

RUSSELL SOCIETY NEWS

No. 42

May 1984

(1) Highlights: Annual meeting arrangements (2). Dora accepts (34). Leiber reviews Cambridge Essays (18). Director nominations wanted (38). Dyson's Weapons and Hope reviewed (14,16). Dyson on Rotblat (25). Library's new list of books to lend (26). BR's War Crimes Tribunal, according to Scheer (13). Barnes' case vs. BR (35). Reports: Philosophers' Committee (6); Sciences and Human Rights Committees (8) Index is at the end.

ANNUAL MEETING (1984)

(2) The time, June 21-24. The BRS Annual Meeting is timed to coincide with a Conference on Russell at Trinity College, Toronto. The Conference is jointly sponsored by the Russell Editorial Project (at McMaster University), The Higher Education Group, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and The Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology (at University of Toronto).

The Conference is titled: "Bertrand Russell: His Early Technical Work". Last year's Conference, at McMaster University, was on Russell's non-technical ("humanistic") writings.

The Program. The Conference begins with a reception on Thursday evening, June 21st. There will be 9 or 10 talks on Friday and Saturday, starting at 10 A.M.; and a panel discussion Sunday noon, the 24th. W.V.O. Quine will speak at the banquet Friday evening, at the U. of T. Faculty Club.

Some expected participants, and their topics:

Sir Alfred Ayer	Panel Discussion
I. Grattan Guinness	Russells Logical Manuscripts
Alastair Urghart	Russell's Ramified Theory of Types
Nick Griffin	The Proposed Encyclopedia of the Sciences
Bob Tully	Neutral Monism
Joan Richards	The Foundations of Geometry
Michael Bradie	Russell's Scientific Realism
Daniel O'Leary	Propositional Logic in the Principia

The BRS Meeting will be held Saturday evening at 7:30, when no Conference talks are scheduled.

Costs. The Conference fee of \$45 (Can), \$35 (U.S.) covers talks, coffee breaks, Friday night banquet, and Saturday lunch. (Other meals are available at Trinity's Buttery Cafeteria and at public restaurants on Bloor Street, within a few blocks of Trinity.) Single rooms are \$23 (Can), \$18 (U.S.) per night; a limited number of single rooms and double rooms are available at \$15 (Can), \$12 (U.S.) per night per person. Rates include linens, tax, etc. These figures may change somewhat, depending on the rate of exchange on June 21st, but are suitable as deposits.

To make a reservation, do 4 things: (1) Have a check or money order for the Conference fee — \$45 (Can), \$35 (U.S.) — made out to OISE (Russell Conference '84). (2) Have a check or money order for one night's lodging — \$23 (Can), \$18 (U.S.) or \$15 (Can), \$12 (U.S.) — payable to Trinity College. (3) Specify which nights you want the room (Thursday? Friday? Saturday? Sunday?) (4) Send it all to Professor Ian Winchester/OISE, Suite 9-196/252 Bloor St. West/Toronto, Ontario/ Canada M5S 1V6.

How to get there: Like the old recipe for rabbit stew which starts, "First catch your rabbit..." we are saying, "First get to Toronto Airport." There are 3 ways of getting to Trinity College from the Airport:

(1) Gray Coach bus, Airport to Islington Subway, fare \$2.75. Take Islington Subway (90 cents), Bloor West Line, to St. George. Exit at Bedford Street end of station, walk one block south on Devonshire to Trinity College.

(2) Airport Limousine, to Trinity. \$21 one way.

(3) Taxi, to Trinity. \$22 (approx.) one way.

On arrival at Trinity College: Check in at the Porter's Office at the main entrance of the College facing south on Hoskin Avenue, up to 11 P.M. Trinity College consists of only 2 buildings, the older College itself, and the new Gerald Larkin Building (classrooms, offices, Buttery Cafeteria). See map on next page.

Come if you can!

American Humanist Association held its 1984 Annual Conference in Washington, April 20-22. I attended 2 sessions, and enjoyed being there, particularly for the following: (1) Presentation of awards to Stephen Jay Gould, paleontologist and evolutionary theorist, and Isaac Azimov, the celebrated polymath and author whose output long ago overtook Russell's in number of books published. Both men spoke eloquently yet humorously about their work and the menace of creationism. Asimov in particular endeared himself to a totally receptive audience by telling of the lengthy fundamentalist-oriented letters he often receives, explaining how he must renounce his views or suffer bitter after-death consequences. In response, Azimov jots off a terse postcard message quoting a powerful biblical passage stressing tolerance and humility. (2) A talk by Actor Dana Andrews on "How I Became A Humanist." Andrews, now 75, gave his autobiographical review, which interested me considerably because of both the philosophical and film-history references. (3) An hour long "Evening with Albert Einstein", in which Actor David Fenwick, appropriately costumed, presented a lecture which sometimes seemed to be taking place in 1950 when it wasn't in 1984. He did a convincing job, stressing Einstein's commitment, along with Russell's, to strive for peace in the nuclear age before it is too late.

