

## Foreword to *Freedom Is as Freedom Does* [1956]

RUSSELL HAD BEEN asked for this contribution to the British edition of Corliss Lamont's *Freedom Is as Freedom Does* (1956), pp. ix–xii (B&R B113), by John Calder, its prospective publisher. Calder had noticed from recent correspondence in *The Manchester Guardian* (32b) that the author was known to Russell. He therefore hoped that the latter might oblige with a 1,000-word introduction for Lamont's "important book" (24 May 1956)—a critique of recent attacks on civil liberties in the United States, where the work had been published in March by the Horizon Press. The British edition was issued on the same day that the foreword appeared in the *New York Daily Worker* under the heading "State of Civil Liberties in U.S.A.", 30 Oct. 1956, pp. 6–7 (B&R C56.18). Russell had also agreed to have it reprinted with no additional fee in a second impression of the American edition of *Freedom Is as Freedom Does*. An additional reprint appeared many years later in *Bertrand Russell's America*. Vol. 2: 1945–1970 (1983), pp. 338–40.

Corliss Lamont (1902–1995) was the son of the influential banker Thomas W. Lamont, whom Russell had regarded in the early 1920s as a rather sinister agent of American economic imperialism in China (see *Papers* 15: 330). The younger Lamont, however, had taken a rather different path, becoming an academic philosopher—he taught at Columbia intermittently from 1928 until 1959—and a patron of numerous progressive causes during a long public life. Lamont was also an inveterate fellow-traveller who even many years later defended his attitude of "critical sympathy" towards the Soviet Union (1981, 39). In September 1953 he had been subpoenaed by the Senate Subcommittee on Investigations, ostensibly over the bibliographical listing of one of his books, *The Peoples of the Soviet Union* (1946), in an obscure US military intelligence manual. Lamont refused to cooperate at this hearing presided over by McCarthy himself—not by invoking the fifth amendment but by challenging in a prepared statement the jurisdictional competence of the subcommittee. As a result, he was cited for contempt of Congress in July 1954, then formally indicted by a federal grand jury four months later. But the district judge dismissed the indictment the following July on first amendment grounds remarkably similar to those originally presented by Lamont to the Senate. In August 1956 this ruling was unanimously upheld by a federal court of appeals. Lamont's travails nevertheless continued. Having unsuccessfully applied for a passport on a number of occasions, he finally (in June 1956) filed suit against the State Department. The case was never heard, however, because the legal argument

in his favour was won by two similarly affected plaintiffs in 1958. Although at odds with Russell politically on the question of Communism, Lamont seems to have brought to his confrontation with the United States Government the same self-assurance of the privileged that Russell frequently exhibited in his dealings with British authorities.

Not for the first time, the FBI was irked by Russell's blanket condemnation of its investigative methods. An internal memorandum dismissed Lamont's book as "what one might expect from an ardent follower of the communist movement in the United States ...". But its endorsement in Paper 34 gave cause for concern because Russell "has many followers both in the United States and in England and is a very influential speaker, writer and personality" (n.d., RA REC. ACQ. 851b). No action was taken by the bureau, but a rather unflattering profile of Russell was placed on file. His sympathetic appraisal of *Freedom Is as Freedom Does* also infuriated some of the liberal anti-Communists who had taken issue with Russell's intervention on behalf of Morton Sobell (see H32). The public spat with Norman Thomas is featured in Paper 35, and Russell had already clashed privately over Lamont with an erstwhile friend, the political philosopher Sidney Hook, who was, like Thomas, a director of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom. Even before publication of this foreword, Hook had objected to Russell's use of Lamont in Paper 32b "as an authority on the state of political freedom in the United States" (5 June 1956). Russell did not dispute the evidence of Lamont's pro-Soviet convictions as presented to him by Hook. However:

As regards facts in America, I do not find him unreliable. Mankind is divided into two classes: those who object to infringements to civil liberties in Russia, but not in the U.S.; and those who object to them in the U.S., but not in Russia. There seems to be hardly anybody who objects to infringements of civil liberties (period). Corliss Lamont denied evils in Russia of which there was ample evidence; you deny evils in the U.S., of which there is equal evidence, except that they have not yet been publicly blazoned forth by Eisenhower. (8 June 1956; 2001, 500)

But Hook's intervention seems to have had some impact on Russell, for he then asked Lamont to clarify his views on the Soviet Union. In the absence of such clarification, Russell would feel unable to provide the foreword that he had agreed provisionally to write.

