

Editorial

The increasing military commitments in Europe, the continuing war risk in the Middle East, the rapidly growing tension and military adventures in Central America, South Africa and South East Asia, these are the provoking events of the past years. Aggressive actions are undertaken against other countries, military bases are established on the territories of other states.

Expressing their extreme uneasiness about these events and about the increasing danger of a world nuclear conflict, the citizens of 132 countries of the world, of different races and nationalities, of different philosophical opinions, religions and political beliefs, convened in Prague in June 1983 to express their determined disagreement with such hazardous endangering of the life on our planet.

The scientific workers, representing the vanguard of the social conscience of mankind, met in a panel discussion at this assembly to formulate their standpoint concerning the present world and to submit their proposals aiming at the liquidation of the existing centres of war tension and at a reduction of the stresses of our stormy life. It is our moral obligation to make our readers acquainted with the principal ideas of these proposals.

Scientists of various branches from 49 countries declare that it is the most important task of scientists all over the world to join forces and prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction and to participate in the peace campaign for nuclear freeze and UN world disarmament campaign.

Nuclear war would mean, in its unavoidable consequences, the end of humanity, the end of intelligent life on this planet. The idea that one of the parties could emerge victorious from a nuclear war is entirely erroneous and it is absurd to believe in the possibility of a limited nuclear war. Therefore, the scientists appeal to the governments of all countries possessing nuclear weapons to heed the warnings of the threat to mankind of a nuclear war and to do everything to ensure that nuclear energy be used only for peaceful purposes, for the welfare of mankind. The true role of science and scientists is to construct — not to destroy.

The participants recommend to the governments of all countries to enhance the dignity of international law and to accede to the resolution of the UN General Assembly declaring that the state which would be the first to use nuclear weapons even in preventive or defensive actions would commit the gravest crime against humanity that could not be justified by any means. They recommend to all the governments to accede to the international treaties prohibiting chemical and bacteriological weapons and to reduce the enormous stocks of military chemicals.

The participants point out that the new phase of development in the arms race with its growth of the military industrial complexes and the role of militarism in national and foreign policies increase mistrust between nations, particularly between those with different social systems, and threaten international stability. They appeal to the highest representatives, governments and parliaments of countries possessing nuclear weapons to reduce the danger of a nuclear conflict by international negotiations for the limitation of nuclear armament and gradual disarmament on the principle of equal security.

The participants consider the struggle for peace and peaceful coexistence of countries with different political systems to be the most urgent global problem of mankind. The arms race drains away enormous economic values and human efforts, thus postponing indefinitely the possibility of a solution of these problems which are particularly urgent in the Third World. Only in peace is it

possible to solve such problems as poverty, illiteracy, diseases, to preserve a healthy environment for mutually interrelated forms of life on Earth, to ensure food and the necessary resources for people and to solve problems connected with the cultural, economic, scientific and technological development of society. The struggle for peace is closely connected with the struggle for democracy and human rights. In this respect the right of the individual as well as of nations to live in peace must be considered as the most outstanding and fundamental human right.

The participants propose the organization of a World Congress of Scientists against War and Armament, and the creation of National Committees of Scientists for Peace which will concentrate the forces of active scientists against war.

The participants appeal to the moral responsibility of all scientists of the world to engage in the struggle for peace and against the danger of nuclear war, and to instil the feeling of this responsibility in the young generation.

The participants consider it of vital importance to develop international cooperation in research necessary to secure peace and prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war. They recommend that UNESCO and all international scientific associations of various branches of science put on the agenda of their world congresses, symposia and conferences a discussion of the question how science could contribute to securing peaceful coexistence.

They address their urgent appeal to scientists all over the world to work actively in their countries and on an international level in favour of the détente, of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, against the threat of nuclear war and for the protection of life wherever and whenever it may be threatened.

Editors of
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