

# THE BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

May 2003

No. 118



**Lake Forest College,  
Site of the 2003 BRS Annual Meeting  
May 30-June 1, 2003**

***Register for the Meeting Today!  
See Page 7 for Details.***

## 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)

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## THE BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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### QUOTE OF THE *QUARTERLY*

"Religion of every kind involves the promise that the misery and futility of existence can be overcome or even transfigured. One might suppose that the possession of such a magnificent formula, combined with the tremendous assurance of a benevolent God, would make a person happy. But such appears not to be the case: unease and insecurity and rage seem to keep up with blissful certainty, and even to outpace it."

Christopher Hitchens, "Holy Writ," *Atlantic Monthly*, April 2003. (See also "Updates on Awards and Honorary Members" in this issue.)

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*From the Editor:*

### Fundamentalism Then and Now

Recently, I had the opportunity to address a meeting of the Humanist Association of Toronto. My talk was entitled "Bertrand Russell's Politics and Humanism." (An account of this talk will appear in a forthcoming issue of the *BRSQ*.) The question-and-answer period following this talk generated a lively discussion about Russell. One question in particular, however, stands out in my mind. One attentive listener was genuinely perplexed by a quotation from Russell (one of my favorites) that I used during my talk—"I think all the great religions of the world—Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, and Communism—both untrue and harmful" (Introduction to *Why I Am Not a Christian*). The listener had no doubts about the falsity or harmfulness of religion (this was a gathering of humanists, after all), but she could not understand why Russell included Communism in his list of religions.

The question raised by this listener is an important one, and while I suspect most readers of the *BRSQ* will have some idea of what Russell meant, it is worth discussing the point in some detail here.

Throughout his life, Russell took great pains to stress that where belief was involved, what mattered was not *what* you believed but *how* you believed it. This was true regardless of the subject area involving belief, whether it be religion, physics, or economics. For example, he famously began the first essay of his collection *Sceptical Essays* (1928) with the following injunction:

I wish to propose for the reader's favourable consideration a doctrine which may, I fear, appear wildly paradoxical and subversive. The doctrine in question is this: that it is undesirable to believe a proposition when there is no ground whatever for supposing it true.

Russell clearly believed that this "subversive" doctrine had implications for what one believed. He argued in "Why I Am Not a Christian" and many other works that there was no ground whatever for believing in the existence of God. This did not prove God's nonexistence—this is why Russell considered himself an agnostic and not an atheist—but when talking about unicorns, minotaurs, or compassionate conservatives, one does not normally have to prove their nonexistence; the mere lack of any

evidence of existence is sufficient reason not to believe in any of them. (Incidentally, 2003 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *Sceptical Essays*, one of Russell's most widely read collections of essays. In the next issue of the *BRSQ*, I shall have more to say on this book so as mark its birthday with the proper amount of respect.)

Russell applies this concern with the methods used to generate and maintain beliefs to questions of politics. In his book *Power: A New Social Analysis* (1938), he discusses the presence of fanatical creeds, and their alleged social usefulness. Unity around political programs, held without thought and reflection, is often thought to be necessary if a nation is to survive in this dog-cat-dog world. Russell subjects this claim to a searching analysis, and finds it wanting.

The dogmatic approach to religious belief that Russell decried is as alive now as it was when "Why I Am Not a Christian" was first published, even if atheism and agnosticism have grown marginally more respectable in public circles. However, now more than ever it is intertwined with other, equally unsavory and equally destructive belief systems that command assent based on faith rather than on evidence. For example, the Indian feminist and political activist Vandana Shiva recently observed that "Two forms of fundamentalism seem to be converging and becoming mutually reinforcing and mutually supportive" in many parts of the world today. One is the familiar "politics of exclusion emerging in the form of political parties based on 'religious fundamentalism'/xeno-phobia [sic]/ethnic cleansing and reinforcement of patriarchies and castism." This sort of fanatical creed will be familiar to traditional opponents of bigotry. The second is the "market fundamentalism of globalization itself," or at least the version of globalization promoted by western elites for their own advantage. This form of fundamentalism holds, despite all available evidence, that the free market can do everything better than both traditional social networks and democratic political institutions (Shiva's essay, "Globalisation and Its Fall Out," is at <http://www.zmag.org/sustainers/content/2003-04/02shiva.cfm>.)

The convergence of these two fundamentalisms is not accidental. Countries that embrace the free market fundamentalism offered by corporate-led globalization simply cannot guarantee their own people a decent standard of living. If those people cannot meet their basic needs, they will embrace any political project, no matter how wild, that offers them some hope of improving their lives. This includes all the species of religious and racial bigotry presently sweeping the globe. It is no accident that in India the rise of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), a far-rightist party whose government

has presided over vicious anti-Muslim pogroms, coincides almost exactly with India's embrace of the "structural adjustment" programs of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Nor is it a coincidence that IMF-led reductions in educational spending in Pakistan led many parents to send their children to the madrassas, schools that provided an education in Muslim fanaticism. These schools were financed by the CIA (through the Muslim groups it armed to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan) and rich Saudi fanatics like (also not a coincidence) Osama bin Laden.

And there is yet another side of the fanaticism that sweeps the globe today. Naomi Klein, a leading critic of globalization, describes the way the IMF has tried to force Argentina to maintain and strengthen its agreements to abide by free-market fundamentalist dogma. "But there is another criterion," writes Klein, that Argentine leaders must meet "to merit foreign capital: They must show that they are willing to use force to control those sectors hurt by such agreements" ("No Peace without a Fight," *Nation*, March 31, 2003). In other words, free-market fundamentalism also goes hand in hand with the development of military force. And military force invariably brings another kind of fanaticism in its wake.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the U.S.'s current war on terrorism, most recently manifested as "Operation Iraqi Freedom." There is no denying that the current U.S. government embraces Christian fundamentalism, a near-obsessive concern with expanding the reach of the corporate-led marketplace, and a militaristic jingoism that blithely disregards any language but that of force. The connections among the three run very deep; people who can think critically about privatization of prisons are also likely to be able to see through lies about both "faith-based initiatives" and the virtues of duct tape.

What would Russell think about the current political situation in the United States? I suspect he'd ponder whether his description of the political situation in the 1930s mirrored the ongoing face-off between George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden—

A collection of lunatics, each of whom thinks he is God, may learn to behave politely to one another. But the politeness will only last as long as each God finds his omnipotence not thwarted by any of the other divinities. If Mr. A thinks he is God, he may tolerate the pretensions of others so long as their acts minister to his purposes. But if Mr. B ventures to thwart him, and to provide evidence that he is not omnipotent, Mr. A's wrath will be kindled, and he will perceive that Mr. B is Satan or one of his ministers.

Mr. B, of course, will take the same view of Mr. A. Each will form a party, and there will be war—theological war, bitter, cruel, and mad. For “Mr. A” read Hitler, for “Mr. B” read Stalin, and you have a picture of the modern world. “I am Wotan!” says Hitler. “I am Dialectical Materialism!” says Stalin. And since the claim of each is supported by vast resources in the way of armies, airplanes, poison gases, and innocent enthusiasts, the madness of both remains unnoticed (*Power: A New Social Analysis*).

I also suspect he'd ponder whether the American attitude toward the “Axis of Evil”—three countries whose ruling ideologies have nothing in common, two of which are traditional enemies—resembles a scenario described in “Outline of Intellectual Rubbish”—

Give me an adequate army, with power to provide it with more pay and better food than falls to the lot of the average man, and I will undertake, within 30 years, to make the majority of the population believe that two and two are three, that water freezes when it gets hot and boils when it gets cold, or any other nonsense that might seem to serve the interest of the state. Of course, even when these beliefs had been generated, people would not put the kettle in the refrigerator when they wanted it to boil. That cold makes water boil would be a Sunday truth, sacred and mystical, to be professed in awed tones, but not to be acted on in daily life. What would happen would be that any verbal denial of the mystic doctrine would be made illegal, and obstinate heretics would be ‘frozen’ at the stake. No person who did not enthusiastically accept the official doctrine would be allowed to teach or to have any position of power. Only the very highest officials, in their cups, would whisper to each other what rubbish it all is; then they would laugh and drink again. This is hardly a caricature of what happens under some modern governments (*Unpopular Essays*).

Above all, he would probably want to ask hard questions about the reasons for attacking Iraq earlier this year, an attack for which the justification changed week by week.

Russellians should of course be mindful of Russell's excellent and entertaining critiques of organized religion and its detrimental consequences for human life. But they should also remember that the lessons of these critiques apply far more broadly. When the belief not based on evidence prevails in other areas of life, the results are no less devastating for the world we share.

## Last Chance to Renew!

All BRS memberships (except Life and Honorary memberships) expire at the end of the calendar year. The BRS sends everyone with expired memberships the first two *BRSQ* issues of the year (February and May), but those who have not renewed by August will not receive the third issue of the year. And so if you haven't renewed already, **now is the time!** If you don't, the BRS will have to send you an individualized reminder, and that takes time, money, and energy the BRS could better use elsewhere.

To find out whether or not you have renewed as of this issue, please check the mailing label on this issue. It will have one of the following four-digit numbers on it:

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| 2002                | means you are paid through 2002, but still need to renew for 2003.  |
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If you have any questions about your membership or the renewal process, feel free to drop Dennis a line at **[djarland@qconline.com](mailto:djarland@qconline.com)**.



**The 2003 Annual Meeting of the Bertrand Russell Society  
Lake Forest College (Lake Forest, IL)  
May 30-June 1, 2003**

The BRS's 2002 Annual Meeting was held at Lake Forest College, in Lake Forest, Illinois (about 30 miles north of Chicago). That meeting went so well that the BRS will be returning there for its 2003 Annual Meeting. The BRS thanks Rosalind Carey, an Assistant Professor in Philosophy at Lake Forest who handled arrangements for the 2002 Annual Meeting, for volunteering to play host yet again.

The BRS encourages everyone to **register to attend** the Annual Meeting. Registration for the meeting—including buffet, banquet, papers, and other conference materials—costs \$60 for members, \$75 for non-members, and \$40 for students. Those interested in skipping the meals may register for one day of the conference for \$20 or both days for \$35. (This rate applies to members, non-members, and students.) Dorm-style accommodations are available on campus for \$49.50 for the weekend (plus \$10 for linens if needed). There are hotels in the area for those uninterested in the dorm experience. Checks for registration and/or housing should be made out to "Bertrand Russell Society" and sent with the conference registration form (located at the center of this issue of the *BRSQ*) to Rosalind Carey, Department of Philosophy, Durand Hall, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL 60045 USA, [carey@hermes.lfc.edu](mailto:carey@hermes.lfc.edu). Registrants may also pay via credit card using PayPal, as detailed in "Last Chance to Renew!" p. 6). Anyone paying in this manner must still send a registration form to Rosalind. Please direct all questions about the conference to Rosalind as well. There is also a website devoted to the conference at <http://mypage.campuspipeline.com/brsam2002/indexbrsam2003.html>. See you in Lake Forest!

**2003 BRS Award to Be Given to Katha Pollitt**

Kevin Brodie, Chairman of the BRS Awards Committee, has announced that the 2003 BRS Award has been offered to Katha Pollitt, longtime columnist for the *Nation* and author of *Reasonable Creatures: Essays on Women and Feminism* (Vintage Books, 1995) and *Subject to Debate: Sense and Dissents on Women, Politics, and Culture* (Random House, 2001). Ms. Pollitt has indicated that she will accept the award but will be unable to travel to the 2003 Annual Meeting for this purpose. She will instead issue a statement of acceptance to be read at the meeting.