You are very much more pro-Soviet than I am and you have, in the past, been pro-Stalin. This compels one to doubt whether you really care for civil liberties or only use it as a stick to beat anti-Communists with. I hope you will forgive me if I ask you some questions:

- 1) Do you accept Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin?

- 2) Did you formerly admire Stalin or only think that, for the benefit of the Communist cause, it was necessary to profess admiration?
- 3) Were you ignorant of the misdeeds of the Stalinist régime which Khrushchev has denounced?
- 4) If you were, do you now acknowledge the better judgement of those—e.g. Dewey—who emphasized the facts which have recently been asserted by Khrushchev?

If I do the introduction that your publishers ask for, I shall have to make it clear that I consider the offences against civil liberties in Russia immeasurably worse than those in the U.S. (8 June 1956; 2001, 499)

In his detailed reply, Lamont accepted "Khrushchev's analysis as true in general, although perhaps not in every detail". Regarding the second question, Lamont indicated his approval of Stalin's economic and foreign policies and that he admired the Soviet leader for "these positive aspects of his rule and never because it was necessary to *profess* admiration for the benefit of the Communist cause". As for Russell's third question, he demonstrated his awareness of the "many mistakes and misdeeds committed by the Stalin regime" by reference to some typed excerpts from two of his own publications—*Soviet Civilization* (1952) and *Why I Am Not a Communist* (1952). In response to the final query, Lamont conceded that "John Dewey and other critics certainly were more realistic than I on this point, although they tended to go on to overall denunciations of the USSR". Finally, he responded to another point raised by Russell with an affirmation that he did not "support civil liberties merely as a stick to beat anti-Communists with" (11 June 1956; Feinberg and Kasrils 1983, 83–5). Russell was clearly satisfied with these replies. He informed Lamont that, as advised, he had read *Why I Am Not a Communist* and that this pamphlet had "cleared up all the points upon which I had felt any doubt. I will certainly do the introduction to your book that the English publisher wants". In this letter of 16 June Russell also notified Lamont that he had written to Sidney Hook in the reverse sense, "viz; that I mind infractions of civil liberties in America as much as in Russia".

Located with the manuscript which Russell had dictated to Edith Russell on 26 June (RAI 220.022120) are two manuscript leaves of notes and page references from *Freedom Is as Freedom Does*. The copy-text is the typescript (RA2 220.1480101a); it is dated August 1956, although Russell seems to have sent this version to the publisher John Calder on 26 June. A second typescript carbon (RA2 340.184049) shows the same minor emendations as appear on the copy-text. There is also a photocopy of a different typed copy in the Corliss Lamont Papers (RA REC. ACQ. 17j). This shows the three minor emendations by Lamont that were approved by Russell after being brought to his attention by Calder on 10 August (T168: 42, T169: 7, T169: 26). A fourth and more substantive change introduced at Lamont's suggestion is explained at A169: 22–4.

IT IS A pleasure to have the opportunity of introducing to the British public Mr. Corliss Lamont's book *Freedom Is as Freedom Does*. The book is an admirable epitome of the various forms of attack on personal liberty that have been taking place in America in recent years. So far as I am able to judge, Mr. Lamont is wholly reliable as to facts, and he has shown good judgment in selecting from an enormous mass of material. Every friend of freedom ought to lay to heart what he has to say. This applies not only to Americans, since there is no country where liberty may not be endangered.

