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COPY of letter from PROF. ERWIN SCHRÖDINGER  
to Prof. Donnan.

Solda,  
Hotel Jenible,  
Alto Adige.

26. 8. 33.

Dear Professor Donnan,

I am informed that you would appreciate to hear my opinion on Dr. Leo Szilard both as a scientist and as a man.

I know Dr. Szilard very well and range him among my true personal friends. To begin with his scientific personality, I should like to emphasise the fact that during the years of his séjour at the Berlin University, Szilard took an important part in all the discussions of our colloquia and seminars. He was one of those to whom one always listens with greatest interest, for what he had to say was always of a profound and original kind. He very often points to an important point or to a view of the subject matter, which would not occur to anybody else.

The same observation can duly be made on inspection of Szilard's scientific publications, though it must be owned that these are perhaps not so numerous as might be expected of a good and promising scientist of his age. It is my personal opinion that this fact is caused by both a rather wide range of interests (which are by no means limited to the science of physics) and the absolute refusal of publishing on a subject which he has not really thoroughly studied in all its details and connection to others, even far remote subject matters. My personal hope with regard to Dr. Szilard is that he will find occasion to specialise his work and his interests a little more - and I am absolutely convinced that if he does, he will never frustrate however far-reaching expectations that may be put into him and into his work.

Perhaps I may add that I have come to know Dr. Szilard as an absolutely trustful and truly altruistic person, who has all the qualities that would make him a valuable and esteemed member of an institution collaborating to some common aim.

(Signed) E. SCHRÖDINGER.

November 9, 1950

Professor E. Schroedinger  
Trinity College  
Dublin, Ireland

Dear Professor Schroedinger:

We have been doing recently some work which might perhaps interest you, and I am sending you therefore the enclosed manuscript of a paper which is now in press.

I have read with much pleasure your little book What Is Life some time ago. Whether life will persist long enough on this planet to enable us to find out what it is I do not know.

I haven't been to Europe since before the war (the Second World War I mean), but if I manage to get there next year perhaps I would hope to see you then and to hear what you think of the world.

With best wishes--

Sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard

November 7, 1950

Professor E. Shrodinger  
Trinity College  
Dublin, Ireland

Dear Professor Shrodinger:

We have been doing recently some work which might perhaps interest you, and I am sending you therefore the enclosed manuscript of a paper which is now in press.

With best wishes--

Sincerely,

Leo Szilard

wv

Dr. Leo Szilard  
Institute of Radiobiology and Biophysics  
Chicago 37, Illinois

12. Februar 1951

Lieber Herr Szilard!

Erst jetzt nach meiner Rückkehr von meinem Österreich-Urlaub habe ich Ihre fundamentale Arbeit gelesen, die Sie so freundlich waren mir schon im November in Durchschlag zuzuschicken. Es war ein großer Genuß, besonders in unserer Zeit der Hast, Unklarheit und Nachlässigkeit in bezug auf die Darstellung, etwas nach Inhalt und Darstellungsform so Vollkommenes und Wohldurchdachtes in die Hände zu bekommen, das ganz und gar an die Untersuchungen unserer großen Klassiker gemahnt, an die Zeiten, da es in der Wissenschaft noch mehr auf scharfen Verstand und geniale Intuition als auf große Geldmittel ~~ankam~~ ankam. So viel ich davon verstehe, haben Sie hier mit einer verhältnismäßig einfachen, aber äußerst sinnreich bis ins Kleinste durchüberlegten Apparatur und durch sorgfältige Planung der ersten damit angestellten Versuchsreihen nicht nur schon jetzt ganz fascinierende Ergebnisse zutage gebracht, sondern ein ungeheures Gebiet erschlossen, das noch Jahre lang reiche Früchte zu tragen verspricht. Gerade diese Mutationsversuche, mit denen Sie begonnen haben, scheinen mir in zwei ganz verschiedenen Richtungen der Anfang einer großen Entwicklung zu sein, nämlich erstens als "Modell" der Evolution überhaupt, zweitens in der praktischen Medizin. Es ist wohl bekannt, daß bei vielen Krankheiten sich der klinische Befund, der Verlauf und die Gefährlichkeit in verhältnismäßig kurzen Zeiträumen von der Größenordnung Jahrzehnte stark verändert hat, in manchen Fällen periodisch schwankt, was man jetzt vielleicht auf die Ursachen wird untersuchen und, wenn man diese kennt, wird beherrschen können. Auch klingt mir etwas im Ohr von "Züchtung nichtvirulenter Kulturen" für Zwecke der Immunologie. - Aber Sie wissen das Alles wohl besser als ich.

Ob sich Ihre Methode wohl auf Viren ausdehnen läßt?

