

Answered

AUSTEN RIGGS CENTER, INC.

FOR THE STUDY AND TREATMENT OF THE PSYCHONEUROSES
NON-PROFIT CHARTER IN 1919

STOCKBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

TELEPHONE STOCKBRIDGE 29-8-5511

A.G. 413

January 11, 1962

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Dear Doctor Szilard:

How shall I tell you what your lucid, straightforward paper, "Are We on the Road to War?" has meant to us here in western Massachusetts? Perhaps the enclosed letter which I have sent out with over 200 copies of your speech (some to people in Kansas and California) will tell you a fraction of what we feel.

Suffice it to say that within three days after first reading this remarkable document, people here (some members of the South Berkshire Chapter of SANE, some not) have found energies within themselves none of us suspected: I, who cannot type, typed out long lists of names and addresses, a colleague to whom I immediately gave your paper had gathered enough money within twenty-four hours to get another thousand copies printed; moreover, to save a delay of a few days he is driving 150 miles to Boston to get these copies from Michael Brower; a group of young mothers have formed a "typing pool" to help with clerical work; and most important, for the first time in many months people have taken hope again that perhaps we need not simply wait for doomsday.

A last postscript: my young son, aged 8, hearing me on the phone for hours asked, "Mommy, how much is 2% of a quarter? I could give some of my allowance." When I told him it would amount to half a cent a week, he thought a while and then said, "I'd even give three cents a week if that would help." So there you are.

We fervently hope you will decide to go ahead with this movement. If you could see the responses here, you would not hesitate. More later...

Sincerely,

Margaret Brennan Gibson (Mrs. William)

Margaret Brennan Gibson, Ph. D.

MBG/hkp

Dr. Leo Szilard
Hotel Dupont Plaza
Washington, D. C.

January 11, 1962

Dear

I am writing to tell you I have sent you several copies of a document that, for the first time in many months, gives me a real ray of hope that we may yet avert a nuclear catastrophe. This address was given by Dr. Leo Szilard just before the holidays at Harvard. As you will see this remarkable man is seriously considering leading a movement which in its concept has a boldness and freshness, so far unprecedented in any peace effort in this, or any other, country. It combines three major sources of power which, in combination, hold a potential for influence so far missing: money, science, and votes. Two percent of an annual income seems a cheap price. The curious and exciting fact so far is that most people to whom I have told his plan agree that 2% is little enough to ask, and immediately pledge themselves.

This is what I implore you to do as quickly as possible: read Szilard's speech, distribute the rest I have sent, tell everyone to read it as soon as possible and to give you their reaction. Then write directly to Dr. Leo Szilard at the Hotel Dupont Plaza in Washington, D. C., giving, wherever possible, a list of names and addresses of those who have pledged their support. I am told he is very eager now for mail which will give him some notion as to whether he is gathering a following. He will decide by the end of January or middle of February whether to go ahead. Also, if you need more copies, write directly to Mr. Michael Brower, 3 Dana Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts. My own opinion is unambiguous: although I have been spending countless hours in recent weeks on the peace movement, it has been with a certain dutiful, dull feeling of inadequacy and impotence. Szilard's proposal, for the first time, gives me a feeling that maybe something can be done.

I am eager to hear what responses you get--if you could send me a copy of your letter to Szilard, I'd appreciate it no end.

Sincerely,

Margaret Brenman Gibson
(Mrs. William Gibson)
Box 254, Stockbridge, Massachusetts

P. S. I have begun discussing this whole issue with officers of National SANE and Turn Toward Peace, in order to explore what kinds of cooperative action is possible; I hope to contact also the other leading peace organizations such as United World Federalists, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, American Friends Service Committee, Committee for Non-Violent Action, etc.

