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“The town is beastly and the weather was vile”: Bertrand Russell in Chicago, 1938-1939

Visiting Chicago in 1867, Lord Amberley offered his wife an appreciation of the city: "The country around Chicago is flat and ugly; the town itself has good buildings but has a rough unfinished appearance which does not contribute to its attractions."¹ While Bertrand Russell is known to have accepted and developed particular aspects of his father's thought, it is more likely that his own visits to Chicago, rather than this nineteenth-century appraisal, brought him to the opinion that "the town is beastly and the weather was vile."² One might suppose Russell's longest stay reaffirmed his image of the city suggested in a 1922 article expressing fear of "a slow destruction of the civilization of China" through which "the big towns will become like Chicago."³ Here, Russell appears to have envisioned this city as an amorphous collection of streets and structures manifesting the least desirable values of American capitalism.

In his *Autobiography* a single paragraph is devoted to his 1938-1939 experience of "the bleak hideousness of Chicago" (II, p. 332). Yet there was far more to Russell's six-month sojourn than the little he chose to recall in print. One-half year is a significant period in anyone's life, even for a man who lived ninety-seven (and a half) years. This article, then, presents an account of Russell's coming to and departure from Chicago and his diverse activities while a professor at the University of Chicago.

The need to secure some permanent academic position was strongly felt by Russell in the mid-1930s. His

¹Bertrand and Patricia Russell, *The Amberley Papers* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966), p. 57.

²*The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell* (Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1968), II, p. 332.

³"How Washington Can Help China", *New Republic*, 4 Jan. 1922, p. 154.

second marriage had ended and a third was beginning; participation in the Beacon Hill experiment was behind him; and journalistic writing, though a continuing source of income, was ceasing to be attractive. Now a desire to return to philosophical work, recurring financial troubles, and the fear of another, far more destructive European war all contributed toward his decision to investigate American possibilities.

My feelings are threefold: (a) I have a lot of ideas in my head that I long to work at and believe important (b) I am faced with such poverty that I may be unable to give a proper education to the child that is coming (c) That Europe is no place for children, with the imminent risk of war--particularly England, which is likely to suffer most in the next war.⁴

At first, with the help of his American publisher, Warder Norton, Russell approached Princeton University hoping for a research post "on the foundations of mathematics and philosophy" (letter to Norton, 13 Jan. 1937). But no prospect materialized, and he requested Norton to inquire at universities such as Columbia and Harvard.

Finally in the spring of 1937 Russell received a letter from Professor Scott Buchanan who then represented the University of Chicago's Committee on the Liberal Arts (COTLA). Buchanan offered a place on COTLA with only minor teaching duties. Writing to Norton that this "seems a very agreeable job", Russell nevertheless suggested the post "may be reactionary and the sort of thing my radical friends would think I ought not to be connected with. ... it is a committee concerned with a conservative reform of education." But the invitation promised adequate time for independent research, and Russell, quite characteristically, concluded "my wish is to accept, but not if doing so would be wicked" (letter of 30 Apr. 1937).

However, Buchanan, having soon thereafter left the University of Chicago for a Maryland college, corresponded no further with Russell. The COTLA job offer was officially withdrawn. Only in January 1938 did Russell again hear from a University of Chicago spokesman. Aware that Russell had been somewhat brusquely treated, Professor Richard P. McKeon of the Department of Philosophy now wrote "in the hope that we shall be able to find the means to persuade you to come to Chicago."⁵ Further clarifying COTLA's function to examine the role of philosophy in liberal art curricula, McKeon in effect asked his permission to recommend Russell directly to University President Robert Maynard Hutchins for consideration for a COTLA seat and as an informal speaker in the Department of Philosophy.

⁴Letter to Warder Norton, 25 Dec. 1936. Russell's letters to W.W. Norton are in the Columbia University Library, with copies in the Russell Archives.

⁵Richard P. McKeon to Russell, 20 Jan. 1938. All correspondence between Russell and McKeon courtesy of Professor McKeon.

To this renewed interest in his services Russell responded "... I should very much like to be connected with the University of Chicago, however informally" (letter to McKeon, 5 Feb. 1938). McKeon answered with obvious satisfaction that, although the COTLA post was no longer a possibility, a visiting professorship of philosophy was now open for the 1938-1939 academic year. The \$7500 COTLA post salary could not be matched, but \$5000 was appropriated for this new philosophy position. Duties were to allow

a great portion of leisure for research or for outside lecturing if you wish; apart from meeting with a group of students for a seminar in some subject to be selected by you, and apart from occasional special lectures your time would be your own. (McKeon to Russell, 15 Mar. 1938)

Russell was happy to accept. He proposed conducting a seminar on "Words and Facts" and agreed to present an undergraduate philosophy course.

