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## LETTERS

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### Bertrand Russell Replies

MR. DAVID MARQUAND'S article on "Bombs and Scapegoats" [ENCOUNTER, January] demands a short reply. With a great deal of his analysis of the anti-nuclear movement, I have no quarrel. There are, as he says, two trends in the movement, one primarily moral, the other primarily political. But, to anyone whose ethic is not superstitious, there can be no disagreement between these two trends. What is right morally must be right politically, and what is right politically must be right morally. I am somewhat surprised by Mr. Marquand's power of reading the human heart: he knows exactly what was in the minds of the various Aldermaston marchers. There is one other thing that surprises me in his article, and that is his failure to realise the seriousness of the issue. For every person not wedded to frivolity, the question is: "What can be done to make it likely that there will be live human beings at the end of the present century?" The Governments of East and West, and those who support them, are taking pains not to face this question. Instead, like Mr. Marquand, they attempt to discredit by means of ridicule those who face the peril—for instance, by taking seriously a jocular suggestion to kidnap the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

To come to more serious matters, Mr. Marquand is quite right in distinguishing two trends among opponents of nuclear weapons. There are those who think that the campaign will be best served by remaining "respectable," as Mr. Marquand calls them, and there are others who think that something more drastic is necessary if public opinion is to become enlightened. I see no reason why this difference should be a cause of mutual hostility, since each group can work independently in the way that it believes to be most effective. I very much admire what the C.N.D. has achieved, and I hope it will go on to further triumphs, but I think that a "ginger group" is also required in this very urgent situation.

The argument against direct action appears conclusive to those whose social contacts are within the Establishment, but the study of British history since 1815 proves the opposite. Mr. Marquand says: "The way to win over public opinion in this country is to get Bishops to write letters to the Press, not to get philosophers put in gaol!" If Mr. Marquand had studied British political history, he could not have said this. I cannot think of any successful movement of reform since 1815 which has been favoured by Bishops—at any rate, in its early stages—but I can think of reforms which have profited by the imprisonment of philosophers. John Stuart Mill, as a young man, was arrested for advocating birth control, and Bradlaugh, in 1878, was sent to prison for the same reason. It was in 1878 that the British birth rate commenced a decline which con-

tinued for decades. Or, again, take evolution: Bishops wrote furiously against Darwin, and yet Darwin prevailed. Or, to come to less important matters: Bishops opposed marriage with a deceased wife's sister, and, when defeated on this issue, they continued to oppose marriage with a deceased husband's brother.

As for the efficacy of direct action, it was only the fear of revolt which caused the passage of the Reform Bill in 1832, and it was the fear inspired by the tearing down of the Hyde Park railings that caused the passage of the Reform Bill of 1867. John Brown's illegal actions played a very important part in the American Civil War. Illegality secured votes for women in a few years, after decades of decorous agitation had proved fruitless. There is nothing peculiarly modern in this. It was antiquity that coined the saying, "The blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church." (It is sometimes forgotten that it was for civil disobedience that the Martyrs were punished.)

As for the circumstances of the present campaign, I think that those who wish it to remain "respectable" ought to be grateful to the civil disobedience movement for drawing off the more turbulent spirits, thereby leaving the respectable elements undisturbed. The argument in favour of civil disobedience, as I see it, is this: Present policies, if pursued, make it almost certain that the human race will shortly become extinct. If this were generally known, public opinion would insist upon general disarmament. At present, it is not generally known because the major organs of publicity (largely without their own knowledge) prevent the truth from being generally known. It has seemed to some of us that civil disobedience, by virtue of its news value, offers the only available method of breaking through the barrier of silence and deceit by means of which populations are being lured to their doom. It is hoped that, as a result of the breaking of this barrier, the serious arguments for nuclear disarmament may be infiltrated into the news and may acquire a wide publicity which at present is denied them. My own conviction is that these purely rational arguments are so strong that they would convince even the Prime Minister if they could be brought to his attention.

Undoubtedly, civil disobedience will rouse opposition, but it will also rouse enthusiasm and may diminish general apathy and ignorance. Mr. Marquand gives away his case when he says: "Tell them how wicked they are, and they will sagely nod their heads; kick them in the teeth, and they are apt to hit you back." This is very true. But what is the use of a sage nodding of the head? In a furiously murderous world, this will save no one.

BERTRAND RUSSELL

*Plas Penrhyn,  
Penrhyndeudraeth,  
Merioneth*

LORD RUSSELL accuses me of failing to realise the seriousness of the issue. But since my article was about the C.N.D. as a political movement, not

about nuclear disarmament as such, he has no way of knowing my views on the issue. I suspect, therefore, that his real reason for disliking my article was not that I failed to realise the seriousness of nuclear disarmament, but that I failed to realise the seriousness of Lord Russell.

