

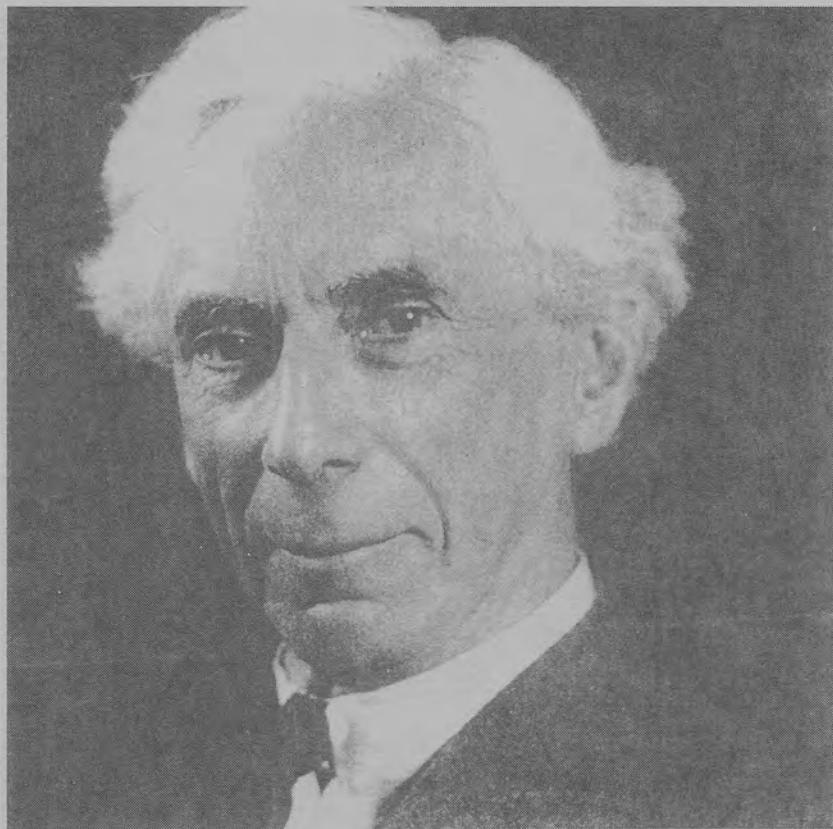
THE BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY

QUARTERLY

Newsletter of the Bertrand Russell Society

November, 1996

No. 92



Time to Renew!
Membership Application Inside

The Bertrand Russell Society
3802 North Kennedy Avenue, Chicago, IL 60641-2814, USA

The Bertrand Russell Society was founded in 1974 to foster a better understanding of Russells work and to promote ideas and causes he thought important. The Society's motto is Russell's statement, "The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge."

The Bertrand Russell Society Quarterly is published in February, May, August and November. Letters and manuscripts should be addressed to:

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Bertrand Russell Society Business

The following pages contain Society business that need your attention. Each page may be xeroxed and sent to the appropriate address.

SOCIETY BUSINESS INCLUDES:

- 1) Membership Renewal
- 2) Board of Directors Election Ballot
- 3) Note From Peter Stone
- 4) New Honorary Member - - Noam Chomsky
- 5) Note From Tim Madigan
- 6) From the Library

BOARD OF DIRECTORS BALLOT

Vote for Eight

(3 Year Term January 1, 1997 - December 31, 1999)

James Alouf _____

Robert Davies _____

Jan Loeb-Eisler _____

Nicholas Griffin _____

Robert T. James _____

Chandrakala Padia _____

Harry Ruja _____

John Shosky _____

Peter Stone _____

Return To: Donald Jackanicz
Bertrand Russell Society-Secretary
3802 North Kenneth Avenue
Chicago, IL 60641

Please return by December 30, 1996

ATTENTION, PLEASE

BRS Dues Are Due January 1, 1997

Everyone's Bertrand Russell society renewal dues are due January 1, 1997. The January 1st due-date applies to all members, including first-year members (excepting those who joined in the final quarter, i.e. October/November/December 1996).

The 1997 dues schedule in U.S. Dollars: Regular Individual, \$35. Regular Couple (two persons at the same address), \$40. Student or Limited Income Individual, \$20. Limited Income Couple, \$25. **Plus \$10 for any membership outside the U.S.A., Canada, and Mexico. Plus \$4 for any membership in Canada or Mexico.**

Please remember that the BRS's financial condition is a continuing concern. There is no immediate financial crisis. But neither is there, as yet, the solid financial foundation that long-term survival requires. We ask those members who can afford to, to make an extra contribution when renewing membership by choosing one of the special membership categories on the renewal coupon below.

Please mail dues, payable to "Bertrand Russell Society" in U.S. Dollars, to Bertrand Russell Society; c/o Dennis Darland, 1965 Winding Hills Drive, #1304, Davenport, IA 52807.

Thank you for renewing and for your contributions. And thank you for renewing early.

RENEWAL COUPON

I am glad to be an early renewer, to ease the renewal process for the BRS. And I hope to see the BRS continue to thrive for a long time to come. I have looked over the membership categories below, and chosen one that is right for my circumstances.

I have checked my membership category And, if applicable, my foreign mailing category.

- Student, \$20
- Limited Income, Individual, \$20
- Limited Income, Couple, \$25
- Regular Individual, \$35
- Regular Couple, \$40
- Contributor, \$40
- Sustainer, \$50
- Sponsor, \$100 and up
- Patron, \$250 and up
- Benefactor, \$500 and up
- Life Member, \$1000 and up

I enclose my dues, in U.S. Dollars, payable to "Bertrand Russell Society."

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

NOTE FROM PETER STONE

Dear Michael,

I wanted to let you know that Gerry Wildenberg, David White, and I are starting a Bertrand Russell discussion group in Rochester. The group is called the Greater Rochester Russell Set, and will meet monthly. At a meeting, we will either discuss some work by Russell, or else talk about some topic relating to Russell.

Would you mind mentioning this group in the newsletter? The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month, starting on Nov. 12, at Park Avenue Books and Espresso, 370 Park Ave. Rochester. At the Nov. 12 meeting we will discuss Marriage and Morals; at the Dec. 10 meeting we will discuss Why I am Not a Christian. Interested people should contact me by phone at 716-325-3459, or by e-mail at <prse@troi.cc.rochester.edu>. And of course, we'd be happy to plug the BRS as well.

If it's too late to make the next newsletter, I'll let you know what we'll be doing in future months later on.

Thanks a lot.

Peter Stone

NOAM CHOMSKY ACCEPTS HONORARY SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

The BRS is pleased to announce that Noam Chomsky has accepted honorary Society membership. In his August 12, 1996 letter to the BRS, Dr. Chomsky wrote:

I was, needless to say, very pleased and honored to receive the offer of an honorary membership in the BRS, and am delighted to accept.

By I suppose no accident, the second quote from Russell on the back of the [BRS] brochure graces my office, with a marvelous picture, so I've been looking at it almost every day for many years.

The Russell quotation referred to is: "Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind."

For a recent brief, yet substantial, article on Dr. Chomsky's thought, see "Chomsky, Noam" in The Oxford Companion to Philosophy, Ted Honderich, editor (1995), pp. 132-133. Among Dr. Chomsky's many writings are Syntactic Structures (1957), Language and Mind (1968), Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin and Use (1986), and Detering Democracy (1992). Of special interest to students of Russell is Dr. Chomsky's Problems of Knowledge and Freedom (1971), being a slightly revised version of his two Russell Lectures, given in 1971 at Trinity College, Cambridge, titled "On Interpreting the World" and "On Changing the World."

We welcome Dr. Chomsky and hope that he may be able to attend one or more of our future annual meetings.

NOTE FROM TIM MADIGAN

Last night I met again with BRS member Gerry Wildenberg, professor of mathematics at St. John Fisher College (relax - although once a Catholic school, it's been secularized!). He is starting a Bertrand Russell Book Discussion group. The first meeting will be on Tuesday, Nov. 12 at 7:15 p.m., at the Park Avenue Books and Espresso in Rochester, NY. The discussion will be on "Marriage and Morals." The next meeting will be on Tuesday, Dec. 10, and will discuss "Why I Am Not A Christian." I plan to attend these meetings and spread the good word about them. This would also make a nice item for the newsletter - we should be encouraging more such meetings.

NOTE FROM THE LIBRARY TOM STANLEY

Please change my e-mail address in the librarian's report to:
tjstanle@freenet.calgary.ab.ca. Thanks

I have only this item for the News:

New and forthcoming:

Mortals and Others: Russell's American Essays 1931-1935, edited by Harry Ruja. Routledge paperback \$16.95. A copy is in the lending library.

Understanding Principia and Tractatus: Russell and Wittgenstein Revisited by A.P. Rao. International Scholars Publications \$49.95.

The Bertrand Russell Society Library Box 434 Wilder, VT 05088
Visit our website: www.ncf.carleton.ca/~ck714

FROM THE EDITOR

Michael J. Rockler

The breadth of Bertrand Russell's scholarly work in part reflects the fact that Russell lived almost one hundred years and pursued many different interests during his long lifetime. One can begin the study of Russell from a variety of vantage points—my own interest began with an exposure to Russell's views on science and religion and ultimately came to include his works on education as well as his approach to fiction.

Since the last issue of the *Quarterly*, I have read two books which make the breadth and depth of this unique scholar clear. *Philosophical Essays* was published by Russell in 1910 and is a relatively technical book. It includes BR's early position on ethics, an essay on history, and a strong critique of pragmatism and William James. This volume demonstrates a first rate mind at work—it is Bertrand Russell in the prime of his intellectual life taking on a powerful philosophical system advocated by William James and John Dewey among others.

Russell's writing can be elegant. Note the following passage from "On History" in *Philosophical Essays*:

On the banks of the river of Time, the sad procession of human generations is marching slowly to the grave; in the quiet country of the Past, the march is ended, the tired wanderers rest, and all their weeping is hushed.

It is this kind of writing which led ultimately to the awarding of the Nobel Prize for literature to Russell.

A second book I have recently read is a collection of Russell's correspondence with the general public edited by Barry Feinberg and Ronald Kasrils and published in 1969 by Houghton Mifflin. This book contains delightful letters organized around many of Russell's lifetime interests.

There is a facsimile reproduction from one Paul Altman, six years old, who thanks Russell for all he has done and invites him to tea if Russell should ever come to Oxford. Russell replies:

Dear Paul Altman:

Thank you for your very nice letter which I am especially glad to have because it encourages me to keep on working. I wish that I could have tea with you but I do not expect to come to Oxford. If I do come, I will let you know.

With love and warmest good wishes,

from
Bertrand Russell

Russell's letters to people on religion, peace, youth and old age, and philosophy are enjoyable to read and stand in sharp contrast to the more technical writing in *Philosophical Essays*. Yet both volumes, published 59 years apart, are indicative of the varied intellectual and political career of this significant figure.

Reminder: Plan now to attend the annual meeting which will be held as a joint gathering with Canadian and American Humanists. The meeting will be held in Buffalo, New York from May 31 to June 2, 1997. Mark your calendars now for this special BRS event.

RUSSELL'S GROWING CRITICISM OF KANT'S IMPACT ON PHILOSOPHY

Paul Hager
University of Technology, Sydney

Russell's estimate of the worth of Kant's contribution to philosophy declined sharply during the course of his philosophical writings. The early idealist phase began with a defense of a Kantian theory of geometry which takes account of the discovery of non-Euclidean geometries. Then the remainder of the idealist phase represented a shift from Kant to Hegelian dialectic (*My Philosophical Development*, p.31). It was the rejection of idealism, however, which set Russell into sustained opposition to Kant. Initially this opposition was tempered by a willingness to point out the merits in Kant's work. So while the doctrines of the 1903 *Principles of Mathematics* are "on almost every point of mathematical theory, diametrically opposed to those of Kant" (p. 456) and erroneous philosophical understandings of the infinitesimal Calculus, for example, are traced to an "undue mysticism inherited from Kant" (p.326), nevertheless Russell is at pains to stress Kant's virtues. Thus he is credited with having first called attention to the logical importance of asymmetrical relations" (p. 227) and with rendering in a precise form the contradictions belonging to the notion of the infinite then current (p. 355). In addition, the Russell of *Principles of Mathematics* shared the Kantian view that mathematical knowledge is both synthetic and *a priori*, whilst, in opposition to Kant, putting logic in the same category as well (p. 457).

In the 1912 *Problems of Philosophy* Russell maintains this even-handed approach, insisting that although Kant is generally regarded as the greatest of the modern philosophers . . .", nonetheless the validity of his many metaphysical results as to the nature of the world . . . may well be doubted" (p. 82). Perhaps inspired by the description of Kant as yonder *sophistical philistine*, who was *so bad a mathematician*", in a letter sent to him by George Cantor in September 1911 (*The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell*, pp. 226-28), Russell's respect for Kant quickly declined in the succeeding years. So on more than one occasion in 1914 he lambasted Kant for being "unusually ignorant of psychology" (*Our Knowledge of the External World*, First Edition, p. 112).¹ However, it is with the 1927 *Outline of Philosophy* that Russell's vituperation of Kant could be said to have gotten into full stride. There we are told that

Kant deluged the philosophic world with muddle and mystery, from which it is only now beginning to emerge. Kant has the reputation of being the greatest of modern philosophers, but to my mind he was a mere misfortune.(p. 64)²

This level of pungency was thereafter the norm. In the 1946 *History of Western Philosophy*, after disagreeing with the general estimate that has Kant as the greatest of "the modern philosophers," Russell says of him that

Hume, by his criticism of the concept of causality, awakened him from his dogmatic slumbers so at least he says, but the awakening was only temporary, and he soon invented a soporific which enabled him to sleep again. (pp. 677-8)

In the 1950's Kant is portrayed as the generator of "a new set of fallacies" ("Philosophy's Ulterior Motives" in *Unpopular Essays*, p. 53). Alan Wood reports on the effect at this time of "Kant's allegation of a subjective element in mathematics" on Russell, with his "yearning for absolutely certain impersonal knowledge":

... the tone of his voice can only be described as one of disgust, like a Fundamentalist confronted with the suggestion that Moses had made up the Ten Commandments himself. Kant made me sick

(*My Philosophical Development*, pp. 192-3).

Interestingly, on the page following the above report, Wood suggests that Russell's career as a philosopher can be "briefly and crudely" summed up in the slogan "From Kant to Kant". Given the trend we have noted in the preceding series of quotations, it is no surprise to find Russell himself firmly repudiating Wood's suggestion. (*My Philosophical Development*, 194)³

No doubt a variety of explanations could be proposed for Kant's steady fall from favor with Russell. It might be suggested, for example, that the younger Russell would have more reason to be wary of intemperately attacking one of the acknowledged greats of the philosophical tradition than would the older Russell, by then securely established as a leading philosopher of the early twentieth century. Then there is the well known fact that Russell, especially from the 1920's onwards, often wrote with an eye to possible sales to remedy his recurring financial difficulties. Outrageous attacks on sacred cows would clearly fit the bill here. Probably there is some truth in both of these suggestions. Nonetheless, I suggest that the inexorable decline in Russell's estimation of Kant stems largely from considerations that are more directly philosophical. In brief I suggest that from the start of his revolt into pluralism, Russell viewed his own philosophy as providing a superior alternative to the tradition derived from Kant. Initially optimistic about the likely success of this

venture, Russell's high hopes were gradually dimmed for a couple of main reasons. Firstly, the development of a coherent philosophical position that corrected (what he saw as) Kant's mistakes proved to be more difficult than expected. the various phases of Russell's pluralism can each be viewed as new attempts to answer Kant. In each case there were compelling reasons for abandoning the existing position and developing a new one. These changes were actually more orderly and less drastic than has been commonly claimed. However, the perception of frequent erratic changes of mind was not conducive to winning support for the newer position from other philosophers. This gives us the second main reason for Russell's early optimism being dashed. From being a major influence in the early decades of his pluralism, Russell had the mortification of seeing his place in contemporary philosophy slip to the stage where he was no longer a significant part of the mainstream. This in turn put him in the rather anomalous position of having to advance his current unpopular views against critics who were still assiduously defending his earlier views, views that he had long seen good reason to discard.² Thus providing a viable and widely accepted alternative to Kant proved much more difficult and frustrating than Russell had originally anticipated.

Invitation to readers:

Are there other major instances of Russell denigrating Kant?

Are there other more plausible explanations of Russell's deteriorating estimate of Kant's work?

¹See also p. 116 and "The Relation of Sense Data to Physics" in *Mysticism and Logic*, p.113.

²See also pp. 192 and 198.

³Russell's response is in a footnote that he himself inserted in Wood's work

⁴A prime example of this is the paper by J. Feibleman in the Schilpp volume on Russell (1944). On this issue, see Russell's response in the Schilpp volume (p. 686).

“CONVERSATION WITH FLEW”

JOHN SHOSKY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

JULY, 1996

In 1995, the Bertrand Russell Society asked Anthony Flew, professor emeritus of philosophy at the University of Reading, to become an honorary member. Flew may be best known to BRS members for his brilliant essay "Russell's Judgment on Bolshevism", published in the *Bertrand Russell Memorial Volume*, edited by George W. Roberts, Allen and Unwin, 1979. Like Russell, to whom he has been compared in more than one review, Flew has popularized philosophy, using economic, and social controversies. Like Russell, Flew is also a well-known and vocal humanist. He graciously accepted our invitation. Flew is a most appropriate, prominent, and respected addition to our society.

Last July I visited Anthony Flew in Reading. Over lunch and a few pints of bitter at "The Monk's Retreat", we discussed many topics, including Russell's influence at Oxford during the late 1940s. Michael Dummett and others have argued that Russell was vilified at Oxford during this period, primarily because he was a foil for the linguistic movement. (See "Oxford Philosophy," in *Truth and Other Enigmas*, Harvard, 1978). Flew remembers it differently. Flew was in Oxford during part of the period analyzed by Dummett — 1946-1949. Flew first attended St. John's College, Oxford, as an undergraduate from January to June, 1942, but he did not study any philosophy at that time. His service in World War II January, 1946, taking final exams for his undergraduate degree in 1948, supervised by Golbert Ryle until December, 1948. In January of the 1949, Flew became a lecturer at Christ Church, Oxford. During the late 1940's, he also attended a weekly gathering of philosophers who met with J.L. Austin. Others who joined Austin's "Saturday Mornings" included J.O. Urmson, A.D. Woozley, and Isaiah Berlin. (For another description of these gatherings, see Berlin's "J.L. Austin and the Early Beginnings of Oxford Philosophy," *Personal Impressions*, Penguin, 1982).

Dummett repeats a charge often heard: that Oxford ignored Russell and the analytical movement. But this charge appears somewhat suspect; after all, A.J. Ayer came out of Oxford greatly impressed by Russell and Russell himself gave lectures in Oxford during 1938, which were later published as *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*.

Perhaps Dummett is correct, but only in describing the views of some of the older dons. Much of the animosity against Russell was evidently among philosophers who were directly assaulted by Russell's work: Cook Wilson, H.W.B. Joseph, perhaps R.G. Collingwood, and others. In Flew's recollection, Ryle and Austin were most respectful of Russell; and Ryle admired him enormously. Flew remembers Ryle as quite taken with Russell, as were many philosophers in Oxford (See Ryle's speech to the Aristotelian Society upon Russell's death, reprinted in the Roberts volume). Philosophy students with any interest in the discipline were expected to have read *Problems of Philosophy* immediately upon arrival (Flew had devoured it even before attending Oxford). Three books by Russell were regularly read and discussed in Oxford: *Principles of Mathematics*, portions of *Principia Mathematica*, and *Our Knowledge of the External World*. Ryle supervised Flew's reading of *Analysis of Mind*, which Ryle felt was a much better book than any of Russell's writings on matter. In fact, Flew remembers Ryle as very enthusiastic about *Analysis of Mind*, some portions of which were influential in Ryle's great work, *The Concept of Mind*. Many students also read chapters of *History of Western Philosophy*, which had just been published in 1945. Flew and Ryle both viewed the book as uneven — good where Russell seemed interested in the material (Leibniz, Hume, Rousseau, Mill, and the last chapter on analytical philosophy) and disgraceful on matters of little interest to him (the scholastics, Kant, and Hegel).

Flew has heard of only one meeting between Ryle and Russell. Ryle told Flew that he had bumped into Russell and shared dinner together on a train. They seem to have got on famously. One of them said that John Locke had invented common sense. The other added, "And ever afterwards only Englishmen have had it!" Some may believe that Russell did not particularly like Ryle, using comments found in *My Philosophical Development* for evidence. But Flew believes that they both enjoyed their conversation, and that Russell's disappointment in linguistic philosophy was not a personal reaction to Ryle.

I asked Flew about Russell's legacy. He felt that Russell's work in logic and epistemology will always be relevant. For Flew, *Principia Mathematica* is Russell's great achievement. In epistemology, Flew believes that students will probably find Hume more important. Hume is the source of much of Russell's work. Russell may even be viewed historically, in Flew's opinion, as "a first-rate neo-Humean." In morality and politics, Flew believes Russell's work has had its effect and much of what he said is now part of our culture. In terms of theology, "Why I am not a Christian" or "Free Man's Worship" will probably continue to be influential

through republication in anthologies. Yet, for Flew, one of Russell's last-
ing contributions to philosophy is his writing style, which achieved an un-
paralleled clarity, providing a model for philosophical progress. Russell
taught us that philosophers should clearly state their positions, methodolo-
gies, and findings, so other philosophers can understand them.

Flew also told me that he thinks Russell offers great insight for philoso-
phers in developing countries, where more and more educated people are
looking to "spread out" in their thinking. Russell will speak in a fresh
voice to millions of people who hope to find new ideas, original view-
points, and intellectual honesty. This is why Flew believes the BRS is
growing in places like India and the Philippines.

Flew is pleased to be a part of the BRS. He is looking forward to receiving
the *Bertrand Russell Society Quarterly*. Flew is also continuing his own
work in philosophy, which is a life-long tribute to the inspiration of Russell,
Ryle, Austin, and others forty years ago in Oxford

THE MADMAN'S SPEECH

by Tim Madigan

Reprinted with Permission from *The Secular Humanist Bulletin*

TOWER OF BABBLE

During my teen years, I was an ardent reader of *The Catholic Digest*. I particularly enjoyed a feature known as "The Open Door", which described the process by which converts had come to choose the Catholic religion as their vessel to salvation. This helped to reaffirm me in my own faith: if people were freely *choosing* to join rather than simply following what they'd been taught since childhood, that made the teachings all the more plausible. I never expected that I would soon be walking out of that open door the converts were so eagerly rushing into.

I think it is too little noted how influential converts often are to a religion, ideology or political cause. They tend to bring with them an enthusiasm and drive which can fire up those who'd been born into the system and never thought very deeply about it. Christianity surely wouldn't have gotten off the ground if Saul hadn't converted into Paul. One of the strengths of humanism is that it is a haven for individuals who have chosen to leave the indoctrination of their childhood. Yet there is still something to the old saying reputed to the Jesuits: "Give me a child at an early age and it is mine for life." We tend to bring to our new outlook presuppositions from the past.

This tendency is amusingly described in an article found in Bertrand Russell's classic book *Why I Am Not a Christian and Other Essays on Religion and Related subjects* (Simon and Schuster, 1957). Entitled "On Catholic and Protestant Skeptics," and written originally in 1928, it states that "Any person who has had much contact with free-thinking people of different countries and diverse antecedents must have been struck by the remarkable difference between those of Catholic and Protestant origin, however much they may imagine that they have thrown off the theology that they were taught in youth" (p. 118). He goes on to describe the "Protestant" freethinkers as being obsessed with a strict advocacy of duty and moral fervor. The Utilitarian thinkers Jeremy Bentham and James and John Stuart Mill, for instance, while maintaining that pleasure is the goal of life, remained Puritanical and self-denying throughout their lives. He writes that a "Protestant freethinker would have been capable of deciding in the abstract in favor of free love, and nevertheless living all his days a life of strict celibacy." "Catholic" freethinkers, on the other hand, having been taught from birth that theirs is the one true church and that they should accept no substitutes, are much more prone to become full-blooded hedonists, tossing out the baby of duty along with the bath water of dogma. "The chief distinction that

One notices," Russell adds, "is that in the Protestant type departure from tradition is primarily intellectual, whereas in the Catholic type it is primarily practical. The typical Protestant freethinker has not the slightest desire to do anything of which his neighbors disapprove apart from the advocacy of heretical opinions" (p. 124).

One can see the twinkle in Lord Russell's eye as he wrote these lines. As a good logician, he recognized the problems of over generalizing, and he himself, while raised as a Protestant, certainly pursued a rather hedonistic life-styles at times, as his most recent biography attests (Ray Monk, *Bertrand Russell: the Spirit of Solitude*, 1996). Still, I think he's touched on an important point, one which may help explain the controversies that often rage *within* humanist movements. Freethinkers raised within Protestant traditions took their protests one step further than most, denying such tenets as the existence of any God at all. Yet they were still in accord with such Protestant virtues as opposition to authority, non-conformism and radical individualism. Almost all Protestant congregations came about because they split off from an already established church. Freethinkers raised as Catholics, on the other hand, had a greater tendency to be anti-clerical, exuberantly chanting Voltaire's call to "Crush the infamous thing." To them, there is but one true Church, and even *it* isn't true.

Of course, these attitudes have been changing. In recent times, there is much more interaction between Catholicism and Protestantism - witness the rather bizarre spectacle of Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed singing the high praises of Mother Teresa. And the Catholic church in the United States has been aptly described as this country's largest Protestant congregation. No doubt John Paul II would ruefully agree!

Russell's essay also helps one to understand better the dynamics of the humanist movement. Like a contemporary tower of Babel, it welcomes in people who've fled from all manners of belief systems. In my travels across the United States organizing humanist groups, I've come across former Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, Baptists, Methodists, Greek Orthodox, and pre- and post-Vatican II Catholics. And I've met with former members of Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu and other non-Christian religions. There are sizable numbers of Jewish freethinkers, who debate amongst themselves over whether or not Judaism is a religion, and whether doubting the existence of God also entails giving up keeping kosher. In addition, there are many people within the humanist movement who were not raised as members of any religion, and who consider themselves to be modern-day Alices in Wonderland, shaking their heads at the curious beliefs that motivate so many of their contemporaries.

Such a mingling of different traditions adds to the health of the humanist movement, just as such "Open Door" policies keep other

movements supplied with fresh blood. Yet unlike most of these, humanism is forthright in welcoming new directions and challenges. Former Mormons within our midst, for instance, have stressed the need to develop community support among humanists along the lines of that which they had previously experienced. In his article, Russell wisely pointed out that "It is a mistake to suppose that the admirable consequences achieved in the first moment of breakdown can continue indefinitely" (p. 125). How we use and channel this energy is important. And while humanism might be a Tower of Babel - or more aptly Babble, as those who've attended any humanist conference can confirm - it does have a *lingua franca* through which all members can converse: the shared notion that only humans working together can solve the problems that beset us. No deity will save us. Metaphysical differences should not separate us into warring camps, nor should differing traditions keep us from emphasizing our common humanity. With all due respect to Robert Schuller, *ours* is the real tower of power.

BERTRAND RUSSELL AND THE LIBERAL MEDIA

By Laurie Endicott Thomas

In the August 1995 issue of the *BRS Quarterly*, James L. Alouf quoted Bertrand Russell's *Sceptical Essays*, in which Russell argued that the teaching of newspaper reading should be taught that students should be brought to the understanding that "everything in the newspapers is more or less untrue." I have never worked for a newspaper, but I have had the privilege of working for a peer--reviewed scientific journal. This kind of publication represents the pinnacle of integrity as far as commercial media are concerned. Nevertheless, advertisers have some influence even in this kind of forum. I imagine that publications whose mission is entirely commercial would be subject to even greater pressures.

From my own experience, and from my courses of economics, I developed the suspicion that the commercial media do have a bias; but I expected to find that their bias would be commercial, not "liberal" (whatever "liberal" means). All the complaints by self-styled "conservatives" in the press and over the airwaves that the "liberals" dominate the media seem invalid by self-reference. Why is it that everyone seems to know the term *feminazi*, but few heard the term *Afro-Saxon*?

If "liberals" really do dominate the media, why is it that conservatives like Thomas Sowell get plenty of column space in the commercial media while dissidents like Bell Hooks get none?¹ Why can I hear Rush Limbaugh over the radio but no democratic socialist balance? We heard plenty about purported defects of Marxists economic theory after the "fall of communism," but I do not recall any Marxists being given an opportunity to give their point of view. I have lived among humans all my life, and I find it implausible that any person or group is absolutely right (or absolutely wrong) about absolutely everything. Besides, if Marxism really is transparently foolish, what would be the harm in letting the Marxists have their say?

To enable students to understand the nature of the press, Bertrand Russell recommended asking students to read conflicting newspaper accounts of the same historical event. To this curriculum, I would add some personal accounts by journalists and a theoretical model developed by a finance professor and a linguist.

George Seldes died in the summer of 1995 at the age of 104. He began his career as a newspaperman in Pittsburgh in 1909. He knew Mussolini back when the future Duce was just a newspaperman, and Seldes achieved the distinction of being the first foreign journalist expelled from Italy by the Fascists. In *Freedom of the Press* [1935], Seldes recounts how he originally viewed journalism as a calling but was told bluntly on his first day of work that it is a form of prostitution.

Bertrand Russell gave a clear definition of power; Seldes explained how power is applied in the newspaper business. Tactics ranged from refusal of editors to run stories that irritated major advertisers to the deployment of Pittsburgh policemen to attack newsboys hawking New York papers that carried a story suppressed in the Pittsburgh papers.

Freedom of the Press focused mostly on the decisions of individual newspaper editors. *Witness to a Century* [1987] provides more of a view of the national media as a whole. Seldes realized early in the game that papers from other cities often published stories that were suppressed in Pittsburgh. Seldes went on to publish a periodical called *In Fact*, which published stories submitted by reporters whose own papers refused to run them.

Often, however, the people who had wanted various stories suppressed had power that extended beyond their hometown. Seldes details how tools ranging from mail carriers to Congressional witch hunters were deployed to suppress *In Fact*.

Just in case one retains the notion that magazines are somehow "liberal" even when it has become clear that newspapers are not, Seldes tells the tale of *Ken*, which was to be the only general interest publication to be even "one step left of center." Seldes explains how it came to pass that *Ken* never took any steps at all.

Russell had suggested assigning the reading of conflicting newspaper accounts of an event that had aroused passions in its day, along with "some impartial account of what really happened." I am at a loss to come up with any impartial accounts of anything that has aroused passions, but I can think of a literary classic that shows how everything that the newspapers were saying could be more or less untrue: George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, which describes his experiences in the Spanish Civil War.

Was Orwell impartial?

I have tried to write objectively about the Barcelona fighting, though obviously, no one can be completely objective on a question of this kind. One is practically obliged to take sides, and it must be clear which side I am on. [Orwell fought in the P.O.U.M.] I warn everyone against my bias, and I warn everyone against my mistakes. Still, I have done my best to be honest.

Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *1984* were assigned reading when I was a teenager, and the lesson that I was supposed to derive from them was that Communism is bad. Foolish me, I derived the lessons that lying is bad, that self-deception is no better, and that the power to distort truth is accompanied by the power to get away with murder. I am not surprised that my teachers never mentioned *Homage to Catalonia*. From that book,

I derived the lesson that like the United States, the Soviet Union was more concerned about its national interests than about the well-being of anti-revolutionary or reform movements in other countries. Orwell explained that

The whole of Comintern policy is now subordinated (excusably, considering the world situation) to the defence of the U.S.S.R., which depends on a system of military alliances. In particular, the U.S.S.R. is in alliance with France, a capitalist-imperialist country. The alliance is of little use to Russia unless French capitalism is strong, therefore Communist policy in France has got to be anti-revolutionary. This means not only that the French Communists now march behind the tricolour and sing the Marseillaise, but, what is more important, that they have had to drop all effective agitation in the French colonies (pp. 56-57).

If Communist policy can be antirevolutionary, then the term *Communist* is meaningless. People who were in favor of a revolution regardless of its effect on the U.S.S.R. and its allies were accused of a polymorphous heresy called "Trotskyism."

A Spanish literary critic noted that the only passage that was suppressed in the 1970 Spanish edition of *Hommage to Catalonia* was the one that explained that Franco had not wished to establish fascism but rather to reestablish feudalism—that Franco's movement was a military uprising by the aristocracy and the Church.²

After explaining the party lines of the various groups involved in the Spanish war, Orwell reviewed what the newspapers said about the conflict. He concluded that

One of the dreariest effects of this war has been to teach me that the Left-wing press is every bit as spurious and dishonest as that of the Right. [He noted that the Manchester Guardian was an exception.] . . .

As far as the journalistic part of it went, this war was a racket like all other wars. But there was this difference, that whereas the journalists usually reserve their most murderous invective for the enemy, in this case, as time went on, the Communists and the P.O.U.M. came to write more bitterly about one another than about the Fascists. . . . I grasped that the Communists and Liberals had set their faces against allowing the revolution to go forward; I did not grasp that they might be capable of swinging it back. (pp. 65-66)

Orwell added that

The thing for which the Communists were working was not to postpone the Spanish revolution till a more suitable time, but to make sure that it never happened. . . . Please note that I am saying

nothing against the rank-and-file Communist, least of all against the thousands of Communists who died heroically round Madrid. But those were not the men who were directing party policy. As for the people higher up, it is inconceivable that they were not acting with their eyes open. (pp. 67-68)

From the accounts of Seldes and Orwell, it becomes clear that the commercial press sometimes supports a line consistent with the needs of a government, even where the government is not exerting direct control over the publication. A clear description of the underlying mechanisms can be found in *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* by Edward S. Herman (a professor of finance at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania) and Noam Chomsky (a professor with the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy of Massachusetts Institute of Technology).

Herman and Chomsky propose a "propaganda model" of the media. Their critique of the media is not a "conspiracy theory" but an analysis of market forces. Their conclusions are somewhat reminiscent of the "spontaneous order" that Libertarians tell me can emerge from free markets, except that the order is not something that an ordinary citizen would consider desirable.

Leaders of the media claim that their news choices rest on unbiased professional and objective criteria, and they have the support for this contention in the intellectual community. If, however, the powerful are able to fix the premises of discourse, to decide what the general populace is allowed to see, hear, and think about, and to "manage" public opinion by regular propaganda campaigns, the standard view of how the system works is at serious odds with reality. (p. xi)

Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model focuses on [the] inequality of wealth and power and its multilevel effects on mass-media interests and choices. It traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public. (p. 2)

Herman and Chomsky outline a set of interconnected news "filters": (1) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms; (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and "experts" funded and approved

by these primary sources and agents of power; (4) "flak" as a means of disciplining the media; and (5) "anticommunism" as a national religion and control mechanism. Herman and Chomsky show how these filter work by comparing the media treatment of "worthy" and "unworthy" victims. For example, the media devoted considerable attention to a Polish priest who was murdered in 1984 by policemen who were quickly apprehended, tried and jailed. In contrast, they paid little attention to 100 prominent Latin American religious martyrs killed by U.S.-backed "security" forces, non of the members of which were tried or even arrested. Herman and Chomsky also compared "legitimizing" versus "meaningless" Third World elections. According to the propaganda model, the spectrum of permissible debate in the media is bounded by the tactical options being considered by powerful elites. Criticism of an imaginary "liberal bias" is a means of establishing the lefthand margin of this spectrum. In *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies*, Chomsky provides further discussion of implications of the propaganda model:

In short, the major media-particularly the elite media that set the agenda that others generally follow-are corporations "selling" privileged audiences to other businesses. It would hardly come as a surprise if the picture of the world they present were to reflect the perspectives and interests of the sellers, the buyers, and the product. Concentration of ownership of the media is high and increasing. Furthermore, those who occupy managerial positions in the media, or gain status within them as commentators, belong to the same privileged elites, and might be expected to share the perceptions, aspirations, and attitudes of their associates, reflecting their own class interests as well. Journalists entering this system are unlikely to make their way unless they conform to these ideological pressures, generally by internalizing the values; it is not easy to say one thing and believe another, and those who fail to conform will tend to be weeded out by familiar mechanisms. (p. 8)

Chomsky also discusses how Bertrand Russell fared at the hands of the "liberal" press. Precisely because Chomsky's account is not worshipful, it emphasizes that Russell was an admirable human being:

Another relevant case is that of Bertrand Russell. Then well into his eighties, Russell had the courage and integrity to condemn the Vietnam war and its mounting atrocities when this was unfashionable, and to warn of what lay ahead. In retrospect, his commentary stands up well, certainly as compared to the falsehoods, evasions, and apologetics of the time, and it is a model of probity and restraint in comparison to standard condemnations of official enemies, as has been documented beyond serious question. Some of Russell's comments, however, were unjust,

exaggerated, and incorrect. To criticize these statements would have been appropriate. What happened, however, was different. Russell became an object of contempt and obloquy; one would be hard put to find a word in his defense against the venom of the commissars. The denunciations were only heightened by Russell's willingness to engage in nonviolent civil disobedience in protest against the nuclear arms race, unlike others who shared his perceptions about unlike others who shared his perceptions about the threat but contented themselves with occasional sage comments, then retreated to their work and personal lives. The attacks are not, of course, a reaction to Russell's errors and excesses. Rather, to the fact that he stood virtually alone against the herd and dared to tell truths that were then, and remain now, unacceptable, exposing by his example the behavior of those who chose the normal path of submissiveness to the state and support for its violence. (pp. 159-160)

References

1. Edward S. Herman showed that between 1980 and 1991, the New York Times, Washington Post, and Philadelphia Inquirer published 11 articles or opened pieces by Black rightists Thomas Sowell, Shelby Steele, and Walter Williams, 15 articles or op/ed pieces about them, and 30 reviews of their work. In comparison, these papers published nothing by or about Black leftists Bell Hooks, Manning Marable, or Cornel West. (Herman, Edward S.: *Triumph of the Market: Essays on Economics, Politics, and The Media*. Boston, South End Press, 1995.)
2. Escobar, Julia: *El Hombre Que No Se Quiso Callar*, in Orwell: 1984: *Reflections Desde 1984*. Madrid, Selecciones Austral, 1984.

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RUSSELL AND THE ORIGINS OF ANALYTICAL PHILOSOPHY

Book review by John Shosky
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Russell and the Origins of Analytic Philosophy. Edited and Introduced by Ray Monk and Anthony Palmer. Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996.

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This year there will be a lot of discussion of Ray Monk's *Russell: The Spirit of Solitude* and A.C. Greyling's *Russell*, both which are mighty and worthy additions to the critical corpus. But any serious student of Russell cannot -- must not-- overlook what may be the best book about Bertie this year, *Russell and the Origins of Analytical Philosophy*. This is a collection of essays from last year's Southampton Conference. Included are essays by Monk, Nick Griffin, Peter Hylton, Francisco Rodriguez-Consuegra, A.C. Greyling, C.M. Kilmeister, Gregory Landini, Charles Pigden and Louis Greenspan. I strongly urge society members to buy it, read it, and discuss it. This is the cutting-edge of Russell Studies.

This set of essays also will be rightly compared to the several fine collections that are standard fare in Russell scholarship, such as George Robert's *Bertrand Russell: Memorial Essays*, J.E. Thomas and Ken Blackwell's *Russell in Review* or C. Wade Savage and C. Anthony Anderson's *Rereading Russell*. In my view, the Robert's volume is the best of the previous lot, and Monk and Palmer's effort is easily of equal value. My intuition is that *Bertrand Russell and the Origins of Analytical Philosophy* will be read with great interest for many generations to come.

Frankly, each individual essay is destined to become a landmark on its issue, whether it is Landini's brilliant (as always) examination of *Principia Mathematica*, Griffin's powerful analysis of Russell's early use of denoting concepts, Greenspan's persuasive look at the *History of Western Philosophy*, or Noonan's fascinating logical excavation of the "Gray's Elegy" argument "On Denoting." I have discussed most of these papers earlier in my conference report, found in *Russell*, No. 88, November, 1995, pp. 20-30. I will try to avoid redundancy in this review, so I will not cover each and every paper in depth.

But perhaps no essay is more important for contemporary philosophy than Monk's "What is Analytical Philosophy?" Here Monk makes devastating counterattack against Michael Dummett's claim that Analytic Philosophy was a European movement, having nothing to do with Russell and G.E. Moore, and that Gottlob Frege is really its

inspiration. In fact, Monk shows that, for Dummett to be correct, Russell wouldn't be considered an analytical philosopher at all. Dummett argues that analytical philosophy is founded upon philosophy of language, and Russell did not see himself as that kind of philosopher (even though he contributed to many of the logical and linguistic issues that are the grist of any philosophy of language enterprise). With all due respect to Dummett, Monk sets the record straight: logical analysis began with Russell and Moore's attempt to break philosophical problems down into their individual components and provide a rigorous assessment of philosophical problems under this "logical microscope." That is the true starting point for this movement. Of course, Frege is a key figure; I readily understand the power of Dummett's claim because last year I taught a seminar on Frege, so the evidence is still fresh in my own memory. However, Monk doesn't sound a false chord in his discussion. Rather, he is refreshingly candid and impatient, sweeping away Dummett's claims with a tidal wave of historical and philosophical evidence. In the end, Russell and Moore remain the revolutionaries that forced an analytical turn in twentieth century philosophy.

I also found Kilmeister's essay of great contemporary interest, particularly the last third. The issue is whether or not Russell's work in mathematics and logical analysis is of any lasting value. Kilmeister doubts whether Russell has shown that technical advances in logic actually "solve" philosophical problems. I have heard such scepticism from other scholars and from my own students. Russell, of course, would point to the theory of descriptions and the theory of types as clear-cut cases of success. But Kilmeister argues that since Kurt Godel's 1931 paper on incompleteness, there has been no "real convincing example of the power of symbolic reasoning." Now, is this due to lack of ability by philosophers or an inherent limitation in logic itself? That is the question that should stimulate much controversy and debate. In my own view, Russell is correct to think that logic can clarify problems or eliminate them (see the beginning of "Logic as the Essence of Philosophy"). The great escalation and explication of logical systems in this century shows much technical prowess. Perhaps we now need to show more prowess in applying that logic to philosophical problems. Then we will know if Kilmeister's doubts are well grounded. He also favorably acknowledges Russell's use of definition and his use of abstraction. In Kilmeister's view, this triad--symbolic, definition and abstraction--are Russell's "main contribution to the analytic tradition." Whether one agrees with the essay or not, this is a much-needed evaluation of Russell's methodology and his contention that analytic philosophy can generate progress in philosophy.

Pigden's essay on Russell as a "neglected ethicist" is a big surprise. He notes that "Russell is often underrated as a moral philoso

phy," and indeed he is. But Pigden digs deep into Russell's early philosophy years, relying heavily on the *Russell's Collected Papers*, letters and interaction with Moore. Pigden proves--let me emphasize that--"proves"- - Russell was a tremendous influence on Moore (and vice versa), and that Russell had very important, formative views on ethics.

Finally, let me add that Hylton's essay on Russell's use of analysis in examining the nature of proportions is a paradigm case of how to do philosophical history. When I heard it at the conference I was in awe, and left motivated to redouble my efforts. Upon reading it now, I can't help but feel that this is an instant classic in Russell Studies. I will refrain from any attempt to critique it, because I am still studying it.

The essay by Candish, Sainsbury, Palmer, Rodriguez-Consuegra and Grayling are also very, very well-done. Each deserves careful attention.

One question: where is the conference lecture by Ivor Grattan-Guinness? Surely some explanation is required.

Also, one comment: it would have been a good idea to mention the fine discussion at the conference, or even include some of it. Grattan-Guinness, Griffin, Pigden, Paul Hager, Stuart Brown and many other participants offered valuable insights with questions and comments. It is a shame that these are now lost.

So, yes, I highly recommend this collection of fine essays. If you want to be in the thick of contemporary discussion of Russell, and ahead of the curve in your thinking and scholarship, devour these essays as soon as possible, and keep coming back to them.

The cost should not be to much of a problem. Fortunately, the paperback is quite reasonably priced in Great Britain (under twelve pounds at Foyles in London). In the United States it is being offered through Thoemmes Press, Books International Inc., P.O. Box 605, Herndon, VA20172 (phone 703-661-1586/fax 703-661-1501) for \$29.95 in paperback and 78.00 in hardback. I don't know the cost in Canada, Mexico the EC, the Philippines, or India. But my guess is that it will cost much less than comparable academic textbooks. Access to the book may be difficult. But it would appear that Thoemmes Press has made this book a high priority. You can probably purchase it directly from the press (telephone in the United Kingdom is 0771-9291377 and fax 0017-922-1918), or have you local bookstore arrange to do it for you. But don't let any obstacle keep you from getting this most important, vital resource.