

3500 Fairpoint Street
Pasadena, California

4 June 1957

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. President:

I am sure that your concern about the biological effects of nuclear weapons will cause you to be interested in the appeal to stop the testing of these weapons that was prepared by me a short while ago, and that has been signed by about 2000 American scientists, including many of the most distinguished biologists in the country.

On 15 May 1957 I gave an address in the Chapel of Washington University, in Saint Louis, to the students and faculty of the University, on the subject of science in the modern world. In the course of the address I emphasized that there is essentially unanimous agreement among scientists with experience in the field of the biological effects of radiation as to the general magnitude of these effects. I discussed the damage that is being done to the health of human beings all over the world now and to future generations of human beings by the testing of nuclear bombs, and expressed my conviction that a stop to the testing through international agreement would be an effective first step toward averting a cataclysmic nuclear war. The response to this address was so enthusiastic as to suggest that a statement be prepared to which American scientists could adhere. The statement was prepared by me, with the help of a number of other scientists, and in a short while signatures of about 2000 scientists were obtained to the appeal.

A copy of the appeal, together with the names of the initial signers, is attached to this letter.

It was my experience during the short period when signatures were being obtained that very few biological scientists abstained from signing the appeal. Many physicists who were asked to sign the appeal felt that they could not sign it because of the statement that it contained about the knowledge of the dangers involved in carrying out the tests; some of these men felt that they had no personal knowledge.

Among the signers is Professor Hermann J. Muller, of Indiana University, who received the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1946 for his discovery that penetrating radiation produces mutations in plants and animals. Professor Muller has been a leader among geneticists in pointing out the dangers of fallout radiation to the human race. Another member of the group is Professor L. H. Snyder of the University of Oklahoma, who is a leading authority on human genetics. Professor Snyder is now the President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He signed the appeal to stop bomb tests as an individual scientist, not as a representative of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In fact, I prepared the appeal as an individual, and all of the signers signed as individuals - no organization was involved in the preparation of the appeal.

Many other distinguished geneticists signed the appeal; I may mention in particular Professor Richard B. Goldschmidt, of the University of California; Professor Sewall Wright, of the University of Wisconsin; Professor Theodosius Dobzhansky, of Columbia University; Professor L. C. Dunn, of Columbia University; Professor M. R. Erwin, of the University of Wisconsin; Professor S. E. Luria, of the University of Illinois; Professor H. Bentley Glass, of Johns Hopkins University; and Professor M. Demerec, of the Biological Laboratories of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. Other signers include Professor Joseph Erlanger, of Washington University, Saint Louis, recipient of the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine in 1944; also Professors George W. Corner, John T. Edsall, Kenneth V. Thimann, Edward S. Castle, Michael Heidelberger, Edwin C. Kenble, I. M. Koltzoff, Barry Commoner, E. U. Condon, Kirtley F. Mather, Elmer G. Butler, Chauncey Leake, Severo Ochoa, C. C. Price, Oswald Veblen, M. B. Visscher, W. H. Zachariassen, Karl Paul Link, Benjamin P. Sonnenblick, F. A. Jenkins, W. D. Knight, A.F. Kip, E. T. Bell, J.A. Campbell, C.B. Van Niel, Ralph H. Wetmore, Viktor Hamburger, Arthur Kornberg, James W. Alexander, P.J. Flory, J.R. Johnson, L.O. Kunkel, Harlow Shapley, B.H. Willier, and many others of distinction in the field of science.

I feel that it is especially significant that the geneticists, who have, of all scientists, the best basis for judgment about the genetic effects of the fallout radiation from the atomic bomb tests, and biologists in general, who have the best basis for judgment about the somatic effects of the fallout, have joined so vigorously

in the appeal to stop the bomb tests. There is no doubt that the bomb tests are doing damage to the health of human beings all over the world and to the pool of human germ plasma that determines the nature of future generations.

If you should feel that I could be of service to you in your consideration of this great problem, I shall make every effort to come to Washington at your invitation, to answer whatever questions you wish to ask me.

Yours respectfully,

Linus Pauling:W