

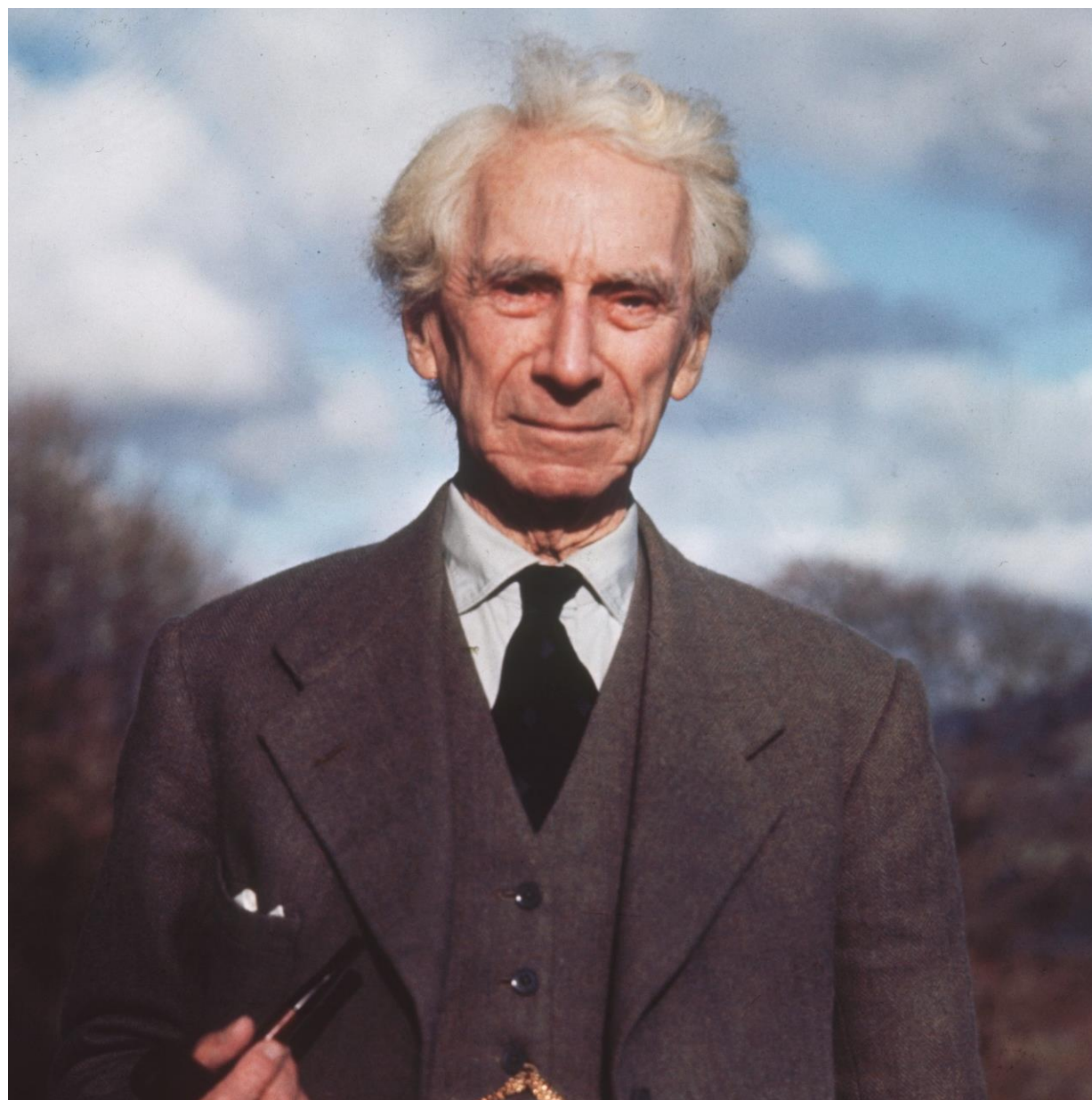
The Bertrand Russell Society

Spring 2019

No. 159

ISSN 1547-0334

BULLETIN



Editor

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Manuscripts may be submitted in Microsoft Word to the editor at his email address. Feature articles and book reviews should deal with Russell's life or works, written in scholarly or journalistic style. Articles generally should not exceed 3,500 words, and book reviews 1,000 words. Submissions should be made no later than August 31st and January 15th for the fall and spring issues, respectively. The editor collaborates with authors as necessary, and authors are invited to review suggested changes before publication. There are no guarantees of publication, and articles submitted may be held for future editions. Acceptance by the editor does not imply endorsement by the editor. We aim to publish articles with various and sometimes contrasting views.

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If a new member, please tell us a little about yourself beyond just your name (interests in Russell, profession, and so on). If a renewing member, please let us know of any relevant changes to your contact information.

The BRS is a non-profit organization, and we greatly appreciate any donations or requests members choose to give. Donations may be tax-deductible in certain jurisdictions.

The final page of the *Bulletin* gives the names of elected and appointed officers of the Bertrand Russell Society.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Tim Madigan
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This will be my final "President's Column," as my four-year reign of terror as Bertrand Russell Society President draws to a close. It has been a pleasure serving in this role, and I am eager to help my successor plan for the 2020 annual conference, which will commemorate the 50th anniversary of Russell's death.

But before that event we still have the 2019 annual conference to look forward to. It will take place at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, from Thursday, June 20 to Saturday, June 22, 2019, under the auspices of Kevin Klement, our intrepid Vice President, a professor of philosophy at that institution. It promises to be an intellectually stimulating three days, and I encourage all members to attend. Registration information can be found at

<https://bertrandrussellsociety.org/registration/>.

I am also glad to say that I had the chance to visit the recently opened new headquarters for the Bertrand Russell Archives and Research Centre at McMaster University. It is a truly impressive place, and I was quite impressed by the sheer volume of materials pertaining to Russell's long life and careers, as well as the dedication of the staff members there. As always, it was nice to meet up with Ken Blackwell, the Archivist Emeritus, who has been involved with cataloguing the Russell papers since the Archives' beginning.

As I bid farewell to the awesome responsibilities of the office of President, I want to give special thanks to Bill Bruneau, the *Bulletin* editor. It has been a joy working with him these past few years. He too is passing on the torch, to Michael Stevenson, who I know will continue the good work that Bill and his predecessor Michael Berumen did in editing the *Bulletin*. Bill and I now plan to take up Russell's sage advice and live lives of total idleness, as exemplified in Giovanni de Carvalho's article on pages 51-57 in the *Bulletin*!



Tim Madigan
in the Reading Room, Bertrand Russell Archives,
Russell House
McMaster University
2019 February 28

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

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Like Tim Madigan, I write for the last time as an officer of the Bertrand Russell Society, your *Bulletin* editor. It has been a pleasure to work with authors from several continents and many countries, all motivated by a common interest in the life and work of Bertrand Russell and in Russellian matters generally. Russell Society officers—president, chair, and treasurer—have been consistently encouraging during my two-year stint at the *Bulletin*.

As editor of the *Bulletin* I built on a foundation provided by previous editors, most recently Mike Berumen. For this spring 2019 number, Mike agreed a recent essay by him might appear almost at the same time it comes out in another place. His paper is a vigorous study of "patriotism", a timely reminder that Russell's influence and utility (*pace* J.S. Mill) are as great and as desirable as ever.

Later in this *Bulletin* you'll find Michael Stevenson's article about monuments to Bertrand Russell (a bust of Russell) and Fenner Brockway (a statue). Michael's work serves as a kind of "forward transition", since he is to edit the *Bulletin* beginning 2019 July 01. Michael's long editorial experience, not to mention his thorough knowledge of all matters Russellian, tell us that the *Bulletin* will flourish under his care.

Our opening article, Sheila Turcon's final essay on "Russell's Homes", reminds us of the material and social background of Russell's intellectual output from the mid-1950s. Sheila's articles have, over several years, built up a picture of Russell as owner or lessor or lessee of many properties. Her work has shown how Russell relied on his homes—and on his domestic arrangements—to provide a foundation for his political and philosophical projects. Although her emphasis lies elsewhere, Sheila's last "homes" paper also gives a clearer idea of the role that Edith Russell played from 1951-52 onward.

You'll notice photographs and graphics in several articles. The advantages of online publication are numerous, the use of photographs and graphics being among them. On the next page you see a photo reminds us about last year's celebration, when the Russell Archives moved into a new home, supported by McMaster's University Library and the University's upper administration. We hope to continue in this photographic-archival vein in future numbers of the *Bulletin*.

This issue offers Nick Griffin's paper on Russell's notions of truth and evidence in philosophy, complete with intriguing comments on the "politics" of these matters. As General Editor of the *Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, as a director of the Bertrand Russell Society, as a philosopher and an historian, Nick's contribution to Russell studies has been immense. He has announced his retirement from teaching, but we in the Russell community like to think this will

mean only that Nick has more time to write about Russell, and to help the rest of us who labour in Russellian vineyards.

Adding to these good things, the *Bulletin* publishes Giovanni de Carvalho's paper on the virtues of idleness. It's another in a number of *Bulletin* papers drawing on the expertise of our international membership. Idleness is not the usual modus operandi of BRS members; in this case we're happy that idleness did not prevent Giovanni from writing about Russell and Lafargue.

The *Bulletin* looks forward to the opinions and assessments of its readers, and to their manuscript articles and reviews. We hope you'll write for us; the standing invitation on the inside front cover is entirely sincere.



Above: The BRS Award for 2018, to the Bertrand Russell Archives, being presented in Russell House by Hon. Russell Archivist Ken Blackwell to University Librarian Vivian Lewis and Associate University Librarian (Collections) Wade Wyckoff. The award was announced at the June 2018 meeting at McMaster University.

A Russell School in Brighton

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Two years ago, a routine Google Search for “Russell” and “school” yielded an article from the *Brighton Journal* about the “tweeting goats” of a large secondary school—Varndean School.¹ The goats were said to be an encouragement for students to think of animals and the natural world as part of their “classroom,” and to learn a little biology. The news reports suggested Bertrand Russell was somehow connected to the school—and thus to the pets adopted by Varndean students and staff.

The internet then produced another surprise, an article about Varndean’s *Schoolhaus*. This is a connected building whose electricity is produced by solar panels, with surplus power sold to the national grid.² William Deighan, head teacher of the entire school, joined local Green MP Caroline Lucas to celebrate the opening of the new space in 2014; the *Schoolhaus* would provide needed workspace, a student lunch area, and a “training zone.”

There were Russellian angles in these news items—the ideas of integrating science into daily life, paying close attention to the beauty of the natural world, and taking seriously the individual requirements of students in all their variety/ies.

But how do Bertrand or Dora Russell’s educational ideas fit into the picture? The answer has to be that some but not all Russellian ideas fit well enough with educational provision in 2019.

Your editor hopes to visit Varndean on his next English sojourn, but for this present article has relied mostly on published accounts of Varndean and Brighton in the past several years, and on an experience as the parent of children in an Oxford comprehensive secondary school during the Thatcher government.

An administrative point: Varndean School, whose name was borrowed from a neighbouring 19th-century farming estate, is four schools, not one. One of those four constituent “schools”, with its 300 or so pupils, is the Russell School. Already one wonders how far the Russell School is like or unlike the original Beacon Hill,

¹ Sarah George, “This Brighton School Has Tweeting Goats,” *Brighton Journal*, 2017 February 22: URL <https://bjournal.co/this-brighton-school-has-tweeting-goats/>. Also Helen Ward, “How Pygmy Goats Have Transformed Pupil Behaviour,” *TES [Times Educational Supplement]*, 2017 February 3: URL <https://www.tes.com/news/how-pygmy-goats-have-transformed-pupil-behaviour>.

² Mike Eames, “Local MP Opens Varndean School’s New Sustainable Schoolhaus,” Parliamentary Press Release, 2014 April 22.

the private school Bertrand and Dora Russell founded and administered together in 1926-31. Those similarities and differences might throw light in two directions—on the Russells’ original ideas about education, and on the direction of state-supported schooling in modern Britain and possibly in Europe over the past century.

But the Russell School (Varndean) triggers another question: why are there so few “Russell schools” in the 21st century anywhere at all? The Vardean-Russell school may be the only Russell School, named for Bertrand Russell and inspired by his and Dora’s ethical and educational outlook. Considering the enduring interest in Russell’s life and thought, the sheer rarity of the Brighton case calls for an explanation.

It will help to revisit Beacon Hill, the Russells’ own independent school. From 1926 to 1931 Beacon Hill, housed at Telegraph House new Petersfield, welcomed a small number of boarding children. After the winter of 1931-32 and until 1943 the school continued under the sole direction of Dora Russell.

Bertrand Russell had come to see education as a central feature of social reconstruction after 1914-18, and Dora did not disagree. But the arrival of their two children (John b. 1921 and Katherine [“Kate”] b. 1923) persuaded them to take the practical step of creating a progressive school—for John and Kate and for a small number of children aged 2-12. The school was as much Dora Russell’s creation as Bertie’s. It opened in a rambling and remote country house—Telegraph House—on the South Downs near Petersfield.³

Beacon Hill had a generous pupil-teacher/staff ratio. There were nearly as many hired hands as there were pupils. The fees were reasonable, although parents did not always pay on time (or ever), and salary and maintenance costs continued to be high.⁴

Still the Russells’ commitment to the school was firm. To keep the place going, they knew they must find additional sources of income. Neither Bertie nor Dora had regular remunerated employment. Their solution was to write books (between 1926 and 1932 Bertrand and Dora each wrote two, Bertie’s explicitly about education and Dora’s about children understood in a broader context of

³ For more about Telegraph House, see Sheila Turcon, “Russell’s Homes: Telegraph House,” *Bulletin of the Bertrand Russell Society*, no. 154 (fall 2016): 46-70.

⁴ An essential resource for all matters Beacon Hill is David Harley, “Beacon Hill and the Constructive Uses of Freedom,” Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1980; see also David Harley, “Beacon Hill School,” *Russell*, nos. 35-6 (1979-80): 5-16; and Deborah Gorham, “Dora and Bertrand Russell and Beacon Hill School,” *Russell*, n.s. 25 (2005): 39-76.

social policy⁵) and to undertake extensive lecture tours in North America, almost entirely in the United States (two exhausting tours in Bertie's case, one in Dora's).

The Russells' ideas were as notorious as they were attractive in the inter-war period. Once Beacon Hill had begun operating, outside attention came to bear on external details of the Russells' experiment, at least as much as it did on the School's motivating ideas. The Russells' books attracted generally balanced reviews, but in contrast, Beacon Hill's day-to-day operations divided public opinion sharply. Some outsiders saw Beacon Hill as odd, extreme, or even dangerous considering that pupils were aged 3-12 years. Yet notoriety was necessary if organizers were to fill large halls during those three lecture tours.

