

RUSSELL SOCIETY NEWS

No. 21

February 1979

- (1) 5 years old (2). Pears and Popper approved (9). Atheist-agnostic, the last word? (10). BR compressed (11). Muhammed Ali (12). India's BR stamp (13). Dora accepts (23). Paradoxes wanted (33). Index (41). An asterisk in the left column indicates a request.
-

FIVE

- (2) The BRS is 5 years old.

Q: How are we doing, at age 5?

A: Pretty well; but there's plenty of room for improvement.

Here are some of the things we have done during our first 5 years of existence:

- . tapped existing reservoirs of Russell admirers, and enabled them to be in touch with one another;
- . grown to a membership of over 200 (222 at last count);
- . acquired distinguished honorary members;
- . presented a BRS symposium at the annual American Philosophical Association convention, every year for the past 5 years;
- . held a BRS symposium for psychologists attending the American Psychological Association's annual meeting in 1976;
- . propagandized against chemical weapons, nuclear weapons, and uncontrolled technology;
- . set up a BRS Library, that lends books, films, tapes;
- . surveyed U.S. colleges and universities for courses on BR;
- . established a BRS Travel Grant, to enable a scholar to visit the Russell Archives;
- . offered books by and about BR for sale;
- . issued a list of books by BR, sorted into categories;
- . held 5 annual meetings: 3 in NYC, 1 in Los Angeles, 1 in Hamilton;
- . issued 20 newsletters;
- . printed or reprinted a number of short articles, book reviews, recollections;
- . reproduced a list of 62 (+ 2) dissertations on BR.

Here's why we say there's room for improvement:

- . Fund-raising; we haven't yet raised a penny except from our own members.
- . The BRS Award, first proposed in July 1975, has never been awarded. A new attempt will now be made to organize for it(7).
- . The BRS Travel Grant has never been awarded, although funds to cover the first of these awards are on hand.
- . Applied Philosophy. There have been efforts to apply some of BR's views to everyday living, but nothing has come of them as yet.
- . Local chapters. Several chapters were started and seemed to be going well, but none has been heard from in quite a while.
- . Universal Human Rights Committee has done virtually nothing. It now exists in name only, and has no chairperson.

Q: What will the next 5 years bring?

A: Well, that's sort of up to us, isn't it.

COMING EVENTS

- (3) Annual Meeting reminder. The meeting will be held in NYC, June 1-3. Save that weekend; plan to come, if you possibly can.
-

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS

(4) Chairman Peter G. Cranford reports:

Most of the following is a P.S. to the previous report (RSN20-3) on my visit to England in August 1978.

- . The Bertrand Russell Memorial Committee presently consists of Lord Fenner Brockway, Sir Alfred Ayer, Peter Cadogan (General Secretary, South Place Ethical Society), Nicholas Walter (Managing Editor, Rationalist Press Association), John Sutcliffe, and Dora Russell. The Memorial is to be a bust of BR, and the Camden Council has consented to its placement in Red Lion Square, London. (The Camden Council is where BR took refuge, when Trinity turned him out in 1918.) Two inscriptions have been suggested for the Memorial: "The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge," and "Remember your humanity and forget the rest."

- * Which one would BRS members prefer, if they could choose?
- . I expressed the hope to Lord Brockway (on behalf of the BRS) that the next British project -- after the Memorial -- would be the preservation of buildings associated with BR.
 - . Dora on BR: "Most people who followed Bertie knew nothing about his philosophy. They liked him for what he was -- his cheek, wit, activism and recklessness. He was at his best as a person. That was the person I loved."
 - . Dora on BR: "In his very old age, Bertie became dictatorial and became cut off from all his friends."
 - . Dora to BR, on arriving in China (1921): "If we didn't have any money with us, what would you do?" BR: "I'd go to the Jews."
 - . Dora agrees to the idea of promoting "compossibility". See(19).
 - . Dora believes in massive protests by private groups rather than by governments, such as (presumably) the campaign in Britain against nuclear armaments, carried on by BR and his colleagues and followers. It could also apply to U.S. government protests against violations of human rights in the USSR, which have been counterproductive.
 - . Several suggestions about future BRS meetings: (1) from Peter Cadogan, Dora agreeing: no regular meetings; occasional meetings, with lectures, advertised; (2) from John Sutcliffe: meetings at which publishable papers are presented, dealing only with such ideas as can be supported by factual evidence. BR's works should not be used to drift into other targets, as happened with the BR Peace Foundation, according to John.
 - . Kate Tait's family will be living with Dora this summer (1979).

(5) President Robert K. Davis reports:

It has been a busy fall and winter for me. In November I gave a talk to the Los Angeles Humanists on Russell, discussing questions of relevance to Humanists: why BR did not accept the label of "humanist" for himself; which of BR's books are particularly apposite to humanists, BR's individualism, the BRS, and a lengthy question and answer session. I enjoyed the event and have the impression that they did too.

In December I left for a month in England and New York. As before I combined a vacation with BRS business. In England I saw a number of people who had been associated with BR, and missed a few who were away for the holidays. My first visit was with Graham Whettam, who was in from North Wales. He is the composer of "Sinfonia Contra Timore" (N115-46), dedicated to BR, and was a personal friend. Like BR, he has a talent for telling stories, and he regaled me with many by and about BR. A delightful evening!

As Peter Cranford reported, a Committee has been set up to erect a bust of BR in Red Lion Square -- near the British Museum. I had lunch and a leisurely afternoon with Peter Cadogan, the Director of the Rationalist Press Association and of Conway Hall (which is in Red Lion Square.) He heads the Committee, and we discussed the proposal. I hope to have details for the next RSN. We also discussed politics and BR. Conway Hall (i.e., the South Place Ethical Society), without necessarily being aware of BR's positions, shares a lot of BR's views and values. I obtained a copy of The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism for him, and am sending him copies of D.H. Lawrence's letters to BR. He gave me a copy of his pamphlet, "Direct Democracy". After our meeting, I popped out into a major bomb scare; it reminded me of the urgent need to bring both justice and a non-violent ethic to the solution of political differences.

I did not meet Lord Brockway, as he was in Africa. I have been interested in him ever since I came across him in the literature, as a young figure in the WWI pacifist movement and a colleague of BR's, when I was doing research into that part of BR's career. I was also unable to meet Sir Karl Popper, one of our new honorary members. His assistant called me in Oxford to tell me that he too was out of the country. I bought 4 of his books, which I am studying. I am warming up for an article about BR and history, and Popper's works on historicism are helpful.

In Oxford I visited my friend, BRS member Peter Houchin, and his family for Christmas. We were about a mile from Churchill's grave at Bladen, which I visited. On Boxing Day (the 26th) Peter and I visited Woburn Abbey, the 400-year old home of the Dukes of Bedford (the Russell family). (The proposed BRS tour next summer will include Woburn Abbey.) It is surrounded by a huge animal park. Inside, it has the art accumulated by one of the great English families. I saw a superb Dürer of the founder of the family, and many other paintings, plus books, furniture, china, silver and gold services, etc. It is an hour north of London, and I urge anyone who finds himself in the vicinity to pay a visit to Woburn Abbey.

While in Oxford I found a used-book store (Waterfield's) that was selling Arnold Toynbee's library. I got a personal set, in 6 volumes, of his A Study of History, some Gilbert Murray volumes of Plato -- Murray was a great translator of Greek plays, and a close friend of BR's -- and some books by the Webbs sent to Toynbee. I also got some new Russell books for my collection, including an obscure pictorial biography of BR issued at the time he received the Order of Merit (1949).

I next went to Penzance, to visit Dora and John Russell at Carn Voel. I arrived at the end of a storm and left at the start of another, so that I saw at first hand the tempestuous beauty of Cornish storms and the incredible beauty of Land's End. I spent the day at their cottage. I spoke briefly with the Earl, and talked with Dora for 4 hours. She originated the memorial bust idea, and is working on her own books. She has just won a suit against the Estate and Foundation, for funds for John, and was filled with plans and hopes for the future. As usual, the day went too fast, as she is an engrossing conversationalist.

