

EDITORIAL PAGE

San Francisco Chronicle, Monday, March 31, 1947

A SCIENTIST'S PEACE FORMULA

"What we need in this country now," says Professor Leo Szilard, "is a crusade for an organized world community--a crusade that will give a clear mandate to the Government to take the leadership."

We are inclined to listen with great respect to Dr. Szilard--one of the Nation's outstanding nuclear physicists--not because he is an eminent political scientist (he doesn't purport to be), but rather because he brings to his subject none of the conventional preconceptions which are ready at hand to the man who has spent his lifetime studying political science.

Dr. Szilard's springboard is the conviction that the world has found, in the atomic bomb, a ready means of destroying itself, and will so use it if traditional foreign policy paths are pursued. "The traditional aim of foreign policy is to prolong the peace, i.e., to lengthen the intervals between two wars," he told a meeting here last week. "We physicists find it difficult to get enthusiastic about that."

Difficult because, according to Dr. Szilard, it's now necessary, to preserve civilization, to think in terms of prolonging that interval ad infinitum, in other words, to eliminate war.

With a physicist's tendency to reduce probabilities to mathematical terms, Dr. Szilard estimates the chances of establishing permanent peace at about one in ten. He then proceeds to present his idea of how that one chance can be capitalized.

It must be done through the establishment of incentive, he believes--by demonstration to the world's peoples, and especially the Russians, that the

only chance for any of us is in co-operation for the common good. This entails, of course, a modification of existing national loyalties in favor of an ultimate world organization. Dr. Szilard perceives the establishment of a world community as the prerequisite of world government.

Establishment of such a community could be achieved, he believes, if each nation would contribute 10 per cent of its national income to the project. This money would be used to produce and move American farm products to needy countries; to build up a vast consumer goods industry in Russia and elsewhere; to cushion against the effects of American depressions abroad by manipulating the market; to stabilize the American economy by the same means.

So much for the material side. On the cultural side, Dr. Szilard would:

- (a) Finance large-scale exchange of students among the various countries and
- (b) establish and finance agencies to promote the widest possible interchange of information. Ultimately, under his plan, 20 per cent of the students in American universities would be foreign students; ultimately, the editor of Pravda would edit a daily page in the New York Times, and the Times editor would edit a daily page in Pravda.

It becomes clear, of course, why Dr. Szilard assigns his objective only a 10 per cent chance of becoming effective. But it also becomes clear that, as he says, "the problem which faces the world today can be solved only by the initiative of the American people"--the only people rich enough and, as he hopes, intelligent enough, to get the program started.

The kernel of the problem, he considers, is to persuade the American people that their national policies should be based on "those higher loyalties . . . . which do not find expression at present in our national policy."

It would take a profound degree of such loyalty, he predicts, to persuade Americans to invest as much in the world peace effort as they invest, for instance, in national defense. And it would take even a more profound degree

of such loyalty to persuade the American people that the only return for their \$15,000,000,000 annual investment would be intangible--a greater supply of oxygen, let's say, to nuture the flickering flame of world peace.

Yet Dr. Szilard advances his case without batting a professorial eyelash, because, with his physicist's propensity for hard figures, he perceives that only a miracle can save the world, and accept's a colleague's definition of a miracle as "an event which has a probability of less than 10 per cent."

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