

Working with Bertie

Ken Coates



In 1997, Ken Coates gave the annual Bertrand Russell Peace Lecture at McMaster University in Canada, which holds the Bertrand Russell Archives. Whilst there, he reflected on his experiences working with Russell during the last years of his long life, from 1965 until 1970, and how the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation faced the challenge of continuing Russell's work once he was gone.

This discussion is in part reminiscence and in part a current perspective on carrying on Bertrand Russell's work. It concerns the whole remit we had when Bertie died and the experience we subsequently gained in trying to continue some of his projects when he was no longer with us. It also concerns tomorrow and what we're going to do next .

Where to start? The problem is that Russell has a monumental reputation as a philosopher and as a man who, in certain spheres, is the archetype of consistency and intellectual rigour: a person to whom people look for the nearest thing that's available, in an agnostic universe, to some kind of certainty. Of course, it isn't really like that. But it is true that Russell established his crystalline reputation as a thinker and, at the same time, carried out a lifetime of political activity, a large part of which was expressed in the various books he wrote.

The very first book was a political work, a description of German social democracy. A very interesting work, it still stands up. While it served as an introduction to a novel political force, it also had a very important academic significance. In it he laid out, before the Italian political sociologist Roberto Michels had ever been heard of, something very close to the theory that Michels advanced of the 'iron law of oligarchy', which described how power was inexorably centralized within democratic political parties so that 'socialists may triumph' in Michels words, 'but socialism never'. Russell was very concerned to measure the pretensions of the German socialists against the likely consequences of their activity.

From there on he didn't only move straight into the foundations of geometry and other more recondite academic works, but he also continued to molest the political domain with a whole string of works, some of which were absolutely high explosive. During the First World War the various books and tracts which were subsequently published as *Justice in Wartime* had a dramatic impact. He actually went to prison for some of the things he wrote as a pacifist in the later months of that war. And then he went off to Russia and to China, so that the people of the Bertrand Russell Archives at McMaster University are in the process of producing what I hope will be very revealing studies of the background to the published writings of those days: for they were fascinating writings. After that we had a whole series of writings on the problems of political power in Europe, on anarchism and freedom, and on pacifism. And at the very end of his life the writings were about nuclear disarmament, about the balance of global power, about the dreadful events in Vietnam, about the crisis in Cuba; there flowed a whole string of tracts and books. How consistent was all this political output?

It is my belief that there is a very strong degree of consistency, but it is not to be found simply in comparing texts, nor is to be found in the maintenance of an identical political position across contexts. To a superficial observer, you could say that Russell sometimes looks like a weathercock; he points this way, he points that way. When you look at what he said about nuclear weapons, you can find him pointing in this direction this decade round and in the contrary direction in the next. And sometimes you can find him struggling with intractable realities and going to opposite conclusions within a time span of a couple of decades. Now for most people a couple of decades is a devil of a long time, and not so many of us can be found to be completely consistent over such a period of time. But we haven't all published a shelf full of books to record the movement of our opinions for future critics.

I want to talk about some of these problems, but the first consideration has to be this: that political action – even on such broad issues as human survival, on such questions as the nuclear arms race, on general matters of pacifism or the preparation of war – is necessarily a contingent affair, subject to mobility, to fluidity of movement. In public affairs it is not possible, or at least it has not yet been possible for anybody I have ever known, including Russell, to present a book of rules which can be inflexibly followed to produce a desired result, which will always be replicated whenever the prescription is repeated. None of that is possible. What actually happens is that you find yourself dealing with huge social

pressures, sometimes volcanic pressures and you find yourself trying to persuade people to act and react when they are most reluctant to do anything at all. In fact, too often people are extremely reluctant to do what perhaps they ought to do and frequently they owe allegiances to others who are even more refractory, intransigent and uncooperative. All of that means that politics is still an art and one in which those of us that tread into it quite normally fail. I don't trust a politician who isn't at least partly ready to admit failure. It is a very difficult thing to produce results that everybody wants in the solid political contexts in which we have to operate.

