

The American Bertrand Russell Society

a progress report

After the decision in 1972 to found an American Bertrand Russell Society, letters were sent to American subscribers to *Russell* inviting discussion on the general aim of examining, disseminating, and actively promoting Russell's ideas. Similar letters were written to those on a list of Russell's American friends compiled by Lady Russell and Christopher Farley.

Replies were received from 48 of the 66 to whom letters were sent. 45 expressed very strong to strong interest. Almost all commented at some length. A capsule digest of the letters follows.

- *Start on campus and expand. Glad to help on small tasks only, not in organizing.
- *Interested - particularly in BR's pacifism, make it comprehensive. Work with McMaster. No reason for rival journal to *Russell*.
- *Young "Russelophile". Dedicated. Entrance corridor to apartment has "The Bertrand Russell Memorial Alcove".
- *Applauds. Suggests some programs.
- *Delighted.
- *Busy but interested. Already trying to carry out Russell's kind of work.
- *If anything I can do, call on me.
- *A privilege to cooperate. Capitalize on Einstein peace experiences.
- *Don't believe in cultist Preservation Societies.
- *Those who thought of organizing are best qualified to proceed.
- *Start as broadly as possible. Attract as many as possible of BR admirers.
- *Main interest is BR's parents, not BR.
- *Very interested and very willing to help. Combine education and action.
- *Further Russell's social and political goals. Further the ideas behind the War Crimes Tribunal.

- *Possibly capitalize on experience of Peirce Society. Cooperate with McMaster.
- *Offer whatever help I can provide.
- *Don't see much benefit, but it would be nice to be in contact with people who think highly of BR.
- *Enthusiastic. Would like a BR Journal. Will help.
- *Do not see the BRS as a great movement, but am interested.
- *Interest primarily in BR psychologically as a study in genius and from a literary point of view. Admire his ideas. Think pushing his social ideas would be too narrow.
- *Intrigued by your use of *The Conquest of Happiness*. Will have time to help implement his ideas.
- *Greatly interested. Persuaded Government of India to issue BR commemorative stamp. Have distributed many copies of *The Conquest of Happiness*.
- *Difficult to embrace whole Russell in one organization; radical peace efforts already exist.
- *Delighted. Popularize Russell. Get Russellites together. Expand *Russell*. Count me in.
- *Delighted. Suggests a number of valuable ideas. Suggests title "Bertrand Russell Society (USA)."
- *In hospital (but will help after recovery).
- *Pleased to be counted Russellians. Do not hesitate to call on us for services.
- *Should focus on ideas and ideals, not on personality.
- *Am retired - not active - but best wishes. Studied under BR 58 years ago.
- *Long and informative letter. Interested in BR since high school (15 years). Profoundly affected by him.
- *Number of admirers at University of Arkansas. Will help spread the word. Admire BR.
- *Enthusiastic. Boundless admiration for Russell. Glad to do what I can.
- *Inclined to think Russell's ideas must make their way on their own strength, rather than organizationally. But interested in developments.
- *Chief aims should be: BR's unification of thought and life of social and personal responsibility. Will cooperate in every way. *Why not world-wide?*

It is time to have an organizational meeting for a Bertrand Russell Society. The first meeting should be of a provisional nature (and those taking part should be those with the most dedicated interest).

A comprehensive organization is envisaged that will include a balanced attention to the examination and/or promotion of specific Russell ideas. The organization itself should be invested with Russell's principles - most important of these being love of humanity.

The utmost encouragement should be given to the BR "buffs", particularly in the task of reaching alienated youth and also alienated adults. This should be approached through the problem of happiness and can be met through the distribution and promotion of *The Conquest of Happiness*.

The advice and counsel of the Bertrand Russell family should be given the deepest consideration, as should the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, the Bertrand Russell Archives at McMaster University, and the Japanese Bertrand Russell Society.

The possibility of an international organization needs to be explored.

Plans will be made between now and the next issue of *Russell* for the getting together of charter members. Letters will be sent to keep them informed as to developments and to solicit further suggestions as to organization. We need all the help we can get.

If we have overlooked anyone, please write:

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Red Hackle finale:

As most of you know, we were not able to bring to the McMaster Centenary Celebrations the Red Hackle Scotch - Lord Russell's favourite drink. After months of negotiation, and with only a week remaining, a final appeal was made to Prime Minister Trudeau, but he was out campaigning. His office opined that "those assembled to do honour to Lord Russell will accept their deprivation philosophically" (though we had pointed out that seven days had been sufficient for creation).

We have heard from Alan Marshall, director of Hepburn and Ross Ltd. It appears that though we lost the battle, we won the war. The makers of Red Hackle are negotiating for entry to the lists of the liquor control boards of British Columbia and Ontario.

Augusta, Georgia

Peter G. Cranford
Michael C. Moore