

“A LOVELORN ORPHAN IN A COLD WORLD”: BERTRAND RUSSELL’S 1931 NORTH AMERICAN LECTURE TOUR

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Bertrand Russell undertook an extended North American lecture tour in 1931 to raise funds for the Beacon Hill experimental school he operated with Dora Russell. To rectify the existing lack of scholarly analysis of the 1931 tour, this paper provides annotated transcriptions of twenty-eight letters Russell sent during the tour to Dora and to Patricia Spence, Russell’s mistress. These letters provide intriguing insights into the state of Russell’s financial and professional affairs and illuminate personal relationships he cultivated in the United States and Canada. Most importantly, they document his complex marital situation at this tumultuous juncture in his life before he decided to end his relationship with Dora early in 1932 in favour of Spence.

Beset by difficulties personal and financial, Bertrand Russell embarked on a two-month lecture tour of the United States and Canada in October 1931. His marriage to Dora Russell proved increasingly strained, primarily over Russell’s inability to treat Harriet Russell, Dora’s infant daughter fathered by another man, as his own. Russell’s relationship with Marjorie Spence—his children’s governess known as “Peter”—further complicated his domestic life, particularly after she became pregnant with Russell’s child during a

summer vacation in 1931. The Great Depression impacted his ability to earn income through his writings, and the experimental Beacon Hill School Russell and Dora had established in 1927 failed to attract enough students to be profitable. Indeed, funds to support Beacon Hill's operations were the primary motivation for him to undertake his North American lecture tour. He returned to England on 28 December 1931 having failed to address any of these issues, particularly the continuing status of his relationship with Peter. "I don't know yet what is going to happen," Russell subsequently informed his long-time confidante Ottoline Morrell, "but things must be decided soon. So many factors come in: not only personal and emotional ones, but financial prospects, the state of the world, and the future of education. It is difficult."¹

Although scholars have examined many aspects of Russell's activities in the interwar period in exhaustive detail, little attention has been paid to his North American tour in 1931. In his expansive biography of Russell, for example, Ronald Clark devotes a single sentence to the 1931 tour and only emphasizes his new promotional status as the third Earl Russell after the death of his brother in March 1931.² Similarly, Ray Monk allots fewer than two pages to a description of Russell's relationships with Dora and Peter during the tour, quoting from a limited selection of correspondence between Russell and Dora.³ Barry Feinberg and Ronald Kasrils provide another brief overview of his travels in the United States and Canada, consisting almost entirely of quotations taken from press reports of his lectures and debates (*BR* 1: 116–19). In his *Autobiography*, Russell himself failed to provide any account of the 1931 tour, preferring instead to curtly note that he was "profoundly unhappy" in this period. As a "more exact picture of my mood than anything I can now write in somewhat pale reminiscence", he printed "Christmas at Sea" at this point in his memoirs, a brooding, melancholic, and reflective essay written for the Hearst chain on 25 December 1931 during the Atlantic voyage back to England (*Auto*. 2: 156–8).

To overcome the lack of analysis of the 1931 lecture tour, this article provides annotated transcriptions of twenty-eight letters Russell wrote

¹ Russell to Morrell, 30 Dec. 1931, Bertrand Russell Archives, Rec. Acq. 69, box 2.69.

² CLARK, *The Life of Bertrand Russell* (1976), p. 434.

³ MONK, *Bertrand Russell: the Ghost of Madness, 1921–1970* (2000): 130–2.

to Dora and Peter during the tour found in the Russell Archives at McMaster University. Of the fourteen extant letters written in this period to Dora, only two (**Lets. 9, 21**) have previously been published in their entirety—by Nicholas Griffin in his *Selected Letters* collection (*SLBR* 2: #396, 398). The fourteen extant letters Russell wrote to Peter during the tour have never been published or cited, primarily because they were under an access and publication embargo until 2009. The letters to Peter are among the most detailed and informative of the tens of thousands of letters comprising his adult correspondence, and they, in concert with those Russell sent to Dora across the Atlantic, provide a compelling picture of his personal life and professional activities at a critical juncture of his life.

TOUR ITINERARY, SPEAKING THEMES, AND FINANCES

Detailed correspondence between Russell and William Feakins, his American lecture agent, related to the 1931 tour is not found in the Russell Archives, and it is unclear how many speaking engagements Feakins had secured for Russell before he left England on 18 October 1931. He noted on his arrival in New York that “the prospects of my tour are gloomy” (**Let. 3**), and extended periods without a lecture or debate were in evidence, including two trans-continental railway journeys between New York and California that were interrupted by a single lecture at the University of Oklahoma during Russell’s return to New York after speaking on the West Coast. He added several engagements in early December in the Mid-West because, according to him, of the increase in the price of grain, and he proved willing to speak on very short notice in Champaign, Illinois, on 8 December. Russell even seemed to act as his own impromptu scheduling agent in conducting a lecture at the Arcady Hotel in Los Angeles in exchange for accommodation. The table overleaf indicates the known speaking engagements during his tour. Although his formal commitments were not onerous, he emphasized repeatedly that he was nonetheless “appallingly busy” (**Let. 7**) because of the interviews and publicity campaigns conducted to support the lectures and debates on his schedule, and his itinerary in Toronto that he documented to Peter (**Let. 28**) certainly indicated that much of his time was accounted for outside of his lecture and debate commitments.

RUSSELL'S SPEAKING SCHEDULE, OCTOBER–DECEMBER 1931⁴

| Date | City | Venue | Topic |
|---------|---------------|------------------------------|---|
| 25 Oct. | Boston | Ford Hall | "What This Depression is Doing to Our Moral Standards" [lecture, n. 41] |
| 26 Oct. | Cambridge, MA | New Lecture Hall, Harvard U. | "The Relation of Logic to Psychology" [lecture, n. 41] |
| 1 Nov. | New York City | Mecca Temple | "Shall the State Rear Our Children?" [debate, n. 57] |
| 8 Nov. | San Francisco | KOA NBC Radio | Unidentified topic [radio lecture, n. 84] |
| 9 Nov. | San Francisco | Scottish Rite Hall | "Is Monogamy Doomed?" [debate, n. 85] |
| 12 Nov. | Los Angeles | Wilshire Ebell Theatre | "Is Monogamy Doomed?" [debate, n. 111] |
| 15 Nov. | Los Angeles | Arcady Hotel | "The Conquest of Happiness" [lecture, n. 90] |
| 16 Nov. | Los Angeles | Wilshire Ebell Theatre | "The International Outlook" [lecture, n. 111] |
| 17 Nov. | San Diego, CA | Unknown | "Is Monogamy Doomed?" [debate, n. 111] |
| 23 Nov. | Norman, OK | U. of Oklahoma | "The Scientific Outlook" [lecture, n. 118] |
| 27 Nov. | New York City | Central Opera House | "Is Proletarian Dictatorship the Road to Freedom?" [debate, n. 127] |
| 30 Nov. | Akron, OH | Jewish Center | "The International Outlook" [lecture, n. 133] |
| 1 Dec. | Cleveland | Euclid Avenue Temple | [The United States and Future World Wars] [lecture, n. 140] |
| 2 Dec. | Ann Arbor, MI | University of Michigan | "The Philosophy of Physics" [lecture, n. 142] |
| 5 Dec. | Detroit | Masonic Temple | "The Future of Civilization" [lecture, n. 158] |

⁴ Note numbers are to the footnotes below that cite newspaper reports of the tour debates or lectures concerned.