10 All countries (except perhaps Holland and Scandinavia) are liable to waves of hysteria, though the extent of the damage caused by such waves differs greatly in different places. France had such a wave in 1793 and, in a lesser degree, during the Dreyfus case. Germany had it in the worst possible form during the time of Hitler. Russia had it under Stalin. And America has had it three times, in 1798, in 1919–20, and since the outbreak of the Korean War. Let us not flatter ourselves that Britain is exempt. From the accession of Charles I until the Revolution of 1688, hysteria of all kinds—left wing, right wing, religious, and economic—was rife. In reading what has happened in America since 1950, I constantly feel  
20 as if I were reading about England under the Stuarts. Congressional Committees are the counterpart of the Star Chamber, and Senator McCarthy seems like a re-incarnation of Titus Oates who invented the Popish Plot. Nor is it necessary to go so far back. In the days of the French Revolution, when the mob sacked Dr. Priestley's house and the Government employed spies and *agents provocateurs* to ferret out sympathizers with the Jacobins, England was not unlike what America has been lately. The younger Pitt, if he found himself now in Washington, would feel quite at home. I think it important that English readers should remember such facts and should not react to what is amiss in America by smug national  
30 complacency. I think it also important to remember, in protesting against loss of liberty in America, that the loss in Russia was very much greater and that the defects of the American system afford no argument in favour of the Soviet dictatorship.

In spite of these provisos, I cannot deny that some of the facts about the anti-Communist hysteria in America are utterly amazing. Who would have guessed that the *Girl Scouts Handbook*, a work intended to instruct what we should call Girl Guides in their duties, was savagely criticized because it praised the United States Public Health Service and spoke favourably of the United Nations, “the handiwork of that arch-traitor,  
40 Alger Hiss”? So severe was the censure that a correction had to be immediately issued omitting the offending matter.

Perhaps the most valuable chapter in Mr. Lamont's book is the one called “Police State in the Making”. The Federal Bureau of Investigation

(FBI) has been steadily building up its power and spreading terror far and wide. It has 130 million finger-print cards and a system of indexing them of which it is enormously proud. Only a minority of the population do not appear in a police dossier. Members of the FBI join even mildly liberal organizations as spies and report any unguarded word. Anybody who goes so far as to support equal rights for coloured people, or to say a good word for UN, is liable to be visited by officers of the FBI and threatened, if not with prosecution, at least with black-listing and consequent inability to earn a living. When a sufficient state of terror has been produced by these means, the victim is informed that there is a way out: if he will denounce a sufficient number of his friends as Communists, he may obtain absolution. 10

As in Ancient Rome and modern Russia, this system has produced its crop of professional informers, mostly men who once were Communists and who now denounce others at so much a head. These are generally men over whom the Government holds the threat of prosecution for perjury for having at some time denied they were ever Communists. They are safe so long as they continue to do the dirty work demanded of them, but woe betide them if they repent. One of them, Matusow, after securing the conviction of a number of innocent people, went before a Federal judge and recanted. For this the judge said he would give him three years in prison. Although Matusow won this case on appeal the Government currently is prosecuting him on another charge, that of perjury, for statements he made in his general recantation. 20

The police have, for many years, shown a complete disregard for the law and, so far as I can discover, no Federal policeman has ever been punished for breaking the law. The whole terrorist system would break down if one simple reform were adopted: namely, that criminals should be punished even if they are policemen.

The evils of the system have not failed to be condemned by some who cannot be accused of subversive opinions. This is true especially of the Federal judiciary. For example, as Mr. Lamont relates, the Federal Court of Appeals in San Francisco objected to the Government's "system of secret informers, whisperers and tale-bearers" and went on to say: "It is not amiss to bear in mind whether or not we must look forward to a day when substantially everyone will have to contemplate the possibility that his neighbours are being encouraged to make reports to the FBI about what he says, what he reads and what meetings he attends." On the whole, however, such protests from "respectable" citizens are distressingly rare. The persecution of minority opinion, even when not obviously connected with Communism, is a thing which has not been imposed from above, but suits the temper of most men and receives enthusiastic support from juries. 40