## The BRS Needs *YOU*...at the APA!

The Bertrand Russell Society is recognized by the American Philosophical Association and allowed to participate in their programs, but the BRS is responsible for selecting its own speakers. Members of the BRS who are also members of the APA are urged to get in touch with David White ([dwhite@sjfc.edu](mailto:dwhite@sjfc.edu)). We need people to give papers, to comment, to chair sessions, and, most importantly, to fill seats. We are now accepting proposals for the Eastern Division meeting at the Washington, DC, Hilton, December 27-30, 2003, and for the Central Division meeting at the Palmer House in Chicago, April 22-25, 2004. The deadline for proposals for the Eastern Meeting is May 31.

### Buy a BRS T-Shirt Today!

Don't you be caught without something distinctive to wear! BRS t-shirts always make you stand out in a crowd (except at BRS Annual Meetings, of course). So why not order yours today? 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 BRS Vice President Ray Perkins, 854 Battle Street, Webster, NH 03303, USA. Please specify size (M,L,XL) and color (black, yellow, white). Any questions about the shirts can be directed to Ray at [perkrk@earthlink.net](mailto:perkrk@earthlink.net).)

### Are You on BRS-List?

BRS-List is the BRS's official listserv, used to send members information about Society activities and to discuss Society business. The listserv is open only to members of the BRS, and all members are encouraged to join. Just visit <http://mailman.mcmaster.ca/mailman/listinfo/brs-list> and fill out the form. Alternatively send the message

subscribe

to [brs-list-request@mailman.mcmaster.ca](mailto:brs-list-request@mailman.mcmaster.ca).

Any questions regarding BRS-List can be directed to the listserv's owner, Ken Blackwell, at [blackwk@mcmaster.ca](mailto:blackwk@mcmaster.ca).

## Articles:

### Reflections on Russell's Politics in the Light of Editing His Letters

Nicholas Griffin

*The BRSQ is very pleased to run this brief article by Nicholas Griffin, Director of the Bertrand Russell Research Centre, in which he discusses various issues raised by the volume he recently edited, The Selected Letters of Bertrand Russell: The Public Years, 1914-1970 (Routledge, 2002).*

For me, Russell's last political campaigns were one of the glories of his life. I first got to know of him in the early sixties through the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and my interest in his philosophy developed from my admiration for his political stand on nuclear weapons. Most of the large final section of my book is devoted to Russell's politics and I wondered, as I started work on it, whether my early, youthful enthusiasm would survive a close encounter with the archival record. Well, youthful enthusiasm is hard to sustain in middle age, but on the whole, I thought Russell held up rather well—better, overall, than I was expecting. And indeed there was one respect in which my middle-aged weariness and political despair taught me an altogether new respect for him.

There's a marvelous letter in the book to Gamel Brenan, written in 1945, in which he says that as he gets older it becomes more difficult to balance hope against memory. That phrase stayed with me as I worked through the thousands of letters which he devoted to the perils of nuclear war over the next 25 years. Through that long period—which began when he was already past normal retirement age—he tried one means after another to tame the monster, placing his hopes in the neutral nations, direct appeals to world leaders, the nuclear scientists, the Labour Party, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, civil disobedience. Though thwarted at every turn, he never gave up. As a youthful supporter of CND, having no experience, I had no idea how difficult it would be to balance hope against experience. But here was a man whose hopes had survived—not Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan—but two world wars, the great slump and Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini.

It was not that he was a great optimist; his assessment of the dangers and of his chances for success were as bleak as could be. But he simply refused to give up. He clung to his cause through every setback, through illness,

personal tragedy, and increasing physical frailty. I found this extraordinarily impressive. In his relations with women, one might think that he allowed hope to over-balance memory too easily. But in politics it was admirable.

\*

There was a lot I learnt for the first time about Russell's political campaigns. For example, I had no idea of the sheer size of his campaign for political prisoners, mostly in Eastern Europe. In the book, I cover only one of the cases he took up from beginning to end, and even then there was not enough space to include everything and the book gives no impression of the variety of ways in which Russell and his aides brought pressure to bear on the Romanian government for the release of the two men involved.

And this was only one case among many; Russell's files on political prisoners in Romania alone include well over 100 cases. He got two other Romanian appeals in the same month as the one I covered. Of course, he was not always successful, but there were scores, if not hundreds, of people in Eastern Europe who owed their freedom to him.

Russell did not publicize this work, though to have done so would have been useful to him in answering the frequently made charge that he was pro-Soviet. But the effectiveness of his appeals to the various Soviet bloc governments depended upon their being made quietly.

\*

I find myself, therefore, in total disagreement with Ray Monk's dismissal of Russell's political work in the second volume of his biography (*Bertrand Russell: The Ghost of Madness*). It's not always easy to reply to Monk, because it's not always clear what exactly his complaints are.

Monk complains, for example, about the intellectual shallowness of Russell's political pamphleteering. But it's important to realize that Russell was not writing political philosophy. His concern here was to change the world, rather than to understand it. When it came to understanding the world, Russell put his hopes in physics. I doubt that he ever found political theory as interesting as physical theory, and I'm quite certain that he never thought that producing a political theory was as important as the simpler, but more difficult task, of stopping people from killing one another.

At one point, Monk claims that Russell was prepared to say anything

merely to keep in the public eye. But this is ridiculous. With his opposition to the war in Vietnam, Russell lost whatever access he had had to the mainstream media. Left-wing news sheets would publish his statements, but not the mainstream press. He was reduced to mass mailing press releases in the hope that some small paper somewhere might publish it.

If his only desire had been for publicity, it is not difficult to see what he should have done. He should have declared himself in support of the Americans in Vietnam, denied that they were committing atrocities, and warned (as he had so often done in the past) about the miseries inflicted by communism. He could have done it. It would have confirmed his reputation as a political maverick. It would have got huge press attention. The op-ed pages of every major newspaper in the West would have been open to him. And he would have found himself being flattered by the American ambassador, not the Cuban one. (Monk is never quite clear why he thinks Russell was so anxious to be flattered by the Cuban ambassador.)

In part, Monk seems to believe that it was absurd for Russell to think he might influence world events. As I've suggested, Russell was under no illusions as to how difficult that would be, but he thought the dangers were so great that he had to try anyway. Moreover, on many smaller matters—like the release of political prisoners, which Ray entirely ignores—he did affect events and in an almost entirely good way.

Even on some of the big issues he was taken seriously by the principals. As I show in the book, both Nehru and Zhou Enlai took him seriously on the Sino-Indian border dispute. Any peace initiative between warring nations is likely to emerge out of officially deniable, diplomatic back channels, often opened by the use of academics and intellectuals. The 1993 Middle East peace agreement, now in ruins, emerged in just such a way. And not long after Russell sent Ralph Schoenman and Pat Pottle on a shuttle diplomacy mission between New Delhi and Beijing, Henry Kissinger, then a mere Harvard professor with infinitely less moral and intellectual clout than Russell, shuttled between Washington and Paris to feel out the Vietnamese. No one calls Kissinger's mission absurd.

If Russell's involvement in politics was as absurd as Monk pretends, it is hard to understand why it was taken so seriously. Not just among the thousands of ignorant and unwashed—like myself—who marched and demonstrated with him, but by people in power like Khrushchev and Nehru and Zhou Enlai. Would Zhou have had *Unarmed Victory* translated into Chinese for his own use, sent the Chinese chargé d'affaires in London to North Wales for discussions, and have written Russell respectful six-page

letters explaining how, in *Unarmed Victory*, he had misconstrued Chinese foreign policy, if he had thought that Russell was entirely without influence or importance? And given that both public and politicians granted Russell some influence, don't we have to admire Russell for working so hard to use it for goals that he thought were right?

\*

It has often been claimed that in old age Russell was entirely taken over by a group of much younger assistants who used his name in ways of which he had no knowledge and did not approve. His secretary Ralph Schoenman is often cited in this regard. In view of all this talk, I was somewhat surprised, on working through the archival materials, to find how close a control Russell kept on the political activities carried out in his name.

Of course, many letters were written for his signature by other people. His correspondence ran at 100 letters a day; it would have been impossible for anyone to keep up such a pace without that sort of help. But when letters were written for him it was much more often by Edith, his wife, than by Ralph Schoenman. (The two of them write quite differently, so you can tell their work apart. And of course, both write quite differently from Russell, who retained his distinctive style even in extreme old age.)

Moreover, many of the letters which were drafted by others were drafted according to Russell's instructions. We often have the notes to prove it. Russell was far too practical a man in political matters to worry much about style and wording, and he frequently let infelicities pass that he would never have been responsible for himself. He did, however, concern himself, often quite minutely, with content, and there is evidence of letters being changed by him, often in quite small details, when they did not express exactly what he wanted. Though, again, as a practical man, he realized that it was often more important to issue a crudely drafted statement quickly, than to take so long producing timeless prose in which no one was interested. Russell could produce timeless prose quickly, but not so quickly that the press lost interest in a story.

I cannot, of course, maintain that all the letters he signed said exactly what he would have wished, or that his name was never used for purposes of which he would not have approved. But the papers in the Bertrand Russell Archives make it clear that this occurred much less frequently than has been alleged.

The most controversial of all Russell's late political efforts was his

International War Crimes Tribunal on Vietnam. There were, indeed, many things about the organization of the Tribunal which could have been improved. But I persist in my view that the Tribunal was an important and well-conceived effort to make known the facts about the Vietnam War that was systematically derailed by a hostile press, which tried and condemned the Tribunal in advance of its taking place.

Comparisons to the Nuremberg Trials were, I suppose, inevitable—but they were unfortunate. Nuremberg was an actual trial conducted before judges with the defendants and their lawyers. No such trial could be held for the American government. The Russell Tribunal was essentially a citizens' commission of inquiry to discover the facts about the American conduct of the war. There is no general requirement that such commissions be bipartisan or that they be conducted by strict legal principles—let alone those of a criminal trial.

The Tribunal did assemble a great deal of scrupulously collected evidence about atrocities in Vietnam. Press reports gave no indication of the high standards of evidence required by the Tribunal, nor of the overwhelming quantity of evidence that it assembled. American atrocities in Vietnam were not widely known at that time in the West and the Tribunal's evidence deserved much more attention than it received. Its conclusions were essentially validated two years later, when details of the My Lai massacre finally became public knowledge.

I can't help but admire Russell's determination to do whatever he could to make the truth about the Vietnam War known. He spent a fortune creating the Tribunal and assembling the evidence for it to hear. He endured months of vilification in the press. He was accused of being senile and a Communist; it's hard to judge which charge was the more farfetched.

Is it absurd for a 95-year-old philosopher to take it upon himself to charge a nation with war crimes? Perhaps. But faced with subsequent atrocities in Rwanda, the Balkans, and now Palestine, one regrets that (counting Chomsky as a linguist) no contemporary philosopher has the will, the ability, or the courage to do likewise.

## Earth to Russell: The Limits of Russell's Views on Space Exploration

Chad Trainer

...the generations of men...observed how the array of heaven and the various seasons of the year come round in due order, and could not discover by what causes all that came about. Therefore their refuge was to leave all in the hands of the gods....And they placed the gods' habitation and abode in the sky...

