

## Wells et al., in their own words

*The following was compiled by Scott Thompson and Michael Minnicino.*

H.G. Wells first came to the attention of Britain's literary elite at the end of the 19th century. As many critics noted at the time, he was not considered a particularly skillful prose writer, but the didactic "message" of some of his early works—in particular, *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1886), and *The War of the Worlds* (1898)—perfectly fit the political objectives of Edwardian England. It was decided to call Wells "the English Poe," a praise so grotesquely inappropriate, that even Wells refused it.

Wells' passport to the highest levels of British imperial policymaking came in 1901, with the publication of *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress Upon Human Life and Thought*. Here, for the first time, Wells stated his theory of one-world government, which he called "the New Republic" (a concept that would later inspire the American magazine of the same name). What made Wells' version of global imperialism particularly appealing, was its emphasis on racial hygiene, then called eugenics. Excerpts follow:

"And the ethical system which will dominate the world-state will be shaped primarily to favour the procreation of what is fine and efficient and beautiful in humanity—beautiful and strong bodies, clear and powerful minds, and a growing body of knowledge—and to check the procreation of base and servile types, of fear-driven and cowardly souls, of all that is mean and ugly and bestial in the souls, bodies, and habits of men, the method that has only one alternative, the method that must in some cases still be called in to the help of man, is death. For a multitude of contemptible and silly creatures, fear-driven and helpless and useless, unhappy or hatefully happy in the midst of squalid dishonour, feeble, ugly, inefficient, born of unrestrained lusts, and increasing and multiplying through sheer incontinence and stupidity, the men of the New Republic will have little pity and less benevolence."

Wells' call for racial mass-murder was harsh, even by the standards of Edwardian England. Arthur Conan Doyle (hardly a racial liberal himself) denounced the book as vile and villainous; G.K. Chesterton led scores of critics in attacking the piece. But, the Fabian policymakers loved it. Fabian Society founder Beatrice Webb called *Anticipations* "the book of the year," and wrote that it was full of luminous hypotheses and worth careful study by those trying to look

forward. Beatrice's husband, Sidney, wrote Chesterton, claiming that, while Wells might have "fallen over the edge" in his zeal, the book's message of eugenics and neo-Malthusianism had to be supported by right-thinking Britons. *Anticipations* went through eight printings in one year, and netted Wells an invitation to join the Fabian Society.

From 1901 until his death in 1946, Wells wrote about 60 more books. However, almost all of them are really the same book rewritten over and over again: a tale of world civilization destroyed by catastrophe or war (the "war to end all wars," as Wells wrote), and then rebuilt as a "scientific" one-world dictatorship. In 1913, Wells added a nasty twist to the format: that the most efficient method of world destruction would be through the use of "atomic bombs." Wells claimed that the inspiration for this came from physicist Frederick Soddy, who had worked under Baron Ernest Rutherford.

(It was Rutherford's lectures on the atom that inspired Lord Bertrand Russell to write a short story in 1902, which he never published, about a bomb that was capable of destroying all mankind.)

Soddy gave a series of lectures on radium and radioactivity in Glasgow, Scotland in 1908, and then published them in 1909 under the title *The Interpretation of Radium and the Structure of the Atom*. Although Soddy emphasized the positive uses of atomic power, Wells was inspired by its terroristic possibilities. He wrote *The World Set Free* in 1913 (published 1914), and dedicated it "To Frederick Soddy's *Interpretation of Radium*. This story, which owes long passages to the eleventh chapter of that book, acknowledges and inscribes itself." Soddy himself appears fictionalized as "Professor Rufus."

With this book, Wells inaugurated the era of nuclear terror and "mutual and assured destruction." Excerpts follow:

"A certain professor of physics named Rufus was giving a course of afternoon lectures upon Radium and Radio-Activity in Edinburgh. They were lectures that had attracted a very considerable amount of attention.

"'And so,' said the professor, 'we see that this Radium, which seemed at first a fantastic exception, a mad inversion of all that was most established and fundamental in the constitution of matter, is really at one with the rest of the elements. It does noticeably and forcibly what probably all the other elements are doing with an imperceptible slowness. It is like the single voice crying aloud that betrays the silent breathing multitude in the darkness. Radium is an element that is breaking up and flying to pieces. A little while ago we thought of the atoms as we thought of bricks, as solid building material, as substantial matter, as unit masses of lifeless stuff, and behold! These bricks are boxes, treasure boxes, boxes full of the intensest force. This little bottle contains about a pint of uranium oxide; that is to say, about fourteen ounces of the element uranium. It is worth about a pound. And in this bottle, ladies and gentlemen, in the atoms in this bottle there slumbers at least as much energy as we could get by burning a hundred and sixty tons of coal. If at a word, in one instant I could

suddenly release that energy here and now it would blow us and everything about us to fragments; if I could turn it into the machinery that lights this city, it could keep Edinburgh brightly lit for a week. But at present no man knows, no man has an inkling of how this little lump of stuff can be made to hasten the release of its store.’

