there is a continuous cord of coherent and consecutive thinking about defense with sufficient depths and sufficient neglect of side issues to insure that we have an effective policy which is understood by our own governments - by our own citizens - and by the citizens on the other side - if I may put it crudely - on the other side of the fence of opinion.

Q.

I think there is enough thinking about defense - but it is short-term thinking. We think about what

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7/3

Q.

to say to the Russians at the next meeting. There's not enough thinking about where we are going - about what the long-term goals are ...

A.

Yes.

Q.

And this is usually very difficult to get, in Washington. Everybody's very busy - all those who operate, have to make day-to-day decisions. And there is one other thing which perhaps characterizes the American Government - In America, those who operate make policy.

A.

Yes.

Q.

Those who are advisory - have advisory positions - are supposed to think - are afraid to think. Because it's very difficult for them to make an impact on policy. You see, this apparently is quite different in the Soviet Union. There, those who operate, are just office boys - they don't make policy --/policy's made at home.

A.

Yes.

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7/3

Q.

And those who operate - well, they have to telephone Moscow and find out what to say next.

(CUT)

ROSSI - ROLL #24/3

7/4

A.

My fears about the formation of a continuing policy are common to my two adopted countries - Canada and the United States. I look hard in any direction that I can find evidence, and I cannot convince myself that there is anything of the quality of thought, that between 1902 and 19 and thirtyfive went into the work of the Committee of Imperial Defense, in Great Britain. This really was a very remarkable institution. It has never, I think, been adequately publicized. And I believe that both the countries in North America require a Committee of Imperial Defense - with people who are given time to do nothing but thing - go on thinking - talking - and re-thinking - about something that can produce a result within the five years-that you are now optimistic enough - and I

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7/4

A.

am sure your optimistic rather belatedly - to let us hope for, before we bring ourselves to complete catastrophe.

Q.

Well, I don't share fully your conviction that what troubles you about if you wish - the difficulty of American decision-making - this could be remedied purely by creating new forms of organizations. I fear that there are some rather deep-lying attitudes involved, and while you can't change the organization, you cannot change the attitude. You see, policy, in Washington, comes about through various groups pushing for certain special views.

A.

Yes.

Q.

..and vested interests - and somehow a balance is made between these various forces. This is a very deep-lying attitude. The American political system is rather conducive to this kind of policy making.

A.

Yes.

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7/4

Q.

And whether this could be remedied by creating any number of new committees or organizations, I'm not sure.

A.

But this is a unique committee, because it has no executive power - it can't interfere in the operations of any of the agencies - it just thinks and puts its thought...

END OF REEL #7

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REEL #8/1

DOCTOR SZILARD INTERVIEW DOCTOR WATSON...

A.

Isn't that a wild divergence from...

DIRECTOR

(INSTRUCTIONS

A.

...the agencies. It just thinks and puts its thought
and
into convincing/~~an~~compact paper.

Q.

The great difficulty - the great problem is then -
how would, from this kind of thinking, any action
result? Now, I'm not saying it cannot be done.
For instance, I believe the President's Advisory
Committee, particularly in its - at the beginning -

A.

Yes.

Q.

Even though it was purely thinking committee - and
purely advisory, did affect policy.

A.

Yes.

Q.

And - a- perhaps its affect would have been even
greater - and the policies it formulated even
better - if it hadn't been a parttime committee?

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8/1

A.

Yes.

Q.

With the exception of its chairman, this was a parttime committee of very excellent people but still people who were busy. And while you can be intelligent and effective if you are busy - wisdom ~~which is not~~ really requires leisure.

A.

Yes. Yes, we want the Institute for Peace, that we've all talked about - a- a - and I think that we want people who have decided that it's more important to use their declining years in thinking than in doing -- and I hope that you will provide a formula for - for getting a group of these people together, even at this late date.

Q.

Well, of this, I'm not certain.

A.

Nor am I. I'm still an optimist. I was born that way. I can't cure myself.

Q.

If you were born an optimist - you'll die an optimist.

A.

I - I'm often reminded of still another Scotsman.

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8/1

A.