-Lucretius (99-55 BCE)  
*De Rerum Natura* 5.1170ff

In the first ages of the world, the islanders either thought themselves to be the only dwellers upon the earth, or else if there were any other, yet they could not possibly conceive how they might have any commerce with them, being severed by the deep and broad sea, but the aftertimes found out the invention of ships....So, perhaps, there may be some other means invented for a conveyance to the Moone....We have not now any Drake or Columbus to undertake this voyage, or any Daedalus to invent a conveyance through the aire. However I doubt not but that time who is still the father of new truths, and hath revealed unto us many things which our ancestors were ignorant of, will also manifest to our posterity that which we now desire but cannot know.

-John Wilkins (1614-1672 CE)  
*The Discovery of a World in the Moone.*

Bertrand Russell has been one of the best at chronicling and lampooning history's opponents of science. Surprisingly, though, he expressed opposition to the exploration of space. This paper details and critiques the four lines of argument Russell employs in attacking the space program.

### **I. Introduction:**

Bertrand Russell regularly noted the demerits of living in the past both as a danger in old age and as an obstacle to an entire culture's progress. In general, much is said in his writings about the merits of scientific exploration and the importance of realizing the planet Earth's minute place in the cosmos. In the light of all this, it might seem a safe conjecture that



Russell would enthusiastically support the space program. He did not. For Russell was also a self-described Cassandra doomed to prophesy evil and not be believed. As early as 1924, he speaks of how his long experience of statesmen and governments has made him skeptical: "I am compelled to fear that science will be used to promote the power of dominant groups, rather than to make men happy. Icarus, having been taught to fly by his father Daedalus, was destroyed by his rashness. I fear that the same fate may overtake the populations whom modern men of science have taught to fly" (*Icarus*, p. 5). It was in such a vein that Russell expressed his concerns over space exploration.

Passing remarks about exploring space are scattered throughout Russell's writings, but the bulk of his proclamations on this topic can be found concentrated in three pieces: a 1958 article for *Maclean's Magazine*, a filmed 1965 interview of Russell by Ralph Miliband, and some 1966 comments for *Paris Match*. Russell had essentially four criticisms of space exploration:

- The space program was not undertaken in a spirit of scientific impartiality;
- The exploration of space could result in the spread of human foolishness;
- It would be better to expend energy addressing terrestrial problems before involving ourselves in celestial affairs; and
- The actual increase in human understanding that could result was questionable.

While I consider all of Russell's arguments here to be unacceptable, I view them as unacceptable to considerably varying degrees.

## **II. An Absence of Scientific Impartiality:**

Russell's first contention is that space exploration was not being undertaken in a spirit of scientific detachment: "I am afraid that it is from baser motives that Governments are willing to spend the enormous sums involved in making space-travel possible" (*Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare*, p. 18).

In fairness to Russell, he lived during the dawn of the nuclear age. Today, people do not always appreciate the extent to which space exploration was associated with the arms race during the Red Scare. In its time, Sputnik conjured up fears of nuclear annihilation. Given Russell's concern with

human welfare and the predominantly military nature of the nascent space program's purposes, his skepticism is understandable, even if knowledge pertaining to space exploration has not always been gleaned for just the grimmest purposes. Even if early space exploration has been thoroughly military and devoid of anything in the way of scientific detachment, the ensuing deluges of data and experience become available to all, including the "sufficiently scientifically detached." When Galileo, for example, presented his spyglass to the doge, "Galileo was...more concerned with the rewards to be reaped from the earthly advantages of an improved instrument than with any celestial advantage" (Van Helden, Introduction to *Galileo Galilei's Sidereus Nuncius*, p. 9). Yet this has hardly prevented the telescope from eventually being employed for the purest and loftiest purposes.

In any case, Russell could well have feared the human race destroying itself before any advances of military technology could accommodate the "scientifically impartial."

### III. The Spread of Human Foolishness:

Russell's second argument against the space program was that it could lead to the spread of human follies. "Before long, if we do not destroy ourselves, our destructive strife will have spread to those planets" (*The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell*, vol. III, p. 186). "[W]hen I read of plans to defile the heavens by the petty squabbles of the animated lumps that disgrace a certain planet, I cannot but feel that the men who make these plans are guilty of a kind of impiety" (*Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare*, pp. 19-20). It might be argued by some that Russell harbored no objections to space exploration as long as it took the form of mere astronomical observation and was not militarily oriented. However, the evidence suggests that Russell would have been wary even of astronomical *observation* chiefly because of the military missions that might be concealable under the guise of mere "exploration."

It is interesting to ponder to what degree Russell thought the planet's atmosphere should be off-limits. Would he have objected to Albert Abraham Michelson's interferometer, notwithstanding its establishment of light's speed as a universal constant? Or would Fitzgerald and Lorentz's experiments with radio waves be deemed objectionable in spite of the wireless telegraphy such experiments spawned? How about Orville and Wilbur Wright's aeronautical innovations? All such developments are subject to misuse. Yet Russell can be assumed to have appreciated such advances profoundly as only befits a man who both sung the praises of

scientists and took theologians to task for superstitious behavior ranging anywhere from condemning Benjamin Franklin's lightning rod to protesting advances in medicine. It is against this backdrop that charges of space exploration perpetrating "a kind of impiety" appear out of character. Nevertheless, Russell was certainly right about the intrusion of militarily-oriented missions into space.

#### **IV. Prosperity of the Earth vs. the Space Program:**

Russell's third argument against exploring space is that we need "a little more wisdom in the conduct of affairs on earth before we extend our strident and deadly disputes to other parts" ("Let's Stay off the Moon"). Russell seems guilty of a false disjunction here. Substantial progress in the space program is not necessarily a net setback for our terrestrial prosperity. Space exploration has helped this planet and could well have been predicted to do as much. The amount of money required by NASA amounts to a small portion of the U.S. budget. In addition, space satellites have had more than military applications. Many military enterprises ultimately redound to civilians' economic and social benefit.

The Topex/Poseidon satellite has enabled oceanography researchers to observe major patterns of surface circulation. Satellite radar measurements were able to inform scientists about El Niño and satellite maps are expected to help us in comprehending the distribution of mineral resources on the planet's seafloor. Nowadays specialized maps can be used, for example, to "predict crop yields, model optimal lumber harvests, or chart ever changing wetlands" (John D. Bossler, "Mapmaking: Redrawing the Boundaries" in the *1995 Britannica Book of the Year*, p. 154). Satellites have also aided in detecting ancient remains.

Satellite technology has assisted us in exploring the science behind the planet's single ecosystem and helped us comprehend global environmental changes. Satellites have given meteorologists enough detail to foresee big storms all over the planet. They have enabled us to provide disaster warnings. They have provided navigational aid for the maritime and trucking industries. To bring matters a little closer to home, the Global Positioning System (GPS) has not only become the basis of modern navigation and mapmaking but GPS devices in automobiles significantly assist directionally-challenged people (like the present writer) in finding obscure locations such as those of philosophy conferences.

Thousands of communication satellites circling the Earth enable television to broadcast between nations and continents and also provide long-distance

telephone service. But perhaps considering the amount of time people spend watching TV or talking on cell phones, Lord Russell might not have considered these as advances.

While there may be little to no disadvantage to the foregoing *civilian* technologies, the net gain or loss for human welfare would seem to depend, ultimately, on the fate of the *military* applications of this technology. Some of these technologies do serve a function in the realm of arms control when it comes to verifying or abiding by international treaties. But whether the science will be used to "make men happy" or to "promote the power of dominant groups" remains to be seen.

### V. Wisdom to Be Derived from Space Exploration?

Russell's fourth and final argument against space exploration was that "There is no reason whatever to suppose that the new possibilities of travel will do anything to promote wisdom" ("Let's Stay off the Moon"). That Russell objected to space exploration not just on the grounds of prudence but also because it did not offer anything of cerebral value seems clear enough from the Miliband interview:

MILIBAND: You wouldn't put this [space exploration] in the department of the search for truth?

RUSSELL: Oh no, no.

MILIBAND: The thirst for knowledge?

RUSSELL: It is just fantasy.

It may not be clear what Russell meant by saying "It is just fantasy." But, given his remark in the same interview that "it's quite all right to have space science. Only it doesn't happen to appeal to me," it seems reasonable to conclude that, at the very least, Russell did not think there was interesting information to be discovered in this realm.

Such declarations seem in complete contradiction to the overall tone and texture of Russell's philosophy. For example, Russell criticizes Hegel as entirely too terrestrial in his thinking and speaks of how "if you want to get a sound philosophy, you must have astronomy well in your head and realize that this planet is a very unimportant and trivial part of the universe. And what happens on it, from a cosmic point of view, isn't very important" (Bertrand Russell interviewed by Mike Tigar; broadcast on KPFA, November 2, 1962). Also, "Vitalism..., and evolutionism,...[o]ptimism and pessimism, as cosmic philosophies, show the same naïve humanism....All such philosophies...are best corrected by a little

astronomy" (*Why I Am Not a Christian*, p. 55). To be sure, Russell credits Halley and Newton with their respective discoveries dispelling superstition about comets. He has nothing but scorn for their obscurantist contemporaries (*Cf. In Praise of Idleness*, pp. 168-170.). In saying that the space program has nothing to offer when it comes to "the search for truth," Russell himself seems to be guilty of an obscurantism of sorts. Even the most cursory surveys of the space program's history yield insights of the highest order.

To take a few examples, in 1989 the European Space Agency launched the Hipparchos satellite, the results of which included positions of more than 100,000 stars being charted with a precision "100 times better than ever before achieved on Earth" (See Kenneth Brecher's articles on astronomy for *Encyclopedia Britannica's* yearbooks). Also, the Hubble Space Telescope has helped solve a variety of astronomical riddles. To name but a few things, Hubble has revealed proof of black holes, given us a direct look at Pluto's surface, and was particularly helpful in viewing the 21 fragments of comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 that collided with Jupiter. A host of extrasolar planets have been discovered some of which "raise many questions about the late stages of stellar evolution, not to mention the origin of planets around old pulsars" (Brecher). And evidence has been discovered of conditions for past or present life on Mars, one of Jupiter's moons, and extrasolar planets.

In 1998, sightings of the brightness of fairly distant exploding stars afforded evidence for the "cosmological constant" (a kind of "cosmic repulsion force" first postulated by Albert Einstein in 1917 in his equations of general relativity). During 2001, new studies were reported of the most distant supernova found to date, which yielded the best evidence ever that the expansion of the universe is certainly accelerating.

In 1993, a U.S.-Australian team verified Einstein's prediction that gravity bends light. By the end of 1993, there had been four reports of massive compact halo objects in outer areas of the Milky Way. "Even though the amount of matter represented..., if extrapolated to other galaxies, was insufficient to close the universe, the observational technique did open a new channel for detecting dark matter in the universe" (Brecher).

The case is becoming increasingly strong that the universe has substantially more matter than can be seen in the way of stars and galaxies. The matter's gravitational effects indicate its existence. Astronomers in search of so-called dark matter can now argue more cogently that the universe is closed.

Finally, space research has enabled astronomers to estimate the age of the universe as ranging anywhere from 7 billion to 14 billion years.

Would Russell have really said that there is no increase in wisdom following from such revelations? While the net worth of space exploration for our terrestrial welfare remains to be seen, the volume of our knowledge or wisdom on this front is *plainly and simply increased*. One would think Russell would have relished the increasingly more informed accounts of the cosmos that enable us to more thoroughly refute the misguided metaphysics of the past.

