

APPENDIX 6

Resolution passed by the Fourth Assembly of
the WFSW, Berlin, 23-25 September, 1955

ON THE NEED FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons in war would produce a disaster beyond any human history. The full extent of the death and suffering it would cause cannot yet be gauged. Many of its consequences are indeed at present unpredictable. From facts already available, however, we know that it could produce hundreds of millions of victims and serious genetic and other long term effects. Even the experimental explosions of nuclear weapons have caused death and disease. These horrors have been made possible as a consequence of scientific discoveries and it is the first duty of scientists to do all in their power to prevent their occurrence.

The Assembly accordingly welcomes the initiatives already taken by numerous scientific organizations and individuals in protesting against atomic war. We join them in urging on all governments the conclusion of negotiations which would make it impossible.

The effectiveness of the action of scientists greatly depends on the achievement of co-operation between them. Here the success of the Geneva Conference on the Peaceful Use of Atomic Energy has already shown what can be done. However, from the very fact that the dangers of the military uses of atomic energy could not be discussed there it is evident that, for the purpose of preventing atomic war, Geneva is not enough.

A further conference of comparable importance and authority is still urgently needed. It should examine, in the light of indisputable facts, the nature of atomic warfare and the ways of averting it. It would consider the scientific aspects of the problem of the prohibition of atomic weapons and the possibilities of ensuring their adequate control. The conference, apart from its scientific contribution, would serve the indispensable purpose of providing the public with reliable information of vital importance to them.

Such a conference to be effective must be of the widest character embracing scientists in all principal countries and of different opinions.

The Federation declares its willingness to give its fullest support to any sufficiently qualified and representative conference. Such a conference was called for in the letter signed by Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein, Frederic Joliot-Curie and other world-famous scientists. It should give effective expression to the moral responsibilities of scientists. The Federation will co-operate in this with other organizations of scientists to ensure that a conference is held as soon as it is technically possible. It is in this way, we are convinced, that scientists can best contribute to preventing atomic warfare and securing a permanent peace.