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IN YOUR December 1956 and February 1957 issues, Dwight Macdonald suggests some curious conclusions from facts supplied to him by Professor Reinhard Bendix in connection with the "suppression" of a paper by the latter at the Amsterdam Sociological Congress of 1956.

To begin with, the term "suppression" is quite inapplicable. It might fit a decision not to use it if no other channels existed through which Bendix could communicate whatever truths are contained in it. But this is *not* the case. It was not the intention of those who took the decision to prevent this or any other information or theory reaching the world, and their willingness to see the paper left out of the programme of the Congress was conditioned by the fact that they knew that other means of expression are open to Bendix.

The main feature of the Congress was the presence, for the first time at such a gathering, of massive delegations from behind the Iron Curtain. The programme was planned when the events of Warsaw and Budapest had not merely not occurred but were foreseen by no one. All that was known was that some degree of thaw had set in. A desire to assist it, rather than thwart it by what would clearly have been interpreted as an act of deliberate hostility, seems to me neither dishonourable, nor a betrayal of the ideals of truth and science, nor even tactically unwise.

The question is—is Mr. Macdonald aspiring to teach us ethics, or political tactics? At either level he has a case of kinds, but at each it is one very questionable in all good faith.

Take ethics first. One of the morals to be drawn from Stalinism, indeed touchingly proclaimed by one of the manifestos of the Hungarian revolution, is that truth cannot be sacrificed with impunity. But it is *also* a lesson of Warsaw and Budapest, and perhaps of the Moscow thaw, that men involved in Stalinism are not beyond reclamation, and that in Communist countries at any rate, honourable and intelligent men have been inevitably involved in it and had to compromise with it. Courteous and diplomatic relations with them may help their liberation without necessarily amounting to intellectual

treason, and certainly nothing adduced by Macdonald shows that it amounted to it on this occasion. Some compromise is inevitable both for the partial realisation of ideals and for survival, but it is not clear that anything *was* compromised in this case.

But perhaps Macdonald considers all persons holding responsible positions on the other side of the Iron Curtain to be beyond redemption, and consequently deplors any diplomatic relations with them. His final remarks about UNESCO suggest this. Perhaps he approves the conduct of an Ambassador of his country who demonstratively refused to shake hands with a Soviet envoy at UNO. Are demonstrations of hostility and contempt to replace attempts at establishing contact (attempts which I hold should indeed be discriminating, and uncompromising on essentials)? It is difficult to see how that would serve the interests of survival, or indeed of the purer moral ideal of restoring liberty where it is absent (if Macdonald's heroic morality cares for justice only though the heavens literally fall). The only possible advantage of such a policy, apart from gaming the support of some sections of the U.S. public, is the emotional gratification of ex-ultra-leftists who cannot forgive the world for having once been deceived.

On the level of tactics, Macdonald may be right. At East-West gatherings, it is quite possible that potential trans-curtain liberals find more solace and encouragement from Westerners who speak their minds than from those who are over-diplomatic. But perhaps the realisation of this does not exclude some discrimination in choice of topic, at least during the

first encounter when contacts are being established. Or perhaps it does. I do not wish to emulate Mr. Macdonald in dogmatism or in a comic holier-than-thou attitude. Judging by all reports, it would in fact have made little difference to the temper of most of the Eastern delegations if a paper about an Eastern dictatorship had been read. On other occasions it might. But in no case is the issue as simple as Macdonald's vehemence and moralism suggest.

ERNEST GELLNER

London, S.W.1 5

[Mr. Macdonald replies:

(1) The Concise Oxford defines "suppress" as "withhold or withdraw from publication," which is what happened to Dr. Bendix's paper; of course he could have published it elsewhere—so can the author of a suppressed book publish it in Morocco or Finland. Let's compromise on "repressed."

(2) I don't think all, or even most, "men involved in Stalinism" are "beyond redemption." I approve of "courteous and diplomatic relations" with them, I think many of the satellite intellectuals and even some of the Russian ones can be influenced by free discussion with their Western counterparts (though I doubt that many of the Russians of this sort would be allowed to attend international congresses), and, difficult as I find it—as an ex-ultra-leftist—to forgive the world for my own past self-deceptions, I do favour cultural contacts with individuals behind the Iron Curtain. But I'm not willing to pay as high a price for these contacts as Dr. Gellner seems to