From the days of old, a determination to view celestial phenomena as of an inviolably different order than terrestrial phenomena has been an obstacle to scientific progress. Instead, Galileo's assumption that the laws of physics applicable to earth are on a continuum of sorts with those to be applied to the heavens seems to have pointed us toward a proper approach. And for Russell to be dismissive of space exploration's merits brings to mind the Jesuits who castigated Galileo for peering through his telescope.

In fine, to discount the firmament as a source of wisdom seems grimly reminiscent of the very obscurantism Russell never tired of deriding and vilifying.

#### **VI. Conclusion:**

Overall, Russell's disapproval of space exploration can be assessed as being 1) understandable in the context of the early Cold War arms race; 2) well-founded regarding the specter of militarizing space; 3) an open issue in calculating our ultimate earthly welfare; and 4) inaccurate in its denial that there is any wisdom to be derived from its discoveries.

We should accept Russell's second argument to the extent of realizing the increased extent to which space has become militarized but be prepared for a possibility he would not accept, namely, that the increased extent to which space has become militarized could nevertheless be a price worth paying for our broadened horizons. We should accept his first argument as a respectable one for its time but just that—a dated argument. While it may be difficult to marshal evidence to this effect, my hunch is that anywhere from, say, thirty to seventy percent of space exploration these days could be credibly deemed "scientifically impartial." We should reject the third argument if it is to be understood as flatly denying terrestrial benefits ever coming from the space program. If, however, such benefits are not doubted but said to be not worth it, the matter becomes partially valuational (in

which case I don't share Russell's values in this area) and partially empirical (in which case once the framework of values is given an objective reference the matter becomes subject to the ongoing and apparently endless findings of science). We should completely reject the fourth argument because wisdom/knowledge is not only attainable in this area but its attainment is quite desirable and a cause for celebration.

In our own day and age, we are faced with challenges relating to such uncharted territory as electronic surveillance, genetic testing, and the like. The most helpful philosophers here would seem to be those proposing the best uses to which new technology can be put and suggesting specific abuses against which we should be on our guard. What are not helpful are philosophers simply dismissing new discoveries as "fantasy," or "impiety," and suggesting that we simply try to close Pandora's Box, or put the genie back in the bottle.

It may have been such reflections combined with a spirit of British compromise that prompted Russell in 1966 to outline conditions that would allay his misgivings about people exploring space as a "sacrifice to science." He remarks in the *Paris Match* piece that, first of all, "[t]he man must be willing to take the risk. In the second place, he must be a scientist able to report validly on his new environment. In the third place, he must be unarmed and the expense of his journey must be shared, at any rate, by America, Russia and China. It is above all important that he [the astronaut] should not be the advance guard of a military expedition by one of the existing powers."

Russell's denial that worthwhile information can be derived from the space program's discoveries are particularly striking in view of the fact that he opens his autobiography citing "the search for knowledge" as one of his life's three governing passions. But another of the three passions was "unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind." When it came to the exploration of space in Russell's day, he must have envisioned these two passions on a collision course. He opted to side with the welfare of mankind even at the cost of placing obstacles in the way of man's search for knowledge. In the twilight of his life, as his campaign for nuclear disarmament mounted, Russell took a different perspective on his life's greatest achievements. Regarding even his contributions to mathematical logic, which are typically viewed as his greatest accomplishments, Russell reflected, "What is the truth on logic does not matter two pins if there is no-one alive to know it" (*Compass and Fleet* interview, December 1964). The same can safely be said to have been Russell's view concerning "the truth on astronomy." "Material progress has increased men's power of

injuring one another, and there has been no correlative moral progress" (*The Prospects of Industrial Civilization*, p. 74). Hence Russell's interest and success in launching the Pugwash Movement. Ray Monk (a man not exactly known for his charitable interpretations of the aged Russell) hails the Pugwash Movement as one which enjoys "an impeccable reputation as a sober and respectable body that governments could trust, listen to and learn from, and...is widely credited with having been responsible for the partial Test-Ban Treaty of 1964" (*Bertrand Russell: The Ghost of Madness*, p. 380).

In conclusion, perhaps we can bear in mind Ray Monk's point that "Looked at like this, in the last ten years of his life, though Russell wrote no more on philosophy—indeed, precisely in not writing any more on philosophy—he was perfectly fulfilling the duties of a philosopher" (*Bertrand Russell: The Ghost of Madness*, p. 387).

*Chad Trainer is an independent scholar, engaged in a study of ideas and arguments from the history of philosophy. He would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of the Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University Library, especially Carl Spadoni. He would also like to thank Ray Perkins, Jim Daily, Cara Rice, Lee Trainer, Mark Trainer, Charles Tuller, Debbie Winfield, and especially Ken Blackwell for their assistance, as well as the Greater Russell Rochester Set for its interest in this paper. He presented an earlier version of this paper on June 1, 2002 at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Bertrand Russell Society. An abbreviated version of this article appeared in the March/April 2003 issue of Philosophy Now, and is available online at <http://www.philosophynow.org/40trainer.htm>.*

### Chomsky at McMaster Michael Potter

Noam Chomsky's visit to McMaster University at the behest of the Bertrand Russell Research Centre was most appropriate, as Nick Griffin noted when introducing the celebrated linguist and philosopher. After all, Chomsky is one of a select group who can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Russell as both a thinker and a political activist. Russellians also like to think of Chomsky as an heir of sorts to Russell's throne. Chomsky was inspired by Russell's philosophy and by his political activism, and in many ways Russell's torch in these areas was passed along to him. Were Russell alive today, he and Chomsky might have some quibbles over language and knowledge, but they would be united in their practical causes.



In town for the week of November 11th-15th, 2002, Chomsky offered semi-private seminars for academics—"Language and the Rest of the World," "Anarchism Today," and "9-11 and the Future of Progressive Social Change"—and two public lectures—"Is There Intelligent Life on Earth? The Role of Intellectual Culture and Institutions" and the Bertrand Russell Peace Lecture, "The Emerging Framework of World Order."

Like Russell, Chomsky is famous and infamous in disparate circles and attracts a diverse audience. Tickets for his public talks in Hamilton were snapped up minutes after being made available. Hundreds of people hoping for a chance to see Chomsky went home disappointed; they were too late for tickets, some having arrived only one hour early. Consequently, I was only able to attend one of the public lectures, "The Emerging Framework of World Order," and the seminar on language given to the folks in the departments of modern languages and linguistics, and philosophy.

The latter half of "Language and the Rest of the World" dealt with language and intentionality. In the 1920s, Chomsky said, a confident Russell asserted that the laws of chemistry had been reduced to the laws of physics. Chemistry had become a mere "calculating device." As it turned out, the laws of chemistry could not be reduced to the laws of physics—because the laws of physics were wrong. Eventually, the new, radically-revised physics that emerged out of the first half of the twentieth century was reunited with its old friend chemistry.

At present, we find an analogous controversy in the philosophy of mind over the attempt to reduce the "psychological" approach to the explanation of intentional systems to terms of the "neurophysiological" approach. Although they must be related in some way, he conceded, the proper explanation may come not through attempts to reduce one approach to the other, but rather through efforts to rethink one or both approaches.

Chomsky also made brief mention of Russell's principles of non-demonstrative inference, noting that Russell believed they were uniquely human and made knowledge possible. Although Chomsky believes such principles are most likely unique to human beings, he insisted that we might find counterparts in other species—even insects—that are adequate given the needs of each species. Each species-specific structure is likely to have no more of these principles than it needs. The task of the "minimalist program" is to discover such principles.

Those who attend Chomsky's talks do so for a variety of reasons. Nonetheless, attendees may be split into two general groups—those who

genuinely want to hear what he has to say and those who hope to upstage him. At "Language and the Rest of the World," representatives of the latter group were more prominent—an eager bloodthirst in their eyes as they asked questions they'd spent hours preparing, only to endure Chomsky's calm deflection. At "The Emerging Framework of World Order," on the other hand, those genuinely interested in Chomsky's ideas seemed to dominate, a delightful potpourri of the skeptical and the credulous.

Those attending the "The Emerging Framework of World Order" were forced to make their way through a throng of salespeople, activists, and protesters (salespeople of a different sort). The latter were primarily representatives of B'nai Brith Canada, handing out pamphlets and making the same charges Chomsky had responded to earlier in a *Hamilton Spectator* article—that he "trivializes" genocide in Cambodia, supports the work of a Holocaust denier, and lies about Israel. Indeed, Chomsky has responded to these charges several times in the past. But the B'nai Brith stands its ground, refusing (perhaps on principle) to undertake the hour or so of research needed to discover what Chomsky has actually said about matters near and dear to them.

Among the merchandise and propaganda offered for purchase at Hamilton Place, some gems could be found. The activists attracted to Chomsky's ideas tend to be young, passionate idealists—as were the activists attracted to Russell's crusades in the 1960s. Many peace activists took advantage of this opportunity to reach more people at one event than they'd normally reach in a year—they busily recruited attendees, spread the word about forthcoming protests, and dispensed information about the danger not posed by Iraq.

The information distributed by the peace activists was prepared just as the world came to the appalling realization that Bush was serious about waging war on Saddam. And it is Chomsky's prescient discussion of the causes and consequences of possible war with Iraq that is now the most relevant aspect of Chomsky Week. He spent most of his talk discussing Iraq, oil, and the traditional stance of American governments toward human rights violations—all in the wittily informative spirit best embodied by Russell.

After the events of September 11th, 2001, the belief that "nothing would ever be the same" became commonplace. The same sort of belief was common at the end of the Cold War. But then, as now, events continued as they probably would have in any event. What changed, in both cases, Chomsky argued, were the pretexts, doctrines, and tactics used in the

inevitable pursuit of power. At best, he predicted, 9/11 accelerated trends already in motion. The only thing that can keep a nation as powerful as the United States from bullying the rest of the world is the deterrent effect of other nations in possession of weapons of mass destruction.

At present, war against Iraq is justified by appeal to the threat of Saddam's (likely imaginary) "weapons of mass destruction" and the terrible human rights violations for which his regime is responsible. Chomsky spent a fair amount of time addressing the latter, moral justification.

There is a significant correlation between American arms transfers, Chomsky maintained, and human rights violations. If you wish to find atrocities, just follow the arms transfers; that those "in the know" don't notice the trail of bodies, destruction, and terror is, at best, self-deceit. When Turkey was the leading recipient of American arms, in the 1990s, it used them to terrorize its Kurdish population—driving millions from their homes, torturing and killing tens of thousands. An estimated 80% of the arms used in these activities were provided by the Clinton administration, an administration that doled out more arms in eight years than were transferred during the entire Cold War.

In 1997, when the *New York Times* claimed that American foreign policy was entering its "noble" phase, Turkey was praised for its "counter-terrorism"—that is, terrorism approved by the United States. A similar euphemism was used by the Nazis; whoever "we" may be, Chomsky wryly insisted, "our" atrocities are always *counter-terror*.

Colombia, Turkey's successor as leading American arms recipient, hasn't yet succeeded in crushing its own people, though it managed to achieve the worst record of human rights violations during the 1990s, with 10-20 political murders per day.

The horrific events of 9/11 made no difference when it came to the noble tradition of supporting brutal regimes. But it did affect the Bush administration's attitude toward Iraq. Chomsky recognized back in November, along with many others then and since, that Iraq poses no major threat to anyone. Yet, to hear Bush tell the tale, in the post-9/11 world, Iraq poses an "imminent" threat to the existence of all decent people on this planet. So the message was sent: Iraq is primarily interested in killing Americans, and it may do so at any time. Presumably he wasn't interested in killing his neighbors, since they didn't consider him a threat. But those living in the Middle East do live in fear, Chomsky noted, of the United States.

