

BERTRAND RUSSELL

Statement at television interview and press conference on launching the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and Atlantic Peace Foundation 29 September, 1963

We are announcing the establishment of two Foundations for Peace: The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and The Atlantic Peace Foundation. The Atlantic Peace Foundation is now a registered charity and will conduct the research necessary for the work of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation.

The future of the movement against nuclear war depends on the ambitiousness of its aims. All the various mass movements in different countries have been seriously hampered because it has been impossible to sustain an argument before the peoples of the world. There is an unbelievable amount of ignorance among governments and peoples regarding the nature of the danger, its imminence and its magnitude. The anti-war movements have lived from hand to mouth. They have gone begging to the press and film media for a crumb of publicity. That publicity which has been achieved concerning the danger of nuclear war and the necessity of disarmament has been distorted, inadequate and sporadic.

The problems of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Committee of 100 are essentially derived from the conspiracy against the truth about the danger of nuclear war which exists in an organised mass society. The titbits about divergence and differences have no importance in comparison with the truth about the conspiracy against making the public understand the danger of nuclear war and the necessity to act quickly to prevent that danger from being realised. It is said that the Test Ban Treaty, in some curious way, invalidates the past work of the movement or makes it unnecessary for it to continue. What a gross misconception this is. The United States and the Soviet Union have stockpiled the equivalent of 320,000 million tons of TNT. In order to exhaust that arsenal of death, it would be necessary to use the total explosive power employed during the entirety of the Second World War each day for 146 years. Why has this not been made known to the public? The United States and the Soviet Union can eliminate organic life on the planet many times over in an instant. The Test Ban Treaty has done very little to remove that danger, or lessen the immediacy of the need to campaign against the delivery systems of great governments and their stockpiles.

The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation is being brought into existence to investigate the causes of cold war and to pursue such measures as may diminish and eliminate the

risk of war. We intend to develop our own media of communication—radio, press, films, journals—a community of discussion which will not depend upon establishment-controlled or government-intimidated press. I call your attention to those who are supporting these efforts. They include the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the leader of one of the great neutral countries. We at last offer to all who sympathise with the aims of the Foundation a means of creating a voice which must be heard in the countries affected by the Cold War. The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation is going to develop the means of creating a climate of influence and a channel for combating the lies in which governments and their servants indulge concerning the desperately vital issues of life and death in a nuclear age. We have already received strong indications of support from individuals in many parts of the world who are in a position to promote this work.

Essential in our plans is the Atlantic Peace Foundation, an organisation which is created to investigate and to do research in the areas pertinent to the work of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation: disarmament, peace and the danger of war. It is essential to create a permanent structure for the work of the peace movement and these two foundations will seek to do just that. We can no longer allow this work to be conducted in a haphazard, hand-to-mouth, manner, with our ideas and our efforts at the mercy of those who are essentially hostile to them.

Man faces two supreme menaces to his existence. The world is racked with hatred. Wherever one looks, fratricidal violence is rampant. Cruelty is pervasive. I am, at the moment, actively appealing on behalf of political prisoners, many of them suffering torture, in 23 countries: East, West and neutral. Elementary human problems, such as the re-union of families, seem to be beyond the capability of governments. There is little time to learn elementary lessons of decency and tolerance. The Atlantic Peace Foundation will investigate the circumstances of victims of racial, religious and political persecution and all breaches of individual human rights. The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation will enlarge past efforts in the light of the investigations conducted by the Atlantic Peace Foundation.

Throughout my life, and especially since 1914, I have witnessed an increase in the unbounded cruelty of authority. One is driven almost to despair by the growth of intolerance and the anguished cries which reach one from all parts of the world. Wherever one looks, whether at the condition of Africans in South Africa, the Negroes in the United States, the Jews in the Soviet Union, the Naga in India, the semi-starvation of two-thirds of mankind, the fanatical conflicts which rack whole areas of the globe, one is faced with the menace of authoritarianism and the manner in which it contributes to the danger of extinction for our species. If men are unfree to question those who hold power, and if those who find the courage to do so are tormented, there is small hope that humanity will survive. The psychological distance between torturing one human being and preparing to blot out hundreds of millions of them in a moment is not as great as one might think. Each act betrays an absence of compassion and a failure of imagination.

I have strong hopes that people in all countries, rich and poor, will respond to the aims of these two Foundations with their support. This undertaking will be one of the most ambitious ever attempted by a non-governmental movement and we have every evidence that it will take the struggle against nuclear war and for human rights to a new level of activity and achievement.