

Amrine

MICHAEL AMRINE

5422 ALTA VISTA ROAD

BETHESDA 14, MD.

OLIVER 6-8724

September 17, 1956

Dr. Leo Szilard
University of Chicago
Chicago 37, Illinois

Dear Dr. Szilard:

I am most interested to hear (from Robert Jungk) that you plan to finish and publish your autobiography. I have felt for years that your material and your temperament uniquely fitted you to write a remarkable document of these times.

I would be glad to work with you on this if you are so minded. There are several ways in which this might be arranged, if you remain interested. I may be in Chicago for the Atomic Forum, the latter part of this month, but that is doubtful. However, we could get together at Arden House next month, and plan to confer for a day or two before or after, if this is convenient for you.

Sincerely yours,

Mike Amrine
Michael Amrine

MA:ec

The Quadrangle Club
The University of Chicago
Chicago 37, Illinois
September 21, 1956

Mr. Michael Amrine
5422 Alta Vista Road
Bethesda 14, Maryland

Dear Amrine:

Many thanks for your very kind letter of September 17th. I appreciate very much your offer to cooperate on the book and I might very well take you up on it. I shall, however, try first to put down on paper the bulk of the material that might go into the book, *I hope before May 1,* and then decide in principle whether I should proceed with writing the book myself or in collaboration with someone else. I rather doubt that I would want to write the book alone, and when this becomes even clearer than it is now, I shall think of you first of all.

As I told you, I read your book, "Secret". I was very much struck at the insight into what makes a scientist tick, which is displayed in the book on a number of different occasions. I have not heard yet whether the Arden House Conference is definitely going to take place but if it does I would expect to see you there.

Sincerely,

Leo Szilard

MICHAEL AMRINE

5422 ALTA VISTA ROAD
BETHESDA 14, MD.
OLIVER 6-8724

October 8, 1956

Dr. Leo Szilard
The Quadrangle Club
The University of Chicago
Chicago 37, Illinois

Dear Dr. Szilard:

I hear that the Arden House conference is off, and I have no present plans for going to Chicago.

But I wanted to write you about your book.

I was very glad to get your letter and don't wish to urge any particular course of action on you. I would like to point out that there are many different levels of collaboration. Furthermore, I think that a publisher, or very likely an educational foundation, would under-write the expenses of pursuing any of these means of collaboration. I don't know whether you have access to a good secretary of the kind such a book would need. This should be a good girl who knows her way around in foot-notes and, shall we say, neutrons.

I have often worked at the conclusion of one draft of a book, that is, worked partly as an editor and partly as a person doing writing and re-writing. In one case I took some 3,000 pages of documents and diaries which a diplomat had kept through busy years. This problem was entirely one of selection and compression: it made a good book when reduced in size by one order of magnitude.

There can be many degrees of collaboration beyond this. One way that I was thinking of in connection with the kind of material I believe you have, would be to bring in a writer -- me -- in a much more candid way than I have ever seen done. It might go like the following.

You would write an autobiography, a personal history, a reminiscence, a memoir. On this you would use as much or as little help from me as seemed reasonable.

Introducing some of the chapters and sometimes taking an entire chapter would be a historical or journalistic review of what was happening on the world stage, or the political history stage at the time these other events were occurring. Then of course, in the latter part of the book, these two threads

obviously converge. This would counter-balance the elements of personal history, scientific history, and politican events.

I know of no precedent for letting the "ghost" writer actually up on the corner of the stage except in the case of the dead. Very frequently a diary which has turned up from the past, or has been bequeathed to someone, becomes a far better book when a historian writes introductions and footnotes which give the book an added depth. I'd like to see this honor done some one while he is alive. Why not?

I know you have an interest in politics and you also have an interest in writing yourself. Incidentally, I don't think that would necessarily make it easier, but would probably make it harder for a collaborator. I also know you like frankness and directness, and so I suggest that one way of possibly making the most of this story would be to let me put in some of my contributions by mutual agreement plainly labelled under my name. A good editor with the publishing house could give us both good counsel on how to weave such a book together.