“[Given that knowledge,] he said, ‘mark what we should be able to do! We should not only be able to use this uranium and thorium; not only should we have a source of power so potent that a man might carry in his hand the energy to light a city for a year, fight a fleet of battleships, or drive one of our giant liners across the Atlantic; but we should also have a clue that would enable us at last to quicken the process of disintegration in all the other elements, where decay is still so slow as to escape our finest measurements. Every scrap of solid matter in the world would become an available reservoir of concentrated force. Do you realise, ladies and gentlemen, what these things would mean for us?’

“ ‘It would mean a change in human conditions that I can only compare to the discovery of fire, that first discovery that lifted man above the brute. We stand to-day towards radio-activity as our ancestor stood towards fire before he had learnt to make it. He knew it then only as a strange thing utterly beyond his control, a flare on the crest of the volcano, a red destruction that poured through the forest. So it is that we know radio-activity to-day. This — this is the dawn of a new day in human living. At the climax of that civilisation which had its beginning in the hammered flint and the fire-stick of the savage, just when it is becoming apparent that our ever-increasing needs cannot be borne indefinitely by our present sources of energy, we discover suddenly the possibility of an entirely new civilisation.’ ”

As the story proceeds, atomic power is mastered in 1953, and “atomic engines” are created. The dislocations caused by this new power collapse the oil, coal, and steel industries; strikes and social chaos ensue, and ultimately world war begins in 1956. The war is fought with “atomic bombs.” By 1956, every major city in the world has been reduced to rubble:

“And now under the shock of the atomic bombs, the great masses of population which had gathered into the enormous dingy town centres of that period were dispossessed and scattered disastrously over the surrounding rural areas. It was as if some brutal force, grown impatient at last at man’s blindness, had with the deliberate intention of a rearrangement of population upon more wholesome lines, shaken the world. The great industrial regions and the large cities that had escaped the bombs were, because of their complete economic collapse, in almost as tragic plight as those that blazed, and the country-side was disordered by a multitude of wandering and lawless strangers. In some parts of the world famine raged, and in many regions there was plague. . . . The plains of north India, which had become more and more dependent for the general welfare on the railways and that great system

of irrigation canals which the malignant section of the patriots had destroyed, were in a state of peculiar distress, whole villages lay dead together, no man heeding, and the very tigers and panthers that preyed upon the emaciated survivors crawled back infected into the jungle to perish. Large areas of China were a prey to brigand bands. . . .

“The catastrophe of the atomic bombs which shook men out of cities and businesses and economic relations shook them also out of their old established habits of thought, and out of the lightly held beliefs and prejudices that came down to them from the past. To borrow a word from the old-fashioned chemists, men were made nascent; they were released from old ties; for good or evil they were ready for new associations.”

### **From fiction to geopolitics**

British Round Table/Fabian Society propagandist Wells’ fictional tale of nuclear armageddon and “benign” one-world dictatorship formed the core of British geostrategy from the moment that Wells’ book was released to the public. Following World War I, the British elites moved to put their scheme into practice. Their sponsorship of Hitler and the Nazis, and the imminent outbreak of another “war to end all wars,” provided the moment of opportunity to launch the nuclear-war era. Wells’ protégé, physicist Leo Szilard, and Lord Bertrand Russell ally Eugene Wigner, approached Albert Einstein, and induced him to press President Franklin Roosevelt to launch an American atom bomb project, based knowingly on the false claim that Hitler’s scientists were working on the same program, and that it was vital to “beat the Nazis” to the atom bomb.

The following letter was drafted by Szilard with the assistance of Russell’s Princeton epigone, Wigner. Einstein signed it after Szilard and Wigner falsely assured him that the Nazis were about to obtain the main source of uranium in the world and begin work on an atomic bomb. This letter to President Roosevelt started U.S. involvement in an atomic bomb project. Einstein had nothing to do with the subsequent “top secret” U.S. bomb project, and when he heard a bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima, he exclaimed, “*Oy Vey!*” The letter read:

“Albert Einstein  
“Old Grove Rd.  
“Nassau Point Peconic, Long Island  
“August 2nd, 1939

“F.D. Roosevelt  
“President of the United States  
“White House  
“Washington, D.C.  
“Sir,

“Some recent work by E. Fermi and L. Szilard, which has been communicated to me in manuscript, leads me to expect



Physicist Leo Szilard, a protégé of H.G. Wells, was the model for the film character “Dr. Strangelove.”

that the element uranium may be turned into a new and important source of energy in the immediate future. Certain aspects of the situation which has arisen seem to call for watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action on the part of the Administration. I believe therefore that it is my duty to bring to your attention the following facts and recommendations.

“In the course of the last four months it has been made probable through the work of Joliot in France as well as Fermi and Szilard in America—that it may become possible to set up a nuclear reaction in a large mass of uranium, by which vast amounts of power and large quantities of new radium-like elements would be generated. Now it appears almost certain that this could be achieved in the immediate future.

“This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it is conceivable—though much less certain—that extremely powerful bombs of a new type may thus be constructed. A single bomb of this type, carried by boat and exploded in a port, might well destroy the whole port together with some of the surrounding territory. However, such bombs might well prove to be too heavy for transportation by air. . . .