This was true even in the early days of the formation of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Originally, Russell confronted nuclear weapons with almost a sense of relief that now, perhaps, war would at last become impossible. This entailed the hope that the possession of nuclear weapons by one power, especially if that power could be persuaded to share and cede control over them to a responsible international body, might mean that the outbreak of war might be effectively inhibited. But the technology of nuclear weapons advanced extremely rapidly and the monopoly of nuclear weapons was broken almost immediately. And then we got the race between the great nuclear powers to perfect thermo-nuclear weapons, followed by the race to create more and more versatile rockets. With the arrival of the H-bomb, Russell took alarm, and he then launched his Pugwash Appeal with numerous Nobel scientists, but jointly sponsored by Albert Einstein, to oppose the hydrogen bomb and to call for the beginnings of what became a global nuclear disarmament movement. By very speedy stages, we arrived in Britain at the formation of a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the enrolment of large numbers of distinguished people, the mobilization of campaigners, demonstrations, efforts to persuade political parties, social organizations and all the rest of it.

Today all of this is presented in a fairly straightforward manner. However, at the time there was a lot of argument about it. Russell's own apparent earlier inconsistencies were highlighted, and no doubt they'll have to be highlighted again when the appropriate volumes in the *Collected Papers* will appear. But the interesting thing is what happened when the political processes in Britain were tested by the spectacular advance of this most successful of Russell's campaigns, for there was a tremendous enthusiasm among young people for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The cry 'Ban the Bomb' was everywhere. The arguments about the meaning of unilateralism became very powerful. This argument quickly spread into the Labour Party, which was relatively open

and a relatively democratic option in Britain, and which was very much influenced by what the young people were doing. Labour MPs found that their children were marching to and from the nuclear weapons manufactory at Aldermaston. I slept on several floors with the sons and daughters of extremely important politicians. The argument, after the march, literally went home with them. And all these distinguished people found themselves debating with their children and, some of them, found themselves actually moving with the tide of youthful opinion.

In a very short time, the Labour Party found itself divided, found itself voting more than once on the issue of whether the policy of Her Majesty's Opposition would henceforth oppose the ownership of nuclear weapons by the UK.

The story was as follows. The leader of the Labour Party was a partisan the Atlantic Alliance, a man of very firm principle. People said he was a rather inflexible man. Certainly, he couldn't accept the argument for unilateral nuclear disarmament and, in the end, he went down to defeat in a vote at the Party conference. After this he made a very famous speech in which he pledged to 'fight and fight and fight again' to save the Party he loved. Well, he didn't exactly save it, but he certainly reversed the commitment to nuclear disarmament.

The easiest way to achieve this reversal was to persuade various important trade union leaders, who in the structure of the British Labour Party, actually dominated the votes. Because the trade unions had block votes, if you had a million members you could cast a million votes. It was very difficult for the individual members to muster something equivalent to that. In the end Mr. Gaitskell and his friends talked to all the trade union leaders and in no time at all they had assembled a reverse majority for keeping the bomb.

Two things happened and they brought Russell into a new position. That is to say, we had a political choice. Young Ralph Schoenman, facing these circumstances in which the political authority had first been persuaded of the justice of Russell's case and then rejected it, thought that this meant that the political processes were silted up beyond challenge and that it was necessary to confront the civil powers in a campaign of civil disobedience. For historical reasons, that was an attractive argument to Russell who had been involved in civil disobedience himself in the period of the First World War and who had certainly had many pacifist friends who had suffered in prison for their refusal to cooperate in that war effort.

So there began a campaign of sit-downs. I was on the first one, which was in Trafalgar Square. We all sat there. And the more intrepid and

courageous, or the unluckiest, of us were arrested, borne off by the police, and subsequently sent to prison, initially for short periods of time. Later, as further sit-downs followed, they were sent to prison for longer periods of time and then longer still. Most of Russell's intimate advisors, of whom I was not one at that time, actually faced very considerable repression. They served long months in prison.

