

## RUSSELL SOCIETY NEWS

No. 27

August 1980

- (1) Last call for dues (37). The 1980 meeting (2). The first BRS Award (17). BRS Award candidates wanted (18). New series, "My Favorite Russell" (10). Schilpp's favorite Russell (16). BR on Iran (11). Time to vote for Directors (36,44), for 1981 meeting place (3,44). for Schilpp's honorary membership (26,44). BAS anti-war Essay Competition (19). "Faith and Fanaticism" (42). Index (43). An asterisk in the left column indicates a request.

## THE 1980 MEETING

- (2a) The 7th Annual Meeting of the BRS was held on June 20-22, 1980 (from Friday evening to Sunday noon) at the University of Chicago's Center for Continuing Education.

The sessions were absorbing and the facilities (all under one roof) were excellent, credit for all of which belongs to DON JACKANICZ. He selected the site, planned the program, acquired the speakers, arranged the exhibits, provided Red Hackle, taped the sessions, and videotaped the presentation of the BRS Award. He also arranged to get feedback: a questionnaire asked members how they had liked various features of the weekend.

Films of ER were one feature of the sessions, as has been true of all recent BRS meetings. 7 ER films were shown; the BRS now owns all 7 ER films that are commercially available (RSN26-27).

All sessions were taped, and you may borrow the cassettes from the BRS Library (address below).

An attendance record was set. 33 members attended one or more of the 5 sessions: JERRY ALSPAUGH, GEORGE BLAM\*, ROBERT CANTERBURY, LEN CLEAVELIN, JACK COWLES, PETER CRANFORD, DENNIS DARLAND, BOB DAVIS, ALEX DELY, LESTER DENONN, RON EDWARDS, LEE EISLER, MARY GIBBONS\*, BARRY GOLDMAN, DAVID HART, ALVIN HOFER, DON JACKANICZ, JOHN JACKANICZ, ROBERT LOMBARDI, STEVE MARAGIDES, JIM MCWILLIAMS, JOE NEILANDS, JACK RAGSDALE, STEVE REINHARDT, HARRY RUJA, CHERIE RUPPE, GARY SLEZAK, CRAIG TISON, ELEANOR VALENTINE, ARNOLD VANDERLINDEN, HERB VOGT, CAROLYN WILKINSON, RON YUCCAS. (\* became a member at the meeting)

Also present at one or more sessions were 16 non-member guests: Celeste M. Cassidy, Bess Denonn, James P. Gianickos, Richard J. Harris, Allen Jonassen, Gladys Krobil, Jean Nakhnikian, George Nakhnikian, Keith Peterson, Marian Roberts, Madelon Schilpp, Paul A. Schilpp, Amber Stelnicki, Miriam Targ, Lila Weinberg, Arthur Weinberg. (We don't vouch for the spelling; we had to decipher signatures.)

The following officers were elected (or re-elected) for one-year terms starting 1/1/81: Chairman: PETER CRANFORD; President, BOB DAVIS; Vice-President, HARRY RUJA; Treasurer, DENNIS DARLAND; Secretary, DON JACKANICZ.

- (2b) Lester Denonn's talk, "Characterizations of Bertie — Pro and Con", consisted of quotes selected from the 2100 books and articles in his great Russell Library. As the following samples indicate, many people had nice things to say about ER; but it was not unanimous:

- . Santayana: Bertie was small, dark, brisk...according to some people the ugliest man they had ever seen. But I did not find him ugly, because his mask, though grotesque, was expressive and engaging.
- . Laski: Did you ever read B. Russell's rather striking piece of rhetoric, "A Free Man's Worship"? I think that it is the religion of a sensible man.
- . Gellner: If humanism had saints, they would be the first to be canonised. (Said of Hume, J.S. Mill and Russell.)
- . Radhakrishnan: He has been a major force in the growth of liberalism in national and international affairs.
- . Berenson: For many years I have been reading what you published about things human, feeling as if nobody else spoke for me as you did.
- . Jager: His fiction...abounds in lucid intelligence and wit. In 1953 he published the first of two volumes, declaring that after devoting his first eighty years to philosophy, he planned to devote the next eighty to other forms of fiction.