I returned to London for New Year's and the worst storm in 15 years. The storm seriously disrupted transportation, but did -- as I was told repeatedly -- give the city a "Dickensian air."

I next had a nice talk with Chris Farley, of the Foundation. I told him about the proposed Memorial. We also discussed technical matters of copyright and possible cooperation in publishing at the Spokesman Press. We discussed the volumes not yet published, of BR's writings on and in America, and the hope that at least one will appear this year. The Foundation's plan to issue a BR medallion did not materialize because of high cost. Some questions have been addressed to me, about BR's house in Wales: it was leased by BR, not owned, and the owner recently sold it for a very tidy sum.

On New Year's Day and in the midst of the storms, I visited BRS honorary member, Sir Alfred Ayer. Due to both our schedules and the storm, our visit was short, but very rewarding. We discussed BR and the proposed Memorial. I now have an item I prize greatly: an autographed copy of Language, Truth and Logic.

After a rough flight, I arrived in New York, for a week. I had meetings with Lee Eisler and Warren Smith concerning the annual meeting and other BRS business. I was also there to see the opening of a play in the Village -- "Dungalore" -- co-authored by my friend (and BRS member), Dan Wray. It is a moral fantasy with a comedic approach.

The high point in New York was seeing Lester Denonn's collection of Russell material -- thousands of books and articles he has collected for over 50 years. A humbling experience for a relatively new collector, but also an inspiration and a guide to method in Russell-collecting. I spent a delightful afternoon rummaging in his library with him, and dining with him and his wife.

Lester is concerned about the eventual destiny of his collection. It is unique and superb. It should be preserved for research and not broken up. We need to find a source of funds -- \$100,000 -- to preserve it. It would provide the U.S. with a Russell collection ancillary to, and compossible with, the Russell Archives in Canada. Anyone who has experience in approaching foundations or other sources of funds for such a purpose, please get in touch with me. (7025 West Franklin #86, Hollywood, CA 90068. Phone: 213-874-5568.)

There are two main problems facing the BRS, and typical of organizations such as ours: acquiring funds for projects such as the above, and integrating a greater number of members into our activities. Solving these problems are now our most urgent priorities.

(6a,b) Treasurer Stephen J. Reinhardt reports:

For the quarter ending 12/31/78:	For the year ending 12/31/78:
Balance on hand (9/30/78).....1589.12	Balance on hand (12/31/77).....759.06
Income:	Income:
13 new members.....115.00	93 new members.....977.54
24 renewals.....357.56	102 renewals.....1336.21
Total dues.....472.56	Total dues.....2313.75
Contributions.....1690.22	Contributions.....2681.72
Sales of RSN, books, etc...69.68	Sales of RSN, books, etc...180.11
Total income.....2232.46	Total income.....5175.58
2232.46	5175.58
3821.58	5934.64
Expenditures:	Expenditures:
Information & Member-	Information & Membership
ship Committees.....1237.44	Committees.....2738.90
Subscriptions to	Subscriptions to
"Russell".....185.50	"Russell".....595.00
Total spent.....1422.94	Other.....202.10
1422.94	Total spent 3536.00
Balance on hand (12/31/78).....2398.64	Balance on hand (12/31/78).....2398.64

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

(7) Awards Committee (Donald W. Jackanicz, Chairperson):

For several years the BRS Award has been discussed, but it has never been awarded, nor have we agreed on all the details. The Award will be given to some individual who furthers some cause or idea that BR championed or whose actions exemplify some quality of character that distinguished BR. (such as moral courage.) The recipient will be invited to the annual meeting to receive the Award, which might be a book or certificate. Whether the BRS pays traveling expenses has not been decided.

At the 1978 annual meeting, a Book Award was proposed. This too deserves further consideration.

We are not going to be able to make the Awards in 1979 -- not enough time -- but we ought to start working on them now, to be ready for 1980.

If you might be interested in serving on the Awards Committee, please write to me at 3802 N. Kenneth Avenue, Chicago, IL 60641.

Science Committee (J. B. Neilands, Chairperson):

- (8a) Buffet supper for a Vietnamese Professor was given by the BRS Science Committee, at the home of Joe and Juanita Neilands, on November 3rd. The Professor, Nguyen van Hieu, Vice-Director of the Vietnam Scientific Research Center, is touring the USA under the sponsorship of the Scientists' Institute for Public Information. A physicist, he is interested in meeting American colleagues, to discuss plans for the development of science in post-war Vietnam. Earlier the same day, he gave a talk in the Student Union (UC Berkeley) on "Science in Vietnam".
- (8b) An untimely death in Cambodia. Malcolm Caldwell, long time member of The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and faculty member at the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies, was murdered by unknown assassins while on a fact-finding trip through Cambodia in December. Caldwell, an editor of the Journal of Contemporary Asia, was well known for his incisive studies of Western imperialism in Indonesia and throughout South East Asia. He had expected to attend the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Los Angeles, March 30-April 1, and the Science Committee had planned to invite him to lecture in Berkeley on that occasion. The last word from him was received in late November, when he wrote, "I'll have been to Kampuchea by the time I come - Malcolm." Only the barest details of the incident, which occurred at a Government guest house in Phnom Penh, were reported in the December 25 New York Times and in the January 8 issue of Newsweek. It is urgently necessary that additional facts surrounding the death of this crusading economic historian be developed and, in particular, to establish precisely what special interests were served by his murder.

THE MEMBERS VOTE

- (9) Honorary memberships approved, for David Pears and Karl Popper. For more on this, see (24).

FROM BR'S CORRESPONDENCE

- (10) Atheist yes, agnostic no. A Mr. Major asked BR whether he called himself an atheist or an agnostic. Here is BR's response:

Thank you for your letter of March 9. I do not wonder that you and Mr. Lewis are in doubt as to whether to call me an atheist or an agnostic as I am myself in doubt upon this point and call myself sometimes the one and sometimes the other. I think that in philosophical strictness at the level where one doubts the existence of material objects and holds that the world may have existed for only five minutes, I ought to call myself an agnostic; but, for all practical purposes, I am an atheist. I do not think the existence of the Christian God any more probable than the existence of the Gods of Olympus or Valhalla. To take another illustration: nobody can prove that there is not between the Earth and Mars a china teapot revolving in an elliptic orbit, but nobody thinks this sufficiently likely to be taken into account in practice. I think the Christian God just as unlikely.

From Dear Bertrand Russell, Feinberg & Kasrils, eds.,
Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1969, p.5-6.

(Thank you, Leonard Cleavelin)

ABOUT BERTRAND RUSSELL

- (11) BR compressed. The New Columbia Encyclopedia (1975) fits 97 years into 17 column-inches, and -- considering the limitations of space -- does it rather well, we think. Judge for yourself:

Russell, Bertrand Arthur William Russell, 3rd Earl, 1872-1970, British philosopher, mathematician, and social reformer, b. Trelleck, Wales. He had a distinguished background: His grandfather Lord John Russell introduced the Reform Bill of 1832 and was twice prime minister; his parents were both prominent freethinkers; and his informal godfather was John Stuart Mill. Orphaned as a small child, he was reared, despite his parents' wishes to the contrary, by his paternal grandmother under stern puritanic rule. That experience, although failing in its intended effect, powerfully affected his thinking on matters of morality and education. Russell studied at Trinity College, Cambridge (1890-94), where later he was a fellow (1895-1901) and a lecturer (1910-16). It

was during this time that he published his most important works in philosophy and mathematics, *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903) and, with A. N. Whitehead, *Principia Mathematica* (3 vol., 1910-13), and also had as his student Ludwig WITTGENSTEIN. World War I had a crucial effect on Russell: until that time he had thought of himself as a philosopher and mathematician; although he had arrived at pacifism before that time, it was in reaction to the war that he became passionately concerned with social issues. His active pacifism at the time of the war inspired public resentment, caused him to be dismissed from Cambridge, attacked by former associates, and fined by the government (which confiscated and sold his library when he refused to pay).

and led finally to a six-month imprisonment in 1918. From 1916 until the late 1930s, Russell held no academic position and supported himself mainly by writing and by public lecturing. In 1927 he founded with his wife, Dora, the experimental Beacon Hill School, which influenced the founding of other schools in Britain and America. He succeeded to the earldom in 1931 and in 1938 began teaching in the United States, first at the Univ. of Chicago and then at the Univ. of California at Los Angeles. In 1941 he went to teach at the Barnes Foundation in Merion, Pa., following the cancellation of his appointment to the College of the City of New York as a result of a celebrated legal battle occasioned by protest against his liberal views, particularly those on sex.