| | | | |
|---------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 8 Dec. | Champaign, IL | Champaign High School | “The Outlook for Civiliza- tion” [lecture, n. 151] |
| 9 Dec. | Unknown | Unknown | “Is Civilization Becoming Intolerable?” [lecture, Let. 26] |
| 10 Dec. | Jacksonville, IL | MacMurray College for Women | “The Outlook for Civiliza- tion” [lecture, n. 153] |
| 12 Dec. | Toronto, ON, Canada | Massey Hall | “The Sins of Civilization” [lecture, n. 164] |
| 14 Dec. | Reading, PA | Abraham Lin- coln Hotel | “Youth and Education” [lecture, n. 156] |
| 17 Dec. | New York City | Carnegie Hall | “Is Modern Morality a Failure?” [debate, n. 157] |

Based on press accounts, Russell addressed several themes in his debates and lectures.⁵ His debates focused primarily on social, ideological, and moral questions about which he had developed thorough and nuanced positions in his published writings, usually leading to convincing performances against his debate opponents. In his opening debate in New York City on 1 November, for example, Russell’s opponent, the novelist Sherwood Anderson, “took a thorough licking, morally, mentally, and physically”,⁶ as Russell developed a seven-point argument about the benefits of a boarding-school education that emphasized the removal of children from an over-protective urban home environment in favour of a natural educational setting where children were given “practical help without emotional intensity”⁷ by qualified teachers—the blueprint for Beacon Hill School itself. He occupied an equally strong rhetorical position in his three debates in California on the future of monogamy by relying on his established argument advocating open relationships found in *Marriage and*

⁵ Only one complete transcript of Russell’s speaking engagements is known. The debate with Jay Lovestone (n. 124) is fully documented with ticket leaflet, Russell’s ms. outline, and a professional stenographic transcript of the entire debate. See Rec. Acq. 1440a–b. An “advance statement” of Russell’s debate position on monogamy in San Diego on 17 November appeared as “Woman Leader to Preside at Russell Debate”, *San Diego Union and Daily Bee*, 15 Nov. 1931, p. 4.

⁶ “Sherwood Anderson, Novelist, Is Badly Beaten in Debate Due to Overdeveloped Stage Fright Case”, *San Bernardino Daily Sun*, 3 Nov. 1931, p. 1.

⁷ “Abolition of Family Debated by Authors”, *New York Times*, 2 Nov. 1931, p. 19.

Morals. His cause was certainly helped in debates held in Los Angeles and San Diego by the scandalous private life of his opponent, Rabbi Herman Lissauer, who was “desperately in love” with a married woman. “He defended monogamy against me in debates,” Russell informed Dora, “but very half-heartedly.... It was sad. I think he will end by suicide” (**Let. 18**). Even when he faced “a richly Red Communist crowd”⁸ in his debate in New York with Jay Lovestone, he steadfastly refuted the view that the Soviet Union was controlled by a proletarian dictatorship, building on the insight of his own trip to Russia in 1920 that had resulted in an increasingly hostile view of communism first articulated in *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism*.

In his tour lectures, Russell addressed several topics in a stand-alone fashion. These included engagements in Los Angeles on 15 November and in Norman, Oklahoma, on 23 November, respectively, examining “The Conquest of Happiness” and “The Scientific Outlook” that dealt with the subject matter of his two most recently published books of the same titles. At Harvard University, Russell delivered one of the more technical and scholarly lectures of his tour focusing on the relationship—or the lack thereof—of logic and psychology. “We can be unduly psychological in our interpretation of logic”, he informed a standing-room only crowd. He preferred to “keep logic pure by keeping it in a world by itself”, noting that the field “is concerned with a transformation of symbols, not with how people think.”⁹ Russell also dealt with the topic of early childhood education in his penultimate speaking engagement in Reading, Pennsylvania, on 14 December. He called for children to experience considerable freedom in an educational environment; “we can’t always be nagging at our children,” he explained, “any more than we can always be pulling out trees and plants expecting them to grow.” Echoing his argument from the New York debate on 1 November, he warned that “a great many children are ruined by conscientious mothers” who placed unrealistic expectations on their children. “We must make up our minds”, he emphasized, “to become used to the idea that our child won’t become President of the United States.”¹⁰

⁸ “Russell Faces a ‘Red’ Crowd”, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 29 Nov. 1931, p. 8.

⁹ “Psychology Not Needed for Logic, Russell Declares”, *The Harvard Crimson*, 27 Oct. 1931.

¹⁰ “Noise Better Than Quiet for Children, Says Russell”, *Reading Times*, 15 Dec. 1931, p. 1.

In more than half of his lectures, though, Russell addressed aspects of the international situation and the long-term prospects for modern civilization. Patriotism, in his view “the chief vice of the age”,¹¹ was the driving impulse of war and aggression. Russell believed that current Japanese belligerence in Manchuria would not lead to international conflict because the great powers had little interest in the region, but he forecast the possibility of future global wars that would, by comparison, make the First World War seem like a “pleasant picnic”,¹² result in the complete destruction of Western Europe, and feature the use of bacteriological weapons. If this prediction of multiple international conflicts proved correct, Russell informed his audience in Cleveland that the United States would ultimately descend into chaos with other established nations. But he emphasized that this grim prospect could ultimately be avoided by adopting two measures. First, the United States could use its economic and military might to establish a world government, “without which no civilization, especially of the industrial type, is able to progress.”¹³ This global political stability, Russell argued, could then, secondly, allow the world’s population to “forego its prejudices and temperamental desires” to build a new economic and social order—“a better and truer civilization which, for the first time in human history, will be enjoyed not only by the few, but by every human being alive.”¹⁴

In terms of Russell’s financial remuneration for the two-month lecture tour, he initially lamented that “I saw Feakins, and found the financial prospects even worse than I had expected” (**Let. 4**), but he later noted that his schedule had grown “fast and furious” (**Let. 27**) with the addition of new dates which improved his financial situation. On 3 December, Russell informed Dora that he had nearly earned the £2000 owed to Amy Otter (see n. 32) for the continued use of Telegraph House as the venue for Beacon Hill School—this sum was £500 more than the expected tour revenue he had forecast during the early weeks of the tour (see **Let. 11**). When he returned to England, Russell informed his lawyer, Crompton Llewelyn Davies, that Feakins had

¹¹ “Russell Assails Patriotism, Sees U.S. Domination”, *Akron Beacon Journal*, 1 Dec. 1931, p. 21.

¹² “Russell Sees War as ‘Darkest Sin’ He Tells Audience”, *The Globe*, Toronto, 14 Dec. 1931, p. 12.

¹³ “Civilization on Brink, Says Noted Briton”, *Urbana Daily Courier*, 9 Dec. 1931, p. 2.

¹⁴ “Russell Sees War as ‘Darkest Sin’ He Tells Audience”.

sent him a cheque for \$3,840.44. "With luck", Russell noted, "this should bring in slightly more than the balance due to Miss Otter."¹⁵ Based on the conversion rate from dollars to sterling, it would appear that other payments from Feakins were made during the tour, since £2000 would convert to between \$7,000 and \$8,000. Ultimately, therefore, the 1931 tour realized the bare minimum amount Russell needed to allow Beacon Hill School to survive, but these earnings were certainly well below the \$10,000 he pocketed during his 1927 American lecture tour (Monk, p. 93). These somewhat lacklustre earnings did not reflect the popular interest in many of Russell's speaking engagements. Although he indicated that he debated in "half-empty halls" (**Let. 18**) in Southern California, press accounts repeatedly indicated he spoke to large crowds in many cities.

