

- A. *The building of the Hanford Plant.*
- B. *The fight against the use of the bomb.*

Notes to p. 45.

Second version of petition dated July 17,  
1945. Declassified July 23, 1957

July 3, 1945

A PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Discoveries of which the people of the United States are not aware may affect the welfare of this nation in the near future. The liberation of atomic power which has been achieved places atomic bombs in the hands of the Army. It places in your hands, as Commander-in-Chief, the fateful decision whether or not to sanction the use of such bombs in the present phase of the war against Japan.

We, the undersigned scientists, have been working in the field of atomic power for a number of years. Until recently we have had to reckon with the possibility that the United States might be attacked by atomic bombs during this war and that her only defense might lie in a counterattack by the same means. Today with this danger averted we feel impelled to say what follows:

The war has to be brought speedily to a successful conclusion and the destruction of Japanese cities by means of atomic bombs may very well be an effective method of warfare. We feel, however, that such an attack on Japan could not be justified in the present circumstances. We believe that the United States ought not to resort to the use of atomic bombs in the present phase of the war, at least not unless the terms which will be imposed upon Japan after the war are publicly announced and subsequently Japan is given an opportunity to surrender.

If such public announcement gave assurance to the Japanese that they could look forward to a life devoted to peaceful pursuits in their homeland and if Japan still refused to surrender, our nation would then be faced with a situation which might require a re-examination of her position with respect to the use of atomic bombs in the war.

Atomic bombs are primarily a means for the ruthless annihilation of cities. Once they were introduced as an instrument of war it would be difficult to resist for long the temptation of putting them to such use.

The last few years show a marked tendency toward increasing ruthlessness. At present our Air Forces, striking at the Japanese cities, are using the same methods of warfare which were condemned by American public opinion only a few years ago when applied by the Germans to the cities of England. Our use of atomic bombs in this war would carry the world a long way further on this path of ruthlessness.

Atomic power will provide the nations with new means of destruction. The atomic bombs at our disposal represent only the first step in this direction and there is almost no limit to the destructive power which will become available in the course of this development. Thus a nation which sets the precedent of using these newly liberated forces of nature for purposes of destruction may have to bear the responsibility of opening the door to an era of devastation on an unimaginable scale.

In view of the foregoing, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition that you exercise your power as Commander-in-Chief to rule that the United States shall not, in the present phase of the war, resort to the use of atomic bombs.

Owen France  
Joseph D. Teresi  
William P. Norris  
David S. Anthony  
Joseph B. Jeffrey  
Marquente N. Swift

Maxim Finkel  
George A. Secker  
Elias W. Hager Jr.  
George A. Secker  
Margaret H. Raud.  
Maritta Moore

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED  
OR CHANGED TO  
BY AUTHORITY OF C. I. [unclear]  
BY [unclear] DATE 7/23/57

3939

July 3, 1945

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Alexander Langsdorf Jr.

Herbert E. Kubitschek

Alfred Banchich

Mary Burke

Norman Madine

Ethelene Hartge Cortelyou

Wilfrid Kell

Shuman Fried

73989

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David L. Hill  
David B. Hales  
Albert Cahm, Jr.  
Stanley A. Jashemski  
Solomon H. Turkel  
B. Roswell Russell

Robert L. Purbrick  
Reuben E. Fields  
Norman Goldstein  
a. Wattenberg  
Robert Mauer  
H. Freeman

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George R. Carlson

Thomas Wirth

Glen T. Barbara

E 393 9

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Waven C. Johnson J. D. Mulliken Walter Barthelemy  
George M. ... James G. Nickerson  
Karen Darrow W. A. Zachary  
Leo ...

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Katharine Way  
Ernest Wilkins, Jr.  
William Kurch  
Mildred Ginsburg

6898

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Robert J. Moon

Walter J. Duntzner

C. Ladd Prosser

Austin W. Brues

H. S. Cole

Eric L. Simmons

Ray S. Suides

Elizabeth E. Parlett

Richard Abrams

Raymond H. Finkle

Raymond E. Finkle

Norman Fisco

1393

SECRET

July 17, 1945

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If such public announcement gave assurance to the Japanese that they could look forward to a life devoted to peaceful pursuits in their homeland and if Japan still refused to surrender our nation might then, in certain circumstances, find itself forced to resort to the use of atomic bombs. Such a step, however, ought not to be made at any time without seriously considering the moral responsibilities which are involved.

The development of atomic power will provide the nations with new means of destruction. The atomic bombs at our disposal represent only the first step in this direction, and there is almost no limit to the destructive power which will become available in the course of their future development. Thus a nation which sets the precedent of using these newly liberated forces of nature for purposes of destruction may have to bear the responsibility of opening the door to an era of devastation on an unimaginable scale.

If after this war a situation is allowed to develop in the world which permits rival powers to be in uncontrolled possession of these new means of destruction, the cities of the United States as well as the cities of other nations will be in continuous danger of sudden annihilation. All the resources of the United States, moral and material, may have to be mobilized to prevent the advent of such a world situation. Its prevention is at present the solemn responsibility of the United States--singled out by virtue of her lead in the field of atomic power.

The added material strength which this lead gives to the United States brings with it the obligation of restraint and if we were to violate this obligation our moral position would be weakened in the eyes of the world and in our own eyes. It would then be more difficult for us to live up to our responsibility of bringing the unloosed forces of destruction under control.

In view of the foregoing, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition: first, that you exercise your power as Commander-in-Chief, to rule that the United States shall not resort to the use of atomic bombs in this war unless the terms which will be imposed upon Japan have been made public in detail and Japan knowing these terms has refused to surrender; second, that in such an event the question whether or not to use atomic bombs be decided by you in the light of the consideration presented in this petition as well as all the other moral responsibilities which are

*Iruman P. Kolman*  
*Stewart*  
*Larned B. Sprey*

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED  
Date JUL 23 1957  
For The Atomic Energy Commission  
*C. L. Marshall McKeyfer*  
Director, Division of Classification

*C. L. Marshall McKeyfer*  
Director, Division of Classification

*George U. Sack*  
Madette C. Moore

E 939  
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*Lawrence B. Magnusson*  
*Paul R. O'Connor*

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED  
OR CHANGED TO \_\_\_\_\_ E 398  
BY AUTHORITY OF *[Signature]*  
BY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 7/23/57

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED  
Date 7/23/57  
For The Atomic Energy Commission  
*[Signature]*  
Director, Division of Classification

*George A. Smith*  
*William P. Norris*  
*Chas. W. Hagen, Jr.*  
*George A. Sack*  
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R. Shapp  
R. Mulliken  
E. P. Wigner  
George S. Monck  
Her Richard

J. J. Wilson  
H. H. Zachariasen  
Francis R. Thonka  
John A. Simpson, Jr.  
Walter Bartley  
John P. Howe

Frankly Foot W

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED  
JUL 23 1957  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
For The Atomic Energy Commission  
C. L. Marshall / M. C. Blythe  
Director, Division of Classification

...as decided by  
...in this petition as well as all the other  
...which are involved.

Kenneth S. Cole  
Austin M. Brues  
Eric L. Simmons  
Margaret H. Rand

Jasper B. Jeffries

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Robert J. Moon  
Marguerite N. Swift

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In view of the foregoing, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition: first, that you exercise your power as Commander-in-Chief, to rule that the United States shall not resort to the use of atomic bombs in this war unless the terms which will be imposed upon Japan have been made public in detail and Japan knowing these terms has refused to surrender; second, that in such an event the question whether or not to use atomic bombs be decided by you in the light of the considerations presented in this petition as well as all the other moral responsibilities which are involved.

Arthur J. Grundhauser  
C. Ladd Prosser  
Meriam P. Frost  
Joseph D. Teresi  
David S. Anthony

Owen France  
Mary M. Sailer

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED  
Date JUL 23 1957  
For The Atomic Energy Commission  
C. L. Marshall/McLeister  
Director, Division of Classification

1398

William Karush  
Ethelene H. Cortlyou  
Alfred Flansburg  
Katharine Way  
Norman Medive  
Mary Burke  
Mildred Ginsburg

Robert L. Platzman  
Sherman Fried  
Hoyland D. Young  
L. A. Olinger  
Ernest Wilkin Jr.  
Witfrid Rall

George R. Carlson  
CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED  
Date JUL 23 1957  
For The Atomic Energy Commission  
C. L. Marshall/McLeister  
Director, Division of Classification

1398

in the near future. It places in your hands, as  
Commander-in-Chief, the fateful decision whether or not to sanction the use of such bombs  
in the present phase of the war against Japan.

We, the undersigned scientists, have been working in the field of atomic power.  
Until recently we have had to fear that the United States might be attacked by atomic bombs  
during this war and that her only defense might lie in a counterattack by the same means.  
Today, with the defeat of Germany, this danger is averted and we feel impelled to say what  
follows:

The war has to be brought speedily to a successful conclusion and attacks by  
atomic bombs may very well be an effective method of warfare. We feel, however, that such  
attacks on Japan could not be justified, at least not unless the terms which will be im-  
posed after the war on Japan were made public in detail and Japan were given an opportunity  
to surrender.

If such public announcement gave assurance to the Japanese that they could look  
forward to a life devoted to peaceful pursuits in their homeland and if Japan still re-  
fused to surrender our nation might then, in certain circumstances, find itself forced to  
resort to the use of atomic bombs. Such a step, however, ought not to be made at any time  
without seriously considering the moral responsibilities which are involved.

The development of atomic power will provide the nations with new means of  
destruction. The atomic bombs at our disposal represent only the first step in this direc-  
tion, and there is almost no limit to the destructive power which will become available in  
the course of their future development. Thus a nation which sets the precedent of using  
these newly liberated forces of nature for purposes of destruction may have to bear the  
responsibility of opening the door to an era of devastation on an unimaginable scale.

If after this war a situation is allowed to develop in the world which permits  
rival powers to be in uncontrolled possession of these new means of destruction, the cities  
of the United States as well as the cities of other nations will be in continuous danger of  
sudden annihilation. All the resources of the United States, moral and material, may have to  
be mobilized to prevent the advent of such a world situation. Its prevention is at present  
the solemn responsibility of the United States—singled out by virtue of her lead in the  
field of atomic power.

The added material strength which this lead gives to the United States brings with  
it the obligation of restraint and if we were to violate this obligation our moral position  
would be weakened in the eyes of the world and in our own eyes. It would then be more  
difficult for us to live up to our responsibility of bringing the unloosed forces of  
destruction under control.

In view of the foregoing, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition: first, that  
you exercise your power as Commander-in-Chief, to rule that the United States shall not  
resort to the use of atomic bombs in this way unless the terms which will be imposed upon  
Japan have been made public in detail and Japan knowing these terms has refused to surrender;  
second, that in such an event the question whether or not to use atomic bombs be decided by  
you in the light of the considerations presented in this petition as well as all the other  
moral responsibilities which are involved.

William Rubins  
Walt Fred  
John O. Crawford  
Eugene P. Steinberg  
Sheffield Hanson  
Melvin Friedman

Edgar L. Westrum Jr.  
Earl K. Hyde  
Ralph E. Telford

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED  
Date JUL 23 1957  
For The Atomic Energy Commission  
C. L. Marshall / McRight  
Director, Division of Classification

E-393-9

David L. Hill  
Robert J. Mauer  
Francis Lu Crestman  
Albert Wattenberg  
David B. Hall  
Albert Kahn, Jr.

Herbert E. Kubitschek  
Alexander Langsdorf Jr.  
Robert L. Furber  
Norman Goldstein  
B. Rowell Russell

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED  
OR CHANGED BY AUTHORITY OF C. L. Marshall  
DATE 7/23/57

[Bayline  
3-20-68]

In the spring of '45 it was clear that the war against Germany would soon end, and so I began to ask myself, "What is the purpose of continuing the development of the bomb, and how would the bomb be used if the war with Japan has not ended by the time we have the first bomb?"

Initially we were strongly motivated to produce the bomb because we feared the Germans would get ahead of us, and the only way to prevent them from dropping bombs on us was to have bombs in readiness ourselves. But now, with the war won, it was not clear what we were working for.

I had many discussions with many people about this point in the Metallurgical Laboratory of the University of Chicago, which was the code name for the uranium project which produced the chain reaction. There was no indication that these problems were seriously discussed at a high government level. I had repeated conversations with Compton about the future of the project, and he too was concerned about the future of this project, but he had no word of what intentions there were, if there were any intentions at all.

There was no point in discussing these things with General Groves or Dr. Conant or Dr. Bush, and because of secrecy there was no intermediate level in the government to which we could have gone for a careful consideration of these issues. The only man with whom we were sure we were entitled to communicate was the President. In these circumstances I wrote a memorandum addressed to the President, and was looking around for some ways and means to communicate the memorandum to him. Since I didn't suppose that he would know who I am, I needed a letter of introduction.

Notes to p. 36 (section 9)

Enclosure to Mr. Albert Einstein's letter of  
March 25, 1945 to the President of the  
United States, by L. Szilard

Letter of transmittal for above, Szilard to Truman,  
May 25, 1945

I went to see Einstein and I asked him to write me such a letter of introduction, even though I could tell him only that there was trouble ahead, but I couldn't tell him what the nature of the trouble was. Einstein wrote a letter and I decided to transmit the memorandum and the letter to the President through Mrs. Roosevelt, who once before has channelled the communications from the project to the President. I have forgotten now precisely what I wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt; I suppose that I sent her a copy of Einstein's letter - but not the memorandum. This I could not do. The memorandum I couldn't send her, because the memorandum would have been considered secret.

Mrs. Roosevelt gave me an appointment for April such-and-such - I have to look it up - and when I had this appointment, then I called on Dr. Compton, who was in charge of the project, and told him that I intended to get a memorandum to the President, and I asked him to read the memorandum. I was fully prepared to be scolded by Compton, to be told that I should go through channels rather than go to the President directly. To my astonishment, this is not what happened.

Compton read the memorandum very carefully, and then he said, "I hope that you will get the President to read this." Elated by finding no resistance where I expected resistance, I went back to my office. I hadn't been in my office for five minutes when there was a knock on the door and Compton's assistant came in, telling me that he just heard over the radio that President Roosevelt had died.

There I was now with my memorandum, and no way to get it anywhere. At this point I knew that I was in need of advice. I went to see the Associate Director of the project, Dr. Bartky, and told him of my plight. He suggested that we go and see Dr. Hutchins,

president of the university. I had not met Hutchins previously; this was the first time that I met him. I told him briefly what the situation was, and this was the first time that he knew that we were close to having an atomic bomb, even though the Metallurgical project had been on his campus for several years. Hutchins grasped the situation in an instant. He used to be an isolationist before the war, but he was a very peculiar isolationist, because where most isolationists held that the Americans should keep out of war because those foreigners do not deserve to have American blood shedded for them, Hutchins' position was that the Americans should keep out of war because they would only mess it up. After he heard my story he asked me what this in the end all would mean, and I said that in the end this would mean that the world will have to live under one government. Then he said, "Yes, I believe you are right." I thought this was pretty good for an isolationist. As a matter of fact, a few days after the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Hutchins went on the radio; he gave a speech about the necessity of world government.

In spite of the good understanding which I had with Hutchins, he was not able to help with the task immediately at hand. "I do not know Mr. Truman," Hutchins said. I knew any number of people who could have reached Roosevelt, but I knew nobody offhand who could have reached Truman. Truman just did not move in the same circles, so for a number of days I was at a complete loss of what to do. Then I had an idea. This was a very large project of ours - it was very large by then - and there ought to be somebody from Kansas City; and three days later we had an appointment at the White House. I asked the Associate Director of the project, Dr. Bartky, to come to Washington; and armed with Einstein's letter and memorandum we went to the White House and were

received by Matt Connelly, Truman's Appointment Secretary. I handed him Einstein's letter and the memorandum to read; he read the memorandum carefully from beginning to end, and then he said, "I see now this is a serious matter." At first I was a little suspicious, because this appointment came through Kansas City. Then he said, "The President thought that your concern would be about this matter, and he has asked me to make an appointment with you with James Byrnes, if you are willing to go down to see him in Spartanburg, South Carolina." We said that we would be happy to, anywhere that the President directed us to go, and he picked up the phone and made an appointment with Byrnes for us. I asked whether I might bring Dr. H.C. Urey along, and Connelly said I can bring along anyone whom I want. So I phoned Chicago and asked Urey to join us in Washington, and together we went down the next day to Spartanburg, taking an overnight train from Washington. ○

We were concerned about two things: we were concerned first about the role which the bomb will play in the world after the war, and how America's position would be affected if the bomb were actually used in the war; we were also concerned about the future of atomic energy, and about the lack of planning of how this research might be continued after the war. It was clear that the project set up during the war would not be continued but would have to be reorganized. But the valuable thing was not the big projects; the valuable things were the numerous teams which somehow crystallized during the war of men who had different abilities and who liked to work together with each other, and we thought that these teams ought to be preserved even though the projects might be dissolved. We did not quite understand why we were sent by the President to see James Byrnes. James Byrnes had occupied a high position in the government, but was

now out of the government and was living as a private citizen in Spartanburg. Clearly the President must have had in mind to appoint him for a government position, but for what position? Was he to be appointed to be the man in charge of the uranium work after the war, or what? We did not know.

Finally we arrived in Spartanburg, and I gave Byrnes Einstein's letter to read and the memorandum which I had written. Byrnes read the memorandum, and then we started to discuss the problem. When I spoke of my concern that Russia might become an atomic power - and might become an atomic power soon, if we demonstrate the power of the bomb and if we use it against Japan - his reply was, "General Groves tells me there is no uranium in Russia." I told Byrnes that there is certainly a limited amount of rich uranium ore in Czechoslovakia, to which Russia has access; but apart from this, it is very unlikely that in the vast territory of Russia there should be no low-grade uranium ores. High-grade uranium ore is, of course, another matter: high-grade deposits are rare, and it is not at all sure that some new high-grade deposits can be found. In the past, only the high-grade deposits were of interest because the main purpose of mining uranium ores was to produce radium and the price of radium was such that working low-grade uranium ores would not have been profitable. But when you are dealing with atomic energy you are not limited to high-grade ores; you can use low-grade ores. And I doubted very much that anyone in America would be able to say in a responsible way that there are no major low-grade uranium deposits in Russia.

I thought that it would be a mistake to disclose the existence of the bomb to the world before the government has made up its mind as

to how to handle the situation after the war. Using the bomb certainly would disclose that the bomb exists. As a matter of fact, even testing the bomb would disclose that the bomb exists. Once the bomb has been tested and shown to go off, it will not be possible to keep it a secret.

Byrnes agreed that if we refrained from testing the bomb, people would conclude that the development of the bomb did not succeed. However, he said that we had spent two billion dollars on developing the bomb, and Congress will want to know what we got for the money spent. "How would you want to get Congress to appropriate money for atomic energy research if you do not show results for the money which has been spent already?"

I saw his point at that time, and in retrospect I see even more clearly that it would not have served any useful purpose to keep the bomb secret, waiting for the government to understand the problem and to formulate a policy; for the government will not formulate a policy unless it is under pressure to do so, and if the bomb had been kept secret there would have been no pressure for the government to do anything in this direction.

