

May 21, 1947

**Letter from Homi Bhabha to Council of Scientific and
Industrial Research Director Shanti Swaroop
Bhatnagar**

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Summary:

A letter from Dr. Bhabha to Dr. Bhatnager arguing for the establishment and a small experimental pile of fissile material and its benefits, including operational and training experience

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AIR MAIL

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21st May, 1947.

My dear Bhatnagar,

I am proposing to take a three to four weeks holiday in Simla during June. Of course it will be a busman's holiday inasmuch as I intend to use the opportunity to work on my book without interruption. You will remember that it was our intention to call a meeting of the Atomic Research Committee at the beginning of June in Travancore. I do not think this will be possible now. I propose calling the meeting in Bombay in the first week of July, or if you think a meeting should be held earlier than in the month of June in Simla. Please let me have your views. I suppose it would be several months before the new Atomic Energy Board is actually instituted.

As I told you in our various conversations during the last few months, I have been waiting for the setting up of the Atomic Energy Board and the agreement with Travancore to go through before putting forward, what I consider to be, a very important project for India. The time is at last come when at the first meeting of the Board we should decide what steps should be taken to set up a small pile at this Institute as soon as possible. What I have in mind is what is known as the Initial Zero Energy Experimental Pile, and although the free energy available is only a few watts the neutron density is very high and the pile could be used not only for producing tracer elements but for testing the purity of substances required in the setting up of a larger pile. It would also give us experience in the operation of a pile, and in training people for it. I have already put two people on to work out theoretically the equations for the pile. I am also putting some

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of the new team of people on the high energy accelerator scheme on making special types of ionisation chambers and other instruments which are used at Chalk River for detecting the intensity of the various radiations from a pile. We have received from them blue-prints, just de-classified of some of the instruments used by them. These instruments are absolutely necessary if a pile is to be operated successfully without danger to the personnel.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

W.P.J.S.

D I R E C T O R.

Sir S. S. Huxford, O.B.E., D.Sc., F.R.S.,
Director, Scientific and Industrial Research,
Military Barracks, The Mall, DEW.