“In view of this situation you might think it desirable to

have some permanent contact maintained between the Administration and the group of physicists working on chain reactions in America. . . .

“I understand that Germany has actually stopped the sale of uranium from the Czechoslovakian mines which she has taken over. That she should have taken such early action might be understood on the ground that the son of the German Under-Secretary of State, von Weizäcker, is attached to the Kaiser Wilhelm-Institut in Berlin where some of the American work on uranium is now being repeated.

“Yours very truly,  
“Albert Einstein”

### Russell picks up Wells’ dream

Even before the radioactive cloud had dissipated over the ruins of Nagasaki, Russell began his public campaign to convince the world that the threat of atomic war meant that nations must give up their sovereignty to a one-world dictatorship which must ruthlessly exterminate any resistance. The following is an excerpt from a commentary entitled “The Bomb and Civilization,” published in the *Glasgow Forward*, a Scottish newspaper, on Aug. 18, 1945. The article was written one or two days after the bombing of Nagasaki on Aug. 9, but before the announcement of Japan’s surrender on Aug. 14. Excerpts include:

“The prospect for the human race is sombre beyond all precedent. Mankind are faced with a clear-cut alternative: either we shall all perish, or we shall have to acquire some slight degree of common sense. A great deal of new political thinking will be necessary if utter disaster is to be averted.

“For the moment, fortunately, only the United States is in a position to manufacture atomic bombs. The immediate result must be a rapid end to the Japanese war, whether by surrender or by extermination. The power of the United States in international affairs is, for the time being, immeasurably increased; a month ago, Russia and the United States seemed about equal in warlike strength, but now this is no longer the case. This situation, however, will not last long, for it must be assumed that before long Russia and the British Empire will set to work to make these bombs for themselves. Uranium has suddenly become the most precious of raw materials, and nations will probably fight for it as hitherto they have fought for oil. In the next war, if atomic bombs are used on both sides, it is to be expected that all large cities will be completely wiped out; so will all scientific laboratories and all governmental centres. Communications will be disrupted, and the world will be reduced to a number of small independent agricultural communities living on local produce, as they did in the Dark Ages. But presumably none of them will have either the resources or the skill for the manufacture of atomic bombs.

“There is another and a better possibility, if men have the wisdom to make use of the few years during which it will remain open to them. Either war or civilization must end, and if it is to be war that ends, there must be an international

authority with the sole power to make the new bombs. All supplies of uranium must be placed under the control of the international authority, which shall have the right to safeguard the ore by armed forces. As soon as such an authority has been created, all existing atomic bombs, and all plants for their manufacture, must be handed over. And of course the international authority must have sufficient armed forces to protect whatever has been handed over to it. If this system were once established, the international authority would be irresistible, and wars would cease. At worst, there might be occasional brief revolts that would be easily quelled.

“But I fear all this is Utopian. The United States will not consent to any pooling of armaments, and no more will Soviet Russia. Each will insist on retaining the means of exterminating the other, on the ground that the other is not to be trusted.

“If America were more imperialistic there would be another possibility, less Utopian and less desirable, but still preferable to the total obliteration of civilized life. It would be possible for Americans to use their position of temporary superiority to insist upon disarmament, not only in Germany and Japan, but everywhere except in the United States, or at any rate in every country not prepared to enter into a close military alliance with the United States, involving compulsory sharing of military secrets. During the next few years, this policy could be enforced; if one or two wars were necessary, they would be brief, and would soon end in decisive American victory. In this way a new League of Nations could be formed under American leadership, and the peace of the world could be securely established. But I fear that respect for international justice will prevent Washington from adopting this policy.

“In view of the reluctance of mankind to form voluntarily an effective international authority, we must hope, and perhaps we may expect, that after the next world war some one Power will emerge with such preponderant strength as to be able to establish a peaceful hegemony over the rest of the globe. The next war, unless it comes very soon, will endanger all civilized government; but if any civilized government survives and achieves supremacy, there will again be a possibility of ordered progress and the utilization of science for happiness rather than for destruction.”

In October 1946, Russell wrote the following policy statement for the *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*:

“... There is only one way in which great wars can be permanently prevented, and that is the establishment of an international government with a monopoly of serious armed force. When I speak of an international government, I mean one that really governs. . . .

“An international government, if it is to be able to preserve peace, must have the only atomic bombs, the only plant for producing them, the only air force, the only battleships, and its infantry regiments must each severally be composed of men of many different nations; there must be no possibility of the development of national feeling in any unit larger than

a company. Every member of the international armed force should be carefully trained in loyalty to the international government.

“The international authority must have a monopoly of uranium and of whatever raw material may hereafter be found suitable for the manufacture of atomic bombs. It must have a large army of inspectors who must have the right to enter any factory without notice; any attempt to interfere with their work must be treated as *casus belli*. . . .

“The monopoly of armed force is the most necessary attribute of the international government, but it will, of course, have to exercise various governmental functions. It will have to decide all disputes between different nations, and will have to possess the right to revise treaties. It will be bound by its constitution to intervene by force of arms against any nation that refuses to submit to the arbitration. . . .