Byrnes thought that the war would be over in about six months. This proved to be a fairly accurate estimate. He was concerned about Russia's postwar behavior. Russian troops had moved into Hungary and Roumania; and Byrnes thought it would be very difficult to persuade Russia to withdraw her troops from these countries, and that Russia might be more manageable if impressed by American military might. I shared Byrnes's concern about Russia's throwing around her weight in the postwar period, but I was completely flabbergasted by the assumption that rattling the bomb might make Russia more manageable.

I began to doubt that there is any way for me to communicate

with Byrnes in this matter, and my doubt became certainty when Byrnes turned to me and said: "Well, you come from Hungary - you would not want Russia to stay in Hungary indefinitely." I certainly didn't want Russia to stay in Hungary indefinitely, but what Byrnes said offended my sense of proportion. I was concerned at this point that by demonstrating the bomb and using the bomb in the war against Japan, we might start an atomic arms race between America and Russia which may end with the destruction of both countries. I was not disposed at this point to worry about what will happen to Hungary.

Well, after all was said that could be said on this topic, the conversation turned to the future of the uranium project. To our astonishment, Byrnes showed complete indifference. This is easy to understand in retrospect, because contrary to what we had suspected, he was not slated to be director of the uranium project, but he was slated to be Secretary of State.

I was rarely as depressed as when we left Byrnes's house and walked toward the station. I thought to myself how much better the world might be off had I been born in America and become influential in American politics, and had Byrnes been born in Hungary and studied physics. In all probability there would have been no atomic bomb, and no danger of an arms race between American and Russia.

When I returned to Chicago, I found the project in an uproar. The Army had violently objected to our visit to the White House, and to Byrnes. Dr. Bartky was summoned to see General Groves; General Groves told him that I committed a grave breach of security by handing a secret document to Byrnes, who does not know how to handle secret documents. To calm the uproar, Dr. Compton, the leader of the project,

decided to regularize the discussions by appointing a committee under the chairmanship of James Franck to examine the issue of whether or not the bomb should be used, and if so, how. The report of the committee has been published, and it was meant to be presented to the Secretary of War, Mr. Stimson. Whether it ever reached his desk I do not know.

On my way from Spartanburg to Chicago I stopped in Washington to see Oppenheimer, who had arrived there to attend a meeting of the Interim Committee. I told Oppenheimer that I thought it would be a very serious mistake to use the bomb against the cities of Japan. Oppenheimer didn't share my view. He surprised me by starting the conversation by saying that the atomic bomb is shit. "What do you mean by that?" I asked him; and he said, "Well, this is a weapon which has no military significance. It will make a big bang - a very big bang - but it is not a weapon which is useful in war." He thought that it would be important, however, to inform the Russians that we had an atomic bomb, and that we intended to use it against the cities of Japan, rather than taking them by surprise. This seemed reasonable to me, and I know that Stimson also shared this view. However, while this was necessary, it was certainly not sufficient. "Well," Oppenheimer said, "don't you think if we tell the Russians what we intend to do and then use the bomb in Japan, that the Russians will understand it?" And I remember that I said, "They'll understand it only too well."

The time approached when the bomb would be tested. The date was never communicated to us in Chicago, nor did we ever receive any official indication of what was afoot. However, I concluded that the bomb is about to be tested when I was told that we were no longer permitted to call Los Alamos over the telephone. This could have meant

p. 44.

Petition, July 3, 1945.

Declassified July 23,  
~~1953~~ 1957

P. 8

only one thing: Los Alamos must get ready to test the bomb, and the Army tried by this ingenious method to keep the news from the Chicago project.

I knew by this time that it will not be possible to dissuade the government from using the bomb against the cities of Japan. The cards in the Interim Committee were stacked against such an approach to the problem. Therefore all that remained to be done was for the scientists to go unmistakably on the record that they were opposed to such action. While the Franck Report argued the case on the grounds of expediency, I thought that the time has come for the scientists to go on record against the use of the bomb against the cities of Japan on moral grounds. Therefore I drafted a petition which was circulated in the project.

This was again violently opposed by the Army. They accused me of having violated secrecy by disclosing in the petition that such a thing as a bomb existed. What the Army thought, that we thought, that we were doing all this time, I cannot say. However, we did not yield to the Army's demand. The right to petition is anchored in the Constitution, and when you are a naturalized citizen you are supposed to learn the Constitution prior to obtaining your citizenship.

The first version of the petition which was circulated drew about fifty-three signatures in the Chicago project. What is significant is that these fifty-three people included all the leading physicists in the project and many of the leading biologists. The signatures of the chemists were conspicuously absent. This was so striking that I went over to the chemistry department to discover what the trouble was. What I discovered was rather disturbing: the chemists argued that what we must determine is solely whether more lives would be saved by using

the bomb or by continuing the war without using the bomb. This is a utilitarian argument of which I was very familiar through my previous experiences in Germany; that some other issue may be involved in dropping the bomb on an inhabited city and killing men, women and children did not occur to any of the chemists with whom I spoke.

Some of the members of the project said that they would sign the petition if it were worded somewhat more mildly, and I therefore drafted a second version of the petition which drew a somewhat larger number of signatures - but not a significantly larger number. The second petition was dated one day before the bomb was actually tested at Alamogordo, New Mexico. (July 16, 1945).

After the petition had been circulated we were faced with the decision through what channels to communicate it to the White House. Several people, and above all James Franck, took the position that he will sign the petition because he agrees with it, but they could do this only if the petition would be forwarded to the President through the regular channels rather than outside of these channels. I did not like this idea because I was just not sure whether the regular channels will forward the petition or whether they will sabotage it by filing it until the war is over. However, to my regret, I finally yielded and handed the petition to Compton, who transmitted it to Colonel Nichols, who promised that he would transmit it to General Groves for immediate transmittal to Potsdam. I have no evidence that this petition ever reached the President.

After the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, I called the responsible officer of the Manhattan District in Chicago and told him that I am going to declassify the petition and asked him if there was any objection.

Notes to p. 45 (Section 9)

Szilard to Compton, July 19, 1945.

Transmittal of petition, to be delivered  
to President via War Department.

Compton to Nichols, July 24, 1945

"re: Transmittal of petition addressed to the  
President."

There could not have been any objection, and there wasn't, and so I declassified the petition. A short time thereafter I sent a telegram to Matt Connelly, The President's secretary, to advise him that it is my intention to make the contents of the petition public, and that I wanted to advise him of this as a matter of courtesy. When the telegram was not acknowledged I phoned the White House, upon which I received a telegram saying that the matter has been presented to the President for his decision, and that I will be advised accordingly. Shortly thereafter I received a call from the Manhattan District saying that General Groves wants the petition to be reclassified "Secret." I said that I would not do this on the basis of a telephone conversation, but that I would want to have a letter explaining for what reason the petition, which contains nothing secret, should be reclassified. Soon after, I received a three-page letter stamped "Secret" in which I was advised that while the officer writing the letter could not possibly know what was in General Groves's mind when he asked that the petition be reclassified "Secret", he assumes that the reason for this request was due to the fact that people reading the petition might conclude that there must have been some dissension in the project prior to the termination of the war, which might have slowed down the work of the project which was conducted under the Army.

Repeated efforts to have this letter declassified by the Atomic Energy Commission have so far failed. It is my guess that, inasmuch as the War Department has declassified all documents which were dated prior to 1946, a renewed request to the Atomic Energy

Notes to. p. 46. (Section 9)

Letter, James S. Murray, Intelligence Officer,  
Manhattan District, to Szlach. August 27, 1945

Declassified May 13, 1960

Page 3 of letter gives this exact explanation

Commission for declassification of this document will not be refused.  
This does not necessarily mean, however, that it will be possible for  
me to have the document returned.

Stenorella III  
5-6-60 E.R.

9 B. Dec 2, 1942 - Aug 6, 1945 (1)

9. B

Beginning of tape

36 min

~~This is now a long insert about other matters.~~

5-6-60 p. 41

Still

Tape 2

#35

In the spring of '45 it was clear that the war against Germany would soon end, and so I began to ask myself "What is the purpose of continuing the development of the bomb, and how would the bomb be used if the war with Japan has not ended by the time we have the first bomb?"

Initially we were strongly motivated to produce a bomb because we feared the Germans would get ahead of us, and the only way to prevent them from dropping bombs on us was to have bombs in readiness ourselves. But now with the war ~~all~~ won it was not clear what we were working for. I had many discussions with many people about this point in the <sup>Metalurgical</sup> Meteorological Laboratory of the University of Chicago, which was the code name for the uranium project which produced the chain reaction. There was no indication that these problems

(2)

were seriously discussed at a high government level. I had repeated conversations with Compton <sup>(?)</sup> about the future of the project, and he too was concerned about the future of this project but he had no word of what intentions ~~they over had~~, if ~~they had~~ any intentions at all.

There was no point in discussing these things with General Groves or Dr. Conant or Dr. Bush, and because of secrecy there was no intermediate level in the government to which we could have gone for a careful consideration of these issues. The only man with whom we were sure we were to be entitled to communicate was the President. In these circumstances I wrote a memorandum addressed to the President, and was looking around for some ways ~~had~~ and means to communicate the memorandum to him. Since I didn't suppose that he would know who I am, I needed a letter of introduction.

I went to see Einstein and I asked him to write me such a letter of introduction, even though I could tell him only that there was trouble ahead but I couldn't tell him what the nature of the trouble was. Einstein wrote a letter and I decided to transmit the memorandum and the letter to the President through Mrs. Roosevelt, who once before has ~~carried~~ <sup>channeled</sup> the communications from the project to the President. I have forgotten now ~~just~~ <sup>precisely</sup> what ~~it was~~ I wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt; I suppose that I sent her a copy of Einstein's

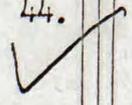
letter -- but not the memorandum; this I could not do. The memorandum I couldn't send her, because the memorandum would have been considered secret.

Mrs. Roosevelt gave me an appointment for April such-and-such -- I have to look it up -- and when I had this appointment, then I called on Dr. Compton (who was in charge of the project) and told him that I intended to get a memorandum to the President, and asked him to read the memorandum. I was fully prepared to be scolded by Compton, to be told that I should go through channels rather than go to the President directly. To my astonishment, this is not what happened.

Compton read the memorandum very carefully, and then I said "I hope that you will get the President to read this." Elated by finding no <sup>resistance</sup> ~~resistance~~ where I expected <sup>resistance</sup> ~~resistance~~, I went back to my ~~MEM~~ office. I hadn't been in my office for five minutes when there was a knock on the door and Compton's assistant came in, telling me that he just heard over the radio that President Roosevelt had died.

There I was <sup>not</sup> with my memorandum, and no way to get it anywhere. At this point I knew I was in need of advice. I went to see the associate director of the project, Dr. <sup>that</sup> ~~Barkley~~ <sup>of project</sup>, and told him about my plans. He ~~did~~ suggested that we go and see Dr. Hutchins, president of the university. I had not met

(4)



Hutchins previously; this was the first time that I met him. I told him briefly what the situation was, and this was the first time that he knew that we were close to having an atomic bomb even though the <sup>retellurical</sup> "meteorological" project had been on his campus for several years. Hutchins grasped the situation in an instant. He used to be an isolationist before the war, but he was a very peculiar isolationist because where most isolationists held that the Americans should keep out of war because those foreigners do not deserve to have American blood shed <sup>at</sup> for them, Hutchins' position was that the Americans should keep out of war because they would only mess it up. After he heard my story he asked me what this <sup>in the end all</sup> would mean in the end, and I said that in the end this would mean that the world will have to live under one government. Then he said "Yes, I believe you are right." I thought this was pretty good for an isolationist. As a matter of fact, a few days after the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Hutchins <sup>went</sup> said on the radio -- he gave a speech about the necessity of world government ~~MM~~.

In spite of the good understanding which I had with Hutchins, he was not able to help with the task immediately at hand. "I do not know Mr. Truman", Hutchins said.

TAPE 3

I knew any number of people who could have reached Roosevelt, but

I knew nobody offhand who could have reached Truman. Truman just did not move in the same circles, so for a number of days I was at a complete loss of what to do. Then I had an idea.

This was a very large project, of <sup>course</sup> ~~course~~ -- it was very large by then -- and there ought to be somebody from Kansas City. So I looked around, and sure enough there was someone from Kansas City; and three days later we had ~~made~~ an appointment at the White House. I asked the associate director of the project, Dr. <sup>(BARTKY)</sup> ~~Bartky~~, to come with me to Washington; and armed with Einstein's letter and ~~the~~ memorandum, we went to the White House and were received by <sup>MATT CONNELLY</sup> ~~Matt Connelly~~ Truman's Appointments Secretary. I handed him Einstein's letter and the memorandum to read; he read the memorandum carefully from beginning to end, and then he said "I see now this is a serious matter." At first I was a little suspicious, because this appointment came through Kansas City; then he said the President "thought that <sup>the concern would be</sup> you ~~conferred with~~ me about this matter, and he has asked me to make an appointment <sup>with</sup> for you with James Byrnes, if you are willing to go down to see him in Spartansburg, South Carolina." We said that we would be happy to, anywhere that the President directed us to go, and he picked up the phone and made an appointment with Byrnes for us. I asked whether I might

*convincingly*

bring Dr. H. C. Urey along, and ~~Conerty~~ <sup>*ally*</sup> said I ~~could~~ <sup>*can*</sup> bring along anyone whom I wanted, so I phoned Chicago and asked Urey to join us in Washington, and together we went down the next day to Spartansburg, taking an overnight train from Washington.

We were concerned about two things: we were concerned first about the role ~~that~~ <sup>*which*</sup> the bomb <sup>*with*</sup> would play in the world after the war and how America's position would be affected if the bomb were actually used in the war; we were also concerned about the future of atomic energy, and about the lack of planning of how this research might be continued after the war. It was clear that the projects set up during the war would not be continued but would have to be reorganized. But the valuable things <sup>*was*</sup> were not the big projects: the valuable things were the numerous teams which somehow crystallized during the war of men who had different abilities and who liked to work together with each other, and we thought that these teams ought to be preserved even though the projects might be dissolved. We did not <sup>*quite*</sup> ~~try~~ to understand why we were sent by the President to see James Byrnes. James Byrnes had occupied a high position in the government but was now out of the government and was living as a private citizen in Spartansburg. Clearly the President must have had in mind to appoint him

~~for~~ to a government position, but ~~to~~ <sup>for</sup> what position? Was he to be appointed to be the man in charge of the uranium work after the war, or what? We did not know.

*Finally*

~~Anyway~~, we arrived at Spartansburg, and I gave Byrnes Einstein's letter to read and the memorandum which I had written. Byrnes read the memorandum, and then we started to discuss the problem. When I spoke of my concern that Russia might become an atomic power -- and might become an atomic power soon, if we demonstrated the power of the bomb and if we use it against Japan -- ~~HHHHHHH~~ his reply was "General Groves tells me there is no uranium in Russia." I told Byrnes that there is certainly a limited amount of rich uranium ore in Czechoslovakia (C), to which Russia has access; but apart from this, it is very unlikely that in the vast territory of Russia there should be no low-grade uranium ores. High-grade uranium ore is, of course, another matter: high-grade deposits are rare, and it is not sure that some new high-grade deposits can be found. In the past, only the high-grade deposits were of interest because the main purpose of mining uranium ores was to produce radium, and the price of radium was such that working low-grade uranium ores would not have been profitable.

But when you are dealing with atomic energy you are not limited to high-grade ores; you can use low-grade ores. And I doubted very much that anyone

in America would be able to say in a responsible way that there are no major low-grade uranium deposits in Russia.

I thought that it would be a mistake to disclose the existence of the bomb to the world before the government has made up its mind as to how to handle the situation after the war. Using the bomb certainly would disclose that the bomb exists; as a matter of fact, even testing the bomb would disclose that the bomb exists. Once the bomb has been tested and shown to go off, it <sup>will</sup> ~~would~~ not be possible to keep it a secret.

Byrnes agreed that if we refrained from testing the bomb, people would conclude that the development of the bomb did not succeed. However, he said that we had spent two billion dollars on developing the bomb, and Congress <sup>will</sup> ~~would~~ want to know what we got for the money spent. "How would you want to get Congress to appropriate money for atomic energy research if you do not show results for the money which has been spent already?" ~~(he said.)~~

I saw his point at that time, and in retrospect I see even more clearly that it would not have served any useful purpose to keep the bomb secret, waiting for the government to understand the problem and

to formulate a policy -- for the government will not formulate a policy unless it is under pressure to do so, and if the bomb had been kept secret there would have been no pressure for the government to do anything in this direction.

Byrnes thought that the war would be over in about six months.

This proved to be a fairly accurate estimate. He was concerned about Russia's postwar behaviour. Russian troops had moved into Hungary and Rumania; <sup>and</sup> Byrnes thought it ~~was~~ would be very difficult to persuade Russia to withdraw her troops from these countries, <sup>and</sup> that Russia might be more manageable if impressed by American military might, and that the demonstration of the bomb might impress Russia with America's military might. I shared Byrnes's concern about Russia's throwing around her weight in the postwar period, but I was completely flabbergasted by the assumption that rattling the bomb might make Russia more manageable. I began to doubt that there <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ any way for me to communicate with Byrnes in this matter, and my doubt became certainty when Byrnes turned to me and said "Well, you come from Hungary -- you would not want Russia to stay in Hungary indefinitely."

I certainly didn't want Russia to stay in Hungary indefinitely, but what Byrnes said offended my sense of proportion. I was concerned at this

point that by demonstrating the bomb and ~~by~~ using the bomb in the war against Japan, we might start an atomic arms race between America and Russia which <sup>my</sup> might end with the destruction of both countries. I was not disposed at this point to worry about what ~~would~~ <sup>will</sup> happen to Hungary.

Well, after all was said that could be said on this topic, the conversation turned to the future of the uranium project. To our astonishment, Byrnes showed complete indifference. This is easy to understand in retrospect, because contrary to what we had suspected, he was not slated to be director of the uranium project, but he was slated to be Secretary of State.

I was <sup>very</sup> depressed <sup>as</sup> when we left Byrnes's house and walked toward the station. I thought to myself how much better ~~off~~ the world might be <sup>off</sup> had I been born in America and become influential in American politics, and had Byrnes been born in Hungary and studied physics. In all probability there would have then been no atomic bomb, and no danger of an arms race between America and Russia. (1)

When I returned to Chicago, I found the project in an uproar. The Army had violently ~~objected~~ <sup>our</sup> objected to ~~my~~ <sup>our</sup> visit to the White House and ~~my~~ <sup>my</sup>.

to Byrnes. Dr. ~~Bariky~~ <sup>Bariky</sup> (assoc. dir.) was summoned to see General Groves; General Groves told him that I had committed a grave breach of security by ~~giving~~ <sup>handing</sup> secret documents to Byrnes, who does not know how to handle secret documents. To calm the uproar, Dr. Compton, the leader of the project, decided to regularize the discussions by appointing a committee under the chairmanship of James ~~Frank~~ <sup>FRANCK</sup> to examine the issue of whether or not the bomb should be used, and if so, how. The report of the committee has been published, and it was meant to be presented to the Secretary of War, Mr. Stimson. ~~But~~ Whether it ever reached his desk I do not know.

