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WORLD FEDERATION OF SCIENTIFIC WORKERS
世界科學工作者協會
ВСЕМИРНАЯ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ НАУЧНЫХ РАБОТНИКОВ
FÉDÉRATION MONDIALE DES TRAVAILLEURS SCIENTIFIQUES

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4th January 1956

Professor H. Yukawa
Research Institute for
Fundamental Physics
Kyoto University
Kyoto.

Dear Professor Yukawa,

This last summer has witnessed developments of the utmost importance to scientists in all countries. The great Geneva Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy marked a new stage in the development of international scientific contacts and provided a firm basis for the development of friendly co-operation between scientists of different countries, and demonstrated again that scientists of all countries speak a common language irrespective of differences of nationality and ideology. The pledges exchanged at Geneva of continued co-operation in the great task of bringing to the peoples of all countries the benefits to be derived from the fullest application of atomic energy to peaceful purposes are of tremendous significance.

But also during the summer leading scientists of many countries joined together to draw attention to the terrible perils facing humanity in the event of a war fought with the most modern nuclear weapons.

"Here, then, is the problem which we present to you, stark and dreadful, and inescapable: shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war",

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asked the group of eleven eminent scientists of west and east headed by the late Albert Einstein, and whose signatures were obtained by Bertrand Russell to a document that made a tremendous impression wherever it was published.

"With pleasure we have devoted our lives to the service of science. It is, we believe, a path to a happier life for the people. We see with horror that this very science is giving mankind the means to destroy itself. By total military use of weapons feasible today, the earth can be contaminated with radioactivity to such an extent that whole peoples can be annihilated",

stated the declaration issued by eighteen Nobel Prize Winners at Lindau.

The World Federation of Scientific Workers has, ever since its formation, sought to ensure that all the mighty forces that have come into the power of man to wield since he learned to control the energy of atomic nuclei should be used exclusively for peaceful uses to increase the wealth and happiness of all, and never for purposes of destruction. It has therefore especially welcomed the growing realisation of the peaceful potentialities of atomic energy as well as the recognition that the use of these great forces in weapons of mass annihilation would be an unimaginable disaster.

In spite of these events, however, there are still many scientists who stand aloof from the consideration of the implications of recent scientific discoveries. They feel that these implications are not their concern and even, sometimes, that the consideration of them constitutes a distraction from their real scientific work.

Scientists organised in the World Federation of Scientific Workers believe that a special responsibility rests on the shoulders of scientists everywhere as a result of these applications of scientific discovery. They share, of course, with all other citizens of all countries, the responsibility for seeing that their governments adopt wise, far-sighted and humanist policies in the field of the application of scientific discovery as in other fields. But they have

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also a special responsibility, in view of their special knowledge and understanding of scientific matters, to leave humanity in no doubt of the perils that confront it if the course of the unrestricted production and testing of nuclear weapons is followed, with the ever-present risk of the outbreak of unrestricted war in which these weapons are used.

The Japanese people have suffered far more than any other from the consequences of the policy of developing nuclear weapons. They felt the fullest impact of the first fission weapons and more recently have suffered from the results of the first tests of thermonuclear weapons.

We are appealing to all scientists in all countries to shoulder their responsibilities and to discuss the implications of these matters with their fellows. We appeal particularly to Japanese scientists to discuss the Einstein-Russell declaration as well as the warning of the Nobel Prize Winners issued at Lindau with all physicists and other scientists, including members of the "Science Council of Japan". If you agree, will you discuss the question of how ways can be found to ensure that the text of these statements reaches all scientists in Japan.

We suggest further that a full assessment of the dangers from nuclear weapons cannot even now be made owing to considerable gaps in our available knowledge of such things as the damage by blast and fire, effects of radioactive fallout, possible meteorological effects, and above all of the extent of the genetic damage to the human race as a result of the use of nuclear weapons. We have strongly advocated the calling of a world conference of scientists on the broadest possible basis to discuss these matters and to publish its findings. Moves are at present afoot aimed toward the assembly of such a conference, and we would greatly appreciate your assistance in obtaining the adherence of leading Japanese scientific figures to proposals in this direction.

Yours sincerely

C.F. Powell

C.F. Powell.
Chairman of the Executive Council.