My view of this was that it was entirely justifiable for people to register their protests and I had no objection in principle to civil disobedience. The question at issue was what is a sensible strategy for a political movement. And let me put it to you what such a strategy entailed. It entailed taking all the most courageous, all the most dedicated, all the most persistent advocates for your cause and putting them in line to be separated from the rest. Now it always seemed to me that the important thing to do when you're involved in a battle of this kind was to spread your courage as evenly as possible and ensure that all were fired by the same motives. So I had great doubts about a policy which separated people. I didn't think that the Committee of 100, which was the civil disobedience movement, was unjustified or wrong and I didn't regard it as fair to accuse them of splitting. I thought that it was entirely natural that they should be impatient and cross and resistant to the fact that the political process was so deliberately obstructed. But it also seemed to me that we had to deal with the political process and remove the obstructions.

I was approached by a young man called Richard Fletcher who looked into all of this and persuaded me that the victory in the Labour Party for the restoration of nuclear policy was based not on all the trade unions, but a very restricted number, and that one in particular was the key to the question. That was the Engineers' Union. And the Engineers' Union had a long democratic history. Its members were rather radical. They were not all passionate nuclear disarmers, but they were more *pro* nuclear disarmament than they were *contra*. While their national committee had voted repeatedly in favour of nuclear disarmament their leader who held their block vote, which determined their position in party voting, was an establishment man, and over a period of time he had consistently cast the union's vote against nuclear disarmament even though his members had cast their votes in favour of it.

Ergo, we had to see what could be done to democratize the voting within the Engineers' Union. So, we launched a little newspaper. We got together with engineering workers, and we created a campaigning focus, not just about nuclear disarmament but about all the issues that engineering workers were concerned about. To our surprise, we got an

enormous degree of support from those people. *Engineering Voice* became quite a popular newspaper and in due course, it discovered a candidate who would run for the presidential elections. Shortly afterwards, he won.

What brought him into office was the most spectacular manipulation of his predecessor who was in the end cornered by his own history of constantly voting against the mandate given to him by his members. His parting shot was to cast the union's block vote on both sides of the question, thus annulling it. He voted against nuclear disarmament and he voted for it, and, of course, we lost the game. But that was the last time. The union elections transferred power to someone who could be trusted not to do that. From then on, the Engineers' Union was led by a man who was, in this respect, a consistent democrat. He would not have cast a vote against his members, even if he deeply disliked what they wanted him to do. This meant that the Labour Party was henceforward a different place. The way was cleared for a long, subsequent development, in which different ideas prevailed. When we formed the European Nuclear Disarmament campaign, some time later, we did it with the total support of the then Labour Party.

Now, I don't claim that this was a superior way to behave than the way Russell himself and Ralph Schoenman and the other young people were moving. It isn't like that. It is a political process. All that sitting down, and although it cost us a lot in terms of the number of years of imprisonment served by good people, none the less raised the profile of the issue, stirred the consciences of those of us who were more reluctant to volunteer for a term in prison – it made sure that all of us were highly motivated and it gave some inspiration to the engineers. You must remember that Bertie himself went to prison. Nehru told Galbraith, 'He is more free than any of us'. He was the most popular prisoner of the decade and they were discussing this in the factories. It was seen as being an important act of defiance, not only on the nuclear question, but on a whole range of issues about which popular discontent was running high.

I think the point is important. At the time, you could have entered the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and, undoubtedly, would have encountered a lot of heat and argument about what was the right thing to do. But in the end, all the things that were done contributed to a change in the overall position. As always that is determined by the issues chosen, by the way in which the question of nuclear disarmament was centred. So in the words of the poet, John Donne, he who would seek truth 'about must and about must go'. There is more than one way of pursuing a proper objective. That is my first lesson.

Now there is a second lesson which is also, I think, unavoidable ...

The second point I want to make covers slightly different ground because I want to come back to the story of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in a later period than that in which Russell was happily in the forefront. As the movement for nuclear disarmament continued, we got a series of events culminating in the most horrific confrontation which was the war in Vietnam.