~~Omit~~

On my way from Spartansburg to Chicago I stopped in Washington to see Oppenheimer, who had arrived there to attend a meeting of the interim committee. I told Oppenheimer that I thought it would be a very serious mistake to use the bomb against the cities of Japan. Oppenheimer didn't share my view. He surprised me by starting the conversation by saying that the atomic bomb is ~~sick~~ <sup>shit</sup>. "What do you mean by that?" I asked him; and he said "Well, this is a weapon which has no military significance. It will make a big bang -- a very big bang -- but it is not a weapon which is useful in war." He thought that it would be important, however, to inform the Russians that we ~~had~~ had an atomic bomb and that we

<sup>to use</sup>  
 intended ~~using~~ it against the cities of Japan, rather than taking them by surprise. This seemed reasonable to me, and I know that Stimson also shared this view; however, while this was necessary, it was certainly not sufficient. "Well," Oppenheimer said, "don't you think if we tell the Russians what we intend to do and then use the bomb in Japan, that the Russians will understand it?" -- and I remember that I said "They'll understand it only too well."

The time approached when the bomb would be tested. The date was never communicated to us in Chicago, nor did we ever receive any official indication of what was afoot. However I concluded that the bomb <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ about to be tested when I was told that we were no longer permitted to call Los Alamos over the telephone; this could have meant only one thing: Los Alamos must get ready to test the bomb, and the Army tried by this ingenious method to keep the news from the Chicago project.

I knew by this time that it <sup>will</sup> ~~would~~ not be possible to dissuade the government from using the bomb against the cities of Japan. The cards in the interim committee were stacked against such an approach to the problem; therefore all that remained to be done was for the scientists

to go unmistakably on the record that they were opposed to such action.

While the Frank Report argued the case on the grounds of expediency, I

thought that the time <sup>has</sup> had come for the scientists to go on record against

the use of the bomb against the cities of Japan on moral grounds. There-

fore I drafted a petition which was circulated in the project.

This was again violently opposed by the Army: they accused me of having violated secrecy by disclosing in the petition that such a thing as <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ bomb existed. What the Army thought that we thought that we were doing all this time, I cannot say. However, we did not yield to the Army's demands. The right to petition is anchored in the Constitution, and when you are a naturalized citizen you are supposed to learn the Constitution prior to obtaining your citizenship.

The first version of the petition which was circulated drew about fifty-three signatures in ~~the~~ the Chicago project. What is significant is that these fifty-three people included all the leading physicists in the project and many of the leading biologists. The signatures of the chemists were conspicuously absent. This was so striking that I went over to the chemistry department to discover what the trouble was. What I discovered was rather disturbing: the chemists argued that what we must determine is

solely whether more lives would be saved by using the bomb or by continuing the war without using the bomb. This is a utilitarian argument <sup>of</sup> with which I was very familiar through my previous experiences in Germany; that some other issue may be involved in dropping the bomb on an inhabited city and killing men, women and children did not occur to any of the chemists with whom I spoke.

Some of the members of the project said that they would sign the petition if it were worded somewhat more mildly, and I therefore drafted a second version of the petition which drew a somewhat larger number of signatures -- but not a significantly larger number. The second petition was dated one day before the bomb was actually tested at ~~HHHHHHHHHH~~ Alamogordo, New Mexico. After the petition had been circulated, we were faced with the decision through what channels to communicate it to the White House. Several people, and above all James **FRANCK** <sup>he will</sup>, took the position that ~~they had~~ signed the petition because <sup>he</sup> they agreed with it, but they could do this only if the petition would be forwarded to the President through the regular channels rather than outside of these channels. I did not like this idea because I was just not sure whether the regular channels <sup>ill</sup> would forward the petition or whether

they <sup>will</sup> would sabotage it by filing it until the war <sup>is</sup> was over. However, to my regret, I finally yielded and handed the petition to Compton, who transmitted it to Colonel Nichols, who promised that he would transmit it to General Groves for immediate <sup>transmission</sup> to Potsdam. I have no evidence that this petition ever reached the President.

After the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, I called the responsible officer of the Manhattan District in Chicago and told him that I <sup>am</sup> was going to declassify the petition and asked him if there was any objection. There could not have been any objection, and there wasn't, and so I declassified the petition. A short time thereafter I sent a telegram to Matt **CONNELLY**, Connelly (2), the President's secretary, to advise him that it <sup>is</sup> was my intention to make the context of the petition public, and that I wanted to advise him of this as a matter of courtesy. When the telegram was not acknowledged I phoned the White House, upon which I received a telegram saying that the matter ~~was~~ had been presented to the President for his decision, and that I <sup>will</sup> would be advised accordingly. Shortly thereafter I received a call from the Manhattan District saying that General Groves <sup>s</sup> wanted the petition to be reclassified "Secret". I said that I would not do this on the basis of a telephone conversation, but that I would

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want to have a letter explaining for what reason the petition, which contains nothing secret, should be reclassified. Soon after, I received a three-page letter stamped "Secret" in which I was advised that while the officer writing the letter could not possibly know what was in General Groves's mind when he asked that the petition be reclassified "Secret", he assumed that the reason for this request was due to the fact that people reading the petition might conclude that there must have been some dissension in the project prior to the termination of the war, which might have slowed down the work of the project which was conducted under the Army. [ Repeated efforts to have this letter declassified by the Atomic Energy Commission have so far failed. It is my guess that, inasmuch as the War Department has declassified all documents which were dated prior to 1946, a renewed request to the Atomic Energy Commission for declassification of this document will not be refused. This does not necessarily mean, however, that it will be possible for me to have the document returned.

Tape 3 - 25 min

Revealed after 18 years

# THE FIGHT OVER THE A-BOMB

*Hidden in "top secret" files since World War II, here is the dramatic story of the attempt by many nuclear scientists to convince President Truman that the A-bomb should not be used to destroy Japanese cities without warning. This is the record—uncolored by hindsight—of what men said and did during a great moral debate.*

WHEN PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN ordered the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan, in an effort to end World War II with one swift stroke, he touched off a debate that will endure as long as men survive to write history.

No serious student can question the motives or the integrity of the men who made that fateful decision. Behind them lay more than three years of bloody, bitter fighting. Yet one question has troubled those who study the issue: Were the men who actually unlocked the power of the atom—the nuclear scientists themselves—given a full hearing?

Now, from behind the security curtain surrounding the atomic project, comes an answer:

President Truman, faced with one of the great moral decisions of human history, was denied access to the petitions of many American nuclear scientists who opposed the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima without warning.

This startling fact emerges from the official files of the Manhattan Project, the \$2 bil-

lion complex that built the bomb. Policy papers from these files, classified "Top Secret" for 18 years, were obtained by LOOK after a two-year security clearance process that involved the Defense Department, the State Department and the Atomic Energy Commission.

The secret files—until now open only to official Government researchers—provide a blow-by-blow account of the futile efforts of scientists at the great atomic laboratories in Chicago and Oak Ridge to dissuade President Truman from releasing the frightful power of the atom on the Japanese.

The dispute took place in an atmosphere that present-day critics find it convenient to overlook. Uppermost in the minds of President Truman and his chief advisers was the probable high cost in American lives if this country had to subdue Japan by frontal assault.

At a White House war council on June 18, 1945, Gen. George C. Marshall, Army chief of staff, estimated that in the first month alone of the

continued

By FLETCHER KNEBEL and CHARLES W. BAILEY

Look. Aug. 13, 1963

covering letter of his own. He said that "contrary to the hopes of Mr. Leo Szilard . . . it is believed that these collective papers generally support the present plans for use of the weapons." Nichols urged, on July 25, that "these papers be forwarded to the President of the United States with proper comments."

But President Truman never saw them. He was then in Potsdam at the conference with Stalin and the British. Groves, according to the evidence in the Manhattan files, held the bundle of petitions until August 1, when a messenger delivered them to Stimson's office. Truman was about to embark for home aboard the U.S.S. *Augusta*. The bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, while Truman was still aboard the warship in the Atlantic.

Almost a year later, on May 24, 1946, Arneson wrote a memorandum for the Interim Committee files explaining what happened. He said that since the question of the bomb's use "had already been fully considered and settled by the proper authorities," and since scientists had been given adequate opportunity to present their views to the Interim Committee "through the scientific panel," it was decided that "no useful purpose would be served by transmitting either the petition or any of the attached documents to the White House, particularly since the President was not then in the country."

General Marshall's reservations on use of the bomb, which remained unknown until the unlocking of the Manhattan papers, were disclosed to Stimson and Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy at a meeting in Stimson's office on May 29, 1945. McCloy made a memorandum of the discussion, and Marshall approved it as written. The memo records that Marshall stressed the need of warning the Japanese, a course that was not followed before the drop on Hiroshima.

"General Marshall," noted McCloy, "said he thought these weapons might first be used against straight military objectives such as a large naval installation, and then if no complete result was derived from the effect of that, he thought we ought to designate a number of large manufacturing areas from which people would be warned to leave—telling the Japanese that we intended to destroy such centers. There would be no individual designations so that the Japs would not know exactly where we were to hit—a number should be named and the hit should follow shortly after.

"Every effort should be made to keep our record of warning clear. We must offset by such warning methods the opprobrium which might follow from an ill-considered employment of such force."

Marshall went on to say that he was considering the "limited" use of a nonlethal poison gas against "fanatical but hopeless" Japanese pockets of resistance. Marshall said the gas would not kill, but would permit quick cleanup of suicidal defenders. He realized that public opinion might not support the use of gas, but said it was no

General Marshall, who wished to postpone use of the atomic bomb against Japanese cities, felt the U.S. might have to make "limited" use of a nonlethal poison gas to capture "fanatical" Japanese soldiers.

tested at Alamogordo and later dropped on Nagasaki.)

On July 26, President Truman, along with Britain's Clement Attlee and China's Chiang Kai-shek, issued the Potsdam Declaration. It was an ultimatum to Japan to surrender unconditionally or face "prompt and utter destruction." But there was no warning of the nuclear devastation that would follow a refusal to give up.

The day the first atomic bomb wiped out Hiroshima, without warning and without a prior demonstration, Leo Szilard asked permission to make public his petition to President Truman—the petition that had asked the President not to use the bomb until the moral issue had been resolved.

On August 9, the same day that the second atomic bomb fell on Nagasaki, Szilard got his answer in the form of a message from one of Groves's security officers: Request disapproved. Groves was still pushing his vast machine hard. The next day, he notified General Marshall that four days had been gained in the assembly of a third bomb, and that it would be ready to drop on Japan by August 17 or 18.

The Japanese surrendered on August 14, and the third bomb was never dropped. The lid of peacetime official secrecy snapped shut on the files of the Manhattan Project.

It was not until the opening of the files, 18 years later, that Leo Szilard could learn that President Truman never saw his petition—nor those of Szilard's colleagues—before an atomic bomb, in a fraction of a second over Hiroshima, changed the course of history.

END

invasion of Japan, there would be 31,000 casualties. Others were gloomier. Adm. Ernest J. King, chief of naval operations, thought a "realistic" figure for the conquest of Kyushu—the first of two planned assaults on Japan—would be between 31,000 and 42,000 casualties. Adm. William D. Leahy, the President's chief of staff, thought the casualty rate might be as high as 35 percent of the 766,000-man invasion force. And Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson foresaw as many as one million American casualties—three times the cost of the entire Pacific war up to that time—if Japan fought to the bitter end.

With Washington and the nation sick of bloodletting, winning quickly and at minimum human cost became the prime objective. Harry Truman told his military chiefs he would write his orders "with the purpose of economizing to the maximum extent possible in the loss of American lives." He hoped, he said, to avoid "an Okinawa from one end of Japan to the other."

Thus dissenters to the use of the bomb found most officials indisposed to approve any course that could prolong the war. Nevertheless, the dispute raged behind Manhattan's wall of secrecy.

Although 18 years old, the story is as fresh as tomorrow morning's newspaper—for the struggle behind the tight Manhattan security curtain provides a backdrop for the debate that has swept the world since Russia resumed testing the giant megaton warheads that could erase whole cities from the earth.

The long-secret files show that this dilemma for mankind was forecast by atomic scientists almost two decades ago—even before they knew their terrible invention would work.

In essence, the first great moral debate of the atomic age was personified by two strong-minded men, one a refugee scientist, the other an Army general. Many others participated in the secret struggle, but these two became the symbols.

Against the bomb: Leo Szilard, a brilliant Hungarian physicist who had studied at the University of Berlin, but fled to the United States after the rise of Hitler. As much as any other man, he was responsible for persuading Franklin D. Roosevelt to undertake atomic-weapons research in the first place. With Enrico Fermi, he supervised the first controlled chain reaction in a squash court under the football stands of Stagg Field at the University of Chicago.

For the bomb: Maj. Gen. Leslie Richard Groves, a West Point-educated Army engineer who built the Pentagon and then took over the prodigious "Manhattan Engineer District" to build the atomic bomb. A big man, handsome and fearless, he literally drove a vast army of scientists, factory workers and military officers to accomplish a feat that changed the world forever.

Both men still live today, and the fervor of their differences continues unabated. Szilard, at 65, and Groves, at 66, still cling to the views that cleaved them 18 years ago. Groves still believes the decision to use the bomb was right. Szilard still believes it was wrong.

Here are highlights of the epic dispute, in which Szilard and Groves stood at opposite poles, as revealed in the Manhattan papers:

- A bundle of scientific petitions and statements, largely opposed to unrestricted use of the A-bomb on Japan, never reached President Truman—although they were addressed to him, and Col. Kenneth D. Nichols, production chief of Manhattan, had urged Groves "that these papers be forwarded to the President of the United States with proper comments."

- America's top military officer of World War II, Gen. George C. Marshall, urged that the A-bomb should not be used against Japan except after adequate warning. Said Marshall: "We must offset by such warning methods the opprobrium which might follow from an ill-considered employment of such force." His advice was not followed.

- Apparently, only a few opposition statements ever reached Truman. One was a passionate letter from O. C. Brewster of New York, who was involved in atomic production, and who wrote the President: "This thing must not be permitted to exist on earth."

Another was the official dissent of Ralph A. Bard, the Under Secretary of the Navy, who argued that the Japanese should be warned that atomic power might be used.

- As early as September 30, 1944, many months before the first atomic device was tested and before Manhattan officials were even sure it would work, two distinguished Americans, James B. Conant, president of Harvard University, and Vannevar Bush, president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, warned Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson of future "super-super" bombs that could be delivered by guided missiles. They urged that America demonstrate its first bomb for the Japanese before actually using it against Japan.

- The Interim Committee, set up at Stimson's suggestion in the spring of 1945 to study all implications of the atomic bomb, started with the assumption that the bomb would be used and never really weighed the opinions of the opposing scientists.

- Almost all American leaders privy to the atomic secret—military, scientific and political—were concerned about possible Russian duplicity and were extremely wary about informing Russia, our World War II ally, of our atomic progress. This was one of the few areas of general agreement in the otherwise divisive dispute over use of the bomb on Japan.

- Nowhere in the Manhattan papers is there any indication that President Truman ever made an affirmative decision to drop the bomb. Rather, he seems to have proceeded on the assumption that the bomb would be dropped when ready. The papers tend to confirm a recent statement by Groves that Truman "was like a little boy on a toboggan," who never had an opportunity to say yes. All he could have said, Groves argued, was no. That word the President never uttered.

The moral implications of using the atomic bomb were first raised by Conant and Bush in a lengthy joint letter to Secretary Stimson on September 30, 1944, more than ten months before the bomb vaporized Hiroshima.

This letter, remarkable for its prescience, urged that international control of the atom be established to prevent an arms race of terrifying proportions. One prophetic sentence read: "One must consider the possibility of delivering either the bombs at present contemplated or the super-super bomb on an enemy target by means of a rocket plane or guided missile."

Bush and Conant argued that the history of the bomb should be disclosed to the world as soon as the bomb was first demonstrated, and they urged that such a demonstration should precede direct military use. "This demonstration might be over enemy territory," they wrote, "or in our own country, with subsequent notice to Japan that the materials would be used against the Japanese mainland unless surrender was forthcoming."

The great debate within the secret atomic community began in the winter of 1944-45, when it became plain that Nazi Germany would collapse before the bomb was ready. Some scientists recoiled at the idea of using the bomb against Japan, which was already beginning to blaze under the great B-29 incendiary raids. Other scientists wanted the A-bomb used at once to quicken the war's end.

One of the few antibomb documents ever to reach President Truman's hands from inside the Manhattan District was a 3,000-word letter penned on May 24, 1945, by O. C. Brewster, one of those who shared the atomic production secrets. Brewster's letter, although addressed to the President, was not mailed but given to a Manhattan Project security agent.

In a few days, it reached Secretary Stimson's office. The elderly War Secretary was so struck by it that he urged General Marshall to read this "remarkable document" and feel "the impress of its logic." Then Stimson personally delivered the letter to President Truman and noted for the record that he received the letter back from the White House on June 2.

Brewster contended that if America initiated the use of atomic

weapons, a "corrupt and venal demagogue" would someday seek to conquer the world with A-bombs for his "own insane satisfaction."

"This thing must not be permitted to exist on earth," he wrote the President. "We must not be the most hated and feared people on earth, however good our intent may be. So long as the threat of Germany existed, we had to proceed with all speed to accomplish this end. With the threat of Germany removed, we must stop this project."

Brewster urged a "demonstration" for the Japanese before actual use of the bomb. "I beg you, sir," he wrote, "not to pass this off because I happen to be an unknown, without influence or name in the public eye." He conceded he was no statesman, but added, "There surely are men in this country, however, to whom you could turn, asking them to study this problem, secure the facts and come to a conclusion unbiased by their own deep and sincere interest in the project."

A few days later, on May 28, Arthur Holly Compton, chief of Manhattan's Chicago Metallurgical Laboratory, submitted a statement to his superiors.

"First in point of urgency," he said, "is the question of how

Committee met, that the bomb would be used. A May 1 memorandum by Harrison for Stimson, preserved in the Manhattan file, makes this clear: "... In view of the possibly short time available before actual military use ... certain things must be done now before use if we are to avoid the risk of grave repercussions." And again, in the same Harrison memorandum: "... As soon as possible after use some assurance must be given of the steps to provide essential controls over post-war use and development."

The Interim Committee met eight times, from May 9 through July 19, 1945. The decisive meeting took place in the Pentagon on May 31, and ran from 10 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., with an hour out for lunch. This was the day the committee met with its four-man scientific advisory panel. The prepared agenda listed five questions likely to come up, but not one of them involved use of the bomb. There is only one reference to the use of the bomb in the minutes of the meeting:

"After much discussion concerning various types of targets and the effects to be produced, the Secretary [Stimson] expressed the conclusion, on which there was general agreement, that we could not

## Behind the story

Fletcher Knebel and Charles W. Bailey of LOOK's Washington Bureau, and authors of the best-selling novel *Seven Days in May*, first sought access to the secret files of the wartime atomic project in 1959.

Denied access then, they renewed their request after President Kennedy's inauguration in early 1961.