The Russells' central educational claims were less interesting to some listeners (and readers) than titillating stories about "godless Beacon Hill." It was easy in journalistic accounts to emphasize the titillating tales: the one-vote one-person rule of governance at Beacon Hill, in which children's votes were supposed to have the same weight as adult votes; or Beacon Hill's straightforward, straight-ahead policy—that children should expect honest well-evidenced answers to any questions they cared to ask—including questions about sex and procreation; or that attendance at lessons was voluntary.⁶ Judging by contemporary newspaper coverage of Beacon Hill and of the Russells, there was a risk that the founders' fairly complete theories of educational psychology, their balanced curriculum in language, history, and natural sciences, and the high level of care given to children at Beacon Hill⁷ all might be lost from view. Titillation sold papers in the 1920s and 1930s as it did and does.

Taken on the whole, and discounting the more lurid coverage of the Russells' views and of Beacon Hill, it is nonetheless fair to say the public mostly read accounts that emphasized essence, not accident. On that account alone, one might expect to find "copy-cat" schools in the 1930s and later. There were none.

In the latter 1930s and afterward, progressive and conservative educators in Europe and the Americas occasionally announced their interest or their upset *vis-à-vis* the Russells. But no Russell schools were founded. Nor were there anti-Russell schools.

⁵ These were: Bertrand Russell, *On Education, Especially in Early Childhood* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1926); Dora Russell, *The Right to be Happy* (London and New York: Harper & Brothers, 1927); Bertrand Russell, *Education and the Social Order* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1932); and Dora Russell, *In Defence of Children* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1932). Dora's work dealt with broad questions of social policy and cultural practice, as much as it did with the specifics of schooling and education. Bertie's books paid roughly equal attention to both aspects of educational development.

⁶ Among the most important sources for such matters is Katherine Russell's first-hand account in *My Father, Bertrand Russell* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996), along with Dora Russell's autobiographical *The Tamarisk Tree, vol. II: My School and the Years of War* (London: Virago, 1981)

⁷ On the matter of children's care at Beacon Hill, see William Bruneau, "New Evidence on Life, Learning and Medical Care at Beacon Hill School, *Russell*, n.s. 23 (2003): 130-52.

This is not to say that Beacon Hill and the Russells' educational thought sank without a trace. Several English progressive schools had some connection with the Russells. None was a knock-off. Summerhill School (1921-present), at least as democratic and psychotherapeutic as Beacon Hill, had begun just before the Russells started up, but based on distinctive principles and dependent for a half-century on the leadership of a single man, A.S. Neill.⁸ Dartington Hall School's progressive and arts-oriented programmes (1926-1987) were the joint collaboration of the Elmhirst family and of William Curry (longtime friend of the Russells and later teacher of John and Kate Russell). But here again, the school depended much on its founders' force of will, on ideas developed independently of Bertrand and Dora Russell.⁹

Meanwhile Bedales (1893-present), a progressive or liberal school in the day, had begun by the 1920s to move from a notably participatory educational system to a more sedate one. By 2019 Bedales was among the more expensive private secondary schools of the world (just over £37,000/annum for boarders, uniforms and extra lessons not included).¹⁰

Beacon Hill was thought in all three cases to offer a point of educational reference, but not to be a complete model, nor even an adequate example for the creation an entirely new school, private or state-maintained. Thus the Russells' names might be invoked by reform-minded educators in North America and Europe, but as indirectly helpful guides.¹¹ Beacon Hill's impact was arguably present in the attitudes of educational experimenters, especially among the most energetic founders of "alternative schools" in the 1960s and 1970s.¹² Otherwise it is hard to find concrete evidence of the past in the British educational present.

With that it is time to return to the 21st century – and to Varndean/Russell School, Brighton.

In its physical aspect, Varndean School is an accretion of structures from the 1920s and afterward.¹³ It is not unlike state-maintained comprehensives elsewhere in

⁸ Cf. Richard Bailey, *A.S. Neill* (London: Continuum, 2014).

⁹ Michael Young, *The Elmhirsts of Dartington: the Creation of an Utopian Community* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982).

¹⁰ Significantly, Trevor Blewitt's *Modern School Handbook* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1934) puts all three of these institutions high on its list of reliably liberal schools.

¹¹ Brian P. Hendley, *Dewey, Russell, Whitehead: Philosophers as Educators* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986).

¹² For a wide-ranging introduction, see W.A.C. Stewart, *The Educational Innovators: volume II, Progressive Schools 1881-1967* (London: Macmillan, 1968).

¹³ Varndean began as a college for girls (first the York Place School, by 1909 the Brighton Municipal Secondary School for Girls). It was "comprehensivised" in the mid-1970s, that is, made coeducational and a part of the British maintained, publicly-funded system of primary and secondary education. Like all such schools, Varndean has a board or committee of Governors, roughly analogous to a North American school board but concerned with the

Britain, but noteworthy for its commitment since the mid-1970s to specialist provision for teaching of music, applied learning, and technology. (Comprehensives are a product of British legislation and public policy following on the Butler Act of 1944; North Americans might think of comprehensives as general-service public high schools as they are in the United States or Canada.) Varndean's academic, applied, and technical programmes are offered to more than 1,300 pupils, preparing them for university studies, advanced technical education, or for apprenticeship and employment.

Although Varndean includes four "schools," they are not four distinct buildings, but rather four educational communities in one building. One community is the Russell School. Its siblings are the [Maya] Angelou, the [Alan] Turing, and the [Ethel Vera] Ellis schools. For readers of this *Bulletin*, the names Angelou, Turing, and Russell need little introduction; Ellis School is named for the headmistress of Varndean 1909-1937, when it was still a school for girls. It was later to be integrated into the state system of education.



Varndean School as of 2019

Varndean's website says this of its small-school structure:

administration of only one school. William Deighan, head teacher, says of the school's geography that "We are beautifully situated at the top of a learning campus with views across Brighton and Hove to the English Channel that inspire great thinking for a great school." And this, too, has a Russellian overtone, considering Bertrand Russell's constant preference to live and work in places with a view to the great spaces of sea and countryside.

Since September 2012 we have been using a system that can cope with a larger school and its varying range of abilities and needs. We have **four** schools within the main school, each similar in size to small primary schools. We aim to build on the personal approach that many of our parents tell us their children miss when moving to large high schools....Our structure means we can track and nurture your child's progress faster and more accurately than before.

Each school has a Head of School, a Deputy Head and either a School Leader and Student Manager or two School Leaders. Their focus is to ensure that progress, attendance, dress code, behaviour and punctuality meet our high expectations.... Students within their school meet those from other years as occasion demands in a more vertical way of working. This provides greater leadership and developmental opportunities within an identified unit – learning with and from peers as well as from older/younger students.¹⁴

Some of this is consistent with Bertrand Russell's educational views, especially those in *On Education* (1926) – some perhaps not.¹⁵ Russell was famously suspicious of some (although not all) state-supported or state-instigated public institutions. His attitudes had been shaped at least in part by the nightmare of the Great War and all-in mobilisation of British society.

Russell's criticism of official policy was matched by his sharp scepticism about the institutions of property, marriage, banking, and business. About these things, Russell did not much change his mind. Despite a life-long commitment to democratic-socialist politics, he was lukewarm about the expansion of the educational system after 1944. Russell was ambiguous even in his assessment of the grant system, the arrangement that allowed two generations of British young people to attend post-secondary education institutions tuition-free, with support for board and room.

For most observers looking back from the vantage point of 2019 (including this writer), Russell's outlook is hard to place; but then, Russell was never anxious to please the generally held opinion of any time or place. He would not be as impressed as many of us are by the impact of large-scale state-supported secondary schooling. We should not then be surprised by some of the attitudes we find in his big education books, or in the work he carried on as the co-owner of a small independent school, or in the opinions he expressed post-war.

Russell went somewhat further, worrying after 1945 that the enormously increased accessibility of universities and colleges did not necessarily mean that those institutions were better than they had been, academically speaking, in the good old days, including the Cambridge of Russell's own earlier days. The word "excellence" recurs many times in Russell's two main education books, *On Education* (1926) and *Education and the Social Order* (1932); the meaning of that term

¹⁴ A discussion of the four-school system appears near the front of the Varndean website:

<https://www.varndean.co.uk/pastoral>.

¹⁵ Bertrand Russell, *On Education*, esp. Part II, pp. 69-188.

in the 1920s and 1930s was uncertain—even to Russell—and it is no less uncertain in 2019.

Consider for a moment the British approach to pupil assessment and “grading”. As co-owners of their own private school for young children, the Russells, Bertrand (d. 1970) and Dora (d. 1986), were deeply interested in the assessment of their pupils and their progress.

The Russells’ concept of “progress” was quite unlike that advanced by successive British ministers of education since the days of Harold Wilson, let alone Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair. The Russells did not worry much, if at all, about dress codes,¹⁶ nor about punctuality (although they had occasional sleepless nights when it came to pupil attendance at class...or anywhere else), or efficiency as a general measure of educational “output”.

Instead they were concerned with the development of courage, general intelligence, the ability to make logically persuasive arguments, vitality, and empathy for the social circumstances of other people—including “others” who live half a world away. A successful pupil was one who had experienced a measure of pupil self-government (since open school governance was perhaps consistent with openminded criticism). A pupil who fearlessly asked questions about every imaginable thing—and found that her/his teachers gave honest and full answers to them all—was in Dora’s and Bertie’s eyes a “success”. A happy pupil could ask about sex and self interest and sobriety...and hear unvarnished truths in reply. Success and knowledge—in the natural sciences, the arts, mathematics, technical matters—went hand-in-hand.

Varndean and the Russell School are the products of a long history, especially the development of state-maintained education after 1944. Their administrators and teachers have naturally to be concerned with law, regulation, politics, and the expectations of the city of Brighton. In contrast, Bertie and Dora had a tiny (and sympathetic) parent body to please, and had to obey only the usual rules of health and public order while experimenting with a mix of pedagogies—some drawn from the new psychology of the 1920s, some from Froebel and Montessori.¹⁷

The Russells planned to make their pupils ready for grammar school and possibly for university entrance, attending to studies some pupils might have preferred to avoid—history, mathematics, natural science, English literature, and so on. Still, on many important matters (including matters of diet and daily routine) the Russells could please themselves rather than please the state. These are luxuries partly unavailable to a state-maintained secondary school.

¹⁶ The Russells would have been indifferent or incensed, depending on the case, by the events described (without adequate context) in Jody Doherty-Cove, “Sockgate: Parents Angry at Ban on Colourful Socks at Varndean School,” *Argus* [Bristol], 2018 November 18 :

<https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/17231939.sockgate-parents-angry-at-ban-on-colourful-socks-at-varndean-school/>.

¹⁷ For details about these matters, see William Bruneau, “New Evidence on Life, Learning, and Medical Care at Beacon Hill School, 1930-1934,” *Russell*, n.s. 23 (2003 Summer): 131-52.

Varndean and the Russell School work in a world spectacularly different from that of 1926-1931. But this does not prevent Varndean/Russell from providing an education for critical thinking, an education for social responsibility, an education about difficult questions (the distribution of wealth in a time of inequality, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity). Varndean/Russell illustrates the difficulty, perhaps the impossibility of adopting holus-bolus the Beacon Hill “model” of schooling. The original Russell “model” may be mostly out of reach in 2019.

The difficulty faced by contemporaries is embodied in an institution that the Russells would almost certainly have opposed: OFSTED, the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. In 1926 His Majesty’s Inspectors for Education [HMI] evaluated schools and teachers within them, and their work had an aura of authority that is hard to recapture in 2019. Importantly, Beacon Hill was never inspected by HMI, but rather only by a health department official. There are still HMIs, more than 200 of them and several hundred more inspectors deputized to carry out the work. Bertrand and Dora were pleased that HMI had no part in deciding the content of schooling at Beacon Hill, nor in deciding whether the school would rise or fall, succeed or fail.

But the question of school “excellence” has since been placed partly in the hands of OFSTED, a separate state agency. OFSTED sees schooling in comparative and quantitative terms, not so much by the humanistic, psychological, and ethical goals of Beacon Hill and their like. Still, the most recent OFSTED report on Varndean gives it a grade of “Good.”¹⁸

The framework of modern British legislation and regulation may allow two possibilities: first, that the *spirit* of the Russells will live on at Varndean/Russell in teaching method and outlook, or second, that the *details* of classroom management as they were in the 1920s and 1930s, may be inimitable. The Russells had a peculiar view of children’s psychological and social development and a similarly distinctive approach to school administration. Little of this may be adaptable or adoptable.

But the objective of combining the spirit of Russell, Turing, Angelou, and Ellis with the material reality of 2019...well, these are in some sense transferrable. But it takes courage and imagination to take up that spirit.

¹⁸ Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills, London: Her Majesty’s Stationers, various years): Varndean’s report is at <https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/2725509>.

Private, independent schools (including Eton College, where Bertrand Russell’s third child was a student in the 1950s) are sometimes assessed not by OFSTED but by the Independent Schools Inspectorate. For the most recent ISI report on Eton, see: <https://www.etoncollege.com/userfiles/files/Eton%20Inspection%20Report%202016.pdf>. The 2009 OFSTED report on Eton, it being the last OFSTED public report on that institution, is at <https://www.etoncollege.com/userfiles/files/Ofsted%20Final%20Report%202009.pdf>.

Eton has adjusted to external pressures of evaluation and scrutiny, but so has Varndean-Russell. An important educational question is to know how far that adjustment has interfered with school autonomy. This article does not pretend to answer that question.

The Russell School has its own webpage and its own statement of purpose and method:

Our school is named after British philosopher Bertrand Russell and unique to Russell School, we adopt Philosophy for Children (P4C) enquiries in some of our tutor sessions. Students participate in discussion over 'big ideas' and develop the confidence to speak out and share their views. It is our philosophy that students need to learn how to think critically and creatively so that what and how they learn at Varndean is future-proof in an ever changing, fast paced 21st Century.

Philosophy for Children has organizational roots in the United States, where Matthew Lipman built in the early 1970s an Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children at Montclair State College, California.¹⁹ In the United Kingdom, P4C is supported by Sapere, a national organization whose website says this:

We promote philosophical enquiry and reflection in education by providing high-quality [P4C training](#) and [sustaining P4C](#) practice through continuous professional development. We support a community of registered trainers, P4C practitioners, teachers and members. We train over 5,500 teachers and educators in P4C each year and have over 25 years' experience in bringing P4C into a range of schools and educational settings.²⁰

The American variant of P4C gives examples to show P4C at work in school, beginning with questions that children aged 6-16 may ask:

I wonder if ghosts are real or unreal.
When Dad tells me to be good, what does he mean?
What makes someone a best friend?
What do people mean when they say they love me?
That's not fair!
Where did grandpa go when he died?