Like Russell, Chomsky appears to be a consequentialist; what we should do is, roughly, what is most likely to lead to the best consequences. No sane person wants the United States, or any other country, to suffer more terrorist attacks. We must recognize, Chomsky urged, that certain actions are likely to reduce the risk of further terrorist attacks, and others are likely to increase it. War with Iraq practically guarantees an increase in terrorism against the United States. He referred to reports that the CIA warned the Bush administration that an attack on Iraq would lead Saddam to ally himself with terrorist organizations, would lead to a new generation of Iraqis bent on revenge, and accelerate already-existing plans for further terrorist attacks. We must conclude, Chomsky suggested, that the "radical nationalist leadership" is pursuing ways to increase the risk of further terrorist attack with "vigor and determination."

One course of action almost guaranteed to decrease the risk of more terrorist attacks is shut out of the debate entirely. And that is to stop participating in it. In the words of the head of Israeli secret police, "Those who want victory against terror want an unending war, unless they address the underlying grievances." But, Chomsky pointed out, the Bush administration shows little interest in doing this—since it would, after all, entail admitting that the United States has supported, and continues to support, terrorism.

Sounding much like Russell, Chomsky declared that the "aim of practical politics" is to use imaginary hobgoblins to frighten members of the public until they beg you to lead them to sanctity. It's an old strategy—Hitler used it—that manages to "transform mass discontent into fervent nationalism by inventing an external enemy." "All of this," Chomsky explained, "is second nature to the recycled Reaganites" in power. The formula is simple: find a weak enemy, inflate the danger it poses to a monstrous degree to scare people, then quickly and decisively crush it. The public feels happy and secure and you still have their support. Problems begin to arise if the hobgoblin won't die on schedule.

No one is left to watch the watchmen, as it were. The United Nations, a prototype of the world government Russell insisted we must one day create, is helpless in the face of Bush's military superiority and open disregard for the rules of the international game. The U.N. functions "just as far as the great powers allow it to function." The only "great power" left is the United States, and it has no interest in an international democracy of nations. "How many U.N. resolutions would Iraq be violating if it had veto power?" Chomsky asked. None at all. Those who violate the most security resolutions are those who veto them—and the United States gets the gold

in this regard. Great Britain takes silver. In fact, three weeks before Chomsky's talk, only two countries opposed United Nations resolutions banning chemical weapons and the militarization of space: the United States and Israel. There was "zero coverage" of this event in the American press.

That his talk was sponsored by the Bertrand Russell Research Centre is appropriate, Chomsky said, because Russell is an exemplary model of the committed and responsible democratic citizen. In fact, he told the assembled masses, "there could hardly be a more inspiring model for what can and must be done."

Asked to state his message for today's youth in one sentence, he responded, "Be like those people who, throughout history, worked to create a world that was better than the one before." Russell would no doubt have agreed.

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## **Buddhiwadi Foundation: Aims and Activities**

**Dr. Kawaljeet Kaur**

*Several months ago, the BRS became acquainted with the Buddhiwadi Foundation, a humanist organization in India. Since then, they have been sending our society copies of their English-language publications, and we have reciprocated with copies of the BRSQ and other literature. We recently asked them to send us a few words about their organization, and their response is included below.*

Buddhiwadi Foundation is a registered, non-profit, educational trust for promoting rationalism-humanism and for eradicating blind faith and superstition. It was established in June 1996 by Dr. Ramendra Nath, who is also the founder of Bihar Buddhiwadi Samaj, or Bihar Rationalist Society (<http://bihar.humanists.net/>). I have been working as its Managing Trustee since its inception. Dr. Kiran Nath Dutta is the third founder-trustee of the organization.

Over the last six years, Buddhiwadi Foundation has published books and booklets in Hindi and English for achieving its aims. Till now, the Foundation has published five titles in Hindi and two in English. In English it has published *Is God Dead?* and *M.N. Roy's New Humanism and Materialism*, both written by Dr. Ramendra. This October the

Foundation will be publishing J.P.'s *Total Revolution and Humanism*, written by me. In addition, the Foundation has taken over maintenance and distribution of titles published earlier by Bihar Buddhiwadi Samaj. A total number of sixteen titles, including four in English, are at present distributed by the Foundation. The list includes Dr Ramendra's *Why I Am Not a Hindu & Why I Do Not Want Ramrajya* and *The Ethical Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*. The Foundation is also distributing Hindi translation of Prof. Paul Kurtz's *A Secular Humanist Declaration*, which was published earlier by the Bihar Buddhiwadi Samaj.

*Buddhiwadi*, an eight-page Hindi quarterly, is also now being published by the Buddhiwadi Foundation. Earlier, it was being published by the Bihar Buddhiwadi Samaj. The journal is still being sent free to the members of the Society. The Foundation has been bringing out *Buddhiwadi* in English as an occasional publication. From May 2002, we have also been bringing out an electronic version of the newsletter as well.

Buddhiwadi Foundation has also been maintaining a website since 1998; it can be found at <http://www.buddhiwadi.org>. The site contains information about the aims, activities and publications of Buddhiwadi Foundation. The site also contains information about Bihar Buddhiwadi Samaj. It also includes brief biographies of the trustees of the Buddhiwadi Foundation, and links to several national and international organizations with similar or complementary aims. One of the highlights of the website is the online publications of Dr. Ramendra and as well as my own. In addition to *Why I Am Not a Hindu* and *Is God Dead?*, "The Ethical Philosophy of Bertrand Russell," a paper based on Dr. Ramendra's book of the same title, is also available online. My own "How I became a Rationalist" also could be of interest to readers. Through the website, the Foundation has been able to establish an international presence, and develop contacts with several organizations including the Secular Web and the Bertrand Russell Society.

Buddhiwadi Foundation has also established a Buddhiwadi Study and Research Centre in cooperation with the Buddhiwadi Samaj. Rationalist and Humanist literature—books, booklets and journals in Hindi and English, published by various rationalist, humanist, atheist and secular organizations—are available at the centre for study and reference. An important research-project for preparing a book titled *Rationalism, Humanism and Atheism in Twentieth Century Indian Thought* was undertaken by Dr Ramendra in collaboration with me. This has been a major preoccupation of the Buddhiwadi Foundation for the last few years. The first draft of the book has now been completed. The book contains

brief life-sketches and philosophies of eight twentieth-century Indian thinkers—Periyar, M. N. Roy, Ambedkar, Gora, Kovoov, A.B. Shah, Narsingh Narain and Ramswaroop Verma. It also contains an introductory chapter on “Rationalism, Humanism and Atheism.” The concluding chapter contains critical comments on the thinkers discussed. The Foundation hopes to raise funds and to publish this important work soon.

Since its inception, the Buddhiwadi Foundation has been closely associated with the Bihar Buddhiwadi Samaj, which is a membership-organization for promoting rationalism, humanism, atheism and secularism. Bihar Buddhiwadi Samaj is also an associate-member of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU).

In the past, publishing was a major activity of the Society. However, with this activity now being taken over by the Foundation, the Society has been concentrating on increasing membership and on networking. To supplement the networking effort of the Buddhiwadi Samaj, the Buddhiwadi Foundation published in the year 2000 a Hindi directory of rationalist-humanist organizations in India. The directory contains information on fifty Indian organizations, including Hindi and English literature published by some of them. We have been exchanging our journal and literature and cooperating in different ways with several of these organizations. We have also been publishing introductory articles on them in the Buddhiwadi. In the October issue, we will be publishing an introductory article on the Bertrand Russell Society.

On September 15, the Bihar Buddhiwadi Samaj hosted a meeting of the National Executive of the Federation of Indian Rationalist Associations (FIRA). Several rationalist and humanist organizations from different Indian states are associated with the FIRA. The meeting was attended by B. Premanand, editor of *Indian Sceptic*, who is the convener of the organization, and representatives of rationalist organizations from Tamilnadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Gujarat, W. Bengal, Haryana, Jharkhand and Bihar. We took the opportunity to distribute complimentary copies of the *Bertrand Russell Society Quarterly* to those interested. Mr. Premanand also performed three “Miracle Exposure Programs” in and around Patna, including one in Buddhiwadi Seminar Hall.

Thus, Buddhiwadi Foundation and Bihar Buddhiwadi Samaj have been undertaking several kinds of activities, including publication, organizing meetings, seminars, conferences, writing letters in newspapers, issuing press statements, circulating articles and networking, etc., for promoting rational humanism.

## The Case of Dr. Yunis Shaikh

Phil Ebersole

*The BRSQ has already published brief mentions of the dire predicament facing Dr. Yunis Shaikh (See "News from the Humanist World," #113, February 2002; #114, May 2002; and #115, August 2002). However, given the seriousness of the issue we thought that a more in-depth treatment of the issue was warranted. Bertrand Russell was, after all, denied a teaching appointment at City College of New York due to a lawsuit from a mother concerned that her daughter would be "corrupted" by studying with Russell—despite the fact that her daughter could not possibly have attended one of Russell's classes. (Courses at the college were segregated by sex at the time.) The parallels with Dr. Shaikh's case are clear, although Shaikh faces a much more terrible fate than Russell did.*

Bertrand Russell was known for writing letters on behalf of political prisoners and victims of persecution. If he were alive today, he would surely take an interest in the case of Dr. Yunis Shaikh, a Pakistani humanist medical lecturer being held in solitary confinement under sentence of death on charges of blasphemy.

Dr. Shaikh's alleged crime was to have stated, in answer to a question, that neither Mohammed nor his parents could logically have been Muslims prior to Mohammed receiving his revelation from God. For this offense he was arrested on Oct. 4, 2000, and placed in solitary confinement, then tried and sentenced to death on Aug. 18, 2001. His appeal to the High Court of Pakistan was heard late last year, but, as of this writing, no decision has been issued. The fact that the decision so long in coming may indicate the court has some doubt about the merit of the case against Dr. Shaikh. This is a good sign, but nevertheless Dr. Shaikh is still in solitary confinement. If the verdict and sentence are upheld, he has one more right of appeal, to the Supreme Court of Pakistan, before the sentence can be carried out.

There is some question as to whether Dr. Shaikh actually made the statements he is accused of making. It has been proven that none of the accusers or witnesses were present in his class at the time they said he made the alleged statement. And I doubt if any intelligent Muslim would consider Dr. Shaikh's statement, even if theologically incorrect, to be disrespectful of Islam or its Prophet. But the larger issue is that at the dawn of the 21st century, a respected humanitarian and lecturer is to be put to death for the peaceful expression of his religious beliefs. Nor is this, unfortunately, a unique or isolated case.



What would Bertrand Russell do? As the record in Ray Perkins' *Yours Faithfully, Bertrand Russell* (Open Court, 2001), clearly shows, he would make his objections known. Courteously worded letters of protest should be sent to (1) Ambassador Shamstad Ahmad, Pakistan Mission to the United Nations, 6 East 65th Street, New York, NY 10021 USA or (2) Dr. Malceha Lodhi, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 2315 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20008 USA. Protest letters can also be sent to other embassies of Pakistan. Letters of concern also may be sent to (3) Dr. Abdul Fatleh Amor, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, 8-14 Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, or (4) Mr. David Abramson, Officer in Charge of Pakistan, Office of International Religious Freedom, DRL/RF, Room 4829, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520.