This time, permission was granted to examine a limited portion of the files. The authors were required not only to submit their notes for initial security clearance, but also to submit the finished manuscript to the Department of Defense, the Department of State

and the Atomic Energy Commission for final review and clearance.

Access to the files was granted in June, 1961. The authors' notes were cleared.

The manuscript was submitted on October 31, 1961, and was initially refused clearance by the State Department. After prolonged efforts, the State Department was finally persuaded to give its clearance on June 13, 1963—exactly two years after the Army's initial opening of the files to the authors.

The contents of the article do not reflect the views of the Defense Department, the State Department, or the Atomic Energy Commission.—THE EDITORS



Fletcher Knebel and Charles W. Bailey

the first nuclear bomb is to be used. This is much more a political than it is a military question. It introduces the question of mass slaughter really for the first time in history. [Here, General Groves penciled this note on the margin of his copy of Compton's statement: 'The air raids in Germany were not wholly unmasslike in their effect.'] ... Consideration must also be given to the political consequences on the enemy unless their complete extermination is irrevocably decided upon. This whole question may well have received the broad study it demands. I merely mention it as one of the urgent problems that have bothered our men because of its many ramifications and humanitarian implications."

At Stimson's suggestion, President Truman created a body to study all aspects of the atomic bomb before its first use. This group was known as the Interim Committee, and until now the record of its deliberations has remained locked. It was headed by Stimson. George L. Harrison, president of the New York Life Insurance Co. and a top Stimson aide, was assistant chairman. Other members were Bard, Bush, Conant, Assistant Secretary of State William L. Clayton, James F. Byrnes, soon to be Secretary of State, and Karl T. Compton, brother of Arthur and president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

There was an underlying presumption, even before the Interim

give the Japanese any warning; that we could not concentrate on a civilian area; but that we should make a profound psychological impression on as many of the inhabitants as possible. At the suggestion of Dr. Conant, the Secretary agreed that the most desirable target would be a vital war plant employing a large number of workers and closely surrounded by workers' houses."

A few days later, on June 6, Army Lt. R. Gordon Arneson, secretary of the Interim Committee, sent a memorandum to Harrison, stating that the committee's views on use of the bomb were:

"a. The big bomb to be used against Japan as soon as possible.

"b. It be used on a dual target, that is, a military installation or war plant surrounded by or adjacent to homes or other buildings most susceptible to damage.

"c. It be used without prior warning."

Conant, who was aware of the moral ferment among the scientists, had written Stimson on May 5 that he believed the view of "a few of the leading scientists" should be transmitted to President Truman, either directly or through the Interim Committee. This, he said, would enable the Government to "have the full support of the scientific community in this matter."

Stimson, in a May 9 letter to Conant, seemed to agree. He said

continued

the Interim Committee "now being formed will no doubt wish to hear them and their views soon after it is organized."

But the committee did not. On June 12, it received a petition from seven atomic scientists at the Chicago laboratories. This group, headed by James Franck, a Nobel Prize physicist, argued that "an early unannounced attack against Japan" would be "inadvisable" and declared that if the United States "were to be the first to release this new means of indiscriminate destruction upon mankind," it would lose world support, spark an arms race and prejudice future international control of A-bombs.

Lieutenant Arneson, the Interim Committee secretary, discussed the Franck report with several men, including Arthur Compton, Byrnes and Harrison, and then noted in the committee's log: "Harrison decided that the scientific panel and not the committee should consider the memorandum from the Chicago scientists."

On June 21, Harrison told the committee that the scientific panel had weighed the views of the objecting Chicago scientists, but had decided there was "no acceptable alternative to direct military use."

Oppenheimer disagreed with the many scientists who pleaded that Japan first be given a "purely technical demonstration" of the frightening destructive power of the bomb

The scientific panel was composed of Arthur Compton, Enrico Fermi, Ernest O. Lawrence, head of the Berkeley radiation laboratory, and J. Robert Oppenheimer, chief of the Los Alamos atomic-bomb laboratory. Its report on use of the bomb read:

"The opinions of our scientific colleagues on this initial use of these weapons are not unanimous; they range from the proposal of a purely technical demonstration to that of the military application best designed to induce surrender. Those who advocate a purely technical demonstration would wish to outlaw the use of atomic weapons and have feared that if we use the weapons now our position in future negotiations will be prejudiced.

"Others emphasize the opportunity of saving American lives by immediate military use and believe that such use will improve the international prospects, in that they are more concerned with the prevention of war than with the elimination of this specific weapon. We find ourselves closer to these latter views; we can propose no technical demonstration likely to bring an end to the war; we see no acceptable alternative to direct military use.

"With regard to these general aspects of the use of atomic energy, it is clear that we, as scientific men, have no proprietary rights.

"It is true that we are among the few citizens who have had occasion to give thoughtful consideration to these problems during the past few years. We have, however, no claim to special competence in solving the political, social and military problems which

are presented by the advent of atomic power."

Oppenheimer submitted the report to the Interim Committee.

There were a number of petitions and statements by the scientists, most of them objecting to military use of the bomb against Japan, but none of them ever reached President Truman, for whose consideration in his hour of decision they were intended.

On July 25, the day Secretary Stimson approved final orders to drop an A-bomb on Japan without warning "after about 3 August 1945," Colonel Nichols at the Oak Ridge, Tenn., atomic site bundled up a batch of letters and petitions and sent them by Manhattan security messenger to General Groves in Washington.

Most important was a sealed brown manila envelope marked "P. O. Box 5207, Chicago 80, Illinois," and addressed in ink "To The President Of The United States." This was Szilard's appeal to Truman, buttressed by the signatures of such prominent atomic scientists as Ralph E. Lapp, Eugene P. Wigner and Walter Bartky.

Szilard and his colleagues urged Truman not to use the bomb "unless the terms which will be imposed upon Japan have been made public in detail and Japan, knowing these terms, has refused to surrender; second, that in such an event the question whether or not to use atomic bombs be decided by you in the light of the considerations presented in this petition as well as all the other moral responsibilities which are involved."

This was compromise language, for Szilard's first draft, written July 3, would have asked Truman not to use the bomb at all. When this original petition began circulating at the Chicago laboratory, Grover C. Thompson, a security officer, reported it to Groves. The General said it was all right to let the petition circulate, provided it went through security channels and was not shown to scientists who had less information about the bomb than Szilard. Szilard's first-draft plea to the President concluded:

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition that you exercise your power as commander-in-chief to rule that the United States shall not, in the present phase of the war, resort to the use of atomic bombs."

Szilard modified his petition—changing it from a plea for no use of the A-bomb at all to a plea for use only after warning to Japan—after discussing the issue with a number of his colleagues. As revised, it drew 70 signatures.

Another enclosure in the package for Groves was a document signed by 68 scientists at Oak Ridge, recommending that "before the weapon be used without restriction in the present conflict, its powers should be adequately described and demonstrated, and the Japanese nation should be given the opportunity to consider the consequences of further refusal to surrender."

Still another was signed by 18 Chicago scientists. They agreed generally with Szilard, but said their feeling was more explicitly expressed in these words:

"We respectfully petition that the use of atomic bombs, particularly against cities, be sanctioned by you as Chief Executive only under the following conditions:

"1. Opportunity has been given the Japanese to surrender on terms assuring them the possibility of peaceful development in their homeland.

"2. Convincing warnings have been given that a refusal to surrender will be followed by use of a new weapon.

"3. Responsibility for use of atomic bombs is shared with our allies."

Also included in the package was a poll of 150 scientists at Chicago who were asked by Farrington Daniels, director of the laboratory, to choose among five possible courses. By far the largest number, 46 percent, voted to "give a military demonstration in Japan, to be followed by a renewed opportunity to surrender before full use of the weapon is employed."

In a letter forwarded with the poll, Arthur Compton pointed out

AUGUST 15, 1960

# U.S. News & World Report

The United States News ©

World Report ©

**IS CUBA  
CRACKING UP?**

# **WAS A-BOMB ON JAPAN A MISTAKE?**



UNPUBLISHED STORY OF FATEFUL ARGUMENT 15 YEARS AGO



# KOREA—U. S. MAKES A GAIN

**Rioting in Korea last spring upset a regime friendly to the U. S., opened the door to turmoil in a country kept free by the U. S. in a shooting war.**

**Now what? A staff member of "U. S. News & World Report," back in South Korea, has cabled this analysis of a U. S. Ally in the midst of change.**

## SEOUL

Just last spring South Korea appeared to be slipping away into chaos.

Mobs ruled in Seoul's streets, ousted a regime in a nation which the U. S. had defended at the cost of 157,530 American casualties in a war begun 10 years ago.

Now, Korea revisited tells another story. You find it everywhere in this country, not only in the cities, bustling with new energy, but also in the rural areas where people are better fed, better clothed than ever before.

The new Government, to the surprise of many in this country, is taking hold in South Korea. Elections, held on July 29, did not solve all of Korea's countless problems. But they did give Koreans a taste of real freedom—and they appear to like it.

**A clean sweep.** A single political party, never before in power, won an overwhelming victory in these free elections. Promising only conservative government and clean government, the Democrats crushed both the newly formed left-wing parties and the remnants of the right-wing followers of ex-President Syngman Rhee.

As a result, you find a new atmosphere, new hope, in South Korea.

There was no sign during the Korean elections, or after them, that the people of this country are even faintly interested in turning to the Communists.

U. S. prestige is higher than ever. This gain is due in part to the pressure brought by the U. S. to get President Rhee to quit and in part to the subsequent visit of President Eisenhower to this country.

There were fears, last spring, that the purge of officials and Army officers of the Rhee Government would get out of hand, destroying all vestige of authority in South Korea and opening the door to Communists sent into this country by the

Communist Government of North Korea. These fears have not materialized.

**Police in control.** You still see student demonstrations in the streets, but they are milder in form. Students seize the goods of black-market operators and burn them in the streets. Students halt officials using Government automobiles for their private pleasure, make them get out and walk. But the police, who lost control under the Rhee Government, now are regaining it. Courts are trying demonstrators who get out of hand and making their convictions stick.

Korea's troubles are by no means over. Much remains to be done.

The governing Democratic Party has control of two thirds of the seats in

industrial fuel, additional working capital at rates under the prevailing 8 per cent per month—all these must be found.

An enormous biscuit factory outside Seoul is closed. A shoe factory completed three years ago still has not turned out a single pair of shoes. Only 95 of the 238 small and medium-sized factories being financed in whole or in part by U. S. aid are actually turning out products at this moment.

Price trends still are up. Devaluation of the hwan, South Korea's currency, may temporarily upset the money market. Inflationary pressures are still at work. Unemployment remains high.

**Enduring vitality.** Yet, despite all this, the vitality of the South Korean people



—USN&WR Photo

## SOUTH KOREANS VOTING IN JULY 29 ELECTIONS

With a brand-new Government, an upsurge of hope in a troubled country

the lower house and a majority in the upper house, but a split between leaders of the Democrats, patched up now, may reopen.

Corruption among Government officials and Army officers has not yet been stamped out entirely. A Cabinet minister gets only the equivalent of 35 U. S. dollars a week; an Army captain gets only about 40 dollars a month. Such income cannot be stretched to keep a Korean family going. Pay must be raised to stamp out corruption. Payrolls, the budget too, must be pruned to permit pay increases.

**Industry in need.** Korean industry needs a complete overhauling. Better management, more electric power and

and their economy is surprising to the visitor who has seen this country in war and during the last months of the Rhee regime. The industrial output has remained steady, and exports now are climbing slowly but surely.

The new Government of this country has two big things in its favor—the support of the people as expressed in free elections and the respect of non-Communist countries. Koreans still will need U. S. aid for many years to come. But, if their Government can end personal feuds within the leadership and put an end to corruption, Korea may well become a firm outpost of free government on the continent of Asia. This is the trend in South Korea today.



# WAS A-BOMB ON JAPAN A MISTAKE?

## Unpublished Story of Fateful Argument 15 Years Ago

A bomb dropped without warning in 1945 wiped out a city in a split second—and the world has never been the same since.

It is possible now to recount the secret arguments that sealed the fate of Hiroshima.

Was it necessary to drop the bomb?

Did those who knew of its awesome power foresee the aftermath?

Could U.S. have won the war and still kept its atomic secret from Russia?

New light on such questions comes from exclusive interviews with five men who were involved in the secret decision.

They are James F. Byrnes, who became Secretary of State; Lewis L. Strauss, later head of the Atomic Energy Commission; scientists Leo Szilard and Edward Teller, and Ralph Bard, former Under Secretary of Navy.

Their answers add fuel to a 15-year debate over the violent birth of the atomic age.

Just 15 years ago, on Aug. 6, 1945, a single American bomber sped westward over Hiroshima, releasing an object that tumbled through the air, righted itself and plummeted earthward.

Forty-five seconds later, a blast occurred such as the world never before had seen, and 78,150 people perished.

Three days later, on August 9, this scene was repeated over another Japanese city—Nagasaki. There, 36,000 people perished.

On August 10, Japan's leaders decided to surrender.

Never since has the world been the same. Never again will it be the same world that existed before man showed that he could control the basic force of nature itself.

Almost immediately, these questions arose: Was it a mistake to drop the atomic bomb on Japan? How would the world be different if the bomb had not been dropped? Would the U. S. position in the world be different?

Now, 15 years later, those questions are still being asked—more intently than ever.

**The men and the decision.** To throw more light on answers to those questions,

"U. S. News & World Report" went to some of the men who participated in, or tried to influence, fateful decisions of that period.

James F. Byrnes, then President Truman's personal representative and soon to become Secretary of State, played a vital role in the decision to drop the atomic bomb. He gives his reasons for that decision.

Lewis L. Strauss, then a Navy officer and later Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, had doubts about use of the bomb. He tells why.

Two key scientists, Dr. Leo Szilard and Dr. Edward Teller, describe their misgivings about the atomic bomb.

Ralph A. Bard, then Under Secretary of the Navy, was the only "decision maker" to oppose unrestricted use of the bomb. He explains that stand.

**Already-beaten enemy?** As these men look backward, there is broad agreement among them on these points:

- At the time the bomb was dropped, Japan was already beaten.

- Whether or not the bomb was used, it could not have been kept a secret. Soviet spies had gained some knowledge of it. But the destruction of Hiroshima

and Nagasaki probably hastened Soviet research and espionage.

- As a result, had the bombs not been dropped, pressure to develop the hydrogen bomb might have been less. And without the hydrogen warhead the missile age and space exploration would have been delayed.

Out of it all, these men feel, would have emerged a world somewhat different from that which today finds Soviet Russia and the U. S. running neck and neck in missiles and space competition.

**A few key months.** The story that these five men tell on following pages deals only with a few months of 1945, when decisions were made that led to the leveling of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Their story unfolds in this setting: Harry Truman became President in April, 1945. By then, nearly three years and 2 billion dollars had been spent on "Manhattan District," the project to develop the atomic bomb. A test explosion was expected in midsummer.

A month later, the war in Europe was over, and Japan was in a bad way. It had virtually no Navy and few aircraft. Great raids had crippled its economy.

Even so, fighting continued on Oki-



—Yoshito Matsushige

## PEOPLE OF HIROSHIMA, 10 MINUTES AFTER THE A-BOMB EXPLODED

Among awe-stricken survivors of the atomic blast was a Japanese photographer, who took this grim picture. Almost 80,000 lives were snuffed out by a single bomb.

nawa, with high casualties to the U. S. A Japanese Army of 5 million stood ready to defend the home islands. American strategists, planning the invasion of Japan for Nov. 1, 1945, thought U. S. casualties in that invasion might come to 1 million—while Japanese casualties would be double or triple that number.

It was in this situation that the question of how to use the atomic bomb most effectively came into the foreground.

Early in May, President Truman named an "Interim Committee" of eight men to recommend to him how and when to use the bomb. Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Bard were on that Committee, and now they tell of its deliberations.

Other members were Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson; his assistant, George L. Harrison; Assistant Secretary of State William L. Clayton; and three scientists high in Government councils—Drs. Vannevar Bush, Karl T. Compton and James B. Conant.

This Committee was to be assisted by an advisory panel of four scientists then working on the atomic bomb. They were Drs. Arthur Compton, Enrico Fermi, Ernest O. Lawrence and J. Robert Oppenheimer.

**From scientists: doubts.** As Dr. Szilard and Dr. Teller explain in their interviews, many scientists had strong doubts about using the bomb. Even before the Interim Committee met, Dr. Szilard relates, he and two other atomic scientists visited Mr. Byrnes on May 28 to express their doubts. This meeting produced no results.

Seventy-two hours later, Mr. Byrnes and other members of the Interim Committee entered a two-day session to settle the question of using the bomb. The four advisory scientists were present. So were Gen. George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, and Brig. Gen. Leslie R. Groves, chief of the atomic-bomb project.

In those two days, May 31 and June 1, the 14 men thrashed out alternatives to unrestricted use of the bomb.

Foremost of these, Mr. Byrnes makes clear, was the idea of an explicit warning to Japan before using the bomb, or some kind of demonstration on an uninhabited area. Both suggestions were rejected. The scientific advisers, in a subsequent study, upheld these decisions.

Mr. Byrnes states that the "decision makers" did not discuss the political consequences of using the bomb. Nor, by

his and Mr. Bard's account, was it suggested that an effort might be made to negotiate Japan's surrender before the bomb was used.

On June 1, the eight-man Committee recommended that the atomic bomb be used against Japan as soon as possible, without specific warning.

It also recommended a target consisting of a military installation and surrounding homes and buildings. This implied that civilians would be among the casualties.

That same day, President Truman was told of the recommendations. He agreed with them. In his memoirs, he writes:

"The final decision of where and when to use the atomic bomb was up to me. Let there be no mistake about it. I regarded the bomb as a military weapon and never had any doubt that it should be used."

From that moment, in effect, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were doomed.

**Continuing opposition.** Military planners went to work drawing up a list of target cities, estimating probable dates of attack, making other preparations. The 509th Composite Group, which

(continued on page 64)

[ continued  
from page 63 ]

## WAS A-BOMB ON JAPAN A MISTAKE?

was to "deliver" the bombs on Japan, already was arriving on Tinian Island.

Yet, outside the small circle of "decision makers," opposition to use of the bomb persisted.

Mr. Strauss, in his interview, tells the story of the memorandum he wrote during those weeks, suggesting a demonstration of the bomb on a Japanese forest. Dr. Szilard, then in the Chicago branch of the bomb project, mentions how he and six other scientists sent a report to Mr. Stimson also urging a demonstration. Dr. Teller, who was at the Los Alamos branch of the project, reveals his misgivings.

High officials, too, voiced doubts. Among them were Gen. H. H. Arnold, chief of the Army Air Force; Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy, and Fleet Adm. William D. Leahy, the President's chief of staff. But none of these men had any official "say" in the decision on how the bomb should be used.

Then, on June 27, Mr. Bard broke the surface unanimity of the "decision makers" on this question, with a memorandum to the acting chairman of the Interim Committee.

**A Japanese surrender?** The text of Mr. Bard's dissent and his explanation of how it came about appear on page 74. They bring into focus a question that now is being debated more and more: Could the Japanese have been persuaded to surrender that summer, before America dropped the atomic bombs?