RUSSELL'S TOUR CORRESPONDENCE AND INSIGHT INTO
HIS LIFE AND WORK

Russell's letters to Peter and Dora during the 1931 tour provide important new information for Russell scholars. They reinforce his reputation as one of the finest epistolarians of the twentieth century and convey his detailed thoughts about the various features of his tour and the people with whom he interacted. He made no secret of his extreme distaste for being required to cross the Atlantic to lecture. "I am always unhappy here" (**Let. 4**), Russell informed Peter immediately upon his arrival, noting subsequently that in America "a curious impersonal terror gets hold of me" (**Let. 7**). Financial concerns, of course, lay at the root of Russell's malaise. "I have been worried to death about money" (**Let. 20**), he lamented, and he repeatedly promised both Peter and Dora that he would never return to America again. Russell expressed his greatest personal satisfaction during the tour on his uninterrupted train journey from New York to San Francisco, but his time in California proved to be the low point of his travels. His long-standing penchant to comment in detail on the natural environment is again in evidence in his 1931 letters. Russell criticized the "inconceivably dull" (**Let. 10**) topography of the Great Plains before

¹⁵ Russell to Davies, 4 Jan. 1932, RA2 760. Russell also indicated that Herman Lissauer, who had organized the California leg of his tour, paid him \$700 less than he had originally contracted (see **Let. 18**).

praising the majestic ferry ride across San Francisco Bay—“as beautiful as anything I know in the world” (**Let. 12**). On his return journey to New York, he emphasized the splendour of Mexico during a visit arranged by Herman Lissauer and described in detail the dismal environment of an Arizona copper town, a place of greater misery than the most squalid area he visited during his trip to Russia in 1920.

Russell’s tour letters also document his interactions with a remarkable range of people. He renewed his contacts with many longstanding friends such as Alfred North Whitehead, Russell’s academic mentor at Cambridge University and former collaborator. In letters to both Peter and Dora, he provided a vivid portrait of the debauched lifestyle of Horace Liveright, the publisher of *Marriage and Morals*. Russell rubbed shoulders with individuals from all socio-economic sectors of American society, including a New York City taxi driver who after his marriage had “ceased to be a person” (**Let. 11**), Eleanor Wilson McAdoo, daughter of former US President Woodrow Wilson, and Ben Lindsey, the controversial Denver judge and juvenile justice reformer who had been disbarred for advocating companionate marriage. Russell continued the promiscuous behaviour that he had practised on his previous American lecture tours with lovers both fleeting and enduring. Rhoda Rypins—“a completely candid person of promiscuous temperament” (**Let. 10**)—provided considerable physical and emotional support to Russell while he stayed with her in New York, and he continued to develop his relationship with Miriam Brudno, the Cleveland bookseller who played a significant role in his life for more than two decades after they met during his 1929 lecture tour. Russell also had a two-day liaison in Iowa Falls with a previously unknown woman in his life, Helen MacLeod Fiske, apparently over Peter’s explicit objection. “I know you told me you would never forgive me if I did,” Russell confessed, but “I should have been needlessly unkind if I had not gone, and I liked her very much” (**Let. 26**).

Of greatest importance, Russell’s tour letters demonstrate the remarkably complex and fluid nature of his personal relationships with Dora and Peter. Two unexpected factors weighed heavily on him while he was in North America. First, within days of his arrival, Peter informed him that she had suffered a miscarriage. Dora would later claim that Peter had actually procured an abortion (Monk, p. 131), but Russell consistently maintained in his tour correspondence that it was a miscarriage, despite a peculiar reference in one letter (see n. 97).

Russell initially proved to be exceptionally solicitous as he comforted Peter, promising that they would immediately and deliberately attempt to conceive again. “You needn’t think I shall revert to not wanting children,” he reassured her, since “having once let instinct loose, I can’t bottle it up again” (**Let. 10**). Yet he also repeatedly indicated that the miscarriage might have been the best short-term outcome, since it eased his financial situation and would allow Peter to return to Oxford to complete her undergraduate education. The second factor complicating Russell’s domestic affairs was the unexpected news that Griffin Barry sought to claim paternity of Harriet Russell and Dora’s expected child whom he had fathered during the summer of 1931 at the same time Russell and Peter had conceived their now-miscarried baby. This irritant, he informed Peter, could be removed if Dora decided that she wanted to live with Barry and if Barry assumed financial responsibility for his children, but Russell also admitted to Dora that he would “feel maimed” (**Let. 21**) if she pursued this course of action and disentangled herself from his life.

All of these interrelated issues—professional, financial, and personal—demonstrate that Russell stood at a crossroads in his life at the end of 1931. Existing scholarship tends to portray Russell’s relationship with Dora in an irreparable state of decay and his ties to Peter inevitably deepening at this time. Yet these tour letters convincingly demonstrate that Russell remained conflicted about the direction he should follow, and he admitted to Ottoline Morrell during the tour that “the future is all vague”.¹⁶ In fact, the balance of evidence in the letters indicates that he might have even tilted in the direction of trying to salvage his relationship with Dora. In the last few weeks of the tour, Russell informed Peter that he had longstanding concerns that she might leave him to marry a younger man and that “it would be a mistake to build on the assumption that our relations were permanent” (**Let. 20**). In the same letter, he also complained of Peter’s “occasional cruelty”, a sentiment reinforced in his “Private Memoirs” where Russell claims she “became prone to hysterical outbursts of hatred against him” (*SLBR* 2: 303) after the miscarriage. Russell subsequently told Dora that he wanted a permanent relationship with her; “I had some grievances some time back,” he claimed, “but I have none now” (**Let. 21**). Russell continued to move in this direction after he

¹⁶ Russell to Morrell, 11 Nov. 1911, RA3 69, box 2.69.

returned to England but, ultimately, decided to reverse course and cast his lot with Peter. Dora’s increasingly inflexible attitude towards Peter’s presence at Telegraph House combined with the birth of her and Griffin Barry’s son, Roderick, convinced Russell to abruptly inform Dora that their marriage should end:

Giving you pain is very difficult to me. But I know that my best hope of happiness lies in what is virtually marriage with Peter, with children if possible. I have come to care for her more and more, and lately I have become persuaded that she can be happy with me in spite of the difference of age. For the sake of the children it may be wise to be divorced if the law allows.... This letter is very stark, but as you know it is hard for me to say things that will hurt. What I have said in this letter is my stable conviction, though there have been moods when loyalty to the past overwhelmed me. But now I have become convinced that it is no longer good either for you or me to let our lives be dominated by this kind of loyalty.

(3 April 1932, *SLBR* 2: #404)

Russell’s 1931 tour letters to Dora and Peter printed below are faithful transcriptions of the original correspondence located in the Russell Archives, including abbreviated names, spelling of names, emphases, deletions, punctuation, capitalization, and letterhead. Any errors made by him are noted in the annotations, which also provide thorough commentary on the individuals and events described by Russell. At least one letter he wrote during the tour is lost—the “beastly little letter” to Peter dated 28 November referenced in **Let. 20**. Russell frequently discusses material found in letters to him written by Dora and Peter while he was in North America, but most of these letters are not extant, and some of his allusions to their contents cannot be explained. A single letter from Peter to Russell during the tour dated 4 December is found in the Russell Archives; it was sent to William Feakins in New York, and he likely refers to it as the “sad letter” identified in **Let. 28**. Dora’s 22 October letter to Russell is available (see n. 65), but no other letters from Dora to which he refers were located; these include the 27 October letter referenced in **Let. 11**, the two letters Russell received in Los Angeles referenced in **Let. 18**, the three letters he received in Oklahoma referenced in **Let. 19**, and the multiple letters Dora sent about the legal status of her children with Griffin Barry referenced in **Let. 21**. Three extant letters from Dora

dated 25 and 27 November and 1 December were sent to New York and forwarded to Russell's attention in Toronto, but he would have received these after he wrote his final letter to Dora before returning to England. Similarly, Dora wrote extant letters dated 4, 8 and 10 December to him in care of Feakins that he would have received in New York before his tour ended.

Letter 1 *To Dora Russell*

NORDDEUTSCHER LLOYD BREMEN D. "BREMEN"

Monday 19.10.31

My Darling

It was painful parting from you and the children yesterday. I saw that both you and Kate were sad, whereas John remained as merry as a cricket.¹⁷ That is a form of reserve on his part, I think.