Now arrangements had to be undertaken for the move and some Chicago residence selected. Russell contacted McKeon for information concerning suitable lodgings:

I shall be accompanied by my wife and child, the latter now just one year old. I suppose it will be best for the child if we are some way out, where there would be fresher air. ... a very small apartment will do.... Economy is essential. (Letter of 24 Apr. 1938)

McKeon suggested, "It would be wise for you to spend at least the first few weeks in one of the apartment hotels not far from the University and near the lake" (McKeon to Russell, 7 May 1938). So, Atlantic passage was booked on the *Britannic*, and inquiries were made at The Plaisance, an eight-story residential hotel overlooking Jackson Park, site of the 1893 World's Fair. It was there at Stony Island Avenue and The Midway, a spacious parkway dividing the University area into two parts, that the Russells lived during their Chicago stay.

Officially his teaching responsibilities were to commence on October 3, 1938, but Russell, Patricia (Peter), and their infant Conrad reached New York on September 19. Their arrival occurred during one of the most grave periods of international affairs. Chamberlain and Hitler had begun negotiations finally leading to the September 29 Munich agreement. Controversy was inevitable, but in New York Russell told reporters that patient arbitration with Hitler--Chamberlain's diplomacy--was the only way to avoid war. Describing himself as "an extreme pacifist", he introduced themes to be enlarged upon during his time in Chicago:

I am afraid war would do an extraordinary amount of harm to the world.... Even if we win, after the war I am afraid we would be just as mad as Hitler is. You go into such a thing believing that you are going to accomplish something, but you get so angry

that all proportion is lost.⁶

Having travelled the 900 miles westward from New York, the Russells at last arrived at the University. What they encountered was not totally new since Russell had included Chicago on his American lecture tours and had spoken before a University of Chicago audience in 1924 and even as early as 1914. Founded in 1891, the University had origins in the philanthropy of John D. Rockefeller. In intellectual stature and physical size the institution quickly grew. Approximately 12,500 students were enrolled in 1938-1939. The campus is architecturally noted for its gray limestone buildings in English Gothic style, a feature perhaps (though not necessarily) reminding Russell of his beloved Cambridge.

Russell was highly complimentary of the scholarship of his new academic home as these excerpts from his correspondence indicate:

This University, as far as philosophy is concerned, is about the best I have ever come across. (*Auto.*, II, p. 379; Russell to Gilbert Murray, 15 Jan. 1939)

I am quite sure that Chicago University is better than either Oxford or Cambridge.⁷

Yet he was well aware of a powerful division in the Department of Philosophy. In retrospect he maintained President Hutchins not only to have been "occupied with the Hundred Best Books" but "with the attempt to force neo-Thomism on the philosophical faculty" (*Auto.*, II, p. 332). Although the precise plans of Hutchins literally to pack the Department remain in dispute, he was known as an ardent supporter of Neo-Thomist thought and to have at least encouraged its representation within the University. By 1938-1939 the Department can be said to have divided into two parts--those professors more friendly toward historical studies, notably in the Platonic, Aristotelian, and medieval traditions, and involved in all the customary fields of philosophical endeavour, perhaps best represented by Richard McKeon; and those inspired by the logical work of Whitehead, Russell, and the early Wittgenstein to limit theorizing to fields such as mathematics, epistemology, and the philosophy of science, with the most prominent figure being Rudolf Carnap who had joined the faculty in 1936.

In both his undergraduate and seminar classes Russell was an enthusiastic teacher. Each was a two-part course meeting over the autumn and winter quarters. For Philosophy 237-238, the undergraduate course titled "Problems of Philosophy", he presented one weekly lecture on Monday

⁶*New York Times*, 20 Sept. 1938, p. 7.