Mr. Strauss, for one, says that the Navy had intercepted and decoded Japanese messages pointing in this direction. These messages were from the Japanese Foreign Minister to his Ambassador in Moscow. Early in July, they urged the Ambassador to seek Russian

aid in ascertaining U. S. terms of surrender. As weeks went on, these messages became more desperate.

The messages themselves did not state what terms the Japanese would accept. Even before July, however, Mr. Stimson and Under Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew had been saying that the U. S. should state its terms. Specifically, they thought surrender might come more quickly if an assurance were given that Japan could retain its Emperor.

These two men proposed to include such an assurance in the ultimatum soon to be issued to Japan by President Truman. Other officials, however, were not so sure.

**"Unconditional surrender."** Some military leaders feared that such a concession might be considered by Japan to be a sign of U. S. weakness. Other officials saw it as confusing the internal politics of Japan after the war. Former Secretary of State Cordell Hull thought it might be politically offensive to the American people.

As related by Mr. Byrnes, it was decided at Potsdam that the surrender ultimatum to Japan should not mention the question of the Emperor's status. Mr. Truman has never publicly discussed his own opinion on this question.

In late July, time began to run out on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Doubts about the bomb were still heard, and Dr. Szilard tells how he and more than 60 other scientists at Chicago signed a petition against use of the bomb. But other scientists sent in a petition asking quick use of the bomb to end the war.

**A test, an ultimatum.** On July 16, the world's first atomic explosion took place at Alamogordo, N. Mex.

On July 25, in Potsdam, President Truman approved orders to the 509th Group to drop the bombs any time conditions were favorable, on or about August 3—unless countermanded by presidential orders.

No such countermand was ever issued. On July 26 the Allied ultimatum to Japan went out over the air waves. Two days later, the Tokyo radio replied that the Japanese Government considered the Allied ultimatum "unworthy of notice."

Inside Japan, the Supreme War Council was split 3 to 3 on the surrender question when the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima—and the world entered the age of nuclear politics and weapons. The Council was still divided when Soviet Russia entered the war two days later—and when the second bomb was dropped, on Nagasaki, on the third day. Then Japan sued for peace.

**The argument continues.** Today, after 15 years, there is still serious controversy over the meaning of these events.

Mr. Byrnes shares the feeling of nearly every other "decision maker" that the U. S. had no alternative to dropping the bomb, in light of knowledge then available. Like the late Henry L. Stimson, he doubts that a concession to Japan on the question of its Emperor would have brought it to surrender much more quickly than it did.

Against that viewpoint, Mr. Strauss and Dr. Teller feel that such a concession would have borne fruit. Mr. Bard holds that a negotiated surrender also could have kept the Soviet Union from getting into the Pacific war for a share of "loot" in the Far East. Dr. Szilard, in retrospect, says that he and others

### HOW SCIENTISTS VOTED ON USE OF A-BOMB

On July 12, 1945, Dr. Farrington Daniels, the director of the Metallurgical Laboratory of the University of Chicago, polled 150 scientists, then working on the atomic bomb, in order to get their views on how the bomb should be used. Results suggested that 124 scientists favored some kind of demonstration of the weapon's effectiveness before the bomb was actually used against Japan.

This is how the scientists voted on

five different methods of using the bomb listed in the questionnaire:

Twenty-three votes—Use the bombs in the manner that, from the military point of view, is most effective in bringing about prompt surrender at minimum human cost to U. S.

Sixty-nine votes—Give a military demonstration in Japan to be followed by renewed opportunity for surrender before full use of the weapon is employed.

Thirty-nine votes—Give an experi-

mental demonstration in this country, with representatives of Japan present; followed by a new opportunity to surrender before full use of the weapon is employed.

Sixteen votes—Withhold military use of the weapon, but make a public experimental demonstration of its effectiveness.

Three votes—Maintain as secret as possible all developments of our new weapons and refrain from using them in this war.

The first petition was signed by 59 members of the laboratory, among them:

Jasper B. Jeffries  
Robert J. Moon  
Austin M. Brues  
K. S. Cole  
Alexander Langsdorf, Jr.  
David L. Hill  
David B. Hall  
Warren C. Johnson  
Walter Bartky  
James J. Nickson  
W. H. Zachariasen

Elizabeth E. Painter  
Richard Abrams  
Raymond E. Zirkle  
Herman Lisco  
A. Wattenberg  
Robert Maurer  
F. L. Freedman  
Robt. S. Mulliken  
Karl Darrow  
Leo Szilard

*Jasper B. Jeffries*

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The second petition was signed by <sup>70</sup>~~59~~ members of the laboratory, among them:

George A. Sacher  
Robert S. Mulliken  
John A. Simpson  
Frank Foote  
Robert L. Platzman  
J. Ernest Wilkins, Jr.

*R. E. Marsh*  
E. P. Wigner  
John P. Howe  
~~Jasper B. Jeffries~~  
Hoyland D. Young

who had misgivings on the bombs in 1945 should have pressed for a negotiated surrender, instead of a demonstration or warning, as an alternative to the atomic bomb or a costly invasion of Japan.

In Japan, Sakoh Tanemura, assistant to the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Japanese Army through World War II and now head of the Historical Facts Research Institute, says:

"The Americans blundered in not guar-

anteeing the safety and status of the Emperor. Otherwise, the war would have ended before A-bombs were used. The American position in Japan and Asia would be much better now if the A-bomb had never been used."

It is widely conceded that the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended a Pacific war that had cost the world nearly 1.5 million lives, with the fear that more millions would yet be

lost in an invasion of the Japanese home islands.

The bombs, however, did not end arguments over their use. The disclosures now made by men who were involved in the decisions of summer, 1945, will add to those arguments for years to come.

*Interviews with men who were in on the bomb decision follow. The Hiroshima story, page 77.*



## The unpublished story of the A-bomb decision as told by five men involved

### "WE WERE ANXIOUS TO GET THE WAR OVER"

**JAMES F. BYRNES**, now 81, was President Truman's personal representative in early deliberations on use of the atomic bomb. Later, as Secretary of State, he participated in final decisions leading to use of the bomb, and was able to weigh its effect on world affairs. Today, after serving as Governor of South Carolina, he is in retirement.



At COLUMBIA, S. C.

**Q** Governor Byrnes, in the light of what we now know, was it wrong to use the atomic bomb against Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

**A** I do not think so. Of course, Monday-morning quarterbacking is a very pleasant pastime, but it is not a fruitful one. To judge the wisdom or the lack of wisdom in the decision to drop the bomb, one has to consider the conditions existing at the time the decision was reached.

**Q** Do any of the alternatives proposed in 1945 look any better today than they did then?

**A** Again, my answer is that I do not think so. For instance, I recall, among the alternatives suggested at that time to the Interim Committee of which I was a member, the suggestion that the bomb be dropped on an isolated island with representatives of Japan and other nations invited to witness the test. This was rejected.

Then there was a question of giving the Japanese fair warning about the time and place of the explosion, but we rejected it because we feared the American prisoners of war would be brought into the designated area. We were told by experts, too, that, whatever the success of the test bomb, they could not guarantee that another bomb would explode when dropped.

**Q** It might be a "dud"?

**A** Yes. If we gave the Japanese advance notice of the time and place we would drop the bomb, and then the bomb failed to explode, our optimism would have played into the hands of Japanese militarists who were urging a continuation of the war, and who would say that our failure was proof that we were merely bluffing about possessing this bomb.

**Q** What was the basic reason for going ahead with military use of the bomb?

**A** Fundamentally, the factor influencing the Interim Committee—and later the President—was the statement that General Marshall, Chief of Staff, made some months prior that plans would have to go ahead for the invasion of the mainland of Japan in the fall.

We had about 500,000 casualties in the Pacific theater up to that time. While the Japanese Navy had been practically destroyed, the Japanese had an Army of approximately 5 million men. We were told by the military advisers that we should anticipate a million casualties when we invaded the mainland in the fall.

With that information, the Committee decided to recommend to the President that, if the experiments at Alamogordo were successful, the bomb should be dropped some place where there was a military installation, and at the earliest possible date.

**Q** Was any delay considered in view of the Japanese approaches to the Soviets in Moscow regarding surrender?

**A** No, those approaches were made about a month later. I was serving as the representative of President Truman on the Interim Committee, and, as early as June 1, that Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to President Truman that the bomb be used without specific warning and as soon as practical.

The afternoon the agreement was reached, I advised the President of the action of the Committee. After we had discussed it for a while, he said he'd given considerable thought to it, and, while he appreciated the tremendous possibilities that might result from the use of this unknown weapon, that reluctantly he agreed there could be no other

## ... "We would have had more casualties" without the A-bomb

action—that he had to follow the advice of the Interim Committee.

**Q That the bomb should be dropped when ready?**

**A** Yes. And a few days later, Mr. Stimson, as chairman of that Interim Committee, submitted the recommendation of the Committee formally and in writing, going into details as to what should be done then and recommending that after the war steps should be taken to have the secrets of production turned over to an international organization, with power to inspect and control production.

**Q Before drawing up the Potsdam Declaration, there were some suggestions that the Japanese be given assurance that the Emperor would be retained. Why did the Potsdam Declaration omit this proposal regarding the Emperor?**

**A** The draft given to me by the President, and which I now have, does not contain any such assurance. It did not refer specifically to the status of the Emperor. I know that in the State Department there was some division of sentiment among officials as to whether there should be specific mention of the status of the Emperor, but in the draft which Secretary of War Henry Stimson first gave to the President, and he gave to me, there is no statement.

### WHAT WENT ON AT POTSDAM—

**Q Do you recall any discussions at Potsdam with President Truman and/or Mr. Stimson on the question of whether the proclamation to Japan should include a categorical undertaking that unconditional surrender would not mean the elimination of the dynasty, if the Japanese people desired its retention?**

**A** Mr. Stimson did not talk to me at any time about the Emperor, and the first draft of the Declaration which was given to me by the President—and which had been given to him by Mr. Stimson—has no reference to what should be the future status of the Emperor.

**Q Was there full concurrence in the decision by President Truman's top advisers, including Mr. Stimson?**

**A** It was my understanding President Truman did not discuss the Declaration with anyone other than Mr. Churchill, General Marshall, Admiral Leahy [military adviser to the President], Stimson and me. If Stimson did not approve, the President did not so advise me.

**Q In retrospect, might it have been possible to avoid using the atom bomb by offering Japan a chance to keep its Emperor, as Joseph Crew [U. S. Ambassador to Japan before World War II] has stated?**

**A** That's dealing in the realm of speculation. Later, on August 11, in drafting the message to Japan replying to their surrender message, I wrote that Japan would have the right to determine the form of government under which its people wished to live. It was approved by the President and by Stimson.

**Q Would any assurance regarding the retaining of the institution of the Emperor have encouraged Japan to open negotiations for surrender sooner?**

**A** I do not think so. The militarists were still in control. The record shows that on July 21, five days before the Potsdam Declaration was released, the Japanese Government advised its Ambassador in Moscow that "so long as the enemy demands unconditional surrender we will fight as one man against the enemy."

**Q But in our final acceptance of their offer of surrender, didn't we agree to retain the institution of the Emperor? Wasn't that a change from the Potsdam Declaration?**

**A** No. When the Japanese Government submitted its agreement to surrender, provided the surrender did not en-

visage the insistence upon the removal of the Emperor, we replied that "from the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms."

**Q Did this represent any change of view on our part?**

**A** No, it did not. It was a requirement that the Emperor, as head of the Japanese Government, should agree to the terms of surrender. Then we added that it was for the people of Japan to determine the form of government under which they would live.

**Q Did we want to drop the bomb as soon as possible in order to finish the war before Russia got in?**

**A** Of course, we were anxious to get the war over as soon as possible.

**Q Was there a feeling of urgency to end the war in the Pacific before the Russians became too deeply involved?**

**A** There certainly was on my part, and I'm sure that, whatever views President Truman may have had of it earlier in the year, that in the days immediately preceding the dropping of that bomb his views were the same as mine—we wanted to get through with the Japanese phase of the war before the Russians came in. On July 26, Jim Forrestal [then Secretary of the Navy, later Secretary of Defense] wrote in his "Diaries," page 78: "Talked with Byrnes now at Potsdam. Byrnes said he was most anxious to get the Japanese affair over with before the Russians got in, with particular reference to Dairen and Port Arthur. Once in there, he felt it would not be easy to get them out."

**Q Was there a feeling by that time that the Russians would not be needed?**

**A** After the successful test of the bomb, of course, there was a feeling of greater assurance, and yet the military advised Stimson—who advised the President—that we should proceed with plans for the invasion in the fall.

**Q Even in August, did the military think we would need the Russians?**

**A** Yes, they did, and Stimson stated in one of his books that he was so advised when he asked the opinion of the staff.

**Q Do you think that the dropping of the atom bomb raised world problems that would not have developed otherwise?**

**A** Oh, of course, it has raised problems that we are today wrestling with, and we will continue to wrestle with.

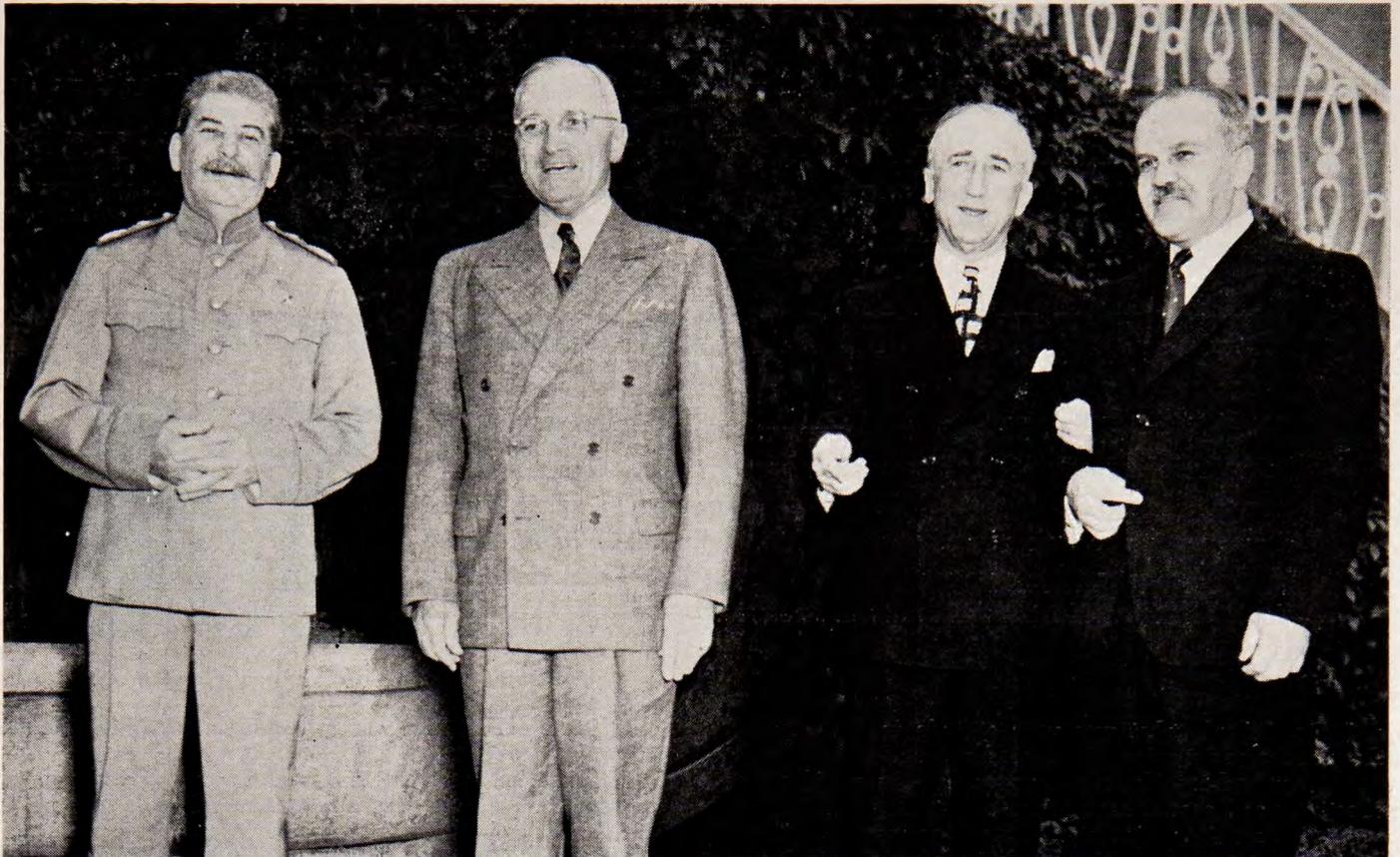
### IF THE BOMB WASN'T USED—

**Q How would the world of today have been different if the United States had not dropped the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?**

**A** Well, we would have had more casualties, but looking back and knowing what we do now about Japan's military condition in August, 1945, we can see that we would have been victorious in the war with Japan without the great losses that the military had anticipated, and today the world would be a safer place in which to live.

**Q Did we foresee that the Russians soon would develop the A-bomb, too?**

**A** Of course, our people had given thought to the Soviets' developing a bomb. As a member of the Interim Committee, when we heard the various physicists and the captains of industry who were in charge of the production of the bomb, I asked several of them their opinion as to how soon the Soviets could produce an atomic bomb. The physicists and some of the industrialists were of the opinion that in two



—Defense Department

AT POTSDAM: Joseph Stalin, President Truman, Secretary of State Byrnes, Russian Foreign Minister Molotov. Mr. Byrnes was "satisfied that Stalin did not appreciate the significance" when Mr. Truman told him that the United States had a new weapon.

years the Soviets would be able to ascertain the secret of the atomic bomb.

**Q** This was two years from 1945?

**A** Yes. But these people added that the Soviets would not have the know-how to produce a bomb—that we had done it because of our wonderful industrial organization and the fact that, during the war, we were able to draft for this service the brightest minds in the nation.

The consensus was that it would take the Soviets five additional years to develop a bomb. And I personally felt that, in that seven years, we would undoubtedly be far ahead of the Russians in the atomic field.

**Q** Did the dropping of the atom bomb in Japan hasten in any way the Soviet development of the atom bomb, and later the H-bomb?

**A** I suppose so, because they might not have undertaken the work upon it with such speed, had it not been for the knowledge that we possessed such a destructive weapon. I can understand that it would spur them to take steps to develop a bomb. Certainly that's what they did, and it would seem to have had that effect.

**Q** Once the atom bomb was developed—whether or not used—was an arms race in this new weapon inevitable?

**A** I think so.

**Q** Do you think it could have been avoided?

**A** I do not know how we could have avoided it. Knowing what we now do of the ambitions of the Soviets to dominate the world, it is apparent that they would have left nothing undone in order to develop this tremendously destructive weapon. I hate to think of what would have happened if they had atomic weapons and we had none.

**Q** Did our use of the atom bomb weaken our standing in world opinion?

**A** When we speak of "world opinion," of course that covers a lot of territory. Certainly it did not affect our prestige with the free nations of the world that are today our Allies. I don't think that it has affected our prestige with the neutrals. And certainly, so far as the Soviet Union is concerned, they respect only power.