These views, much distorted by his critics, had appeared in *Marriage and Morals* (1929), where he took liberal positions on divorce, adultery, and homosexuality. In 1944 he was restored to a fellowship at Cambridge. In 1950 he received the Nobel Prize in Literature. Prior to World War II, in the face of the Nazi threat, Russell abandoned his pacifist stance; but after the war he again became a leading spokesman for pacifism, and especially for the unilateral renunciation (by Great Britain) of atomic weapons. In 1961 his activity in mass demonstrations to ban nuclear weapons led once more to his imprisonment. He organized, but was unable to attend, what was called the war crimes tribunal, held in Stockholm in 1967, presided over by Jean-Paul Sartre, and directed against U.S. activities in Vietnam. Almost until his death he was active in social reform. Throughout his life his dissent had scorned easy popularity with either the right or the left. Untamable, he had profound trust in the ultimate power of rationality, which he voiced with an undogmatic but quenchless zeal. Philosophically and ethically Russell's thought grew in reaction against the extremes he encountered. He answered the idealism of F. H. Bradley and J. M. E. McTaggart with a logical atomism founded on a rigorous empirical base: he was deeply convinced of the logical independence of individual facts and the dependence of knowledge on the data of original experience. His emphasis on logical analysis influenced the course of British philosophy in this century. One of his most important notions was that of the logical construct, the observation that an object normally thought of as a unity was actually constructed from various, discrete, simpler empirical observations. The technique of logical constructionism was first employed in his

mathematical theory. Under the influence of the symbolic logic of Giuseppe Peano, Russell tried to show that mathematics could be explained by the rules of formal logic. His demonstration involved showing that mathematical entities could be "constructed" from the less problematic entities of logic. Later he applied the technique to concepts such as physical objects and the mind. Although he came to have misgivings about logical atomism and never assented to all the propositions of empiricism, he never ceased trying to base his thought—mathematical, philosophical, or ethical—not on vague principle but on actual experience. This can be seen in his pacifism as well as in his philosophy: he objected to specific wars in specific circumstances. So, in the circumstances preceding World War II he could abandon pacifism and, following the war, resume it. Similarly, in ethics he described himself as a relativist. Good and evil he saw to be resolvable in (or constructed from) individual desires. He did distinguish, however, between what he called "personal" and "impersonal" desires, those founded mainly on self-interest and those formed regardless of self-interest. He admitted difficulties with this ethical stance, as well as with his logical atomism. As much as anything, his thought was characterized by a pervasive scepticism, toward his own thought as well as that of others. As with his philosophical stance, Russell's positions on social issues grew as a reaction against extremes in his own experience. He believed that cruelty and an admiration for violence grew from inward or outward defects that were largely an outcome of what happened to people when very young. Pacifism could not be effected politically; a peaceful and happy world could not be achieved without deep changes in education. "I believe that

nine out of ten who have had a conventional upbringing in their early years have become in some degree incapable of a decent and sane attitude toward marriage and sex generally." His objections to religion were similarly based. What he tried to draw attention to was the destructiveness of accepting propositions on faith—in the absence of, or even in opposition to, any evidence. "The important thing is not what you believe, but how you believe it." The person who bases his belief on reason will support it by argument and be ready to abandon the position if the argument fails. Belief based on faith concludes argument to be useless and resorts to "force either in the form of persecution or by stunting and distorting the minds of the young whenever [it] has the power to control their education." If Russell's logic was not always unassailable, his life showed that ethical relativism could be combined with a passionate social conscience and that passionate commitment could be stated without dogmatism. In his autobiography (3 vol., 1967-69) Russell summarized his personal philosophy by saying, "Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind." See *American Civil Liberties Union, The Story of the Bertrand Russell Case* (1941); John Dewey and H. M. Kallen, eds., *The Bertrand Russell Case* (1941, repr. 1972); D. F. Pears, *Bertrand Russell and the British Tradition in Philosophy* (1967); E. D. Klemke, ed., *Essays on Bertrand Russell* (1970); John Watling, *Bertrand Russell* (1970); A. J. Ayer, *Russell and Moore: The Analytic Heritage* (1971) and *Bertrand Russell* (1972); Ronald Jager, *The Development of Bertrand Russell's Philosophy* (1972).

Incidentally, this excellent one-volume encyclopedia of 3000-plus pages, list price \$79.50, is being offered at the bargain price of \$29.50 + \$1.75 postage, by Barnes & Noble, 105 Fifth Avenue, NY NY 10003.

(12) The Greatest writes about the reaction to his statement, "I aint got no quarrel with the Viet Cong."

For days I was talking to people from a whole new world. People who were not even interested in sports, especially prizefighting. One in particular I will never forget: a remarkable man, seventy years older than me but with a fresh outlook which seemed fairer than that of any white man I had ever met in America.

My brother Rahaman had handed me the phone, saying, "Operator says a Mr. Bertrand Russell is calling Mr. Muhammad Ali." I took it and heard the crisp accent of an Englishman: "Is this Muhammad Ali?" When I said it was, he asked if I had been quoted correctly.

I acknowledged that I had been, but wondered out loud, "Why does everyone want to know what I think about Viet Nam? I'm no politician, no leader. I'm just an athlete."

"Well," he said, "this is a war more barbaric than others, and because a mystique is built up around a champion fighter, I suppose the world has more than incidental curiosity about what the World Champion thinks. Usually he goes with the tide. You surprised them."

I liked the sound of his voice, and told him I might be coming to England soon to fight the European champ, Henry Cooper, again.

"If I fight Cooper, who'd you bet on?"

He laughed. "Henry's capable, you know, but I would pick you."

I gave him back a stock answer I used on such occasions: "You're not as dumb as you look." And I invited him to ringside when I got to London.

He couldn't come to the fight, but for years we exchanged cards and notes. I had no idea who he was (the name Bertrand Russell had never come up in Central High in Louisville) until two years later when I was thumbing through a *World Book Encyclopaedia* in the *Muhammad Speaks* newspaper office in Chicago and saw his name and picture. He was described as one of the greatest mathematicians and philosophers of the twentieth century. That very minute I sat down and typed out a letter of apology for my offhand remark, "You're not as dumb as you look," and he wrote back that he had enjoyed the joke.

A short time after I fought Cooper, when I had another fight prospect in London, I made plans for Belinda and me to visit him, but I had to explain to him that the outcome of my fight against being drafted to Viet Nam might hold me up. The letter he wrote back was sent to me in Houston:

I have read your letter with the greatest admiration and personal respect.

In the coming months there is no doubt that the men who rule Washington will try to damage you in every way open to them, but I am sure you know that you spoke for your people and for the oppressed

everywhere in the courageous defiance of American power. They will try to break you because you are a symbol of a force they are unable to destroy, namely, the aroused consciousness of a whole people determined no longer to be butchered and debased with fear and oppression. You have my wholehearted support. Call me when you come to England.

Yours sincerely,
Bertrand Russell

By the time I got his letter I had been convicted and my passport lifted, just as his had been in World War I. Four years later, when my passport was returned, the friend I had made with my remark in my front yard had died. I thought of him whenever I visited England and for years I kept a picture of his warm face and wide eyes. "Not as dumb as he looks."

(Thank you, Dennis Darland)

BR HONORED

- (13) India's Bertrand Russell stamp is reproduced below. We don't know exactly when it was issued, but it must have been some time between 1970, when BR died, and 1975, when JACQUELINE BERTHON-PAYON noticed it on a friend's letter. "If India can do it, I would think that England would want to do it also!" says Jacqueline. We share her feelings. (Again!) Thank you, Jacqueline.