⁷Quoted in Ronald W. Clark, *The Life of Bertrand Russell* (New York: Knopf, 1976), p. 464; cited as letter, Russell to W.B. Curry, April-May 1939.

mornings in the auditorium of the Oriental Institute. In preparing a suggested reading list for this introductory course, Russell chose eight works representing a vision of philosophy's development from traditional speculation to contemporary analytical thought. On this list were Plato, *Theaetetus*, Descartes, *Meditations on the First Philosophy* (Meds. I and II); Berkeley, *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*, Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Book I); Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*; Mach, *Analysis of Sensations*; Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*; and Carnap, *Philosophy and Logical Syntax*. Other than attending lectures and partaking of the readings, all that was required of students was a paper whose assignment read:

Answer in about 2000-3000 words the following three questions on the Principle of Causality:

1. Formulate the principle in clear and precise language, both in its traditional and in its scientific form.
2. What reasons, if any, are there for believing it to be true?
3. What is its bearing on the construction of an objective space and time?⁸

About 150 students registered in "Problems of Philosophy" during the autumn quarter. Owing to the increasing difficulty of the material, the winter enrollment decreased somewhat. There were, however, numerous unofficial listeners attending the lectures, perhaps the most faithful being Peter Russell who was noted for regularly occupying a front row seat. Something of the course's character and Russell's teaching style can be gathered from this series of students' recollections:

He was low-keyed and treated his audience as participants in an interesting inquiry. He had, of course, a keen, almost sly sense of humor, which was well-sprinkled into the lectures. (Walter J. Rockler to Slezak, 30 July 1974)

... the blackboard was frequently used. After the lectures Bertrand Russell remained to answer questions, which he did in an open and relaxed manner. (John A. Stern to Slezak, 1 July 1974)

He had ... a remarkable ability to make the ancient Greek philosophers come alive... I think Dr. Russell expected us to read them in original Greek, and I remember his seeming disappointed when it turned out that most of us were unable to do so. (George I. Blanksten to Slezak, 20 Sept. 1974)

I do recall that he did not speak in jargon, that he had a most warm smile and that I came away with the impression of a very gentle person, who did not pontificate and who enjoyed his lecturing. (Morris H. Cohen to Slezak, 4 Aug. 1974)

⁸The authors are indebted to Harlan M. Smith for supplying a copy of this reading list and paper assignment.

... his course [consisted of] a careful analysis of the major philosophers, carrying each one's basic thoughts and concepts to the ultimate limit. In this manner he destroyed one system after another reducing them to absurdities.... It was not the purpose of his course to add another philosophy to be destroyed. (Jerome E. Moberg to Slezak, 30 July 1974)

I remember one time during his lectures his false teeth became loose; the noise clattering in the microphone. Without batting an eye, he stepped aside, and in full view of the audience fitted them back in, took a swallow of water, and finished his sentence. (William Earle to Slezak, 14 June 1974)

Philosophy 431-432, the seminar titled "Words and Facts", was highly important to Russell for two reasons. Firstly, he remembered

It was an extraordinarily delightful seminar.... Carnap and Charles Morris used to come to it, and I had three pupils of quite outstanding ability--Dalkey, Kaplan, and Copilowish [now Copi]. We used to have close arguments back and forth, and succeeded in genuinely clarifying points to our mutual satisfaction, which is rare in philosophical argument. (*Auto.*, II, pp. 331-2)

Secondly, it was part of the creative process leading to Russell's 1940 William James Lectures at Harvard University published later that year as *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*. In this work's preface the growth of his ideas was reviewed:

In 1938 I treated part of the subject in a course of lectures on 'Language and Fact' at the University of Oxford. These lectures formed the basis for seminar courses at the University of Chicago in 1938-9 and the University of California at Los Angeles in 1939-40. The discussions at the two seminars did much to widen my conception of the problems involved and to diminish the emphasis which I originally placed on the linguistic aspects of the subject.... More especially at Chicago ... the discussions were models of fruitful argumentative co-operation.⁹

The seminar met for two hours on Thursday evenings. But a site for the class became a problem at its first meeting, as Irving Copi explained:

Norman Dalkey, Abe Kaplan, and I went early to the seminar room ... but we were not able to approach it very closely because of the crowd of people. Word came that it was being moved to a larger room. We scooted over there to find quite a large room containing an enormous oval table. But alas, not enough room to hold the swarm of people trying to enter. After the crowd proved too large for the ordinary but large classroom that was tried next, the "seminar" was finally held--that night and the rest of the time during which Russell was in residence--in one of the largest auditoriums in the University! (Letter to Slezak, 19 Aug. 1974)

Kaplan and Copi had hoped to greet Russell on this first evening with a limerick of their own composition:

Discouraged from saving the masses,
Defamed for depraving the lasses,
He kicked off his traces,
Came here--of all places--
Where he's teaching this class--
of all classes!