“There is one other method by which, in theory, the peace of the world could be secured, and that is the supremacy of one nation or of one closely allied group of nations. By this method Rome secured the peace of the Mediterranean area for several centuries. America at this moment, if it were belligerent and imperialistic, could compel the rest of the world to disarm, and establish a world-wide monopoly of American armed forces. But the country has no wish for such enterprises, and in a few years the opportunity will be gone. In the near future, a world war, however terrible, would probably end in American victory without the destruction of civilization in the Western Hemisphere, and American victory would no doubt lead to a world government under the hegemony of the United States—a result which, for my part, I would welcome with enthusiasm.

“But if, as seems more likely, there is no world war until Russia has an adequate supply of atomic bombs, plans for world peace will have to reckon with Russia and America as roughly equal powers, and an international government, if it is to be established before the outbreak of an utterly disastrous war, will have to be created by agreement rather than by force.

“Short of actual force, however, the government of the United States, with the support of Great Britain and a number of other powers, could do a great deal toward the creation of an international government. An alliance should be formed, consisting in the first place of all North and South America, the British Commonwealth, France, Belgium, Holland, Scandinavia and Spain (after dealing with Franco). This alliance should proclaim certain international purposes, and declare its willingness to be joined by any power that subscribed to these purposes. There should be both military and economic inducements to join the alliance; military, in that the alliance as a whole would undertake the defense of all its members; economic, in a lower tariff for trade within the alliance than for trade with countries outside it, and also in advantages as regards loans and access to raw materials. There should be a gradual increase in closeness of the alliance and a continually greater amalgamation of military resources. Every possible

effort should be made to induce Russia to become a member of the alliance. In this way international government might grow up gradually. . . .

“Russia, since it is a dictatorship . . . can be dealt with only on the governmental level. Stalin and Molotov, or their successors, will have to be persuaded that it is to the national interest of Russia to permit the creation of an effective international government. I do not think the necessary persuasion can be effected except by governments, especially the government of the United States. Nor do I think that the persuasion can be effected by arguments of principle. The only possible way, in my opinion, is by a mixture of cajolery and threat, making it plain to the Soviet authorities that refusal will entail disaster, while acceptance will not. . . .

“If the atomic bomb shocks the nations into acquiescence in a system making great wars impossible, it will have been one of the greatest boons ever conferred by science.”

### **Szilard at Pugwash**

In 1954, both the United States and the Soviet Union developed the H-bomb. On Aug. 3-5, 1955, as a result of an invitation from Russell to Soviet General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev, four Soviet scientists joined their Western counterparts for a discussion of the implications of the arms race, at a meeting of the Association of Parliamentarians for World Government (APWG, with headquarters in London). The conference voted in favor of The Russell-Einstein Manifesto, which called for cooperation among scientists. Russell drafted this manifesto for signature by scientists of the East and West blocs after the development of the H-bomb, and Einstein approved putting his name to it in a letter written two days before his death. Eight scientists, mostly Nobel Prize winners, signed the statement, and it was released in a press conference on July 9, 1955. After the APWG also approved the manifesto, Russell started work that led to the founding of the Pugwash Conferences, whose initial funder was the Canadian industrialist Cyrus Eaton, as a way for scientists from the East and West blocs to meet on a regular basis. Pugwash continues to the present day, but, by 1960, Russell considered it superfluous and moved on to other methods.

The excerpts below are from a document based on a speech by Szilard (the person on whom the character “Dr. Strangelove” was modelled), that was first presented to the second Pugwash Conference at Lac Beauport, on March 31-April 11, 1958; its topic was, “The Dangers of the Present Situation, and Ways and Means of Diminishing Them.” Szilard’s speech, as it appeared in the February 1960 *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, was titled, “How to Live with the Bomb and Survive: The Possibility of a Pax Russo-Americana in the Long-Range Rocket Stage of the So-Called Atomic Stalemate”:

“In the years that followed the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima, men of good will have from time to time thought that the problem posed by the bomb could be solved by getting

rid of it in the foreseeable future. At this point, I am not at all certain that this is, or that it ever really was, a promising approach to the problem. . . .

*“I believe the time has come to face up to this situation and to ask in all seriousness whether the world could learn to live for a while with the bomb. The purpose of this paper is to examine what it would take to accomplish this.*

“In the present transitional phase of the so-called atomic stalemate the situation is changing rapidly. If Russia were to stage a sudden attack against America’s bases at some point in this transitional phase, she might seriously cripple America’s capability for striking a major counterblow. The fear that this could happen induces America to build submarines which are capable of launching intermediate-range rockets that may carry hydrogen bombs. For the same reason America is prepared to keep—in an acute crisis—an appreciable fraction of her strategic bombers in flight. . . .

“The next stage of the ‘stalemate’ toward which we are now moving will be rather different from the present transitional phase. . . .

