

Second Discussion Paper (Due Friday, March 6):

Write a five-page essay on either one of the following two topics.

1. It is early June of 1945, the last year of World War II. Germany has surrendered, rendering moot the premises upon which the Manhattan Project was established and upon which your own participation in the project as director of the bomb physics group, one of the seven major research groups at Los Alamos, was predicated. A copy of the Franck report has come into the hands of the members of your group, most of them considerably younger than you are and lacking the wide experience of the world that you possess. They look to you not only as a technical leader but as a kind of moral and spiritual guide as well, thanks in no small part to the fact that you are yourself a refugee from Nazi persecutions in your homeland of Hungary. The members of your group are eager to learn your reaction to the Franck report, to which they have been asked to add their signatures. Should your group take a position on the recommendations of the report? If not, why not? If so, what position? You decide to put your reaction in the form of a discussion memorandum to the members of the group. Write that memorandum.

2. It is December of 1945. A war-weary United States is looking forward to celebrating its first Christmas of real peace in five years. Earlier in the fall you left your junior position as a member of the theoretical physics group at Los Alamos to resume your teaching position in the physics department at the University of Michigan. With the explosion of the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August, the whole world—your students and faculty colleagues included—learned about the secret work that you had been doing during your two-year absence from campus. Now the question of the United States' future atomic energy policy has become the focus of a major public debate. By nature you are not a political person, preferring the laboratory to the soapbox, but you have been urged by your former Los Alamos colleagues and your faculty colleagues at Michigan to join a newly-formed group of atomic scientists which is advocating a policy of [*(the sharing of nuclear technology and the international control of atomic energy under the auspices of the United Nations, this in the interest of world peace, international cooperation, and freedom from nuclear terror)* **or – you choose** *(the most rapid possible development, under conditions of maximum secrecy, of a powerful nuclear arsenal, including preliminary work on the “the super,” the H-bomb, for the purpose of defending ourselves against the frightening new threat posed by our former ally, the Soviet Union)*]. Thanks to the fact that you have a way with words, those pressing you to join the new group have also asked you to draft an editorial essay stating the group's position. The essay will be published in the New York Times. Write that editorial essay.