We felt that it captured the social reformer, the unconventional moralist, and the logician in one brief, irreverent doggerel. Anticlimatically, it must be reported that when we wrote it on the blackboard at the front of the room in which Russell's seminar met, just before his entry, his response was disappointing. Perhaps because he was not wearing the correct spectacles, perhaps because he was too preoccupied with what he was going to say, he saw only that his blackboard was not clear, and without reading what was there, he simply erased it!

The seminar, however, was a serious philosophical enterprise. "Several hundred townspeople, including housewives and businessmen, as well as scholars from the University ... and a sprinkling of physicists, chemists and biologists,"¹⁰ in addition to the relatively small number of registered students, attended with regularity. Perhaps the format of the course can best be understood from these reminiscences:

At each session, he would present the principal contents of each chapter [of the future *Inquiry*] and then conduct a discussion open to all present.... (Francis H. Dowley to Slezak, 23 Dec. 1974)

Although each part of his teaching was clear enough, the course depended upon a full assimilation and retention of careful arguments. Each conclusion (always tentative) became the premise for the next, more complicated analysis. (Rockler to Slezak, 13 Aug. 1974)

With several eminent philosophers always in attendance, a strong sense of group participation developed. The most powerful encounters were those between Russell and Carnap. Professor Charles W. Morris reported that

Carnap and I acted somewhat as devil's advocates in raising questions in terms of our own positions. But Russell was brilliant and masterly in reply and the three of us had sufficient in common to make the discussion a genuine "inquiry" and not a "confrontation." It was indeed an event. (Letter to Slezak, 17 May 1974)

Carnap himself recalled that "Russell had the felicitous ability to create an atmosphere in which every participant did his best to contribute to the common task."¹¹ While the two men surely knew the merits of tolerance and skept-

¹⁰Norman Dalkey to Gary Slezak, 11 Oct. 1974.

¹¹*The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1963), p. 35.

⁹*An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962), p. 7.

ticism in argument, it is yet difficult not to understand the seminar, at least in part, as a kind of philosophical war of Russell's mode of analysis versus logical positivism as represented by Carnap. Having studied under both men, Irving Copi gives this revealing picture of their interaction:

I remember Carnap showing me the most prized volume in his personal library: a bound sheaf of papers on which Russell almost twenty years earlier had copied out in his own hand the major propositions of *Principia Mathematica* to send to the unknown young man in Germany who could not find a copy of that enormous and expensive work. On that occasion Carnap spoke so warmly and enthusiastically of Russell's genius and generosity, that I made a serious effort to eliminate or at least to diminish the tension between the two great men. I told Russell of what great esteem and affection Carnap had for him, and how he treasured those pages he had in Russell's own writing. I remember Russell being touched, and reminiscing about the time at which he had prepared the material for Carnap. Apparently it had been during the ruinous inflation shortly after the end of World War I, a time when, as Russell remarked, "there was probably not enough money in all Germany to pay for the set of books!" Despite my best efforts, however, no real rapprochement took place, though each was unfailingly courteous to the other whenever their paths crossed. (Letter to Slezak, 19 Aug. 1974)

But the seminar presented lighter moments as well. One student offered the following anecdote as an example:

Russell was dealing with an analysis of negative assertions in relation to their referents in the external world. He had spent considerable time explaining that negatives have no basis in the "facts" of the world, but were concepts of the mind needed to express our judgments about things. He used several examples, mostly witty ones, to clarify his explanation. In the case of the use of "neither-nor," he said, in effect, that when we say, "The animal is neither a cat nor a dog," there is no such creature in nature. After the lecture, it was customary for Russell to hold a relaxed question and answer period.... An elderly gentleman, a kind of perennial attendant at campus meetings, regularly sat in one of the front rows. He sat on the edge of his seat and apparently followed the lecture with close attention. After the lecture had lasted about two hours and the questions were just about exhausted, the elderly gentleman with obvious seriousness and a loud voice asked, "Lord Russell, if that animal you talked about was neither a cat nor a dog, then what was it?" With that Russell just beamed with amusement, everybody laughed, and spontaneously decided it was time to leave. (Robert M. Johnson to Slezak, 27 Aug. 1974)