Behind Lord Russell's objections there lies an attitude which is extremely common among unilateralists. The attitude can be summarised as follows: mankind is threatened by destruction; the C.N.D. is conscious of this threat, and has devised a policy to meet it; this policy is clearly right; therefore all the C.N.D.'s opponents must be wrong—and not merely wrong, but insincere or indifferent as well. This attitude is understandable enough. Nuclear weapons are horrible, and if they were used in warfare mankind would probably be destroyed. But the C.N.D. is not alone in realising this. Everyone capable of reading a newspaper realises it. Where the C.N.D. is alone is in thinking that unilateral nuclear disarmament by this country would help to avoid nuclear war. The C.N.D. may, of course, be right. The issue is incredibly complex; the evidence is unreliable, and to a layman often incomprehensible; the facts are constantly changing. In these circumstances, no one can afford to be dogmatic. The C.N.D. is entitled to do all it can to persuade its opponents. But when it accuses them of wickedness or callousness merely because they disagree with it, it is claiming a degree of infallibility to which not even Lord Russell is entitled.

Lord Russell is equally dogmatic about the efficacy of civil disobedience. How can he know that it was "only" the threat of violence which led to the passing of the Reform Bill? How does he know that "illegality secured votes for women"—presumably with no help from the changed attitude which accompanied the first World War? As to John Brown, I agree that his illegal actions played an important part in the American Civil War. Indeed, they did a great deal to cause it. But does Lord Russell really want to start a civil war in this country?

In my original article, I argue at some length that civil disobedience could only succeed when the mass of the population supported those who broke the law. Most of Lord Russell's examples fall into that category. In 1832 and in 1867, the mass of the population, who were without votes, wanted to get them. The threat of violence may or may not have helped to secure their objective; but it could not have done so, if the government had not known that the majority of the population was determined on reform. If Lord Russell wishes to turn to 19th-century British history for his analogies, let him read any good account of the Chartist Convention of 1839 and ponder the reasons for the failure of the "physical force" Chartists. Then he will learn what happens to revolutionary movements when they are not supported by the majority of the population.

On the bishops, I give way. They have indeed been reluctant to support movements of reform.

DAVID MARQUAND

Manchester

### Mr. Fairlie's Profession

HENRY FAIRLIE can boast an enviable—indeed, a startling—range of journalistic experience. The *Manchester Evening News*, *The Times*, the *Observer*, the *Spectator*, the *Mail*... it is a formidable record. Yet in his commentary, "*A Dying Profession*" [ENCOUNTER, January], he reveals how the failure of these journals to live up to his standards compelled him to move from one to the next—as a Salvation Army Band moves from street corner to street corner. Those of us who in the past have been privileged to be his colleagues may not quite recognise his picture; but his impact on all the journals for which he worked was certainly considerable, and all were the poorer for his departure. So, when he asserts that journalism is moribund, his thesis cannot lightly be dismissed.

Mr. Fairlie's chief complaint about the press is that it has lost influence. In one sense he is right—and for reasons which are hinted at in his own article, when he describes an incident that took place while he was working under W. F. Casey on *The Times*. Mr. Fairlie suggested that a leading article should be written on the nationalisation of steel. Casey replied that he had just heard from the Prime Minister, with whom he had been lunching, that the Government was about to announce the setting up of a new committee on steel production; the leading article, therefore, should propose the setting up of just such a committee. This was a technique that had been exploited by the first of the great *Times* editors, Thomas Barnes, more than a century before, and by his successors; cleverly used, it naturally gave *The Times* an impression of power, almost of omniscience. What *The Times* prophesied—observers were not slow to notice, and often to deplore—normally came to pass.

*The Times* has recently lost this reputation. As Mr. Fairlie points out, the "*enough is enough*" article, in which the paper's political correspondent imprudently forecast the removal of Selwyn Lloyd from the Foreign Secretaryship, simply could not have happened in an earlier day—for if *The Times* had said Mr. Lloyd was to be moved, he would have been moved. But this example should also serve to remind us of the nature of *The Times*' influence. To its readers, it *appeared* influential because when it urged that a committee should be set up or a Foreign Secretary put down, it was invariably obeyed. But such editorials, in fact, recorded a decision that the Government had already taken; the comparatively infrequent occasions when *The Times* exercised a decisive influence—for instance, when it published Russell's dispatches from the Crimea—coincided with its periods of disenchantment with, and consequently independence of, the Government of the day. Ordinarily, its influence on events was apparent rather than real.