This boat is a wonder,¹⁸ and the weather is to match. There is bright sun, and it is so warm that one can sit in the wind without a coat. In my state-room the sun shines in through the open window. I have never before travelled in such luxury. The people on the boat tumble over each other to serve me when they find I can speak German. I have not yet spoken to any of the passengers except one Jew¹⁹ who says he met me once 10 years ago, and was gazing at my photograph in a book when I came upon him. I have my meals at a table to myself, and sleep and rest.

The Youngs²⁰ sent me a telegram of good wishes; it was the only thing I

¹⁷ Russell refers to his two children with Dora, John Conrad Russell (1921–1987) and Katharine Jane Russell (1923–).

¹⁸ Launched in 1928 and completing its maiden transatlantic voyage in 1929, the *Bremen* was a famed high-speed passenger liner commissioned by the German shipping company Norddeutscher Lloyd. The *Bremen* was destroyed by arson in 1941 while docked at Bremerhaven.

¹⁹ A peculiar feature of Russell's 1931 tour letters to Dora and Peter is his frequent identification that an individual he met was a Jew or groups of people with whom he interacted were Jews—in addition to the reference here, see **Lets. 2, 7, 10, 12, 13, 15, 18, 19, 21, and 26**. These references are not pejorative, and Russell had long-standing friendships with many Jews and ties to the Jewish community, including writing 55 articles for the *Jewish Daily Forward* between 1926 and 1930. He gave an extensive interview during the tour on the subject of the Jews (see Brainen, "State Can Stamp Out Anti-Semitism" [B&R E31.18]). Russell also wrote forcefully in 1941 about the need to combat even casual anti-Semitism: "For example, if you are at a party where someone begins to disparage the Jews, or any other race, do not let them get away with it. Remember that it is from such small beginnings that terrible persecutions grow" (RUSSELL, "On Keeping a Wide Horizon", *Papers* 10: 456).

²⁰ These individuals cannot be identified. Miss Anne Young—who lived near Telegraph House (see n. 32)—had sent a letter of condolence to Russell in March 1931

got on the boat.

I hope you won't wear yourself out electioneering,²¹ and that after that you will rest as much as you can. D.V.²² there should be a quiet time while I am away. At any rate all is well as regards money.

I wish we had thought of having you and the children come to Cherbourg. I did not know the boat called there, but the children would have enjoyed it and you could have got back next day.

If anything happens on the boat, I will continue this letter. Much love.

Your

B.

Wednesday. I have come across the author and producer of *Young Woodley*.²³ The latter, tell Mrs. Harrington,²⁴ is a plain elderly virgin; the former, I think, rather a puppy. The Canfields²⁵ are on the boat: both dull, to my mind. I spend as much time as I can alone. I have written a Doran article,²⁶ which a

after the death of his brother, and it is possible that the telegram to which Russell refers here came from that family.

²¹ Dora Russell was campaigning for the Labour Party in the United Kingdom general election to be held on 27 October 1931.

²² The Latin “*Deo volente*” translates to “God willing”.

²³ English playwright John William Van Druten (1901–1957) authored *Young Woodley*, a play about a schoolboy falling in love with his headmaster's wife. Initially banned in England, Van Druten first staged the play in New York in 1925 before it premiered in London in 1928. The producer to whom Russell refers was probably Auriol Lee (1880–1941), a veteran stage actor who also produced Van Druten's Broadway plays beginning in 1931.

²⁴ Olive Harrington was the secretary of Beacon Hill School.

²⁵ Russell probably refers here to Augustus Cass Canfield (1897–1986), the president of the Harper and Brothers publishing firm from 1931 to 1945. He had married Katherine Temple Emmet in 1922. Harper and Brothers had published Russell's *The ABC of Relativity* in 1925 and Dora Russell's *The Right to Be Happy* in 1927.

²⁶ George H. Doran (1869–1956) merged his publishing company with Doubleday, Page and Company in 1927 to form Doubleday, Doran and Company, one of the largest English-language publishers in the world. Doran met Russell in June 1931 to negotiate, in concert with Russell's literary agent, Nancy Pearn, an agreement to feature Russell's articles in William Randolph Hearst's American newspaper chain. The Hearst press eventually published 156 articles between 1931 and 1935, although Russell wrote at least fourteen additional articles intended for publication in Hearst outlets. The specific article mentioned here by Russell cannot be identified. Russell indicates that he sent the ms. back to Olive Harrington. The Russell Archives, however, have several recently acquired mss. of articles published in Hearst newspapers while (or soon after) Russell toured the US and Canada in 1931 (see B&R 2: 97–8). They are: “Marriage and Personality” (B&R C31.26) and “On Being a Good Boy” (C31.27), typed in New York on 4 Nov.; “Who Gets Our Savings?” (C31.29); “On Politicians” (C31.31), sent on the letterhead of The Inman Hotel, Champaign, IL, on 8 Dec.; and “Christmas at Sea” (C32.04), written on *Adriatic* letterhead. A Toronto collector has the ms. of “On Snobbery” (C31.33).

German steward typed for me, and read most of the book about Frederick II, who is a glorious man.²⁷ I enclose the MS of my article, which you can give to Mrs. Harrington to keep. Please tell her to keep an account of all cheques that come for me, noting their amount, who they are from, and what for. I need this for income tax purposes, *and it is important*. Also whether for me or for the school. (Some publisher's cheques are for the school.) When she goes away for Xmas, she should leave it in an envelope addressed to me.

All goes well. Love to John and Kate and yourself.

B

Letter 2 *To Peter Spence*

S.S. BREMEN

Oct. 20, 1931.

My Beloved

There is of course nothing to tell, but I feel I must write to you. I don't know whether you tried to get an express letter to the ship, but if you did it did not arrive in time. It is much the most comfortable ship I have ever been on: I have a bathroom to myself, I can keep my port-hole always open, the weather is perfect and very warm. Doran gave me an introduction to Van Druten, author of *Young Woodley*; also to an actress who produces Van Druten's plays. She, however, like the Cambridge bedmakers, is *nec juvenis nec pulchra*.²⁸ Otherwise I have only spoken to one man, an American Jew, who was gazing at my photograph in a book when I came upon him, and therefore spoke to me. I am reading a life of the Emperor Frederick II, who has always fascinated me. It is pleasant to have no duties, and no psychological complications. I should not like it long, but for a few days it is restful. I sleep endlessly and eat like a hog.

Very soon after I arrive I have to go to California. This will cause some delay in my letters. I will do my utmost to get a letter to you by every mail, but while I am travelling West I may not succeed.

Oct. 21. It is rather nice having these quiet days that give one leisure to think

²⁷ Holy Roman Emperor and King of Sicily Frederick II (1194–1250) was part of the Hohenstaufen dynasty established in 1138. Although Frederick lived up to the legendary Hohenstaufen reputation for avarice and sexual misconduct, he also possessed a keen intellect and fostered the growth of an academic culture throughout the Mediterranean. The book Russell refers to is KANTOROWICZ, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (1927); English translation as *Frederick the Second, 1194–1250* (1931). Russell later listed the German edition as one of his ten favourite books in a 1945 pamphlet published by the National Book League.

²⁸ The Latin phrase translates to “neither young nor beautiful”. Russell used it in his *Autobiography* to describe the deliberations of senior administrators at Cambridge University who discovered inappropriate relationships of the Senior Porter with five bedmakers “in spite of the fact that all of them, by Statute, were ‘*nec juvenis, nec pulchra*’” (*Auto.* I: 67).

and feel. My thoughts are constantly about you. I hate to be away from you while our child is growing in you. Love has a special quality when the woman one loves is pregnant; and I want to know, day by day, how you are getting on. The child will probably quicken just about when I get home. If it suits you to come to Telegraph House²⁹ before I get home, I am sure Dora won't mind. It is lovely to think of all the long slow satisfying joys ahead of us—first when you suckle the child, then its first smile, then when it walks and talks, and so on through the years. The way you feel about it is splendid, and warms my heart.