Soon after the autumn quarter began the Russells held informal Thursday evening gatherings at The Plaisance for graduate students. These "at-homes" were known for fine conversation, good jokes, and excellent whiskey. Each evening had a character of its own as suggested by these

two accounts of different "at-homes":

The group soon divided into two parts, those clustered about Mr. Russell, talking chiefly about logic, and those about his wife, a dashing tall redhead many decades his junior, who talked most of the time about relations between the sexes. It was a difference between propositions and propositioning. The conversation on both sides of the room was lively, but I think most of us felt that Russell was uncomfortable. Someone mentioned Aristotle, and Russell asked: "Did he discover the syllogism?" and when we all nodded and said yes he did, Russell tried to bring the house down by adding, "Well, that is enough for me!"--which would have done beautifully at Oxford or Cambridge, but which produced not even one snicker in Chicago. Russell appeared a little crestfallen and shortly changed the subject to Bernard Shaw, whom he evidently disliked intensely. (George Kimball Plochmann to Slezak, 31 May 1974)

I remember at one of them Russell showed us how he used to beat out the rhythm as coxswain of the crew at Trinity (Cambridge) almost fifty years earlier. He perched himself on one arm of the couch, his feet on the cushions, and bobbing forward and backward, his face even redder than usual, making his long hair look even whiter, he loudly intoned: "By the HOLY left leg of the HOLY Lamb of God--*STROKE!*" There was much hilarity and warmth.... (Copi to Slezak, 19 Aug. 1974)

Faculty and students of other departments also came to know Russell outside the classroom. An item in *The Pulse* (Nov. 1938, p. 27), a University newspaper, gives an idea of how popular he became on campus:

... Bertrand Russell ... has been delivering from ten to twenty speeches a week and always receives top billing. Because he will talk on anything, from pacifism and free love to symbolic logic, Russell is in demand for a corresponding range of occasions, good-naturedly accepts [sic] almost any invitation.

He was to be found lunching with residents in a dormitory, or at the Beta Theta Pi fraternity followed by a group visit to a local bar, in the receiving line of a prom, or as a guest on two nationally broadcast University radio programs.¹² Russell's busy schedule even allowed time for a brief trip to Cleveland to address the February 1939 meeting of the National Association of High School Principals.¹³ Many area residents might have best recalled seeing the Russells walking about with Conrad in a carriage. Two such memories are worth noting:

... during a chilly fall day with a biting wind sweeping down the

¹²These items are found respectively in: *The Pulse*, 8 Feb. 1939, p. 3; Earle to Slezak, 31 May 1974; *Daily Maroon*, 16 Feb. 1939, p. 2; for the broadcasts see *Taming Economic Power* (1938) and *Is Security Increasing?* (1939), two pamphlet transcripts published by the University of Chicago.

¹³See "Bertrand Russell on Education for Democracy", in *Elementary School Journal*, 39 (April 1939), 564-7.

Midway, Russell was pushing a baby buggy. His face was red from the wind, his pipe gripped between his teeth, his hat clamped firmly on the top of his head, and his hands stuffed deep into the pockets of his topcoat. He occasionally gave the buggy a nudge with his stomach and the buggy rolled ahead until he caught up to give it another push. Apparently it was his way of amusing the baby and enjoying the walk himself. (Johnson to Slezak, 27 Aug. 1974)

My most vivid recollection of Bertrand Russell is looking out of my third floor window in Hitchcock Hall on Sunday morning and seeing the unmistakable figure of the venerable philosopher pushing a baby buggy down the sidewalk across from Stagg Field. In view of Russell's later concern for the consequences of man's learning how to split the atom, there is something strangely ironic in remembering him in that role at the very site where that historic event took place a few years later. (E.F. Schietinger to Slezak, 1 June 1974)

Perhaps typical of his visits to relatively small groups was a November talk before the University of Chicago Chapel Union. The co-chairperson of this organization wrote, "He acted as though there was no where else he would rather be than at our meeting!" (Beth Sheffel to Slezak, 29 July 1974)

He made a special appearance in an introductory physical science class to speak on "Physics and Philosophy". "Determinism in Physics" was the subject of another lecture presented at a combined session of the American Physical Society and the Physics Club of Chicago (*Daily Maroon*, 30 Sept. 1938, p. 7). But such representative scientific or philosophical topics were overshadowed by Russell's pronounced interest in putting forth his views on the current international scene. One student remembers such a lecture