The campaign on behalf of Dr. Shaikh is being led by the International Humanism and Ethical Union (IHEU), which is based in London. Updates on his case may be found on the IHEU web site at <http://www.iheu.org/Shaiikh/>. It is helpful to e-mail copies of letters sent on behalf of Dr. Shaikh to the IHEU at [campaign@iheu.org](mailto:campaign@iheu.org).

### *Review:*

#### **Richard Mann. "The Poker"**

Warren Allen Smith

Richard Mann's one-act play "The Poker" was presented to an SRO audience at Saint Ann's School in Brooklyn Heights, New York, on 10 March 2003. The play is loosely based on the book *Wittgenstein's Poker*, by David Edmonds and John Eidinow (Ecco, 2001).

Featured were Bertrand Russell (played adroitly with pipe by mathematics teacher and playwright Richard Mann); Ludwig Wittgenstein (played amusingly by fellow mathematics teacher Paul Lockhart); Robert Braithwaite (played convincingly by history teacher William Everdell); and Karl Popper (played tempestuously by another mathematics teacher, Dan Finkel). Mr. Everdell is a member of the Bertrand Russell Society.

The plot, as developed by Mann, not only was well-researched but also is precisely what can entertain as well as educate teenagers and adults. That a private school's faculty and several of its well-directed students performed the work so engagingly is refreshingly remarkable.

At issue in the play is the 1946 encounter between Wittgenstein and Popper. Did something involving a fireplace poker occur? The play provides several answers. Suffice it to say that each poked at the other in one way or another. Some of the stabs were intellectual, almost everyone getting jabbed; some of Bertrand's ideas were pierced by Ludwig; and one student willingly thrust himself at Ludwig (a scene not even implied in past high school presentations).

Memorable lines: "Popper was trying to ask me about my chicken" (Russell); "One should not threaten visiting professors with a poker" (Popper); "Meaning is not fixed in any Platonic sense" (Wittgenstein).

Saint Ann's is a 34-year-old private school, offering classes from pre-kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, with around one thousand students. Two of its alumni have won Academy Awards for "A Beautiful Mind"—screenplay writer Akiva Goldsman and actress Jennifer Connolly.

In an ideal world, the cast and crew would find it profitable to perform "The Poker" in schools around the country and abroad!

*Warren Allen Smith is a longtime BRS member and founding member of the Society's New York City Chapter, the GNYCCBRS. For more information on this play, contact William Everdell at [everdell@aol.com](mailto:everdell@aol.com).*

### *Regular Features:*

#### **Russell-Related Odds and Ends**

- Roger Kimball, author of the left-bashing *Tenured Radicals*, has discussed Russell in print several times. (See, e.g., Peter Stone's "Russell and Hegel" in *BRSQ* #110, May 2001.) The lengthiest of these discussions is probably "Love, Logic & Unbearable Pity: The Private Bertrand Russell," which appeared in September 1992 *New Criterion*. While the article begins with the line, "It must have been extraordinary, being Bertrand Russell," Kimball is quite critical of Bertie. Interestingly, Kimball takes the position (rare among students of Russell) that Russell had no mystical side—indeed, that many of his failings stemmed from his totally anti-mystical nature. The review is at <http://www.newcriterion.com/archive/11/sept92/brussell.htm>.

*Source: Peter Stone*

- In his book *How Are We to Live? Ethics in an Age of Self-Interest* (Prometheus Books, 1995), Peter Singer discusses the problem (raised by fellow philosopher Richard Taylor) of the mortality of human creations. Citing Shelley's *Ozymandias*, he asks how people could find meaning for their lives in acts of creation when the products of those acts invariably decay and crumble in time. He further notes that

Bertrand Russell was fond of making a similar point, emphasizing our cosmic insignificance by pointing out that our entire world is only one planet circling around one star in a galaxy that contains about 300,000 million stars, and is itself only one of several million galaxies. The sun will eventually grow cold, and life on earth will come to an end, but the universe will continue, utterly indifferent to our fate (pp. 216-217).

Quoting Bertie in response, Singer then writes, "while 'the realization of the minuteness of man and all his concerns' may at first strike us as oppressive, and even paralyzing, 'this effect is not rational and should not be lasting. There is no reason to worship mere size'" (p. 217).

Singer here quotes Russell's "The Expanding Mental Universe," from *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell*, ed. by Robert Egner and Lester Denonn (Allen & Unwin, 1961). (Singer incorrectly spells BRS Honorary Member Denonn's name as "Dononn.") He also mentions "What I Believe," from same volume. Curiously, he does not mention "A Free Man's Worship," despite its relevance to the theme.

*Source: Peter Stone*

- In 1996, the *Nation* published a review by Arthur C. Danto entitled "Picasso and the Portrait." This review discussed an exhibition of Picasso portraits at the Museum of Modern Art that year. The review opens with an insightful comparison of Russell and Picasso. Danto was provoked into finding parallels between the two men through "reading Ray Monk's forthcoming biography of Bertrand Russell." One assumes that Danto had a draft copy of the book; otherwise, reading a forthcoming book is a little like being married to a bachelor. (It also had to be Volume 1, as Volume 2 would have been little more than a gleam in Ray Monk's eye at that point.) The review is at <http://www.tamu.edu/mocl/picasso/news/nation.html>.

*Source: Peter Stone*

- On January 20, 2003, *Slate* magazine ran a crossword puzzle by Matt Gaffney entitled "The Penn Is Mightier than the Sword." (An ongoing theme throughout many of the clues was Sean Penn's recent trip to Baghdad, as well as his views on President Bush's war plans regarding Iraq.) The clue for entry 34 down read, "Bertrand Russell became one in 1931." The answer, of course, is "EARL." The puzzle is at <http://slate.msn.com/id/2077060/>.

*Source: Peter Stone*

- On March 27, 2003, the *Daily Princetonian* announced that

Professor John Bahcall, a faculty member of the Institute for Advanced Study and a lecturer at the University, has been awarded the Dan David Prize for the Future of Cosmology and Astronomy for his long-term groundbreaking work in astrophysics. The prize, which includes a \$1 million award, is "granted to individuals or institutions with proven, exceptional, and distinct excellence in the sciences, arts, and humanities that have made an outstanding contribution to humanity," according to the Dan David Prize website.

Most impressive of all is the fact that Dr Bahcall indicated in the article that "he was first inspired to study astrophysics by a quote from philosopher and logician Bertrand Russell." The article, written by Eric T. Yanagi, can be found at <http://www.dailyprincetonian.com/archives/2003/03/27/news/7703.shtml>.

*Source: Peter Friedman*

- The *National Post*, a prominent Canadian newspaper, recently ran an obituary for Donald Coxeter, a British-born mathematician best known for his work on multidimensional geometric shapes. Coxeter, who spent 60 years of his professional career at the University of Toronto, was taken by his father to meet Bertrand Russell. Russell was sufficiently impressed by the young man's abilities as to put him in contact with the mathematician E.H. Neville, who in turn recommended private tutoring. The obituary ran on April 5, 2003 and can be found at <http://www.nationalpost.com/national/story.html?id=4C3576E1-43E1-4297-8BD7-B23BCF8842FE>.

Interestingly, according to another obituary of Coxeter—appearing in

the April 7, 2003 *New York Times*—Coxeter has another, more indirect Russell connection. “As a student at Cambridge,” the obituary notes, Coxeter “was one of five students selected by Ludwig Wittgenstein to attend his philosophy of mathematics classes.” (The *BRSQ* would love to hear who the other four were.) The *New York Times* obituary does not mention Russell, however.

*Source: Peter Friedman*

- On April 7, *USA Today* ran a brief article on the search for evidence of the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq that allegedly justified the attack on that country (evidence that still somehow remains “elusive”). The article included a sidebar on the origins of term “weapons of mass destruction.” (Its first known use appeared in the *London Times*.) The sidebar goes on to point out that

The term became an arms-control catchphrase, used by Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein in 1955: “In the tragic situation which confronts humanity, we feel that scientists should assemble in conference to appraise the perils that have arisen as a result of the development of weapons of mass destruction.”

This quote comes from the first paragraph of the Russell-Einstein manifesto. The conference mentioned there would, of course, turn into the Nobel Prize-winning organization Pugwash.

The article is at [http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2003-04-07-unmask-usat\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2003-04-07-unmask-usat_x.htm).

*Source: Peter Friedman*

- The online Dictionary of Unitarian & Universalist Biography features an entry on the Russell family. The article, by Wesley Hromatko, focuses on Bertie, his grandmother, and his uncle Francis (“Rollo”). While noting that Bertrand Russell was an agnostic throughout most of his life, it does point out that he did sign the membership register at a Unitarian church as a boy, and continued to attend until he was 18 (though privately he had abandoned religion at 15). The entry is at <http://www.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/russellfamily.html>.

*Source: Peter Friedman*

- The more paranoid among the ranks of the BRS will be pleased to learn that Lyndon LaRouche's classic diatribe, "How Bertrand Russell Became an Evil Man," is now available at [http://www.schillerinstitute.org/fid\\_91-96/943a\\_russell\\_lhl.html](http://www.schillerinstitute.org/fid_91-96/943a_russell_lhl.html). The essay originally appeared in the Fall 1994 issue of *Fidelio*, a house organ of LaRouche's political "empire." You can also find Russell-bashing in a brief biography of LaRouche available at the website of his 2004 presidential campaign, <http://larouchein2004.net/>. If critics of LaRouche are more your style, you can find a list of LaRouche quotes at the Public Eye, website of Political Research Associates, which monitors organizations on the extreme Right. LaRouche is quoted there at <http://www.publiceye.org/larouche/nclc4.html> as blaming the legacy of Russell and H.G. Wells (as well as the Club of Rome, and the World Wildlife Fund) for "pushing the world toward war" in the 1980s.

*Source: Peter Friedman*

### News from the Humanist World

- Humanists and human rights advocates have been asked to support the case of Sreemati Pattathanam. Mr. Pattathanam is General Secretary of the Bharatseeya Rationalist Association, the Kerala affiliate of the Rationalist Association of India. (The Rationalist Association of India is a member of the International Humanist and Ethical Union, or IHEU, to which the BRS also belongs.) He also edits the Malayalam-language rationalist monthly *Yukthirajyam*. In 2002, he published a book in Malayalam entitled *Matha Amruthandamayi—Divya Kadhakalum Yatharthiavum* ("Matha Amrithanandamayi: Sacred Stories and Realities"). The book is an effort by Mr. Pattathanam to debunk the claims of Mata Amritanandamayi (née Sudhamani, 1953), a prominent Kerala-based faith healer who claims to heal people through her hugs. (She is known as the "hugging mother.") The book also proposes that the police investigate several suspicious deaths that have occurred around the faith healer's ashram.

Unfortunately, this "healer" enjoys the favor of the BJP, the Hindu fundamentalist party currently governing India, as well as powerful officials in Kerala. Instead of heeding calls to investigate the "hugging mother," the government moved to prosecute Mr. Pattathanam for making "objectionable references" to a spiritual leader, and for "hurting the religious sentiments of her devotees."