At first sight, it seems curious that a great and powerful country like the United States, which contains only a handful of Communists, should allow itself to get into such a state of fright. One might have expected that national pride would prevent anything so abject, but such a view would be one which could only be suggested by a false psychology. We are all of us a mixture of good and bad impulses, and it is almost always the bad impulses that prevail in an excited crowd. There is in most men an impulse to persecute whatever is felt to be "different". There is also a hatred of any claim to superiority, which makes the stupid many hostile to the intelligent few. A motive such as fear of Communism affords what seems a decent moral excuse for a combination of the herd against everything in any way exceptional. This is a recurrent phenomenon in human history. Whenever it occurs, its results are horrible. There is some reason to hope that Russia is past the worst in this respect. When McCarthy fell into disfavour, it seemed as if persecution in the United States might diminish. So far, the improvement has been less than one might have hoped. But improvement has begun, and it would be no excess of optimism to think that it will continue, and reach a point where men of intelligence and humane minds can once more breathe an atmosphere of freedom. If this comes about, books such as Mr. Lamont's will have served an immensely important purpose.

### 34 Foreword to *Freedom Is as Freedom Does*

- 168: 12 **France had such a wave in 1793** The infamous Reign of Terror lasted from about May 1793 until July 1794 and was instituted after the Jacobins secured political ascendancy over their Girondin rivals in the National Convention. Its principal mechanism in Paris was the special tribunal created to expedite the trial of counter-revolutionary suspects, while in the provinces special watch committees were equipped with draconian powers of summary execution. Perhaps 30,000 people in all were either executed (with or without trial) or else died in prison. Norman Thomas derided Russell's comparison of the French Terror with the worst outbreaks of political hysteria in United States as "terribly far fetched" (1957, 16).
- 168: 13 **Dreyfus case** Captain Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935), the first Jew to hold a commission in the French Army, was found guilty in 1894 of selling military secrets to Germany and transported to the notorious penal colony of Devil's Island. The Catholic press and Catholic and royalist army officers strenuously defended the verdict and sentence against allegations of an anti-Semitic con-

spiracy in the military. Support for Dreyfus, meanwhile, tended to be staunchly republican and anti-clerical. Dreyfus was again convicted by court-martial in 1898 but obtained a presidential pardon the following year. Not until 1906, however, was either his innocence affirmed or his commission restored. The Dreyfus affair completely polarized French politics: after the “Dreyfusards” won control of government at the turn of the century, the officer corps was purged and secular legislation enacted.

- 168: 15 **America has had it three times** Alarmed by the prospect of war with revolutionary France and by the Jacobin tendencies of the Jeffersonian opposition at home, the Federalist leadership of the United States enacted three repressive measures in 1798: the Alien, Alien Enemies and Sedition Acts. This draconian legislation also reflected nativist suspicions of Irish and French immigrants as the foremost subversive elements. During the 1919–20 “red scare” American political and business leaders engaged in the often brutal suppression of civil liberties. Russell had been much alarmed by this anti-Bolshevik frenzy, which culminated in the notorious “Palmer raids” of 2 January 1920 and the arrest by order of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer of some four thousand suspected radicals in thirty-three American cities. Throughout the latest wave of anti-radical hysteria to sweep the United States, Russell had been vigorously opposed to McCarthyism and the attendant erosion of civil liberties.
- 168: 18–19 **hysteria of all kinds ... was rife** The most noteworthy example of such hysteria in Russell family lore was the Rye House Plot (see A90: 14–15)—a possibly bogus plan to assassinate Charles II—which resulted in the execution of Lord William Russell (see A90: 14–15), a leader of the “Protestant” party in Parliament which had sought legislation to exclude Charles’s brother James (a Catholic convert) from the succession.
- 168: 21 **Star Chamber** This court of law gained its name from the painted stars on the ceiling of the room in the Palace of Westminster where it convened from the fifteenth century until its abolition in 1641. Its jurisdiction was progressively widened by Tudor monarchs and their ministers from the hearing of subjects’ petitions to cover a broad range of equity and criminal matters. In the last decades of its existence the Stuarts exercised their royal prerogative through the Star Chamber, and the court was resolutely opposed by common lawyers in Parliament as a symbol of despotism and judicial bias.
- 168: 22–3 **Titus Oates who invented the Popish Plot** Titus Oates (1649–1705) was an unscrupulous anti-Catholic agitator who, feigning conversion, was admitted to a Jesuit seminary in France. On returning to England in 1678, he claimed knowledge of a plot to murder Charles II, burn London and re-establish Roman Catholicism. However fanciful his tales, they certainly resonated with popular fears and suspicions of “popery”, French power and resurgent arbitrary rule.
- 168: 24 **when the mob sacked Dr. Priestley’s house** The scientist, dissenting theologian and political reformer Joseph Priestley (1733–1804) sympathized