Bless you, my Beloved.

B.

Letter 3 *To Dora Russell*

ONE LEXINGTON AVENUE, GRAMERCY PARK, NEW YORK

c/o W.W. Norton

Oct. 24, 1931

My Darling

The *Bremen* arrived at noon yesterday after a very good voyage. On the boat they took a talkie of me, and the afternoon was spent seeing journalists³⁰ and

Feakins.³¹ The prospects of my tour are gloomy, even more so than I expected. We shall be very pinched this year by having to find a good deal³² of

²⁹ Telegraph House, part of the 230-acre country estate near Petersfield built by Frank Russell, the 2nd Earl Russell, had been rented by Russell and Dora to house Beacon Hill School in June 1927. Russell eventually assumed ownership of Telegraph House following the death of Amy Otter, to whom Frank had left his estate after suddenly dying in March 1931.

³⁰ See, for example, “Europe Tottering, Russell Says Here”, *New York Times* 24 Oct. 1931, p. 19. The “talkie” created on Russell’s arrival cannot be located. Russell’s interview with journalists after he left the *Bremen* occurred at the home of Warder Norton (see the next letter).

³¹ William B. Feakins (c.1872–1946) served as Russell’s lecture manager for his inter-war American tours. A self-proclaimed “transcontinental tour agent for lectures by Men of Fame” (quoted in *BRA* 1: 93) who ran his firm from the heart of Manhattan in the Times building at 500 Fifth Avenue, Feakins insisted on a close management of Russell’s speaking itinerary during his 1924, 1927, 1929, 1931, and 1939 lecture tours.

³² As part of the complex purchase agreement for Telegraph House negotiated in the spring and summer of 1931, Russell agreed to pay £2,000 to Amy Otter on his return from the American lecture tour (see Turcon, “Russell’s Houses: Telegraph House” [2016], p. 57), a financial burden to which Russell refers repeatedly in his letters to Dora and Peter during the tour. Russell’s financial obligations to the women once in Frank Russell’s life can also be seen in his payment of £400 per year to Frank’s second wife, Mollie, until her death in 1942 (see WATSON, “Mollie, Countess Russell” [2003], pp. 67–8).

Otter's money out of ordinary income. Things are *very* bad here. My book³³ has been a best seller ever since it came out, but ~~about~~ apart from an initial 5000 has sold only 100 a week. I cannot hope to earn as much next year as this. Unless the school can be made to be no great loss, we shall have to give it up next summer. Meanwhile, here is \$500 from Alice Crunden.³⁴ It ought to yield £125 at least. I have not endorsed it, as it is safer if I leave it to you.—The Nortons³⁵ are kind; I have seen no other friends yet except Aanestad.³⁶ They didn't much like my autobiography.³⁷

Mrs Holden writes that Jackie misses the school³⁸ and resents New York. I am going to see her, and perhaps she will send Jackie back. Tomorrow week I have a big meeting here, and next day I go to California. Zora writes that she is married and pregnant.³⁹

³³ Russell's *The Scientific Outlook* had been released in the United States in mid-September 1931.

³⁴ The daughter of a Milwaukee railway magnate, Alice Crunden (née Tweedy, 1892–1951) conducted an affair with Russell during his 1924 lecture tour of the United States that formed the basis of a “valuable friendship” (*SLBR* 2: 265, 286, 286 n.5). In addition to the \$500 donation mentioned here by Russell, Crunden donated \$1,000 to Beacon Hill School in 1929 (see Dora Russell to Russell, 11 Oct. 1929, RA2 710). Russell visited Crunden on several occasions in New York during his 1939 lecture tour and painted a sad picture of a life destroyed by drug addiction: “At moments Alice is her old self, but most of the time she is a wreck, morally and every way. It is most tragic” (see STEVENSON, “‘In Solitude I Brood on War’” [2013], p. 136).

³⁵ Russell's publisher, William Warder Norton (1891–1945), and his wife, Mary Dows Herter Norton (1892–1985).

³⁶ Elling Aanestad (1904–1985), a “pitilessly candid” editor at W.W. Norton and Company (see BAILEY, *Farther and Wilder* [2013], p. 130).

³⁷ In June 1931, Russell had provided Norton with “My First Fifty Years”, a dictated typescript of his autobiography covering his life up to 1921. Ray Monk characterizes this early version of Russell's autobiography as arguably “his finest piece of writing, and it is certainly his most penetratingly self-searching” (MONK, p. 125). The Nortons' reasons for disliking this manuscript are not determined.

³⁸ Born into a wealthy Chicago family, Marie Celeste Holden (née McVoy, 1900–1974) married Canadian businessman Edward Holden in 1924; their daughter Jacqueline was born in 1924. To facilitate her divorce under English law in Canadian courts, Holden enrolled Jackie in Beacon Hill School from 1928 to 1930 and contributed funds to the school beyond the regular tuition. She met Russell several times in England while visiting her daughter, and she seems to have accompanied him to England in December 1929 after the conclusion of Russell's American lecture tour (see Russell to Holden, 21 Dec. 1929, RA3 Rec. Acq. 254).

³⁹ Zora Schaupp (1897–1982) earned a doctorate in philosophy from Bryn Mawr College and visited Beacon Hill School in 1929 on a Social Science Research Council grant to study experimental education methods. Her frequently acerbic unpublished memoir of her six-month tenure at Beacon Hill is found in the Russell Archives (RA3 Rec. Acq. 1070). In 1931, Schaupp married Robert Lasch (1907–1998), a Rhodes

I am depressed about the world and also about our private income. Unless things revive in America we shall be very hard up. The weather is warm and delicious and I am very fit. But I loathe being away from home. All my love, Darling. I hope you are not getting overdone with electioneering.

Your

B.

Letter 4 *To Peter Spence*

NEW YORK NEW HAVEN AND HARTFORD RAILROAD

New York to Boston.

25 Oct. 1931

My Darling

Here I am in full swing. The boat takes journalists on board about 2 hours before arriving and they interviewed me, photographed me, made a talkie of me. Then others interviewed me further at W.W. Norton's. I saw Feakins, and found the financial prospects even worse than I had expected. Also Norton is gloomy about the sale of books. I shall have to take to a lower standard of life.

I stayed tonight with Sheffer,⁴⁰ a mathematical logician at Harvard, tomorrow with the Whiteheads.⁴¹ Then I return to New York for a few days. Zora writes⁴² that she is married and pregnant, which the Dr's said she couldn't be. Mrs Holden writes that Jackie misses T.H. I shall see Jackie when I can. Next Sunday I have a big debate in New York,⁴³ and next day I start for California.

It is hateful being away from every one that I love. I am always unhappy here, and now I specially mind being away from you. I dislike feeling that I can't be at hand if anything goes wrong. However, I shan't have to come to America again.—Goodbye for now, Beloved. I love you with all my soul.

Scholar and future Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist.

⁴⁰ Henry M. Sheffer (1863–1964) taught at Harvard University from 1917 to 1952. Inventor of the “Sheffer stroke” in logic, he first met Russell at Cambridge in 1910, and they corresponded frequently before the 1930s.