A public outcry against the proposed prosecution caused the government to back off, but the danger of prosecution is still very real. The IHEU is asking concerned citizens everywhere to write to the following officials and demand that they keep their hands off Mr. Pattathanam and respect free speech and skeptical inquiry:

-A.K. Anthony, Chief Minister of Kerala (Fax: 91-0471-2333489; e-mail: [cmkerala@vsnl.net](mailto:cmkerala@vsnl.net) and [chiefminister@kerala.gov.in](mailto:chiefminister@kerala.gov.in))

-The governor of Kerala (Fax: 91-471-2720266)

-The director general of the Kerala police (Fax: 91-471-2726560; e-mail: [dgp@scrb.com](mailto:dgp@scrb.com))

-The principal home secretary (Fax: 91-471-2327582; e-mail: [prisecy@home.kerala.gov.in](mailto:prisecy@home.kerala.gov.in))

Please send copies of any e-mails sent to [humanism@iheu.org](mailto:humanism@iheu.org). For more information, visit <http://www.iheu.org>.

- The Center for Inquiry-Florida (CFI Florida), held its inaugural conference on February 7-9 2003, at the Radisson Hotel in Pinellas Park, Florida. Paul Kurtz, chairman of the parent CFI Amherst (NY) and an Honorary Member of the BRS, spoke at the event. The CFI Florida, which joins sister centers in Amherst, Los Angeles, and the New York City metropolitan area, is chaired by Jan Loeb Eisler, a longtime BRS member and past Vice President.

The CFI Florida replaces the St. Petersburg-Largo Area Secular Humanists (SPLASH). Those interested in supporting the new Center may become a friend of the Center for \$45/year (or \$55/year for families), a supporting friend for \$100/year, or a regent of the Center for \$500/year. For more information, contact Toni Van Pelt, Executive Director of the CFI Florida, at PO Box 8099 Madeira Beach, FL 33738-8099, (727) 209-290, [vanpelt@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:vanpelt@tampabay.rr.com). Or visit the CFI Florida's website at <http://www.CFIFlorida.org>.

- The Center for Inquiry Institute will once again hold a full 2-week summer session of educational programs available for undergraduate credit through the State University of New York. The summer session will be held at the Center, in Amherst, New York, on July 6-20, 2003. The summer session will feature courses on the Psychology of Belief and Reason and Ethics. Assistantships are available. The registration deadline is May 30. For further information, visit [www.centerforinquiry.net/summer2003.htm](http://www.centerforinquiry.net/summer2003.htm).

## Updates on Awards and Honorary Members

- A new 74-minute documentary, entitled *Power and Terror: Noam Chomsky in Our Times*, presents Chomsky's critical response to U.S. foreign policy in the wake of the September 11 attacks. A selection of reviews of this documentary can be found at <http://www.metacritic.com/film/titles/powerandterror/>. Reviews also appeared in *Spirituality & Health* (November), the *Austin American-Statesman* (January 10), the *London Free Press* (January 20), the *Boston Herald* (January 31), the *Chicago Sun-Times* (February 7), the *Melbourne Age* (February 27), and the *Sydney Morning Herald* (March 6). (The BRS would welcome a review of this film.) Reviews also appeared in such Left periodicals as the online *Dissident Voice* (December 2, [http://www.dissidentvoice.org/Articles/MickeyZ\\_Chomsky.htm](http://www.dissidentvoice.org/Articles/MickeyZ_Chomsky.htm)), and *Socialist Worker* (December 13, [http://www.socialistworker.org/2002-2/433/433\\_13\\_Chomsky.shtml](http://www.socialistworker.org/2002-2/433/433_13_Chomsky.shtml)). An article on the making of the film appeared in a Japanese paper, the *Daily Yomiuri*, on September 26, 2002 under the title "Filming the 'Rebel without a Pause.'" The article is by Asami Nagai. (This paper also reviewed the film on the same day. The film was made in Japan, and features what the *New York Daily News* describes as "really bad Japanese pop music.")

The film, released on November 22, 2002, may be at a theater near you; to find the nearest cinema playing it, visit its distributor, First Run Features, at <http://www.firstrunfeatures.com/>.

- A long article on Chomsky appeared in the *New Yorker* on March 31, 2003. The article, by Larissa MacFarquhar, was entitled "The Devil's Accountant." (The title comes from a phrase used by philosopher Avishai Margalit to describe Chomsky, and refers to his single-minded focus on the consequences—in terms of people killed, etc.—of U.S. foreign policy.) The article reviews Chomsky's politics, but devotes much of its attention to Chomsky's work in linguistics and private life, the latter being a topic Chomsky normally demands be kept off-limits. (It describes, for example, the occupations of Chomsky's children.)
- A detailed article on Dr. Henry Morgentaler, Canadian champion of abortion rights and winner of the 1999 BRS Award, appeared in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* on January 18, 2003. The article's title captures the general approach taken—"Why Doesn't This Man Have the Order of Canada?"



- The Spring 2003 issue of *New Humanist* included two features relating to BRS Honorary Members. Noam Chomsky had an article entitled “The People in Gravest Danger” that dealt with the perilous situation of Iraqi Kurds. And David Hall had a review of *What the Koran Really Says*, edited by Ibn Warraq (Prometheus, 2002).
- Speaking of Warraq, the April 2003 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* features an essay by Christopher Hitchens on recent books dealing with Islam—including Warraq’s *Why I Am Not a Muslim* (Prometheus, 1995). Hitchens describes this book as his “favorite book on Islam.”

### Russell on the Web

- At <http://www.britannica.com/nobel/> can be found the Britannica Guide to the Nobel Prizes, which needless to say features Russell. It even has a small video feature whereby one can view Russell briefly discussing the value of clear thinking. Other video and audio features involve other Nobel laureates with ties to Russell, including Einstein, Pauling, Eliot, and Shaw.

*Source: Ken Blackwell*

- Top Telemedia, Ltd., an Indian “Infotainment” company, has a website featuring biographies of many famous persons, including philosophers like Bertrand Russell. The Russell biography features some high-quality pictures of the good lord as well as quotable quotes and downloadable Russell screensavers and wallpaper. Top Telemedia is at <http://www.toptelemedia.com>.

*Source: Russell-1*

- Those wanting to know more about the women in Russell’s life should check out the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam. Its archives are currently home to the papers of Dora Russell, Bertie’s second wife. The Institute has an index of these papers at <http://www.iisg.nl/archives/gias/r/10767897.html>.

*Source: Ken Blackwell*

- Those wishing to know even *more* about the women in Russell’s life should visit [http://www.oilonline.com/essay\\_herworld.htm](http://www.oilonline.com/essay_herworld.htm), which features an essay entitled “Anne Harvey and Her World.” The

essay, by Henry Lessore, details the life of the daughter of Dorothy Dudley, sister of Helen Dudley. Russell had a brief affair with Helen that ended quite badly, and the Dudley family enjoyed a number of close ties to Russell, his first wife Alys, his second wife Dora, and Ottoline Morrell. Many of these ties are discussed in the essay, which was apparently written as promotional material for a show at the New York School of Drawing Painting and Sculpture. (The show, entitled "Family Ties," featured drawings and paintings by Anne, her brother Jason, and Jason's son Steven. In another interesting tie-in, Jason and probably Anne attended Beacon Hill school at the time when both Bertie and Dora were running the place.)

*Source: Ken Blackwell*

- There is a weblog (an internet "diary" containing the musings of its creator as well as various links) entitled "Half the Sins of Mankind" at <http://www.bertrandrussell.blogspot.com/>. Unfortunately, the creator of the weblog (or "blogger") declined to place his or her name on the site anywhere. The name of the magazine apparently refers to a line from *The Conquest of Happiness*—"Boredom is a vital problem for the moralist, since at least half the sins of mankind are caused by the fear of it."

*Source: Thom Weidlich*

- The website BrainyQuote lists many Russell quotes (though without documenting the sources for these quotes) at <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/b/a125713.html>.

*Source: Ken Blackwell*

## Who's New in Hell

The last issue of the *BRSQ* (February 2003) offered a list of libraries that presently own a copy of Warren Allen Smith's *Celebrities in Hell* (*CH*, Barricade, 2002). This issue includes a list of libraries that possess Warren's magnum opus, *Who's Who in Hell* (*WWH*, Barricade, 2000). As with *Celebrities*, the *BRSQ* urges BRS-ers to see if their own local libraries are on this list and, if they are not, request that they obtain the book.

The following 156 libraries in the United States and Canada are known to have *Who's Who in Hell*:

Birmingham Public Library (Birmingham, AL)  
City of Mesa Library (Mesa, AZ)  
Northern Arizona University (Flagstaff, AZ)  
Phoenix Public Library (Phoenix, AZ)  
Tucson-Pima Public Library (Tucson, AZ)  
University of Arizona (Tucson, AZ)  
Berkeley Public Library (Berkeley, CA)  
Beverly Hills Public Library (Beverly Hills, CA)  
California State University, Northridge (Northridge, CA)  
Los Angeles Public Library (Los Angeles, CA)  
Napa City-County Library (Napa, CA)  
Orange County Public Library (Orange County, CA)  
Sacramento Public Library (Sacramento, CA)  
San Jose Public Library (San Jose, CA)  
University of San Francisco (San Francisco, CA)  
The Webb Schools (Claremont, CA)  
Yolo County Library (Yolo County, CA)  
Denver Public Library (Denver, CO)  
Jefferson County Public Library (Lakewood, CO)  
Pikes Peak Library District (Colorado Springs, CO)  
University of Northern Colorado (Greeley, CO)  
Darien Library (Darien, CT)  
New Canaan Library (New Canaan, CT)  
Library of Congress (Washington, DC)  
Charlotte-Glades Library System (Charlotte County, FL)  
Edison Community College (Lee County, FL)  
Florida International University, Biscayne Bay Campus (North Miami, FL)  
Jacksonville Public Library (Jacksonville, FL)  
Palm Beach County Library System (West Palm Beach, FL)  
Santa Fe Community College (Gainesville, FL)  
Seminole County Public Library (Seminole County, FL)  
University of West Florida (Pensacola, FL)  
Volusia County Public Library (Volusia County, FL)  
University of Guam (Mangilao, GU)  
Arlington Heights Memorial Library (Arlington Heights, IL)  
DePaul University (Chicago, IL)  
Oak Park Public Library (Oak Park, IL)  
Prairie Trails Public Library (Burbank, IL)  
Skokie Public Library (Skokie, IL)  
University of Illinois (Urbana & Champaign, IL)  
Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library (Evansville, IN)  
Indiana University (Bloomington, IN)  
Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library (Indianapolis, IN)

Valparaiso University (Valparaiso, IN)  
Wabash College (Crawfordsville, IN)  
Cedar Rapids Public Library (Cedar Rapids, IA)  
Davenport Public Library (Davenport, IA)  
University of Northern Iowa (Cedar Falls, IA)  
Benedictine College (Atchison, KS)  
Kansas State University (Manhattan, KS)  
Pittsburg State University (Pittsburg, KS)  
Topcka and Shawnee County Public Library (Topeka, KS)  
Jefferson Parish Library (Metairie, LA)  
Loyola University (New Orleans, LA)  
Portland Public Library (Portland, ME)  
Boston Public Library (Boston, MA)  
C/W Mars, Inc. (Paxton, MA)  
Harvard University, Divinity School (Cambridge, MA)  
Harvard University, Harvard College Library Technical Services  
(Cambridge, MA)  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge, MA)  
Minuteman Library Network (Framingham, MA)  
Noble, Inc. (Danvers, MA)  
Old Colony Library Network (Braintree, MA)  
Lakeland Library Cooperative (Grand Rapids, MI)  
Michigan State University (East Lansing, MI)  
Southfield Public Library (Southfield, MI)  
University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, MI)  
Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo, MI)  
Minneapolis Public Library (Minneapolis, MN)  
University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, MN)  
Ozarks Technical Community College (Springfield, MO)  
St. Louis University (St. Louis, MO)  
Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter, NH)  
University of New Hampshire (Durham, NH)  
Drew University (Madison, NJ)  
Felician College (Lodi, NJ)  
Princeton University (Princeton, NJ)  
Somerset County Library (Somerset County, NJ)  
Woodbridge Public Library (Woodbridge, NJ)  
San Juan College (Farmington, NM)  
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library (Buffalo, NY)  
Center for Inquiry (Amherst, NY)  
Columbia-Greene Community College (Hudson, NY)  
Columbia University (New York, NY)  
Fordham University (Bronx, NY)