Not answered by RBL

Box 254
Stockbridge, Mass.
Feb. 2, 1962

Dear Dr. Szilard,

I was delighted by your gracious phone call, and most particularly by the indication you gave that there seems to you to be, so far, sufficient nation-wide positive response to your proposal to warrant further active exploration of it. Directly after you called, three couples called me from New York City to ask whether there was any chance of meeting with you in New York in the near future. They are Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Penn, 2 West 67 St., Dr. and Mrs. George Klein, 444 West 20 St., and Dr. and Mrs. David Rubinfine, 35-12 165 St., Flushing, L. I. All of them are extremely interested in your idea and have doubtless written to you, pledging their support. They have been very active in distributing copies of your paper. Mr. Penn is a well-known director (having directed both of my husband's plays, "The Miracle Worker" and "Two for the Seesaw" as well as Lillian Hellman's "Toys in the Attic" and Mosel's "All the Way Home"). Dr. Rubinfine is a psychiatrist and Dr. Klein is a professor of psychology at N. Y. U.

I told them of our tentative agreement to have a meeting on Feb. 11 at 3 P.M. and said I would write to you to ask you what you would think of having this meeting include some of those in New York who have been active in spreading news of the proposed Movement. I am aware that a Dr. Meiers of New York City has written to you suggesting a large meeting there. From my one meeting with him I have the impression that he is a well-meaning, rather romantic, somewhat disorganized, enormously dedicated gentleman whom you probably would find trying. He has become, in a way, a self-appointed "organizer" of what he calls "Szilardians", in the metropolitan area, and has done good work, but he cannot become your spokesman. I think his suggestion of a large meeting at this time is premature, although it probably could be managed.

For myself, I would think it perhaps more practical to have a meeting which would include perhaps five or ten representatives from Stockbridge, a similar number from the University of Connecticut (Michael Brower tells me there is much interest there), perhaps ten or fifteen from New York City, and maybe also a group from Washington, D. C. In a group of forty or fifty people it might be easier to discuss such practical problems as the need for systematic regional organization, methods of national publicity, ways of tapping various professional groups, etc. In this connection, incidentally, I wonder if you remember Harold Oram who worked for the Committee of Atomic Scientists in a public relations capacity, some years ago?

He has read your paper, pledged his support, and ordered more. He would be willing I believe to assume a fair amount of administrative burden (which few people can) if he thought you would want him to. I have wondered whether he should be among those invited from New York.

I will appreciate hearing what you think as soon as possible, so that I may notify people. I do not know any of the Connecticut people but I would be glad to invite members of our group in Western Massachusetts and some from New York. If there is a problem of where to meet with so many, I'd be glad to scout around.

Sincerely yours,

Margaret Brennan Gibson
Box 254
Stockbridge, Mass.

3 March 1962

Mrs. Margaret Gibson
Austen Riggs Center, Inc.
Stockbridge, Massachusetts

Dear Mrs. Gibson:

Many thanks for your very kind letter of 28 February. There is no immediate need for funds for you to concern yourself about. I am working hard to identify the members of the Council so that we can take the next step. The latest version of my speech will be printed in the April issue of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists which comes out in the first few days of April.

Sincerely,

Leo Szilard

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Feb 28

Dear Dr Szilard-

Just a brief note to thank you for sending me a copy of the "Voice of the Dolphins". Curiously, that very day I had ordered 10 copies to distribute here. I have just begun it, and I can't put it down.

For the last two weeks, there has been a distraction from pursuing our "Movement" work because we have been working on a large local meeting to discuss the importance here in Berkshire County of the dependence of the local economy on the defense contracts held by General Electric in Pittsfield. Fifty percent of the local labor force is taken up with missile work. The head of the local General Electric Company is an honest, thoughtful man who is very concerned about this. I am trying to make him even

(over)

more concerned.

I remember your saying that we Stockbridge people should try to have our money raising dinner (s) (?) in New York. So far this proves hard, but we shall see. In the meantime, I am wondering whether there is an immediate need for funds. Maybe we could manage to do something if there is.

I have the impression that everyone is waiting to hear whether the Council has been organized and what then are the most immediate steps to take. Also, do you know when the paper will appear in the Bulletin for the Atomic Scientists?

It was a great privilege and delight to meet you and your good wife. I hope to see you in New York soon.

Sincerely,
Margaret Gibson

P.S. It looks now as if we are going to Mexico for anywhere from two to four months sometime next month. I mention this so that if you write after April 1st, you should address Dr. Anthony Philip, here.