*“The long-range rocket stage will present a much simpler and clearer picture than the present transitional phase. In that stage the bomb will manifestly pose a wholly novel problem to the world, and it will be obvious that the statesmen do not have at present an answer to this problem. The problem may be phrased as follows: The threat of force has hitherto always played a role in the dealings of the great powers with each other. At present there is no substitute in sight, and therefore it may be assumed that in the long-range rocket stage the threat of force will continue to play, at least for a while, its traditional role.*

“In the past, the great powers have always regarded war as the ultimate resort, and ‘war’ meant a contest of strength, to be resolved by the exhaustion or total collapse of one of the two parties to the conflict. . . . In that stage America and Russia could no longer engage in a contest of this sort with each other without both being destroyed. Between them ‘war,’ in this sense of the term, will no longer be practicable, and thus one of the basic premises of their traditional foreign policy will cease to be valid. What is going to take its place?

“The possession of bombs, large ones and small, will continue to present an implied threat. Perhaps Russia and America might be able to retain the use of the ‘threat of force’ and yet avoid an all-out atomic catastrophe, but only if there is a major change in the character of the ‘threat.’ Thus we are led to ask what kind of ‘threats’ may remain ‘permissible’ in the long-range rocket stage, if that stage is to be ‘metastable.’ By ‘metastable’ we mean a state in which an international disturbance may lead to a change, but would not trigger a chain of events leading to greater and greater destruction. . . .

“What is needed at present is not for Russia and America to reach agreements on concrete issues, but rather to reach a meeting of the minds on what it would take to render the long-range rocket stage a ‘metastable’ situation, so that an initial

disturbance may not trigger an all-out atomic war. . . .

“What kind of an international disturbance is likely to lead America and Russia into an all-out war in the long-range rocket stage?

“In the first few years following the Second World War America and Russia found themselves locked in a power conflict. Conflicts of this kind have repeatedly arisen in the course of history. The conflict between Athens and Sparta which preceded the Peloponnesian War and led to the destruction of Greece was a conflict of this kind. . . . Just as in Greece, the opponents attempted to strengthen their position by forming alliances, and gradually more and more nations were drawn into one or the other of the two camps. This was the setting in which the ‘cold war’ arose. . . .

“It is my contention that, as the world moves into the next stage, the vicious circle of classical power conflict will cease to operate between America and Russia.

“During the early post-war years Russia and America looked upon other nations as potential allies, and upon every ally as a potential asset. In the long-range rocket stage they will increasingly look upon allies as potential liabilities. The controversial issues that have arisen between America and Russia in the early post-war years will not retain any substantial strategic significance, and therefore, they may become negotiable. . . .

“It is conceivable that America and Russia may be able to go one step further, that they may be able to agree on a revision of the map, and that they may subsequently act in concert with each other, should other nations attempt to change the map by force or the threat of force. Could such a pax Russo-Americana conceivably evolve during the next stage?

“A few years after Hiroshima, when America was in possession of the bomb and Russia was not, America adopted a policy of threatening massive retaliation against the cities of Russia, were Russia to intervene militarily in Western Europe. Winston Churchill was the first statesman who proclaimed the belief that, were it not for the possession of the bomb by America, freedom in Western Europe and perhaps in the whole world would perish. Subsequently many people in America came to believe that this was true. . . .

“The prevailing school of thought in America holds that Russia has a propensity for expanding her rule and that she would bring about changes in the map if she were able to do so at comparatively little cost to herself. But for an effective ‘deterrent’ in operation, so these people believe, Russia would have kept on expanding in the post-war years.

“Adopting for the moment such views, for the sake of argument, we may accept the thesis that the threat of massive retaliation may have functioned as an expedient—even though morally unacceptable—‘deterrent,’ as long as Russia was herself in no position to strike back. In the next stage, however, when Russia may be capable of destroying America to any desired degree, just as America may be capable of

destroying Russia to any desired degree, the threat of massive retaliation on the part of America would be tantamount to a threat of ‘murder and suicide.’ . . .

“Among those who believe that Russia needs to be ‘deterred’ . . . [the most important group] believes, however, that a policy of ‘Keep them guessing!’ will not work, and that Russia must be left with no uncertainty concerning the price that may be exacted from her, should she make an aggressive move. These men say that America must resist a possible Russian invasion of any area which she is committed to protect, by being prepared to fight a local war in the contested area. They also believe that America may use small atomic bombs against troops in combat in such a ‘limited’ war. . . .

“A limited war need not deteriorate into an all-out war if America and Russia realize that the objective of such a war cannot be anything approaching ‘victory,’ not even victory in the contested area, to which the fighting may be limited. The objective of such a limited war would rather be to exact a price, and thereby to make it costly for the enemy to extend its rule. America and Russia would need to impose upon themselves certain far-reaching restraints, proclaimed well in advance. They could do this, for instance, by both declaring unilaterally at the outset that they would use atomic bombs only against troops in combat and only within their own side of the prewar boundary.’ . . .