You know, of course, about Saul Johnson's biographers -
Boswell? Boswell said - I have tried, in my time,
to be a philosopher but cheerfulness would come
creeping in. And this is a great danger.

END OF REEL #8

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REEL #16/1

SZILARD

QUESTIONS

No, I can't say I'm proud of it. But you see, what I did was just inevitable. We knew at the time that there will be a World War - we knew that the Germans had very good physicists - and it was reasonable to assume that the Germans will develop the bomb. If we didn't develop the bomb also, Germany would have won the war without a fight. So we had really no choice but to do what we did. But to be proud of it, that again would be something else.

Perhaps, however, this will give you an answer to your question. I didn't see very much of Mr. Einstein during the war. I was not permitted, really, freely, to talk to him, because he was not in on the project. But I saw him occasionally - and immediately after the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, I went to see him. He saw me - received me with - when he saw me, he said - and these were his first words - you see, the ancient Chinese are right. One must not do anything - one must never do anything. What he meant, of course, was that if you do something that has important consequences, you cannot foresee the consequences -- and if you do not know what the

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10/1

SZILARD(questions)

consequences of your action are, it will be better not to act. This was Einstein's reaction to Hiroshima.

(CUT)

16/2

SZILARD

QUESTIONS

Well, I -uh I recall what happened there. You see, there was a platform, near the pile, on the stack field, and on the day when this chain reaction was first demonstrated there was some ten or fifteen people, there, watching the ceremony. When it was all over most of them left - all of them left, as a matter of fact, and only Fermi remained. And then I shook hands with Fermi and said - well Fermi, I feel that this will go down as a black day in the history of mankind.

Well, I think it has gone down as a black day in the history of mankind. There was Hiroshima -- and we are not going to get over Hiroshima so soon. You may, of course, say that the bomb also, for the first time in history, gives us a chance to abolish

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16/2

QUESTIONS

SZILARD

war - and this I believe is true. So you may say that while the bomb gives us a chance to abolish war - if we don't abolish war, it will presumably destroy the world.

(CUT)

16/3

SZILARD

QUESTIONS

Now, these prophecies may sound a little too gloomy - and so, let me say you something to clear you up. This was a meeting in San Francisco, I believe, where the speaker spoke of the possibility of the world may be destroyed by the bomb. And in the discussion an old lady got very excited about it and asked a number of question. So finally the speaker told her - now look here, the situation is serious - but it is not tragic. It is not after all as if the earth were one of the major planets.

(CUT)

16/4

SZILARD

QUESTIONS

Immediately after the end of the Second World War they began the discussion of the issue of whether we could get rid of the bomb. Ever since that time there was talk about general...

Well, you see, as soon as the war ended they began talk about how to get rid of the bomb. And ever since, there was much discussion of the problem - of the issue of disarmament. But there was much talk about disarmament - there was very little thought given to the problem. So that we really do not know what disarmament would involve. And when I say this, I mean the following -- Just how desirable would be disarmament? Would that lead to a stable world? What you almost invariably hear, in the public discussion, is people saying that disarmament is highly desirable, but it is not feasible. A - most people say that - how would we know, if the Russians agreed to disarmament, whether they wouldn't hide, secretly, bombs or rockets suitable for delivery? So the general hue, which you hear, is that disarmament is desirable but not feasible. What I believe to be is exactly the opposite. I think there can be serious doubt about whether a world disarmed down to the level of machine guns

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SZILARD

QUESTIONS

- would be stable - that is whether in such a world we can be confident that no war would break out. But there is no doubt in my mind that if both Russia and we thought that disarmament is desirable, then we would see to it that disarmament would become feasible. And I think disarmament is feasible, providing the great power regard it as desirable.

(CUT)

16/5

SZILARD

QUESTIONS

Well, I think exactly the same thing today as I thought at the time when this issue came up in the Spring of '45. But I do not want to go now into the arguments in favor and against dropping the bomb. There is really only one thing that I would like to say on this occasion - let us assume for a moment that we would not have gotten any bombs ready - but the Germans would have gotten two bombs ready, toward the end of the war - and they would have dropped these two bombs on two American cities, killing a few hundred thousand people. And let me assume further that after that the Germans would have run

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16/5

SZILARD

out of bombs and lost the war. Can you seriously doubt that in such a case the dropping of atomic bombs on cities would have been defined as a war crime? And that the Germans, guilty of that crime, would have been sentenced, in Nuremberg, to hang - and that they would have been hung?

