

Dear Prof. Pegram:

Dr. Szilard has shown me the note he has written concerning publication of our letter. I dislike very much imposing on you to the extent of asking you to decide this question. However Szilard and I do take opposite views. My opinion may be summed up as follows.

Withholding publication cannot now keep the matter from becoming generally known among physicists here and abroad.

A small rumor to certain people would start them off on experiments just as quickly as a full publication.

Jahant's paper already provides them with an excuse to begin work.

Our fears, apparently, are not shared by the French workers and I can hardly believe that they are ignorant of the possibilities.

Withholding publication can, at most, delay the discoveries we fear for some months, in which case secrecy would be impossible. On the other hand publication would accelerate research work in several laboratories and I feel this country will not be put on the "spot" by its research workers failing to do their job.

Finally, withholding publication sets a new and undesirable precedent among physicists.

Despite the above arguments I would be influenced a great deal by Prof. Fermi's opinion. My reason for this

is that he, inevitably,
will be forced to accept the
major part of blame or
honor which might result
from these publications.

Columbia University also
has a vital interest in the
matter from this viewpoint
and therefore I am inclined
to give your opinion great
weight.

W. H. Brinn

March 27th - 39

Dear Professor Pegram,

It seems we shall have to decide today about delaying the letter which Tim and I sent to Phys. Rev. -

I feel that if we delay this letter now, and if you write to take along the times which Fermi suggested on his return from Washington, we may have a chance, though not a very great one, to get others to cooperate. If we publish now, we can not ask others to withhold future, perhaps more important papers.

Lincoln, I believe, is of
somewhat different opi-
nion.

It seems that in the
circumstances you as
head of the Department
will have to take the
responsibility for deciding
this difficult question
one way or another.

I am very sorry to have
to worry you with this
unpleasant decision but
it happens only once in
a life time.

Yours sincerely

Lee R. Child

Metallurgical Laboratory

August 12, 1946

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

The material in the lower drawer of the file safe in Room 115 and in the back part of the second-to-the-top drawer of this file safe was deposited with me for safekeeping on August 12, 1946 by Leo Szilard. No inspection of these documents was made by me, and I am assured by Mr. Szilard that they consist of personal memoranda notes concerning the type of work he carried out while a member of the Metallurgical Laboratory. I was also assured that no registered classified documents are included.

Instructions have been issued to the secretaries having access to this file safe not to disturb this material in any way or to permit anyone to disturb this material without the permission of the undersigned.

W. H. Zinn, Director
ARGONNE NATIONAL LABORATORY

WHZ:pp

A.H. Compton
Ryerson Physical Laboratory
University of Chicago
Chicago Ill.

It is my conviction that your time schedule ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~
can be best met by immediate concentration under your direction
at Columbia .However, if you do not share this view and wish to
move elsewhere to effect concentration I shall be happy to join
you and extend my fullest cooperation to the project.

W. H. Zinn

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