BR & HUMAN RIGHTS

- (14) The following appeared in the January 1965 issue of "Commentary":

SOVIET ANTI-SEMITISM: AN EXCHANGE

The following exchange between BERTRAND RUSSELL and ARON VERGELIS, the editor of the Yiddish-language Soviet magazine, Sovietch heimland, was initiated last spring by a letter to Lord Russell from a Russian Jew who wished him to intercede against the suppression of Jewish culture.

Moscow, 20 May, 1964

Dear Mr. Russell:

The Jews of Russia have been very moved by your letters to N. S. Khrushchev concerning the discrimination against them in the trials dealing with economic crimes. But I must say that your advisers have led you to use your influence unwisely. I believe there was a certain tendentiousness in the evaluation of these trials. There was no need to use your name in this matter.

In our opinion, it is much more important that you ask world public opinion and the Soviet leaders to look into the problem of the forced assimilation of Jews that is taking place in the Soviet Union.

Although there are about three million Jews in the USSR, we do not have our own newspaper in Moscow, Kiev, Minsk, or the other population centers; there are no Jewish libraries; there are no

schools or courses for those who wish to study the Jewish language; there are no clubs, theaters, or any other centers of cultural activity; there is no public organization that concerns itself with the welfare of the Jewish population.

We find to our deep regret that it is impossible as well as fruitless to place this problem before the Soviet government or any other responsible organization.

We want nothing more than the rights given to the Jews of Poland, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia.

We ask you and other influential people to write to Premier Khrushchev and request him to solve this problem. It is urgent.

With respect.

(Signature withheld)

Please address all questions concerning our letter to the Jewish journal, *Sovietch heimland*, Mos-

cow Center, Kirov Street. This letter was written on behalf of a great number of people by a war veteran who is an invalid of the war, the father of several children, the bearer of several war medals, and a member of the Communist Party.

22 July, 1964

The Editor,
Sovietish heimland

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you to make known the feelings of several Soviet citizens, including members of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, who have addressed letters to me recently. These Soviet citizens wish to enjoy the right to a full cultural life in the Soviet Union. They are Jews and they feel that they are denied the means of living a complete and satisfying life in the Soviet Union because they are denied the cultural facilities made available to all other national and minority groups in the USSR. I consider this an important and an urgent problem and I should be glad if you would kindly publish the letter I enclose, as well as my own letter.

I write because I am concerned for justice and for the good name of the Soviet Union. Unless people who are concerned for both raise their voices, the cause of peaceful coexistence and the pursuit of peace and general understanding between peoples and nations will be harmed by silence.

Yours sincerely,
Bertrand Russell

Dear Mr. Russell:

My colleagues and I on the editorial board of *Sovietish heimland* have read your letter very carefully. We greatly regret that we must tell you openly that only total ignorance of Soviet Jewish affairs and cultural life can account for the fact that a person as experienced as you are in public affairs could have allowed yourself to be involved in a campaign based not on facts but on unfounded accusations.

You sent us a copy of a letter you received from an anonymous writer in the Soviet Union. This anonymous correspondent suggests arguments for your intervention on behalf of Soviet Jews, who are supposedly discriminated against. You ask us to publish the letter, with the assurance that this will serve peace and "general understanding between peoples and nations."

But Mr. Russell, wouldn't the publication of an irresponsible letter serve aims contrary to those you mention?

Please bear in mind that the anonymous letter criticizes those who earlier counseled you to base your intercession for Soviet Jewry on the so-called "economic crime" that are allegedly being attributed to persons of the Jewish nationality in the Soviet Union. The anonymous writer admits the tendentious character of the clamor raised in the West about the various Soviet trials involving economic crimes; and he urges you to take up another issue, that of culture. As you can see, the "defenders" of Soviet Jewry are not consistent, or, baldly stated, they opportunistically supply the uninformed person with the "argument" they think has not yet lost its demagogic power.

However, if one objectively considers the development of Jewish culture, I doubt that it can continue to be exploited for political purposes. How, for instance, can you explain the fact that in England there is not one Yiddish school, not one Yiddish newspaper, no Yiddish theater, no variety artists who appear in Yiddish, no Yiddish literary journal, no Yiddish books or translations

from the Yiddish, no composers or artists who deal with Jewish themes?

I might be mistaken, but I don't think I have ever heard you express anxiety about this matter. But I have heard, on the other hand, that your compatriots claim that the Jews of London or Manchester are, as a rule, assimilated and that therefore there is simply no need for special Jewish cultural institutions in your country.

This may well be true. But one wonders why you deliberately ignore the obvious and natural fact that here in Moscow, in Kiev, in the Urals, in Leningrad, the Jews take less of an interest in Jewish culture than they did in the 1920's and 1930's and that it is impossible today to artificially expand the scope of cultural work done in Yiddish. How can one talk of satisfying "the cultural needs of the Jewish population" in isolation from their actual needs?

The fact of the matter is that the actual needs of Soviet Jewry with respect to Jewish culture are being satisfied. It is common knowledge that the main elements of Jewish culture have traditionally evolved chiefly through literature and through the works of painters, composers, and artists who cherish and preserve their bonds with their national environment. Study the facts, Mr. Russell, to satisfy yourself that these elements of Jewish culture are developing with sufficient intensity in the USSR.

At the same time, we are not advocates of what is called "cultural autonomy." On this point you will find many relevant passages in the work of V. I. Lenin, who more than once found it necessary to demonstrate the hollowness of this theory put forward by the Jewish nationalist party, the "Bund," which went bankrupt at the turn of this century.

Here in the land of socialism, libraries and clubs are not built on the national principle. We have no "pure" Ukrainian or Bielorrussian libraries and clubs. And there are also no "pure" Jewish ones. Moscow's Lenin Library has some 70,000 Jewish books on its shelves. The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library in Leningrad has about 40,000, etc.

The Jewish workers are fully equal members in all Soviet clubs, so that Jewish concerts, plays, and literary soirées can be arranged in any club and palace of culture. As for literary activity in Yiddish, I would like you to name one other country where literary people writing in Yiddish enjoy such conditions for fruitful and creative work as in the USSR, where editions of Yiddish books and periodicals run as high as 30,000, where books by Jewish authors are systematically translated into other languages, where Jewish writers participate with full equality in all of the country's literary organizations and institutions. Incidentally, let me inform you that, as I write these lines, the editorial board of *Sovietish heimland* is engaged in a great and important project: we are preparing to change from a bi-monthly to a monthly publication with the new year.

But, speaking frankly, Mr. Russell, this is not the main point. Nor, of course, is the heart of the matter the "cultural autonomy" within which anonymous letter-writers wish to imprison us. The main point is that socialism has produced in the USSR a new type of Jew, one who is a full and equal member of the great, friendly workers' collective. What astonishes me is that after the definitive answer you recently received on this question from the Prime Minister, N. S. Khrushchev, the same question is again being raised.

Mr. Russell, surely you must know that all of these "questions" being raised by tendentious propaganda are nothing but cold war positions which certain circles consider to be advantageous at the moment. Were you to become more familiar with the life of the Jews in the Soviet Union, I am

certain that you would refuse to allow your name to be exploited by people who operate on the "catch-the-thief" principle: in order to divert attention from the virulent racism and anti-Semitism in some countries across the water, they raise a hue and cry about the allegedly unsolved Jewish problem in the Soviet Union.

Respectfully,
Aron Vergelis*

29th October, 1964

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your reply to my letter of July 22, 1964. I note that this reply was published in the October, 1964, issue of your periodical, *Sovietish heimland*. You did not publish my own letter, or the copy I sent of a letter addressed to me by a Soviet Jew complaining that Jews in the USSR are exposed to forced assimilation and appealing for "nothing more" than the rights accorded to Jews in Poland, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia. The reason you give for withholding this from your readers is that it is "irresponsible" and "anonymously written."

The letter was not anonymous. The decision to withhold the name of the writer was my own and was taken for reasons which you well understand. I should have been content to leave the question of "irresponsibility" to the judgment of your readers and I should have more confidence in the value of your reply if you had published my letter. Not only did you fail to publish the letter, but you misrepresented its content. The writer does not, as you allege, admit "the tendentious character" of the clamor raised in the West around Soviet economic crimes. He states the opinion that public reaction to "the problem of forced assimilation" of Soviet Jews is much more important. In the long term, he is undoubtedly right, although the shooting of speculators and the singling out of Jewish offenders is properly abhorred by enlightened opinion.