Last week, I had a telephone call from Professor Ray Monk, who is now a very famous biographer of Russell. He's just published the first volume of his study. It is scholarly. It is very well written. It actually gives me the impression that he doesn't like Bertrand Russell very much. But he can be forgiven for not liking someone whom we are very fond of. That happens. Now Professor Monk is busily working away to prepare his Volume II. The other day he drew my attention to a little book called *War Crimes in Vietnam*. Russell was at this time being advised and assisted by some of the young men who volunteered to help him at the time of the sit down protests against the Bomb. In this book Bertrand Russell thanks this group of young men for the inputs that they made into researching and preparing the texts that are included in it. These are the same young men who actually encouraged him into supporting the Committee of 100 in direct action. Chapter 8 of this little work worries Ray Monk very much indeed because it is called 'Peace Through Resistance to US Imperialism', which he thinks is quite contradictory to what he described as Russell's other commitment to peaceful coexistence.

First of all, I don't really accept that dichotomy, although I must say why I do accept that peaceful coexistence in the broad meaning of that term was an engagement which united millions of sensible people and most of the people who were in favour of nuclear disarmament. While Russell did use the words 'peaceful coexistence' from time to time, actually 'peaceful coexistence' wasn't an invention of Russell's by any manner of means. It was a famous slogan of the Russian government, and it betokened their policy for the continuation of peaceful relations, which meant essentially that no government should get in the way of Russian objectives and, in turn, the Russians would not get in the way of Western objectives. Most of the time, most people would agree that such a stand-off was better than a nuclear war, even if they were often very unhappy about the objectives pursued by either side, or both.

This was not an unalloyed recipe for peace. Dastardly things were being done on both sides and the nuclear stand-off could freeze in continuity all the dastardly deeds in the world. If you said 'well we're going to ignore all

of that in order to get on with peacefully coexisting', the world could become quite a miserable place for some of the people caught in between the contending powers.

Peace and Justice do not always sit well together. If there were Justice, would there be Peace? It would be nice to know. I will offer you an example of this. When we were trying to carry on the legacy of Bertrand Russell, we ran a tribunal in West Germany on what was called the *Berufsverbot*, which was a kind of McCarthyite law, sacking communists from public offices of responsibility. Which communists got sacked? Not the nice man who was spying in Willy Brandt's office, but usually the postman or the village schoolteacher. German radicals got onto us and we agreed to constitute a tribunal of inquiry. It worked over three sessions and we drew a lot of attention to *Berufsverbot* and I think we made the German government rather ashamed of this. At the end of the day, we received another proposal from Vladimir Dedijer, one of the tribunal's principal spokesmen, and a famous Yugoslav historian, together with a number of others, suggesting that we should go on to conduct a tribunal into the atrocities that had been committed in Russia since the 1917 Revolution and that we should judge all of the human rights violations that had happened in their country.

Now this is precisely where you hit the frontiers. There was a division in the Foundation and Bertie was gone, unfortunately. We had to decide what to do. The majority of us thought that it would be a mistake to run such a tribunal. I do promise you that we were not soft on the atrocities committed in Russia. We had all spent years defending political prisoners, defending victims of a wide variety of different oppressions in Russia. We weren't at all naïve about the extent of breaches of civil liberty and about the astonishingly savage history of Russia in between the wars and during the Second World War. We were familiar with these problems, but the question that we had to face was that this tribunal was proposed as an event to take place in West Germany, precisely at the moment when Willy Brandt had become the Chancellor and was driving full steam ahead with the programme of *Ostpolitik*, which was an attempt, if you like, at peaceful coexistence; an attempt to establish more normal relations between East and West and particularly between East and West Europe. Some of us argued that if we were to run such a tribunal, this would be extremely popular in parts of the press in West Germany, which hated Willy Brandt, and it would be used to prove that Willy Brandt was a communist stooge. While we weren't entirely uncritical of Willy Brandt, who also took responsibility in part for the *Berufsverbot*, we thought that peaceful

coexistence had its due claims on us and that such an investigation could happen anywhere, but not in West Germany and not at that time.