“At some point, either Russia or America could decide to respond to the threat of ‘limited’ war, not by a counterthreat of the same kind, but by the threat of demolishing—if need be—a specified number of cities, which have received adequate warning to permit their orderly evacuation. This would then represent a novel method of ‘exacting a price’ which might be quite appropriate—if a price has to be exacted at all. . . . From the moral point of view it would be no minor advance were the threat to destroy property to take the place of the threat of killing soldiers or civilians. . . . It might, however, be necessary to have a catalogue, giving the number of inhabitants for all Russian as well as American cities, which is acknowledged as valid by both nations. Otherwise, a dangerous dispute could arise in an acute crisis as to how the principle of ‘one-for-one’ applies to the particular case. . . .

“Let us now assume, for the sake of argument, that in the long-range rocket stage there may occur some major disturbance affecting the Arabian Peninsula which threatens to cut off Western Europe from its Mid-Eastern oil supply. Let us further assume that America is on the verge of sending troops to Iraq and Saudi Arabia, that Turkish troops are poised to move into Syria, and that Russia is concentrating troops on her Turkish border for the purpose of restraining Turkey. Let us suppose further that at this point America may declare that she is prepared to send troops into Turkey and to use small atomic bombs against Russian troops in combat on Turkish territory and perhaps, in hot pursuit, also beyond the prewar Turkish-Russian boundary.

“Russia would then have to decide whether she wants to fight an atomic war on her southern border and take the risk that such a war might not remain limited. Assuming that Russia has a substantial stake in the Middle East at that time, she might then decide to proclaim that she would not resist an American intervention locally in the Middle East, but would, if need be, exact a price from America, not in human life, but in property. She might proceed to name some twenty American cities and make it clear that in case of American troop landings in the Middle East she would single out one of these cities, give it four weeks’ warning to permit its orderly evacuation and to enable the American government to make provisions for the feeding and housing of the refugees, and then demolish that city with one single long-range rocket.

“In order to make this threat believable, Russia would have to make it clear that she would abide by the principle of ‘one-for-one’ and that she would tolerate—without threatening any reprisals—America’s demolishing Russian cities having the same aggregate population. She could make it clear that she expects these cities to be given advance warning also, and that for any additional city which America might choose to demolish in Russia would demolish one and just one city of a similar size in America. . . .

“What would be the American response to a Russian threat of this sort, provided the threat were properly qualified and therefore believable? Presumably, the twenty cities named would be lobbying in Washington against the projected armed intervention in the Middle East and perhaps force a re-examination of the whole Mid-Eastern issue. People might well ask: ‘In view of the fact that there is no other market for Mid-Eastern oil, is Western Europe really in danger of losing the supply of oil from the Middle East? Could not the oil from the Sahara replace, if need be, the oil from the Middle East, and if this were so, just how high could the Mid-Eastern countries raise the price of oil?’

“As a result of such a re-examination, America might perhaps decide against an intervention in the Middle East. Contrariwise, if America, being willing to lose one of her major cities, were to decide in favor of intervention, then both Russia and America would lose the same amount of ‘property destroyed,’ and America would be free to occupy Iraq and Saudi Arabia without having to fear any further Russian reprisals. . . .

“Even today, hardly anyone in governmental circles in France or Western Germany, for instance, really believes that America could be counted upon to sacrifice a substantial number of her cities in order to live up to a commitment made by her at the time when she needed military bases in Europe, and was able to extend protection to nations in Western Europe without risking the loss of her own cities. Sooner or later, doubts of this sort will inevitably lead nations like France and Germany to want to possess their own bombs, if they choose to put their faith in them. . . .

“At this point it may be necessary to say that the loss of

an evacuated city could mean a good deal more than just a ‘loss of property’ and this would hold true in Europe perhaps even more than anywhere else in the world. People have a strong emotional attachment to the city in which they live, and certain cities are in fact irreplaceable. The destruction of a city would cause dislocation of population and may destroy much of the social fabric; thus the damage cannot be expressed in purely monetary terms. In Europe, perhaps even more than anywhere else, people might rebel at the thought that their city might be sacrificed on the altar of more or less irrational national goals. . . .

“Occasionally there are hints in speeches of officials who should know better, that there is work in progress on a defense system aimed at destroying long-range rockets in flight. Such a defense system is not in fact in sight. What may be in sight is a novel type of futile arms race. One nation, say, America, may acquire means which would permit her to destroy in flight a small fraction of the incoming long-range rockets and the fraction of rockets which she could thus destroy may gradually increase over the years. Russia may then respond by correspondingly increasing the number of rockets ready to be launched. Only a small fraction of these rockets would need to carry a hydrogen bomb; the rest could carry dummies.

“Such an arms race would be futile, with the capability of the offense always keeping ahead of the capability of the defense, and yet it could become a major economic burden. In these and similar circumstances, an agreement on arms limitations might at some point become necessary. . . .”

