

## RUSSELL SOCIETY NEWS

No. 34

May 1982

- (1) Annual Meeting location switched (2). 2 BR BEC broadcasts (9). "Guided Tour" performed (14). A Jesuit on BR (15). Time to nominate Directors (29). '82 dues, last call (30). Hamlock (35). Voice of Reason (37). Index is on the last page. An asterisk in the left column indicates a request.

## ANNUAL MEETING 1982

- (2) Los Angeles replaces Claremont. We have changed the place but not the date: June 25-27. The place is the Sheraton Townhouse (also called Sheraton West), 2961 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90010. When writing "Reservations" there, to reserve your room, mention BRS to get the discount. Single room \$59, double \$69 (before discount). If you want to share a double room, let Bob Davis know; he will team you up with another member. In that case, if yours is a name that does not indicate your sex -- like Pat or Lee -- indicate it. If you want lodging that costs less than the Sheraton, write Bob, and he will tell you what's available. The Saturday evening banquet costs \$17.50 and includes table wine. Please send Bob your check for \$17.50. We have to tell the Sheraton several days in advance how many will attend the banquet; it will be helpful if you send Bob your \$17.50 check sooner rather than later. To get there take the Mid-Wilshire Hotel Bus from Los Angeles Airport, which lets you off at the Sheraton door. The meeting starts Friday June 25th at 8 P.M. and ends Sunday about noon. Bob's address: 2501 Lake View Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90039. We hope to see many of you there! For more, see (43).

## RECENT EVENTS

- (3) National Summit Conference on Religious Freedom and the Secular State was held in NYC on March 27th. BOB DAVIS and LEE EISLER attended as delegates from the BRS.

There were sessions on religion in the public schools (school prayer), book banning (library censorship), creationism, morality in a secular society, and infringements on sexual privacy.

Two organizations sponsored the Conference. The two had decided to combine when they discovered that their aims were virtually identical. One of them, The Center for Moral Democracy, was organized by the New York Society for Ethical Culture -- which is associated with the American Humanist Association -- "for freedom, tolerance and diversity in moral, religious and intellectual life." The other, The Voice of Reason, was formed by The Society for Humanistic Judaism, to defend the Secular State, Personal Freedom, and Free Inquiry. Moral Democracy and Voice of Reason, now combined, will be known as Voice of Reason.

We asked Rabbi Sherwin Wine -- founder of the Society for Humanistic Judaism -- how a rabbi could be part of a movement that shunned the supernatural. He replied that he loved the Jewish traditions in which he has grown up -- he viewed them as cultural -- and he also loved the ideals of humanism, and he found no difficulty in combining them.

For more about the Society for Humanistic Judaism, see (36). For more about the Voice of Reason, see (37).

Next day (March 28th) the meeting was open to the public. Speakers included polymath Isaac Asimov, Dorothy Samuels (Executive Director of the ACLU), and a representative of Planned Parenthood.

It was all well worth attending.

For another report on the National Summit Conference, see (4).

is obscure. I consider this the best of Lamont's many books. I rank it with Russell's popular works for style, clarity and discussion of complex questions.

The opening chapters provide a definition of Humanism, and describe types of humanism and the wide variety of people and beliefs that the term "humanist" can refer to. A considerable amount of history is provided. Lamont traces the roots of humanism to the ancient Greeks, Hebrews and others...to the Renaissance humanists...to Spinoza...and continues into the 20th Century.

The principal part of the book deals with philosophic aspects and issues of humanism. Lamont discusses Humanism's Theory of the Universe, including such topics as the role of science, existence, nature, knowledge, ethics, happiness. For the layman, the presentation of these subjects is refreshingly clear, devoid of technical terms and inflated writing that obscures so much in philosophy.

For many, however, the intellectual aspects of Humanism are secondary, the feel for life and human happiness being more important. Much of the latter half of the book addresses these aspects. Lamont has always had strong feelings for nature and poetry, and the two are both well represented. I particularly recommend the poem on death on page 180.

I cannot find, in The Philosophy of Humanism, anything with which I disagree. Some Russell scholars may wish to reject his hopelessly American discussion of "Truth"; others may adopt a more Popperian view of science. But that would not affect the substance of the book.

In sum, this is a valuable book. I was glad to re-read it after some years, especially in the light of today's political climate. If you can't find it at a local bookstore, you may order it from the publisher, Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 250 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10003. \$15.95 cloth, \$9.95 paper.

#### INDEX

(42)

Introductory (1). Annual Meeting June 25-27 (2). National Summit Conference, March 27, NYC (3). President Davis reports (4). Treasurer Darland reports (38). Secretary Jackanicz reports (5). Membership Committee report (6). Science Committee report on nerve gas (7a); BR Peace Foundation on nerve gas (7b); 2 papers offered, on Civils Defense, and Defense Dept. Influence (7c). Philosophy Committee report (8). 2 BBC talks by BR (9a); "Scepticism and Tolerance" (9b); "Nature and Origin of Scientific Method" (9c). BR on Israel, 1943 (10). BR's favorite hymn (11). BR's "Science and Values" broadcast (12). BR quote on tombstone (13). "Guided Tour" (Act II) performed (14). A Jesuit on BR (15). Creationist biology teachers (16). News about members: Cleavelin (17), Giron (18), Nechvatal (19), Herb & Betty Vogt (20). New members (21). Address changes (22). Book reviews: Popper-Eccles (23,39), on Wittgenstein (24), Lamont (41). BRS Library: books for sale (25), "Let Me Die Before I Wake" (26). Contributions solicited (27). Contributors thanked (28). Time to nominate Directors (29). "82 dues, last call (30). For sale: members' stationery (31), BR postcard (32). Other organizations: American Atheists (33), Croatian National Congress (34), Hemlock (35), Society for Humanistic Judaism (36), Voice of Reason (37). Treasurer's Report (38). Reviewer Medawar (39). 3 letters to The Guardian (40a): Scott (40b), Lund (40c), Dora (40d). Lamont's book reviewed (41). Index (42). Annual Meeting tentative program (43).

#### ANNUAL MEETING (CONTINUED)

(43)

Tentative program. As we said in the last issue (RSN33-8b), Al Seckel will give a talk on Russell and the Cuban Missile Crisis, drawing on published and unpublished sources. Dr. Gerald Larue will discuss the "Moral Majority". There may also be some or all of the following: a film dealing with BR's position on nuclear war, a talk or panel on disarmament, the celebrated Norman Lear film on the "Moral Majority", a talk or panel on BR and the 1980s ("New Hopes for a Changing World" revisited). Dan Wray plans to film parts of the meeting and interviews with members; a documentary film may result. The '82 BRS Award will be announced.