The last thirty years' experience in doing philosophy with children and adolescents has shown us that they are not only capable of doing philosophy but need and appreciate it for the same reasons that adults do. Children think constantly, and reflect on their thoughts. They acquire knowledge and try to use what they know. And they want their experience to be meaningful: to be valuable, interesting, just and beautiful. Philosophy offers children the chance to explore ordinary but puzzling concepts, to improve their thinking, to make more sense of their world and to discover for themselves what is to be valued and cherished in that world.

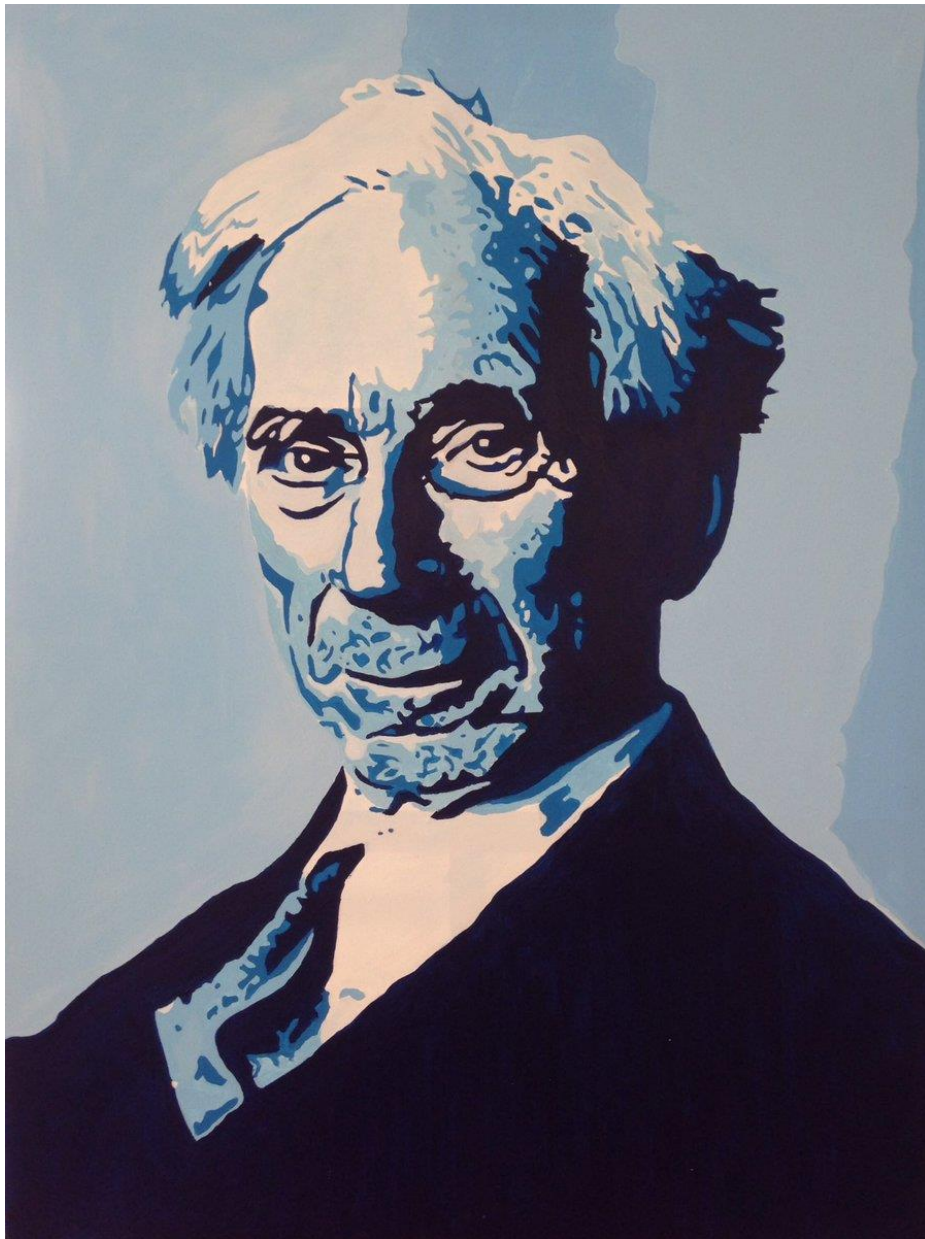
Both Russells wrote similar lists and recommendations for Beacon Hill (and for parents, teachers, and students everywhere), and would welcome the work of P4C. They regularly emphasized the importance of taking children seriously – even having “reverence” for them – and treating their questions and arguments with honesty and respect. P4C is a close reminder of the Russellian educational outlook.

¹⁹ For a definition of P4C and an example of P4C in practice, see: <https://web.archive.org/web/20101218030732/http://cehs.montclair.edu/academic/iapc/whatis.shtml>

²⁰ The Sapere website is at <https://www.sapere.org.uk/>.

The psychology that guided the Russells was a peculiar mix of modified behaviourism, a vaguely neo-Freudian therapeutic approach, along with sensible borrowings from the “practical” psychologies of Montessori and 20th-century followers of Froebel. At Varndean/Russell, it may be that such questions of general psychology have not guided the School’s decision making. Still, on the conceptual and logical side, the School’s adoption of P4C is importantly Russellian. So is the Russell School’s commitment to children’s creativity, to leave open time and space for arguments on all sides of every issue.

We end with art work commissioned at the Russell School in 2016. It appears by and with the kind permission of Gareth Hughes, Head of Russell School.



Bertrand Russell painting by Russell School students in Enrichment week 2016

Russell's Homes:

Plas Penrhyn and Two London Flats

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Russell and his wife Edith relocated to North Wales in 1956 from their home on Queen's Road in Richmond. They maintained a presence in London for medical, legal, banking, and business appointments, for seeing friends, and for Russell himself to appear on BBC broadcasts.

29 Millbank Road, SW1

The couple rented a first floor flat at this address when they lived on Queen's Road.¹ This arrangement continued until 1958 when the building was scheduled for demolition. Russell wrote to two correspondents telling them the destruction was required to make way for skyscrapers.² There are only 36 letters from Russell using this address and only in the years 1957-58. It was very much a pied-à-terre. There are no known photographs of this flat or the building that housed it.

Russell considered returning to Richmond as his London base. He told his lawyer Louis P. Tylor on 31 May 1958 that he was thinking of buying 2, Old Place Terrace, a townhouse overlooking Richmond Green. On 3 June he wrote that he could not afford the purchase without a mortgage. On 4 June Tylor wrote back that Penningtons, the agents in the possible sale, had found a lender willing to provide £4,000. An eight-page report, with appendixes, was prepared on the property by G.B.M. Lansdown, Chartered Surveyor, on 23 June. Work was required on the property, in addition to the alterations requested by the Russells. It is not known why they abandoned this idea; perhaps the work was too extensive. Instead, they turned their attention to London.

43 Hasker Street, SW3

Russell and Edith moved to a townhouse at this address in November 1958. Russell took over the lease between Cadogan Settled Estates Co. and Flavia Dorothea Clarke. It had 18 years left to run, expiring 29 September 1973. The rent was only £5 a year but there was a premium of £460. Russell agreed to pay Mrs.

¹ See my article, "Russell's Homes: 41 Queen's Road, Richmond", *Bertrand Russell Society Bulletin* no. 158 (Autumn 2018): 22-31 for further information on this flat.

² Penelope Gilliatt, 12 March 1959 and John Sargent at Doubleday, 20 January 1960. Millbank Tower towers over the Thames; it is 387 ft. high.

Clarke £3,300 for the lease. There was a muddle with regard to negotiations and the estate agent Roy E. Brooks's commission was in doubt. When Russell stepped in to assume payment, Brooks wrote on 12 September that he "was delighted to receive your letter as we so rarely find that the private business actions of a Great Man match up to his public reputation!" The responsibilities of a tenant were vastly different than what is expected in North America. Russell was required to paint the exterior in 1958 and every fourth year thereafter and to redecorate the interior in 1957 and every seventh year thereafter, among other things (Coward Chance, 12 September).



On the front steps of 43 Hasker Street

The three-storey townhouse was 16 feet wide at the front. There was a two-storey attached outbuilding in the rear.³ A couple, Jean and Cecil Redmond, looked after the property. Russell described the location as "a little street running from Walton Street to Milner Street at the Knightsbridge end of Chelsea" to his doctor, J. Lister Boyd, 17 November 1958. The Redmonds lived nearby at 40 Oakley Street but in 1961 moved further out to SW6. The Russells helped them

³ Drawing in the Edith Russell papers.

financially with this move. There is a large amount of correspondence between Edith and Jean regarding the running of the house. Cecil, though he had employment elsewhere, undertook small odd jobs. Major repairs such as a new slate roof in 1959 were done by outside contractors. When interior painting took place in December 1961 Edith's request for the walls was "pure white in colour ... not ... pinkish or yellowish or greyish" (18 December). Russell told Desmond King-Hele that the house had "smokeless fuel, which doesn't give any heat."⁴

There was a burglary in 1963. Russell wrote to Hepburn & Ross, 2 August that: "My house in London (43 Hasker Street), was recently entered by a burglar. He found two bottles of Red Hackle, consumed them on the spot, & thereupon considered further depredations unnecessary. I consider this a tribute to Red Hackle...." The house was a hub of activity. One note Edith made for 4 February 1960 lists people they had to see during that visit: "Augustus John, [Joseph] Rotblat & [Patricia] Lindop, Conrad [BR's son], Elizabeth Greene, David Birkin (Flora [Russell]'s & B's cousin), Asshetons [John and Betty], Brian FitzGerald, [Wolfgang] Foges [Rathbone Books], Gogi [Joan Thompson] & husband, Trevelyans, Themersons [Stefan and Franciska], Huntingdons [Jack and Margaret], Angela Thirkell" in addition to their doctor and lawyer. People, some of them famous, who came to visit were photographed either on the front steps of Hasker Street or inside the townhouse. James Baldwin⁵ and Paul McCartney⁶ were among the visitors, as was Peter Sellers⁷. At the height of the Sino-Indian dispute in November 1962 Indian and Chinese diplomats⁸ came to discuss the situation with Russell (*Unarmed Victory*, p. 89).

⁴ Desmond King-Hele, "A Discussion with Bertrand Russell at Plas Penrhyn, 4 August 1968", *Russell: The Journal of the Bertrand Russell Archives* o.s. 16 (Winter 1974-75): 21-6, at 24; includes a Plas Penrhyn map.

⁵ Russell wrote Baldwin, 18 September 1963, praising his two-essay book on civil rights, *The Fire Next Time*. On 9 January 1967 Baldwin agreed to join the International War Crimes Tribunal.

⁶ McCartney took advantage of his growing fame as a member of the Beatles to call Russell up. They discussed the Vietnam War. McCartney misremembered the name of the street, calling it "Flood Street" (*Many Years*, p. 125). He visited with a lady friend Saturday 18 June 1966, 4 pm, which suggests tea was probably served (Edith Russell Pocket Diary entry; PD currently at BRPF).

⁷ There is archival correspondence about Sellers visiting Plas Penrhyn in September 1964 but nothing was confirmed. The décor of this photograph makes it clear it was taken at Hasker Street. Russell contacted Sellers after seeing his film *Dr. Strangelove*.

⁸ On Saturday November 17 the Chinese Chargé d'Affaires visited; on Monday 19 November the Indian High Commissioner arrived.



With Peter Sellers in Hasker Street



Taking tea with James Baldwin

Russell wrote 200 letters from Hasker Street beginning 1958 and ending June 1966. The last time he was in London was November 1966. On the 16th he delivered a statement on his International War Crimes Tribunal at a press conference in the Caxton Hall (C66.44a). The reason he stopped travelling to London is uncertain. When Desmond King-Hele visited him at Plas Penrhyn in 1968, he told him: "I don't visit London much, because I have a complaint that prevents me walking more than a quarter of a mile" (King-Hele, p. 24). He did tell Grace Forester on 7 May 1969 that "nothing has taken me to London for two and a half years." The townhouse was not given up even though Edith did not travel into London on solo visits.⁹

⁹ There was regular correspondence with Jean Redmond in 1967-69; Edith's side is not extant. Jean became Edith's personal shopper in London. Christopher Farley did have access to no. 43 (letter of 8 May 1968). In 1969, beginning on 4 June, Jean outlined major problems with the flooring in the house; Cadogan Estates would not pay for the repairs. On 24 June Jean wrote

The lease on Hasker Street was not put up for sale until March 1971, more than a year after Russell's death. It was purchased by Christopher Baldwin (documents .311960, .311991). Some of the contents were moved to Plas Penrhyn; some furniture went to Conrad Russell; a refrigerator went to Shavers Place.¹⁰ Edith was there to supervise the removals. The library, after being declined by McMaster University, was sold off to the European University Institute in Florence, Italy.¹¹ The main library housed at Plas Penrhyn came to McMaster University after Edith's death.

Plas Penrhyn: "We're in Clover!"

It took time to find a new place to live. The Russells did not confine their search for a new home to Wales. On 23 February 1955 estate agents, the Chamberlaine Bros., contacted Edith with regard to the sale of a home in Coln Rogers, near Bibury, Gloucestershire. Edith indicated she was interested and wanted photographs and the price. One year earlier Russell wrote to Frances Williams¹² on 14 April 1954: "I remember the house that you mean, but I do not at present wish to live in Wales as it is too far from London."

On 5 May Edith wrote to their friends, Rupert and Elizabeth Crawshay-Williams, enclosing an advertisement for a house near Portmadoc, Wales. This house turned out to be unsuitable. According to Rupert, he and Elizabeth had been looking for houses for the Russells since 1953 and they were the ones to find Plas Penrhyn (*Russell Remembered*, p. 101). Very little can be found in the Russell Archives about the arrangements. There is a letter, 26 July 1955, from the owner who lived nearby, Sir Osmond Michael Williams of Borthwen, Penrhyndeudraeth, enclosing the lease, which has not survived. There is a letter from R.C. Jones & Sons, estate agents, on 27 October 1955, listing a rent of £50 quarterly. Percy A. Popkin noted in a letter to Russell of 20 February 1956 that Russell had rented Plas Penrhyn since 22 June 1955.¹³ For the first year Russell also spent time

that no one would be able to sleep at Hasker Street for three to four weeks because of the odour, presumably from whatever had been applied to the floors. The problem was wood beetles; Green Cupinal was applied after repairs were done (A.W. Stevens to Edith, 14 August). None of Jean's letters indicate who might have been sleeping there. On 12 August Jean told Edith that Pamela Wood, administrative secretary of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, would be staying at no. 43 until she and a friend could find a flat of their own. On 19 November Jean told Edith that Anne, Russell's grand-daughter, wanted keys to no. 43. Redecoration of the sitting room was finished in late December.