Both Russell and Szilard kept up a correspondence with Khrushchev, from approximately the time of Khrushchev’s decision to send four top Academician scientists to attend the 1954 meeting of the Association of Parliamentarians for World Government in London. As is documented in the book *Toward a Livable World: Leo Szilard and the Crusade for Nuclear Arms Control* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1987), the correspondence between Szilard and Khrushchev was particularly heavy in the early-1960s, including during the Berlin Crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis. In an Oct. 4, 1961 letter addressed to “Dear Mr. Khrushchev,” Szilard proposed the following solution to the Berlin Crisis, when the Soviets walled off their zone of the city:

“When I was recently interviewed on television, they asked me if I thought that there would be an all-out war over Berlin. I answered that I didn’t see why it would be necessary for America to drop hundreds of H bombs on Russian cities and for Russia to drop hundreds of H bombs on American cities to settle the Berlin issue, when clearly the issue could be settled by dropping just two H bombs—both of them on Berlin. They asked me thereupon why one H bomb would not be enough to demolish Berlin, and I said that this would not work, because if only one H bomb were to be dropped, then Russia and America would not be able to agree on who should drop that one bomb.”

## Russell and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Russell reflected on his 1946 call for preventive war and world government during a 1959 interview on BBC:

**BBC:** “Is it true or untrue that in recent years you advocated that a preventive nuclear war might be made against communism, against Soviet Russia?”

**Russell:** “It’s certainly true, and I don’t repent it now. What I thought all along was that a nuclear war in which both sides had nuclear weapons would be an utter and absolute disaster. There was a time, just after the war, when the Americans had a monopoly of nuclear weapons and offered to internationalize nuclear weapons by the Baruch proposal [to the UN], and I thought this was an extremely generous proposal on their part, one which would be very desirable that the world should accept; not that I advocated a nuclear war, but I did think that great pressure should be put upon Russia to accept the Baruch proposal, and I did think that if they continued to refuse it might be necessary actually to go to war. At that time nuclear weapons existed only on one side, and therefore the odds were the Russians would have given way. I thought they would—”

**BBC:** “Suppose they hadn’t given way?”

**Russell:** “I thought and hoped that the Russians would give way, but of course you can’t threaten unless you’re prepared to have your bluff called.”

During the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, Russell tried to insinuate himself as the go-between for President John F. Kennedy and Khrushchev, to further the primary goals of: 1) using the threat of potential thermonuclear obliteration to advance the cause of one-world government through the United Nations; 2) orchestrating rules of thermonuclear engagement on the basis of *quid pro quo*; and, 3) generating a shock, through thermonuclear terror, that would occasion a cultural paradigm shift in future generations.

Russell condemned President Kennedy as “insane” for refusing to play by the rules that he was setting, while he praised Khrushchev to the skies for saving humanity by responding to his intervention. Although recently declassified documents from the JFK Library show that President Kennedy did consider a trade of missiles in Italy and Turkey for those being located in Cuba, the evil Russell makes it abundantly clear that President Kennedy did not cooperate with his goals.

The Cuban Missile Crisis erupted on Oct. 22, 1962, when President Kennedy imposed a blockade on Cuba. Kennedy then announced that Soviet missiles had been discovered on the island, and that unless these were dismantled forthwith, the United States would wage war to remove the threat to its security. On Oct. 23, 1962, Russell cabled President Kennedy as follows:

“Your actions desperate. Threat to human survival. No conceivable justification. Civilized man condemns it. We will not have mass murder. Ultimatums mean war. I do not speak for power but plead for civilised man. End this madness.”

At the same time, Russell cabled Khrushchev:

“I appeal to you not to be provoked by the unjustifiable action of the United States in Cuba. The world will support caution. Urge condemnation be brought through United Nations. Precipitous action could mean annihilation for mankind.”

On Oct. 24, while Russell had gathered large crowds before the U.S. Embassy in London through his Committee of 100, he released the following thermonuclear terror leaflet that was picked up by news media worldwide:

*“You are to die*

“Not in the course of nature, but within a few weeks. And not you alone, but your family, your friends, and all the inhabitants of Britain together with many hundreds of millions of innocent people elsewhere.

*“Why?*

“Because rich Americans dislike the government that Cubans prefer, and have used part of their wealth to spread lies about it.

*“What can you do?*

“You can go out into the street and into the market place proclaiming: Do not yield to ferocious and insane murderers. Do not imagine that it is your duty to die when your Prime Minister and the President of the United States tell you to do so. Remember rather your duty to your family, your friends, your country, the world you live in, and that future world which, if you so choose, may be glorious, happy and free.

*“And remember*

*“Conformity means death—*

*“Only protest gives a hope for life.”*

On Oct. 24, Russell was inundated by the press after they learned that Khrushchev had responded to his cable with a letter, which was simultaneously released in excerpts through the Soviet news agency TASS, before the letter was in Russell’s hands. In the letter, Khrushchev expressed “sincere gratitude” for the concern Russell had displayed “in connection with the aggressive actions of the United States.” Khrushchev gave assurances that “the Soviet Government will not take any reckless decisions . . . will do everything to prevent war from breaking out.” Khrushchev called on President Kennedy to “display reserve and stay the execution of its piratical threats.” He proposed “a top level meeting to remove the danger of unleashing a thermonuclear war.” Russell immediately cabled Khrushchev as follows:

“Thank you for your heartening reply. I congratulate you on your courageous stand for sanity. I hope you will hold back ships in Cuban waters long enough to secure American agreement to your proposal. Whole world will bless you if you succeed in averting war. If there is anything I can possibly do please let me know.”