Your reply is equally lacking in scruple when it dismisses as a "cold war" attitude, expressions of concern for Soviet Jews which exist in progressive, pro-Soviet, and also Communist circles in the West, and when it makes the ridiculous charge that the motive is the diversion of attention from "the racist and anti-Semitic orgy rife in some countries across the water." You cannot be unaware that the Communist Parties in Italy, France, United States, Canada, Scandinavia, Australia, and elsewhere have publicly criticized anti-Semitic literature in the USSR, discrimination against Jewish religion, and the depredation of Jewish culture. You are grossly misleading your readers if you suppress this important fact and misrepresent honest criticism of the inequality experienced by Soviet Jews. Your readers are surely able to judge for themselves the sincerity of your statement that it is an "obvious, natural fact" that Soviet Jews today "have less of a yearning for Jewish culture than in the 20's and 30's" and that "one cannot artificially expand, without rhyme or reason, the scope of cultural work done in Yiddish." They will, I am sure, be as astonished as I am that you omit that during the personality cult of Stalin, Jewish culture and its leading exponents were assassinated; and that restitution has since been quite inadequate. This seems to many of us an unacceptable way of diminishing the yearning for Jewish culture.

Nor can one with knowledge of the true situation of Soviet Jews be impressed by what you say about the "fruitful" conditions available to

*This version of the Vergelis letter was translated from the Yiddish (as it appeared in the Sept.-Oct. 1964 issue of *Sovietish heimland*). The English version Vergelis sent to Lord Russell differs in some small details.—Ed.

Yiddish writers. Only five or six books in Yiddish have been published in the Soviet Union since 1948, not one by a living writer. I am fully informed of the cultural facilities that have been accorded to Soviet Jews since 1956. I welcome them as some mitigation of the crimes Stalin committed against the Jewish people, but they are meagre, grudging, and inadequate to the needs of a vigorous intellectual community of some three million Jews, of whom almost half-a-million speak the Yiddish language as a mother tongue. The striking cultural amenities supplied to even the smallest Soviet national and linguistic minorities illustrate injustice at present imposed on Soviet Jews.

You ask why I do not express anxiety about the unavailability of Jewish and Yiddish cultural institutions in Britain. *The Jewish Year Book for 1964*, published by the *London Jewish Chronicle*, lists hundreds of Jewish organizations of every kind, scores of libraries, museums, newspapers, and

schools, manifold religious institutions, and a considerable selection of book titles on aspects of Jewish history, religion, sociology, politics, and philosophy. A number of the listed institutions have facilities in both the Hebrew and Yiddish languages. All this exists for a total Jewish population in Britain of 450,000, or rather less than the number of Soviet Jews whose mother tongue is Yiddish and about one-sixth of the entire Soviet Jewish community.

The Jews in Britain are clearly at liberty to decide for themselves if they wish to assimilate, what form that assimilation shall take and in what way they shall express their interests as Jews. If Jews in your country had a comparable choice, within the framework of Soviet society, or if they had opportunities equal to those of the other Soviet nationalities, outside interventions would be presumptuous. Unfortunately, they do not; authority imposes upon them conditions of assimilation in which they have virtually no choice but sub-

mission.

As the appointed editor of the only Jewish journal in the USSR, you are not an initiator of policy on Jewish matters but an authorized spokesman. The present moment, however, requires all of us to explain the need for an enlightened Jewish policy to the Soviet government. More than two years ago, as a sincere friend of your country and its policy of coexistence, I said that this situation would do much harm to the reputation of the Soviet Union. This, indeed, has proved true. It will be unfortunate for both the Soviet Union and the Jewish people if something is not quickly done to accord dignity and justice to Soviet Jews. Nor can this letter end without an expression of concern that little has been done to reunite survivors of Jewish families broken up by the war, and so to terminate their prolonged sufferings.

Yours faithfully,
Bertrand Russell

PROMOTING BR/ERS

(15) The BRS fact sheet aims to provide outsiders with a quick overview of the BRS — its aims and ways — on a single page. Here is the latest version. Your suggestions or corrections will be appreciated.

Some facts about THE BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY, INC.

General aims: to promote Russell's ideas and causes he championed.

Some specific areas of interest: promoting Russell's writings; encouraging new scholarly and popular writings on Russell; presenting Russell's ideas as attractive, rational alternatives to alienation, cynicism, and mysticism; opposing misuses of science and technology; spreading Russell's views — which deal with virtually all the problems facing modern man, from how to be happy to how to work for nuclear disarmament.

Why people join: most members join (they have told us) for one or more of 5 reasons: to learn more about Russell; to be in touch with other admirers; to work for things Russell worked for; to discuss Russell's work with others; to do something useful for others via the BRS.

Academia: although the BRS is not a scholarly society, one of its aims is to encourage Russell scholarship. A number of professional philosophers are BRS members. A BRS Symposium is held each year at the annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association (Eastern Division). A BRS Travel Grant will enable a scholar to travel to The Russell Archives, at McMaster University. A BRS Psychology Symposium was held for psychologists attending the American Psychological Association's annual convention (September 1976). Symposia papers are available from the BRS Library.

BRS Library lends films and tapes of Russell, as well as books by and about him. Books published by The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation (England), and a small number of other books, are offered for sale.

Some members: SIR ALFRED AYER F.B.A., author, Russell scholar (Professor of Logic, New College, Oxford). DORA BLACK RUSSELL, pioneer feminist, educator, author, BR's 2nd wife, mother of John & Kate. LESTER E. DENONN, Co-Editor of "The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell", BRS Board member and director. GORLISS LAMONT, author, philosopher, civil libertarian (Seminar Associate, Columbia University). PAUL EDWARDS, Russell scholar, Editor in Chief of "The Encyclopedia of Philosophy" (Macmillan) (Professor of Philosophy, Brooklyn College). J.B. NEILANDS, member, 3rd Commission of Inquiry, Bertrand Russell War Crimes Tribunal, North Vietnam (1967); BRS Board member and director (Professor of Biochemistry, UC Berkeley). DAVID PEARS, author, Russell scholar (Tutor in Philosophy, Christ Church, Oxford). SIR KARL POPPER F.R.S., F.B.A., author, philosopher (Professor Emeritus, University of London). CONRAD RUSSELL, Russell's son (History Department, Bedford College, University of London). THE EARL RUSSELL, Russell's son John. KATHARINE RUSSELL TAIT, Russell's daughter, BRS founding member, BRS Board member and director.

How the BRS functions: the BRS meets once a year. Other contacts between members are usually by mail. Committees are formed to work in specific areas. 4 BRS newsletters per year go to members, as does the periodical, "Russell", published by the Russell Archives, at McMaster University.

Committees: the Science Committee is chiefly concerned with misuses of science and technology that threaten the biosphere. The Philosophers' Committee promotes scholarly writings by professional philosophers, through its annual symposium at APA. The BRS wishes to develop a Universal Human Rights Committee, an Applied Philosophy Committee (to apply BR's views on the "good life" to everyday living), and an Awards Committee (to select recipients of the BRS Award.)

Degree of activity: members may be as active or as inactive as they wish to be. Some wish merely to be kept informed. No matter. Anyone who is interested in Bertrand Russell is welcome as a member.

For more information, write to:

Information Committee
The Bertrand Russell Society, Inc.
RD 1, Box 409
Coopersburg, Pa. 18036

R8 1/79

RATIONALITY

(16) From the Op Ed page of The New York Times of November 25, 1978, p. 23:

A Possible Remedy for Thinking That Leads Youth Into Easy Acceptance of Cult Figures

By Harold J. Morowitz

NEW HAVEN, Conn.—In light of the cult tragedy in Guyana, I am reminded that the almost desperate effort to understand cults in the United States has ignored a fundamental flaw in our educational system that renders young people so vulnerable to these irrational movements.

Because we are interested in transmitting to our children the beliefs of their parents and teachers, we omit from school curricula training in methods of establishing the validity of ideas.

The primary question of "How do we know the things that we know?" is simply not dealt with.

