

Book reviews

"Bertrand Russell's America"

Barry Feinberg and Ronald Kasrils, *Bertrand Russell's America: his transatlantic travels and writings*. Vol. 1: 1896-1945. 371 pp. 28 illus. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973. £5.75. Same edn. in Canada, distributed by Methuen, \$23.95. New York: Viking Press, 1974. \$12.50.

The authors have done a tremendously successful and impressive job in presenting a solid basis for the interested reader to form a well founded answer to the query heard most frequently in America: "Was not Russell violently anti-American?" Despite the well known disturbing incidents occurring during the years treated in this first volume, the infamous City College Case and the Barnes Foundation fiasco, either of which might well have created prejudice in any sensitive person, we learn from these pages that Russell was fair in his criticism, not of America as such, but of those beliefs and actions he decried no matter where they originated or were voiced.

In fact, as he stressed in so many of his lecture tours in America, he saw a high position for America in world affairs.

"America alone in the modern world has stability.... There is in America a capacity for unregimented co-operative enterprise which is not equalled anywhere else in the world.... The culture of America has improved while that of Europe has deteriorated.... The power to lead the world both politically and culturally will certainly come to the United States and I firmly believe that with the power will come more of the necessary wisdom than has been shown in the past by nations in a similar position."

These significant words were penned about 1938 and have hitherto been unpublished. Part II of this volume contains twenty-seven selections of which nine were not previously published. Part I in fourteen chapters ably presents and carefully documents the story of the trips, the lectures, and teaching engagements and the noted individuals with whom Russell had contact in America during the forty-nine years covered by this first volume. All is developed in the light of the events occurring during these vital years encompassing two world wars. We can eagerly await the second volume to test from the material presented how the Vietnam War coloured the Russell view of America in the later years.

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