

From The Earl Warren, John F. Kennedy
Washington, D.C.
November 1961

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Cassidy
11/10

Miss Lucille Eastman,
224 Sunset Street,
Valley Stream,
New York

Dear Miss Eastman,

Thank you for your letter of October 1961. 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 my exact opinion. I should however like to say that, sooner or later, unless we do something to prevent it, civilization and probably the whole human race as well will be destroyed in a nuclear war. It almost goes without saying there are countless people on a fair trial. I wonder continually about the ethics. The whole military system cannot tell a good man from a fascist. How can we be fair to the innocent, and for all we know, the innocent as well, in favoring the side of war as soon as possible. Every day we run the risk of war through accident or miscommunication or malice, and spread our armies and guns this risk because's certainty.

We are faced with a simple alternative, to meet either weapons in the draft towards war or we must try to prevent it. If we do not make the attempt, we ~~lose~~ we lose 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 opinion, and in an conventional society as the United States, it is extremely unpopular. I am convinced that the apparent discontent, uprising, and often contempt and hatred that your nation provides in the great mass of the population are not the result of any loss of courage. People feel powerless to affect events in any way ~~what~~, and they are so frightened by this impotence that they refuse to think about the problem at all, and find fault upon the official line. Your action in protesting at the nuclear tests of the United States has given some way to express this feeling of powerlessness, and thus to remove some of the guilt.

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