

From: The Earl Russell, O.M., F.R.S.,
PLAS PENRHYN,
PENRHYNDEUDRAETH,
MERIONETH.
TEL PENRHYNDEUDRAETH 242
30th December, 1961.

Assembly
Letter
Answer
to us

Miss Lucille Komisar,
224 Locust Street,
Valley stream,
NEW YORK

Dear Miss Komisar,

Thank you for your letter of October 29th. I am sorry that I have been unable to reply to you sooner, but I am sure you will understand that I have been overwhelmed with correspondence ever since my release from prison.

I can give neither you nor your parents any easy answers. I should however like to say this. Sooner or later, unless we do something to prevent it, civilisation and probably the whole human race as well will be destroyed in a nuclear war. In almost every country there are rockets poised on a hair trigger. H-bombers continually patrol the skies. The radar warning systems cannot tell a goose from a missile. More and more the Pentagon, and for all we know, the Kremlin as well, is favouring the idea of war as soon as possible. Every day we run the risk of war through accident or miscalculation or malice, and spread over months and years this risk becomes a certainty.

almost

We are faced with a simple alternative. We must either acquiesce in the drift towards war or we must try to prevent it. If we do not make the attempt, we deny our own humanity. I do not know whether we shall succeed or not, and sometimes I feel that we are bound to fail. It is never easy to challenge accepted myths, and in as conventional a society as the United States, it is extremely unpopular. I am convinced that the apparent disinterest, apathy, and often contempt and hatred that your actions provoke in the great mass of the population are not the result of any lack of concern. People feel powerless to affect events in any way ~~at all~~, and they are so frightened by this impotence that they refuse to think about the problems at all, and fall back upon the official dogma. Your action in protesting at the nuclear tests of the Soviet Union has gone some way to dispel this feeling of powerlessness, and thus to remove some of the apathy.

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America must be one of the most materialistic societies in history. It is not easy to assert human values, or even to express a

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wish for the survival of humanity. It is always painful when our deepest convictions clash with the views of those dear to us. I should like you to show this letter to your parents, and to assure them that in my view your actions and your attitudes are extremely courageous and right, and are in accord with all that is best in American history and thought.

I am enclosing some speeches of mine, and some documents of the Committee of 100, which I hope you will find valuable.

Yours sincerely,

Bertrand Russell

Bertrand Russell.