... on the fall of Czechoslovakia, with students and faculty hanging from every rafter in Mandel Hall, and being much stirred. Afterwards, I happened to be standing on the steps of Lexington Hall when he passed, and since I wanted to write it up for *Pulse* I called to ask him if he could answer a couple of questions on points I was unclear about. He was, as usual, on his hurried way somewhere; rather than stop he simply reached into his coat-pocket pulled out his notes for the lecture, handed them to me, and went on with hardly a break in stride. (George C. McElroy to Slezak, 11 Aug. 1974)

Other lectures on political topics included "Pacifism" and "How Can We Meet the Fascist Threat of War?".¹⁴ Serious though his lectures were, Russell's personal style of humour created a friendly atmosphere for his listeners. For example, in the introductory comments of his talk at a banquet of the University's Sociology Club he asserted:

¹⁴*Daily Maroon*, 11 Nov. 1938, p. 5. and 11 Jan. 1939, p. 1, respectively.

I have been speaking a fair amount and I have become quite adept at talking on subjects of which I am completely ignorant, and I gather that is what is expected of me tonight. I want, first of all, before I embark upon my remarks, to make it perfectly clear to you that I am not a social scientist, and I am speaking as an ignoramus. But, now, having made this statement, I will assume the prophetic mantle.¹⁵

Power: A New Social Analysis was published in the autumn of 1938, and the University's Division of the Social Sciences engaged Russell to present a series of public lectures reviewing its contents. He remarked before the series began:

The way the world is developing shows the growing concentration of power in the world. Many people have become skeptical of democracy, but I haven't, which is why I think we should have a critical examination of power and its works. (*Daily Maroon*, 30 Sept. 1938, p. 7)

These four lectures--"The Psychology of Power", "Traditional and New Power", "The Relations of Military, Economic, and Propaganda Power", and "The Ethics of Power"--were given before overflow audiences. During the first, special loud-speakers had to be hastily installed for those unfortunate enough not to have found space in the auditorium.¹⁶

Another notable event, for which there are almost no records, was the February 1 debate between Russell and C.L.R. James, a Marxist historian. The question "Can Democracy Be Defended?" was positively argued by Russell while James assumed a negative stance, holding that the capitalist nations were turning to fascist forms of government to bolster their declining control of the working class. One member of the audience offered his view that

Mr. Russell maintained his usual manner in this debate, and was virtually cut to pieces rhetorically by his opponent. This is to say, the Communist representative ... brought an enormous passion to his argument which Russell did not match. (Rockler to Slezak, 13 Aug. 1974)

Russell, however, did counter James' criticism of the Western democracies with a memorable statement: "I do not know how much value there is in this debate but it would not be allowed in any totalitarian state, much less in Russia" (*Daily Maroon*, 2 Feb. 1938, p. 1).

Another eminent Chicago school, Northwestern University, twice provided Russell the opportunity to lecture before its faculty and students. Northwestern Professor Paul Arthur Schilpp, probably best known for his editorship of "The Library of Living Philosophers", made the

¹⁵"The Role of the Intellectual in the Modern World", *American Journal of Sociology*, 44 (Jan. 1939), pp. 491-2.

¹⁶For these lectures see *Daily Maroon*, 4-26 Oct. 1938.

formal arrangements for these talks given on November 29 and December 9. The first lecture, "Can Democracy Survive?", was presented at Orchestra Hall, home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. All seats were filled. Having been introduced by Schilpp, Russell began by outlining three factors affording faith that democracy could withstand the threats of authoritarian movements and nations:

First, dictatorships hold the seeds of destruction in themselves; second, the balance of forces is definitely against the authoritarian states; and third, the democratic peoples treasure their form of government too highly to give it up without a struggle. (*Daily Northwestern*, 30 Nov. 1938, p. 1)

His expectation was that the growing Fascist and Nazi domination of Europe would eventually end: "It is necessary to play a long game, and hope that with the passage of time internal events will occur which will cause these states to crumble." American isolationism tempered by trust of British diplomacy was urged. Russell's respect for Chamberlain's method of handling Hitler was evident throughout the lecture. Thus, to the question "Can Democracy Survive?" a cautious yes was answered. Of this lecture Schilpp has written:

The check for \$1,000 which ... I was entrusted to give to him was out of all proportion to what he gave his audience. I swear that he had never given that lecture a single thought until he got up on his feet. All the way through he played to the galleries, moving them to laughter or tears, as he pleased. But the audience just loved it and seemed sure that they had gotten much more than their money's worth. It was one of the best illustrations to me that even the great Lord Russell was not beyond stooping to conquer.¹⁷

Following the success of his Orchestra Hall lecture, the next month Russell visited the Evanston campus of Northwestern to speak on "The Philosophy of Power". The site was Fisk Hall's auditorium; tickets were priced at 35¢; again a capacity crowd greeted Russell.

