

The Russell Einstein Manifesto (abridged)

In the tragic situation which confronts humanity, we feel that scientists should assemble in conference to appraise the perils that have arisen as a result of the development of weapons of mass destruction, and to discuss a resolution.

We are speaking on this occasion, not as members of this or that nation, continent, or creed, but as human beings, members of the species of man, whose continued existence is in doubt.

We have to learn to think in a new way. We have to learn to ask ourselves, not what steps can be taken to give military victory, for there no longer are such steps. The question we have to ask ourselves is: what steps can be taken to prevent a military contest of which the issue must be disastrous to all parties?

No doubt in an H-bomb war great cities would be obliterated. The best authorities are unanimous in saying that a war with H-bombs might possibly put an end to the human race.

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? People will not face this alternative because it is so difficult to abolish war.

People scarcely realize in imagination that the danger is to themselves and their children and their grandchildren. They are in imminent danger of perishing agonizingly. And so they hope that perhaps war may be allowed to continue provided modern weapons are prohibited.

This hope is illusory. Whatever agreements not to use H-bombs had been reached in a time of peace, they would no longer be considered binding in a time of war, and both sides would set to work to manufacture H-bombs as soon as war broke out, for, if one side manufactured the bombs and the other did not, the side that manufactured them would inevitably be victorious.

Issues must not be decided by war. Remember your humanity. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death.

Resolution:

We invite this Congress, and through it the scientists of the world and the general public, to subscribe to the following resolution:

“In view of the fact that in any future world war nuclear weapons will certainly be employed, and that such weapons threaten the continued existence of mankind, we urge the governments of the world to realize, and to acknowledge publicly, that their purpose cannot be furthered by a world war, and we urge them, consequently, to find peaceful means for the settlement of all matters of dispute between them.”

Max Born
Percy W. Bridgman
Albert Einstein
Leopold Infeld
Frederic Joliot-Curie
Herman J. Muller
Linus Pauling
Cecil F. Powell
Joseph Rotblat
Bertrand Russell
Hideki Yukawa