(CUT)

16/6

SZILARD

QUESTIONS

A -here, you ask all these questions, I begin to suspect that you are asking them because you want to find out what kind of a man I am. But if this is what you want to do, you don't have to go to all this trouble - all you have to do is call up Ed Levy, the Dean of the Law School of the University of Chicago. I understand that someone has asked him - what kind of a man is this man Szilard? Can you tell me? And the Dean of the Law School said - this is very easy. I can tell you that very easily. This is the kind of a man he is. Suppose he's serving on a jury and the jury retires - and the foreman polls the jury. He will find the poll

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16/6

SZILARD

standing at eleven to one with Szilard dissenting. And then the discussion begin and Szilard begins to put forward his argument - and he's convincing more and more of the jurors. And finally the foreman thinks he's ready for a vote. So he puts up the issue to a vote - and the vote is eleven to one with Szilard dissenting. Szilard has realized that he was wrong - changed his mind - and he changed his vote. That's the kind of a man he is.

(CUT)

16/7/

SZILARD

SMITH QUESTIONS

Q.

Doctor Szilard, you seem to be skeptical about the possibility about the world reaching a general disarmament agreement. Why is that?

A.

Well, I'm skeptical that it will reach such an agreement, in an early date, in the absence of a political settlement. Let me, for instance, read you what I picked out of today's pap newspaper. It's a statement which Mr. Khrushchev has made. He said, there was

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16/7

A.

no chance for Germany to recover her former territories of the Oder-Nasser Line because the Czech's, ^{Poles,} ~~policy~~ Russians and I believe the French will not permit it. Now, how will these nations prevent it? Clearly by force of arms. But can they prevent it by force of arms if they have discarded all arms except machine guns? I wonder whether Russia would take the position that she would, in a disarmed world, be indifferent to Germany conquering Poland - or whether the German menace of Poland would be a signal to rearmament. This is as far as the Russians are concerned. I'm even more skeptical about America.. It is clear that general disarmament cannot stabilize a world in the absence of a political settlement. It is clear that such a political settlement would have to include China. Now, we have been pursuing with respect to China a policy of no speak. We have pursued such a policy with respect to Russia during..

END OF REEL #16

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REEL 17/1

AN INTERVIEW OF DOCTOR SZILARD BY HOWARD K. SMITH

SZILARD

Now, we have seen that time changed already towards Russia. We are speaking to Russia, but we are still not speaking to China. Now, there is, of course, a rather major difference between Russia and China, and that is that the Russian Revolution is old and the Chinese Revolution is new. Now, I would like to illustrate this by telling you something - a little Anecdote - something that's actually happened at a meeting when I -- (correction) My first contact with the Russian scientists was at the Pugwash Meeting which was called by Bertrand Russell and was held at Cyrus Eaton's estate in Pugwash Nova Scotia. When I first met the Russian scientists, at the beginning of that meeting, I asked them whether they thought that the meeting should end by issuing a proclamation.

SMITH

Should end by issuing...

SZILARD

By issuing a proclamation. I thought that this would be rather a bad thing to do because it would waste all our time drafting the proclamation. Well, the Russians said they thought there must be a proclamation.

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17/1

SZILARD

Then I said to them - in that case it will be better if we adopted a proclamation which I have already drafted prior to the meeting -- this would save us time. And they looked sort of worried, because this was obviously an attempt to put something over on them. So I proceeded to say that this proclamation is very simple - it consists of two statements. One which would be signed by all the Americans - and one which will be signed by all the Russians. First, the statement which would be signed by the Americans, reads -- we do not believe in capitalism. And the American can sign that - because they know the drawbacks of capitalism. The second statement - the second statement reads - we do not believe in Communism -- and this should be signed by the Russians because by now the Russians should know some of the drawbacks of communism. My Russian colleagues responded to this with an easy laughter - which was very assuring for me - because it showed me that they understood. I rather doubt that Chinese scientists would have responded with the same kind of laughter.