openly with the aims of the French Revolution, having published a critical riposte to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). He was among several prominent dissenters whose property was attacked during four days of "patriotic" rioting in Birmingham from 14–17 July 1791. Local authorities were suspected of collusion in the disorder, which was triggered by a provocative commemoration of Bastille Day staged in a local tavern.

- 168: 24–5 **Government employed spies and agents provocateurs** Although political surveillance in the 1790s was by no means all pervasive, the British Home Office, often with the assistance of local magistrates, utilized a great many informers and spies. Some of them successfully infiltrated the London Corresponding Society and other radical organizations and probably did coax "foolish men into mouthing seditious words or engaging in subversive activity, before betraying them to the authorities" (Dickinson 1985, 38).
- 168: 26–8 **The younger Pitt ... quite at home.** On Russell's low regard for William Pitt the Younger (1759–1806), Prime Minister 1783–1801 and 1804–06, and his objections to the repressive measures directed at British radicalism in the 1790s, see A161: 12–13.
- 168: 36–41 **Girl Scouts Handbook ... United Nations ... offending matter** This furore was provoked by the allegation of Florida newscaster Robert Le Fevre that the *Handbook* advocated "socialized medicine". The condemnation from which Russell quotes was made by a commander of the American Legion (see Lamont 1956, 203). Of this passage, Norman Thomas complained that, even as edited by the McCarthyists, the *Handbook* still featured "accurate and favourable information about the UN ..." (1957, 16).
- 169: 4–12 **Members of the FBI ... obtain absolution.** Norman Thomas would publicly accuse Russell of overstatement in this passage "so great as to approach falsehood" (1957, 15). In private correspondence with Thomas on 25 February, Russell admitted that he had been "guilty of exaggeration as regards the FBI in relation to the colour question" (see H35, p. 173). "On all other points", however, Russell saw "no reason to modify anything that I have said".
- 169: 19–21 **Matusow ... and recanted** Harvey Matusow (1926–2002) had joined a New York City branch of the Communist Party in 1946. Four years later, on discovering that he was the subject of an FBI file, he began working undercover for the bureau until exposed by the party in January 1951. He then became a star ex-Communist witness for the Justice Department and helped convict, amongst others, Clifford E. Jencks, leader of the left-wing Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, as well as thirteen Communists charged in New York with sedition under the Smith Act (see H30). But early in 1955 a supposedly guilt-ridden Matusow signed affidavits claiming that he had testified falsely at these and other trials and that, in the latter case, he had been instructed to perjure himself by prosecutor Roy Cohn (see A154: 2–3, A164: 6). In a federal court in Texas, however, Judge Robert E. Thomason dismissed Matusow's affidavit on behalf of Jencks, and in February 1955 he imposed the

three-year sentence for contempt to which Russell makes reference below. The next month Matusow's dramatic *mea culpa, False Witness* (1955), appeared in a blaze of publicity, followed in July by his indictment on six counts of perjury. His retractions were dismissed by United States Attorney General Herbert Brownell as a Communist plot to discredit *all* government witnesses, probably because of approaches to Matusow that had been made by radical lawyers and the imprint on his book of the left-wing publishers Cameron and Kahn.

169: 22–4 **Although Matusow ... recantation.** Russell originally wrote: "Matusow appealed, and the appeal has not yet been heard, so the ultimate issue, in this case, is still in doubt" (see T169: 22–4). The revised reading was suggested by Lamont in light of developments in the Matusow case since the American edition of the book had gone to press. On 27 January 1956 Matusow had actually been acquitted of the contempt charge in a federal court of appeals. Russell wrote "I agree change" in the upper-right corner of Lamont's letter of 7 September 1956—presumably for the telegram by which Lamont had requested that Russell reply. Matusow was convicted of perjury later in September and began serving a five-year sentence in June 1957.