**Q** Do you think it cost us prestige among the peoples of Asia, since they were Asians that we dropped the bomb on?

**A** That is impossible for me to speculate upon. I have seen no evidence that the people of the Asian countries are entertaining animosity toward us because of the fact that it was dropped upon Japan, with which country we were at war.

**Q** Was this problem of world opinion discussed in high councils in 1945, before the bomb was dropped?

**A** Not that I ever heard. Every person connected with the decision realized the terrific results that were possible, but we wanted to bring the war to an end—save the lives of American boys.

**Q** In your book, you have expressed considerable wonder at Stalin's lack of interest in Truman's announcement to him that he had a new-type weapon, and you weren't sure at that time why Stalin didn't seem to be interested. Do you have any further thoughts on that now?

**A** No. I am just as convinced now as I was when I wrote that first book, "Speaking Frankly," in 1947, that Stalin did not appreciate the significance of the statement. I have read stories by so-called historians who assert that he must have known it, but they were not present. I was. I watched Stalin's face. He smiled and said only a few words, and Mr. Truman

## ... Some scientists "had misgivings about use of the bomb"

shook hands with him, left, coming back to where I was seated and the two of us went to our automobile.

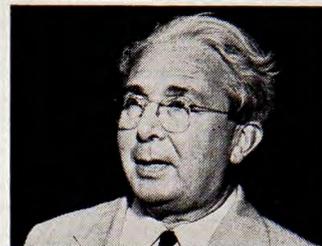
I recall telling the President at the time, as we were driving back to our headquarters, that, after Stalin left the room and got back to his own headquarters, it would dawn on him, and the following day the President would have a lot of questions to answer. President Truman thought that

most probable. He devoted some time in talking to me that evening as to how far he could go—or should go.

Stalin never asked him a question about it. I am satisfied that Stalin did not appreciate the significance of President Truman's statement. I'm pretty certain that they knew we were working on this bomb, but we had kept secret how far that development had gone.

## "PRESIDENT TRUMAN DID NOT UNDERSTAND"

**DR. LEO SZILARD, 62**, is a Hungarian-born physicist who helped persuade President Roosevelt to launch the A-bomb project and who had a major share in it. In 1945, however, he was a key figure among scientists opposing use of the bomb. Later he turned to biophysics, and this year was awarded the Einstein medal for "outstanding achievement in natural sciences."



At NEW YORK

**Q** Dr. Szilard, what was your attitude in 1945 toward the question of dropping the atomic bomb on Japan?

**A** I opposed it with all my power, but I'm afraid not as effectively as I should have wished.

**Q** Did any other scientists feel the same way you did?

**A** Very many other scientists felt this way. This is particularly true of Oak Ridge and the Metallurgical Laboratory of the University of Chicago. I don't know how the scientists felt at Los Alamos.

**Q** At the Oak Ridge and Chicago branches of the A-bomb project, was there any division of opinion?

**A** I'll say this: Almost without exception, all the creative physicists had misgivings about use of the bomb. I would not say the same about the chemists. The biologists felt very much as the physicists did.

**Q** When did your misgivings first arise?

**A** Well, I started to worry about the use of the bomb in the spring of '45. But misgivings about our way of conducting ourselves arose in Chicago when we first learned that we were using incendiary bombs on a large scale against the cities of Japan.

This, of course, was none of our responsibility. There was nothing we could do about it, but I do remember that my colleagues in the project were disturbed about it.

**Q** Did you have any knowledge of Secretary of War Stimson's concern at this time on the question of using the bomb?

**A** I knew that Mr. Stimson was a thoughtful man who gave the bomb serious consideration. He was one of the most thoughtful members of the Truman Cabinet. However, I certainly have to take exception to the article Stimson wrote after Hiroshima in "Harper's Magazine." He wrote that a "demonstration" of the A-bomb was impossible because we had only two bombs. Had we staged a "demonstration" both bombs might have been duds and then we would have lost face.

Now, this argument is clearly invalid. It is quite true that at the time of Hiroshima we had only two bombs, but it would not have been necessary to wait for very long before we would have had several more.

**Q** Were you aware then of the attitude of Under Secretary of the Navy Ralph Bard or of the memorandum by Lewis L. Strauss?

**A** No.

**Q** So, in effect, there was no concerted opposition to military use of the bomb?

**A** No, there was none. You see, it would have been impossible for me to go and talk to Lewis Strauss because of the secrecy rules.

**Q** Do you feel that President Truman and those immediately below him gave full and conscientious study to all the alternatives to use of the atomic bomb?

**A** I do not think they did. They thought only in terms of our having to end the war by military means.

I don't think Japan would have surrendered unconditionally without the use of force. But there was no need to demand the unconditional surrender of Japan. If we had offered Japan the kind of peace treaty which we actually gave her, we could have had a negotiated peace.

**Q** In retrospect, do you think your views got a full hearing?

**A** Let me answer this by describing in detail just what kind of hearing my views got.

In March, 1945, I prepared a memorandum which was meant to be presented to President Roosevelt. This memorandum warned that the use of the bomb against the cities of Japan would start an atomic-arms race with Russia, and it raised the question whether avoiding such an arms race might not be more important than the short-term goal of knocking Japan out of the war. I was not certain that this memorandum would reach the President if I sent it "through channels." Therefore, I asked to see Mrs. Roosevelt, and I intended to transmit my memorandum through her—in a sealed envelope—to the President.

When Mrs. Roosevelt set the date for the interview which I had requested, I went to see Arthur H. Compton, who was in charge of the Chicago project. I rather expected him to object to the contents of my memorandum, and I was therefore much relieved when he told me that he hoped I would get the memorandum into the hands of the President and that it would receive the attention of the President. I then went back to my own office, and I hadn't been there for more than five minutes when there was a knock on the door and there stood Dr. Norman Hilberry. "We have just heard over the radio that President Roosevelt died," he said.

## ... There was "no policy on problem that the bomb would pose"

For a while I was at a loss to know how to bring my memorandum to President Truman's attention. I knew many people who knew Roosevelt, but President Truman didn't seem to move in the same circles. Then it occurred to me that we must have several men from Kansas City in the project and that some of these might know how to reach Truman.

When I was asked to go to the White House and see Matt Connelly, Truman's Appointments Secretary, I suggested to Walter Bartky, associate director of our project, that he accompany me. Mr. Connelly read my memorandum with attention. "I can now see that this is serious business," he said. "Frankly, at first I was a little suspicious because this appointment came through Kansas City." He told us that the President had an inkling of what our business might be and that he wanted us to go to Spartanburg and see James Byrnes. We didn't know why we were sent to see Byrnes, since at that point Byrnes held no Government position. We were quite willing to go, of course, and we asked for permission to take [atomic scientist] H. C. Urey along. On May 27 we took the night train to Spartanburg.

### Q What happened then?

A Having read the memorandum, the first thing that Byrnes told us was that General Groves [head of the Manhattan District, which developed the A-bomb] had informed him that Russia had no uranium. Of course, if Russia did not have any uranium then she would not be able to participate in an atomic-arms race, but to me this seemed to be an exceedingly unlikely assumption. It was conceivable that Russia might have no high-grade uranium-ore deposits—deposits of pitchblende. The only known pitchblende deposit within the control of Russia was the deposit in Czechoslovakia, and this was not believed to be very extensive. But I found it very difficult to believe that within the vast expanse of Russia there should be no low-grade uranium-ore deposits which could be used to obtain uranium for the production of bombs.

When I saw Mr. Byrnes I was very much concerned about the fact that no governmental policy had been developed on the issue of how to cope with the problem that the bomb would pose to the world. I raised the question of whether it might not be wise to gain time for developing such a governmental policy by postponing the testing of the bomb. It seemed to me that once the bomb had been tested its existence could not be kept secret for long. Byrnes did not think that postponing the test was a good idea, and, in retrospect, I am inclined to agree with him. In retrospect, I don't think that postponing the test would have solved our problem.

Byrnes was concerned about Russia's having taken over Poland, Rumania and Hungary, and so was I. Byrnes thought that the possession of the bomb by America would render the Russians more manageable in Europe. I failed to see how sitting on a stockpile of bombs, which in the circumstances we could not possibly use, would have this effect, and I thought it even conceivable that it would have just the opposite effect.

When I returned to Chicago and learned that Byrnes had been appointed Secretary of State, I concluded that the arguments that I regarded as important would receive no consideration. I didn't realize at that time that Secretary Stimson would play a major role in the final decision and that he might be able to understand my point of view better than Mr. Byrnes had done.

In Chicago I collaborated in the writing of the so-called Franck Report. This report was addressed to Secretary Stimson, but none of those who participated in the writing of that report, including Prof. James Franck, had an opportunity to see Mr. Stimson.

In the meantime I drafted a petition to the President which did not go into any considerations of expediency but opposed, on purely moral grounds, the use of atomic bombs against the cities of Japan. This petition was signed by about 60 members of the Chicago project. Some of those who



—Wide World Photos

WHEN THE U. S. RAINED FIRE ON JAPAN . . . IT LEFT CITIES LIKE TOKYO IN RUINS

Dr. Szilard recalls that scientists had "misgivings when we learned we were using incendiary bombs on a large scale"

## ... By using A-bomb, "we greatly affected postwar history"

signed insisted that the petition be transmitted to the President through "official channels." To this I reluctantly agreed. I was, at this point, mainly concerned that the members of the project have an opportunity to go on record on this issue, and I didn't think that the petition would be likely to have an effect on the course of events. The petition was sent to the President through official channels, and I should not be too surprised if it were discovered one of these days that it hadn't ever reached him.

**Q Did you think then that the Russians probably were working on the bomb?**

**A** I had no idea of this. The question before us was: Should we think in terms of America's having a long-term monopoly of the bomb after the war, or will Russia have the bomb before long also? I had no doubt that we would start an atomic-arms race if we used the bomb.

**Q Would a demonstration have been feasible?**

**A** It is easy to see, at least in retrospect, how an effective demonstration could have been staged. We could have communicated with Japan through regular diplomatic channels—say, through Switzerland—and explained to the Japanese that it was our intention to demonstrate a new bomb. We should have said that we didn't want to kill anybody, and therefore proposed that one city—say, Hiroshima—be evacuated. Then one single bomber would come and drop one single bomb.

But again, I don't believe this staging a demonstration was the real issue, and in a sense it is just as immoral to force a sudden ending of a war by threatening violence as by using violence. My point is that violence would not have been necessary if we had been willing to negotiate. After all, Japan was suing for peace.

**Q Did you know that fully at the time?**

**A** No. All I knew at that time was that we had won the war, that Japan had not the ghost of a chance of winning it and that she must know this. It did not matter just how far gone the Japanese were; if they knew they would not win the war, if they knew they would lose it in the end, that is all that matters.

## THE MAJOR MISTAKE—

**Q Have your views on this subject changed at all since 1945?**

**A** No, except that I can say much more clearly today what I was thinking at that time than I was able to say it at that time. Today I would put the whole emphasis on the mistake of insisting on unconditional surrender. Today I would say that the confusion arose from considering the fake alternatives of either having to invade Japan or of having to use the bomb against her cities.

**Q Would most other nations, including Russia, have done the same thing we did, confronted with the same opportunity to use the bomb?**

**A** Look, answering this question would be pure speculation. I can say this, however: By and large, governments are guided by considerations of expediency rather than by moral considerations. And this, I think, is a universal law of how governments act.

Prior to the war I had the illusion that up to a point the American Government was different. This illusion was gone after Hiroshima.

Perhaps you remember that in 1939 President Roosevelt warned the belligerents against using bombs against the inhabited cities, and this I thought was perfectly fitting and natural.

Then, during the war, without any explanation, we began to use incendiary bombs against the cities of Japan. This was disturbing me and it was disturbing many of my friends.

**Q Was that the end of the illusion?**

**A** Yes, this was the end of the illusion. But, you see, there was still a difference between using incendiary bombs and using the new force of nature for purposes of destruction. There was still a further step taken here—atomic energy was something new.

I thought it would be very bad to set a precedent for using atomic energy for purposes of destruction. And I think that having done so we have greatly affected the postwar history.

## HOW BOMBING BOOMERANGED—

**Q In what way?**

**A** I think it made it very difficult for us to take the position after the war that we wanted to get rid of atomic bombs because it would be immoral to use them against the civilian population. We lost the moral argument with which, right after the war, we might have perhaps gotten rid of the bomb.

Let me say only this much as to the moral issue involved: Suppose Germany had developed two bombs before we had any bombs. And suppose Germany had dropped one bomb, say, on Rochester and the other on Buffalo, and then having run out of bombs she would have lost the war. Can anyone doubt that we would then have defined the dropping of atomic bombs on cities as a war crime, and that we would have sentenced the Germans who were guilty of this crime to death at Nuremberg and hanged them?

But, again, don't misunderstand me. The only conclusion we can draw is that governments acting in a crisis are guided by considerations of expediency, and moral considerations are given very little weight, and that America is no different from any other nation in this respect.

**Q How would the world of today have been different if we had not dropped the atomic bomb on Japan?**

**A** I think, if we had not dropped the bomb on Hiroshima and instead demonstrated the bomb after the war, then, if we had really wanted to rid the world of the atomic bombs, I think we could probably have done it.

Now, whether this would have led to a better world or not, I don't know. But it certainly would have been a world very different from the one we have now.

**Q Do you think it would have avoided a nuclear-arms race?**

**A** I think we could have avoided a nuclear-arms race, yes, but we might still have gotten into conflict with Russia—over other issues.

**Q Would the Russians have developed the atomic and the hydrogen bombs as quickly if we had not dropped the bomb? Do you think they hurried up their espionage and research after Hiroshima?**

**A** They had no choice but to hurry up with developing their own bomb, since they would not want us to have the monopoly of the bomb.

**Q Were the Russians aware of the work we were doing?**

**A** Yes. This I did not know at the time. I would say, in retrospect, that not testing the bomb probably would not have gained us very much time.

**Q Do you think that the "missile age" would have come as quickly without the atomic bomb?**

**A** No; the long-range missile would be completely useless without a nuclear warhead, because they are too expensive as vehicles for carrying TNT.

## ... Hiroshima attack "delayed five years" H-bomb development

**Q** What about the space age in general? Would that also have been put off into the indefinite future?

**A** I should think so.

**Q** Then was space exploration—missiles, hydrogen bombs, all the rest of it—a natural outgrowth of the atomic bomb?

**A** I think so. But, you see, I'm in no hurry to get to Mars or Venus. I don't value the exploration of the solar system as much as maybe others do.

**Q** Do Americans have a guilt complex over the bomb?

**A** I wouldn't exactly call it a "guilt complex." But you remember perhaps John Hershey's "Hiroshima." It made a very great impression on America, but it did not in England. Why?

It was we who used the bomb and not the English. Somewhere, below the level of the consciousness, we have a stake in the bomb, which the English don't have. Still, I wouldn't call it a "guilt complex."

**Q** Has this feeling, whatever it is, affected us in any material way?

**A** Great power imposes the obligation of exercising restraint, and we did not live up to this obligation. I think this affected many of the scientists in a subtle sense, and it diminished their desire to continue to work on the bomb.

**Q** Did Hiroshima affect our own development of the hydrogen bomb?

**A** I should say it delayed it five years. I think, if we'd exercised restraint, many physicists would have continued to work on atomic energy after the war who did not.

**Q** Would a United States Government today, confronted with the same set of choices and approximately the same degree of military intelligence, reach a different decision as to using the first A-bomb?

**A** I think it depends on the person of the President. Truman did not understand what was involved. You can see that from the language he used. Truman announced the bombing of Hiroshima while he was at sea coming back from Potsdam, and his announcement contained the phrase—I quote from the New York "Times" of Aug. 7, 1945: "We have spent 2 billion dollars on the greatest scientific gamble in history—and won."

To put the atom bomb in terms of having gambled 2 billion dollars and having "won" offended my sense of proportions, and I concluded at that time that Truman did not understand at all what was involved.

## "I PROPOSED BOMBING AN UNINHABITED AREA"

**LEWIS L. STRAUSS**, now 64, knew of the A-bomb project as an assistant to the Secretary of the Navy. In 1946, he was appointed to the Atomic Energy Commission and eventually became its Chairman. Mr. Strauss led the fight to develop the hydrogen bomb, and later insisted on a nuclear-testing program. He resigned as Chairman in 1958, and has returned to private life.



At CULPEPER, Va.

**Q** Mr. Strauss, do you feel it was a mistake to drop the atomic bomb in Japan?

**A** Even though 15 years have elapsed since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the very fact that you've asked the question indicates that it is still too early to make an unequivocal historical judgment—that is, it's still a matter of opinion. In my opinion, it was a mistake to use the bomb in the manner that it was used. I emphasize the word *manner*. That was my view, however, at the time it was done, so that I am not an impartial judge.

**Q** Why do you feel it was a mistake?

**A** Because, in the late spring of 1945, Japan was defeated before the bombing, except for the formal act of surrender.

There is debate about this, but consider that her fleet had been wiped out. Her few surviving capital ships were anchored in the Inland Sea without fuel. Her Air Force had been all but swept from the skies. Her supplies of gasoline to keep a few of them flying had been cut off. She was a beleaguered island.

And we were intercepting and decoding messages which the Japanese Foreign Office was sending to the Japanese envoy in Moscow directing him—finally, almost beseeching him—to call on Stalin and persuade Stalin to intercede with the Allies for peace. Stalin, incidentally, wasn't seeing him. The final messages from Japan indeed stipulated only that the integrity of the Japanese royal family be preserved.

**Q** Did it occur to any top officials in Washington that a direct approach to Japan might bring surrender?

**A** I don't know what the top officials of that day were thinking. I was in a very low echelon. There were conversations on the subject—at my level. There was a general feeling that the Japanese were on their last legs, which feeling in my own case was reinforced by the access I had to these decoded intercepts.

I don't believe that a landing of troops on Japan against opposition would have been necessary. That is, let's say, analogous to a military judgment as to whether you reduce a city by starving it out or try by sacrificing lives to breach walls. The two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, however, unquestionably accelerated the date of the unconditional surrender.

**Q** Was much attention given in Washington to the possibility that use of the A-bomb could be avoided by giving the Japanese an assurance on the Emperor's status and bringing their surrender sooner?

**A** That I can't answer. But this is a fact which those who are old enough to have lived through World War I would have known: That, in a country which is defeated, if the central government is destroyed, you have absolute chaos and much loss of life for a period of time until some government is established. In a nation like Japan, where the Emperor, in addition to being the head of the state, is in a semireligious sense the father of all Japanese—he's the "head

## ... Result of bombing a city: an "aftermath of resentment"

of the family" so to speak—the destruction of the authority of the royal family and of the Emperor would have had disastrous consequences. And, to General MacArthur's great credit, this historic authority of the Emperor was immediately recognized and preserved and was used with great effect to maintain order.

**Q** In your own opinion which you voiced at the time, did you make this point?

**A** I proposed—I think it was to the then Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, who was my direct superior, or to Under Secretary [Ralph A.] Bard—that the weapon be used in Japan over either an uninhabited area or, after a warning, over a sparsely inhabited area, preferably a forest near Nikko, where the effects of blast and heat would be

how a demonstration would result in a risk to our armed forces. Our armed forces are risked all the time in war.