Now I'm telling you that tale, which is a digression, because I want to make it clear that I don't think it was at all possible to ignore the claims of 'peaceful coexistence', but I think that there is a permanent tension: what iniquities do you put up with in order to secure the peace? And what iniquities do you feel to be so profound as to demand opposition come what may? And where do you draw the line? And how can you be sure that if you oppose this iniquity you don't actually tilt the scales so that you produce results which run away to produce conflicts that you hadn't anticipated and that you profoundly oppose. Those are the difficulties and they are all political judgements. I defy anybody to show me a rule which will enable me to judge beforehand all those possible outcomes. You have to develop a feel for it. It's a political process. We might have been wrong in the 1970s to reject that call. I don't really believe we were, but this was the kind of problem that was confronting Russell a decade earlier when he was confronted with all the pain of the war in Vietnam. Here was a man who had preached incessantly about the need to prevent a nuclear confrontation, who preached all the time about sensible steps toward nuclear disarmament, who had made it very clear that he well understood that the world could tip over into mutual annihilation. And yet, as Ray Monk says to me, he writes a chapter in this book, which appears to show that the American atrocities in Vietnam are so unbearable, so awful that America has to be defeated. Now that sounds very strange.

My view of this matter is, first of all, that the proof of the pudding is that we have eaten it. The Americans were defeated and the world did not come to an end. And not only were they defeated in Vietnam but, as a result of the defeat in Vietnam, there was a whole series of very important changes in which different colonial movements were able to take power in a variety of countries: Mozambique, Angola, Portuguese-Guinea, a wide sweep of dominoes which the US State Department had warned us about — that if Vietnam fell then there would be dominoes going here and there. The dominoes weren't in South East Asia, as had been foreseen, but they were wherever the authorities were beleaguered. The most important domino was in Europe. It was called Portugal, which, because of the upheaval in the Portuguese colonies, changed government and became, at last, a democratic government after half a century of fascism. I am glad that domino went down. Aren't you? A lot of people in Portugal were glad.

Now that is also a political judgement and don't let's stop there, let's run way in front. One of the people who helped Bertie in preparing his case

against the American conduct in Vietnam was an American scholar called Gabriel Kolko, who taught at York University. He wrote some brilliant papers about the origins of the Vietnam conflict and gave, what I think, was perhaps the most important testimony to the War Crimes Tribunal in Stockholm. Kolko has been spending years studying what happened in Vietnam and he is about to publish a book which is absolutely horrifying. It is a book about the evolution of Vietnam. And it is, for those who remember those earlier days, a book which gives us a terrible feeling of anti-climax, of distress, because the evolution in Vietnam has been extremely painful. Kolko makes this completely plain.

This is another datum we have to grasp, which is that the best intentions of people do not necessarily lead to the results they anticipate. It is also true that if you want to look at the history of Vietnam you've got to look at the whole surrounding environment, you've got to look at all the other pressures in a global political system which is devoted to control and to extinction of the kinds of experiments that the Vietnamese wanted to make, and that their western supporters wished to see given the chance to flower. It didn't happen.

What I am saying is that the world is now quite complicated and it was very complicated for Bertie. He didn't have a key that could tell him what was going to happen in the future. He had to respond to what there was. And what there was in Vietnam was an absolutely outrageous and horrific war of repression. It was completely cruel and what he did was to stand against it, in a way which I think was immensely courageous. In standing against it, he inspired a whole generation of young people to oppose it. Now he couldn't get them to oppose it by saying that on the one hand it was this and on the other hand it was that and, on balance, the Americans might be behaving in a way that ought not to be encouraged. He organized the opposition by calling down comminations on the adversary who was, in this case, the American government.