This most important inquiry is confined to specialized college courses in epistemology, and the vast majority of students never confronts the issues.

As a result, we have a large cohort of young people set loose in a rapidly

changing and confusing world without any conceptual tools for evaluating the extraordinary amount of information that they experience daily.

If a cult leader comes along and states with great charisma "I am god" or "I am the voice of god" many do not know how to evaluate the validity of the statement.

Since education has largely been an appeal to authority (teacher, encyclopedia, textbook), cultists simply replace one authority with another.

The difficulty is that to have given students know-how to question cult leaders would also have provided them with an intellectual framework to question the established mores, religions and political systems of their elders.

I believe that we have reached the point where it is far worse to leave our young people exposed than it is to teach them how to formulate meaning-

ful answers.

They are already beset by doubts. We need to show them how belief can be rationally established.

One proposal advocates the institution of an eighth-grade class in theory of knowledge as an introduction to high school education.

In such a course dealing with logic, epistemology and philosophy of science, we could develop the framework for rationalism and then allow the young people to use that powerful tool in assessing the subsequent materials they encounter.

In a very diverse cultural setting, we can no longer afford to merely transmit a body of knowledge and beliefs — we must allow the young to explore the bases of those traditions.

Such an approach to education will not come easily. Socrates was condemned for advocating this doctrine, and that condemnation contributed to

his death.

It has been argued that a study of verification is too obscure or difficult for most students at a high school level. If it is important enough, I believe that a way can be found to teach philosophical foundations to the young.

If we fail to render ourselves vulnerable by teaching students critical thinking, then we leave them easy prey to cult leaders, charismatic politicians and other less bizarre irrationalism such as food fads.

Much of advertising is designed to envelop those who do not question. Mass communication is too effective to stand without a truth filter for the recipients. Along with readin', 'ritin' and 'rithmetic we need to teach reality.

Harold J. Morowitz is professor of molecular biophysics and biochemistry at Yale.

RELIGION AND ITS ADVERSARIES

(17) O'Hair counterproductive? LEONARD CLEAVELIN seems to think so:

While I am more than willing to identify myself as an atheist, I would like to point out that that by no means implies that I like everything that goes on in Mrs. O'Hair's head*. She does deserve credit for her role in the School Prayer Case, which brought much-needed attention to some of the problems of church-state separation in the U.S. But...her scheme, concocted, I guess, during her visit to St. Louis, to remove the "St." from St. Louis, serves no useful purpose, and, I fear, may hurt serious humanism.

*We had said (RSN19-19) that we like what goes on in her head.

NEWS ABOUT MEMBERS

- (18) Margaret and Whitfield Cobb, who recently became members, have written as follows:

We were both delighted to see the quote at the top of your letterhead. You might be interested to know that when we were married — September 17, 1944 — the inside of each of our wedding rings bore the inscription, "Inspired by Love and Guided by Knowledge." Moreover, our wedding vows, which we recited before a Friends Meeting (without a pastor) substituted the phrase, "promising with the inspiration of love and the guidance of knowledge to be unto her (him) a devoted and considerate husband (wife)," instead of the traditional Quaker wording, "...promising with Divine assistance to be unto her (him) a loving and faithful husband(wife)..."

- (19) Peter G. Cranford has written a short paper, "The Possibilities of Compossibility." The term "compossible" was first used by Leibniz to indicate that certain things co-existed. BR used it when two or more desires could be satisfied by the same state of affairs; he called them "compossible desires." Peter wishes to promote the use of "compossible" as a means of encouraging opposing groups to concentrate their efforts on areas of common ground (compossible areas) instead of on areas of irreconcilable differences. The paper is available from the BRS Library (address on Page 1, bottom.)
- (20) Gladys Leithauser has moved from Wayne State University (Detroit) to the University of Michigan (Dearborn), where she is teaching 3 freshman courses in expository writing. She is using BR's Power as the text, and will let us know later how her choice of expository model went over.
- (21) Don Loeb, who has been at Brandeis University, has gone on to Law School (U. of Michigan).
- (22) Warren Smith reports that: he is still teaching highschool (New Canaan, CT); still active in his recording studio (Manhattan), with a little help from his partners; still managing the investment portfolio for the Mensa Investment Club; and still writing "Manhattan Scene" for West Indian newspapers. He's also been practising piano, and (this is new) "after a lapse of three decades" finally performed, at the Stamford Unitarian Society.

HONORARY MEMBERS

- (23) Dora Black Russell has accepted the BRS invitation to become an honorary member, we are very happy to report. The members had voted unanimously, at the 1978 annual meeting, to extend the invitation. She has been a pioneer in the struggle for women's rights, especially women's suffrage, birth control, and civil liberties, as well as other causes that in most cases were unpopular at the time she espoused them. She ran the Beacon Hill School with (and without) her husband, Bertrand Russell, whose second wife she was. She and he are the parents of John (the present Earl) and Katharine Russell Tait. She is a member of The Bertrand Russell Memorial Committee (4).
She continues to take her usual lively interest in the world around her, and not long ago, delivered a paper, "Religion in the Machine Age," before the South Place Ethical Society, in Conway Hall.
Her book on the Beacon Hill School (NLD6-37) will be published by Virago, Peter Cranford advises.
- (24) David Pears and Karl Popper. The members have voted their approval of these 2 nominees, by mail ballot (RSN20-54), we are very pleased (though not surprised) to report. What did come as a surprise, and a welcome one, was the size of the vote: 27% of the members voted, nearly twice as many as had ever voted before.
Welcome to the Society, Gentlemen!
Their addresses: Professor David Pears/Christ Church/Oxford, England OX1 1DP
Sir Karl R. Popper/Fallowfield, Manor Close/Manor Road/Penn, Buckinghamshire/England HP10 8HZ
- (25) A. J. Ayer. We intend, from time to time, to provide additional background information about BRS honorary members. The following appears in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, New York: Macmillan, 1967. We will welcome additional information or corrections, from the subject himself or from anyone else.

AYER, ALFRED JULES, contemporary British philosopher. Ayer was born in 1910. He received his education at Eton, where he was a king's scholar, and at Christ Church, Oxford. After graduating in 1932, he spent some time at the University of Vienna familiarizing himself with the logical positivist movement, then little known among English-speaking philosophers. He returned to Oxford in 1933 as a lecturer in philosophy at Christ Church and in 1935 became a research fellow of the college. Army service in World War II kept him from philosophy until 1945, when he went back to university teaching as fellow and dean of Wadham College, Oxford. In the following year he became Grote professor of the philosophy of mind and logic at University College, London, where he remained until his return to Oxford as Wykeham professor of logic in 1959.

Ayer's first book, *Language, Truth and Logic*, was published in 1936. Its combination of lucidity, elegance, and vigor with an uncompromisingly revolutionary position has made it one of the most influential philosophical books of the century. As Ayer explains in the preface, the views he advocates derive from Russell and Wittgenstein among modern philosophers and from the earlier empiricism of Berkeley and Hume and have much in common with the logical positivism of the Vienna circle. But he accepts none of these influences uncritically and clearly puts his own stamp on the position he outlines. He adopts Hume's division of genuine statements into logical and empirical, together with a principle of verification which requires that an empirical statement shall not be counted as meaningful unless some observation is relevant to its truth or

falsity. This starting point has drastic and far-reaching results. Metaphysical statements, since they purport to express neither logical truths nor empirical hypotheses, must accordingly be reckoned to be without meaning. Theology is a special case of metaphysics; affirmations of divine existence are not even false, they are without sense. For the same reason, value statements in ethics or aesthetics fail to attain the status of genuine statements and are exposed as expressions of emotion with imperative overtones. The a priori statements of logic and mathematics are empty of factual content and are true in virtue of the conventions that govern the use of the words that compose them. The tasks left for philosophy after this withdrawal from its traditional boundaries are those of solving by clarification the problems left untouched by the advance of

the sciences. Philosophy is an activity of analysis and is seen, in the end, to be identical with the logic of science.