¹⁰ Bertrand Russell Archives, Edith's Pocket Diary, entries of 26 and 29 March 1971. The Peace Foundation's offices were located at 3 & 4 Shavers Place.

¹¹ I visited the Institute in 1986 and obtained a listing of the books; it appears that the books have since been dispersed. The listing is in the Russell Archives.

¹² Williams had worked for him at his home in Llan Ffestiniog.

¹³ This date does match the date of the lease, 23 June 1955, which was noted in a letter to Russell from Coward, Chance & Co. of 11 August 1955. Edith attached a note to this letter: "The beginning, for us, of Plas Penrhyn."

in his Queen's Road home in Richmond, not moving permanently to Plas Penrhyn until July 1956 (see my article listed in note 1).

Edith wrote with excitement to her American friends Frances and Learned Hand, whom she called Fanny and Jay, on 7 June 1955 from St. Fillians, Perthshire: "On the way up here we stopped with the Crawshay Williamses & found a house with most beautiful views over Portmeirion harbour to the open sea and up the valley to Snowdon which we are renting so as to have a place in the country for the children's¹⁴ holidays. It is deep in the country but within easy walking distance of the little village & the hotel & lots of Bertie's old friends – among them the Crawshays.... It's quite a large house so we wish you'd come & see us there. It will have to have another bathroom put in & the brambles dug out of the front lawn. But it has lovely fireplaces & views & all essentials & a kitchen garden & an orchard & a woodland & a potting shed & a tiny glass house & the only neighbour is the farmer who supplies eggs & milk etc., & there is even a village daily & a gardener – so, if it turns out right, we're in clover! We rent it unfurnished, but the man¹⁵ who is moving out will sell up cheap all of his furniture (some of it perfectly charming & all of it good Victorian) that we want to buy...."



Side view of Plas Penrhyn

¹⁴ Russell's grandchildren, who had been abandoned by their parents, John and Susan.

¹⁵ The tenant's name was William Kitching. He sent Edith a listing on 15 June 1955 which she annotated, noting things she did not want.

Rupert Crawshay-Williams described the house as “a medium-sized Regency house, with its own grove of beech trees, which belonged to a neighbour and friend ... in several of the rooms there was a window directly above the fireplace.... There was a small conservatory on the outside wall of the drawing-room, which Bertie and Edith filled with masses of flowers set up on shelves.... From the other window, which was a half French window with steps up and down to the verandah, there was a marvellous view of Snowdon ...” (*Russell Remembered*, pp. 101-2; “several” possibly an exaggeration).



On the verandah of Plas Penrhyn

Russell in his *Autobiography* described it as “small and unpretentious” but he loved the views. “I was captivated by it, and particularly pleased that across the valley [estuary] could be seen the house where Shelley had lived. The owner of Plas Penrhyn agreed to let it to us largely, I think, because he too is a lover of Shelley and was much taken by my desire to write an essay on ‘Shelley the

Tough'¹⁶...." The house would be ideal for the children, "especially as there were friends of their parents¹⁷ living nearby whom they already knew and who had children of their own ages" (pp. 71-2). Hung on the wall of the dining room was a portrait by his mother of Ravenscroft, the house where he was born.¹⁸

When the house was put up for sale in June 2014,¹⁹ the estate agents, Tom Parry & Co., described the house as being built "in the late 17th century/early 18th century [with] the Regency north west wing ... in the 1800s." The Regency wing contained the following: ground floor – open porch, principal hall, cloak room, drawing room, dining room, kitchen; first floor – landing, three front bedrooms, bathroom, study. The rear wing contained: rear hall, inner cloaks area, sitting room, inner lobby, shower room, kitchen/breakfast room. On the first floor – landing, two bedrooms and bathroom. On the second floor a landing and two attic bedrooms. The north east wing, ground floor contained an entrance hall, living room and kitchenette. The first floor had a landing, a bedroom with limited headroom and a bathroom. Outside: a fine full-length Regency verandah and slate flagged terrace to the front; a lean-to greenhouse to the side; a cellar with slate slab flooring which housed the central heating boiler.

¹⁶ Letter from Osmond Williams, 13 June 1955, confirms the Shelley quotation. Russell published "The Importance of Shelley", *London Calling*, no. 905 (14 March 1957): 10 (C57.06) and **16a** in *Papers* 29.

¹⁷ Williams-Ellis family (Clark, p. 551); Cooper-Willis family (Monk, p. 390).

¹⁸ Christopher Farley to George and Dorinda Taylor, 2 July 1968.

¹⁹ It was sold in April 2015. I do not know if Plas Penrhyn was sold during the time after Edith died and before this sale took place. The Williams family has a long history in Wales and may have kept ownership until 2015 while continuing to rent it out. Osmond Williams did not die until December 2012.

Here is the floor plan as provided by Tom Parry & Co.:



Since it was an old property, many people had lived there before. Sir Lewis Casson wrote to Russell 24 November 1959 that it “was the first house my father and mother lived in when they were married (at Penrhyn church) in the late [eighteen] sixties!” They had moved on before Casson was born. The Victorian novelist, Elizabeth Gaskell, honeymooned there in 1832.²⁰

Edith went full steam ahead with preparations to move in. On 25 June 1955 she told Elizabeth Crawshay-Williams that she had bought furniture, cutlery, and linens from various London stores which was being shipped north. A list was enclosed. She also wrote a detailed list of furniture at Queen’s Road. Marked beside each item was a letter – S meant “Sure Take”, U meant “Unsure”, N meant “No”. Oddly enough this list is written on printed letterhead of 5, St. Leonard’s Terrace, Chelsea. Three Wittgenstein tables were marked “N”. It is not known what happened to them; perhaps they went to Millbank Road. Two Pembroke Lodge tables were marked “S” (document .311873, box 2.26).

A house as large as Plas Penrhyn required domestic staff, even if the new residents had not been older and still busy with work. The job positions included a cook; either a daily or live-in maid, often two of them; a nurse/housekeeper,

²⁰ <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk>; this website notes that: “In 1827 Samuel Holland (1803-92), industrialist and owner/manager of the Gloddfa Ganol slate works at Blaenau Ffestiniog, moved to the house to which he added the Regency (NW) wing”. Gaskell was his niece.

later a housekeeper/cook; and a gardener. These positions were not all held by the same people during Russell's tenure. Some were let go whereas others chose to leave. When Nell Morgan was let go because of health problems, Edith explained the dilemma in her dismissal letter of 12 December 1963: "We like ... to be able to have visitors here even when the children are at home.... We also should like to have someone here to answer the telephone on fine afternoons when we wish to go out ourselves ... we feel that we must get someone to live in and be our housekeeper-cook, as you have been ... the work is piling up and difficult for Mrs. Griffiths and Mrs. Edwards even with Mrs. Thomas's occasional help...." A Mrs. Humphreys left because "the job [was] too monotonous" and the stone floor too hard on her legs (document .311857). National insurance cards had to be maintained for all staff. They were treated well if they needed help. Russell wrote a job recommendation in 1961 for the son of a staff member. He had never met the son but praised the qualities of his mother, Mrs. Griffiths (document .311696b).

The gardener, Richard Osborne, wanted geese. One gander and three purebred Chinese geese were ordered from C.F. Perry in Somerset on 14 November 1955. Perry's motto stamped on the envelope was: "Every country home should have a flock of Chinese geese." The cost was £20. There was also a rabbit and guinea pigs; it was part of the gardener's duties to feed them and clean their houses (document .311872).

Peanut the dog entered the scene in 1962. According to Edith's Pocket Diary, she was born on 24 February 1962 with the name "Choc. Pud."; she listed her along with the other family birthdays. Russell and Edith noted on 29 May that Pudding had been renamed Peanut.²¹ Nell Morgan (domestic staff) and Peanut sent a happy birthday telegram to Russell at Hasker Street in May 1963. The previous year Edith had written to Nell Morgan from Hasker Street that "We miss her sadly here, however undeniable it is that life is easier in these close quarters without her" (24 August 1962). On 25 September 1964 Peanut had a male puppy (Edith's Pocket Diary; it is not known what happened to this offspring). Peanut put in an appearance during Desmond King-Hele's visit in 1968 but was confined to the verandah because she was too dirty to come in – she had been running in the sea-mud (King-Hele, p. 23).

²¹29 May 1962 to grand-daughters Sarah and Lucy, letter in RA1 750. Christopher Farley explained in a 1963 note (document .053080) that "Peanut was named after [Hugh] Gaitskell's attack on unilateralists, who – he said – had not the brains of a peanut." Hugh Gaitskell (1906-1963) was the leader of the Labour Party; unilateralists wanted unilateral nuclear disarmament, which Gaitskell opposed. I could not locate a source for Farley's quotation. Another explanation is that Gaitskell called hecklers at a May Day Rally in Glasgow in 1962 "pro-Soviet peanuts" (the peanutsclub.blogspot.com). He spoke in favour of the Polaris nuclear missile system.



Gamel Brennan

With their dog Peanut, summer 1962

Many renovations to the property took place. In June 1956 a garage was erected.²² Before the Russells arrived in July 1956, work was to be done on “the two attic rooms and the room above the scullery, especially the enlarging of the skylights, ... on the greenhouse and the roof of the verandah.”²³ Consideration was given to building a maisonette in 1960 designed by Clough Williams-Ellis but was rejected as too expensive.²⁴ On 5 December 1967 Edith wrote to Conrad regarding a Christmas visit. She told him an elevator was being put in so Russell would not have to climb stairs once he recovered from his illness. The house was in a mess with floors up, holes in the walls and “everything is ... sixes and sevens.” She recommended delaying the visit.

Russell lived a full and productive life in old age. He wrote over 10,000 letters from Plas Penrhyn. He published several books including *Portraits from Memory and Other Essays* (1956), *Why I Am Not a Christian* (1957), and in 1959

²² Letter from Deudraeth Rural District Council, 1 June 1956.

²³ Edith to Mr. Williams, 18 June 1956.

²⁴ A maisonette consists of living accommodation of two stories in a larger building with a separate outside entrance.

Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare, My Philosophical Development, and Wisdom of the West. In spring 1959 thirteen dialogues were filmed for television, later published (1960) as *Bertrand Russell Speaks His Mind. Fact and Fiction and Has Man a Future?* appeared in 1961. *Unarmed Victory* was published in 1963, *War Crimes in Vietnam* in 1967. Over a span of three years, 1967-1969, his *Autobiography* in three volumes appeared.

Many people made the long trek from London to visit Russell. He sent the following directions to Yuan Ren Chao, his former Chinese translator, on 24 September 1968 which ended with: "Pass the post office (on the right at the junction) and take the turning 200 yards further along on the left. This narrow lane leads upwards towards Plas Penrhyn, which is half a mile from the main road." Russell wanted signs put up on the main road to mark the entrance. The nearby farmers had to agree, which they did.²⁵ Chao and his wife, Buwei, did visit and Chao mentioned their visit in an article.²⁶ Rupert Crawshay-Williams in Chapter 7 of his book listed many people who visited both couples. They included John and Celia Strachey, Marghanita Laski and her husband John Howard, Margaret Storm Jameson and her husband Guy Chapman, Robert Boothby, Woodrow Wyatt and his wife Moorea, Julian and Juliette Huxley, Charles Laughton and his wife Elsa Lanchester, and John Gilmour. Russell met Ingrid Bergman who was filming *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* in Portmeirion in June 1958.

²⁵ The relevant correspondence: Elizabeth and Rupert Crawshay-Williams and the Deudraeth Rural District Council (18, 26 May 1956, document .3100256). Kenneth Blackwell does not recollect seeing any signs and the letter to Chao does not mention them. However, the signs did exist; Tony Simpson of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation sent me an image of one of them. A different sign marks the house today; Andrew Bone photographed it in 2018.

²⁶ Yuen Ren Chao, "With Bertrand Russell in China", *Russell: The Journal of the Bertrand Russell Archives* o.s. no. 7 (Autumn 1972): 14-17.



Taking tea with the Chaos

Russell sent an invitation to Brand Blanshard and his wife to visit in 1959. After a visit in 1959, Helen Hervey sent Russell a book of her father's poems, *She Was My Spring* (Russell's Library). Zora Lasch who used to teach at Beacon Hill School and her newspaper editor husband Robert also visited in 1959. Grigor Lambrakis and Manolis Glezos, Greek activists, visited in 1963. Glezos recollected that "Russell received us lying down on a chaise lounge."²⁷ His old American friend, Miriam Reichel, visited in June 1963. After one 1964 visit Victor Purcell sent an effusive thank you to Edith on 23 May: "Plato, Socrates, Gibbon, etc. would have been too opinionated to make congenial hosts, Jesus or Buddha would have bored me, and Alexander, Napoleon, and JInghis would have been conversationally ineligible." In May 1965 a group of Indian Trade Union leaders came to Plas Penrhyn. Desmond King-Hele visited on 4 August 1968 (see note 4). He found Russell a charming and witty host. Mansel Davies, who lived about six miles away, made day visits and was served china tea.²⁸ These visitors represent

²⁷ John R. Lenz, "Bertrand Russell and the Post-War Greek Left", *Bertrand Russell Society Bulletin* no. 158 (Autumn 2018): 32-7.

²⁸ Mansel Davies, "CND, Pugwash, and Eddington", *Russell: The Journal of the Bertrand Russell Archives* n.s. 11 (Winter 1991-92): 193-9.

just a fraction of the people Russell welcomed to Plas Penrhyn. People who worked for Russell also spent considerable time there: Christopher Farley, Ralph Schoenman,²⁹ and Kenneth Blackwell to name but three.



A visit of Indian trade union leaders

Russell's daughter Kate, her husband and their five children visited; she does not give the year. Russell put them up at the Portmeirion Hotel; despite its size Plas Penrhyn was too small to accommodate them all comfortably. Kate describes her father as sitting "in his armchair by the fire, with his feet on the same lovely old rug, surrounded by his ivories and his Chinese paintings, his books ... just as he had always done.... I felt his greatness more then, as we sat quietly over tea ... than at any other time" (*My Father*, p. 193).

²⁹ Kenneth Blackwell tells me that Ralph did not stay at Plas Penrhyn but had accommodation in the village of Penrhyndeudraeth.