SMITH

The Chinese?

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17/1

SZILARD

I think the Chinese still believe that they have the solution to all problems and that this solution would make a very people happy. I am very much concerned about the Chinese taking over Tibet - even though legally there may be some justification for that - because here they moved into a country - that forcibly changes its social structure. And I hope that they will not repeat this with other of their neighbors. But I cannot agree with those who condemn China because of the Chinese intervention in the Korean War. When we crossed the thirty-eighth Parallel we became the aggressors. It is true that we did that under the fiat of the United Nations. Because - but we did it under the fiat of the United Nations - in violation of the United Nations Charter. I am not an international lawyer, but I can read, and the Charter says, black and white, that such action can be taken only with the concurring vote of the permanent members of the Security Council.

Q.

Ans.

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17/1

SZILARD

China is a permanent member - and so is Russia. The fact that Russia was absent ^{from the Council Table} ~~at the Council Table~~ voluntarily, ~~does not~~ does not represent a concurring vote - and China was just not permitted to sit at the Council Table - that the Chinese intervened when our troops reached the Yalu River is no excuse for not speaking to them today. The rights or wrong of this case have not been adjudicated. I must also say that already.....China offends my sense of proportions. We cannot look upon what goes on in China, from a narrow point of view of American interests. It is likely that the Chinese Revolution will go down in history as an event more important than the Russian Revolution and more important than the French Revolution. What is so important about this is not that China is now under a Communist Government but rather - but rather for the first time in modern times China has a government. I think that our attitude toward China cannot be explained on the basis of our national interests - it can be explained only on the basis of domestic policies.

SMITH

And so you think that a political agreement cannot

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17/1

SMITH

be reached as long as this obstacle - the American -
the refusal to deal with China exists?

SZILARD

I see no possibility of far-reaching disarmament,
and a stable world, without a political settlement
which will include China. If we are serious about
our intentions to disarm, we should, by now, have
changed our attitude, of no speak, towards China -
that we have not changed it makes me doubt about
the seriousness of our intentions to have far-reaching
disarmament at an early date.

(CUT)

17/2

SMITH

QUESTIONS

Well, Doctor Szilard, we want to thank you, in
these difficult circumstances, for permitting us
to come here to interview you.

Well, I'm sure that if we do, the whole world will
be grateful to us.

Well, Doctor Szilard, I read a book, ^{recently, in} ~~xxxxy~~
which it was said of you, that you have a special

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17/2

SMITH

QUESTIONS

gift for deducing future events from present facts. And I read an article about you, recently, which said you have established your ability to think ahead of your times. Now, we want to exploit that ability to think ahead - but first I would like to ask you some questions about the past.

Well, Doctor Szilard, I should imagine that the thing you're going to be remembered for most is the fact that you - a - played a large part in taking the initiative in the construction of the atomic bomb by proposing to Einstein that he write a letter to the President - at that time - to take this matter seriously. Now, as you look back on that, are you proud of that achievement?

(CUT)

17/3

SMITH

QUESTIONS

Well, Doctor Szilard, thank you for permitting us to come around, in these difficult circumstances, to interview you.

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17/3

SMITH

Well, if we succeeded in that, sir, the whole world will be grateful to us. Well, Doctor Szilard, I have recently read a book about you in which it said you have a special gift for deducing future events from present facts. And I read an article about about you which said that you have established your ability to think ahead of your times. Now, we want to exploit that capacity for thinking ahead o -- but first I would like to ask you some questions about the past. I think you will probably be remembered most for your action, in helping to initiate the construction of the atomic bomb, by inducing or proposing to Professor Einstein that he write that letter, to the President of the United States, asking him to take this matter seriously. Now, when you look back on that, are you proud of that achievement?

DIRECTOR

(INSTRUCTIONS)

SMITH

I don't know whether he was serious or not - but undertaking no initiative at all would certainly be a very barren policy. In any case, sir - a -

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17/3

SMITH

when you first became aware of the chain reaction -
a - you were quoted as saying - this is a black
day in the history of mankind. Do you still
believe that?

