

Plas Penrhyndeudraeth,
PENRHYNDEUDRAETH,
Merioneth,
N. Wales.

29th August, 1956.

Dear

I am writing to you confidentially on behalf of those among the signatories of the public statement, which was made in July of last year, whose names appear below. We wish to invite you to be a member of a Committee of about twenty scientists to meet in India in the latter half of December next, in order to make an appraisal of the dangers which have followed from the development of weapons of mass destruction. You may recall that the suggestion that such a conference should be held was included in our public statement.

Although there has been an important degree of relaxation, in the tension among the great powers in the year which has passed, we believe that there are still cogent reasons for holding such a conference. In particular, the continuation of tests of large hydrogen bombs has caused widespread and deep concern and the demand for more information about the biological and other effects of such tests.

As a consequence of this situation several Governments have established committees to study the biological effects of radiation, and a commission with similar aims, composed of delegates from fifteen nations, has been set up by the United Nations Organization. Recently, reports have been published of the findings of some of the national committees. These make it clear that test explosions have resulted in the deposition of radioactive dust over the globe which, with further increase in the rate of testing, may result in many people contracting cancer or other diseases. Although the genetical danger appears to be small at present, it is not possible to obtain a full appraisal of this hazard unless a world-wide survey is made. The commission set up by the United Nations will doubtless produce very valuable results, especially since it may be hoped that all relevant technical data will be made available by the Government represented. Nevertheless we believe that an independent enquiry, complementary to that organized by the United Nations and individual Governments, ought also to be made, and for the following reasons

- (a) The work of a commission of official delegates may sometimes be restricted by political considerations;

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its scope and its freedom to publish findings may thus be limited even when the delegates personally may wish to see the fullest possible enquiry and widespread publication of its results.

- (b) Unless the enquiry is urged on by public opinion, the complex machinery of such commissions may result in undue delays.
- (c) A statement by a group of independent scientists, not representing Governments, and following the dictates of their own consciences, may find a wider and more ready acceptance by public opinion than official pronouncements.

In addition to the problems of the biological hazard from test explosions, the proposed conference could also concern itself with the following questions:-

- (i) The immediate effect, in the event of war with nuclear weapons, of radiation from the fall-out, as distinct from the long-term hazard.
- (ii) The role of tests of nuclear weapons in contributing to a competition in armaments, and the resulting danger of an eventual unrestricted 'nuclear war'.
- (iii) The need for a new international code of law, covering the widespread use of radioactive isotopes in many fields and the dangers arising from their careless employment.

As we see it, the committee would meet in private and would decide at the end of its meetings whether it wished to make any public communication of its existence and of its findings.

In sending invitations for the proposed conference, we have been particularly concerned to ensure that the final membership will be representative both of different political and other opinions, and of the various scientific disciplines related to the topics of the proposed enquiry. A proper balance in all these respects appears to us to be essential if any findings are to command general respect. A list of those being invited is appended.

We have suggested that the committee should meet in India, shortly before the meeting of the Indian Science Congress which is to take place in early January, 1957. We should be grateful

if you would inform us, at your early convenience, whether you would consent to be a member of the Committee. We hope that by calling on various private resources for financial support, it may be possible to make provision for the costs involved; we suggest, therefore, that in reaching a decision you do not take into consideration the expenses of the visit.

Yours sincerely,

BERTRAND RUSSELL.

Max Born (Germany)
Frédéric Joliot-Curie (France)
L. Infeld (Poland)
Linus Pauling (United States)
C. F. Powell (Great Britain)
J. Rotblat (Great Britain)
H. Yukawa. (Japan).

List of Scientists who are being invited

Professor Marcus Oliphant	Australia
Professor Josué de Castro	Brazil
Professor Li Tze-Kuang	China
Professor Niels Bohr	Denmark
Professor Louis De Broglie	France
Professor A. M. B. Lacassagne	
Professor Otto Hahn	Germany
Professor Werner Heisenberg	
Professor Gustav Hertz	
Lord Adrian	
Professor Alexander Haddow	Great Britain
Sir Cyril Hinshelwood	
Dr D. S. Kothari	India
Sir K. S. Krishnan	
Professor E. Amaldi	Italy
Professor S. Tomonaga	Japan
Professor Matsuo Tsuzuki	
Professor Georg de Hevesy	Sweden
Dr George W. Beadle	
Dr Detlev W. Bronk	
Professor A. H. Compton	United States
Professor Eugene Rabinowitch	
Professor Victor Weisskopf	
Academician A. N. Nesmeyanov	
Dr N. I. Nuzdhin	U. S. S. R.
Academician D. V. Skobel'tzyn	
Academician A. V. Topchiev.	

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