Russell died on 2 February 1970. His ashes were scattered at a location known only to his secretary, Christopher Farley. Edith stayed on at Plas Penrhyn until her own death on 1 January 1978. In March 1970 she went ahead with the construction of a maisonette presumably using the plans abandoned in 1960. A new bathroom was put in. She had Peanut³⁰ for company but must have wanted people around as well. In August the gardener Thomas W. Mullock and his family moved into the new maisonette.

The Russell Archives were offered furniture from Russell's sitting room at Plas Penrhyn on 14 March 1978. A description was sent of the items, now on display in Russell House. They included "[a] drop leaf mahogany side table (which BR used to serve tea) ... [a] two-level table, with drawer under (which BR used for his personal effects ... [an] oak footstool (which BR used for his books of the day)" as well as a winged chair, a revolving bookcase, a writing desk and chair (Rec. Acq. 1283). Various personal effects from this room were also offered and purchased.

Several people associated with the Russell Archives and/or Centre have visited Plas Penrhyn. Ken, of course, was there organizing papers and making a listing of the library while Russell was still alive. Judy Bourke in 1993 found the house neglected and being used as an art school. Despite the deep grass and shrubbery she took three photographs which appear in her article.³¹ She was not able to go inside. Andrew Bone of the Russell Centre visited Plas Penrhyn in July 2018. The home, which had been a holiday let since the sale in 2015, is owned by a London architect and the partition, which had been used when the house was a holiday let, had been removed. Andy was shown around inside by a Rutgers philosopher.

Leonard Woolf wrote that the house in which one lives "is the framework of what one does" (*Downhill*, p. 14). In this series, Russell's framework for his life as a philosopher, mathematician, educator, social activist, and writer has been provided.

³⁰ Peanut died on 28 October 1975 following surgery in May "to remove great lump on her front" (Edith's Pocket Diary, 1975).

³¹ Judy Bourke, "The Search for Plas Penrhyn", *Russell: The Journal of the Bertrand Russell Archives* n.s. 14 (Winter 1994-95): 173-7.



Credit: Andrew Bone

View from the verandah

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and Elisabeth Crawshay-Williams; Frances and Learned Hand; Osmond Williams; Lewis Casson; Nell Morgan; Mrs. Humphreys; Conrad Russell; Christopher Farley; Y.R. Chao; Brand Blanshard; Victor Purcell; Helen Hervey; Miriam Reichel; Zora Lasch; Christopher Farley.

Afterword

This concludes my series on Russell's homes, begun in 2011. I have been allotted space on McMaster's Russell Archives website.³² I plan to revise my articles, then upload them with more photographs than have been used in *Bulletin* articles. New information and photographs continue to arrive in the Archives; other information surfaces from time to time in the Archives by serendipity. As I was working with Kenneth Blackwell in early January 2019 in the Reading Room, he pointed out a quotation to me from Russell's appearance on the Brains Trust of 3 May 1948. "I've always infinitely preferred the country to the town ... because the country is full of beauty, and full of delight, and in the country one can have time to think and time to work..." This caused me to review Russell's homes with this in mind. He was born and died in the country. What large cities did he live in? I could think of six: Paris, London, Beijing, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Apart from London, the time spent in the remainder of the cities could be measured as less than a year for each. Much of his life was spent in the countryside: Wales (four times), Richmond Park³³, Oxfordshire, Cornwall, Sussex and in the United States, California and Pennsylvania. He spent considerable time in small towns and villages. Finally, there is the anomaly of Brixton Prison which provided neither beauty nor delight but gave Russell time to think and work. I hope this series has been as enlightening to readers about how Russell lived as it was for me to research and write.



Sheila Turcon is retired as an archivist from Research Collections at McMaster University. She continues to edit Russell's letters to Constance Malleon and to assist with BRACERS. She has recently published in condensed form the first fourteen articles in her series on Russell's homes as The Homes of Bertrand Russell (McMaster University Library Press, 2018).

³² The URL will appear in the next issue of the *Bulletin*.

³³ Richmond Park is vast and rural; in no way can it be considered "city".

POST-TRUTH POLITICS, POST-TRUTH PHILOSOPHY

Nicholas Griffin

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To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the arrival of Russell's papers in Hamilton, Ontario, Hamilton Arts and Letters, the city's leading on-line cultural magazine, ran a special issue devoted to Russell. To launch the issue HAL held a reception at the Art Gallery of Hamilton on 5 October, 2018 at which I spoke about Russell. The text below is what I said.

Bertrand Russell was a philosopher to whom truth mattered a great deal. 'I would rather be mad with truth than sane with lies,' he wrote from Brixton Prison to his brother in 1918. This, apropos some reflections on the Victorians who retained their sanity, he thought, by never coming anywhere near the truth, shielding themselves from it, one gathers, by hypocrisy, sentimentality, and idealist metaphysics.¹ And Russell had a special contempt for philosophers who evaded the truth. In another letter from prison, this time to Ottoline Morrell, he reflected on the role hatred played in his life and on those he hated most. As World War I ground to its grisly end, the world was surely full of excellent candidates: the war cabinet, the military high command, recruiters and propagandists, and politicians of (almost) all stripes from (almost) every country. Instead, Russell chose J.A. Smith, the Waynflete Professor of Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy at Oxford, an Aristotle scholar of some small distinction and a very minor neo-Hegelian. 'I shall never cease to hate [him] while I have life enough to feel anything', Russell said.² Why? Because, he said, Smith corrupted the young 'by teaching them to believe things which were not true' on 'the pretext of moral improvement'.³ Philosophers like that, he told Morrell, were 'parsons in sheep's clothing', purveyors of consoling myths and edifying platitudes. Traitors, if you will, to one of the main tasks of philosophy.

¹ BR to Frank Russell, 27 May 1918 (*Brixton Letters*, Letter 9).

² BR to Ottoline Morrell, 4 September, 1918 (*Brixton Letters*, Letter 94).

³ Reported by Alan Wood, *Bertrand Russell: The Passionate Sceptic* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1957), p. 83.

Russell's respect for truth in philosophy had been hard won at an early age. He was born just as the Victorian crisis of faith was passing its peak, but he was brought up by his grandmother, whose attitudes and opinions were founded, in all their rigidity, before the crisis. As a result, I suppose it was inevitable that Russell would have to go through his own crisis of faith a couple of decades after everyone else. He did this at the age of 16 and recorded the process, encoded in Greek letters for concealment, in a diary headed 'Greek Exercises'. The clash between the truths discovered by scientific inquiry and the system of beliefs promulgated by organized religion was at the centre of the Victorian crisis of faith and also of Russell's 'Greek Exercises', in which Russell records the gradual dismantling of his faith in an earnest, lachrymose, very Victorian fashion. At one point – philosophically, the high point of the discussion – he considers whether the pursuit of truth was such a good thing after all, since it had not made him happier or better, but had left him in 'the greatest doubt and uncertainty' and altogether had made his life much more difficult without improving the world in the slightest.⁴ To his credit, however, – and he himself took some pride in it – he vowed to continue his pursuit. In particular, he seems not to have been tempted at all by standard Victorian attempts to evade the problem by drawing a distinction between religious Truth and mere scientific fact. Russell, even at 16, was clear thinking enough to recognize that the world is what it is, and if religious Truth clashed with scientific fact, only one of them could be true.

Two points emerge from Russell's crisis of faith in 1888. The first is that Russell belongs to the class of atheists who lost their faith rather than the class of atheists who never had it. And this had a deep and surprisingly long-lasting effect on him – the effect, I suspect, was prolonged by the influence of Ottoline Morrell, whose vague, religious inclinations he took very seriously. For a long time – in fact, I think, into the 1920s – he felt that, without God, something was lacking; that the world was somehow worse off for God's absence – a view I personally find hard to understand.

The second point is a corollary: that the discovery of truth is not only difficult, but often disheartening. In the 1890s, in a letter to his first wife, he said that the truth was 'dull, complex and unedifying'. By 1918, after World War I had unleashed its horrors on the world, his view was considerably darker: 'the truth', he said, 'is spectral, insane, ghastly'.⁵ Nonetheless, we should face it squarely and it was an important task of philosophy to discover it and bring it to people's attention. The discovery of truth, at least on large and important matters, was always difficult, due in part to the obscure complexity of the world and in part to the frailty of our intellectual resources and the prejudices and wishful thinking that got in the way of our deploying them. Moreover, despite our best efforts, it was rarely possible to be absolutely certain that it had been discovered. Grounds

⁴ 'Greek Exercises', *CPBR1*, p. 16.

⁵ BR to Frank Russell, 27 May 1918 (*Brixton Letters*, Letter 9).

for doubt were always possible; our best efforts may always be defeated by recalcitrant evidence. Nonetheless, the only honest policy was to form beliefs according to the evidence available for them and hold them with the degree of certainty that the evidence warranted. Moreover, the results of such careful inquiry should always be faced without evasion even when unpalatable. These epistemological and moral obligations, he held, were incumbent on everyone, but they were especially incumbent on philosophers: it was part of *their* job description.

Russell did not share the view of the many mid-twentieth-century philosophers who thought that philosophy should be concerned exclusively with meaning, even though he had done more than anyone else to draw issues of meaning to their attention. In the mid-twentieth century it was widely held, especially by so-called ordinary language philosophers, that it was no part of a philosopher's task to say whether or not a sentence was true. The philosopher's job was merely to explain what it meant. Russell was not just critical of this view, he was contemptuous. He thought it reduced philosophy to 'an idle tea-table amusement'.⁶

But worse was to come. The dispute between Russell and those mid-century philosophers who thought that philosophy's only concern was with meaning was, at least to some extent, a jurisdictional one. They held that issues of truth, in recondite matters, were the responsibility of scientists, and in more mundane ones, the responsibility of everyone. Russell held that, at least in those areas where scientific methods of inquiry had not been firmly established, truth was a special responsibility of the philosopher. It was in the last quarter of the twentieth century that schools of philosophy became fashionable that disparaged the concept of truth altogether.

It was perhaps predictable that, with their defeat in Vietnam, Americans would need a kinder, gentler concept of truth. And it was perhaps also predictable that American philosophers would provide what was needed. In the 1970s William James's pragmatic conception of truth, torn to shreds by Russell 60 years previously, was revived. William James had maintained, notoriously, that the truth is not an accurate representation of the way things are, but 'what it is better for us to believe'. But 'what it is better for us to believe' can be glossed in endless different ways – and, indeed, James glossed in several of them. It might mean that it was better for us to believe in God because it cheered us up – as James maintained when he was talking to the religious – or it might even mean that it was better for us to believe an accurate representation of how things are – as James came close to maintaining when he replied to Russell. But it wasn't until the end of the 1970s that a treatment of truth, elastic enough for political purposes, emerged from the philosophical industry.

⁶ Review of Urmson, *Philosophical Analysis* (1956), *CPBR11*, p. 615.

In 1979 Richard Rorty published *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, a book which, through no virtue of its own, was enormously influential. Rorty maintained that the notion of accurate representation was 'simply an automatic and empty compliment which we pay to those beliefs which are successful in helping us do what we want to do' (*PMN*, p. 10). Truth, according to Rorty, has nothing to do with accurate representation, or even 'contact with reality' (*PMN*, p. 176), it is 'what our peers will, *ceteris paribus*, let us get away with saying' (*PMN*, p. 176). Russell thought that rational credibility should be apportioned according to the evidence available, Rorty held that 'rational certainty' was simply 'a matter of victory in argument', of how one stood vis-a-vis other contestants in a sort of conversational game show (*PMN*, pp. 156-7).

The notion of a conversation was at the heart of Rorty's conception of philosophy. The purpose of philosophy was to make contributions to what he imagined to be 'the conversation of mankind' (*PMN*, pp. 264, 371). But this was not a conversation designed to uncover the truth or even to promote a frank exchange of views. The sort of philosophy Rorty advocated 'decr[ies] the very notion of having a view' and that includes having a view about having views (*PMN*, p. 371). The point of talking is simply to prolong the conversation – it sounds like a university departmental meeting got out of hand. What makes the difference between a good contribution to the conversation and a bad one is that a good one is what Rorty called 'edifying'. To me, the word 'edifying' calls up all that Russell found disgusting about J.A. Smith, but for Rorty it simply means that one makes a contribution which grabs the attention of others, prompting them to make further contributions – a bit like an internet troll, for the edifying philosopher in Rorty's terms will not actually have a view on the topics on which they speak. A really good philosopher will keep the conversation going for a century or more, until another one comes along to take over. Now whether this, in itself, constitutes a view, I would be hard pressed to determine – but frankly I would much prefer silence. The interminable Rortyan conversation is worse than an 'idle tea-table amusement' – it is not even amusing.

It is curious how philosophical ideas come home to roost a few decades after philosophers have thought them up. If one looks around today to see how 'the conversation of mankind' is getting on, where the most frequent contributions are coming from and which generate the most discussion in a conversation where rationality is whatever happens to dominate the conversation and where truth is whatever you can get away with, then the major philosophical achievement of the 21st century so far is surely the Trump twitter feed. (God forbid that we should ever have a better one!) What else rivets the commentariat of America every night of the week for hours on end, parsing every inanity and lie, and debating whether he can get away with it? Kant didn't even come close. Of course, it is doubtful that Trump's tweets will have quite the shelf-life of *The Critique of Pure Reason*. But that doesn't matter. Rorty did not regard longevity, let alone permanence, as the hallmark of an edifying contribution: edifying

philosophers, he says, are 'reactive ... their work loses its point when [what] they are reacting against is over' (*PMN*, p. 369). No, if Rorty was right about philosophy, then Trump deserves some kind of award from the American Philosophical Association. But to put my point seriously: I think philosophers share some responsibility for Trump and the present state of political discourse.

There is, in fact, something rather strange about Rorty's own contribution to philosophy. For having made his own edifying contribution in 1979, one might have expected him to follow his own advice and make a completely different one a few years later – just as Trump does on a daily basis. But no, he continued to bang on about the first one for another thirty years – rather as if his 'glassy essence' (*PMN*, p. 42) had at long last discerned the Absolute Truth about philosophy. By contrast, Russell, who thought that the truth was 'dull, complex and unedifying' as well as difficult to discover, nonetheless went on finding new views to propound in pursuit of it over a career of 60 years, views which were (and are) of interest not just to an audience of professional philosophers but to a lay audience as well. Rorty would simply sneer to be told that Russell was right and he was wrong – those are simply not his terms of assessment – but I don't think he could ignore the charge that he was boring and Russell was not.