⁴¹ Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947), Russell's mentor and coauthor of *PM*, left England in 1924 to become Professor of Philosophy at Harvard. In 1891, he married Evelyn Willoughby-Wade (1865–1961), a woman who profoundly influenced Russell. After seeing her suffer through illness in 1901, Russell experienced a dramatic conversion that temporarily possessed him with a “sort of mystic illumination” (*Auto.* 1: 149). While staying with Sheffer and Whitehead at Harvard, Russell delivered two lectures. On 25 October, he spoke on “What This Depression Is Doing to Our Moral Standards” as part of the Ford Hall Forum (see the Forum website at www.fordhallforum.org). On 26 October, he spoke in Harvard's New Lecture Hall on “The Relation of Logic to Psychology” (see “Psychology Not Needed for Logic, Russell Declares”, *The Harvard Crimson*, 27 Oct. 1931).

⁴² This letter was not located.

⁴³ See n. 57.

Take care of yourself.

B

Letter 5 *To Peter Spence*

ONE LEXINGTON AVENUE GRAMERCY PARK NEW YORK

28 Oct. 1931

My Beloved

Your sad letter telling of our misfortune came today.⁴⁴ At first I was quite overwhelmed, but fortunately I had to see people without intermission for many hours afterwards, and the effort helped me to pull myself together. Your letter, I am sure, says as little as you could about your own sorrow, so as to worry me as little as possible—This was rather heroic of you. I am sure, too, that you must have been more ill than you said. I do hope you are getting over it well.—On reflection, after I stopped being purely instinctive, I remembered the reasons which had led us not to want a child originally. It is a good thing that you can finish your Oxford course,⁴⁵ though all this will hardly have improved your work. And from the financial point of view it is one difficulty the less at a very difficult time. (My tour here will be very unproductive.) And henceforth we won't use contraceptives,⁴⁶ and if another child comes, we shall have intended it from the first—which is nicer. I am only so afraid there may never be another—but probably there will be.

I had just seen the results of the elections⁴⁷ when your letter came, so I was already feeling pretty blue. There will be savage reaction, led by Amery and Winston.⁴⁸ I lunched with an American communist today, and he suited my mood.

All goes well with me, except that I don't get much money. There is endless

⁴⁴ Although Peter's letter to Russell informing him of her miscarriage was not located, she wrote to Dora on 21 October 1931 noting that "I have had a miscarriage. Heaven knows why, as I had done nothing strenuous" (RA3 Rec. Acq. 1027, box 8.04).

⁴⁵ Peter was an undergraduate student studying history at Oxford University.

⁴⁶ In his "Private Memoirs" written more than two decades later, Russell claimed he had emphatically resisted the idea of conceiving a child with Peter during the summer of 1931, but that Peter had deliberately failed to take birth control measures.

⁴⁷ Ramsay MacDonald's Labour government had splintered in the summer of 1931 over proposed dramatic budget cuts in the face of the Great Depression. MacDonald submitted his resignation, but he defected from the Labour Party and quickly returned to lead a National Government dominated by the Conservative Party. The election of 27 October 1931 shattered the Labour Party, and the Conservatives secured 55% of the popular vote and three-quarters of the seats in the House of Commons. MacDonald continued as the prime minister of the National Government that included a rump of 13 National Labour members.

⁴⁸ Leopold Amery (1873–1956) and Winston Churchill (1874–1965) were among the reactionary Conservative politicians Russell described as "fanatical idealists of the older order" (*Papers* 15: 226), although during the Second World War he came to respect Churchill's inspired leadership.

t tedious publicity, and I look forward to four uninterrupted days in the train.

Dear Love, my tenderest thoughts are with you. Take care of yourself during convalescence.

B

Letter 6 *To Dora Russell*

ONE LEXINGTON AVENUE, GRAMERCY PARK, NEW YORK

[Late Oct.] 1931

My Darling

I got a letter from you yesterday saying you were just starting off to Winchester. I wonder whether your meetings showed you how bad the result was going to be. I dread what the Tories may do in the intoxication of success.

Did Peter tell you she had miscarried? I am sorry, but in many ways it simplifies things. She will now stay out her time at Oxford, as she has managed to avoid scandal. You might as well tell Betty⁴⁹ or matron.⁵⁰

I am terribly busy with interviews—my last was with Louise Bryant,⁵¹ who described Reid’s last illness, the hospital, and his disenchantment.⁵² She seems to have been married to a great many people at various times.⁵³ Various people are approaching me about sending children to the school (*page torn away*: ? I dine) with Sinc.⁵⁴ tonight, and dined with Alice Crunden last (*page torn away*: ? night. She) seems sane at present.

I hate (*page torn away*: ? this tour) and feel I won’t ever come again. It will be easier (*page torn away*: ? not to come) now that it has grown less profitable. I had a curious letter from Kate;⁵⁵ the big writing was an ordinary letter, and then there were small things about “the sadness of the world”. What is troubling her?—My love to you and Kate and John and Harriet.

B

⁴⁹ Betty Cross was one of the principal teachers at Beacon Hill School.

⁵⁰ Griselda Mair was the matron of Beacon Hill School.

⁵¹ Louise Bryant (1885–1936) was a socialist bohemian writer. Her interview with Russell was not located.

⁵² Bryant married left-wing journalist John Reed (1887–1920) in 1916. They visited Russia in 1917, and Reed’s account of his experiences during the Russian Revolution was published in 1919 as *Ten Days That Shook the World*. Reed and Bryant returned to Russia in 1920. Reed, a delegate at the Second Congress of the Third International, held in Petrograd in July 1920, grew increasingly disillusioned with the Bolshevik domination of the international communist movement; he died of typhus in a Moscow hospital shortly after the Congress, receiving a state funeral and burial in the Kremlin Wall (see DEARBORN, *Queen of Bohemia* [1996], pp. 158–66).

⁵³ Bryant’s first marriage was to Paul Trullinger, a prominent dentist in Portland, Oregon; they divorced in 1916. After John Reed’s death, Bryant married her third husband, William C. Bullitt, a wealthy journalist and diplomat named the first US ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1933. Bryant and Bullitt divorced in 1930.

⁵⁴ Probably Sinclair Lewis—see **Let. 9**.

⁵⁵ This letter is embargoed in the Russell Archives at Russell’s request.

Letter 7 To Peter Spence

ONE LEXINGTON AVENUE, GRAMERCY PARK, NEW YORK

Nov. 2, 1931

My Darling

I have not had another letter yet since the sad one telling of our misfortune. I am anxious to know about your health, as I am afraid it may have left you rather ill. The main fact, though it still makes me sad, is perhaps all for the best. At any rate it will have been, if in time we have another.

My life here is appallingly busy. Owing to the fact that I am not having such a successful tour as on former occasions, I have to do more publicity—interviews, talkies, etc. I have to go to bookshops to autograph books, and to endless luncheons and dinners. Parents and prospective parents turn up too, and have to be seen. Articles have to be written for newspapers.⁵⁶ Ladies ask me to get their gentlemen friends out of lunatic asylums [fact]—etc. etc. etc. Yesterday I had a big debate with Sherwood Anderson,⁵⁷ who is a pleasant fellow but not a very good debater. After that I went to a party at Liveright's⁵⁸ (the publisher): he is producing an operetta, and the young Jew composer⁵⁹ played and sang bits of it. One young man, after sitting on the arm of a lady's chair for some time, toppled over and lay on the floor—"passed out" as they say—nobody paid any attention. There were 3 ladies at the party, who all stayed when the men went away. Liveright is a gay fellow. But he has had bad losses, and looks like a death's head.

I have seen Jackie and her mother. Jackie is not well, and has lost weight

⁵⁶ No newspaper articles other than those for the Hearst chain are—if there were any—identified in B&R.

⁵⁷ American novelist Sherwood Anderson (1876–1941) championed the short-story form in his most influential work, *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), and he inspired and helped publish the first works of American authors such as William Faulkner. The debate in New York on 1 November 1931 dealt with the question "Shall the State Rear Our Children?" with Russell arguing in favour (see "Abolition of Family Debated by Authors", *New York Times* 2 Nov. 1931, p. 19).