In der Apparatbeschreibung ist mir aufgefallen, daß Sie auf p. 4, Zeile 6 sagen: the pressure, which forces the nutrient liquid through the sintered disk is at all times equal to the water column in the pressure regulator. Ist jener Druck nicht die Differenz jener Wassersäule und der Nährlösungssäule zwischen dem sintered disk und dem anderen Ende der Kapillare, aus welchem die Nährlösung in das Züchtröhrchen (growth tube) tropft. - Die Bemerkung ist belanglos; auch kann man ja unter "the pressure that forces", wenn man will, einfach die Druckdifferenz an den beiden Enden (sintered disk und Tropfende) der Kapillare verstehen - und so ist es wohl gemeint.

Zu einer Bemerkung Ihres Briefes möchte ich sagen: zugrunde

gehen dürfte das Leben auf unserem Planeten auch im schlimmsten Falle wohl nicht, sondern es dürfte sich, ähnlich wie in Ihrer growth tube ein Gleichgewicht einstellen, spätestens sobald unsere mörderische Art so stark dezimiert ist, daß sie für die immerhin recht beträchtlichen Anstrengungen, welche die Herstellung der gefährlichsten Mordwaffen erfordert, nicht mehr die Kraft hat. Diese optimistische Ansicht setzt allerdings voraus, daß die bis dahin etwa eingetretene Verseuchung mit sublethalen Mutationen noch nicht zu ~~zu~~ ausgedehnt ist, um sich durch Selektion von selbst zu eliminieren.

Ich würde mich sehr freuen, wenn wir Sie bei Ihrem geplanten Europabesuch hier in Dublin sehen könnten. Wenn es noch während des akademischen Betriebs ist - etwa vor 1. Juli - würden Sie uns eine public lecture halten wollen? Soll ich versuchen, so was zu arrangieren? Sie brauchen natürlich darauf nicht gleich zu antworten, sondern sobald Sie wissen, ob es Ihnen passen würde.

Viele herzliche Grüße und Wünsche von Ihrem ergebensten

*E. Schrödinger.*

July 25, 1951

Professor E. Schroedinger  
Institute of Advanced Studies  
Dublin, Ireland

Dear Professor Schroedinger:

I should have thanked you before this time for your extraordinarily kind letter which gave me much pleasure to read. I would have liked nothing better than to give a talk in Dublin, but my plans to visit Europe this summer did not materialize. I still hope to get there before the end of this year.

A friend of mine, David Grene, who recently spent a few months in Ireland, which is his home, tells me many things about the country, and has nearly convinced me that it might be the only place where the remnants of our civilization may survive the next war. He is a professor of Greek at our University, and, at the same time, a farmer. His farm is just outside of Chicago, and I regret that I did not think of arranging for him to see you, since I think both of you would have enjoyed an exchange of views. I will try to think of it the next time he goes back to Ireland.

Enclosed you will find a manuscript which is in print, and which might, perhaps, interest you. As you will see, the story is incomplete and does not add up, so far, to anything intelligent.

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard

Encl: 1  
LS:hw

The Quadrangle Club  
The University of Chicago  
Chicago 37, Illinois  
September 6, 1956

Professor Erwin Schroedinger  
Physikalisches Institut  
Universität, Wien  
Vienna, Austria

Dear Professor Schroedinger:

By now perhaps you have returned to Vienna, have assumed your official position at the University and have found, I hope, a livable apartment at a not too exorbitant price.

I am still assembling documents for my application to the Bundesregierung, for which the deadline is the end of this year. If you are now back at the University, I wonder whether it would be possible for you to have the very kind and generous letter which you sent me copied on the official stationery of the university. The application is not handled by the consul in Chicago but is forwarded to Bonn, and if the German officials are the same as they used to be they are more impressed by the letterhead than by any signature. The carbon of the letter which you sent is attached.

I have kept the original and I may still use it if for any reason you prefer to have me do so. Should it, however, be possible for you to have the letter retyped on official stationery without too much inconvenience, then I shall use the new letter in lieu of the old one.

If the letter is retyped, I wonder how you would feel about making three minor changes:

- 1.) Have my name, where it appears, spelled with one "l" instead of two.

September 6, 1956

2.) Omit the bracket which relates to "grober Unfug" because it comes too close to the truth for comfort.

3.) Omit or modify the last paragraph of the letter. My reason for this suggestion is as follows: My application is not directed at a pension but at the recognition of my claim under the new law. If my claim, that I would very likely have become a professor in Germany, is accepted by the Bundesregierung, then I have an option of either receiving a pension or being reinstated in office. Even though I am, of course, likely to choose a pension, the issue of a pension does not arise at this time.

Please do not go to too much trouble on account of these changes since they might in the end be rather irrelevant with respect to the final disposition of the application.

I have been thinking lately a little about evolution. Somehow I have the feeling that the time available may be too short to let us explain what has taken place on the basis of the mechanism which is believed to be at work. I suspect, however, that on the basis of our present, quite inadequate, knowledge on differentiation and morphogenesis, the problem will prove not to be manageable.

With kindest regards,

Very sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard