

*THE BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY
QUARTERLY*

November 2001

No. 112



*Chad Trainer and
U.S. Representative Neil Abercrombie (D-HI)*

Philosopher Kings? A Russellian in Government?
...get the inside scoops on how politics makes
strange bedfellows...

THE BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY

The Bertrand Russell Society was founded in 1974 to foster a better understanding of the life, work and writing of Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) 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." (*What I Believe*, 1925)

THE BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY HOMEPAGE

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THE BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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The *Quarterly* is by the Council for Secular Humanism
in conjunction with the Bertrand Russell Society.

Letters and unsolicited articles, book reviews, etc. are welcome.

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Quote of the Quarterly

"Faith is the amazing ability of man which enables us to believe things which we know to be untrue."

From Werner Herzog's film *Nosferatu: The Vampyre* (1979).

Herzog's character was trying to defend faith here, by the way. What would Bertrand Russell say...

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it's time to renew!!!
See editorial for details!!!

Russellian Reflections for the End of the Year

(Note: the following Editorial was composed before the events of September 11.)

The year is drawing to a close, and for the first time in a couple of years there will be few predictions that the end of the world is nigh. (After all, if the human race can survive the turn of the millennium, it can survive anything.) At this time of year, my thoughts, like those of every good BRS member, turn to two subjects—the mission of the BRS and renewing my membership. Permit me a few words on the loftier first subject before venturing into the crass and materialistic second one.

I was at the bank today, depositing the refund I had received from Dubya. (I had intended to donate it to some cause Dubya hates, but I'm a bit short on cash right now, and I like to think my very existence annoys the President-Select enough.) My bank has the annoying habit of playing children's movies on videotape for the alleged enjoyment of its customers and their kids. Between movies, I was treated to advertisements for *Cinderella* and *Angels in the Outfield*. While the former, if not the latter, can presumably be enjoyed purely from an aesthetic point of view, to me both movies remind me how strong an anti-rationalist streak still runs through our culture. Both films invite passive resignation in the face of human problems. Just accept your lot meekly, there's nothing you can do, and maybe if you have enough faith a fairy godmother, seraphim, or other supernatural friend will take pity on you and make everything better. Above all, don't try to help yourself, or (shudder!) think for yourself. Don't worry—maybe your prince will come too, someday.

Being reminded of how ever-present such themes are in our culture makes me glad to belong to a society dedicated to someone like Bertrand Russell. Here, the idea of thinking for yourself, of refusing to accept the problems of the day (intellectual or political) without trying to find solutions, is welcomed and encouraged. Our membership holds diverse views on many subjects, but all embrace the idea that a community of minds is a cherished and (unfortunately) scarce thing.

If you bought any of that, then you'll do anything just to remain in such a wonderful society. This is good, because it's time to renew. All memberships (except Life and Honorary memberships) expire at the end of the calendar year, so everyone needs to renew as soon as possible. There's a membership form in the center of the *Quarterly*. Please return it to our treasurer, Dennis Darland, at 1406 26th Street, Rock Island, IL 61201-2837, USA. Please make checks payable, in US Dollars, to "BRS." If you have any questions about your membership, feel free to drop Dennis a line at djdarland@qconline.com.

But wait, you might ask. What happens in February or March if I don't remember if I've renewed? We endeavor to make things as easy as possible for you. You'll hopefully be getting a personal reminder after a few months, but there's no reason to wait that long. Once you receive the February BRSQ, you can check the mailing label. It will have one of the following 3 four-digit numbers on it:

2001 means you are paid through 2001, but still need to renew for 2002.

2002 means you have indeed renewed for 2002, and so are all set for the year.

9999 means you have a Life or Honorary membership, and so never need to renew.

Check for your number, and you'll always know your status.

The BRS is constantly looking for ways we can make it easier for you to keep your membership current. We'd hate to lose any member because of a misunderstanding over the timing of a dues payment. If you have any suggestions to help us improve the process, please drop us a line.

**The 2002 Annual Meeting of the
Bertrand Russell Society
Lake Forest College (Lake Forest, IL)
May 31-June 2, 2002**

Mark your calendars! The meeting site for the 2002 Annual Meeting has been selected—Lake Forest College, in Lake Forest, Illinois (about 30 miles north of Chicago, near Northwestern University). The BRS thanks Rosalind Carey, an Assistant Professor in Philosophy at Lake Forest, for agreeing to host the meeting.

BRS President Alan Schwerin is currently preparing a website with information about the conference and a call for papers. The website will be at <http://bluehawk.monmouth.edu/aschweri/brs2002.htm>. Members may also submit paper proposals to Alan at the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Monmouth University, West Long Branch, NJ 07764 USA, (732) 571-4470, aschweri@monmouth.edu. Please direct all other questions about the conference (concerning housing, food, travel, etc.) to Rosalind Carey, Department of Philosophy, Durand Hall, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL 60045 USA, carey@hermes.lfc.edu.

The *BRSQ* encourages every member to attend and participate in our latest meeting! See you in Lake Forest!

Letters

The BRSQ sent free copies of its May issue to everyone participating in the monthly meetings of the Greater Rochester Russell Set, in an effort to convince them to join the BRS. One of those receiving the free issue wrote the following response to David White:

May 29, 2001

Dear David,

If you are the one responsible for sending me a copy of *The Bertrand Russell Society Quarterly*, I want to thank you. It was nice to see the images of my two favorite Russellites on the cover. I enjoyed and enjoy Tim [*Mudigan—ed.*]’s warm congeniality and your intellect and happy disposition also re: the BR meetings I was able to sit in on.

Tim and I try to keep in touch but it is hard with both of us working so hard.

Regarding the booklet, I especially liked the information on Madalyn Murray O’Hair. I had read the conjectures regarding her and her relatives absconding with the organization’s funds, but nothing about the truth of the murdered bodies being found. That, like so much else, is very upsetting. As I am the only woman who speaks out against religion that I know of in this area, it makes me think of the risks. Perhaps it is good that I don’t have a bigger form to do so in.

I can’t do a lot of things that I would like to but I do what I can and that is to be our area’s representative for a national organization and to write letters of objections to all things of organized religion. On the back of this letter, I am going to copy you my latest objection. I wrote Tim that I wished the BRS in Rochester could tackle issues as a group; play more of a part in educating the general public about religious issues and government. But Tim reminded me that people have to be protective of their jobs. I am fortunate that I don’t have that kind of job and that I am married to a man who dislikes religion perhaps even more than I do. Al was enlightened before I was. He had to wait for me to catch up, but then I surpassed him as I was fortunate to be able to return to three area colleges and enjoy all the latest knowledge.

I was surprised to see your verse at the end of the booklet. Avoiding all things mathematical throughout my life, I had to look up the word Pythagoreanism to find: the eternal recurrence of things, and the mystical significance of numbers. That sounds so Pagan or pre-Christian as in the cycles of life and also the Goddess

numbers such as 13, for the months of the moon and the corresponding women's menstrual cycles, which was demonized by the patriarchal religions as was everything else to do with women's sexuality and spirituality. The verse seems to be a wish that Russell wasn't doing as well with the physical things of his life as he was with the mental? The Christian notion was that the two aspects of our life had to be in constant conflict with each other. And even for those of us who don't embrace the monotheistic religions, they still have influenced our ways of thinking that we probably will never be able to shed. I include myself among those who will never be free in thought as people of color who have not had centuries of the kind of sexual repression as those of us of European heritages. There was lots of things to think about in your verse. The important thing is that you said what you wanted to, not that I understood the meaning.

I hope all the Russell guys are being that forthcoming with objections to the things that are going on now like our tax dollars going to the "faith-based" groups to dole out as they see fit to the needy. This is what happened to the Native Americans long ago as an incentive to their embracing Christian thought, but it has not raised their financial status. It seems like this form of forced Christianity is going forward again using your and my tax money. I hope you and Tim and the other Russell guys are objecting as I know you could do a great job.

Sincerely,

Julie Fausette

June 27, 2001

Sanal Edamaruku should do some fact-checking before writing about events that happen half a world away. His Madalyn Murray O'Hair report in your May, 2001 issue claims that O'Hair, her son Jon Garth Murray, and her adopted daughter Robin Murray O'Hair went missing on September 4, 1995. This is off by about a week; a note was found at the American Atheists office by employees coming to work on the morning of August 28 saying that the three had been called away on an emergency. According to testimony at the Gary Karr trial, they were presumed to have been in the office on August 27.

Sanal asks, "Who is behind the firm in California which allegedly paid one of the most expensive lawyers to defend the murderer?" What firm is he talking about? David Waters, the accused killer, was declared indigent, meaning he was unable to afford a lawyer. An attorney was appointed to defend him; his fees were paid by the U.S. government. Sanal also asks, "What was the secret deal between the authorities and the murderer that saved him from the electric chair?" This makes me wonder what his opinion of the death penalty is. Those who say they're against the

death penalty, but would make an exception in Waters' case, are really for the death penalty. None of the federal charges would have resulted in his execution. Had he been charged and convicted of a death penalty offense, he would have been executed by lethal injection, not the electric chair. The "deal" was no secret; it's called a plea agreement. In short, Waters agreed to plead guilty to the robbery charge, and to show the investigators where the bodies were buried. In return, the feds dropped all other charges, requested that the Texas state government not pursue any charges regarding the murder of the Murray O'Hairs, and transferred Waters from state to federal prison.

Sanal claims to have hundreds of letters written by Madalyn Murray O'Hair, but declines to share copies of them with his readers. What is he hiding? Are these letters unflattering? They're his property, of course, and he can do with them what he pleases. But if he won't at least quote from any of the letters, then why even mention them?

Sanal doesn't specify what rumors he heard, but given the evidence presented at the Karr trial, it remains possible that the Murray O'Hairs attempted to flee overseas, hired smooth-talking Danny Fry to help them out, and got double-crossed when the gold coins were delivered. Remember, Karr was acquitted of the kidnapping charge. When have kidnapers ever requested gold coins as ransom? All those that I've read about demand unmarked bills. Gold coins, which aren't considered legal tender in the U.S., leave an easily-traced paper trail when they're exchanged for cash. Furthermore, Jon Murray had the chance to alert the authorities that he, Madalyn, and Robin were in danger when he picked up the gold coins, as he was in a room with the coin dealer and an off-duty San Antonio policeman, and no one else, for about an hour. The fact that he didn't ask for help, that he didn't even show any nervousness while he counted out the coins, indicates that his actions were voluntary and purposeful.

Sanal claims that United World Atheists "feel victim to hyenas, which ganged up to sabotage its take-off." Once again, specifics aren't provided. When he makes such an allegation, he should present the facts as he knows them, so that other atheists can be warned about the rogues in our midst.

Did it never occur to Sanal that O'Hair appointed herself the President of United World Athiests because she wanted to monopolize atheism? She took over publications such as the *Free Humanist*, the *Ripsaw*, and *Progressive World*, and organizations such as United Secularists of America. Her predatory ways were finally halted when her attempted hostile takeover of the *Truth Seeker* failed.

G. Richard Bozarth worked at the American Atheist office when Sanal and his father visited in 1979. In an article published in the January-February 1983 issue of

American Rationalist, he wrote, "When Edamaruku, the great Atheist leader in India, and his son were in the USA for the 1979 American Atheist Convention, Madalyn and Garth referred to them as 'beggars' and 'monkeys.'" In his book *A Case Against Madalyn Murray O'Hair: Interrelated Essays on an Experience* (1989), Bozarth recalls that United World Atheists was formed as one of Madalyn's many publicity stunts, and as an excuse to take foreign vacations. He writes that Madalyn's brother Irv said of Sanal and his father, "Don't they look like something that just swung out of the trees?" and that Madalyn and Jon "made it clear to me that these two admirable men were to them just an act to help give the convention more drawing power."

Former American Atheist employee David Kent reported that "Madalyn did refer to [Indian atheist leader] Gora as a beggar, although she played up her 'friendship' with the Atheist Centre and with Gora, his wife and his son. She saw the value to her of Gora, since their centre is by far the most extensive atheist operation in the world—a model of what she talked about but never did. Playing on Gora's hopes that financial support might be forthcoming through her efforts, she and Jon and Robin 'cosponsored' the World Atheist Meet in Vijayawada, which meant they flew to India and back on atheist funds. Of course, Gora received nothing from that junket or any other of hers."

Bozarth and Kent both said that Gora, Lavanam, Sanal and Joseph Edamaruku, as well as other atheists from India were ethical people who didn't deserve the derision heaped upon them by the Murray O'Hairs. What Madalyn Murray O'Hair really thought of atheists might best be described in her own words; during a speech in Berkeley, she said, "I do not like atheists very much, if at all," and "Atheists are faithless, gutless, and brainless, and they cannot inherit the future." (The speech is reproduced in the July 1971 edition of *Progressive World*.) Atheists can, and should, do much better than that kind of representation.

John Rush

Mr. Rush enclosed a copy of the plea agreement entered in the David Waters case, as well as a brief article he had written about the plea and sentencing, with his letter.

July 12, 2001

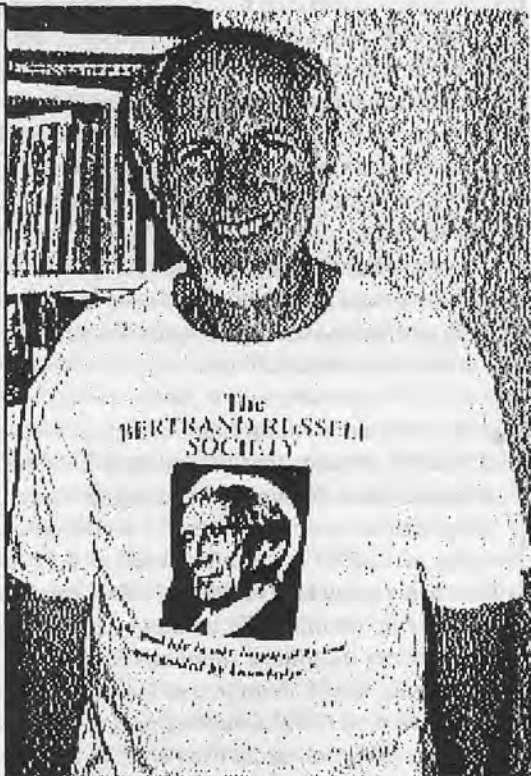
When I was packing for a holiday in Europe, I looked through my t-shirt drawer and selected a couple. One of these was the Russell t-shirt I had bought at last year's national meeting. That the shirt was comfortable and wore well was no

surprise. What was a surprise were the many conversations this t-shirt engendered. "Who is this Ber-TRAND RUSS-ell?" an accented voice asked me. "A *philosophe*," I replied, using the French term. "And why is there a Bertrand Russell Society?" he asked. So I told him a bit about Russell's ideas. This was typical of many encounters I enjoyed. On trails in Chianti, in the Louvre, on the beach, on a cliff in Cinque Terre and elsewhere, this t-shirt was an attention-getter and a conversation-starter. "'Remember your humanity and forget the rest.' That's quite a message to bring to the world." I was told. "I wish I'd said it, those were Russell's words," I answered.

Would YOU like a T-Shirt like This?

If you've ever wanted proudly to display your enthusiasm for Russell in public—and stay out of jail along the way—the BRS has just the thing for you. The Society now has t-shirts available. The shirts feature Bertie's face on the front, along with the BRS's motto, "The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge." The back displays another classic Russell quote, "Remember your humanity, and forget the rest."

The shirts are available for \$10 each plus \$ 3 postage. U.S. funds only, please. Please make checks out to the BRS, and send them to Ray Perkins, 854 Battle ST, Webster, NH 03303, USA. Please specify size (M,L,XL) and color. Shirts are available in black or yellow. (White may also be available; check with Ray at perkrk@earthlink.net.)



I've travelled in Europe many times and never has any t-shirt attracted half the attention that my Russell t-shirt did.

Garry Wildenberg

BRS Board Elections—Vote Now!

It's time for the Bertrand Russell Society to fill the 8 seats on its Board of Directors that fall vacant at the end of the year. Please cast your vote for up to 8 of the 11 candidates whose statements appear below. You may also write in candidates if you wish. Candidates must be members of the BRS in good standing.

A ballot appears at the center of this issue (right under the renewal form). Please return your completed ballot to BRS Librarian Tom Stanley at Box 434, Wilder, Vermont, 05080 USA, tom.stanley@valley.net. If a couple has a joint membership, each member of the couple is entitled to a vote; just photocopy the ballot and send in one copy for each member. All ballots must include the name and signature of the member voting. (Ballots will be viewed only by the Elections Committee and the Secretary.) All ballots must be received by *January 1, 2002!*

Board Candidate Statements

Kevin Brodie was first elected to the Board three years ago. Since then, he has learned a great deal about the operations of the Society. He has been proud to be on the board, and to serve as a member of the BRS Awards Committee (which he now chairs). He is interested in finding ways to increase BRS membership, and in reaching out to non-academics to diversify the membership. He recently succeeded in persuading the administration of the high school at which he teaches to introduce philosophy courses for the first time. (Russell's work has been integral to this endeavor.) He is anxious to continue to serve the Society as a member of the Board of Directors.

Rosalind Carey holds a Ph.D. in early analytic philosophy (with an M.A. in religion) and currently works as an Assistant Professor outside of Chicago at Lake Forest College, Illinois. Her main interest in Russell lies in his middle period metaphysics/epistemology/logic and in his collaboration with Wittgenstein. Her interest in Russell began in the mid-eighties by accident. As a young graduate student of religion, she purchased a used copy of *Logic and Knowledge* at a bookstore in Boston and found the first essay she read—"Mathematical Logic as Based on the Theory of Types"—utterly fascinating, though quite opaque. Several years later, as a philosophy graduate student, an interest in Duns Scotus and individuation led her to read Russell's work on acquaintance. She is proud to be a Russellian, not least because she cannot imagine exerting so much effort to understand someone not in sympathy with her own liberal, progressive, atheist social and political views.

Nino B. Cocchiarella is a Professor of Philosophy at Indiana University. He has written extensively on analytic philosophy, formal ontology and philosophical problems in mathematical logic; formal semantics and theories of predication, reference

and nominalization; and the philosophy of language; as well as our understanding of the logical properties of time and modality. He is the author of several books, including one on early analytic philosophy. He has written numerous articles, book reviews, and reviews of technical papers. His work covers the philosophy of logical atomism and modal logic as well as Montague grammar; and he has written extensively on Russell's paradox of predication and Frege's and Russell's metaphysics, including a logical reconstruction of their different forms of logicism. In his own framework of conceptual realism he has logically reconstructed Lesniewski's ontology and the medieval supposition theory. The recipient of numerous honors, Prof. Cocchiarella is on the editorial boards of a number of distinguished publications, including the *Journal of Philosophical Logic* and *Synthese*. He has been awarded grants from the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and a grant from the Government of Italy. His essays on Russell have appeared in several encyclopedias, and he is a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

Peter Friedman received unconditional offers of places on Philosophy Honours Degree courses from nine U.K. universities, based upon the submission of an essay on Russell's *Problems of Philosophy*. He has a Certificate in Management Studies from what is now Hertfordshire University. His most recent work is a series of studies into the fundamental nature of traffic generation on the World Wide Web; the psychology of the web surfer; the strategic misunderstanding of the role of e-mail in supplier/consumer relationships; and the impact of context in web-based promotion. He also took a decisive role in turning around the U.K.'s leading financial document image service. He has also had a brief spell as head of the technology sub-committee for the leading U.K. regional Chamber of Commerce.

Bernard Linsky (B.A. University of Chicago, 1971; Ph.D. Stanford University, 1975) is Professor and currently Chair of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Alberta. His work on Russell includes *Russell's Metaphysical Logic* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), and two papers in *Bertrand Russell: Critical Assessments* (Routledge, 1999). He has been to McMaster University to see the Archives but has not actually studied the manuscripts. His interest in Russell is longstanding, having been brought up hearing about "On Denoting" and the theory of definite descriptions from his father, Leonard Linsky, who passed along a love of logic and fascination with Russell's philosophy.

Tim Madigan is Editorial Director of the University of Rochester Press. He has a Ph.D. in philosophy from the State University of New York at Buffalo, and was for 12 years on the editorial staff of *Free Inquiry*, the secular humanist journal. He is a past Vice President of the Bertrand Russell Society, and has been a member of the Society for 14 years. He is also an active member of the Greater Rochester Russell Set in Rochester, New York and is on the editorial board of the *BRS Quarterly*.

Ray Perkins is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Plymouth State College in New Hampshire. He has been a student of Russell's philosophy ever since, as a 16 year-old high school student perplexed about religion, he discovered Russell's "Why I Am Not a Christian". He has served one term on the BRS Board of Directors and is currently Vice President of the BRS. He is editor of the recently published collection of Russell's letters to the editor, entitled *Yours Faithfully, Bertrand Russell* (Open Court, 2001).

Alan Schwerin teaches Philosophy at Monmouth University, where he is an Associate Professor and the current Chair of the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies. He completed his doctorate on Hume at Rice University and to date has published twenty-four refereed papers, predominantly on empiricism. His two most recent books are *Apartheid's Landscape and Ideas: A Scorched Soul* (University of Rochester Press, 2001) and a collection of papers on Russell's views on ethics and language (Greenwood, forthcoming). He is the current President of the Bertrand Russell Society and has served in this capacity for the past two years.

Warren Allen Smith is the author of *Who's Who in Hell* (Barricade Books, 2000). He corresponded with Lord Russell in 1953 and 1956. He has served on the Board since 1974. He would prefer that a much younger, better looking, and more brilliant member would replace him, whereupon he would continue to partake in Society business (in the recent past he recommended Ibn Warraq and Taslima Nasrin for Honorary Membership in the BRS) and attend annual meetings. But, to paraphrase Russell, if elected he'll do his humanistic best. If not re-elected he sure as "Hell" won't resign.

Chad Trainer has an appreciation of Bertrand Russell dating back to the late 1970s, when he found the outlook of Russell a welcome alternative to the more orthodox viewpoints to which a Catholic school background had subjected him. He has read over thirty of Russell's books and delivered papers at the last two Annual Society Meetings. His essay "Language: A Leading or Lagging Indicator of Truth for Russell," which he delivered at the Bertrand Russell Society's 2000 Annual Meeting, was recently published in Monmouth University's *Nexus: A Forum for Ideas*. Over the years, he has been in correspondence about many of philosophy's different facets with approximately twenty philosophy professors from institutions ranging anywhere from Bryn Mawr College to Oxford University. He lives in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania less than ten miles from Little Datchet Farm where Russell lived during the Second World War. (He periodically visits this farm to enjoy the Russellian "broad horizon.")

Thom Weidlich is a New York-based freelance writer. He wrote *Appointment Denied: The Inquisition of Bertrand Russell* (Prometheus, 2000), a book dealing with the City College case, published in 2000. (This book won the 2001 BRS Book Award.) He has been a member of the Society for about 15 years.

September 11, 2001: Two Humanist Responses

In the wake of the horrible attacks on September 11, 2001 against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the BRSQ has received a number of responses from various voices in the humanist world. We publish below two of these—a statement by the International Humanist Ethical Union (IHEU) released on September 12, and a brief statement by Paul Kurtz, Editor-in-Chief of Free Inquiry and an honorary member of the BRS. The BRSQ received the first statement directly from the IHEU, while the second appeared in the September 27 issue of Rationalist International. The statements reflect the views of their authors, and not necessarily those of the BRS or the BRSQ.

Copy of Message Sent to American Colleagues

Dear Friends,

In this time of tragedy and great distress, on behalf of the IHEU we would like to share with you all our feelings of solidarity and togetherness.

There is disbelief and disgust for what has happened. The horror of the human devastation was as intense as the incomprehension and anger at the spontaneous jubilation in some parts of the world. Never, it seems, are human values more urgently needed than now. In the past, civilisation has ultimately triumphed against such barbarity, and we hope this will be the case now as well.

As we all psychologically pick ourselves up from the rubble of our destroyed humanity, our hearts go out to those who have become victims of this mindless and senseless attack.

The culprits who have planned and conspired to carry out this attack have to be identified and punished appropriately, but we hope that vulnerable communities will not be victimised in the search for the guilty.

In solidarity, and in hope,

On behalf of the IHEU's member organisations and the Executive Committee,

Levi Fragell
Babu Cugineni

A Call for Caution and Prudence

Paul Kurtz

I wish to speak personally and not on behalf of the Council for Secular Humanism.

The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11th has shocked the civilized world and has rightly brought forth expressions of regret and condemnation. What has stunned everyone is the apparent willingness of nineteen terrorists to commit suicide by slamming their aircraft into targets and their absolute insensitivity to the deaths of thousands of innocent people. Some of the terrorists apparently are men in their late twenties and thirties who have taken months or years to train for their deadly mission. A soldier sent into combat to inflict damage on his enemies usually has some hope of coming out of the battle alive; but not in these cases, where death was inevitable. How could they have acted in this way? What were their motives?

We know that the suicide bombers in Israel and Palestine who enter into crowds of innocent people, including women and children, often yell "Allah akbar!" (God is great!) as they blow themselves to kingdom come. In many cases families of the bombers when interviewed applaud their sons or brothers, for their "heroic deeds." In one case, the father even hoped that his second son would make the same sacrifice.

Obviously, the motives are religious. And they are based upon a deep faith that they are doing the work of Allah and will be rewarded in heaven after death. According to the story, such a hero who dies for Islam will have seventy or seventy-two virgins throughout eternity. All enemies of Islam—as perceived by them—are considered evil and need to be destroyed. Their victims are dehumanized. Here the jihad is considered righteous and just because it is done in the name of God.

Contrast this with the faith of Christians and Jews who pray to God, implying that he is on their side. They often claim that any retribution they may take is in the name of their God and religion.

As the United States in grief and fear responds to these terrorists, one should ponder the opposing religious premises in this conflict. Are we about to enter a Holy War—in the name of God—as viewed differently by the contending factions? Clearly the acts of the Islamic terrorists are unconscionable. But what about self-righteous retribution done with the conviction that God "is on our side?" If He is, why did He allow more than 6,000 innocent people to die in the World Trade Towers; and why will he allow the death of tens of thousands of innocent victims who will surely die in retaliatory military strikes?

Unfortunately, the basic religious premises of this conflagration are not open to discussion. There is all too little inquiry into the foundations of religious beliefs. It is considered in bad taste or intolerable to do so. The age-old jihad is based in the Koran and Hadith (traditions), as the Judæo-Christian response to it is often rooted in the Bible. These documents were spawned in nomadic and rural societies in the infancy of the race and are not appropriate to the modern world. We should seek to find common ground with other human beings—by opening up discussion of the grounds of revelation in the Old and New Testaments and the Koran—and by refusing to allow these ancient documents to dictate our policies.

The Koran is a good case in point, because if one studies the history of Islam, one finds that it expanded its hegemony by the use of the sword. Mohammed himself raised an army of ten thousand men and destroyed his enemies and he advanced Islam by ruthless methods. The jihad has been practiced throughout history by the militant believers in Allah and Muhammad—by North African Moors, in Spain, France, and the Mediterranean, by the Ottoman Empire of Turkey in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and by the Mongol invasions of Europe. The Crusades, seeking to defend the Christian faith in the 11th and 12th centuries, were led by militant Christians who attacked Islamic lands and seized the "Holy Land" from Muslims, only to have it retaken. The Holy Inquisition sought to expel Jews and Muslims from the Iberian peninsula in the 15th century. The jihad was halted two centuries ago when the European colonial powers, especially France and Great Britain, conquered many Islamic countries in North Africa and the Middle East. It was resumed again after the Second World War when these countries were liberated and established their own feudal theocracies. And it has continued to grow as the fundamentalists gain ground and terrorize governments and impede any measures against them.

The battle for Palestine in part is between Jews who believe the Old Testament and Muslims who revere the Koran. Today significant peace-loving and democratic Moslem minorities exist in all the countries of the West—especially the United States, Germany, France, England. But what is not discussed and needs to be discussed, urgently and critically, are the foundations of the claims for the jihad. One can argue that Islam will continue, of course, as the creed of a great civilization. But there is a difference between a liberal reading of the Koran with an emphasis on symbolic pronouncements, and the literal reading of the Koran and the Hadith which justifies jihad. The literal tradition condemns to death those who seek to break away from Islam; those who blaspheme it are considered foes. The jihad needs to be interpreted in light of the fact that these revelations have doubtful foundations. We need Koranic criticism and we need to discuss the Koran carefully, without any condemnation in doing so.

If the Koran and Hadith are used to repress others or to unleash a holy war, then we need a clear discussion of how and why and to show the fragmentary and questionable grounds of this faith which so inspires many Muslims to die in the name of Allah. A similar kind of free inquiry should apply to the Bible.

Free Inquiry magazine was founded in 1980 in response to the emergence of the Religious Right and their use of the Bible to justify repression in the United States and to bridge the separation of church and state. If the Koran and Bible are used to justify wars of aggression or retaliation, then they have to be read critically. Alas, they are still not in most parts of the world.

Fundamentalist Muslims hate the modern Western world, its devotion to democracy, civil liberties, moral freedom, reason, and science. In its place they would establish a medieval and barbaric patriarchy, which suppresses women and freedom of inquiry. Modern Muslims realize that Islamic culture will not advance until it enters into the modern world and accepts democracy, secularism, and rational scientific inquiry. They are intimidated by fundamentalist mobs.

In the current situation we advocate caution and prudence; and we hope that the hysteria and frenzy on all sides will abate. Those who commit heinous crimes of terror must be brought to the bar of justice. But the terrorists are an international problem, not the exclusive problem of the United States, and we need an international convention of all civilized nations of the world—Moslem and Western, Christian, Jewish, and secularist—as President Mubarak of Egypt has advised. Unilateral action by the United States is imprudent. We need all civilized nations of our planetary community to act in concert against terrorism.

We realize that the American people are seeking justice; and they wish to punish those who would commit such foul deeds. President Bush has called for an all-out war against terrorism, but had unfortunately used the term "crusade" to describe that war. He is to be commended for recognizing the threat and asking Americans and others in the world to deal with it. However, I would urge a reflective response. Any action that we take should be in concert with all our allies in the democratic world and also with the support of moderate Muslim nations. The United Nations should be involved and an international peace-keeping force needs to be created. All terrorists should be brought to the World Court in the Hague for a trial.

A cloud of fear overlays America. People are afraid to travel. There is apprehension of spies in our midst. And there are calls for a limitation of our civil liberties. There are fears that a police state will in time result. We should not turn against our Muslim neighbors, the vast majority of whom are not committed to holy jihad.

What is essential is that although we need to defend ourselves, clearly, we also need to protect our cherished civil liberties and our constitutional guarantees and guard against their erosion and abrogation. The United States has been in existence for over two centuries, and our Constitution has safeguarded this great democracy. We should not, in a fit of fear and anger, be willing to suppress our precious liberties.

A call for caution and prudence:

- * We need free inquiry of the religious premises of the growing conflagration.
- * We need rational debate of the questionable premises of a "holy war" or jihad.
- * We need a rational debate of the biblical call for retribution.
- * We call upon the United States not to act unilaterally and to petition the United Nations to establish a peace-keeping force.
- * All terrorists when apprehended should be brought to the World Court at the Hague and put on trial.
- * The basic constitutional civil liberties of America should not be abrogated.

American Philosophical Association

Eastern Division Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia ~ December 27-30, 2000
Pacific Division Meeting in Seattle, Washington ~ March 27-30, 2001
There will be a BRS session at the meetings and a BRS table at the smoker
For more information, contact David White at white@sjfc.edu.

Call for Papers

"Activism, Ideology, and Radical Philosophy"
5th Biennial Radical Philosophy Association Conference
November 7-10, 2002
Brown University

Please send paper, workshop, poster, and other proposals to RPA PROGRAM COMMITTEE, c/o Lisa Heldke, Philosophy Department, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN 56802. Or send them as an attachment to heldke@gac.edu. The deadline for submissions is January 31, 2002. For more information on the RPA, go to www.radicalphilosophy.org

A Conversation with U.S. Representative Neil Abercrombie (D-HI) - Conducted by Chad Tramm

Congressman Neil Abercrombie (D-Hawaii) was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in a 1986 special election. He returned to the House after being elected again in 1990. He is a member of the Committee on Armed Services, where he is ranking Democrat on the Military Installations and Facilities Subcommittee, and the Committee on Resources.

Abercrombie began his political career in the Hawaii State House of Representatives in 1974. After two terms in the State House, he was elected to the State Senate, where he served for eight years. He chaired the Senate Committees on Education, Higher Education and Human Services. He also served on the Honolulu City Council from 1988 to 1990.

Congressman Abercrombie received a B.A. degree in Sociology from Union College in Schenectady, N.Y., and a Masters degree in Sociology and a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Hawaii. He worked as a waiter, custodian, probation officer, graduate teaching assistant, college lecturer, professor, construction apprentice program director, and special assistant to the State Superintendent of Education.

Abercrombie's community activities include service on the boards of the Nuuanu YMCA, the Hawaii Special Olympics, the Epilepsy Foundation of America, Friends of Father Damien, Variety Club (Tent 50), the Life Foundation/AIDS Foundation of Hawaii and Amnesty International.

Awards received by Neil Abercrombie include the Japanese American Citizens League President's Award, Toastmasters International Award, National Epilepsy Foundation Advocacy Award, Hawaii Epilepsy Foundation of Hawaii Person of the Year Award (renamed the Abercrombie Award), Ronald McDonald House Support Award, Favorite University of Hawaii Professor, Friends of the Library of Hawaii Mahalo Award, Most Popular Legislator of the Year Award, United Group Home Operators Legislative Award, Hawaii State Chiropractic Association Senator of the Year Award, Clifford Award (Mental Health Public Official of the Year), Hawaii Federation of the Blind Eva H. Smyth Award for Distinguished Contribution, Clinical Laboratories Management Association Special Recognition Award, and SERTOMA Freedom Award.

Neil Abercrombie and Richard Hoyt co-authored Blood of Patriots, a work of fiction focusing on the role of money in electoral politics. He is married to Dr. Nancie Caraway, an author and educator. He has been a member of the BRS since 1989.

CT: What I thought would be interesting would be to get your feelings about Bertrand Russell but also, maybe, if I could ask you some questions that I think Russell might ask you if he was alive today. I had some fun the other night jotting down some ideas. And, I guess, I was thinking the first question would be: What makes Congressman Abercrombie the only person in Congress who is a member of the Bertrand Russell Society?

NA: Maybe because of my fascination with him all my adult life. What I mean by my adult life is I had no real conception of what Russell was about, let alone who he was, when I was in high school. But by the time I got into college, I got exposed to him—actually through my brother, who was at Syracuse and had picked up on some writings by Russell. I think I picked up *Authority and the Individual*, *Unpopular Essays*, some of the things I have right here, *Sceptical Essays*. And, of course, I was fascinated with him immediately because of the clarity of the concepts, the clarity and the insight of the writings and its appeal. This was in the '50s, and I went to college '55-'59 in a small liberal arts school. There was an engineering base to it, though I wasn't an engineer. It was fortunate for me to go to such a school because it helped me to form my conceptions about urban planning and in that atmosphere, in the 50s, my views on the button down generation, the man in the gray flannel suit, that kind of thing, the pre-beatnik and the pre-hippie, all the gross characterizations that have taken place over that era.

But there was a renaissance underway of literature and theatre that manifested itself in the 1960s, and there was music. Interestingly enough, Russell was a part of that. He was a catalyst in many respects—intellectually for me, certainly. He had been associated in many people's minds with the anti-nuclear testing and anti-nuclear weapons movement, the peace movement, more broadly. And as a result, there had been a lot of exposure—political exposure—to some of his work. But it hadn't really carried through to a whole lot of people. They were familiar with his name. Intellectuals hadn't necessarily done any reading of him and that was really sad because the reading was so easy to do. In some regard, I don't think he got all the attention or respect that he deserved because his work was too easy to read. If he had been Hegel, you see, or Wittgenstein, or Kant, where you had this impenetrable and incomprehensible text to deal with or even, sociologically speaking, Talcott Parsons—all these folks, even Durkheim, it would be different. He didn't have that academic veneer. He was so accessible that way. It couldn't be important, it couldn't possibly be something to be reverential about because he was so irreverent himself. He had no pretense, no public pretense, regardless of what people may write about him, biographically speaking, on his personal relationships and such. His public persona was devoid of that kind of egotism and distance from the mass of people who might be contemplating what he had to say and how he had to say it. He was very accessible. He was the only contemporary pop philosopher.

In other words, he was a celebrity, a celebrity philosopher. And I guess, the only academic I can think of that fell into that category was Marshall McLuhan, maybe. McLuhan was an incandescent candle. He kind of burst for a little while. In pop culture terms, he was a manifest persona—was there for a while, shined very brightly, disappeared kind of thing. But Russell had been there forever and kept on going.

CT: He wouldn't die.

NA: He wouldn't die, literally! So, all of that combined in the late '50s to stimulate me to pay attention to what he had to say. And of course, the more I read the more sense he made. I had great difficulty in finding anything that he said that I didn't agree with which was kind of strange and exhilarating in some respects. In a sense I became a disciple of Russell because he was writing about things that were on my mind and I didn't have many other sources to go to in order to verify the things that were on my mind. Some of the writers, contemporary writers—there was Habermas, more in the academic philosophy that made sense to me. And C. Wright Mills was writing as a sociologist then, again in a popular vein, with *The Power Elite* and *White Collar*. Some of these sociological treatises were parallel examinations of things that Russell was talking about philosophically.

I was interested in religion. That was a thing that drew me to him too in both *Sceptical Essays* and in *Why I Am Not a Christian*—provocative title—*Why I Am Not A Christian*. Today, that may seem kind of prosaic, an interesting title perhaps but almost pedestrian. But let me tell you, fifty years ago it wasn't. And it's really fifty years ago. I am looking here.

CT: 1926, or something like that.

NA: Maybe the publication dates are a little different. "Why I Am Not A Christian" may have been written earlier, the one that I got was published in 1957 and was one essay among other essays that was the title essay of a book of essays that came out in '57 when I got a hold of it. I think that you are right and it was written thirty years earlier. But the point is still made that this was very provocative going on forty or fifty years ago in that era of conformity, those Eisenhower years, the end of conformity, I should say, I guess. And he contributed to that enormously.

The last thing I would say in that regard is that much of the intellectual freedom which was sought, as well as the other kinds of freedom—social freedoms, sexual revolution, personal freedoms, feminism etc., were anticipated—in fact, a foundation was laid for them by Russell's writing. He doesn't get any credit for it. He helped to establish that atmosphere and had done so for decade after decade after decade. You could count on Russell, if you go back over the history of his

writing, to have been zeroing in with great precision on those issues which became so high profile over the years.

CT: You once told me that Russell had influenced your politics more than any other individual. Could you elaborate on that?

NA: Take a book like *Political Ideals*. That was written as a public lecture in 1917 with respect to Britain going into World War I and was banned and remained unpublished in Great Britain I believe until the 1960s. He outlined the basic tenets of his political code. He talked about capitalism. He talked about the pitfalls of socialism. Don't forget he was the first one to analyze communism—remember his *Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* in which he analyzed Leninism. He essentially understood it. He was one of the first people to visit Russia, or the burgeoning Soviet Union, and he, with great insight, great prescience, understood the cycle that was going to take place. He figured out in China too that this essentially was a dictatorship not of the proletariat per se but a dictatorship of the mind and was going to fall of its own weight as a result, and there would be purges and all those kinds of things. He understood that implicitly as well as stating other observations explicitly. He was quite aware.

He even has sections in *Political Ideals*, about socialism, individual liberty and public control, and national independence and internationalism—all those things. The whole essay is less than a hundred pages printed. It is about 75 pages. I went into many things in a conversational way, in a vernacular way, all of the elements that we were trying to come to grips with at that time in the late '50s, early '60s.

Go back in the context of time, all of those things that he was talking about in here, capitalism and the wage system, for example. Now, some of that may seem rather naïve because you have the defeat of communism. But you see Russell understood communism was not a Left ideology at all. It was Red fascism. Another form of fascism is what he was talking about, institutionally speaking, organizationally speaking—communism as just another form of fascism. He understood that and I understood that as a result. Although I was never a Marxist, I had to deal with Marxist ideas and with Marxists all my intellectual life in the '50s and '60s and even into the '70s. And Marxism as such only fell out of favor recently. Everyone tends to think about only what happened in the last two minutes. This all seems like ancient history. And why were people talking about it? Didn't everyone realize that communism wouldn't work? And no, not everybody did. Even if they did, still that didn't mean that they were going to prostrate themselves for capitalism as such. And Russell had a way of working through it.

Just, for example, in "Capitalism and the Wage System," and I'm quoting now, "the most dangerous aspect of the tyranny of the employer is the power it

gives him of interfering with man's activities outside of their working hours." You read *White Collar* or *The Power Elite* by C. Wright Mills and you see this. I mentioned Durkheim before and others that influenced my thinking as a sociologist. I was a sociology major before I went into American studies. All I'm driving at is sentences like that would stimulate me to think about things politically. How do you reconcile the individual and authority? How do you maximize the capacity for individual autonomy and at the same time meet the necessities of reaching the common good? How do you reconcile those things? Should they be reconciled? What about societies who emphasize the group over the individual?

People see things different ways. They see the same thing and interpret it much differently depending on the value system they have inculcated. How much do you try to transcend the cultural baggage you have been given, your view of the world? All those things he addresses in "The Pitfalls of Socialism." And again quoting, "One of the sources of evil in modern large democracies is the fact that most of the electorate have little or no vital interest in most of the questions that arise." Of course, this was written much earlier than the time of television. But you can see immediately how applicable that was to television. He commented on those kinds of things later on in other essays that he wrote and observations that he made.

One needs to remember that Russell was commenting on the world around him, virtually from Queen Victoria's time. The Victorian era certainly went on beyond her passing, and right up until the post-atomic world. So his grasp of the necessity of updating in the outer world that which had been a product of his inner life and thought was fascinating. It was awesome. He was willing to do that, eager to do it.

He basically pioneered taking the scientific attitude and approach into the modern world. Obviously that is where you do experimentation and verification and duplication. When you find you are going in the wrong direction, rather than causing you heartache and grief, you find a sense of joy and relief that you discovered it, that you had an error in your system, and you want to correct it. The thrust of your philosophy is discovery, particularly discovery of that which is in error, is an occasion for happiness. You think, "Gosh, I was going in the wrong direction. I think I am going to go a more positive way." All of this done with a touch of humor, a profound sense of the kind of absurdity of existence.

What is interesting to me is that I never found a contradiction between Bertrand Russell and existentialism, for example. Existentialism had a kind of grim inevitability and fatalism. Of course, Russell, to me, always had a profound sense of optimism and eternal interest in life. Inquiry was an occasion of joy of stimulation and enthusiasm.

CT: Not something to dread.

NA: Not something to dread or simply to accept, but I didn't see it as a contradiction. I think I felt very much in empathy, sympathy with existentialism, and I did not see it as contradiction at all and Russell, I don't think, would have either. He, I think, would see it as a paradox. Different ways of inquiry, different ways of trying to come to terms and grips with life. That really was essential. I think what I took mostly out of the political ideas and ideals of Bertrand Russell was that politics offered constant stimulus to your creative impulses and humanitarian impulses. To try and give yourself the opportunity to justify your existence in terms of your relationship to others, and what you are contributingæit is our moral obligation essentially to do that.

CT: I'd like to talk about you for a moment. What politically oriented accomplishments are you proudest of? And what in your political career are your biggest regrets?

NA: You know, I really don't think that way. Maybe that has something to do with Russell too. Look at him. He lived almost a century and contributed, intellectually, in terms of his activities, for more than three quarters of that time. And to pick something as "well, that was really good" or "that was really bad," or even the regrets—I am not trying to run away from it. It is that—it is not a concern, because I see this thing as a continuum. There are lots of things that I am proud to have been associated with. And by proud, I mean I feel I was acting in a way that certainly Russell might have approved of—I hope so anyway—and that I approved of in myself. There's dozens of things, things that I did with respect to health and education, higher and lower in Hawaii, individual instances in which I may have helped to make someone's life a little more productive. Perhaps I give them a moment of happiness or surcease from grief or pain, and you can do that in politics. That is the appeal of a public life, I think.

If I regret things, it is that I haven't been good enough in explaining some of the things that I do even to those that I am closest to and whose good opinion I treasure. I haven't always been able to explain to people why I did what I did. Maybe I haven't been able to explain it to myself as well. My only regret is that I probably haven't devoted the kind of energy and discipline to trying to accomplish a public life worthy of the name that I should have. I am often struck by Russell's discipline. But I don't have that and he was a genius.

CT: He read all the time. It is amazing what he accomplished.

NA: He's so prolific. You'll get upset with yourself if you start comparing. That is why I was always reluctant to start comparing. Even comparing myself to myself

I think that it is essentially useless. I see all these things as a continuum. You are doing better on some days than you are on others.

CT: It is quite possible that someone with the political acumen of Russell would have been prevented from pursuing a political career because of his private life. To what degree do you think a person's private life should be a factor in determining suitability to a political office?

NA: That is a good question because there is no necessary reason for someone with Russell's insight and his obvious political interest to necessarily manifest that in electoral office at all. Just by coincidence last night I was watching the British elections on C-SPAN. C-SPAN showed the BBC broadcast of the second election cycle for Tony Blair which I found very interesting, very fascinating, because it is quite different. The irreverence of the commentators is great fun, and you have to be on the ball and very sharp. Russell would have been ideal in that give-and-take, that kind of thing, because of his wit, because of his humor, because of his self-deprecating approach and his command of language and his ease in public. He would have been ideal in that regard. I think he would have been happier, though, and more productive, not running for office and dealing with all the quotidian details of having to be in public office. Believe me, when you see people on the TV with shaking hands, and the big bill-signing ceremonies and all that, that is one thing. But that doesn't begin to get into the scutwork, the dogsled work, I call it. That is the way that I always think about it. I think about myself attached to the sled of a public life, and you are pulling that sled and you have to do it with single-minded energy. He was far too eclectic. If I had been in Parliament, not a Prime Minister, of course, but if I had been in Parliament or in a Ministry, what I would have wanted was Russell there as an advisor—not even advisor as such but as a commentator on everything. It would be a "What do you think?" "How does this look?" "What is your view?" "What do you think about things?" "If you've got anything to say to me about it, let me know" kind of a routine. "Let's exchange and meet to refresh my mind and get a fresh perspective."

I don't know if he would have been so great talking to caucuses there, or whatever the equivalent is in Great Britain. But I just don't think that the best use of his energy, his time, his talent, and his genius would have been necessarily in electoral politics. As for his private life, I wouldn't think, particularly in his time, it would have been anything one way or the other. In some respects his private life to me is fairly conventional—a couple of affairs involved and so on and so forth. His life is, compared to some others these days, rather prosaic.

Today there is very little in the way of private life because of television, because of degeneration—I won't even say the degeneration of journalism because I am sure that the yellow journalism, the sensationalism, the tabloidism has always

been there from the first instance. But the instantaneous pervasiveness of it didn't exist before as it does now with entertainment and television operating twenty-four/seven and the capacity to sustain that kind of interest in the name of profit-getting people to watch long enough to sell commercials, of sensationalizing human foible, and tragedy in some instances, personal stupidities and difficulties, and so on. It shouldn't be a part of it. But it is very difficult these days, with the incredible intensity of political life, public life, electoral life, not to sensationalize and put great pressure on the private side, the personal side—families.

It is a tough life. This is a tough life. I don't say much about it ever because you never get any sympathy from anybody about it anyway, but it is hardest on family. Again, you always have to consider the context in which people were doing things in the time Russell lived. He was just, as he entered the last decades of his life, beginning to encounter the type of intensity of scrutiny that we now deal with as an everyday fact of life. We don't have private lives as public figures. You can have a personal life. I differentiate from private and personal. If you go to a restaurant, that is not private anymore. But what you say to your wife or husband is personal. What you do is try to salvage something of the personal but it takes extraordinary, well-integrated people in terms of their personality and psychology to be able to live with, let alone be associated with, a public life, and a public figure who is subject to the electoral process. The requirements of those who are associated with them in terms of their personal rectitude—I don't mean moral rectitude in a cultural sense. I mean their sense of self, their self-esteem, their capacity to understand what is going on around them has to be greater in the spouses, in the friends, in the loved ones than it has to be for the political figure, himself or herself. So there is not a whole lot that we can do about it except understand that it's going to happen and try to take an attitude that you can do very little about much of what is said about you or done to you. All you can do is pay close attention to your own motivation, your own conclusions and activities, and push ahead on the basis that you are examining yourself as best you can with the tools intellectual and other that you have available. You try to effectuate the public good as best you can understand it, and in the process call upon those elements that I guess Lincoln called the "better angels" in yourself. And certainly what Russell would have required of you is a no-holds-barred self-examination of what you are doing and why and not to lie to yourself anymore than you are going to by default anyway. Try not to do it by design.

Endnotes:

- 1 Many thanks to Jenny Miller for transcribing a tape recording of this conversation.
2. Cf. *Political Ideals* (p. 29 of Unwin paperback edition).
3. Cf. *Political Ideals* (p. 44 of Unwin paperback edition).
4. This conversation took place on June 8, 2001.

The Second International Principia Symposium
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina,
Florianopolis, Brazil. August 6-10, 2001
Nick Griffin

Philosophers who lament that only doctors and dentists hold conferences in gorgeous and exotic locations can take heart from the International Principia Symposia organized by the Nucleo de Epistemologia e Logica of the Federal University of Santa Catarina at Florianopolis on the Brazilian coast. The symposia are named after the two *Principia Mathematicas*, Newton's and Russell and Whitehead's, and are held every other year. This year the sessions were held in a hotel right on Florianopolis's spectacular shoreline - a truly stunning location.

The conference was dedicated to Russell, but included papers on many other topics in analytic philosophy, especially in epistemology, logic, and philosophy of science. With five days of papers in English and Portuguese running in up to four concurrent sessions there was a great deal from which to choose. Not having Portuguese, some choices were made for me—sadly, since there were many Brazilian papers on logic (especially paraconsistent logic) and philosophy of science which I should have liked to hear. The two in English that I attended, Adonai Sant'Anna on the elimination of space-time from classical field theories and Decio Krause on sortal logics and quantum theory, were especially interesting.

Many other topics were covered. There was Daniel Vanderveken on speech-act theory, Susan Haack on scientific evidence, Michel Ghins on Putnam's anti-realism, Sven Bernecker on memory, Oscar Nudler on progress and stagnation in philosophy, and Claudio de Almeida (a lapsed Russell scholar now working in epistemology) on knowledge and benign falsehoods. As a graduate student at McMaster working on Russell's theory of descriptions, Claudio de Almeida was an early recipient of the BRS's student award. He is now associate professor at the Pontificia Universidade Catolica in Porto Alegre and gave a particularly polished and cogent paper.

Of Russellian topics, there were no less than three papers on vagueness—two in English, by Mark Colyvan and Marco Ruffino (admittedly on Frege rather than Russell), and one in Portuguese by Carlos Augusto Sartori. It is quite amazing that Ray Monk, in his anxiousness to dismiss Russell's 1923 paper on the topic as inconsequential, could have ignored the explosion of interest in it over the last ten years. The paradoxes and logicism also received their share of attention. Particularly good in this area were Andre Fuhrmann's account of the paradox of propositions in Appendix B of *The Principles of Mathematics* and Otavio Bueno's

defence of a version of Frege's logicism reconstructed to avoid the paradox. Dorothea Lotter surprised everyone by finding a Kantian strain in Frege—I'm not persuaded it's real, but I have a list of passages from her to consult. Last but not least were papers by Oswaldo Chateaubriand disputing Russell's view that there are negative and general facts and a masterly account of Russell's theory of memory by Thomas Baldwin.

Altogether it was a most valuable conference, not only for what one learnt of Russell, but for what one learnt of analytic philosophy in Brazil. Some very interesting work is being done there and my only regret was that my lack of Portuguese prevented me from doing more than scratch the surface.

Nicholas Griffin is Director of the Bertrand Russell Research Centre at McMaster University.

E-Mail Lists and Websites for the Discriminating Russellian by Peter Stone

As of late, there's been some confusion regarding the various e-mail lists dealing with Bertrand Russell and the BRS. There's also been some curiosity about Russell's presence on the web. Hopefully, this article will clear up some of the confusion. If you find yourself getting confused during discussions of all the various lists and websites, you might want to post this on your wall right next to your computer for future reference.

Lists:

Here's a quick rundown on the primary lists:

- **Russell-l**: Not officially affiliated with the BRS, this list is intended for discussion of all aspects of BR's life and thought. To subscribe to this list, visit <http://mailman.mcmaster.ca/mailman/listinfo/russell-l>.
- **BRussell**: A message board on e-groups, this list temporarily replaced Russell-l when that list was briefly discontinued. Now defunct.
- **g-brs**: The list used by the BRS Board to discuss Board business. Only open to the Board of the BRS.
- **g-allbrs**: Used to be the list used by all BRS members (and only by them) to post BRS-related announcements and to discuss BRS business. This list was discon-

tinued due to a large number of e-mails unrelated to Russell or the BRS being posted to the list (The format of the list did not allow for any way to stop spam).

• **BRS-List:** Replaced g-allbrs. This list has controls to stop certain types of spam (e.g., it rejects excessively large e-mails). Only members of the BRS may join. If you are a BRS member, and wish to join this list, visit <http://mailman.mcmaster.ca/mailman/listinfo/brs-list>

Please note the critically important distinction between BRS-List and Russell-I. BRS-List is only for BRS-related announcements and discussion of BRS business. It's intended for the member who wants to stay "in the loop" without receiving an excessive number of e-mail. Russell-I is for discussion of all aspects of Bertie's life and ideas. It's the list for anyone who wants in depth discussion and doesn't mind receiving multiple e-mails every day. One can, of course, be on both lists. Indeed, the only reason to join Russell-I and not BRS-List is a desire not to join the BRS. And what Russellian would not want to be in our genial company?

Websites:

Here are the big five.

- The Bertrand Russell Society (BRS) - <http://www.users.drew.edu/~jlenz/brs.html>
- The Bertrand Russell Society Library - <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Olympus/4268/>
- The Greater Rochester Russell Set (GRRS), a local chapter of the BRS <http://home.sjfc.edu/~white/grrs/>
- The Bertrand Russell Archives at McMaster University <http://www.mcmaster.ca/russdocs/russell1.htm>
- The Bertrand Russell Research Centre, also at McMaster <http://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/~russell/brhome.htm>

Here are a few other websites that may be of some interest.

- The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation is still active and recently set up a webpage at <http://www.russfound.org>. Its journal, *The Spokesman*, and its publishing house, Spokesman Books, are at <http://www.spokesmanbooks.com>
- Episteme.com offers a comprehensive listing of Russell-related websites at <http://www.epistemelinks.com/Main/Philosophers.asp?Philcode=Russ>
- For an article on the "pantheistic" side of Bertrand Russell see <http://home.utm.net/pan/russel.html>
- About.com has a philosophy site dedicated to humanism at <http://philosophy.about.com/homework/philosophy/cs/humanism/index.htm>
- And of course, those interested in seriously pursuing Russell on the web must consult GRRS member David White's paper on that topic at <http://home.sjfc.edu/~white/Russell/>

For more information on the 2002 AM, bookmark: <http://mypage.campuspipeline.com/brsam2002/indexbrsam2002.html>

Russell-Related Odds and Ends

This new feature of the BRSQ will contain brief mentions of Russell sightings in the media, news pertaining to Russell, and pretty much anything Russell-related for which nobody felt like writing a complete article. To start the feature, the editors have included various odds and ends accumulated over the past year. Where possible, the BRS member who provided the information is indicated. Many of the materials here were originally mentioned on Russell-1, the Bertrand Russell discussion listserv.

Hopefully, the materials offered here will inspire members of the BRS to send any similar items they may find to the BRSQ.

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Johan Galtung's autobiography, *Johan Uten Land: på fredsveien gjennom verden* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2000), has a chapter on BR's influence on him. Galtung is a famous pacifist and theorist of conflict reduction and gave the Bertrand Russell Peace Lectures at McMaster University recently. He also introduced the Norwegian edition of *Why I Am Not a Christian*. He says he owes much to Russell.

Source: Ken Blackwell

*

The *Washington Post*, a satirical online magazine, mentioned Russell in its column "No, We Aren't Making This Up"—"An occasional column of political stuff that we don't even have to screw around with to make it funny." Russell put in an appearance in an obituary notice of Alex Comfort, author of *Joy of Sex*. The *Pest* writes:

Comfort was as rebellious in politics as in sexual mores. He was a keen member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, led by the philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell (more than a bit loony despite his credentials). Comfort was one of a number of campaigners briefly jailed by the Brits for marching in his cause.

Finding himself sharing a cell with Russell, Comfort passed the time by teaching Bertie how to sing Irish rebel songs. What a curious image that conjures up.

The obituary appeared in January-June 2000 at http://www.washingtonpest.com/no_we_are_not_1-6_2000.html.

Source: Ken Blackwell

The Summer/Fall 2000 issue of *Television Quarterly* reprints a brief article on Russell by Philip Hamburger. Hamburger worked as television critic at the *New Yorker* from 1949 to 1955; the reprinted article, entitled "Bertrand Russell Didn't Wish to Change his Hopes for the World," first appeared in the May 31, 1952 issue of that magazine. Hamburger reviews the half-hour interview with Russell broadcast on NBC a few weeks earlier. Best line? "I don't know who at N.B.C. conceived the notion for this presentation, but he certainly deserves the wholehearted thanks of every television-set owner who, stunned by fratricide, patricide, matricide, ordinary homicide, and quiz programs, may have begun to wonder what the set was doing around the house anyway."

Source: Ken Blackwell

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The October 20, 2000 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* featured a review of Ben Rogers' *A.J. Ayer: A Life* (Grove Press) entitled "A Philosopher's Examined Live: It's Worth Forgiving". Amidst ruminations about the difficult inherent in writing philosophical biography, the reviewer, Carlin Romano, cites Ayer's claim that he would be content "having played Horatio to Bertrand Russell's Hamlet in the supposed sharpening (if cultural downsizing) of 20th-century English philosophy." He also describes Ayer's laments to him (in an interview given a year before Ayer's death) that so much attention was given to Russell's sexual escapades to the exclusion of his philosophy. Ayer might have well said this out of enlightened self-interest, given that (as Romano points out) Ayer "earned a 'First' in womanizing himself."

Another review of Rogers' book, entitled "Ladies, Truth, and Logic," appeared in the January 29, 2001 issue of *The New Republic*. The reviewer, Simon Blackburn, writes that "This beautifully written, sympathetic, and sensitive biography tells the life of Britain's best-known philosopher in the generation after Bertrand Russell." Of course, the qualifying clause—"in the generation after Bertrand Russell"—made a huge difference in the review. This review is online at <http://www.tnr.com/012901/blackburn012901.html>.

Source: Peter Stone

*

Ever Ahab-like in his intense hatred for Bertrand Russell, political oddball Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. published a recent article which went out of its way to attack the Good Lord. The article, entitled "The Fraud against Edward Teller," appeared in LaRouche journal *Executive Intelligence Review* on December 22, 2000; it also

appears on the web at http://www.larouchepub.com/lar/2000/2750_teller.html. This article defends Teller and his brainchild, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI, or "Star Wars") against two recent critiques. One of these pieces is described as a "hoax", a "puff piece for the memory of Bertrand Russell cat's-paw Leo Szilard, and, thus, a cover-up of the legacies of such Szilard accomplices as the late John J. McCloy, McGeorge Bundy, and Bundy's lackey Henry A. Kissinger." The article continues on at some length in the same vein.

Source: Peter Stone

*

The January 11, 2001 issue of the *Guardian* noted the passing of Gertrude Elizabeth Mary Anscombe, one of the most famous students of Russell's most famous student, Ludwig Wittgenstein. The *Guardian's* obituary is still online at <http://www.guardianunlimited.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4115443,00.html>.

Source: Russell-I

*

On January 28, 2001, the *New York Times* published an article entitled "Philosophy in Hiding: I Have Tenure, Therefore I Am." The article, written by Peter Edidin, lamented the increasing isolation of the philosophy profession from the general public. The article contained the following quote:

Philosophers...practice a vocation that for most of its existence has sought, as Bertrand Russell once wrote, to "Make us know the ends in life that have value on their own account." Surely, that's a project for ordinary men and women as well.

Fortunately, organizations like the BRS (and our own local BRS chapter the GRB) are making an effort to show that philosophy can be relevant outside the academy (see the note "GRRS Catches APA's Attention" in the August 2001 issue of the *BRSQ*).

Source: Russell-I

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The February 9, 2001 issue of the *Times Literary Supplement* contained a review *The New Theory of Reference: Kripke, Marcus and its Origins*, edited by Paul W. Humphreys and James H. Fetzer (pp. 12-13). The book (published by Kluwer)

deals with the allegation that Saul Kripke, one of the leading figures in contemporary logic, had plagiarized the work of another philosopher, Ruth Marcus. The allegation, made in 1994 by philosopher Quentin Smith, has generated much debate, about both the substance of the charge and the propriety of raising it in the forum Smith employed (a meeting of the American Philosophical Association). The new book contains Smith's original paper, other papers of his, and a number of responses and rebuttals. The reviewer, Stephen Neale, provides a stimulating review of some of the issues in philosophy (especially modal logic) considered in the debate, issues tied explicitly to Russell's work on definite descriptions. The reviewer, who clearly sides with Kripke in this debate, concludes that the book does not "raise doubts about Kripke's contributions to philosophy" but does "shed light on some of philosophy's most important and difficult issues" as well as "articulate Kripke's seminal role" in dealing with these issues (p. 13).

Source: Jack Clontz

*

The February 10, 2001 issue of the *New York Times* featured an obituary of Herbert A. Simon, the noted student of human rationality and artificial intelligence (p. A13). In recalling Simon's efforts to duplicate human intelligence artificially, the obituary recounts a classic story about Russell as follows:

The breakthrough came in December 1955 when Professor Simon and his colleague succeeded in writing a computer program that could prove mathematical theorems taken from the Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead classic on mathematical logic, "Principia Mathematica." The following January, Professor Simon celebrated this discovery by walking into a class and announcing to his students, "Over the Christmas holiday, Al Newell and I invented a thinking machine."

A subsequent letter to Lord Russell explaining his achievement elicited the reply: "I am delighted to know that 'Principia Mathematica' can now be done by machinery. I wish Whitehead and I had known of this possibility before we wasted 10 years doing it by hand."

Source: Peter Friedman

The March 5, 2001 issue of *The New Yorker* featured a satirical advice column by Steve Martin entitled "The Ethicist." In the column, Martin considers the following apocryphal question:

After I was banned from my nine-year-old son's Little League playing field, I began teaching him to scream at his coach. I would like to encourage him to include profanity in these adorable tirades, but, as it is banned from our household, would this make me a hypocrite?

"The Ethicist" responded as follows:

You have created a philosophical conundrum. What happens when two contradictory moral laws seem to be in effect at the same time? Bertrand Russell said that it is possible for one law to indicate the truth or falsehood of another, even though the two contradict each other. However, it should be noted that in 1948 Russell entered into a lifelong feud over the issue with a Magic 8 Ball, which said, "Reply hazy, try again."

One suspects that Martin had been reading Ray Monk's biography of Russell at the time he came up with that one.

Source: Thom Weidlich

*

In an interview for the *Independent*, Monty Python John Cleese indicated that "a series of essays on happiness by Bertrand Russell gave me masses of comedy ideas because good comedy is about good ideas." The interview appeared on March 7, 2001, and is still on the *Independent's* website at <http://www.independent.co.uk> (Just run a search for "Bertrand Russell").

Source: Ken Blackwell

*

On March 31, 2001, the *Guardian* published an extract from the new book *Wittgenstein's Poker: The Story of a Ten-Minute Argument between Two Great Philosophers*, by John Eidinow and David Edmonds (Faber and Faber, 2001). The book discusses the debate over an incident in which Ludwig Wittgenstein allegedly threatened Karl Popper with a poker. The book discusses the Rashomon-like debate among those present at the alleged incident, then offers the philosophical and

historical context surrounding the confrontation between Popper and Wittgenstein. The *BRSQ* would also welcome a review of this book.

Source: Russell-1

News from the Humanist World

Those interested in boning up on humanism may wish to check out the website of the St. Petersburg-Largo Area Secular Humanists (SPLASH) at <http://splashes.org>. As mentioned in the August 2001 issue of the *BRSQ*, this organization publishes an excellent newsletter edited by the BRS's very own Jan Loeb Eisler. Their website features much introductory material on humanists. In addition, their monthly events calendars lists the birthdays of important humanist figures, usually with links that lead to more information.

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Another interesting humanist group on the web is the Buddhivadi Foundation, a "registered, non-profit, tax-exempt, educational trust for promoting rationalism and humanism." This Indian organization publishes a regular newsletter in Hindi, an occasional one in English, publishes books and papers, and maintains a library and a website. The website is at <http://www.buddhivadi.org/index.htm>. It offers books and pamphlets for sale (in English and Hindi) and has several papers posted, including "The Ethical Philosophy of Bertrand Russell." Most interestingly, the Foundation is affiliated with the Bihar Buddhivadi Samaj, a humanist educational society and associate member of the International Humanist Ethical Union (IHEU) whose name in English (Bihar Rationalist Society) bears the same acronym as the Bertrand Russell Society.

*

Rationalist International, a high-quality humanist newsletter based in India, will be hosting the Third International Rationalist Conference on February 8-12, 2002 in New Delhi. Conference registration is already open. For more information, visit *Rationalist International's* website at www.rationalistinternational.net or write to Conference Secretariat International, Rationalist Conference 779, Pocket-5, Mayur Vihar-1, New Delhi 110 091, India.

Updates on Awards and Honorary Members

In the wake of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, BRS Honorary member Noam Chomsky immediately began speaking out against a U.S. military response against Afghanistan. In his discussion of "war fever," he notes how few intellectuals in either the U.S. or Western Europe maintained a critical perspective during World War I. Most of those who did, he goes on to note, wound up in jail; as examples, he cites Emma Goldman, Eugene Debs, and Bertrand Russell. Some of Chomsky's responses, as well as other materials on the same subject, can be found at <http://www.zmag.org>.

*

Two belated items of news concerning BRS Honorary Member Taslima Nasrin, courtesy of Warren Allen Smith.

First, a short reprint from the May 2000 issue of the British Humanist magazine Freethinker. This article, entitled "Taslima Nasrin Becomes National Secular Society Honorary Associate," was written by Keith Porteous Wood, General Secretary of the National Secular Society.

Taslima Nasrin's soft and charming smile might mislead some people. Behind it lurks a woman of steely determination and courage, an ardent feminist and a tireless human-rights campaigner. She is also a victim of religious oppression—a high-profile victim because she chose to fight back. She is also, now, an honorary associate of the National Secular Society—although the honour is all ours.

Taslima was in London to meet Babu Gogineni, Executive Director of the International Humanist & Ethical Union (IHEU), of which the National Secular Society (NSS) is a member.

In her novel, *Shame*, Taslima wrote about the oppression that religious conflict brings in its wake, a topic that resulted in a fatwa being issued against her in her native Bangladesh. She has now lived under the shadow of this threat for many years, hiding and living incognito in a manner similar to Salman Rushdie. When Taslima was in hiding in Bangladesh, she was also fighting a case for offending religious sentiment. IHEU helped her then by publicising her plight and raising money to defray the legal expenses. She had to flee from Bangladesh to escape prosecution and the wrath of fundamentalists, and their Government made diplomatic moves to assist her departure.

She chose Europe as her place of exile and took her elderly mother with her. In 1998 she courageously returned to Bangladesh with her mother because her mother was dying. Once again, death threats were issued against her there. Islamic fundamentalists demanded her execution as well as the introduction of blasphemy law with death as the penalty for those convicted.

Taslima has recently visited India twice, and although these visits have been somewhat turbulent, they have not provoked violence.

Taslima was surprised that so much religious privilege survives her, and particularly that it is still necessary to fight off attempts to increase it. As a tireless champion of free speech and a victim of blasphemy laws elsewhere, she was saddened to learn that such a law is still extent here [in the U.K.—ed.]. The idea that it should be extended to cover other religions she found appalling. "That would be a disaster," she said. "It would be like extending one wound to cover the whole of the body. Freedom of expression should override all sectional interests. Laws must be secular and based on equality. There should be no concession to fanaticism or any culture that is counter to the well-being of humanity." She emphasised that the way to eliminate privilege on the blasphemy law was to abolish it, rather than extend it.

Her attitude to religion was equally unambiguous. "It tells people what to do, what to wear, what to speak. No individualism is respected, and group loyalty is all." When I told her there had been calls for a religious discrimination law here, she said it would be a dangerously regressive step. She was horrified when I told her that there had never been any prosecutions in this country against female genital mutilation, although it almost certainly goes on. "The authorities should be taking action against the families and whoever else is perpetrating these acts."

There were, however, some areas where Taslima was more compromising. She does not oppose arranged marriages, provided there is no duress, and she has no problem with religious funerals. She thinks religious minorities should be protected, just like any other minority. The distinction she drew was that people should not be attacked for what they believe, but they should not be permitted privileges over others because of those beliefs.

She called on secularists and humanists in the UK to renew the fight against the forces of religious conservatism and to achieve separation of Church and State.

Solution to puzzle on inside back cover:

With the exception of pure mathematics, every science has had to begin by fighting to establish its right to exist.

Second, a brief report by Warren Allen Smith on Nasrin's speaking engagements in the U.S.

Dr. Taslima Nasrin spoke in Los Angeles in May [2000—ed.] at the Council for Secular Humanism's Annual Conference, held to celebrate twenty years of the organization's journal, "Free Inquiry." The conference's theme was "Imagine There's No Heaven: A Future Without Religion."

The Bangladesh physician-poet-novelist-journalist, who is an honorary member of the Bertrand Russell Society, spoke about her efforts to confront religious extremism.

Other featured speakers included Paul Krassner (editor of *The Realist* and of Lenny Bruce's *How To Talk Dirty and Influence People*); Alan Cranston (California's ex-Senator); Jill Tarter (director of the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence); Jared Diamond (scientist and Pulitzer Prize winner); Paul Kurtz (the philosopher who helped author *Humanist Manifesto 2000*); Steve Allen (entertainer); William B. Davis (a star of the "X-Files" who spoke about superstition in the entertainment industry); and Ibn Warraq (the pseudonymous critic of Islam whose *Why I Am Not A Muslim* was inspired in great part by Lord Russell).

"Religion," Taslima lamented, "has hurt me in a hell of a lot of ways. It successfully banned and burned my books. It was behind my being given arrest warrants, resulting in my having to leave my home and being forced to seek shelter in the dark of the night in my own land, which now has become my hostile land. Religion came to finish me off with snakes, swords, axes, and guns. Religion ran after me and held thick ropes that it wanted to tie around my throat. Religion forced me to quit my job, demanded my execution by hanging, issued a fatwa against me, promised a monetary award to anyone who would kill me. In short, it has led large numbers of human beings to want to cut my tongue out, has led to preventing me from stepping inside the borders of any Muslim country, and has chased me from my tropical land to Sweden where my native language is not spoken."

Now, she explained, Hindu as well as Muslim fundamentalists demonstrate against her because she was quoted as being critical of Hinduism when she supported an Indian film maker whose work illustrated poverty in one community. Her views against genital mutilation, patriarchy, and the sad status of women worldwide led *Time* (the Asian edition), in its century-end issue, to cite Taslima as "One of the 20 Most Important Women in the 20th Century."

As her longtime friend, friend of her family, one who helped hide her one summer who visited her various hiding places in Sweden and an editor of some of her speeches, I told her about some early American women who also suffered derision

for their stands. Taslima had been unaware of feminist leaders in America, so I told her about the views of Susan B. Anthony (that marriage is like legalized prostitution) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (about the futility of women's accepting a he-Bible, a he-God, a he-Christ, and he-angels). She was so amused that she included a reference to the two, then adopted my slang description of them by saying "You GO girls!" After a minimum of tutoring about how to emphasize the second word, she included in her somewhat gripping lecture—a lecture that had a few squirming when she described some of what she has had to endure from protectors of patriarchy—a reference to how she had been told about Anthony and Stanton, had found their views stirring, then added, "You GO girls!" The audience of several hundred erupted in wild applause. She stood at the podium for a moment, in fact, somewhat amazed at how the slang had succeeded.

She then ended by saying she'd certainly not look forward to a Muslim Paradise in which she would have to watch her husband fornicate (I convinced her not to use a 4-letter word she was going to use) with 70 vestal virgins for eternity, nor to a Judeo-Christian Heaven in which she would hear her friends painfully screaming in Hell because of an all-loving God.

Taslima got a standing ovation, the only one during the 3-day conference.

A cassette of Taslima Nasrin's Los Angeles speech can be obtained from the Council for Secular Humanism at Webmaster@SecularHumanism.org or <http://www.secularhumanism.org/nasrin/index.htm>. A speech given by her at UNESCO is available at <http://www.iheu.org>. And her homepage, which includes photos of her with Jacques Derrida, Francois Mitterrand, Jacques Chirac, and others is at <http://nasrin.humanists.net>.

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Finally, a more recent report from Rationalist International (Issue # 73, July 17, 2001) concerning Nasrin.

Taslima Nasreen, Honorary Associate of *Rationalist International*, has been convicted in absentia by a court in Bangladesh on charges of blasphemy. The verdict ends a criminal case, filed by an Islamic cleric against the author for "hurting the religious sentiments of Muslims" with her novel *Shame* and her criticism of the Quran. Taslima had to leave her country in 1994 because Islamic fundamentalists threatened her life. In September 1998 she returned to see her dying mother, but had to flee once again from the wrath of the fanatics.

Paul Kurtz's latest book, *Skepticism and Humanism: The New Paradigm*, has been published by Transaction Publishers. Kurtz is Chairman of the Council for Secular Humanism and editor-in-chief of *Free Inquiry*. He has written numerous books and received many awards most recently the Chancellor Charles Norton Medal, the highest award given out by the State University of New York at Buffalo. The BRS would welcome a review of this book.

The astute reader may have noticed an abundance of items on the BRS's honorary members from the humanist community (Nasrin, Kurtz) and fewer items on honorary members renowned for work in other areas. The reason for this is the simple and obvious one; we print what we get. We encourage members to send us brief reports dealing with the BRS's various award recipients and honorary members. We periodically reprint lists of these honored people and organizations, but a member can find them at any time at the BRS's website.

The Hunt for Red Hackle

The search for Red Hackle, Russell's favorite brand of blended scotch whiskey, proceeds unabated. From the front lines comes a report from Jack Clontz, a member of the BRS currently residing in Japan. Former BRS Secretary Peter Stone had written to Clontz inquiring about Red Hackle in Japan, with a special interest in the premium brand.

Dear Peter:

I have received your message about Red Hackle and the BR Society. Yes, I am a member of the Bertrand Russell Society though only for about a year. Ray Perkins, Jr., a good friend since 1968, urged me to join, and of course I did. I am unable to attend the annual meetings because the Japanese academic calendar is incompatible with the BRS schedule.

At any rate, Ray Perkins told me last year about the difficulty the BRS was having in obtaining Red Hackle from the UK. It seems that the Red Hackle people would not (or could not) ship it to the US for unknown reasons. However, in an account of the BRS meeting last year, I read that you had a Red Hackle Hour (sic). How did you get your Red Hackle last year?

I do drink whiskey at times here in Japan. Sometimes I buy whiskey at stores, but

never recall seeing Red Hackle. It is true, however, I live in the Japanese hinterlands, and that may be a factor. On the other hand, an amazing array of alcoholic beverages from around the world make their way even here, the Japanese being major tipplers in search of something unusual for reasons of prestige. I am in the midst of Final Examinations and go to visit my wife and home in Thailand next month, but in the interim I will look around in this area. In March I will be back in Japan and during part of this time I will be acting as tour guide to an American college president and his wife. I will be in areas of Japan where it is far more likely Red Hackle would be carried. I will also look in Bangkok, but the prestigious imported alcoholic beverage in Thailand is French red wine in view of the king's heart problem at the age of 73 and a wine society headed by one of Thailand's leading writers.

In sum, Peter, I shall do my best, but cannot make any promises. Incidentally, imported whiskey is extremely expensive in Japan as high duties are placed on it. As you probably know, Japan is a very expensive country anyway, though there is now considerable deflation. A cup of coffee costs more than US\$10.00 in some cases. (On the other hand, average wage rates are much higher than for comparable positions in the USA or Western Europe. The cost of living is high but so are wage rates—cf. Economics 101.) However, in my experience, the highest alcohol prices in the world are in Scandinavia, especially Sweden. Margaret Thatcher was appreciated in both Scotland and Japan for persuading the Japanese government under Nakasone to reduce the duty on imports of Scotch whiskey, some of which is greatly loved in Japan as throughout much of Asia. Anyway, your Red Hackle would be very expensive in Japan, and mailing costs would be at least 25% higher than comparable costs for exactly the same items in the USA in addition to much higher packaging charges. But perhaps this doesn't matter since it isn't a matter of importing vast amounts and the burden is shared.

Why brand of pipe tobacco did BR smoke? I think you should have a BRS smoker as well in order to show a lack of respect for political correctness! (Actually, I had to give up smoking, especially my beloved pipes, because of circulatory and coronary problems. But then look at the age at which BR died and how little evidence of senility there was!)

Anyway, I will be in contact later. I will do my best, but again will not make any rash promises. And I have taken note of your "P.S." on your premium line of the scotch.

Regards Jack

If you have a report on the search for Red Hackle, send it to us. The quest continues...

BRS Business and Chapter News

Bertrand Russell Society, Inc. 3rd Quarter Treasurer's Report, Cash Flow Report 7/1/01 through 9/30/01

BALANCE 6/30/01		6,768.68
INFLOWS		
Contributions:		
Contrib-BRS		321.00
TOTAL Contributions		321.00
Dues:		
New Members		55.00
Renewals		1,249.50
TOTAL Dues		1,304.50
Meeting Inc		0.00
TOTAL INFLOWS		1,625.50
OUTFLOWS		
Bank Chrg		3.48
Library Exp		15.72
Newsletter		569.00
Other Expenses		5.00
TOTAL OUTFLOWS		593.20
OVERALL TOTAL		1,032.30
BALANCE 9/30/01		7,900.98

Russell-crypt ***Gerry Wildenberg***

A while ago I published some simple substitution cyphers based on Russell quotes (*BRSQ* #102, February 2000). To my delight, though also to my surprise, they seem to have been well received. Therefore I shall provide the editor with a new "Russell-crypt" for each issue. Below is today's coded quote in which each letter stands for another letter. For example BERTRAND RUSSELL could be coded as OREGENAO EHFFRYYY, O=B, R=E, et cetera. The quote below uses a different code.

UNCR CRF FGQFYCNJO JB YESF KZCRFKZCNQH, FPFST HQNFOQF RZH
RZM CJ XFLNO XT BNLRCNOL CJ FHCZXDNIHR NCH SNLRC CJ FGNIIC.

The solution is on page 35 at the bottom.

Greater Rochester Russell Set

Celebrating Five Years of Monthly Russell Meetings
Open to the Public

GRRS Catches APA's Attention

The American Philosophical Association has placed a copy of our flyer upon its website, citing it as "an example of the kind of thing that we would like to encourage." The flyer can be viewed at the APA site at

<http://www.apa.udel.edu/apa/centennial/100anniv.html>

Program, Spring 2001

Jan. 17	"Russell, Conrad and Conrad Russell"
Feb. 21	"Dora, Dora, Dora"
Mar. 21	<i>Wittgenstein's Vienna</i>
Apr. 18	"Tom and Viv and Bertie"
May 16	<i>The Conquest of Happiness</i>

The Iguana Club (formerly Christian's Coffeehouse)

Village Gate Square, 274 North Goodman St., Rochester, NY

For information

call Tim Madigan 7160424-3184 or write TimothyMad@aol.com

or visit <http://home.sjfc.edu/~white/grrs>

Erratum

The Minutes of the 2001 Annual Meeting of the BRS noted that Alan Schwerin "found the idea of having officeholders (like special Vice Presidents) who were not 'officers' rather odd" (BRSQ, August 2001, p. 12). It also noted that Schwerin "inquired if any member had ever been expelled before" (*ibid.*, p. 13). Alan Bock, not Alan Schwerin, in fact made these remarks. Ex-Secretary Peter Stone apologizes for the misattribution.