\*Russell Society News (Lee Eisler, Editor): RD 1, Box 409, Coopersburg, PA 18036  
 BRS Library: (to 8/31/80) Don Jackanicz, BRS Co-Librarian, 3802 N. Kenneth Ave., Chicago, IL 60641  
 (starting 9/1/80) Jack Ragsdale, BRS Co-Librarian, P.O. Box 28200, Dallas, TX 75228

- . Willey: It was universally known that Russell despised titles, and insisted on being described and addressed as plain Bertrand Russell. After the lecture he came up to me and asked me to arrange for a taxi with the Trinity porter. "If you tell him it's for LORD RUSSELL it will be all right."
- . Durant: The bad boy of England, scandalizer of all continents, and prospective terror of the House of Lords...
- . Broad: As we all know, Mr. Russell produces a different system of philosophy every few years.

(2c) Peter Cranford spoke about "The Possibilities of Compossibility", summarized as follows:

Scattered in several of Russell's works is his idea of "compossibility" — a condition "when desires can be satisfied by the same state of affairs." He hoped that the idea would be expanded by others. Compossibility advises that we seek our good by providing for another what he feels is to his good.

The use of compossibility to satisfy our desires, to increase the total amount of good, and to exert influence can make tough decisions less difficult. For instance, Nations A and B have differing ideologies. Both A and B wish to satisfy their desires, one of which is to participate in the Olympic Games. The question is, should A punish B for its ideology by boycotting the Games?

Compossibility would say "No" in this and all other similar situations — between all people and all groups. It puts water on the flames instead of gasoline.

Antagonists can still continue to disagree in areas of conflict (generally pertaining to matters of self-preservation)

The advantages of compossibility are constructive action in the face of deadlocks, positive attitudes instead of negative ones, less acrimonious backgrounds, denial of "an eye for an eye" and "the meek shall inherit the earth"; and it does not leave the field to wariness gone mad — the certain prelude to universal destruction.

(2d) Don Jackanicz spoke about BR's stay in Chicago, 1938-39 (when BR taught at University of Chicago for a semester), and illustrated it with slides. His talk was based on a paper he and GARY SLEZAK had written ("The Town is Beastly and the Weather was Vile"), which was published in "Russell 25-28", p.5. Since most members have this issue of "Russell", we will say no more about it. (If you do not have it, you can borrow it from the BRS Library, address on Page 1, bottom.)

(2e) The nuclear panel of 6 speakers — 3 pro and 3 con — discussed nuclear energy. It is a serious subject. Their arguments were presented with considerable care and great conviction, on both sides. (Jim McWilliams said, later: "Next time give them knives.") We will not attempt to summarize; we doubt that we could.

(2f) The BRS Award was presented to Paul Arthur Schilpp. This was the highlight of the weekend. The citation read: "For opening a new path to a better understanding of the work of living philosophers." He was given a standing ovation. He responded with some interesting reminiscences about BR. For more about Professor Schilpp, see (16), (17), (26), (44).

(2g) Bob Davis spoke about BR's pacifism, noting that there are different kinds of war — wars of colonization, wars of principle, wars of self-defense, wars of prestige — and different kinds of pacifism — absolute and relative, individual and political. BR's pacifism was relative (for he favored World War II).

(2h) Some negatives. Excellent as the meeting was — it may have been the best one yet — we cannot say it was perfect. There were, in fact, 2 notable imperfections. Apparently under the mistaken impression that the BRS is a scholarly Society, Professor George Nakhnikian gave a professional philosopher's talk that was too scholarly for non-philosophers. And George Blam, pinchhitting for Alex Dely, with whom he is developing a theory about elementary particles (RSN26-40), talked about those particles and was too specific for non-physicists.

And while we're being negative: some members mentioned — on the feedback questionnaire — that in some of the BR films, it is difficult to understand what the people are saying — due, in part, to the U.K. accents. Perhaps transcripts should be available, in future.

Otherwise, all was lovely. If you missed the 7th Annual Meeting, you missed a good one!

For more about the meeting, see the minutes (40).

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#### THE 1981 MEETING

(3) Where in 1981? Here is where we have met in the past: 1974, 1975, 1976 New York (Hotel Tudor); 1977 Los Angeles (Westwood Holiday Inn); 1978 Hamilton (McMaster University); 1979 New York (Hotel Tudor); 1980 Chicago (University of Chicago's Center for Continuing Education.) We have had the poorest facilities in New York, and the best