Sometimes, of course, it is the appearance that matters. The notorious Sudetenland leader in 1938 owed much of its impact to the general belief that Dawson was speaking the Government's mind. Although, as it happened, he had not consulted with Halifax or Chamberlain before writing it, the assumption that he was flying a kite for them

helped to reinforce the appeasement mood—and that led straight to Munich. But is this type of influence desirable? I believe that it is not—that serious newspapers should never allow themselves to get the reputation of speaking for a Government—let alone for individual ministers, as J. L. Garvin's *Observer* did for Fisher. The circulation gained by exploiting such inside information may be considerable; but the method undermines what ought to be the basic principles of the press—the principle which led to its being known as “the Fourth Estate.”

The term the Fourth Estate only came into common usage in the 1830s, but it derived from a thesis often expounded half-a-century before by the great advocates Erskine and Curran; that—as Erskine put it—“other liberties are held under government, but the liberty of opinion keeps governments themselves in subjection to their duties.” On this principle, no newspaper should ally itself too closely with any party or faction, even in opposition, or it may find itself translated overnight into a government newspaper by the whim of the electorate, following a general election. When the *Spectator's* first editor, Rintoul, was asked by irritated readers what his paper stood for (a question that we are still asked to-day), Rintoul replied that it didn't: it stood *against* the prejudices of all parties.

So although Mr. Fairlie is correct in his assertion that the *Spectator* no longer holds “the position of influence it once held under St. Loe Strachey,” and that *The Times* no longer holds the position of influence it held under Dawson, this ought to be regarded as a most encouraging sign—even if, as seems likely, *The Times'* decision to break away from Dawsonism was not made deliberately. Its editorial line has been so flaccid recently, and at times—notably in 1956—so confused, that it may simply reflect the lack of any coherent policy; but at least the move is in the right direction. For a while *The Times* will have to coast along on its top-people reputation (much as the *New Yorker* does), but it could eventually re-emerge as The Thunderer, the bane of governments, as it was in Barnes's time.

THE SAME PROMISING TREND is discernible in many journals of opinion. Mr. Fairlie is mistaken in his belief that the foundation of the “Pendennis” column in the *Observer*, under his auspices, was the effective beginning of the revolution in the Posh Sundays—“Atticus” was already ancient by that time, and in any case the real break with tradition was the *Sunday Times'* decision to run serials. But whoever was responsible for the idea, it was a good one; to go in pursuit of a new range of readers ready to be interested in serious commentary and criticism. Nor are these readers “less discriminating;” a comparison of the present *Sunday Times* and *Observer* with their counterparts of a quarter-of-a-century ago does not suggest that they have inferior tastes. It is a distinct advance that the journals of opinion are no longer “written by members of a small informed circle for members of a small informed circle” (as Mr. Fairlie describes *The Times* in the Dawson era); the papers are

much the better for it, because they no longer have to play the game according to the club rules. One by one, they have broken away; and it is curious to reflect that for *Spectator* readers, the first decisive break with the tradition came six years ago, with a series of articles by a political correspondent, “*Trimmer*,” who launched so effective an onslaught on the Establishment that its reverberations are still with us. *Trimmer* was Henry Fairlie.

Recalling *Trimmer*, I am surprised that Mr. Fairlie should attribute the decline in the *Spectator* to the decision to divorce itself “from every organised body of opinion, from every intellectual or political discipline.” Before his emergence the *Spectator* had for some years been identified in the public's mind with conservatism. It was one of *Trimmer's* merits that he refused to allow his commentary to be cast in this mould. One day, *Trimmer* would extol Harold Macmillan's capabilities; the next, liken him to a peeling Edwardian mansion. One day, Hugh Gaitskell would be written off as a political failure; the next, praised as a political paragon. This left the *Spectator* open to the charge of inconsistency; but *Trimmer* could reply that consistency is as dangerous to the journalist as it is to politicians—the journalist's task being to reflect trends, moods, even whims, rather than to create them. Very effective journalism it made, too.

Why, then, does Mr. Fairlie now magisterially insist on the need for “discipline?” He returns to this point several times in his article: criticising the *New Statesman* for not allowing itself to accept the “salutary discipline” which its loose connection with the Labour Party ought to provide, and concluding that the decline in the influence of the weeklies can be traced to the fact that rebellion tends to be uninteresting unless it is “within a discipline.” This “within a discipline” line is much favoured among Catholic apologists in my home country; they claim that to criticise the Church effectively one must be a member of it, or else risk being dismissed for attacking it out of ignorance or rancour. Well, that is arguable; but it is hard to reconcile with Mr. Fairlie's own writings, particularly when he specifies that journalism “must be nourished by the grand discipline which comes from association with one of the two main parties in the country.” I suppose the *Mail*, at the time Mr. Fairlie worked for it, might be described as within the grand discipline of the Conservative Party; but this could hardly be said of Mr. Fairlie himself, who urged his readers to vote Labour. (Mr. Fairlie says he only just escaped with his life from the *Mail*; recollecting some of his political commentaries, I suspect that its owner only just escaped with his reason.)