These Northwestern lectures solidified Russell's friendship with Schilpp. But Russell's involvement in "The Library of Living Philosophers" dated from a visit by Schilpp to The Plaisance:

It was on this occasion that I sprang the idea of a volume on his philosophy in our Library of Living Philosophers series on him and secured his consent and cooperation. Most of the evening's conversation was shop-talk, concerning itself with this project therefore. As over against my later experiences with Einstein and Radhakrishnan, Lord Russell was not at all bashful or reluctant. He immediately took to the idea of a volume on him in our Library

and agreed not merely to fullest cooperation, but carried this cooperation out that very evening by discussion with me in considerable length the philosophers around the world who might or should be invited to contribute essays to my projected Russell volume.¹⁸

Besides an autobiographical sketch and the "Reply to Criticisms" published in 1944 in *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, he prepared essays for the Dewey and Santayana volumes appearing respectively in 1939 and 1940. Writing to Schilpp near the end of his Chicago stay in March 1939 on his essay "Dewey's New Logic", Russell explained he had "only just managed to get it finished before leaving for California. It has been done under difficult circumstances and is much less good than I could wish."¹⁹ But Schilpp pronounced it an "excellent manuscript" (letter to Russell, 13 March 1939), subsequently inviting Russell's participation in other volumes to which, except for the Santayana, he unfortunately did not choose to contribute.

To some extent foreign affairs troubled everyone during late 1938 and early 1939. At times even Russell would meditate pessimistically: "Day by day we move into an increasingly horrible world."²⁰ War was thought so imminent by the British that, among other precautions, gas masks had been distributed to the London population. A great relief was widely experienced when to many the problem of Czechoslovakia seemed finally solved. But debate immediately ensued whether Munich had been a timely and realistic compromise, a militarily disastrous sellout or an agreement too immoral for good men to bear. Russell's attitude was problematic as his obvious contempt for Nazi values and methods conflicted with a sense that perhaps any development was preferable to a renewal of large-scale European war. However, if his personal brand of pacifism appealed to some within the University community, general American opinion increasingly condemned the settlement as the Nazis gradually asserted control over all Czechoslovakia in defiance of the Munich agreement. Of course Russell himself finally abandoned his earlier stance, but it must not be forgotten that he was once a supporter of appeasement.

Ironically, Eduard Beneš, who had resigned as Czechoslovak President in October 1938, followed Russell to the University of Chicago as a history lecturer. Both men were called to speak before organizations concerned with the international situation. One such noteworthy group was the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, before

¹⁸Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁹Russell to P.A. Schilpp, 13 March 1939. Schilpp's "Library of Living Philosophers" correspondence is housed in the Southern Illinois University Library, Carbondale, with copies at McMaster.

²⁰*Auto.*, II, p. 343, quoting a letter to Dora Sanger, 5 Nov. 1938.

¹⁷"Some Recollections of Bertrand Russell, 1872-1970", *Journal of Thought*, 6 (April 1971), p. 69. Professor Schilpp assures the authors that this figure--seemingly too high for 1938--is correct.

whose December 11 Palmer House meeting Russell courageously put forth views in support of Munich. Introduced by Adlai Stevenson,²¹ Russell developed an argument whose force was founded on the assumption "if war had come it would have meant the end of civilization for Europe." Some defenders of Munich believed it allowed France and especially Britain the needed time to strengthen their weak defence against a German attack. But Russell saw the delay of war, to the extent that it might have been inevitable, as a boon for another reason: "If the pact of Munich only postponed the war, it is defensible on that ground alone. It is possible that the war fears of today may be dissolved. Perhaps the present era of militarism will pass without another worldwide conflict" (*Chicago Tribune*, 11 Dec. 1938, p. 2).