169: 26 **Federal policeman** The adjective was inserted at the suggestion of Lamont, who felt that it "would bring out your meaning more clearly", given that Russell "probably meant to refer to the *Federal* police, that is, the FBI, rather than to the American municipal police who have once in a while been prosecuted for breaking the law" (30 Aug. 1956).

169: 32–8 **Federal Court of Appeals ... "system of ... meetings he attends."** Lamont 1956, 119. This ruling in the case of *Parker v. Lester* from October 1955 had struck at the vetting procedures of the United States Coast Guard.

170: 13–14 **some reason ... Russia is past the worst** See A175: 41–176: 1.

170: 14–15 **When McCarthy fell into disfavour** Senator McCarthy's credibility had been dealt a fatal blow in May and June 1954 by the televised broadcasts of testimony to his Senate Subcommittee's investigation of alleged Communist infiltration of the United States Army. The military was completely exonerated, and McCarthy's political career never recovered from his formal censure by the Senate six months later.

### 34 Foreword to *Freedom Is as Freedom Does*

The copy-text ("CT") is the typescript (RA2 220.148010a), which is foliated 1, 2-4, measures 203 × 254 mm. and has been folded twice as if to fit inside a standard envelope. Several commas were inserted on CT in ink. These accidental emendations, which have not been recorded, are also present on a second carbon copy (RA2 340.184049) and were incorporated into a five-leaf typescript (RA REC. ACQ. 17j) which is substantively the same as CT except for the three emendations in Corliss Lamont's hand that were later approved by Russell. These emendations are indicated at T168:42, T169: 7 and T169: 26 by the readings from the published versions in *Freedom Is as Freedom Does* ("56") and the *Daily Worker*, New York ("DW"). A fourth change recommended by Lamont is indicated by the reading from 56 and DW at T169: 22-4. The

textual notes provide a collation of CT with 56, DW and the dictated manuscript ("MSe") written and emended in pencil in Edith Russell's hand on both the recto and verso of the first two of its four leaves. The last leaf of MSe consists only of the insertion recorded at T169: 25–9.

*title* Foreword to *Freedom Is as Freedom*

Does] Introduction (to *Freedom is as Freedom Does* by Corliss Lamont) CT, MSe]

State of Civil Liberties in U.S.A. DW]

Foreword to the English Edition 56

168: 10 and Scandinavia MSe] *inserted*

168: 11 waves CT, MSe, 56] wave DW

168: 15 since MSe] *after deleted* in

168: 19 In reading CT, MSe, 56] ¶In reading DW

168: 23 so far DW, 56] quite so far CT, MSe

168: 25 with MSe] *inserted above deleted* of

168: 34 provisos CT, MSe, 56] provisions DW

168: 37 their CT, MSe, 56] the DW

168: 42 Mr. Lamont's DW, 56] the CT, MSe

169: 2 them MSe] *inserted*

169: 7 UN DW, 56] UNO CT, MSe

169: 8 consequent CT, MSe, 56] consequently DW

169: 10 victim MSe] *inserted*

169: 22–4 Although Matusow ... recantation. DW, 56] Matusow appealed,

(appealed, CT] appealed MSe) and the

appeal has not yet been heard, (heard,

CT] heard MSe) so the ultimate issue, in

this case, is still in doubt. CT, MSe

169: 25–9 The police ... policemen. MSe] *inserted*

169: 26 Federal policeman DW, 56]

policeman CT, MSe

169: 32 as Mr. Lamont relates, MSe] *inserted*

169: 43 juries MSe, DW, 56] Juries CT

170: 3 fright MSe] *after deleted* abject

170: 8 persecute CT, MSe, 56] prosecute DW

170: 9 the MSe] *inserted Also at 170: 11.*

170: 19 humane MSe] *inserted above deleted* liberal