**Q** It was suggested, for instance, that if we sent a plane over a target designated beforehand, the Japanese might send up their available fighter planes to bring it down—

**A** Well, we sent many planes on missions with fighter-escort cover, and this would be no more hazardous than that.

**Q** What about the argument that the A-bomb used in a demonstration might turn out to be a dud?

**A** I've heard that one, and it strikes me as a poor argument.

**Q** Was there much discussion of the possible effects of the use of the atomic bomb on our standing and prestige abroad?

**A** Not so far as I know.

**Q** Do you think the world would be different today had the atomic bomb not been used, or would it be a better world?

**A** I can't give you an answer to that question. I think our national conscience and the conscience of science might be easier had the war come to a favorable end without the use of bombs over inhabited cities and noncombatants. Whether the world would be a better world in such a case, of course, is quite another matter. It's man, and not man's inventions, which make the world more or less moral. Certainly more people have been done to death more savagely by swords and spears and bludgeons than by the atom. A better world? Who can say? A different world? Perhaps yes—surely, yes.

## SPUR TO "RIVAL" NATIONS—

**Q** General Marshall is said to have told the Interim Committee that it would be better not to use the bomb if we could keep it secret. Did that imply that by using the bomb we would immediately stir other nations into getting A-bombs of their own?

**A** I'm at a disadvantage there because I do not know of the particular quotation attributed to General Marshall to which you have referred. But it seems to me that there is little doubt but that our use of the bomb made it imperative that a rival nation capable of producing it would get the atomic bomb.

**Q** Were we slowed down in our own development of the hydrogen bomb because of a "scientists' rebellion" against the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

**A** I would think not. We developed the hydrogen bomb in about three years, which is certainly par for the course. I think surely it was developed as soon as the most optimistic thought it could be done. In any case, there had to be an invention—a real inspiration—which was supplied by Dr. Edward Teller, before the bomb could be built. Now, whether the problem could have been solved in some other way or solved more quickly if there had been no reservations by any scientist, I cannot say and I do not know anyone who could.

**Q** Do you think the hydrogen bomb was an inevitable successor to the atomic bomb, whether or not we used the atomic bomb?

**A** I think this requires a real flight of fancy. If atomic energy is some day to be used, for instance, to open up large deposits of oil or to uncover strip mines or to dig harbors and canals or large reservoirs for water containment, such requirements would call for devices that were "cleaner" than atomic bombs. The hydrogen bomb is essentially less objectionable than the atomic bomb from the point of view of



—UPI

EMPEROR HIROHITO—Would an Allied promise to keep him on his throne have brought surrender before the A-bombs?

demonstrable after the explosion. I thought that this would demonstrate the power of the bomb fully as well as the destruction of a city without leaving the aftermath of resentment and grief that the employment of so dreadful a weapon would entail.

**Q** What happened to that suggestion of yours?

**A** Well, it was the suggestion of a junior Reserve officer in the Navy, which as a Department was only a junior partner in the atomic enterprise.

**Q** You said you addressed it to Mr. Forrestal?

**A** I would think so. The matter was so confidential and so secret that I was not at liberty to discuss it generally.

**Q** Wasn't it said of proposals such as yours that they would have involved serious risks for us? Were those objections valid?

**A** They don't seem to hold much water to me. I don't see

## ... "Decision was made in good faith to bring war to end"

radioactive residue. Therefore, I think it's possible that, with the passage of time, had the military competition not existed as between the Russians and ourselves for the production of more-efficient weapons, nevertheless, an explosive deriving its energy from the fusion of the nuclei of light atoms would have been needed and would have been developed.

**Q** Do you feel, as some do, that the atomic age was born with a "stain of guilt"?

**A** No. I don't take any stock in that. There can, of course, be times when anyone who is engaged in a war in defense of his country and who in principle hates the idea of the taking of human life may have a feeling of guilt, but there is a moral obligation to defend your own hearth against the aggression of an enemy. And, unless you believe completely in nonresistance, there is no foundation for such a feeling of guilt.

**Q** Does a "guilt complex" exist among a fairly large number of Americans over the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

**A** I've heard it expressed, but not widely. It was a military decision made by the Commander in Chief. It was made in good faith to bring the war to a quick end.

**Q** Was there a fundamental failure anywhere along the line in the decisions which led to the bombing of Hiroshima?

**A** Well, there was a fundamental military decision which was made—to bomb or not to bomb—and the affirmative decision was taken. The only possible failure that might have occurred—and I'm not in any position to know for a certainty that it did—is whether all the information about the intercepts had been seen by those who participated in the decision.

**Q** Would the missile age have come as quickly had the atomic bomb not been dropped?

**A** The atomic bomb represented the first time in the

history of our country that a comparable amount of the national treasure and income had been spent on a single project—it cost 2 billion dollars to develop the first bomb. Now, that conditioned the country to conclude that you could do almost anything by expending large sums of money—so-called "crash" programs. This made it possible for a very large amount of money to be appropriated for projects without raising screams of protest.

The missile program results in experimental shots every little while—some successful and some failing—and each of them costs more than our Navy spent on its prewar research over a period of years. Thus the Manhattan project, which developed the first atomic bomb, set a precedent for going ahead with the missile program. We have become accustomed to the expenditure of large sums of money to achieve a technological objective.

**Q** Would it have been possible to keep secret our possession of the atomic bomb if we had not used it?

**A** I think not. The project was successfully penetrated by Communist spies, but our use of the bomb served as a demonstration of its effectiveness which otherwise would not have been established.

**Q** Do you think that any other nation, given the opportunity we had to use the atomic bomb, would have foregone that opportunity?

**A** I do not see how anyone can answer that question.

**Q** Would Russia have used the bomb had it been given a similar opportunity?

**A** We used the bomb in a war which had begun with a surprise aerial attack upon us by Japan. The unprovoked Communist invasion of Finland in 1939, the Soviet ruthlessness in Hungary three years ago, not to mention a number of other events all in time of peace, suggest that the Russians have no scruples whatever.

## "WAR WAS REALLY WON BEFORE WE USED A-BOMB"

**RALPH A. BARD, 76**, was Under Secretary of the Navy in 1945 and represented that Department on the Committee that recommended use of the A-bomb without warning. He was the only Committee member on record against that recommendation. He has been an industrial financier and consultant in Chicago for more than half a century, and is a leader in civic enterprises.



At CHICAGO

**Q** Mr. Bard, looking back, do you feel that your misgivings in 1945 about use of the atom bomb were justified?

**A** I think that, in the light of what's happened since the dropping of the bomb, it seems perfectly evident that a warning to the Japanese at that time—before dropping the bomb—would have resulted almost certainly in peace.

**Q** Would there have been a surrender, then, without the dropping of the bomb?

**A** I think that the Japanese were ready for peace, and they already had approached the Russians and, I think, the Swiss. And that suggestion of a warning was a face-saving proposition for them, and one that they could have readily accepted. They were entirely surrounded at that time, they

were starving and they were in much worse shape than some people in Washington thought, in my opinion.

**Q** Did you think then, and do you think now, that it was a mistake to drop the bomb?

**A** Without a warning, I was not opposed to dropping the bombs, but I did think it would be a very good thing to warn them and see what happened. And a warning would not necessarily hurt our position in any way.

**Q** So you favored dropping the bomb, but after a warning to the Japanese?

**A** That's right.

**Q** How wide a circulation did your memorandum to the Interim Committee, studying use of the bomb, actually get?

**A** The matter was discussed in the Interim Committee,

## ... "Nobody knew whether the bombs would be successful"

and I'm quite sure it was called to the attention of Secretary Stimson. Whether it went to the President or not, I don't know.

**Q** Did you ever discuss it with Mr. Stimson or Mr. Truman?

**A** No.

**Q** What led up to your memorandum—that is, what specifically led you to believe that the Japanese might accept a conference of the type you proposed?

**A** There was no specific reason except that I felt that they were ready for something of that kind, and I felt that it couldn't do any harm. And it would relieve us of a lot of criticism that we've had since.

**Q** Did you have misgivings about the use of the bomb at the time of the Committee's recommendation on June 1 to use the bomb?

**A** The matter was discussed in the Committee and—as a result of the discussions, and the information that I got about the general situation—I was led to write this letter making this suggestion.

**Q** So you had more information at the time of the memorandum than you did on June 1—

**A** Yes. Naturally we discussed the matter for several weeks, and events were developing that made it look more feasible to me all the time, because Japan was getting into a more difficult position constantly during that month.

**Q** Did you voice these misgivings during the meetings that led up to the Committee's recommendation on June 1, 1945?

**A** Yes.

**Q** How did you arrive at your conclusion that a warning was feasible?

**A** I felt, as I said in my letter, that the United States was a great humanitarian nation, and that a warning could be arranged through an emissary from the President of the United States to the Emperor of Japan, so that it would be

authentic and would, I think, be believed by the Japanese people.

I didn't see how it could harm our program at all. Of course, at that time, nobody knew whether the bombs would be successfully exploded or not. The scientists did not know, could not test these bombs in advance.

**Q** What was the general reaction to your proposal?

**A** I recall that several members of the Committee had a thought that the Japanese would consider that this was just another threat or another bluff, and that it wouldn't be effective.

My reply to that was, "Even if it were not effective, we—the United States—would have gone on record before the world with the warning."

**Q** So this was a moral question with you?

**A** Yes. And, also, I felt that there was a good chance that this would result in peace. If it had, we would never have had to bring the Russians into the Japanese war and we wouldn't have had to disclose our bombs.

**Q** Were you concerned by the question of Russia's entry into the war against Japan?

**A** Yes. I felt then, and I've felt ever since, that they never should have been brought in. There was no occasion whatever to bring them into the war.

**Q** Could we then have forestalled Russia's entry into the war?

**A** If peace had resulted following the warning, it certainly would have ended the war, and there would have been no occasion or opportunity for Russia to enter the war.

**Q** Would some kind of assurance about the Emperor have had a chance of bringing about Japan's surrender before the atom bomb was used?

**A** I think it would have had a great effect.

**Q** What would be different about the world today if we had not used the atom bomb? Would it have been a better world?

**A** In my opinion, the Japanese war was really won be-

## AN OFFICIAL DISSENT ON USE OF THE A-BOMB

*Of eight men officially responsible for recommendations on use of the atomic bomb, only one, Ralph A. Bard, then Under Secretary of the Navy, opposed use of the bomb without warning or efforts to secure Japan's surrender by diplomatic means. Text of his memorandum to the assistant chairman of the Interim Committee on June 27, 1945, follows:*

Ever since I have been in touch with this program, I have had a feeling that before the bomb is actually used against Japan that Japan should have some preliminary warning for say two or three days in advance of use. The position of the United States as a great humanitarian nation and the fair play attitude of our people generally is responsible in the main for this feeling.

During recent weeks I have also had the feeling very definitely that the Japanese government may be searching for some opportunity which they could use as a medium for surrender. Following the three-

power conference [at Potsdam] emissaries from this country could contact representatives from Japan somewhere on the China coast and make representations with regard to Russia's position and at the same time give them some information regarding the proposed use of atomic power, together with whatever assurances the President might care to make with regard to the Emperor of Japan and the treatment of the Japanese nation following unconditional surrender. It seems quite possible to me that this presents the opportunity which the Japanese are looking for.

I don't see that we have anything in particular to lose in following such a program. The stakes are so tremendous that it is my opinion very real consideration should be given to some plan of this kind. I do not believe under present circumstances existing that there is anyone in this country whose evaluation of the chances of success of such a program is worth a great deal. The only way to find out is to try it out.

## ... Invading Japan would have meant "tremendous loss of life"

fore we ever used the atom bomb. Thus, it wouldn't have been necessary for us to disclose our nuclear position and stimulate the Russians to develop the same thing much more rapidly than they would have if we had not dropped the bomb.

**Q How long could we have kept the bomb secret, had it not been used?**

**A** Not for any great length of time. But the dropping of the bomb—the fact that it worked—certainly started everything popping, and all over the world scientists increased their activity in that direction.

**Q Do you think it set off the arms race that we are in now?**

**A** I certainly do—yes.

**Q Would there have been such an arms race had we not used the atom bomb, and would there have been a "cold war" as we know it now?**

**A** Well, there would have been an arms race without any doubt, because of Russia's attitude when the war was over. I don't think it would have developed as rapidly as it did after we had proven the destructive power of the bomb.

**Q Did the United States lose friends in some parts of the world by the use of the bomb?**

**A** There undoubtedly has been criticism to a certain degree throughout the world to the use of the bomb, but my position was that I was not opposed to using the bomb if it was necessary. I simply wanted the United States to go on record historically with a warning which would have obviated whatever criticism has resulted since that time.

**Q During this period of decisions in 1945, was adequate consideration given to the moral issues?**

**A** As I recall it, the scientists—some of the scientists, at least—were very strong for a warning.

**Q On moral grounds?**

**A** On moral grounds. And I do not think the question of a warning was given as serious consideration by the Committee, in the light of what we see now, as should have been given to that.

**Q Was the Interim Committee thinking of the military side of the question?**

**A** I think so. They wanted to win the war and get it over with, and one factor was that the military was planning an all-out attack on Japan, which would have resulted in a tremendous loss of life to our soldiers. They felt that, if the bombs worked, that would end the war and save many lives.

**Q How thoroughly did the Interim Committee discuss the foreseeable consequences of dropping the bomb in terms of political or moral reaction of other nations?**

**A** More consideration should have been given to this question.

**Q In view of the emphasis on military considerations, could the Interim Committee's decision be called one of political expediency?**

**A** I do not think so.

**Q In your judgment, what would Russia have done, given the same opportunity to use the A-bomb that we had in 1945?**

**A** I think they would have dropped the bombs without any warning.

## BOMBING OF HIROSHIMA "WAS A MISTAKE"

**DR. EDWARD TELLER**, 52, widely known as "father of the H-bomb," is another Hungarian physicist who came to the U. S. in the 1930s and participated in the building of the atomic bomb. His thermonuclear theories hastened development of the hydrogen bomb. Until recently he has been director of the University of California's radiation laboratory.



At BERKELEY, Calif.

**Q Dr. Teller, in the light of what we know now, should we have dropped the atom bomb on Japan?**

**A** I believe that it was a mistake. I certainly do not want to criticize anybody. I would have been much happier if we had first demonstrated the bomb, for instance, by a harmless explosion over Tokyo at too high an altitude to do damage, so that everyone could see what could have been done.

If the Japanese had not surrendered, we still could have used the bomb. The misconception has gotten around that we had only two bombs. We had at least the capability to produce more bombs before any planned invasion. Had the Japanese not surrendered, we should have used whatever was necessary to force the surrender. But I think it would have been much better if we had first tried other ways than the destruction of a city.

**Q How much delay might this have involved—one or two weeks?**

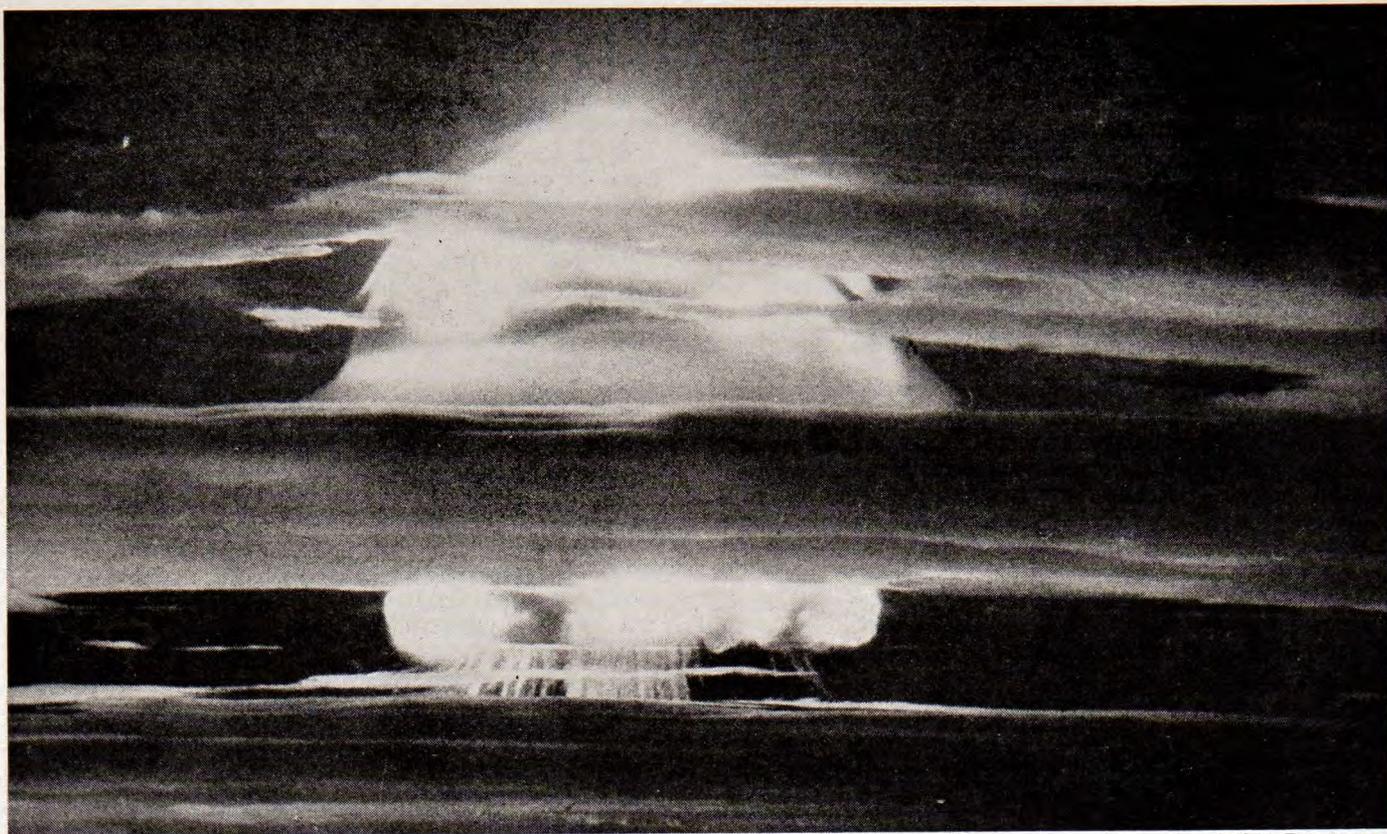
**A** Yes, that is the kind of thing I had in mind. Actually, from documents that were later captured, it is very probable that had we given the Japanese such a demonstration they would have surrendered.

**Q Was that your thinking then—or does it represent a change in your thinking since 1945?**

**A** I have not changed my thinking since 1945. At that time I went to the director of the Los Alamos laboratory and explained my feelings and my desire to join with others in asking that the bomb not be used, at least not at first. I was dissuaded from taking any such action. I was easily dissuaded, because the idea of taking a stand in a matter of such seriousness was outside my competence. I am now sorry that I did not. I was against the great destruction in the first public demonstration.

**Q How might the world today be different had the bombs not been dropped?**

**A** This first public demonstration gave people the unjustified idea that nuclear explosions are always instruments of



—Defense Department

TESTING AMERICA'S H-BOMB—To Dr. Teller, "we should have worked faster and we should work on nuclear weapons right now"

wholesale destruction. We never recovered from that idea. The great majority of the people do not understand that nuclear explosions can be used defensively in such a way that they will not cause great damage.