New York Law School (New York, NY)  
New York Public Library-Research Libraries (New York, NY)  
New York Public Library-Jefferson Market Branch (New York, NY)  
Niagara Falls Public Library (Niagara Falls, NY)  
Nioga Library (Lockport, NY)  
Pratt Institute (Brooklyn, NY)  
Ross School (East Hampton, NY)  
St. John Fisher College (Rochester, NY)  
Sarah Lawrence College (Bronxville, NY)  
Suffolk Cooperative Library System (Bellport, NY)  
University of Rochester (Rochester, NY)  
White Plains Public Library (White Plains, NY)  
Appalachian State University (Boone, NC)  
Duke University (Durham, NC)  
Guilford Technical Community College (Jamestown, NC)  
North Carolina Community College System (Raleigh, NC)  
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (Chapel Hill, NC)  
Akron-Summit County Public Library (Akron, OH)  
Columbus Metropolitan Library (Columbus, OH)  
Cuyahoga County Public Library (Cuyahoga County, OH)  
Lane Public Library (Hamilton, OH)  
Mansfield/Richland County Public Library (Mansfield, OH)  
Marion Public Library (Marion, OH)  
Southeast Ohio Automation Consortium (Caldwell, OH)  
Southwest Public Libraries (Grove City, OH)  
State Library of Ohio (Columbus, OH)  
Toledo-Lucas County Public Library (Toledo, OH)  
University of Cincinnati (Cincinnati, OH)  
Phillips Theological Seminary (Tulsa, OK)  
Tulsa City-County Library (Tulsa, OK)  
Corvallis-Benton County Public Library (Corvallis, OR)  
Linfield College (McMinnville, OR)  
Multnomah County Library (Portland, OR)  
Southern Oregon University (Ashland, OR)  
Washington County Cooperative Library (Hillsboro, OR)  
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, PA)  
La Salle University (Philadelphia, PA)  
Manor College (Jenkintown, PA)  
Moravian College (Bethlehem, PA)  
New Castle Public Library (New Castle, PA)  
Westmoreland County Community College (Youngwood, PA)  
University of Rhode Island (Kingston, RI)  
College of Charleston (Charleston, SC)

Furman University (Greenville, SC)  
Vanderbilt University (Nashville, TN)  
Austin Public Library (Austin, TX)  
Collin County Community College (Plano, TX)  
Dallas Public Library (Dallas, TX)  
Houston Public Library (Houston, TX)  
Irving Public Library (Irving, TX)  
Montgomery County Memorial Library System (Conroe, TX)  
Southwestern University (Georgetown, TX)  
Texas A&M International University (Laredo, TX)  
University of Texas at Austin (Austin, TX)  
University of Utah (Salt Lake City, UT)  
Weber State University (Ogden, UT)  
Central Rappahannock Regional Library (Fredericksburg, VA)  
FBI Academy (Quantico, VA)  
Library of Virginia (Richmond, VA)  
Fort Vancouver Regional Library System (Vancouver, WA)  
King County Library System (Issaquah, WA)  
North Olympic Library System (Port Angeles, WA)  
Seattle Public Library (Seattle, WA)  
University of Washington (Seattle, WA)  
Shepherd College (Shepherdstown, WV)  
West Virginia Wesleyan College (Buckhannon, WV)  
Hedburg Public Library (Jancsville, WI)  
Milwaukee County Federated Library System (Milwaukee, WI)  
Outagamie Waupaca Library System (Appleton, WI)  
University of British Columbia (Vancouver, BC)  
McMaster University (Hamilton, ON)

Libraries outside North America known to have *WWH* include the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow; The Atheist Centre in India; the Ethical Society Library in London; the Vatican Library in Vatican City; and the Alexandria Library in Egypt.

In addition, Warren is proceeding to collect new information relevant to the two books. In the latest installment of his "Gossip across the Pond" column (*Gay and Lesbian Humanist*, Winter 2002-2003), he lists some of the many individuals that readers of *WWH* and *CH* have pointed out were omitted from the first two books. The list includes such diverse figures as Anthony Blunt, Nadine Gordimer, Studs Terkel (winner of the 2002 BRS Award), and Idi Amin. Warren has promised to include them all in the second edition of *WWH* (should one ever appear). The complete column is at <http://www.galha.org/glh/222/gossip.html>.

## Pose with Bertie!



Our latest installment in this series features BRS Honorary Member Taslima Nasrin posing with the bust of Bertie at Red Lion Square, London. The *BRSQ* thanks Warren Allen Smith for the picture, and encourages other BRS-ers visiting London to get their pictures taken with Russell and send copies to the *BRSQ*!

## *BRS Business and Chapter News:*

### **The Greater New York City Chapter of the Bertrand Russell Society (GNYCCBRS) Warren Allen Smith**

The Greater New York City Chapter of the Bertrand Russell Society (GNYCCBRS, pronounced guh-NYKA-burrs by members) held a planning brunch on Sunday, March 16th, with Tim Madigan, longtime steering committee member of the Greater Rochester Russell Set (GRRS).

At the meeting, it was disclosed that GNYCCBRS has increased its rolls by 20%, from 5 to 6 members. Even the GRRS cannot claim to have increased its membership by that phenomenal percentage over the same period of time!

Chapter activist projects in the works include (a) placing an Arthur C. Clarke plaque at the Hotel Chelsea on 23rd Street, where he wrote *2001* (Clarke was not a devotee of Russell, however); (b) placing Sidney Hook's name on the Celebrity Walk at the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens; (c) working to devise new homepages for Taslima Nasrin and ASIBEHU, the Costa Rican-based association of Spanish-speaking ethical humanists; and (d) maintaining contact with BRS Honorary Members Paul Edwards, Ibn Warraq, and Taslima Nasrin.

On the latter subject, GNYCCBRS can make the following reports:

- Dr. Edwards, now retired from New School University, continues to work on his book *God and the Philosophers* (Prometheus).
- Taslima Nasrin's father died on February 25, 2003. She has received a Harvard fellowship in the fall, partially due to the assistance received from Herb Silverman, Tom Ferrick, Tim Madigan, and Warren Allen Smith. In March she spoke in Belgium at a government conference about women and democracy, then attended a poetry festival in Paris, an authors' festival in Hong Kong, and a secular women's conference in Germany. She is interviewed and pictured in the Institute for the Secularisation of Islamic Society. The interview is at <http://www.secularislam.org/skeptics/taslima.htm>.
- Ibn Warraq has received a visa to stay in the United States. He was met when he arrived from Europe in April by Warren Allen Smith.



- Britain's *Gay & Lesbian Humanist*, for which Warren is a columnist, reviewed Warraq's web site in its Winter 2001-2002 issue. The review is at <http://www.galha.org/glh/212/webwatch.html>. The magazine also published an article about "Islam and Homosexuality"; it is at [http://www.galha.org/briefing/2003\\_03.html](http://www.galha.org/briefing/2003_03.html). Warren asked Warraq to comment on the accuracy of this article; the latter responded by e-mailing the article's author, Dr. Stephen Moreton (a member of the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association). "You have done a good job," wrote Warraq, "It seems accurate to me. Well done."

### Rustlings

Gerry Wildenberg

"Rustlings" presents a simple substitution cipher based on the writings of Bertrand Russell. In the coded quote below, each letter stands for another letter. For example BERTRAND RUSSELL could be coded as OREGENAQ EHFFRY Y, O=B, R=E, et cetera. The quote below uses a different code. Today's quote will be familiar to many Russellians. After solving the cipher, try to identify the source.

ARFPGB CPUUATB UTQN BGPAIGA PI RFA UMGR RFMR PRB  
 UJICMNAIRMV CMRM MTA UAAVPIZB MIC ANQRPQIB, IQR  
 HATGAHRB.

### Solution to *Rustlings* Puzzle, February 2003

"The British are distinguished among the nations of modern Europe, on the one hand by the excellence of their philosophers, and on the other hand by their contempt for philosophy. In both respects they show their wisdom."

Bertrand Russell, in "Philosophy and Politics", an essay from the collection *Unpopular Essays*.

**Bertrand Russell Society, Inc.**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2003 Treasurer's Report**  
**1/1/03 Through 3/31/03**

Compiled 4/10/03 by Dennis J. Darland  
BRS Treasurer ([djdarland@qconline.com](mailto:djdarland@qconline.com))

Category Description	
BALANCE 12/31/02	6,742.17
INFLOWS	
Contributions	
Contrib-BRS	437.75
TOTAL Contributions	437.75
Dues	
New Members	171.88
Renewals	2,308.33
TOTAL Dues	2,480.21
Library Income	13.95
 TOTAL INFLOWS	 2,931.91
OUTFLOWS	
Bank Charges	11.32
Library Expenses	16.60
Newsletter	741.67
Other Expenses	0.00
 TOTAL OUTFLOWS	 769.59
 OVERALL TOTAL	 2,162.32
 BALANCE 3/31/03	 8,904.49

**New in Russell Studies!**

Would you like to find out what's new in Russell Studies? Then visit the "Forthcoming, New and Recent Works in Russell Studies" page at the website of the Bertrand Russell Archives at McMaster University. The page is at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/russdocs/forthnew.htm>.

# Greater Rochester Russell Set

Celebrating Six Years of Monthly Russell  
Meetings Open to the Public

## 2003 Program

- May 8            Russell on Audio  
                  (A Celebration of Russell's Birthday)
- June 12         *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* (by  
                  Bertrand Russell)
- July 10         Ambrose Bierce Monologue, Written and  
                  Performed by Ed Scutt.
- Aug. 14         *Selected Letters of Bertrand Russell: The  
                  Private Years, 1884-1914*
- Sept. 11        *Selected Letters of Bertrand Russell: The  
                  Public Years, 1914-1970*
- Oct. 9          The Bertrand Russell Research Centre  
*Guest Speaker: Nicholas Griffin*
- Nov. 13        "Nice People" (by Bertrand Russell)
- Dec. 11        Lord John Russell

All meetings are held at **Daily Perks Coffee House**, 389 Gregory Street, Rochester, NY, at **6:30 PM. Note New Meeting Time!**

All dates and topics are subject to change. For information call Tim Madigan at 585-424-3184 or write [tmadigan@rochester.rr.com](mailto:tmadigan@rochester.rr.com) or visit [http://sun1.sjfc.edu/~wildenbe/grrs/russell\\_poster.html](http://sun1.sjfc.edu/~wildenbe/grrs/russell_poster.html).

### Causal Republicanism Sydney, Australia; 14-16 July 2003

This conference, organized by the Centre for Time and the Department of Philosophy, University of Sydney, marks the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Russell's celebrated attack on causation in his paper "On the Notion of Cause." For further details, see the conference website at <http://www.usyd.edu.au/time/events.htm> or e-mail Richard Corry at [Richard.Corry@philosophy.usyd.edu.au](mailto:Richard.Corry@philosophy.usyd.edu.au).