Doctor Szilard, Heisenberg, the German scientist,
has said that if, in 1939, twelve men - just twelve
men had reached an agreement, there would never
have been an atom bomb. Do you believe that's true?

Well, Doctor Szilard, Heisenberg, the German
scientist, has been quoted as saying that, if in
1939, twelve men - just twelve men - had reached
an agreement on it, there would never have been
the construction of an atomic bomb. Do you believe
that is so?

END OF REEL #17

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REEL #18/1

SMITH

QUESTIONS

And the thing that forced the allied scientists together was the assumption that the Nazis were making progress on making the bomb?

Well, sir, in 1945, you were very much opposed --

(CUT)

18/2

SMITH

QUESTIONS

Well, in 1945 you were very much opposed to the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan. Now, let me ask you frankly - isn't it a little illogical to create a weapon like that to give it to a people fighting a life and death struggle, but who did not want that struggle, and expect them not to use it?

Well, may we now talk about the present, sir? Right now we seem to be very close to the Russians-towards getting an agreement to - a - stop nuclear tests. How man important do you think it is to reach an agreement on stopping nuclear tests?

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18/2

SMITH

Well, I would say like to find out, from you, why you think stopping tests is not important. Most people seem to think it's very important as a first step.

Well, what about the danger then that the Russians might go ahead, in secret, testing small nuclear weapons - and get ahead of us?

Well, I have the impression that one way or another we're going to get some kind of agreement, with the Russians, on tests. So let's move on to other problems. Now, you talked, a moment ago, about the dilemma of trying to get rid of the bomb, or else trying to live with the bomb. Could you expand on that?

(CUT)

18/3

SMITH

QUESTIONS

Well, may I conclude, from what you've said, that you think we ought to accept Khrushchev's proposal for total disarmament?

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18/3

SMITH

Well, sir, you've made a pretty good argument than an agreement to disarm, between America and Russia, is possible. But what about other nations with arms - wouldn't they cause trouble?

Now, you've expressed - a - a - awhile ago, you expressed the beliefs that it may not be desirable to have a total disarmament agreement. What did you mean by that?

Well now, on that very same point - suppose Adolph Hitler had atomic bombs in the Second World War, wouldn't he have acted irrationally, and wouldn't America and Russia, in certain circumstances, be irrational?

Well, what about that? Suppose the Chinese get the bomb?

Well, sir, what about - a - the case of Hungary? Now, suppose the Hungarians have, as they had, a short while ago, a revolution, that is a good revolution - that is reasonable? Wouldn't the system, that you're talking about, permit the Russians to stifle that revolution, without any fear of consequences?

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18/3

SMITH

Now, a while ago I mentioned the possibility that China may get the bomb. Would that alter this - this situation in any way?

Well, Doctor Szilard, you have exercised your imagination to tell us what is possible. Could you exercise your gift of imagination to tell us now what is probable in the future?

Well, have you any idea how long it may take to discover that? I'm thinking of the possibility that, in the next ten years, many more nations will come to possess nuclear weapons.

So stability consists in the fact that either one of us are in a position to destroy the other, but we cannot do so, only at the certain cost of being destroyed ourselves in return?

Sir, what do you think, today, about the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima?

Well, that certainly poses a very serious moral questions. Tell me, Doctor Szilard, when did the idea of creating an atomic weapon first occur to you?

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18/3

SMITH

You appear to be skeptical about early disarmament?

So you see no possibility of disarmament until
the thorny problem of China is - is settled?

END OF REEL #18

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REEL #19/1

SMITH

QUESTIONS

Doctor Szilard, you've been very courageous and candid in talking about your life expectancy. You've left~~ts~~ us quite a legacy in the atomic bomb. I wonder if there's anything you think that future generations ought to hear, from you, about that weapon - or even this generation - or the next administration - for example? Is there anything that you would like to say, if you could, to the next President, whoever he may be?

Well, let me ask you this...

Yes.

Yes.

(SILENT REACTION SHOTS OF SMITH)

END OF REEL #19