⁵⁸ Russell's description here and in **Let. 10** of his American publisher Horace Liveright (1883–1933) accurately encapsulates Liveright's reputation as a hard-drinking philanthropist and spendthrift. Liveright's publishing house dominated the American market; among its books were Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, Anita Loos' *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, and RUSSELL's *Marriage and Morals*. Despite this stable of authors, Liveright died bankrupt after he had been pushed out of his publishing firm in 1930, primarily due to his failed theatre ventures. Despite Liveright's personal and financial decline described in these tour letters, Russell admired Liveright for his "courageous campaign" (*Marriage and Morals*, p. 114) opposing the censoring of *The Captive*, the controversial Broadway play dealing with lesbianism that was viewed as obscene by state officials and shut down in 1926.

⁵⁹ Neither this composer nor the title of his operetta can be identified.

for months.⁶⁰ Her mother is rather fed up with her, but I found her charming—she seemed glad to see me. I have seen Alice Crunden once—she is very friendly, and I avoided love-making with some difficulty. I saw also the girl you and I quarrelled about at Irun⁶¹—Gladys Dickason⁶² her name is. In her case it just came to love-making in the few minutes before going out to dinner; after that we talked only about economics, which she teaches. I don’t expect to see her again while I am in America.—Hearst wired asking me to stay with him while in California,⁶³ but I refused, though I shall go to see him. I couldn’t bear him long, as he is a gross beast.⁶⁴

There is a certain beauty about New York, but I can’t like it. It is all cruel and heartless and terrifying. A curious impersonal terror gets hold of me here. I utterly hate being in America, and count the days till I get home. By the way, you must let me know what your doctor’s bill is, and I will pay it. Now I must stop for the moment.

Letter 8 *To Peter Spence*

ONE LEXINGTON AVENUE, GRAMERCY PARK, NEW YORK

Nov. 3, 1931.

My Beloved

Your 2nd letter after your trouble has just come. I was afraid you would have more illness, and I am worried. I can’t hear anything more for a fortnight as I go West tomorrow. But I will try to feel easy in my mind.

⁶⁰ The cause or extent of Jacqueline Holden’s illness is not known. **Let. 9** indicates that her malady was related to some form of accident.

⁶¹ Irun is a Spanish town across the border from the French town of Hendaye. Russell, Peter, Dora and Griffin Barry vacationed at Hendaye in the summer of 1931—both women became pregnant during this trip.

⁶² Gladys Dickason (1903–1971) earned an MA in political science and economics from Columbia University and was teaching at Hunter College in New York at the time of Russell’s 1931 tour. She later rose to considerable prominence as a researcher and labour organizer for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. It is unclear how Russell met Dickason or why he would quarrel with Peter about her, since no correspondence between Russell and Dickason is in the Russell Archives. It is possible the two met during one of Russell’s earlier American tours or possibly during Dickason’s brief attendance at the London School of Economics in 1925.

⁶³ American newspaper baron William Randolph Hearst (1863–1951) resided in an opulent hilltop castle near San Simeon, between Los Angeles and San Francisco. It does not appear that Russell visited Hearst during the California leg of his tour, as he does not mention any visit in letters to Dora or Peter. He later blamed his refusal to stay with Hearst for the latter’s decision to cut his fee for articles appearing in the Hearst Press (see **Let. 1**) and for discontinuing his article series (*Auto.* 2: 430), although Russell published in the Hearst chain until 1935.

⁶⁴ It does not appear that Russell had met Hearst previously, and his negative reference probably relates to the newspaper magnate’s well-deserved reputation for promoting slanted or sensational journalism documented in Upton Sinclair’s *The Brass Check*, a copy of which Russell had personally requested from Sinclair (see n. 94) in 1922.

Dora has written me a very kind letter,⁶⁵ which I enclose. Am I unjust, or is there a histrionic element in it?

Dearest, you have a hold on me which is amazingly strong. I try to avoid the sort of row I had with Dorothy Harvey,⁶⁶ but it is difficult. No other women interest me, at any rate in America. I hate the place and long to be back in England and where I could do things for you if necessary.

Take care of yourself, my dear Darling.

B

Letter 9 *To Dora Russell*

ONE LEXINGTON AVENUE, GRAMERCY PARK, NEW YORK

Nov. 3, 1931

My Darling

I have just had your dear letter written after Peter's miscarriage. It is *amazingly* kind.—On reflection, I am not sorry for the event: it will be much better for Peter to have her Oxford career out. Also it relieves financial worry. Whatever may happen, I do not wish that you and I should separate, though of course I would consent if you wished it. You have a very profound hold on me, and I want the children to have the stimulus you can give them. Now that Peter is not going to have a child one cannot feel sure that she will be a factor in my future after a while. I had never supposed so before she got pregnant.—Sweet Smith⁶⁷ rang me up just after I had heard of Peter's trouble, and complained of being charged in dollars, not pounds.⁶⁸ She wanted to see me, but

⁶⁵ Dora wrote to Russell on 22 October, noting that "I cried so bitterly" upon hearing the news of Peter's miscarriage; "O my darling," she lamented, "I wish it had been me instead" (RA2 710, box 8.11). Russell later recanted his view that Dora's letter contained a "histrionic element"—see **Let. 16**.

⁶⁶ Dorothy Harvey (née Dudley, 1884–1962) knew Russell initially through the latter's involvement with her sister, Helen. Russell and Helen Dudley began an affair in 1914 that Dudley believed would lead to marriage; she travelled to England after World War I broke out to pursue the relationship before Russell essentially abandoned her. Harvey also played a role—documented in these 1931 tour letters—in complicating Russell's relationship with Dora Russell after she hosted a party in New York early in 1928 at which Dora met Griffin Barry (see **Let. 10**), with whom Dora fell in love and conceived two children (see *SLBR* 2: 278–9). The nature of the "row" Russell had with Dorothy Harvey cannot be identified.

⁶⁷ Marie Sweet Smith was a divorced mother living in New York whose son, De Wilton (mentioned by Russell in this letter), attended Beacon Hill School (see HUSTAK, "Radical Intimacies" [2010], p. 278). Smith had been involved in civil rights trials in Detroit in the 1920s and served temporarily as the organizing secretary of the American League to Abolish Capital Punishment in 1930. She later married Hereward Carrington, director of the American Psychical Institute.

⁶⁸ The value of a British pound had declined sharply from \$4.85 in the first week of November 1930 to \$3.74 a year later, causing Russell and Dora to require American parents sending their children to Beacon Hill School to pay fees in us dollars.

I said I was too busy. I ought not to have, but I *could not* endure her. She says De Wilton has never written to her. Please see he does, or write yourself. She is annoyed.

The Nortons are restful and pleasant. I dined with Sinclair Lewis and his wife:⁶⁹ he “passed out” during the party, and his guests were left to her. I saw Jackie and her mother. Jackie is not well, and lighter than in July. She was glad to see me. I wish she were back with us, in spite of her being such a nuisance. Mrs Holden’s mother has married again, an Italian architect!⁷⁰ Mrs Holden apologized for the fact that her accident had made her irritable.

Alice Crunden is friendly—I have seen her once, but have no wish to have relations with her.

Tomorrow I start for California. Hearst asked me to stay with him out there but I refused; I shall, however, go to see him.

Darling don’t doubt my affection for you, which is very deep and unalterable. I hope you are not exhausting yourself.

B

Letter 10 *To Peter Spence*

In the train.