All things considered, I am tempted to believe that Mr. Fairlie's article must have been one of those *jeux d'esprit* which we who were with him on the *Spectator* recall so vividly; and this impression is heightened by reading an article which appeared in *Time and Tide* last November—an open letter to Michael Foot. In it appeared these words:

The journalist must constantly agitate issues, the politician must settle them; the journalist

must remain free of discipline, the politician must accept discipline...nothing is more tiresome than to see the qualities required in the one profession carried into the other.

The writer was Henry Fairlie.

*The Spectator,*  
London

MR. HENRY FAIRLIE's comments on the Press are indeed so true. What has puzzled me is why, at a time when it is possible to report on ideas and events of every conceivable kind from all over the world, this limitless mine of fascinating and vital material is almost completely ignored. The Press has a great freedom, but does not use it. Why?

JOAN GIBBS-SMITH

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### Zen-Nazism?

WITH REFERENCE to the article by Arthur Koestler, "A Stink of Zen," in your October issue, I think I ought to make a remark illustrating his point concerning the amorality of Zen teaching. Koestler goes in for a lengthy criticism of Eugen Herrigel's *Zen in the Art of Archery* and some other texts by Zen adherents. About one he says that what he quoted could "come from a philosophically-minded Nazi journalist." It has obviously escaped Koestler's attention that Eugen Herrigel, who wrote this widely-discussed treatise, had in fact become a member of the Nazi Party after his return from Japan and having obtained whatever Zen illumination he might have got there. This fact has been carefully hushed up by the circle of his admirers after the war and it is thus small wonder that Koestler did not hear about it. Herrigel joined the Nazi Party after the outbreak of the war and some of his former friends in Frankfurt, who broke with him over this issue, told me about his career as a convinced Nazi, when I enquired about him in 1946. He was known to have stuck it out to the bitter end. This was not mentioned in some biographical notes on Herrigel published by his widow, who built up his image as one concerned with the higher spiritual sphere only. Herrigel's case is an excellent illustration of what happened to many high-minded German intellectuals.

On the other hand, when in 1954 I asked Dr. Suzuki point-blank whether someone who had passed through a true Zen experience could have become a Nazi, he flatly denied this possibility. At the same time, however, he also denied having known any Westerner who—in his opinion—had achieved true Zen illumination or *satori*. This left me not a little baffled—which of course may be just the right state of mind for a student of Zen, or for that matter, for any student of the history of mysticism in general.

GERSHOM SCHOLEM

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## AUTHORS

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**Claude Lévi-Strauss**, one of the world authorities on contemporary anthropology, is the author of innumerable scholarly studies dealing with Asian as well as South American problems. He lectures at the Sorbonne, and his new book will deal with "North American Mythology." *Tristes Tropiques*, which has been translated by John Russell, will be published in an English edition by Hutchinson.... **John Douglas Pringle** is the deputy editor of the *London Observer*, and his portrait of Sydney in our "Cities of the World" series appeared in *ENCOUNTER*, April 1958. His latest book was *Australian Accent* (Chatto & Windus)... **Alan Day**, whose previous contribution to *ENCOUNTER* (July, 1960) was also on the "European problem," is a member of the London School of Economics and editor of the *Economic Review*.... **Anthony Hartley** is the editor of the Penguin Anthologies of 19th and 20th Century French Poetry....

**Sir Isaiah Berlin** is a regular contributor to *ENCOUNTER*. He is a member of All Souls and is Professor of Social and Political Theory at Oxford. His most recent contribution was "Russian Populism" (October 1960), and not a few readers have regretted that his unforgettable series on Herzen, Belinsky, *et al.*, which we published in four instalments in 1955, has not yet been brought together as a book. Among his publications are *The Hedgehog and the Fox*, a critical study of Tolstoy; *Karl Marx*, a biographical and intellectual portrait; *Chaim Weizmann*, a Zionist profile; and *Historical Inevitability*, a philosophical essay.

**Colin Welch**, London journalist and critic, contributed a memorable (so all parents still report) critique of the *Noddy* children's books in *ENCOUNTER*, Jan. 1958.... **Steven Runciman** is one of the leading historians of our time, his major work being a three-volume *History of the Crusades* (Cambridge University Press).

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