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PUGWASH CONTINUING COMMITTEE

APR 15 1959

Chairman	U.K.	U.S.A.	U.S.S.R.
The Earl Russell	Sir Edward Bullard Professor C. F. Powell Professor J. Rotblat	Professor E. Rabinowitch Professor V. Welskopf	Professor E. K. Fedorov Academician D. V. Skobel'tzyn Academician A. V. Topchiev

14th April, 1959

Dear Mr. Eaton,

The Pugwash Continuing Committee met recently to discuss future Conferences. The first of these will be a small private meeting, of the Lac Beauport type, to deal with problems of disarmament. Since a number of participants are coming to Europe this summer, to take part in a Physics Conference in Moscow, it was decided to hold this meeting in Austria, probably in Baden, at the end of June. This meeting will not issue any public statement and it is intended mainly as an exchange of views on topical problems, between scientists from the East and West.

It had been hoped to organize a second larger conference in September, on international scientific collaboration. It appears, however, that several Academies of Science are interested in the organization of this conference, and this makes it almost certain that it would not be called until some time in 1960.

The Committee then discussed the feasibility of convening another conference in September on the problem of biological and chemical warfare. You may have heard that this topic came very much to the fore in recent months, particularly after statements issued by Sir Robert Watson Watt and Dr. Brock Chisholm. Some scientists believe that the destructive potentialities of biological warfare are now even greater than those of nuclear warfare; many other scientists do not agree with this view. Whatever is the true position, it is certainly of the utmost importance to have an authoritative statement on this subject, particularly in view of the tight secrecy with which it is surrounded by the governments concerned. Even if biological warfare were not as bad as nuclear warfare, it could be of very great nuisance value in wars between small nations, and in the present state of the world this may easily lead to a global conflict.

The Committee made preliminary enquiries among experts in the field of microbiology and several of them have intimated that they would be willing to participate in a meeting to investigate this problem. Among those who promised to participate are Sir Macfarlane Burnet of Australia, one of the world's most eminent experts in this field, Dr. A. J. Rhodes of Toronto, Professor von Magnus of Copenhagen, Professor A. Haddow of London and Drs. Holmes, Rosebury and Sabin from the U.S.A. It is also hoped to get participants from the Soviet Union and China.

The Committee felt that these provisional acceptances carry the promise of a valuable and successful meeting and they would like to go ahead and call such a Conference. Its purpose would be to examine the potentialities of biological and chemical warfare both as weapons of mass

destruction and as a factor increasing international tensions, through the possibilities of smaller countries being capable of producing such weapons. An assessment would be made of the strategic and tactical possibilities in warfare with biological and chemical weapons, as compared with nuclear weapons.

The best time appears to be next September, possibly 12th to 19th, although the exact dates could be slightly altered.

I am writing to ask you whether you would be willing to sponsor this Conference in the same way as you have done with the previous Pugwash Conferences. Although the topic of biological warfare is somewhat different from those discussed at the previous Conferences, it certainly comes within the framework of the Pugwash Movement i.e. to deal with all consequences of science which may affect the fate of man. It is quite probable that the potentialities of biological warfare may radically alter the conditions necessary for the establishment of a stable peace. It is for this reason that the Committee and I hope that you will give us your support for this Conference.

If you accept, we would naturally like to hold it in Canada. The total number of participants would probably be between 15 and 20, which makes it a suitable size for a meeting in Pugwash, provided the time of the year does not preclude it.

I am looking forward to having your reply. In the meantime, I should like to express our appreciation for your magnificent help in the mass circulation of our questionnaire to scientists all over the world.

Please convey my regards to Mrs. Eaton,

Yours sincerely,

Bartrand Russell

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