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August 17, 1945

Dr. Karl K. Darrow

New York 27, N. Y.

Dear Karl:

In reply to your letter of August 9th, you have the facts essentially straight, excepting that I don't believe I talked on the subject of a demonstration of the bomb as long as an hour. I made the proposal briefly in the morning session of the Secretary of War's committee, and during luncheon Justice Byrnes, now Secretary of State, asked me further about it, and it was discussed at some length, I should judge perhaps ten minutes.

I am sure it was given serious consideration by the Secretary of War and his committee, and gather from the discussion that the proposal to put on a demonstration did not appear to be desirable because, as you say, (a) the number of people that would be killed by the bomb would not be greater in order of magnitude than the number already killed in fire raids, and (b) Oppenheimer could think of no demonstration that would be sufficiently spectacular to convince the Japs that further resistance was useless. Oppenheimer felt, and that feeling was shared by Groves and others, that the only way to put on a demonstration would be to attack a real target of built-up structures.

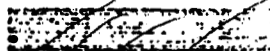
In view of the fact that two bombs ended the war, I am inclined to feel that they made the right decision. Surely many more lives were saved by shortening the war than were sacrificed as a result of the bombs. Further, it goes without saying that all of us hope and pray that there will never be an occasion to use another one. The world must realize that there can never be another war.

As regards criticisms of science and scientists, I think that is a cross we will have to bear, and I think in the long run the good sense of everyone the world over will realize that in this respect, as in all scientific pursuits, the world is better as a result.

Sincerely yours,

Ernest O. Lawrence

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