Indeed, during his first week in Chicago Russell had blasted the German dictator: "Hitler is definitely worse than anything found in England or France.... Hitler is a megalomaniac" (*Daily Maroon*, 30 Sept. 1938, p. 7). His scorn for Nazism was to be expected. What troubled Russell's critics, and most of us today, was his unwillingness to support military checks against actual or threatened aggression. But if Russell's public position on the Munich settlement was only a development of opinions given in his 1936 book *Which Way to Peace?*, privately he was by no means certain what to believe. Katharine Tait, his daughter, has recently expressed the heart of Russell's problem:

It was agony for him to be out of England, powerless to affect events, with two children behind to face the danger of war. He felt his pacifism crumbling as he contemplated the devastation of his country and listened to callous comments of uninvolved Americans.²²

In the end, only Germany's blatant September 1939 attack of Poland reconciled Russell's mind, like so many others', to armed resistance to Hitler.

The University's winter quarter ended on March 17, and, according to Russell's contract, his visiting professorship came to an end. These six months had been philosophically, personally, and economically profitable. The city of Chicago itself might not have realized his urban ideals, but the University of Chicago had proved to be a center of learning in which Russell could feel at home. His wish probably was to be offered a renewal of the visiting professorship, but such an arrangement did

²¹Stevenson's introduction (with a reproduction of his MS) is in *The Papers of Adlai E. Stevenson, Vol. I: Beginnings of Education, 1900-1941*, ed. Walter Johnson and Carol Evans (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), p. 406.

²²*My Father Bertrand Russell* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p. 131.

not come to pass. No invitation to remain in the Department was extended.

It could not have been an issue of "publish or perish" as Russell continued to produce the usual assortment of writings. Prominent, though only a short essay, was his contribution to the *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*,²³ a work including essays by Carnap, John Dewey, Niels Bohr, Hans Reichenbach, and other celebrated philosophers and scientists, and for which Russell served on an advisory committee. Nearly sixty-seven, Russell was a physically active man and, as has been seen, an enthusiastic teacher. He had met all academic responsibilities gladly, enjoyed a sizeable following within the University, and had participated in numerous University functions. Perhaps the correct explanation of why Russell was not reappointed is that of Professor McKeon, the man who had done most to bring Russell to the University:

According to the statutes of the University 1939 professors were retired when they reached the age of 65. In exceptional cases their appointments were extended to the age of 68. We recommended that Russell be appointed for a second year, but 1939-1940 would have carried him beyond the statutory limitation, and the Board of Trustees voted that the recommendation could not be granted. This limitation was changed after the war, and emeritus professors may now be reappointed on one year contracts beyond that age. (Letter to Slezak, 21 Jan. 1975)

From this account, only the point of advanced age was involved in the decision. This may well have been the case, though some may believe the age issue alone did not decide his fate; after all, he did not turn 68 until May 18, 1940.

Russell himself observed, "President Hutchins ... naturally did not much like me, and when the year for which I had been engaged came to an end was, I think, glad to see me go" (*Auto.*, II, p. 332). Disapproval from such high administrators, as well as doctrinal disputes within the Department of Philosophy, may have been involved. Moreover, Russell's manner of political radicalism and pacifism was not widely welcomed and must have been a source of alienation for some. It cannot, however, be definitely claimed that disenchantment with Russell's philosophical or non-philosophical opinions, rather than the question of age, was the cause of his departure from the University. Here, note can only be taken of one or two factors which could conceivably have played a part. Why Russell was not granted an extension is simply a problem on which little information is available. While recalling that the original invitation had been for only two quarters, one must, with reasonable reservations, be satisfied with the more or less official version offered by McKeon.

²³"On the Importance of Logical Form", *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, I, no. 1 (July 1938), 39-41.

Thus Russell and his family left the University of Chicago. With the prospect of another position at the University of California, he was corresponding from that state by March 20. En route eastward in 1941, Russell briefly returned to Chicago to attend a reception in his honor at the University. Having arrived in 1938 on September 29, the day of the signing of the Munich agreement, this 1941 visit to Chicago occurred on another infamous day, December 7.²⁴ Perhaps Russell's negative image of Chicago can be partially attributed to his coincidental presence in that city on these unforgettable dates. This may well have contributed toward his terse conclusion that Chicago was a "beastly" place.

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²⁴In a letter dated 24 Aug. 1975 to Slezak, Charner Perry writes that he "remember[s] vividly, because of the memorable date, a large reception-tea-cocktail party which I arranged for him and his wife at Judson Court on December 7, 1941."