

plausibly maintained that it is everybody's duty to cause suffering. If such a view is not to prevail, it will be necessary that our moral outlook should become more kindly than it has hitherto been, and that we should cease to find pleasure in thinking of this world as a vale of tears. In my more cheerful moments, I allow myself to hope that when the pressure of physical necessity is lifted there may be a general development of kindness and joy which will enable men to view with equanimity the pleasures of others because their own happiness will be secure. Such a world may perhaps come about in time. But in darker moments I am oppressed by the abysses of hatred, malice, and envy in the human heart, and I wonder whether man will ever permit himself the happiness that his intelligence has made physically possible.

We live in a moment of strange conflict. The human heart has changed little since the dawn of history, but the human mastery over nature has changed completely. Our passions, our desires, our fears are still those of the cave man, but our power to realize our wishes is something radically new. Man has survived hitherto because he was too ignorant to know how to realize his wishes. Now that he can realize them, he must either change them or perish. When we were children we were told fairy tales about magicians who granted three wishes. The people to whom this boon was vouchsafed were always silly in the stories and wished for something quite absurd. That is roughly the position of the human race in the present day. Caligula

wished that his enemies had only one head that he might execute them in one fell swoop. But they continued to have many heads, and he was thwarted. Our modern Caligulas manufacture hydrogen bombs, and are not thwarted. If man is to live with the new powers that he has acquired, he must grow up, not only in his mind but in his heart. He must face the painful truth that disaster to his neighbor whom he hates is not likely to bring happiness to himself whom he loves. The world becomes every day more unified technically and more disunified psychologically. I think that education, if it were wisely conducted, could do a very great deal towards remedying this state of affairs. Children could be taught in school that where the interests of different groups appear to conflict, the conflict is caused by useless and foolish passions which inspire false beliefs to the effect that one man's success must be another man's failure. Schools everywhere are dominated by national States and inspire in the young the beliefs which the rulers of States imagine to be useful. It is not an easy thing to educate the rulers of States. I knew a psychiatrist who said that he could cure Hitler in ten sittings, but unfortunately Hitler had no wish to be cured. I wish there were a method of kidnapping all Heads of States and keeping them together in a sanatorium controlled by wise men. But as that cannot be done, the issue must remain in doubt. I shall not see the issue, but I allow myself to hope that it may be happy.

For more of BR at 80, see the Rodney Wheeler interview. (RSN45-28).

(7)

ANNUAL MEETING, 1986

The 13th Annual Meeting took place in NYC on June 21st, at the spacious headquarters of the New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2 West 64th Street.

30 members attended one or both sessions: JANICE BOTTENUS, JACK COWLES, KENNETH DIAMOND, BEVERLEY EARLES, GRAHAM ENTWISTLE, RICHARD FALLIN, RICHARD GNALL, DAVID GOLDMAN, KEN KORBIN, SCOTT KURHAN, GLADYS LEITHAUSER, DON JACKANICZ, TED JACKANICZ, ADAM JACOBS, DAVID JOHNSON, CORLISS LAMONT, JOHN LENZ, JONATHAN LOBL, GRAHAME MAISEY, STEVE MARAGIDES, HUGH MCVEIGH, CARL MILLER, STEVE REINHARDT, MICHAEL ROCKLER, HARRY RUJA, CHERIE RUPPE, WARREN ALLEN SMITH, JOHN SCHWENK, ELEANOR VALENTINE, PHILIP STANDER, THOMAS WEIDLICH.

A number of non-member guests were present: Special Guest Bessie Denonn (widow of BRS Director and Honorary Member, Lester Denonn), Sydney and Silvia Aaronson, Linda DiDesidero, Julie Gricat, Dror Kahn, Felix Klein, Hilbert Schwartz, Nancy Spataro, and others. About 45 people attended the afternoon session (and its Red Hackle Hour), and about 60 the evening.

The following officers were elected or re-elected for one-year terms, starting immediately: Chairman, Harry Ruja; President, Marvin Kohl; Vice President, John Lenz; Treasurer, Dennis Darland; Secretary, Don Jackanicz; and VP/Information, Lee Eisler.

This is what took place during the afternoon and evening sessions:

- . A reading and open discussion of MARVIN KOHL's paper, "Russell and the Attainability of Happiness."
- . A screening of the 1984 BBC-TV production, "Bertie and the Bomb," which had not been seen in America.
- . A viewing of the BBC-TV videotape, "Bertrand Russell".
- . The presentation of a Special Award to CORLISS LAMONT. Mr. Lamont, introduced by JOHN LENZ, then spoke briefly on free choice, and on BR as a humanist.
- . The presentation of the 1986 Bertrand Russell Society Award to People for the American Way, represented by its President, Anthony T. Podesta. Mr. Podesta, introduced by BRS Chairman HARRY RUJA, spoke about his organization's work promoting separation of church and state, and excellence in education and in the federal judiciary. (They are currently opposing textbook censorship and the nomination of Mannion to be a federal judge.) He then screened a videotape, "The 'People For' Story", depicting, among other things, the excesses of the Far Right.