It may sound shocking to say this, but I'm trying to be truthful in terms of my own experience at that time. Remember what happened in the immediate aftermath of this. In the days after this little book was published, you got the bombardment by the US Airforce, not only of Vietnam, but by President Nixon and Henry Kissinger of Cambodia. It was the most horrendous experience. Truly, it was a holocaust. Five miles up in the air, vast bombers rained hundreds of thousands of tons of high explosives on these Cambodian settlements. People were burned alive. A whole generation of young people who, by some miracle or other, survived, orphans usually, came out of the villages into the jungle and were

formed into the Khmer Rouge. It is absolutely clear that these people were frequently deracinated by the pain and anguish through which they had lived and they went on to exact an horrendous toll from other Cambodians who were different.

This is not a story which is easily told to show who was right and who was wrong. But I can tell you who is certainly wrong. The architect of that bombardment was absolutely wrong and we gave him the Nobel Peace Prize. Now Bertie could never be accused of condoning that. But Bertie was also a very great man, even though Mr. Monk might have a different opinion, and what he said exercised influence. Most of us can exercise nothing like that degree of influence because we work in our sphere; we do what we can, we have our friends, we have such influence as we have, and we have to join together with others, in order to be able to effect anything whatsoever. So we can't simply follow Russell and do as Russell did. We have to find ways of acting politically.

Now I can move back from this. One of my jobs when I finally joined the Russell team after much resistance was to look after a number of human rights desks. It was so easy when Bertie was alive because we had all these political prisoners, East, West and neutral, and we have their wives, their families and their political supporters calling on us to do things. We would discuss this, draft letters, and Bertie would send off these letters and immediately they connected on the desk of the State or the Prime Minister and immediately the Prime Minister would pick up the phone to the Chief of Prison Administration and say 'have you got this fellow so-and-so? They're all saying that you're torturing him' or 'you're ill-treating him' or 'you're not feeding him properly'. Even if it didn't go any further than that, the diet of our prisoner immediately improved, for you can't have the headman inquiring without all the minions in the prison service trembling. Sometimes it went far beyond that; Bertie secured a number of people's release and he secured commutations of death sentences. The records are all at McMaster University. I think that when they're gone through, you'll find they are quite impressive.

We want to carry on Russell's work, and he's dead. We know all these political prisoners and we're still getting all the letters, because people kept on writing to Bertie as if he were still very much alive for ten years after he'd gone. But now we can't write a letter: I can't just up and say 'please let out Mr So-and-So and stop torturing him, signed Ken Coates'. Who's that? I mean such a letter goes straight in the bin. So what we had to do was to find substitute Berties. But it's quite difficult. We had to go trawling around the great and the good. How many great and good on a

prison begging letter amounts to half a Bertie? Well, I can tell you it's a devil of a lot. We used to have to get our petitions signed by twelve or twenty and frequently a hundred distinguished people in order to get less than the result that Bertie got with one letter. We carried on doing it and we carried on with these cases and I was very pleased. In 1982 we got Ben Bella out of house arrest. I'd been campaigning and working with Bertie when they put Ben Bella into prison. Over the whole of that period we rained protests on the Algerian authorities, and in the end we got him out. When he came to London he told us lots of things that were very interesting. One of the things he told us was that he'd been locked up with a copy of a French translation of the first volume of Joseph Needham's wonderful book on *Science and Civilization in China*. So we took him to Joseph Needham and it was a lovely meeting. Bertie would have loved to have been there.

The work could be carried on, but it had to be carried on in totally different circumstances and that is the perhaps most noticeable thing about trying to continue the work of someone like Bertrand Russell who is just not dispensable. He was unique.

But these major conflicts continued. In 1979, the Russians decided that it was time to up the notches a bit and they deployed, or threatened to deploy, SS20 missiles all across Eastern Europe to teach the Americans that they weren't going to be messed about with and they weren't going to be threatened with neutron bombs and all the other paraphernalia which was current at the time. And the Western response to this was to deploy cruise missiles and Pershing II missiles across six countries in a sort of facing arc.