Nuclear explosions can be used for peaceful engineering. But we are today so scared of such explosions that we cannot discuss them publicly without undue emotion.

**Q** Once the bomb was developed, whether used or not, was an arms race in this new weapon inevitable?

**A** I think the arms race is due to the fact that the Russians want to conquer the world and we don't want to be conquered. Nuclear weapons did not give rise to the arms race.

**Q** Did the use of the bomb in Japan stir Soviet Russia to develop the weapon more quickly?

**A** I think the Russians would have developed the bomb in any case. But I also think that the impressive use of the bomb probably convinced those in authority that the development of the bomb should proceed with the greatest speed.

**Q** Were we slowed down in our own development of the H-bomb because of reaction of scientists like yourself to Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

**A** The general reaction was in that direction.

**Q** Even if the bomb had not been used on Japan, would the next step still have been development of the H-bomb?

**A** Most certainly.

**Q** Was the H-bomb the inevitable successor to the atomic bomb?

**A** It was, as events have proved, the logical successor.

**Q** Did it give us the power to impose leadership on the world?

**A** At the end of the World War it was inevitable that we

have not only the opportunity but also the responsibility of leadership. This had nothing to do with the bomb. I think that we could have taken then, and we should take now, more positive measures toward world leadership. We might help backward countries, we might set up proper supernational authorities, also we should have enough power for defense so that we and our friends won't be attacked.

**Q** Would the missile age have come as quickly had the A-bomb not been dropped?

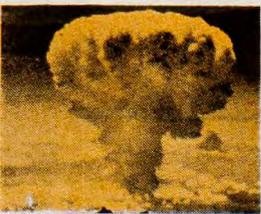
**A** I do not know what would have happened in Russia. But I do know that in our country the fact that the bombs were available was a powerful stimulus in speeding up the development of our missiles.

**Q** Was it a mistake to let others catch up?

**A** We should have worked faster and we should work on nuclear weapons right now.

Let me add one thought: People often talk about the responsibility of developing the atom bomb or the hydrogen bomb, or any other instrument of this kind. I believe that the technical men and scientists have the responsibility of developing tools for mankind. I do not believe that the scientists have or should have the responsibility to determine how these tools should be used. A tool is neither good nor bad in itself. It is the way in which it is used that is good or bad. I think that we, living in a democratic society, should have the confidence to develop whatever is possible.

Dropping the bomb on Hiroshima under wartime conditions was understandable. I think it was regrettable. It definitely would have been better not to do it. But I believe that on the whole we are going to use what we are developing in the right way. Therefore I believe that we should continue with the most rapid development in our dangerous world.



15 Years After the First A-Bomb —

# LIFE IN HIROSHIMA TODAY

**Life is changing for the A-bomb survivors of Hiroshima.**

**All sorts of terrible things were expected.**

**There were predictions of afflictions ranging from cataracts to cancer. Adults feared their children would be monsters.**

**What has the passage of 15 years shown?**

**Robert P. Martin of the International Staff of "U. S. News & World Report" was one of the first Americans to reach Hiroshima after the bomb was dropped. He has been back many times since to talk with survivors and with officials of the Atomic-Bomb Casualty Commission. This is his dispatch.**

## HIROSHIMA

Fifteen years after the first atomic bomb ever used in war exploded over Hiroshima, the survivors have learned how to live with the aftereffects of their experience.

The resignation to sickness and death, so evident a few years ago, is fast disappearing. There is less fear of the unknown. Youngsters scarred by fire and blast and exposed to radiation are adults now—and they have shed their fear of genetic damage. They are getting married and having children.

To see how Hiroshima died and then returned to life, you have to go back to September of 1945, when the first Americans—the writer among them—reached the stricken city. The bomb that had exploded nearly 2,000 feet above Hiroshima on August 6 crushed or burned 62,000 houses. Except for a few buildings of reinforced concrete, the downtown area was wiped out, and 92 per cent of the city's 18,000 built-up acres was laid waste.

Statistics listed 78,150 dead out of the estimated 265,000 people inside the city that day. The injured totaled 37,425, and the missing 13,983.

By the mid-1950s, Hiroshima was well on its way to physical recovery. Broad new streets were laid out. Modern office buildings and department stores had sprung up. New industries came in. The municipal council built parks, the Peace Memorial Hall, the Atomic-Bomb Museum and other monuments to "the ideal of lasting peace."

The 1950s, however, were years of emotional paralysis for the survivors of the bomb. It was popularly believed that men and women exposed to radiation were incapable of having children, or

would have deformed children. Cancer was alleged to be rampant. "Atomic disease" was blamed for everything from dandruff and the common cold to heart complications among the aged. Practically everyone who died in those years was called an "A-bomb victim."

**Atomic "segregation."** Survivors—by then a minority of the population—found themselves a "segregated group." It was difficult to get jobs. Employers thought such people would be poor workers, or would demand medical compensation later. Even juvenile delinquency was blamed on "A-bomb orphans."

The unreasoning fear that gripped Hiroshima was understandable. When the Atomic-Bomb Casualty Commission, supported by the U. S., began work in 1947, the first American scientists on the scene had no idea what their investi-

gations would turn up in the form of genetic or physical damage—temporary or permanent—suffered by the bomb casualties.

A breathtaking change has taken place in the past three years. ABCC and the Japanese medical groups have published enough papers—in both Japanese and English—to reassure everybody that the researches under way are not intended to "whitewash" the aftereffects of the bomb. All ABCC records are now kept in both Japanese and English.

Newspapers are less sensational than they were. They publish reports of deaths in Hiroshima, but usually refer to an "A-bomb victim" only when the death is officially classified as such after an autopsy and study of the individual's history.

*(continued on page 78)*

HIROSHIMA CHILDREN at play near "A-bomb tower," kept unrestored as a reminder

—Birnbach



[continued  
from page 77]

## LIFE IN HIROSHIMA TODAY

A Japanese doctor in Nagasaki recently wrote a letter to a newspaper insisting that exposure does not mean that every illness thereafter should be attributed to radiation. An American scientist in Hiroshima commented:

"Here's a double miracle—first that the doctor would write such a letter, and second that the newspaper would publish it."

Most doctors in Hiroshima now frankly tell patients that there is no simple classification of "A-bomb diseases." Acute radiation sickness, of course, has symptoms and can be diagnosed. But the doctors discourage the long-prevalent idea

is 50 times more common among survivors closely exposed to radiation than those who were more than a mile away from the bomb burst.

The one clear fact to emerge is that radiation increases the occurrence rate of leukemia, and the magnitude of increase depends on the dose received. But scientists in Hiroshima suspect their studies may have been confused by additional radiation the survivors received during treatment. One leukemia patient, for example, had been receiving spinal X-ray treatments.

The eye-cataract scare of the early 1950s is over. Only 70 cases were found, and Dr. Michihiko Hachiya, head of the Communications Hospital, believes that no more cases will appear.

Many survivors still complain of general weakness and a susceptibility to minor illnesses. But neither the ABCC nor the Japanese have turned up evidence linking these with A-bomb radiation.

**Registered survivors.** The real key to Hiroshima's psychological recovery from the A-bomb was the Government's health program for survivors. Since April 1, 1957, when the program finally got under way, 240,000 people have been registered as survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki

bombs. About 90,000 of this group have reported for examination. Of these, only 3,700 required treatment. Of the 240,000 registered, 700 have died, but most of the deaths cannot be directly attributed to radiation exposure.

You still find some apathy among the survivors—people who will not take advantage of the free physical checkups and hospitalization for those who need it. For example, take the case of Kiyonobu Nakagawa, a 59-year-old grocer. He saw his parents killed by the bomb. His wife and daughter died a month later. Nakagawa himself was sick for years, and last June his youngest son died in Hiroshima's Atomic Disease Hospital.

Nakagawa and his only surviving son have been urged by the hospital to undergo examinations. But they insist they are too busy at the store to spare the time. "We'll go sometime," Nakagawa said, "but there's no hurry."

At the other end of the scale is the

Morishima family. Mrs. Morishima was working inside her house, about three quarters of a mile from the hypocenter, when the bomb exploded. Her sister died two weeks after the explosion. Her mother died in 1949 and her daughter, paralyzed by burns, died in 1950.

Mrs. Morishima bore two daughters after the bomb burst. Then, in 1955, she was told that she had leukemia.

There is no known cure for leukemia. But the Morishima family keeps up its spirits. The wife does only the lightest housework. Her husband does the heavy work, including the washing.

"I'm sort of resigned to my fate," said Mrs. Morishima, "but my husband encourages me to struggle. So now I hope to live long enough to make certain my children will be happy."

**Where fear remains.** Neither the Japanese nor the American scientists have been able to eradicate fear of the genetic effects of exposure to the bomb. Officials of Hiroshima admit that, as late as 1958, more than half of those applying to the municipal marriage agencies for help in obtaining a marriage partner insisted that the person chosen be completely free of exposure. Parents have forced their sons to break off engagements when they discovered the prospective bride was a "survivor" of the bomb.

In 1956, the ABCC issued a report by J. V. Neel and W. J. Schull, a six-year study of 70,000 families which had conceived children after the bombing. The report said that no genetic effects attributed to radiation had been demonstrated.

The report was the first clear reassurance to Japan's doctors that survivors could discount their fears.

Dr. Tomim Harada, president of the Hiroshima Medical Association, first noticed three years ago that fewer men and women planning marriage were asking for advice about having children.

"One reason, I think, is that the newspapers publish fewer scare stories about freaks and monsters," he said. "People know more than they did before."

**Nights without horror.** Although one finds individual heartbreak and genuine suffering in Hiroshima, the emotional climate is improving year by year.

Right now, for example, a debate is surging around a proposal to tear down the "A-bomb tower," one of the few structures to survive the bomb blast. The tower is now overshadowed by the banks of lights for night games at the city's massive new baseball stadium. Tear down the tower, say many residents, "so we can forget."

[END]



—USN&WR Photo

GROCER and his son saw kin die from radiation sickness, but are in "no hurry" to be examined themselves

that anemia, widespread everywhere in Japan, is a product of the bomb.

Japanese doctors now know that any survivor within six tenths of a mile of the hypocenter—the spot directly below the bomb burst—must have received radiation doses ranging up to the maximum that is tolerable without causing death. And yet the incidence of malignant tumors among those closest to the bomb is only four times the incidence among nonexposed Japanese. A slight rise in the death rate from tumors began to appear in 1957.

Leukemia—a cancerlike disease of the blood—aroused more interest and fear among Japanese than any of the other diseases attributed to radiation exposure. By the end of 1957, ABCC had spotted a total of only 82 confirmed cases among survivors of the blast still living in Hiroshima. The annual incidence rate in Hiroshima was 95 per million—about four times the rate in Japan as a whole. The study also suggested that leukemia

July 3, 1945

Discoveries of which the people of the United States are not aware may affect the welfare of this nation in the near future. The liberation of atomic power which has been achieved places atomic bombs in the hands of the Army. It places in your hands, as Commander-in-Chief, the fateful decision whether or not to sanction the use of such bombs in the present phase of the war against Japan. "Book 1960"

We, the undersigned scientists, have been working in the field of atomic power for a number of years. Until recently we have had to reckon with the possibility that the United States might be attacked by atomic bombs during this war and that her only defense might lie in a counterattack by the same means. Today with this danger averted we feel impelled to say what follows:

The war has to be brought speedily to a successful conclusion and the destruction of Japanese cities by means of atomic bombs may very well be an effective method of warfare. We feel, however, that such an attack on Japan could not be justified in the present circumstances. We believe that the United States ought not to resort to the use of atomic bombs in the present phase of the war, at least not unless the terms which will be imposed upon Japan after the war are publicly announced and subsequently Japan is given an opportunity to surrender.

If such public announcement gave assurance to the Japanese that they could look forward to a life devoted to peaceful pursuits in their homeland and if Japan still refused to surrender, our nation would then be faced with a situation which might require a re-examination of her position with respect to the use of atomic bombs in the war.

Atomic bombs are primarily a means for the ruthless annihilation of cities. Once they were introduced as an instrument of war it would be difficult to resist for long the temptation of putting them to such use.

The last few years show a marked tendency toward increasing ruthlessness. At present our Air Forces, striking at the Japanese cities, are using the same methods of warfare which were condemned by American public opinion only a few years ago when applied by the Germans to the cities of England. Our use of atomic bombs in this war would carry the world a long way further on this path of ruthlessness.

Atomic power will provide the nations with new means of destruction. The atomic bombs at our disposal represent only the first step in this direction and there is almost no limit to the destructive power which will become available in the course of this development. Thus a nation which sets the precedent of using these newly liberated forces of nature for purposes of destruction may have to bear the responsibility of opening the door to an era of devastation on an unimaginable scale.

In view of the foregoing, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition that you exercise your power as Commander-in-Chief to rule that the United States shall not, in the present phase of the war, resort to the use of atomic bombs.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

April 3, 1945

My dear Mr. Lowen:

Mrs. Roosevelt will be glad to see Dr. Szilard but cannot do so until 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 8, at her apartment in New York City, 29 Washington Square West. Will you ask Dr. Szilard to confirm this so that we will know whether it will be convenient for him?

Very sincerely yours,

*W. A. R. Thompson*  
Secretary to  
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mr. Irving S. Lowen  
1 Jane Street  
New York 14, New York

112 Mercer Street  
Princeton, New Jersey  
March 25, 1945

The Honorable Franklin Delano Roosevelt  
The President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I am writing you to introduce Dr. L. Szilard who proposes to submit to you certain considerations and recommendations. Unusual circumstances which I shall describe further below induce me to take this action in spite of the fact that I do not know the substance of the considerations and recommendations which Dr. Szilard proposes to submit to you.

In the summer of 1939 Dr. Szilard put before me his views concerning the potential importance of uranium for national defense. He was greatly disturbed by the potentialities involved and anxious that the United States Government be advised of them as soon as possible. Dr. Szilard, who is one of the discoverers of the neutron emission of uranium on which all present work on uranium is based, described to me a specific system which he devised and which he thought would make it possible to set up a chain reaction in un-separated uranium in the immediate future. Having known him for over twenty years both from his scientific work and personally, I have much confidence in his judgment and it was on the basis of his judgment as well as my own that I took the liberty to approach you in connection with this subject. You responded to my letter dated August 2, 1939 by the appointment of a committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Briggs and thus started the Government's activity in this field.

The terms of secrecy under which Dr. Szilard is working at present do not permit him to give me information about his work; however, I understand that he now is greatly concerned about the lack of adequate contact between scientists who are doing this work and those members of your Cabinet who are responsible for formulating policy. In the circumstances I consider it my duty to give Dr. Szilard this introduction and I wish to express the hope that you will be able to give his presentation of the case your personal attention.

Very truly yours,

*A. Einstein*

July 16, 1945

A PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Discoveries of which the people of the United States are not aware may affect the welfare of this nation in the near future. The liberation of atomic power which has been achieved places atomic bombs in the hands of the Army. It places in your hands, as Commander-in-Chief, the fateful decision whether or not to sanction the use of such bombs in the present phase of the war against Japan.

We, the undersigned scientists, have been working in the field of atomic power. Until recently we have had to fear that the United States might be attacked by atomic bombs during this war and that her only defense might lie in a counterattack by the same means. Today with this danger averted we feel impelled to say what follows:

The war has to be brought speedily to a successful conclusion and the destruction of Japanese cities by means of atomic bombs may very well be an effective method of warfare. We feel, however, that such an attack on Japan could not be justified on moral grounds, at least not unless the terms which will be imposed after the war on Japan were made public in detail and Japan were given an opportunity to surrender.

If such public announcement gave assurance to the Japanese that they could look forward to a life devoted to peaceful pursuits in their homeland and if Japan still refused to surrender our nation might then, in certain circumstances, find itself forced to resort to the use of atomic bombs. Such a step, however, ought not to be made at any time without seriously considering the moral responsibility which is involved.

The development of atomic power will provide the nations with new means of destruction. The atomic bombs at our disposal represent only the first step in this direction and there is almost no limit to the destructive power which will become available in the course of this development. Thus a nation which sets the precedent of using these newly liberated forces of nature for purposes of destruction may have to bear the responsibility of opening the door to an era of devastation on an unimaginable scale.

If after this war a situation is allowed to develop which permits rival powers to be in uncontrolled possession of these new means of destruction, the cities of the United States and other nations will be in continuous danger of sudden annihilation. All the resources of the United States, moral and material, may have to be mobilized to prevent this contingency. Its prevention is at present the solemn responsibility of the United States--singled out by virtue of her lead in the field of atomic power.

The added material strength which this lead gives to the United States brings with it the obligation of restraint and if we were to violate this obligation our moral position would be weakened in the eyes of the world and in our own eyes. It would then be more difficult for us to live up to our responsibility of bringing the unloosened forces of destruction under control.

In view of the foregoing, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition: first, that you exercise your power as Commander-in-Chief, to rule that the United States shall not resort to the use of atomic bombs in this war unless the terms which will be imposed upon Japan have been made public in detail and Japan knowing these terms has refused to surrender; second, that in such an event the use of atomic bombs against Japan be reconsidered by you in the light of our moral responsibilities.

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
Date <u>      JUL 23 1957      </u>
For The Atomic Energy Commission
<u>C. L. Marshall/Me Righter</u>
Director, Division of Classification

83938

Orig. Petitions + corresp.  
in History box  
Folder from Loh files

**Metallurgical Laboratory**

*Amiels*

August 11, 1945

METALLURGICAL LABORATORY  
P. O. Box 5207, Chicago 30, Ill.  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

AUG 18 1945

Capt. J. H. McKinley  
Area Engineer's Office  
Metallurgical Laboratory  
University of Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois

A.M. P.M.  
7|8|9|10|11|12|1|2|3|4|5|6

Dear Capt. McKinley:

I am writing to inform you that the petition dated July 17, 1945 will no longer be treated as a classified document. If you see anything in the text of the petition that represents a military secret, I should be pleased to be so notified by you in writing prior to August 13, 5:30 p.m. so that your opinion might be given consideration before the text of the petition is communicated to persons not connected with our project.

Inasmuch as I have requested to be notified of any objections which might stand in the way of the release of the text of the petition on Monday, August 6, and have received no written notification on this subject, I shall consider myself free after 5:30 p.m., August 13, to use my own judgement (based on the judgement of my colleagues with whom I consult on this matter) to release at any time the text of the petition together with the statement that 67 scientists engaged in war work at the University of Chicago have sent such a petition to the President in July of this year. I shall not consider myself free to release the names of those who signed the petition.

If you or your superior should be of the opinion that as a matter of courtesy the White House ought to be notified before the text of the petition is released to the press, I shall be pleased to clear the matter with the White House myself.

The present letter does not necessarily mean that the text of the petition will, in fact, be released but it does mean that I wish to have a free hand to release if and when such a release appears to be advisable any time after 5:30 p.m., August 13.

Very truly yours,

*Leo Szilard*

Leo Szilard

LS:SW

*Copy to Director of Metallurgical Laboratory*