(5) Treasurer Dennis J. Darland reports:

For the year ending 12/31/83:

Balance on hand (12/31/82)	521.35
Income: 90 new members	1517.50
195 renewals	3842.48
	total dues 5359.98
contributions	633.69
sales of RSN, books, stationery, etc.	295.90
	total income 6289.57
	6810.92
Expenditures: Information and Membership Committees	2812.47
BRS Doctoral Grant	500.00
BRS Library	6.89
subscriptions to "Russell"	1442.00
bank charges	52.69
other	262.46
	total spent 5076.51
	5076.51
Balance on hand (12/31/85)	1734.41

For the quarter ending 3/31/84:

Balance on hand (12/31/83)	1734.41
Income: 20 new members	320.00
140 renewals	2851.60
sale of RSN, books, stationery, etc.	89.28
	total income 3628.88
	5363.29
Expenditures: Information and Membership Committees	1270.20
BRS Library	2.97
subscriptions to "Russell"	966.00
bank charges	3.91
other	66.61
	total spent 2309.69
	2309.69
Balance on hand (3/31/84)	3053.60

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

(6) Philosophers' Committee (David E. Johnson, Chairman):

The Philosophers' Committee sponsored a meeting in conjunction with the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, in Boston on December 28, 1983, from 10 A.M. to noon. An average of 30 persons attended. One paper was read, and commented on, each hour of the meeting.

The first paper, "Russell on Names," was by Jane Duran of Hamilton College. She described a shift in Russell's views on names from the time of "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" to An Inquiry Into Meaning and Truth. Russell shifted from the demonstratives "this" and "that" being names, to names picking out or referring to bundles of qualities. The difficulty of referring to something which

cannot be completely described in terms of percepts is obviated, and the problem of the continually changing designation of "this" vanishes. Sets of qualities and relations also satisfy the ontological requirements of contemporary science. The resulting epistemology involves the establishment of non-inferential propositions, i.e., first-person statements about percepts.

The commentator, Professor Fred Guy of University of Baltimore, argued that Russell could not rationally solve the problems he dealt with in epistemology, and in ethics acted on beliefs he could not show to be well-founded. Specifically, Guy argued that Russell's belief that the world does not depend on our awareness is shown to be irrational on his own methods. Much like some medieval philosophers, Russell's mind takes him so far, and then his beliefs take over. Guy proposed the following logical demonstration of his point: Naive realism leads to physics; if physics is true, naive realism is false; so if naive realism is true, it is false, and therefore false.

The second paper, by Douglas Lackey of Baruch College, CUNY, was titled, "Russell's Contribution to the Study of Nuclear War." He drew lessons both from what Russell said and from what he did not say. The gaps in Russell's treatment of the subject help us recognize the historic limitations of even the most enlightened mind. Russell's lapses here do not compare with Aristotle's defense of slavery, Hume's remarks on the imbecility of Negroes, Rousseau's condescensions about women, Hegel's rhapsodies about the purifying effects of war, or Heidegger's endorsement of the Nazi program. Russell's ideas about nuclear war occur in four phases:

I. The speech on nuclear war before the House of Lords on 28 November 1945 in which he predicted (i) that atomic weapons would soon become more destructive and cheaper to produce; (ii) that a fusion bomb would be constructed, and (iii) that the secret of the atomic bombs could not be kept.

II. 1946-48, the anti-Soviet phase with proposals for a preemptive nuclear strike against the Soviet Union.

III. 1949-1962, the even-handed denunciation of the Cold War ("in which Russell made an enduring contribution both to world peace and to the study of nuclear strategy"),

IV. The anti-American phase, from Cuban missile crisis in 1962 to Russell's death in 1970.

In Phase III, his great innovation was to compare the nuclear standoff and the Cold War with the game of Highway Chicken. His omission (in Common Sense And Nuclear War) was to overlook a decreased chance of nuclear war through development of mutual deterrence. Lackey then speculated about the applications of the points in the 1915 essay, "War and Non-Resistance" to the contemporary nuclear scene and whether unilateral disarmament would be feasible on those terms.

The commentator was Douglas McLean of The Center for Philosophy and Public Policy at the University of Maryland. He deferred on Russell's exegesis and focused on (i) the analogy of the game of chicken, and (ii) some of the policy suggestions. McLean argued that "Chicken" was not as good an analogy for the present superpower standoff as the game, "Prisoner's Dilemma". In both, rationality undermines cooperation. On policy, McLean argued that, no nation desires a genuine international authority to secure peace. Further, an authority with strong enforcement powers looks as frightening as the world in which security is based on deterrence. Finally, unilateral nuclear disarmament depends on knowing whether or not the Soviet Union would be deterred from aggression against us by consequences other than nuclear retaliation — economic, political, and otherwise. McLean's own "wild suggestion" was to sell Cruise Missiles to the Soviets "because, being mobile, they would be invulnerable to the dangers of a counterforce first strike potential. This would restore the currently threatened stability of classical deterrence that is the goal of the policy of mutual assured destruction. We could then proceed to try to achieve meaningful negotiations. Failing that, he endorses unilateral reductions on a smaller scale.

ABOUT BR'S VIEWS

- (7) Unilateral Disarmament according to Hook. In Sidney Hook's review of Cambridge Essays, 1888-99 (RSN41-25), he quotes this statement by BR:

I am for controlled nuclear disarmament but if the Communists cannot be induced to agree to it, then I am for unilateral disarmament even if it means the horrors of Communist domination.

We wrote Professor Hook, saying we had liked his review, and learned things we had never known before, including the Russell statement, above.

We asked him for the date of issue of the New York Times in which the statement appeared. Here is his answer:

This sentence was not published in the New York Times. It was made to Joseph Alsop, the newspaper correspondent, and was the occasion of my exchanges with Bertrand Russell in the New Leader in 1958 which continued for some time...R. himself in the course of the correspondence acknowledges he made it but implies he was tricked into doing so and that I misunderstood his real intent.

You may also be interested in my article, "Bertrand Russell: Portrait from Memory," in the March issue of ENCOUNTER MAGAZINE, LONDON. Your library probably subscribes to this magazine. If not, it should.

P.S. You seem to be unaware of Ronald Clark's biography of Russell. I recommend it.

Too bad he added that P.S. It detracts from his credibility. Did he really think we were unaware of Clark's biography?