Both Award plaques are shown below.

At the Society's Business Meeting this is what happened:

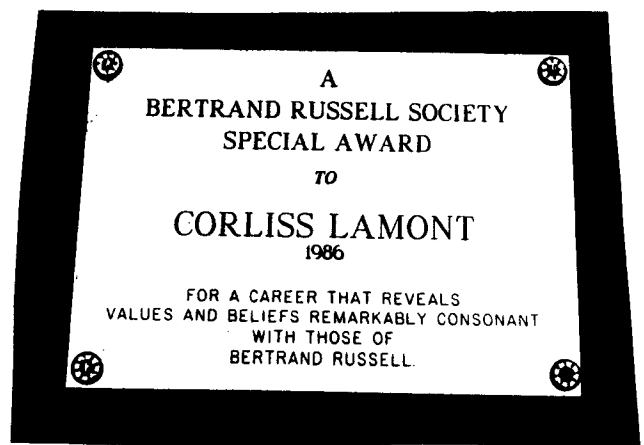
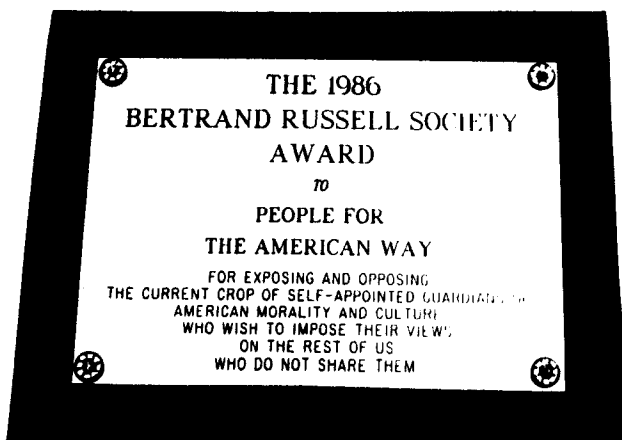
- . Don Jackanicz presided. Many members and non-members attended. Don reported the death of Honorary Member Dora Russell on June 1st, and the election of new Honorary Member, Linus Pauling.
- . Don reminded the members to send items about BR to Lee Eisler, for possible use in the newsletter.
- . Harry Ruja, responding to a question, said that the first volume of the comprehensive BR bibliography that he and Ken Blackwell are working on would appear at the end of 1987.

. David Johnson, Chairman, BRS Philosophers Committee, called for papers for the BRS session at APA in December 1987. See (37)

The BRS Board of Directors met, in 3 brief sessions, and acted as follows:

- . Elected officers for the following year, as reported above.
- . Selected San Diego as the meeting site for 1987, and NYC for 1988. Harry Ruja and Bob Davis will make the arrangements for 1987, Marvin Kohl will do the same for 1988.
- . Approved the creation of a committee to study the possibility of a future meeting in England.
- . Approved paying McMaster \$1 more for members' subscriptions to "Russell", if our Treasurer says we can afford it. The new price per subscription would be US\$7.
- . Approved buying a BR film that BRS Librarian Tom Stanley had located, costing \$150-200.

For more details on June 21st, see the minutes (27). A nice detail, not in the minutes: Warren Smith enjoyed talking with his old philosophy professor, Corliss Lamont.



NEWS ABOUT MEMBERS

- (8) Adam Paul Banner has been "very active locally [in Ann Arbor] as Hazardous Materials Coordinator for the county Office of Emergency Management. Also aided in giving two talks on Islam and Turkey via the Ottoman Empire, and am working on another presentation of the Armenian Question."
- (9) Harry Clifford, a member since 1975, will be 85 on October 12, 1986. Happy Birthday, Harry!
- (10) Peter Cranford, Founder and first President of the BRS, has written a little book with a big message that's worth paying attention to. It is called "BERTRAND RUSSELL ON COMPOSSIBILITY. A first step toward eliminating war." See Recommended Reading (25).
- (11) Paul Kuntz's new book, "Bertrand Russell," has just been published by Twayne Publishers, Boston. See Recommended Reading (24).
- (12) Justin Leiber has gone to Linacre College, Oxford, till mid-December, then back to Houston.
- (13) John Lenz will be in Greece again this summer, on "Paros Island, where I will be digging again: an idyllic spot in the middle of the Cyclades. I continue as a grad. student (this is not news), slowly; on another fellowship, a 'President's Fellowship,' from Columbia (my third lucky consecutive one), with a teaching assistantship in Greek history. Unfortunately, my work has slowed my Russell collecting to a halt, although I was able to purchase some Greek translations of Russell in Athens last year for my friend, John Slater (of Toronto)." As noted above, John was elected BRS Vice-President on June 21st.