Afterword

It should come as no surprise that Russell was well ahead of me on the very point I was making. A few months after I had written this, Ken Blackwell found the following comment by Russell on George Orwell's 1984, written in response to a Book of the Year survey in the Sunday Times, (25 Dec. 1949):

«The book that has interested me most is Orwell's 1984 (Secker & Warburg). I liked the philosophic developments, such as the possibility of altering the past, all of which result inevitably from the pragmatist's rejection of the concept of "fact", which, in turn, comes of supposing Man omnipotent. The connection of politics with philosophy has seldom been more clearly set forth.»

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Monuments to Bertrand Russell and Fenner Brockway in London's Red Lion Square

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Bertrand Russell and Fenner Brockway demonstrated a shared commitment to social justice throughout their adult lives. They worked closely in the No-Conscription Fellowship, the pacifist organization Brockway co-founded with Clifford Allen in November 1914. "He offered his services," Brockway recalled of his initial NCF contact with Russell in March 1916, "but at first we were a little in awe of the distinguished Cambridge professor. He soon won our hearts by his comradeship and mischievous fun and our minds by his brilliance in writing and speaking."¹

In the decades following World War I, Brockway frequently enlisted Russell's support for his anti-colonial campaigns, and he actively participated in the global nuclear disarmament crusade ably led by Russell beginning in the 1950s. Russell's ninetieth birthday celebrations in 1962 demonstrated the deep respect the long-time allies held for each other. Brockway organized a luncheon at the House of Commons in Russell's honour to mark the occasion. "Bertie sat next to me," Brockway detailed in his autobiography, "and I was intrigued by his diet – liquid Complian, wine and coffee. He told me he hardly took any solids. He was lively and in replying to the tribute was witty as well as moving."² Russell subsequently informed Brockway that "I am profoundly grateful to you for organizing the delightful luncheon ... and for the nice things that you say about me."³

United in their activism before Russell's death in 1970, Russell and Brockway are now memorialized together in Red Lion Square located in the London borough of Camden, a short distance from Russell Square and the British Museum. Originally a field adjacent to the Red Lyon Inn that reputedly contains the headless remains of Oliver Cromwell, Red Lion Square was formally laid out by Nicholas Barbon as part of a housing project in 1684 that by the early nineteenth century appealed to merchants, professionals, and artists. In 1929, the

¹ Fenner Brockway, *Towards Tomorrow: The Autobiography of Fenner Brockway* (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1977), 167.

² *Ibid.*, 169.

³ Russell to Brockway, 7 June 1962, RA1 750, Box 11.16, Bertrand Russell Archives, McMaster University.

South Place Ethical Society (SPES) moved its headquarters from the South Place Institute in Finsbury to the newly-constructed Conway Hall, which looks out on Red Lion Square. Both Russell and Brockway had a longstanding connection to the SPES and delivered the Conway Memorial Lecture in 1922 and 1986, respectively; separate meeting rooms in Conway Hall are currently named after them. The SPES also played a leading role in commissioning the public monument of Russell at the eastern end of the square unveiled in 1980.

Russell's second wife, Dora Russell, provided the original impetus for the construction of a commemorative sculpture in Red Lion Square to mark the tenth anniversary of his death. The Borough of Camden tentatively approved the proposal in October 1978, and the Bertrand Russell Memorial Committee was formally constituted on 5 March 1979 consisting of Lord Brockway as Chairman (Brockway had been elevated to a life peerage in 1964), Dora, Sir Alfred Ayer, and Peter Cadogan, who acted as the committee's secretary.⁴ The Memorial Committee would also eventually include Lord Ritchie-Calder, Frank Dobson, John Gilmour, Lord Willis, and Baroness Wootton. The monument was designed to be a bronze bust of Russell 1.5 times life-size mounted on an unpolished plinth of granite or Portland Stone, with a total cost estimated between £3,000 and £5,000.⁵ After receiving formal planning approval for the project, the Memorial Committee issued a widely-circulated appeal for funds on 14 November 1979 in a range of academic and popular outlets including *Mind* and the *New York Review of Books*. Despite being "revered by multitudes all over the world for his untiring efforts for peace and understanding," Russell, the appeal noted, "has not so far received the recognition that is his due," and the "many admirers of Russell and his work" were encouraged to contribute to the cost of the memorial bust.⁶

From the outset of the project, the sculptor for Russell's bust was Marcelle Quinton. She had prominent standing in Europe and North America for her artistic abilities, and her early works included a bust of British economist Roy Harrod and sculptures of mythical animals. Her later prominent commissions included busts of Cardinal Newman in the Brompton Oratory and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in the Houses of Parliament. Quinton's husband was Anthony Quinton, President of Trinity College, Oxford, from 1978 to 1987, and a conservative philosopher of metaphysics and utilitarianism. He also published

⁴ Cadogan to Nickson, 6 March 1979, Records of the Successive Works Departments, and the Ancient Monuments Boards and Inspectorate, File WORK 17/792 Statues: General; Including Proposed Statues of Lord Bertrand Russell and Lord Fenner Brockway, Red Lion Square, London, United Kingdom National Archives [hereafter WORK 17/792].

⁵ Nickson to Cadogan, 20 April 1979, *ibid.*

⁶ Bertrand Russell Memorial Appeal, 14 November 1979, *ibid.*

important analyses of Russell's philosophical works⁷ and wrote the original entry for Russell in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* before it was replaced by the current version authored by Ray Monk. Marcelle Quinton was "delighted" by the proposed site,⁸ described by the Memorial Committee in the following manner:

Location is the eastern side of the garden in the shrubbery, a few feet from the grass and in line with the entrance behind. This will make it slightly off-centre, which is a good thing from the point of view of design, and it will also solve the problem of the tree which might otherwise be right in front. In this position the plinth will be flanked by trees and present an excellent perspective from all parts of the gardens.⁹

Determined to make the monument "as vandal proof as human wit can devise,"¹⁰ Quinton also recommended that the plinth's foundation be buried deeper in the soil, adding an unanticipated cost to the project's budget.

By autumn 1980, plans for the unveiling of the Russell memorial were well advanced. The plinth was to be installed on 13 October, the bust (temporarily covered before the unveiling) to follow on 20 October, and the official public ceremony revealing the sculpture to occur on 23 October. The final cost of the project was £3,500. Apart from a donation of £500 from the Camden Council, individual donors and their contributions cannot be ascertained from the archival record. Approximately £3,000 from all sources had been raised by August 1980.¹¹ Lord Brockway was scheduled to preside over the unveiling ceremony, with tributes being paid by Sir Alfred Ayer, Peter Cadogan, and the Mayor of Camden, Ron Hefferman. The sculpture would be unveiled by Dora, the initiator of the plans for the memorial. "All the tumults of the past will be forgotten," *The Observer* noted in publicizing the event, "when Dora Russell unveils a bust of Bertrand opposite the Conway Hall in Red Lion Square, London, next week ... she will make the journey up from her cottage near Land's End for the ceremony."¹²

⁷ See Anthony Quinton, "Russell's Philosophical Development," *Philosophy: The Journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy* 35 (132) (January 1960): 1-13; Quinton, "Russell's Philosophy of Mind," in D.F. Pears, ed., *Bertrand Russell: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Book, 1972): 80-109.

⁸ Cadogan to Tonkin, 24 April 1979, WORK 17/792.

⁹ "The Proposal," undated, *ibid.*

¹⁰ Cadogan to Tonkin, 14 November 1979, *ibid.*

¹¹ Cadogan to Camden Planning and Communications Director, 7 August 1980, *ibid.*

¹² "Gazing at Bertrand Again," *The Observer*, 12 October 1980.

FIGURE 1



Michael Stevenson

Bertrand Russell Bust, Red Lion Square

At noon on 23 October 1980, 100 people gathered in Red Lion Square for the unveiling of Russell's memorial bust. *The Times* provided an overview of the speeches delivered by Dora and Brockway:

In an emotional appeal to her former husband as she unveiled the bust, Mrs. Dora Russell, aged 85, asked: "Bertie, do we live and labour in vain? You wrote that the good life is inspired by love and guided by knowledge. Well, there is far too much knowledge in the world at the present time and far too little love." ... Lord Brockway, who presided over the ceremony, said: "He began his life in opposition to war. He ended his active life in opposition to war and the danger of nuclear bombs. I very much hope if this country suffers a nuclear attack that the bust of Bertrand Russell will be left standing as a warning to us." He added: "Bertrand Russell was a complete man, a great philosopher and great mathematician, a great sociologist. In each of these spheres he will be remembered."¹³

In the months following the ceremony, the Memorial Committee continued to receive donations until the £3,500 target had been reached. In September 1981, Cadogan informed Camden officials that the committee's activities would be wound down and requested the borough's continued maintenance of the Russell sculpture:

... my one remaining concern is the future care of the Memorial. Happily, it does not seem to attract the vandals. The base of the pedestal may need an occasional scrub and in general it is of consequence that there be someone somewhere who will keep an eye on it. I take it that you have some sort of schedule of monuments in the parks and gardens of Camden for maintenance purposes? May I ask that the Russell Memorial be added to it?¹⁴

Ultimately, Cadogan's query about Camden's maintenance of the Russell memorial was unaddressed for nearly three years.

Meanwhile, planning commenced to erect the statue of Lord Brockway at the western end of Red Lion Square. Organized by Liberation, the anti-imperialist organization of which Brockway was President, the Leisure Services Committee of Camden had approved the location of the proposed monument on 11 November 1981. The formal proposal was submitted to borough planning authorities on 3 February 1982. The bronze statue itself would be 82 inches in height bolted on a Portland Stone plinth 36 inches square and 20 inches in height, and it was specifically proposed that the statue would "complement the bust (also

¹³ "Bertrand Russell Commemorated," *The Times*, 24 October 1980.

¹⁴ Cadogan to Camden Town Clerk, 24 September 1981, WORK 17/792.

bronze) of Bertrand Russell at the eastern end of the gardens.”¹⁵ The borough formally approved the proposal on 26 July 1982. Ian Walters, a self-proclaimed socialist artist who had trained at the Birmingham College of Art from 1946 to 1951, was selected as the sculptor for the Brockway monument. His other works include a statue of Harold Wilson in Huddersfield, a memorial to the Spanish Civil War’s International Brigades in London, and busts and a statue of Nelson Mandela in London.

A regulatory complication threatened to delay the installation of the Brockway monument. Through Tony Gilbert, the general secretary of Liberation, a grant had been sought from the Greater London Council to defray the monument’s cost. The Council had subsequently informed Camden officials that, since Red Lion Square was a public place, approval to erect the statue needed to be received from the Department of the Environment under the terms of the Public Statues (Metropolis) Act of 1854.¹⁶ Appraised of this requirement, Gilbert contacted the national agency in December 1983 enclosing a copy of the planning approval document that had been supplied by Camden, hoping that prompt consent would be granted in anticipation of the monument’s planned installation in May 1984.

The Department of the Environment, however, refused to consider Gilbert’s paperwork sufficient. Consent, Eric Carter, of the Parks, Palaces, and Central Services Secretariat, informed Gilbert, was “unlikely to be given unless provision is made for the continuing maintenance of the statue.”¹⁷ The Department of the Environment maintained that it would only consider undertaking responsibility for a monument’s ongoing care if a capital sum had been provided by the sponsoring agency. Carter also told Gilbert that the design of the proposed statue would need to be vetted by the Royal Fine Art Commission to vouch for its artistic merit. Receiving no reply from Gilbert, Carter approached borough officials in Camden with his concerns, requesting additional details about any public consultations that had been undertaken to determine the merits of the proposed Brockway installation.

¹⁵ Borough of Camden Planning Application, 3 February 1982, *ibid.*

¹⁶ Borough of Camden Chief Executive to Gilbert, 13 December 1983, *ibid.*

¹⁷ Carter to Gilbert, 6 January 1984, *ibid.*

FIGURE 2



Michael Stevenson

Fenner Brockway Statue, Red Lion Square

After a third notice from the Department of the Environment, Gilbert finally responded to Carter's appeals at the end of March 1984. Liberation had believed that approval by Camden planners had satisfied all requirements and that only the borough had an extant copy of the plans for the monument. Gilbert reminded Carter that "Lord Fenner Brockway is in his 95th year" and a stream of information requests from esteemed public figures was being received about the unveiling ceremony. "This places some urgency on the matter," Gilbert noted, and Camden officials had also been promised "that we would accept responsibility for the up-keep of the monument and give a similar pledge to the Department of the Environment."¹⁸ Carter remained unmoved. While promising Gilbert that he was prepared to treat the matter with "some urgency," he emphasized that he could not "seek ministerial consent to the proposal without even a plan, drawing, or photograph of what is proposed. At present no-one has written to me explaining exactly where in Red Lion Square the statue is to be erected, or what size it is to be or what it is to look like."¹⁹ Desultory correspondence continued between the Department of the Environment and Liberation until Kay Beauchamp, appearing for the first time in archival correspondence as the Project Organizer of the Brockway statue project, met with Carter on 17 May 1984 and provided pictures of the life-size clay mock-up of the statue, details about the stone plinth and the cost of the project, and biographical information about Ian Walters. Carter also spoke with Walters by telephone, and the sculptor promised to provide photographs of the finished bronze monument and a picture montage of the anticipated placement of the monument within Red Lion Square.