And, Russell cabled Kennedy at the same time:

“I urge you most strongly to make a conciliatory reply to Khrushchev’s vital overture and avoid clash with Russian ships long enough to make meeting and negotiations possible.



After shots have been exchanged it will probably be too late. I appeal to you to meet Khrushchev. If there is anything I can do please let me know.”

On Oct. 24, Khrushchev ordered some 12 ships that were apparently carrying weapons, to turn back and not challenge the U.S. blockade of Cuba. After Russell received news that the Soviet ships had altered course, he issued the following press statement:

“Premier Khrushchev is personally responsible for the avoidance of a war of nuclear devastation. He has acted with the greatest restraint in a crisis of the first magnitude.

“He has carried out every letter of the promise contained in his message to me. He promised to do nothing rash and nothing which would risk conflict and twelve Russian ships turned back from their destination at Cuba. He stopped all further shipments. This leaves Cuba blockaded. Mr. Khrushchev’s desperately important moderation makes it incumbent upon President Kennedy to accept his offer to meet and discuss outstanding issues at the highest level. The blockade violates international law. It is illegal. It is immoral. If the blockade is defensible when applied to Cuba then it is just as applicable to Great Britain. America should consider the war of 1812. If nuclear bases are intolerable in Cuba they are intolerable everywhere. This is the heart of what I have been saying to the British people for the length of our campaign for nuclear disarmament. Nuclear bases threaten the peace of all. Now is the moment for us to realise that we have been on the very edge of the end of human life on our planet. Mr. Khrushchev’s offer to meet and discuss the source of conflict must be supported by every sane man and woman.”

On Oct. 25, Russell received a response from President Kennedy, which read:

“I am in receipt of your telegrams. We are currently discussing the matter in the United Nations. While your messages are critical of the United States, they make no mention of your concern for the introduction of secret Soviet missiles into Cuba. I think your attention might well be directed to the burglars rather than those who have caught the burglars.”

Russell responded to Kennedy:

“Thank you for your reply to my cables. I understand your anxiety about nuclear missiles. My point is that a blockade which threatens the sinking of Soviet ships brings mankind to the edge of annihilation. I beg you not to invade Cuba or to risk nuclear war. Could you accept United Nations inspection of bases and offer bases in Turkey in exchange?”

“The removal of any bases from the Russian perimeter would immensely strengthen America’s stand on behalf of peace and would bring a comparable Soviet response.

“I am appealing to Dr. Castro to accept United Nations inspection in exchange for your solemn pledge that Cuba will not be invaded by the United States. It is in your hands to transform a situation of grave crisis into one of immense hope. Peaceful initiative from you now would bring the world’s gratitude.”

Russell next cabled Khrushchev:

“May I humbly appeal for your further help in lowering the temperature despite the worsening situation. Your continued forbearance is our great hope. With my high regard and sincere thanks.”

On Oct. 28, Russell cabled Castro:

“In light of America’s total and dangerous unwillingness to respond to moderation, could you make a gesture for humanity and agree to dismantle the bases? The fate of mankind rests with your decision. . . .”

On the same day, Russell cabled Khrushchev:

“The U.S. rejection of your proposals to trade Soviet installations in Cuba against NATO installations in Turkey is totally unjustifiable and is a sign of insane paranoia. Stripped of diplomatic verbiage, the position of the U.S. government is this: ‘unless everybody everywhere does exactly what we wish, we’ll exterminate the human race.’ They have the power to do this and it seems they also have the will. What are sane people to do in view of this armed madness?”

“I think, though with great reluctance, that sane people ought to yield as far as necessary to avoid catastrophe. The end of the human race would be definitive, whereas American insanity may be temporary. It seems to me, therefore, that you ought to dismantle the Soviet installations in Cuba under the guarantee of inspection by UNO demanding only, in return, that when UNO gives the necessary guarantee, the American blockade of Cuba would be lifted. I think it should be made evident to world opinion that this action is only taken in response to a kind of blackmail which is neither sane nor morally justifiable.”

Later that day, the Soviets announced they would dismantle the nuclear bases in Cuba, if only the United States would respect the sovereignty of Cuba. Russell issued the following release:

“. . . I cannot praise sufficiently the sanity and magnanimity, the willingness to do all required to solve this overwhelmingly grave crisis. . . . President Kennedy is under a moral obligation imposed on him by humanity, and has an absolute duty to meet with Mr. Khrushchev and to earnestly pursue the removal of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, to achieve disarmament, and, as Mr. Khrushchev has said, to consider all issues of peace and war. If ever words have been matched by deeds, they have been so by the Soviet Union. The concrete deed is ending the crisis. If the United States has ever been sincere in its claim to be willing to agree to end the Cold War, on the condition that Russian deeds matched their words, then now is the time for the United States and for Mr. Kennedy to prove it.”

Russell next cabled his gratitude to Khrushchev:

“I should like you to know of my personal feelings about your solving the Cuban crisis. I have never known any statesman act with the magnanimity and greatness that you have shown over Cuba and I wish you to be clear that every sincere and honest human being pays you homage for your courage.”