HUMANISM

(26) From the Washington Post (1/4/86), with thanks to DAN JACKANICZ:

Humanism Defined

"A Holy War for Young Minds" [front page, Dec. 30], telling about the attacks by fundamentalists, demands an answer from someone who knows something about humanism. As president of the local chapter of Humanists (the Humanist Association of the National Capital Area) and as the plaintiff in the litigation from which came the popular use of the term "secular humanism," I feel qualified to respond.

First, let me remind (or inform) the readers that the philosophy of humanism was developed by the ancient Greek scholars long before the time of Jesus, and is not of easy explanation. Barbara Parker, representing the organization People for the American Way, has aptly stated, "Trying to define secular humanism is like trying to nail Jell-O to a tree." In his book, "The Philosophy of Humanism," Cor-

liss Lamont writes: "To define twentieth-century humanism briefly, I would say that it is a philosophy of joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in this natural world and advocating the methods of reason, science, and democracy. While this statement has many profound implications, it is not difficult to grasp."

Some people ask, "If we discard the fear of punishment in hell, what is there to guide people in a sensible mode of living?" Well, I have a conscience, I have a mind, some degree of intelligence, a sense of reason and compassion. I hope and believe that most people are similarly equipped. This is all one needs in life to establish a code of conduct that will keep us on the straight and narrow. These faculties will enable a person to examine any ethical situation and, by applying

rational principles, arrive at a course of action that will ensure justice is done, that our behavior is honorable and responsible. We should not be distracted by fear of hell, and we should not be concerned about accumulating points to get into heaven, for these places exist only in the minds of those who have been taught to fear God.

Those who dislike humanists and humanism seem to take offense at our lack of belief in the supernatural. They seem to regard it as a personal attack upon them, yet we are not disturbed when a person asserts that he believes in God. It is nothing more than a difference of opinion. People who dislike humanists and allege that they have taken control of the public schools should remember that public schools are under the supervision of local boards of education whose members

are generally elected by the voters in the various districts. And the curricula and programs of the schools are established, or approved, by these school boards. I do not know of a single school board composed of humanists. Further, I will suggest that the quality of education in this land would be much higher if members of the school boards were humanists.

Those who dislike humanists and humanism impute great power to the movement. They flatter us. In a nation of more than 220 million "souls," fewer than 6,000 individuals are members of the American Humanist Association, the primary organization of humanists in North America. If we are able to exert some influence in the public marketplace of ideas, it is because the product is good.

ROY R. TORCASO
Washington

MINUTES

(27) Combined Minutes of the Business and Board Meetings of June 21st, as submitted by the (then) Secretary, John Lenz, June 28, 1986. We have omitted portions of the minutes that duplicate what has already been mentioned (7).

Hugh McVeigh questioned the granting of the BRS Award to People For The American Way, wanting to know what they had to do with BR. Phil Stander responded, saying they stood for First Amendment rights, Dave Goldman agreeing, and Don Jackanicz pointing to their anti-censorship stand. [BR was strongly against censorship, even of dirty postcards, "feelthy peectures".] Hugh then suggested Paul Kurtz for the Award. Steve Maragides thought that Hugh should volunteer for the Award Committee or nominate someone for next year's Award.

Carl Miller spoke movingly on BR's lifelong integrity.

Harry Ruja stated that, having stabilized our finances [have we?], we might consider reinstating the BRS Doctoral Grant, "one of the important objectives of the BRS". It has been \$1000 recently, until suspended last year for lack of funds. Harry thinks we need some philanthropy from committed members. Carl Miller suggested setting up a fund.

Warren Smith said each member could attempt to recruit new members from present acquaintances. Don Jackanicz suggested giving gift memberships to friends.

Marvin Kohl spoke about his paper, "Russell and the Attainability of Happiness" [which had been made available in advance, in the May newsletter] and then chaired a discussion of it, with many participating vigorously, including Dong Jai Choi, David Goldman, David Johnson, Carl Miller, Steve Reinhardt, Harry Ruja, and Phil Stander.

The Board voted approval of the suggestion that Committee Chairmen be appointed, not by the BRS Chairman, but by the BRS President, thus amending the Bylaws. [This appears to have been an error. This should have been a vote by the Members rather than by the Board, according to Article 1 of the BRS Bylaws.]