This flurry of activity promised a resolution of the matter, but one issue remained unresolved—the long-term maintenance of the statue. The Russell memorial re-emerged in these discussions. When raising the issue of the proposed Brockway statue with Camden officials in February 1984, Carter noted the existence of Russell's bust in Red Lion Square and asked "under what powers this is held and was erected" and if approval had been sought under the Public Statues Act.²⁰ Camden planners deflected Carter's query, noting that the Bertrand Russell Memorial Committee had been required to assume all responsibility for securing proper permission to erect the monument and to maintain it—despite Peter Cadogan's September 1981 letter to Camden bureaucrats indicating that the Russell Memorial Committee was removing itself from any further involvement with the Russell memorial. Legal advice subsequently sought by Carter suggested that the Department of the Environment would be within its legal

¹⁸ Gilbert to Carter, 30 March 1984, *ibid.*

¹⁹ Carter to Gilbert, 6 April 1984, *ibid.*

²⁰ Carter to Borough of Camden Chief Executive, 21 February 1984, *ibid.*

rights to remove the Russell bust from Red Lion Square if some form of retroactive approval proved undesirable.²¹ Carter used this opinion about the Russell memorial to drive home his point to Beauchamp about the necessity of securing all required approvals for the Brockway monument:

It is exactly this situation which the Department is trying to ensure does not happen and why we do not allow organizations other than public bodies to accept responsibility for public statues. I am therefore afraid that the Secretary of State's consent is unlikely to be given unless the Department is able to take the statue into its care on payment of the required endowment or responsibility for the statue is accepted by either the Greater London Council or the London Borough of Camden.²²

All parties to the approval process worked to resolve the lingering problems with the Russell memorial and the proposed Brockway monument. On 7 June 1984, Camden's Leisure Services Committee agreed to maintain the Russell memorial.²³ The Department of the Environment then provided its stamp of approval to Marcelle Quinton's bust of Russell, noting that "whilst it is not an outstanding work of art, it is relatively innocuous and the siting acceptable." The department's Directing Architect, A.J. Kaye, believed that it was unnecessary to submit the matter to the Royal Fine Arts Commission and decided that "in all the circumstances and given the nature of the memorial, it were best accepted without further ado."²⁴ The Royal Fine Arts Commission did consider the photographs and plans for the Brockway monument submitted by Ian Walters and Liberation officials and determined that the statue of Brockway was acceptable but that the plinth and the landscaping around the monument should be altered. After Walters agreed to these design changes that were "a great improvement" over the original proposal,²⁵ the Great London Council financed the site changes in Red Lion Square. In January 1985, the Department of the Environment formally notified Liberation that approval had been granted for the construction of the Brockway monument, with the Borough of Camden being responsible for the maintenance of the site in perpetuity.²⁶ Brockway's statue was eventually unveiled in July 1985 in a ceremony presided over by Labour MP Michael Foot, the party's leader from 1980 to 1983. After one of the statue's arms

²¹ Legal Branch to Carter, 12 April 1984, *ibid.*

²² Carter to Beauchamp, 18 May 1984, *ibid.*

²³ Borough of Camden Chief Executive to Carter, 6 July 1984, *ibid.*

²⁴ Kaye to Russell, 9 August 1984, *ibid.*

²⁵ Flaxman to Gunning, 17 August 1984, *ibid.*

²⁶ Carter to Beauchamp, 15 January 1985, *ibid.*

was sheared off by a falling tree in 1987, the repaired monument was rededicated in November 1988.

Visitors to Red Lion Square, therefore, are afforded the opportunity to reflect on the legacy of two of the most prominent social activists in Britain during the twentieth century by viewing the bronze memorials to Russell and Brockway (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). During a visit in 2013, the author noticed the Russell bust had been vandalized with graffiti and the site allowed to fall into a state of disrepair while the eastern end of the square underwent construction. A return visit in 2018, however, revealed that the Russell memorial and its surrounding environs were maintained properly to match the level of upkeep afforded the Brockway statue on the western side of the square. One hopes the memory of these two influential men will be cultivated to the same degree as the attention afforded to their physical commemorative sculptures.

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The Aristocrat and the Revolutionary: Bertrand Russell and Paul Lafargue on the Virtues of Idleness

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One of the most pressing demands of modern life is how to find a perfect balance between work and leisure. Here public and private may not mesh, and the order of the world is apt to conflict with the order we might wish for ourselves. In ancient times idleness was praised by the Greeks as a noble way of living, without which human flourishing could not be made possible. Hard work was considered unworthy of free men and left for slaves. But if the ancient Greeks praised idleness, the official view of our modern period is that it is a bad thing to lead an idle life, whereas busyness, usefulness and productivity are supposedly the very core of what makes us human.

It was during the Enlightenment, the so-called Age of Reason, that idleness acquired a bad name. In his efforts to articulate the hopes of the Enlightenment for his age Kant went to great lengths to denigrate idleness. He was of the opinion that no rational being—that is to say, a properly functioning moral person—would ever think it right to live in idleness. Rather, a rational being is characterized by the willingness to improve himself and the community in which he lives. Indeed, moral obligation to become worthy of one's humanity through self-realization and industry became the general tone of that period. And that required a lot of work.

Paul Lafargue and Bertrand Russell Enter the Scene

It was against this background of overwork, against this prevalent notion that *homo sapiens* is also, essentially, *homo laborans*, that two thinkers, separated in time by a period of 52 years, raised their voices to restore the dignity of idleness and to buttress its role in our lives. One of them was Bertrand Russell, who needs no introduction; the other one is less known, although he is linked to a leading figure of modern thought: he was the son-in-law of none other than Karl Marx.

Paul Lafargue was born in 1842, in Santiago de Cuba, the son of French and Creole parents. His father was the owner of coffee plantations in Cuba. His four grandparents were a French Christian, an Indian from Jamaica, a Mullato refugee from Haiti and a French Jew. His family moved back to its hometown of Bordeaux, in France, when Lafargue was nine years old. He studied medicine in Paris, where he started his intellectual and political career. He became a Proudhonian anarchist, having been banned from all French universities due to his political activism. He moved to London where he became a frequent visitor at

Karl Marx's house. There he met Marx's second daughter Laura whom he married in 1868. Paul Lafargue became a journalist, a literary critic, a political writer of some prominence, and an ardent activist for Marxist socialism. He ended his life tragically, committing suicide alongside with his wife in 1911. He was 69 years old.

Bertrand Russell's famous essay "In Praise of Idleness" was anticipated fifty-two years earlier by a no less famous pamphlet by Paul Lafargue entitled *Le droit à la paresse* (The right to laziness). Written in 1880, first as a series of articles for the socialist newspaper *L'Egalité*, it was subsequently edited as a booklet in 1881, reedited in 1883, and republished in 1898 and 1900. Translated into Russian even before the *Communist Manifesto*, it was republished in 1944 by the French Resistance, and in the sixties and seventies of the last century under the auspices of the French Communist Party. Translated into major languages, it has been constantly in print.¹ The piece is a vigorous panegyric against overwork and in favour of the idle life. Like Russell, Lafargue thinks too much work is apt to cause more harm than good. He is even more generous than Russell as regards leisure, proposing a workday of three hours instead of Russell's four. Like Russell, he was also a talented writer. He composed his eulogy along the lines of a sermon, competently mastering the figures of rhetoric. He begins with these compelling words:

A strange delusion possesses the working classes of the nations where capitalist civilization holds its sway. This delusion drags in its train the individual and social woes which for two centuries have tortured sad humanity. This delusion is the love of work, pushed even to the exhaustion of the vital force of the individual and his progeny. Instead of opposing this mental aberration, the priests, the economists and the moralists have cast a sacred halo over work. (p.9)²

Russell introduces his essay with no less compelling words, although in a less incendiary manner:

I think that there is far too much work done in the world, that immense harm is caused by the belief that work is virtuous, and that what needs to be preached in modern industrial countries is quite different from what always has been preached. (p.11)

Paul Lafargue is a revolutionary who wants to be read by the typical worker of the nineteenth century in order to arouse their indignation. Bertrand Russell is an aristocrat who wants to be read by the general public of the twentieth century in order to arouse their reflection. Both succeed in their endeavor.

¹The pamphlet was first published in English in 1883, under the title *The Right to Be Lazy and Other Studies*, by Charles Kerr & Co., Co-operative, translated by Charles Kerr. It can be accessed online at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lafargue/1883/lazy/>.

²All Paul Lafargue and Bertrand Russell citations are from Lafargue (1907) and Russell (1976).

Lafargue carries on his invective against the prevailing conditions of work in his time:

Modern factories have become ideal houses of correction in which the toiling masses are imprisoned, in which they are condemned to compulsory work for twelve or fourteen hours, not the men only but also women and children. And to think that the sons of the heroes of the Terror have allowed themselves to be degraded by the religion of work, to the point of accepting, since 1848, as a revolutionary conquest, the law limiting factory labor to twelve hours. They proclaimed as a revolutionary principle the Right to Work. Shame to the French proletariat! Only slaves would have been capable of such baseness. A Greek of the heroic times would have required twenty years of capitalist civilization before he could have conceived such vileness. (pp.15,16)

He summarizes his reproach with a condemnatory assertion:

Our epoch has been called the century of work. It is in fact the century of pain, misery and corruption. (p.17)

No less forceful a pronouncement than Russell's admonition:

The morality of work is the morality of slaves, and the modern world has no need of slavery. (p.14)

The Emergence of an Ethic of Work

But how did this all come to be? How did work acquire such a prominent place in our modern times? Russell places this "sacred halo of work" in war and religion. He says that from the beginning of civilization until the Industrial Revolution what was produced by hard work served the subsistence of the worker and his family. The small surplus, when there was some, was appropriated by warriors and priests. Even when there was no surplus, or in times of famine, the appropriation continued, with the result that many of the workers died of hunger. This system persisted in Russia until 1917, says Russell. And he adds, in a footnote, with typical sagacity, that "since then the members of the Communist Party have succeeded to this privilege of the warriors and priests." (p.14n) "A system which lasted so long and ended so recently—concludes Russell—has naturally left a profound impression upon men's thoughts and opinions. Much that we take for granted about the desirability of work is derived from this system, and, being pre-industrial, is not adapted to the modern world." (p.14)

Russell traces thus the emergence of an ethic of work:

It is obvious that, in primitive communities, peasants, left to themselves, would not have parted with the slender surplus upon which the warriors and priests subsisted, but would have either produced less or consumed more. At first, sheer force compelled them to produce and part with the surplus. Gradually, however, it was found possible to induce many of them to accept an ethic according to which it was their duty to work hard, although part of their work went to support others in idleness. (...) **The conception of duty, speaking historically, has been a means used by the holders of power to induce others to live for the interests of their masters rather than for their own.** (p.15) (Emphasis mine.)

The conditioning of the working classes to see their work as desirable—even an ethical and noble duty—was also emphasized by Lafargue. He cites an anonymous pamphlet that appeared in London in 1770 under the title “An Essay on Trade and Commerce”, urging the factory population of England to abandon the idea that as Englishmen they had by right of birth the privilege of being freer and more independent than the laborers of any country in Europe. “It is extremely dangerous to encourage such infatuation in a commercial state like ours”, said the author. “The cure will not be complete until our industrial laborers are contented to work six days for the same sum which they now earn in four”. “Thus—adds Lafargue—nearly a century before Guizot, work was openly preached in London as a curb to the noble passions of man.” (p.14)

From the above one may think work was entirely to be condemned. Not so. Russell adds this important proviso:

Every human being, of necessity, consumes, in the course of his life, a certain amount of the produce of human labor. Assuming, as we may, that labor is on the whole disagreeable, it is unjust that a man should consume more than he produces. Of course he may provide services rather than commodities, like a medical man, for example; but he should provide something in return for his board and lodging. To this extent, the duty of work must be admitted, but to this extent only. (p.17)

What both Lafargue and Russell condemn vehemently is the idea of work as a virtue, with its subsequent slippery into overwork, which they identify as the main cause of our modern misery.

The Failing Promises of Modern Technique

Both Lafargue and Russell say modern technique has made it possible to diminish the labor required to secure life necessities for everyone. Unfortunately, this is not what happened. Russell points to events during the First World War:

At that time all the men in the armed forces, all the men and women engaged in the production of munitions, all the men and women engaged in spying, war propaganda, or Government offices connected with the war, were withdrawn from productive occupations. In spite of this, the general level of physical well-being among unskilled wage-earners on the side of the Allies was higher than before or since. (pp.15,16)

And he goes on to explain why modern technique failed to ease the burden of the worker:

The war showed conclusively that, by the scientific organization of the production, it is possible to keep modern populations in fair comfort on a small part of the working capacity of the modern world. If, at the end of the war, the scientific organization, which had been created in order to liberate men for fighting and munition work, had been preserved, and the hours of work had been cut down to four, all would have been well. Instead of that the old chaos was restored, those whose work was demanded were made to work long hours, and the rest were left to starve as unemployed. Why? Because work is a duty, and a

man should not receive wages in proportion to what he has produced, but in proportion to his virtue as exemplified by his industry. (p.16)

With the tyrant Duty long-entrenched in the worker's psyche, it is no wonder their working hours increased, even though modern technique had made it possible for the same quantity of resources to be produced with far less human effort. Russell offers an anecdote to illustrate the insanity of such a system:

Suppose that, at a given moment, a certain number of people are engaged in the manufacture of pins. They make as many pins as the world needs, working (say) eight hours a day. Someone makes an invention by which the same number of men can make twice as many pins as before. But the world does not need twice as many pins: pins are already so cheap that hardly any more will be bought at a lower price. In a sensible world, everybody concerned in the manufacture of pins would take to working four hours instead of eight, and everything else would go on as before. But in the actual world this would be thought demoralizing. The men still work eight hours, there are too many pins, some employers go bankrupt, and half the men previously concerned in making pins are thrown out of work. There is, in the end, just as much leisure as on the other plan, but half the men are totally idle while half are still overworked. In this way, it is insured that the unavoidable leisure shall cause misery all around instead of being a universal source of happiness. Can anything more insane be imagined? (p.16,17)

With equally compelling words, Lafargue denounces the failing promises of modern technique, given the potential of machines to replace labor:

The blind, perverse and murderous passion for work transforms the liberating machine into an instrument for the enslavement of free men. Its productiveness impoverishes them. A good working woman makes with her needles only five meshes a minute, while certain circular knitting machines make 30,000 in the same time. Every minute of the machine is thus equivalent to a hundred hours of the working women's labor, or again, every minute of the machine's labor, gives the working women ten days of rest. What is true for the knitting industry is more or less true for all industries reconstructed by modern machinery. But what do we see? In proportion as the machine is improved and performs man's work with an ever increasing rapidity and exactness, the laborer, instead of prolonging his former rest times, redoubles his ardor, as if he wished to rival the machine. O, absurd and murderous competition! (p.31)

And he identifies a perverse consequence of over-production still prevalent today:

Confronted with this double madness of the laborers killing themselves with over-production and vegetating in abstinence, the great problem of capitalist production is no longer to find producers and to multiply their powers but to discover consumers, to excite their appetites and create in them fictitious needs. (p.40)

The Benefits of Idleness

Although our modern world is characterized by a cult of work, it has not always been so. The ancient Greeks praised idleness not only as an end in itself, but as a means to acquire the good life, a life in which all human potentialities

could blossom freely. Both Russell and Lafargue emphasize the lost benefits of idleness.