The second edition of the book (1946) contains an introduction which modifies, though it does not retract, the main theses of the first edition. Ayer's attention here is directed chiefly to giving a precise formulation of the principle of verification. His original version is replaced by a much more elaborate and carefully worded formula. Both versions have, however, been shown to be faulty in admitting as meaningful metaphysical statements of precisely the kind that the principle is designed to outlaw. Indeed, there seems to be a weakness of the principle in that it appears plausible only when its expression is left uncomfortably vague.

The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge (1940) is concerned with two groups of problems, those of perception and those of "the ego-centric predicament" (privacy and publicity in language and in sense experience and the problem of other minds). The most interesting and original feature of the book is Ayer's treatment of the terminology of sense data as a language in which the problems of perception can be most appropriately dealt with rather than as a thesis embodying a discovery about the facts of sense experience. *Thinking and Meaning* (1947) was Ayer's inaugural lecture in the University of London. It is a trenchant application of Ockham's razor to the problems of intentionality and the relations between minds, thinking objects, words, and meaning. This short, powerful essay has so far received less than its due of critical attention. *Philosophical Essays* (1954) is a collection of papers ranging over philosophical logic, the theory of knowledge, and moral philosophy. Half the papers are carefully argued treatments of problems raised in Ayer's first two books; in particular, "The Analysis of Moral Judgements" is a moderate and persuasive restatement of the hints on ethics thrown out in *Language, Truth and Logic*.

In 1956 Ayer published *The Problem of Knowledge*, his most important book since 1936. It is a sympathetic and constructive treatment of the various problems of philosophical skepticism. After a short discussion of philosophical method and the nature of knowledge, he discusses at length the pattern of skeptical arguments. He then examines three problems familiar from his earlier work—perception, memory, and other minds—as instances of skepticism at work. It may be that no statement is immune from doubt, but this does not entail that no statement can be known to be true. Where statements cannot, even in principle, be justified, we may conclude not that they are to be rejected but rather that no justification is called for.

The Concept of a Person (1963) is a collection of essays. The most striking, the one that gives the book its title, is a notable survey of some aspects of the problems of body, mind, and personal identity. The outcome can be roughly summarized as follows: to say that I own a mental state *M* is to say that there is a physical body *B* by which I am identified and that a state of *B* causes *M*.

Ayer's most recent work, embodied in his Shearman lectures at the University of London in 1964 and so far unpublished, is on induction and probability. This is a new field of interest for Ayer, although it was foreshadowed in two papers in *The Concept of a Person*.

Ayer's work is very much of a piece, both in style and attitude. He is now more catholic in interest and more cautious and temperate in expression than in his earlier writings. But his arguments are informed by the same principles and set out with the same grace and clarity. He leans perhaps too heavily on Hume's dichotomy of statements into logical and factual, and he has not so far set himself seriously to meet contemporary criticisms (particularly those of W. V. O. Quine) that have been made of this famous distinction. This is at once a weakness of his present position and, perhaps, a presage of its future development.

velopment.

Works by Ayer

BOOKS

Language, Truth and Logic. London, 1936; 2d ed., 1946.
The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge. London, 1940.
Thinking and Meaning. London, 1947.
Philosophical Essays. London, 1954.
The Problem of Knowledge. London, 1956.
The Concept of a Person. London, 1963.

ARTICLES AND SYMPOSIUM PIECES

"Jean-Paul Sartre." *Horizon* (1945).
 "Albert Camus." *Horizon* (1945).
 "Some Aspects of Existentialism." *Rationalist Annual* (1948).
 "Logical Positivism—A Debate," delivered on the BBC June 13, 1949. The participants were Ayer and F. C. Copleston. Published in Edwards, P., and Pap, A., eds., *A Modern Introduction to Philosophy* (New York, 1957).
 "Professor Malcolm on Dreaming." *Journal of Philosophy* (1960), 517-535. Malcolm's reply, with Ayer's rejoinder, *ibid.* (1961), 294-299.

WORKS ON AYER

For critical discussion of Ayer, see John Wisdom, "Note on the New Edition of Professor Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic*," *Mind*, Vol. 57, No. 228 (1948), 401-419, reprinted in Wisdom's *Philosophy and Psycho-analysis* (Oxford, 1953); H. H. Price, "Critical Notice of A. J. Ayer's *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*," *Mind*, Vol. 50, No. 199 (1941), 280-293; H. H. Price, "Discussion: Professor Ayer's Essays," *Philosophical Quarterly* (1955); D. J. O'Connor, "Some Consequences of Professor A. J. Ayer's Verification Principle," *Analysis* (1949-1950); W. V. O. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," in *From a Logical Point of View* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953); M. Lazorowitz, "Strong and Weak Verification I," *Mind* (1939) and "Strong and Weak Verification II," *Mind* (1950), reprinted in Lazorowitz' *The Structure of Metaphysics* (London, 1955).

D. J. O'CONNOR

(26)

NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome these new members:

TOM BOHR/664 San Juan Street/Stanford, CA 94305
 MARGARET & WHITFIELD COBB/800 Cupp Street, SE/Blacksburg, VA 24060
 ABE COHEN, M.D./560 N Street, S.W./Washington, DC 20024
 JILL COUNTS/4423 N. Edmonson/Indianapolis, IN 46226
 WENDY & ROBERT EPSTEIN/344-16th Avenue, N.E./Minneapolis, MN 55413

ARLENA & RALPH (O.D.) GILBERT/107 Center Street/Elgin, IL 60120
 NICHOLAS GRIFFIN/Dept. of Philosophy/McMaster University/Hamilton, Ont./Canada L8S 4K1
 JOHN HARPER, JR./571 S. Coronado Street (#412)/Los Angeles, CA 90057
 WILLIAM D. HULET/PO Box 480140/U. Centre, U. of Guelph/Guelph, Ont./Canada N1G 2W1
 KIM ANTHONY IANNONE/6892 Trigo Road/Isla Vista, CA 93017

FRED H. ("SANDY") IRELAND/11645 Montana Avenue (#310)/Los Angeles, CA 90049
 VALERIE JANESICK, PH.D./743 Buchon (Apt. D)/San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
 ROBERT KATZ/PO Box 240/Rockport, MA 01966
 RICHARD LEE/PO Box 398/Morgantown, WV 26505
 JOHN R. LENZ/305 Riverside Drive (2B)/New York, NY 10025

ELSIE MCKENNEY/8509 Greenbelt Road (Apt. 102)/Greenbelt, MD 20770
 JOHN MCLUHAN, M.D./726 Southwest Drive (M-3)/Jonesboro, AR 72401
 M.T.P. SIMON, M.D./United Christian Hospital/130 Hip Wo Street/Kwun Tong, Kln./Hong Kong
 W. M. WHARTON, JR./PO Box 132/Borrego Springs, CA 92004

(27)

ADDRESS CHANGES

Changes in existing addresses are underlined. A new address has no underlining.

MICHAEL BALYEAT/60 W. Northwood Avenue/Columbus, OH 43201
 ERIC CARLIEN/12 Cross Street/West Newton, MA 02165
 JACK R. COWLES/392 Central Park West (6C)/New York, NY 10025
 DENNIS J. DARLAND/4104 Sellenck/600 N. 15th Street/Lincoln, NE 68508
 FRANCES LE T. DIMITT/PO Box 1442/Spring, TX 77373

LUKE DONES/"not forwardable," says PO
 JOHN HAILU/566 West 114th Street (5D2)/New York, NY 10025
 NORA HUNT (through March)/Drawer B, Unit 34/Patton State Hospital/Patton, CA 92369
 NORA HUNT (after March)/c/o Centa Schanz/Ringsseis Str. 11a/8000 München 2/West Germany
 GARY JACOBS/300 Grand Blvd./Evanston, IA 50707

DOUGLAS LAWSON/23 Westerly Drive/Fredonia, NY 14063
 DON LOEB/1738 Murfin Avenue (8)/Ann Arbor, MI 48105
 C. McDONOUGH/3463 Ste. Famille (PH9)/Montreal, Que/Canada H2X 2K7
 MICHAEL MCGUIRE/107 S. Mary (5)/Sunnyvale, CA 94086
 STEPHEN A. WILKUS/1002 W. Main/Urbana, IL 61801

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- (28) Rx for medicines. ALBERTO DONADIO asks whether BR ever said something like the following, and if so, he would like the exact quotation and where it can be found:

All medicines should be thrown out at sea; only the fish would suffer from it.