I couldn't know without seeing some of the material and without talking with you what my recommendations would be as to the ultimate shape of the book. You know, collaboration is an everyday matter in science, but in writing a good collaborating team has been more rare than a good marriage in the twentieth century. Sometimes there are even three scientists signing a scientific paper, but there is no case of three men having written a novel and very few of two. There are more cases in non-fiction. There is one good case I can think of where the subject and the collaborator had both their names interwoven throughout the book, but not quite in the way I have in mind. This way, however, proved very good for the late Secretary Stimson and McGeorge Bundy. So I hope sometime to hear your reaction to this proposal for a new kind of collaboration. If you decide on collaboration at all, this might be the most honest and straightforward way to do it.

Yours,



Michael Amrine

MA:ec

Amrine

file

The Quadrangle Club
The University of Chicago
Chicago 37, Illinois
October 15, 1956

Mr. Michael Amrine
5422 Alta Vista Road
Bethesda 14, Maryland

Dear Amrine:

Many thanks for your letter of October 8th. I quite agree with you that it is impossible for two people to write a book jointly, and I also quite agree with you that whatever you write you should write under your own name. I for one do not believe in ghost-written books. Whether the particular form which you suggest is feasible, I really do not know but I will give it some thought, and I shall be in touch with you about it.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,

Leo Szilard

MICHAEL AMRINE
5422 ALTA VISTA ROAD
BETHESDA 14, MARYLAND
OLIVER 6-8724

July 8, 1957

Dr. Leo Szilard
The University of Chicago
Chicago 37, Illinois

Dear Dr. Szilard:

Enclosed is the proposition which was purchased as the basis for a documentary on the A-bomb decision. This is confidential to you--'business' confidential--as I would not want some one else to decide it was a good idea and do one as a quickie.

You may be interested in Part II, the basic chronology, and in some of the material in Part III.

I am also doing the script itself and we all feel it is coming along fine. I would like to ask you for the time-table on the petition from 64 scientists. When was it started? When did it get delivered? Are their names yet declassified? Perhaps you can send me something on this or refer me to the Bulletin or some other source. I have a set of the Bulletin, as well as most of the basic books, from Stimson to Compton.

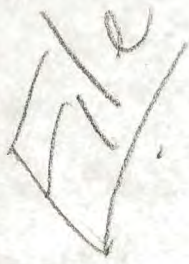
I do not understand Compton.

Sincerely yours,

Michael Amrine
Michael Amrine (mm)

MA:mm
Enc.

V-60



MICHAEL AMRINE

3536 APPLETON STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON 8, D. C.

WOODLEY 6-4027

May 27, 1960

(Delayed)

Dr. Leo Szilard
Room 812, Memorial Hospital
444 East 68th St.
New York, N. Y.

Dear Dr. Szilard:

The first thing this morning I called the Washington man who is working on the Arden House Conference, and I believe you will have your invitation shortly.

This is set for the week-end of June 2nd, starting on a Thursday and going through Sunday. It is much larger than the Conference we had at Gould House. There may be ninety or a hundred people there, and I think quite a few more people with more experience and responsibility than we had in the past. I don't know whether that insures a better meeting. ~~And~~ sometimes seems to me that the less responsibility the more imagination and viceversa.

I was most interested to hear that Dr. Oppenheimer would attend and I know a whole group of Foreign Affairs experts who are going, such as Roger Hilsman, Director of Research at the Library of Congress, and a very well informed man, and Evron Kirkpatrick, Secretary of the American Political Sciences Association. In my work with the American Psychological Association I was able to start a committee to work on the contributions which psychologists might make to arms control or the study of decision making and the relieving of tension in the international field. The head of that committee will be there. Just between us as citizens, I don't think the psychologists have come up with much on these problems, but it seems logical to me that they should try, and some of them have applied a good spirit and good wit to this task.

I sent a message to you through ^{al} Rosenfeld a week or so ago to speak about the importance of your getting your material and papers organized into a book. I am glad to hear you are using the tape recorder, an invention that I just discovered for myself about a year ago. It was invaluable to me in writing my biography of Senator Humphrey. I recorded all my interviews, I made notes by going through material and talking into the microphone at the same time, and I used it just as dictating machine too. _a

If there is anything I can do for you in this matter, I would be glad too.

Respectfully yours,

Michael Amrine

Michael Amrine