That is when Edward Thompson comes into the story because Edward wrote to me when these decisions were announced and he wrote to the leaders of the Labour Party who were, remember, in favour of nuclear disarmament at this time. He said to them all: let's run a campaign of civil disobedience against the deployment of all these American missiles at Greenham Common [US military base in the south of England]. That's what the peace activists instinctively thought of doing. They had learnt it from Bertie. I got copies of the letters from the Labour leaders, too, because I was very close to them at that time and so I was piggy-in-the-middle. What was clear was that Edward was perfectly justified in thinking that civil disobedience was an appropriate response to this deployment. And goodness me, we got civil disobedience all over Europe soon after. But it was politically not possible to expect the leaders of a constitutional political party, about to contest an election, hoping to form the

government, to say 'oh well, we're going to adjourn that for the time being and run some civil disobedience'.

I consulted widely about this with all kinds of friends in and around the peace movement and we decided to put up the suggestion that there should be a new thing: an overall European campaign, East and West, for nuclear disarmament. We wanted to make Europe into a nuclear-free zone. The Russians could keep their weapons and the Americans could and the way to ensure that it wasn't targeted was to withdraw all the nuclear weapons from both sides and send them home to the principal contenders. Edward thought that was a very good idea and he immediately sat down and wrote a very nice draft about it. We debated it and altered it and sent it all over Europe for endorsement. The Labour political leaders also thought it was quite a good idea and they gave their support and convened a press conference in the House of Commons. Very soon we were away and we got many thousands of signatures. And so we got a European campaign for nuclear disarmament.

Because we had had the experience of working with Bertie, I think we were able to avoid some of the pitfalls into which the earlier nuclear disarmament movement fell. We were able to avoid over much worry about whether people were sitting down or signing petitions. If you want to sign petitions, get on with it. That's great. If you feel like starting a peace camp, or doing a spell in prison, well OK, we'll do our best to help you. The question at issue was that people should act in their own way. What we were able to do, which was interesting, now leads me into the third part of what I want to say.

Having got, in England, co-operation from the peace movement, for whom Edward was truly an authentic voice, and the co-operation of a large part of the political movement, because when the Labour Party came with us, the Liberal Party was disposed to help us and quite a number of other smaller parties, the Nationalist parties all rallied round, we found ourselves creating a forum in which these spontaneous peace organizations, other long-standing, non-governmental organizations, and the political parties all began to plan their joint action. In the end, we were able to get a European Convention. It took some doing but we got a congress, first of all in Brussels, of about eight hundred different representatives and, subsequently, in Berlin with several thousand representatives. This was a genuine meeting in which all these spontaneous activisms met with social democracy, with some parts of Christian democracy, with the liberals, with massive involvement from the churches. So we found ourselves working with a genuine movement which, in certain circumstances, could organize

a million to demonstrate in each of six different capitals on the same day or on the same weekend. What I learned from this is that there is no Chinese Wall between political representation and voluntary peace activism. There is no Chinese Wall between the different denominations. But what is necessary is to devise projects which can genuinely liberate the enthusiasms and the involvement of all the most generous people in society. Once you've done that you can begin to work towards giving the constituency for change a real chance of prevailing.

Now we've shut the circle because that is where we are at today. To carry on the work of Bertrand Russell isn't a question of following to the letter his different prescriptions. You can find many different prescriptions and some of them you can follow in an ever-diminishing circle, and you know where that will lead you. The question of carrying on Russell's work is seeing the broad architecture of what he was trying to do and, essentially, that was about creating a space not only for human survival, but for self-organization and the development of humane impulses. Russell didn't set out with this architecture in mind. He came to need this architecture as he worked through the different campaigns in which he involved himself.

What did we know, those of us who supported him? I must say, for the record, that my support grew slowly. The first time I met him, I had a serious disagreement with him. Slowly I came to the view that we had to be together and that he was towering over the other political choices available in Britain at that time. Working with Russell changed your view of him. And I can say that all of us who were involved with him in those final years came to love him very deeply indeed. But this wasn't a question of becoming uncritical fans. Learning through each process, helped us to learn for the next one. What I don't know is whether it will help us to learn in time for the ones to come because the worst and most difficult troubles of humanity are coming in the next millennium. I think that they are more difficult than the earlier ones to overcome, but I also think we've got lots of young people who are more clever than their predecessors ever were.