- (29) For California-haters: BOB DAVIS advises that The Los Angeles Times of 12/3/78 reports BR as saying:

"Southern California — the ultimate segregation of the unfit."

Bob asks: Where? When? In what context?

- (30) On brains: Bob also advises that The New York Review of Books of 12/21/78, in a review of Piaget's books, reports BR as saying:

"If you had my brain, you would find the world a very thin, colorless place."

Again Bob asks: Where? When? In what context?

- (31) On alcohol. VANCE INGALLS writes:

Russell has commented that he felt alcohol would have been a possible escape from his periodic bouts of depression, but a fool's way out. So, can the following quote be true?

"If I would observe sobriety, I should recall that Bertrand Russell put down a fifth of whiskey daily."
In My Own Way, by Alan Watts, New York: Pantheon, Random House, 1972, p. 364

* * * * *

Please send answers to any of the above c/o Russell Society News, address on Page 1, bottom.

THE BRS LIBRARY

- (32) Film rental fees have now been set for the 5 films listed in the last issue (RSN20-41): the 14-minute films, \$10; the 30-minute film, \$20; the 40-minute film, \$25. Plus a \$50 deposit on each film.

FUN & GAMES

- (33) Paradoxes wanted. PETER CRANFORD suggests that it might be amusing to collect paradoxes, and he has sent us some. But before we get to his, here are a few you have probably come across before now:
- . BR's original paradox: the class of classes that are not members of themselves.
 - . The sheet of paper slipped under BR's door (by Wittgenstein?). On one side was written, "The statement on the other side is true." On the other side was written, "The statement on the other side is false."
 - . "All Cretans are liars," said the Cretan.
- Here are some Cranford paradoxes:
- . Never take my advice.
 - . The highway lobby argued that there was no highway lobby. (Washington, D.C. 1972)
 - . He said nothing.
 - . There is no truth.
 - . (One for the MSPs): Wife to husband: "You see, I can keep my mouth shut."

Two whimsical ones:

. Zen guru to his disciples: "Think about not thinking."

. At a seance to communicate with spirits, a voice from beyond says: "There is no life after death."

- * If you know of a paradox — or can invent one — please send it to the newsletter. Specify whether it is original or not, and if not, where it originated, if known. Send as many as you wish.

FINANCES/CONTRIBUTIONS

- (34) Recent contributors. We thank the following for their contributions: CLEAVELIN, CRANFORD, DAVIS, EISLER, LEITHAUSER, LIPIN, REINHARDT, TOBIN, VOGT.
- (35) Contributions, please. Contributions are needed to help us cover expenses. Dues covered only 65% of expenditures in 1978.
We have discontinued the yearly mailing of a request for a contribution, to each member. From now on, requests for contributions will be made only through the newsletter.
As we said recently (RSN20-44b): if we can average a \$15 contribution from half of our members, that should solve our money problems for 1979 (at the present rate of expenditures).
Can you spare \$15? If you can, please send it; and if you can't, please send what you can spare. If you like what the BRS is and does, help pay for it with a contribution you can afford. Every bit helps. Send it to Russell Society News, address on page 1, bottom.
- (36) Volunteers needed. Last issue we asked for volunteers to help us do some fund-raising. The response has been underwhelming; apparently no one wants to work at fund-raising.
If you have hesitated to volunteer because you know nothing about fund-raising, that need not hold you back. We will supply basic information on how to solicit and whom to solicit. The soliciting will all be done by mail.
We need a supervisor, preferably with some relevant experience, plus several aides.
Help!

BRS BUSINESS

- (37) Current officers. At the 1978 annual meeting, the following officers were elected for the coming year (1979) and are now serving: Peter G. Cranford, Chairman; Robert W. Davis, President; Warren Allen Smith, Vice-President; Stephen J. Reinhardt, Treasurer; Donald W. Jackanicz, Secretary.

INVITATIONS TO CORRESPOND

- (38) Richard Lee enjoys rational or logical discourse, and would like to correspond "with like-minded individuals ...no matter what the topic." His field is hydrology and climatology. He's a Professor at West Virginia University. His address: PO Box 398, Morgantown, WV 26505. He doesn't care whether you use his title or not.

ABOUT OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

- (39) The BR Peace Foundation, through one of its Directors, Ken Coates, sent the following letter to The Times (London), where it appeared on August 5, 1978:

Nikolai Bukharin was surely a complex personality. We would find it difficult to disagree with much that you say in your leader (July 28) on our campaign for his rehabilitation. When we approached the Italian communists for support for the appeal of Yuri Larin, Bukharin's son, it was very far from our intention to nominate a new cult figure to replace discredited older ones. But there is one very powerful reason for the rehabilitation of Bukharin which is not covered in your leader.

Visiting Paris in 1936, Bukharin boasted that, single-handed ("with this pen") he had written the entire Soviet constitution of 1936. Whether this boast contained an exaggeration or not, Bukharin was certainly a most active member of the commission which was established to draft this constitution, and the finished document contained a large number of guarantees for freedom of expression and association together with guarantees of the "inviolability of the person". When this constitution was adopted later in the year, it was celebrated by the Webbs with a veritable panegyric. They pronounced it to be a document superior to

the Declaration of Rights of 1776 and to the French revolutionary Declaration of 1793. It is permissible to remain agnostic about the Webbs' judgment: the more so since the Soviet constitution seems never to have been properly enforced.

Since we took up the cases of a number of Soviet dissidents at the beginning of the decade, we have become increasingly aware of the fact that the main demand which is made by critics of present day Soviet society is that the constitution be actually enforced. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why last year a new constitution was proclaimed. However, all of the main provisions concerning civil rights have been carried over from the old to the new versions of this document, yet there remains considerable controversy about their implementation.

Clearly the continuing injustice to Bukharin needs to be evaluated within this context. If the main author of key passages in the fundamental law of the USSR cannot secure justice even posthumously, even after 40 years, what is the value of that fundamental law for other citizens?

(¹Thank you, Peter Cranford)

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

- (40) Justin Leiber (from Lee Eisler.) Are you out there somewhere, Justin? One postcard plus 2 letters (addressed to Mr. Justin Leiber, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Texas, Cullen Blvd., Houston, TX 77004) have been returned. From the writing on the envelope ("Return to sender" in longhand) it looks like the University rather than the Post Office is responsible. (The PO uses a rubber stamp.) The two envelopes are marked "not Physiology"; apparently they have never heard of Philosophy; with my Easterner's built-in unfairness to Texas (plus my exasperation), I am ready to believe it.

Maybe there's a lot of mail you haven't been getting because you're "not Physiology". The mystery deepens because I know you received RSN19: you returned the ballot. Or did the whimsical person who is returning your mail also return your ballot?

I would send these returned mailings to you, if I knew where to send them. Can you give me another address?

INDEX

- (41) Introductory (1). The BRS at 5 (2). Annual meeting reminder (3). Chairman Cranford reports (4). President Davis reports (5). Treasurer Reinhardt reports: 4th quarter '78 (6a), full year '78 (6b). Committee reports: Awards (7); Science (8). Vote results: Pears & Popper approved (9,24). BR on atheist vs. agnostic (10). Columbia Encyclopedia on BR (11). Ali (12). India's BR stamp (13). BR and USSR Jews, 1965 (14). Latest BRS fact sheet (15). Morowitz on cults (16). O'Hair counterproductive? (17). News about members: the Cobbs (18), Cranford (19), Leithauser (20), Loeb (21), Warren Smith (22). Honorary members: Dora accepts (23); Pears & Popper approved (24); Ayer, some background (25). New members (26). Address changes (27). Q & A: Rx for medicines (28); for California-haters (29); on brains (30); on alcohol (31). Film rental fees (32). Paradoxes wanted (33). Contributors thanked (34). Contributions, please (35). Fund-raising volunteers needed (36). Current BRS officers (37). Invitation to correspond (38). Bukharin (39). Personal communication to Leiber (40). Index (41).

P.S. Thank you, Bob Davis, for the "Commentary" article (14).