Russell suggests that “a cult of efficiency” in the modern world has reduced our capacity for light-heartedness and play. We have consequently acquired the habit of doing things for the sake of something else, and lost the ability to indulge in simple and pleasurable activities for no reason other than the joy they provide. He goes on to argue that more leisure time would ultimately free us to pursue the activities that really matter to us, and that such pursuits have historically resulted in much of what we think of as civilization—science, art, philosophy, and so on. He suggests a work-day of four hours, assuming work is scientifically organized. In this way there would not only be enough work for everybody, and no unemployment, but also enough spare time for everybody to pursue interests to make their life worth living:

In a world where no one is compelled to work more than four hours a day, every person possessed of scientific curiosity will be able to indulge it, and every painter will be able to paint without starving, however excellent his pictures may be. Young writers will not be obliged to draw attention to themselves by sensational pot-boilers, with a view to acquiring the economic independence needed for monumental works, for which, when the time at last comes, they will have lost the taste and capacity. Men who, in their professional work, have become interested in some phase of economics or government, will be able to develop their ideas without the academic detachment that makes the work of university economists often seem lacking in reality. Medical men will have the time to learn about the progress of medicine, teachers will not be exasperatedly struggling to teach by routine methods things which they learnt in their youth, which may, in the interval, have been proved to be untrue. (pp.24,25)

Lafargue evokes the old times when laziness had a prominent place not only among the Greeks, but also among more ancient peoples. And with revolutionary fervor, he imagines a world in which no one is forced to work more than three hours each day:

If, uprooting from its heart the vice which dominates it and degrades its nature, the working class were to arise in its terrible strength, not to demand the Rights of Man, which are but the rights of capitalist exploitation, not to demand the Right to Work which is but the right to misery, but to forge a brazen law forbidding any man to work more than three hours a day, the earth, the old earth, trembling with joy would feel a new universe leaping within her. (p.56)

Is There Any Hope for the Future?

Despite the harmful effects of the cult of work, and although modern technique has to a certain extent failed to liberate humankind from overwork, Russell and Lafargue are optimistic about the future. They still place their trust in the scientific organization of work and in the potential of machines to replace human labor. Lafargue, an ardent revolutionary, ends his panegyric with no less compelling words than those that began it:

“The prejudice of slavery dominated the minds of Pythagoras and Aristotle”—this has been written disdainfully; and yet Aristotle foresaw that: “if every tool could by itself execute its proper function, as the masterpieces of Daedalus moved themselves or as the tripods of Vulcan set themselves spontaneously at their sacred work; if for example the shuttles of the weavers did their own weaving, the foreman of the workshop would have no more need of helpers, nor the master of slaves.” Aristotle's dream is our reality. Our machines, with breath of fire, with limbs of unwearying steel, with wonderful inexhaustible fruitfulness, accomplish by themselves with docility their sacred labor. And nevertheless the genius of the great philosophers of capitalism remains dominated by the prejudice of the wage system, worst of slaveries. They do not yet understand that the machine is the saviour of humanity, the god who shall redeem man from the *sordidae artes* and from working for hire, the god who shall give him leisure and liberty. (pp.61,62)

Russell, with at least as much optimism, and with his characteristic aristocratic phlegm, ends his essay with hopeful and wise words:

Modern methods of production have given us the possibility of ease and security for all; we have chosen, instead, to have overwork for some and starvation for others. Hitherto we have continued to be as energetic as we were before there were machines; in this we have been foolish, but there is no reason to go on being foolish forever. (p.25)

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On Patriotism: Reflections on its Scope and Limits and the Priority of Justice

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Editorial Note

Mike Berumen is a past editor of this Bulletin, and a careful student of Bertrand Russell's life and works. In a recent article for Liberal Resistance, Mike wrote in unmistakably Russellian tones on the concept of patriotism. Presuming most readers of the Bulletin may not know of the work done by/at the Liberal Resistance website, we thought it apposite to reprint the piece. It appears here with minor formal modifications. We thank the author for agreeing to this reprint.

Some years ago, something Princeton economist Uwe Reinhardt said about patriotism stuck with me. To paraphrase, he said it was glib and facile to think that patriotism merely means love of country, an easy and painless thing to do. By implication, therefore, patriotic exhortations, flag-waving, and standing hand-over-heart for the national anthem are not nearly enough to qualify as patriotic. He said one must also be willing to defend and support one's country in exigent times. That, he believed, was what separated sunshine patriots from the real ones. He was specifically declaiming against some neo-conservatives who would consign youth to fight a faraway war (in Iraq) when they themselves were unwilling to do so when young and called upon to fight in other wars. As I recall, he was specifically referring to comments made by neo-conservative godfather, Norman Podhoretz. He took some shots at the late actor John Wayne, too, who spent decades cultivating an image of hyper-masculinity and of being a patriotic stalwart, but who nevertheless escaped military service in WWII with questionable draft classifications. Sound familiar?

Reinhardt quoted a standard lexical definition of patriotism that included the phrase *defends one's country*, along with loving and supporting it. He was basically saying that elites who extol the virtues of patriotism often neglect its concomitant duties, finding it easier to delegate the demanding parts to the boys and girls of Main Street, rural America, and the inner cities, while simultaneously

enshrouding themselves in the flag and decrying those who do not share their fervor for war as unpatriotic. By the same token, while Reinhardt did not state this explicitly, I think one could infer from his comments that it is equally patriotic to protest against the injustices inflicted by one's country, including unjust wars, and particularly when such protests cause one to risk reputation or personal liberty, which is to say, when one is willing to suffer the consequences of one's actions.

Let me get my own *bona fides* out of the way. I served in the military from 1969-1972. I was a teenager from a working-class family, barely seventeen, and I volunteered with my parents' permission. I was interested in girls, rock 'n roll, science, and mathematics, and I hadn't a clue about the issues surrounding the war then raging in Southeast Asia. I had some feelings of patriotism, of course, but truthfully, I enlisted to get away from home and out of a sense of adventure. I was at once stupid and lucky. There was not much hazard to be found in cryptography, which is what I did in the military. While serving, I did become more familiar with current events and I gradually came to doubt the merits of our engagement in Vietnam. Soon after I was honorably discharged and back in college, I became politically active and joined the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), becoming an officer of our local Bay Area chapter. Former Senator and Secretary of State, John Kerry, was one of the senior officers of the VVAW. Later, when he ran for the presidency, he would be unfairly "Swift-boated" by scurrilous Bush supporters for what they perceived as patriotic apostasy and opposition to the war, notwithstanding his personal heroism in combat, and in contrast to the coddled Bush, whose fulfillment of his military contract with the Texas Air National Guard was questionable.

I confess that I have a problem with those who avoided the draft in those days purely out of self-interest via privileged and sometimes bogus deferments, and who did not do so out of conscientious objection—a noble reason to my mind, and one with which I have no issue—but rather, who did so out of self-interest or cowardice. I am especially disdainful of those who explicitly supported the war, like the young Donald Trump, while simultaneously taking active measures to avoid military service themselves. Some of these same people, now old and out of harm's way, are quick to counsel war or engage in bellicose chest-thumping at every turn, posturing as tough-guy alpha males, when their personal biography shows they are physical or moral cowards—or both. Political and business elites are replete with such people, and I have encountered many of them over the decades.

It seems to me the social contract requires us to undertake certain obligations for the state, obligations implied by having accepted and benefited from the various

rights and privileges bestowed by the society we inhabit. Among those obligations is the duty to defend one's country. This is not an original argument. In fact, it is the essence of the Socratic view of civic responsibility—what is owed to the society that gives us sustenance and protection, a view delineated in Plato's *Crito* over two thousand years ago. When the country is wrong, however, I think one is also duty-bound to assume moral opposition and take appropriate measures of protest and resistance and to endure the costs of doing so under the law (ignominy or even punishment) as imposed by society. It is the latter reasoning, following the laws, which led Socrates to choose death over exile when given a choice and after being convicted for corrupting youth and denying the gods by the Athenian assembly. I would not propose such an extreme measure, but for similar reasons, I applaud those who were against the war and who had the courage of their convictions—those who resisted the draft from conscience, protested, and then suffered consequences without fleeing to another country. They were right and courageous. That stands in contrast to physical and moral cowards like Trump.

With that said, I do not think the individual soldiers who did their duty by serving in the military were morally culpable for the war, any more than the millions of taxpayers who funded and therefore financed and enabled the war by paying their taxes were blameworthy. I am by no means excusing those few soldiers who violated military or international law and engaged in individual war crimes, such as the massacre at Mai Lai in 1968, among several other moral outrages and malefactions. However, the political leaders who initiated, led, continued, and continually misled the public about this unjust and costly war for over a decade surely were morally culpable.

For many years, now, I have struggled with the very concept of patriotism. Like most people, I have visceral and tribal feelings of fealty towards my country, and I feel proud when I consider some of the noble and remarkable things it has accomplished for its people and for the world as a whole. I can even bristle when it is criticized (not always unjustly) by outsiders. Like many, I, too, get chills from watching a 4th of July parade, seeing the majestic Lincoln monument when lit at night, hearing the Star Spangled Banner, or seeing the rows of headstones at a military cemetery and the mournful sound of Taps. At the same time, I am unable to forget that ours is a country founded to no small degree upon conquest—*theft*, genocide, kidnapping, slavery, and, moreover, that there are other ignoble things today and in our history, ranging from the endemic violence in our gun-ridden culture, Jim Crow, discriminating against LGBTQ peoples, unequal treatment of women, schemes to overthrow legitimate governments of other sovereign nations, sponsoring assassinations, unfair labor practices, economic privation, to initiating

unjust and costly wars. It is impossible for me to reconcile these things with any simplistic version of patriotism. And while I can take pride in many of the things we have done as a country, and while I remain hopeful and optimistic about its future, I am unable to accept “American exceptionalism” as a doctrine that can stand on its own without also saying in equal measure that our nation has committed evils of the highest order. Saying this, of course, among several other reasons, makes me highly unsuitable for political office, for one must be able to lie at least by omission with a straight face to get elected.

Aside from the historical problems associated with unvarnished patriotism, I have trouble rationally justifying loving or respecting abstract, disembodied entities when considered separately from their particular instances or the consequences of said entities. Thus, notwithstanding my tribal emotions, love of country is intellectually problematic to me given what I know about its history and that I am unable to ignore. *Duty to country* (or governments, etc.) is something I can understand and adopt as a matter of principle originating in the social contract, and, even more basically, just as a utilitarian means of survival. But countries, governments, humanity, political offices—they are all essentially abstract entities or concepts, much like the concept of number or the logical concept of *modus tollens*. It is only in their particulars and in their effects that they take on substantive and non-trivial meanings. I can more easily love *some* of its people and *some* of its ideas and actions in the particular. Love of country strikes me as similar to loving a sports team or one’s alma mater. It is a primitive emotion and not one worthy of rational men and women as a *raison d’être* for their political outlook or as a basis of moral judgment.

Respect is even more problematic than the love of country, for that presumably does not arise from emotion, that is, unless engendered by fear or awe, and then it is not true respect, which ought to arise from ratiocination. But we sometimes employ the term in a way suggesting allegiance without due thought, especially when applied to empty abstractions. For example, I do not *respect* the “office of the Presidency” any more than I respect office furniture or a building. One often hears talk of respecting an office when people want to distance themselves from the occupant. It’s a weasel phrase. I may have duties that pertain to a particular position or rank, but that is a different matter, *not* one requiring my respect or love of the position or the person, but just doing my duty, which is to say, fulfilling legitimate obligations towards the officeholder by virtue of either an implicit or explicit agreement. In other words, I am really respecting a principle, an obligation. But there are limits to what I am obligated to do. For example, I am not obligated to respect unlawfulness or immoral acts. I am able to respect duty that arises only from a just principle—and then, only because of its

consequences, and not because of its being a *summum bonum* in and of itself. More on that in a moment.

I also think it is silly to say I “love” all my countrymen or humanity. I, for one, do not love all of them, singly or collectively, and I do not think others really do, either. I am acquainted with a few thousand people, at most—and most of them through my travels and former occupation. I do love some of them, to be sure. But I also dislike what many people say and do, and there are many more people who I most certainly do not love. In fact, there are some I do not even like and I do not pretend to like. I do not respect all of them, either. For example, I do not respect or like people who support Donald Trump. I respect and even like many with whom I disagree on political matters. But I will not and I cannot respect or like fascism, misogyny, or racism, all inherent features of Trumpism; therefore, I cannot respect or like those adhering to such views, notwithstanding their other qualities or merely because they are human or even likable in other respects. The foregoing depredations “trump” the other characteristics. What is more, I see no real virtue in loving or respecting humanity. Humanity is yet another abstraction, one useful only for rhetorical flourishes and too unwieldy to have much meaning beyond ornamental oratory from pulpits. I say this notwithstanding the famous statement of my philosophical hero, Bertrand Russell, who said, “Remember your humanity, and forget the rest.” I don’t think he either believed or practiced that, really, especially the part about forgetting the rest. I have *duties* towards human beings, however, and that includes every human being in the particular—human beings who have moral rights (firstly) and legal rights (secondarily), and that is true whether or not I respect or like or love them.

I simply do not buy the Christian “love your neighbor” business, or the idea that I ought to respect everyone. People say those things to say them because they think it sounds polite, pious, or lofty—or it is an *ex cathedra* prescription that no one really follows. It is unctuously disingenuous to me, such as, the “love the sinner hate the sin” nonsense one hears from some insincere Christians in reference to homosexuals, who while loving them also smugly believe they will get their just recompense in Hell. *Some love*. I doubt the sincerity of anyone who says that they love or respect everyone. What I do respect is the fact that my neighbor has *rights*, even if I do not love or respect him, personally, and that strikes me as a more important and substantive thing than just having a feeling towards them. What is more, I believe it is my moral duty to not violate those rights and to uphold them, notwithstanding any negative sentiments towards him. I cannot help but note that there are many—and especially those of certain religious sects—who pretend to love and respect others, but who most certainly

do not respect their rights, whether it is marrying the person they love, having equal rights under the law, or being able to control one's own reproductive system.

I neither begrudge people their feelings of patriotism or their love for the multifarious symbols and shibboleths that attend it, nor would I try to dissuade people from having what appear to be intrinsic properties of our most rudimentary social and tribal natures. I remain mindful, however, of old Sam Johnson's admonition that "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." Am I patriotic? Yes, but not without qualification. I do not confuse this *feeling* with virtue. I shall continue my skepticism, for patriotic zeal often leads to overlooking or even violating justice, both rights and the concomitant duties that emanate from them, which in their non-judicial forms originate from overarching moral principles, and have precedence over all countries, institutions, laws, offices, symbols, and sentiments. In a just society, the law must attempt to overlap and encompass these moral principles, and institutions ought to be charged with applying them impartially and equally. But morality is to law what a constitution is to statutes in its order of precedence. The ultimate objective of government is to create and preserve a just society, after all, and it is *justice* that deserves our highest loyalty and respect. Now, *that* would be exceptional—love and respect for **justice** because of what it can *do for us all*, and not for its own sake as some disembodied philosophical abstraction. That is something that I can get behind without any mental reservation.

Michael Berumen is a retired CEO and a published author on diverse topics including economics, mathematics, music, and philosophy. He edited the Bertrand Russell Society Bulletin 2013-2017 and served as a director and as treasurer for the Society.

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