

Dr. Linus Pauling's Social Activism Remembered
Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER
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In part 2 of SGI President Ikeda's dialogue with Dr. Linus Pauling Jr., they discuss the late Dr. Pauling's social activism.

(Continued from the Nov. 28 World Tribune)

When SGI President Ikeda asked Dr. Linus Pauling Jr. if he felt Hitler had been mentally ill, the psychiatrist said he thought so. Dr. Pauling suspects the German dictator had a character disorder, such that he was unable to judge right from wrong. Such people, he explained, are incapable of recognizing that they are ill. People who are simply neurotic, he added, realize that something is wrong with them and feel anxiety because of that.

Mr. Ikeda then said that talking with Dr. Pauling reminded him of his dialogues with his father, the late Linus Pauling, who always gave clear, insightful answers to his questions. The SGI leader recalled that he had once asked Linus Pauling, half in jest, if there was some kind of pill or tonic that could boost one's intelligence. The Nobel laureate's reply was that "effort is the only way.... You have to work hard toward your chosen goal. If you just live from day to day without any goals, your intellect will wither." It is no surprise, President Ikeda mused, that a person who works hard for the sake of improving society and the happiness of humanity, will tend to possess exceptional mental acuity.

Conversely, he said, there are extremely bright, capable people who show no interest in making the world a better place. Such people, he said, are invariably dominated by the life-state of Animality. Mr. Ikeda cited a related passage from the late scientist's book *No More War*: "I believe that there is a greater power in the world than the evil power of military force, of nuclear bombs — there is the power of good, of morality, of humanitarianism. I believe in the power of the human spirit."

President Ikeda then shared that he often speaks about Linus Pauling's committed social activism to youth. He voiced admiration for the scientist's struggle to protect the rights of Japanese Americans during World War II and prevent their forced relocation to internment camps.

Mr. Ikeda also talked about the period when Linus Pauling was many times summoned to appear before Congressional committees because of his peace activities. In the 1950s, at the height of the McCarthy era, the scientist faced a barrage of attacks for actively campaigning to collect signatures calling for a stop to nuclear testing. The authorities even threatened him with imprisonment if he didn't reveal the names of his colleagues, but Pauling refused to comply. His unwavering stand moved many people, President Ikeda said, and played a significant role in changing the tide of fear and paranoia that then prevailed.

Touching on the close relationship between Linus Pauling and Albert Einstein, the SGI leader remembered that when Pauling was blacklisted for alleged "un-American" activities and was denied a passport, Einstein wrote a protest letter to the U.S. secretary of state. Einstein once wrote to Pauling, "The fact that independent minds like you are being rebuked equally by official America and official Russia is insignificant and to a certain degree also amusing." Both scientists, Mr. Ikeda observed, acted on their convictions, undaunted by authority figures.

The SGI leader proposed that he and his guests pool their reminiscences of Dr. Pauling and publish them. Dr. and Mrs. Pauling heartily agreed, and it was decided to begin

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preparations.

Dr. Pauling explained that his father came from a poor family and experienced great hardship, having to work from a young age to help support his family and pay his way through school. The SGI leader explained that Shakyamuni Buddha was born the prince of a royal family but abandoned privilege to seek the truth. And Nichiren Daishonin, who enacted a great drama of the human spirit, was the son of a humble fisherman.

As their meeting drew to a close, Mr. Ikeda told Dr. Pauling that he is committed both to replying to Linus Pauling's call for peace and to fulfilling the scientist's hope that the SGI continue to advance intrepidly in this cause.

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