Nov. 5, 1931

My Darling—

I got a letter from you just before starting, which was lucky, as I can’t get another for ages. It was doubly lucky as it was a very cheerful letter. You needn’t think I shall revert to not wanting children; having once let instinct loose, I can’t bottle it up again. The only difference it makes is that until you are pregnant again I have no good excuse for having you live at the school unless Dora has no objection. I dare say she won’t have, but it depends partly on Barry.⁷¹ At the moment, she seems to be on good terms with him. If it isn’t

⁶⁹ Russell had known Nobel Prize-winning American novelist Sinclair Lewis (1885–1951) since the early 1920s and frequently referred to Lewis’ novels such as *Babbitt* (1922) and *Dodsworth* (1929). Lewis’ wife at this time, Dorothy (née Thompson, 1893–1961), was a journalist who interviewed Adolf Hitler in 1931 and who became one of the most famous women in America as a result of her syndicated newspaper column and her work for NBC radio.

⁷⁰ No biographical information on Marie Celeste Holden’s mother and her new Italian husband could be found. Holden’s father, Eugene McVoy, was a wealthy Chicago sheet metal distributor.

⁷¹ After meeting Dora Russell in 1928 (see n. 66), American journalist Griffin Barry (1884–1957) moved to England to continue the relationship; their first child, Harriet, for whom Russell accepted legal and financial responsibility, was born in 1930. Dora was pregnant with Barry’s second child during Russell’s 1931 tour, and Barry’s apparent demand to assume legal custody of these children concerned Russell (see **Let. 21**). See WARD, *A Man of Small Importance* (2003).

going to worry her too much, we can have you come to Telegraph⁷² as a teacher next September, in view of your (by that time) admirable academic qualifications. We will never again use preventives. It will be nicer to have a child that has been intended from the first.

This 4½ days' journey is delicious—no duties, no one to see, complete rest for the nerves. America *is* a queer country. The other day Liveright invited me to lunch with him at the Ritz-Carleton hotel. He was not there, and they had never heard of him. When I said he was a publisher, they advised me to look in a building over the way, there they said there were a lot of publishers there, just as if they were saying there were a lot of rats. I looked, but he was not there. On returning to the hotel I saw a lady I had seen in his rooms, and she said she knew where we were to wait. We went to a vestibule, and gradually the party assembled, but still no host. At last a young Jew strolled up and said that Liveright was in a taxi outside, “rather under the weather”. We found him there, as drunk as a Lord, embracing a lovely lady. He made room for me between him and the lady, and the rest of the party bundled in somehow. It then appeared that we were to lunch with Van Loon (*Story of Mankind*)⁷³ who apparently had thrown himself into the breach. That was at the other end of the town, and all the way Liveright kept saying “Isn't she lovely?”, pointing at the lady whom he could no longer embrace. His only alternative was the statement that another lady, Dorothy Petersen,⁷⁴ is the only lady he will ever love. At the luncheon, which was a formal affair with distinguished people present, he hoisted himself up with great difficulty and proposed the toast of Dorothy Petersen, in the course of which he upset a glass of ice-water over the lovely lady of the taxi. Everybody said “Poor Liveright! How unfortunate to be in such a state when he had a luncheon party!” And the lovely lady told me all she had done to keep him off the drink. (I didn't discover her name.)⁷⁵

⁷² Telegraph House.

⁷³ Dutch-American historian and journalist Hendrik Willem van Loon (1882–1944) wrote and illustrated *The Story of Mankind* as a history of the world for children.

⁷⁴ Dorothy Peterson (1897–1979) starred on Broadway with Bela Lugosi in a 1927 stage version of *Dracula* produced by Liveright. At that time, she was Liveright's mistress before Liveright's wife divorced him in 1928. Peterson went on to enjoy a lengthy career in Hollywood and the New York theatre scene.

⁷⁵ It is possible the “lovely lady” to whom Russell refers is Elise Bartlett (1899–1947), an actress Liveright would marry several weeks after Russell arrived in New York. Russell's description of the luncheon hosted by an inebriated Liveright seems to capture the chaotic essence of his publisher's life. Liveright's 2 December 1931 wedding reception, according to his biographer, “proved to be a tawdry, drunken affair at which Horace spent most of the afternoon and early evening passed out in one of the bedrooms. His bride, visibly drunk, lurched around the apartment, demanding a divorce because of the black eye she had received from her husband” (see DARDIS,

At intervals he wept with self-pity at the thought of my seeing him in such a state.

You may remember my telling you that I had a brief affair in San Francisco with my hostess.⁷⁶ I had not heard a word from her since I left her 2 years ago, but I got the other day an invitation from her husband, saying they are now in New York. So I went to dinner, and found her still friendly and still attractive. I had, however, not more than a minute’s conversation alone with her. I think I shall stay with them on my return to New York. Her husband is a Professor of Early English, on which he has written books: his name is Rypins.⁷⁷ Do you know anything about his work? He was a Rhodes Scholar, but contemplates moving to Moscow. He is a nervous repressed Jew, instinctively but not intellectually puritanical. She teaches in a nursery school, and is a completely candid person of promiscuous temperament. I suppose that when I stay with them things will be as in San Francisco. She is not a Jewess.— You are right that to get through this time one must look for distraction but it is apt to be disappointing. Gladys Dickason was not the least use as a distraction. In fact when the distraction fails it is worse than nothing. You hold my instinct very completely, and more so since I have allowed the hope of children to come in. This, too, has made me no longer jealous. As long as you want my children, and don’t get any one else’s by mistake, I shan’t feel jealous—I feel that we belong together securely. Goodbye for now Beloved—I love you with all my soul.

B

Letter 11 *To Dora Russell*

In train to San Francisco.

Nov. 6, 1931.

My Darling

Your letters about Peter have been most wonderfully kind, and have touched me profoundly. Thank you for them. My last letter from you is dated Oct. 27; it reached me just before I started on this long journey. I am in the

Firebrand [1995], p. 341). For Russell’s fruitful publishing relationship with Liveright, see WHITE, “Russell in the Jazz Age” (2016).

⁷⁶ Russell stayed with Rhoda Belle Rypins (née Kellogg, 1898–1987) in San Francisco during his 1929 American tour.

⁷⁷ Stanley Rypins (1891–1971) earned his doctorate from Harvard in 1918 and taught at San Francisco State College from 1922 to 1930 before moving to Brooklyn College in New York in 1931. He had visited Russia in 1920, where it appears that he met Dora Russell (see **Let. 19**).

middle of Nebraska; I half hoped to see Zora⁷⁸ on the way but couldn't manage it. This part of the country is inconceivably dull, but I have made friends with a young philosopher from Oxford who is going to Berkeley for 2 years.⁷⁹ I don't know his name yet.

Dorothy Harvey has written to me⁸⁰ apologizing for having talked against me to Griffen;⁸¹ she says he resented it.

The price of grain has gone up, which is giving me 2 or 3 more engagements in the Middle West. Seems queer, doesn't it?⁸² I think my tour will bring in £1500 above expenses. I have had £275 from Liveright, and shall have about £250 during the coming months from Hearst. So I can manage Otter's £2000, but shall be hard pressed for income tax. However, I am less worried than I was.

I am at Kearney, Nebraska, which is 2149 feet above the sea and has a population of 10,000, all of whom believe in God and oil. Most of this information was written up in the station.

A taxi-driver in New York, whose cab I had taken, said "Are you Bertrand Russell?" I said I was. He said that formerly he had heard me lecture, but that belonged to his intellectual past: now he was married, and had ceased to be a person. Those were his exact words.⁸³

Liveright asked me to lunch, but was so drunk that his whole party had to be entertained by Van Loon instead. I am glad I don't have to deal with him any longer.

Being so far from home is hateful. I miss you and John and Kate, and Harriet too. It seems likely that I shan't be able to get home for Xmas, but it isn't certain yet. Goodbye my Darling. Thank you for all your goodness. Love.

B

⁷⁸ It appears Zora Schaupp (see n. 39) lived in Omaha, Nebraska, when Russell wrote this letter while her husband, Robert Lasch, worked as an editorial writer for the *Omaha World-Herald*.

⁷⁹ Unidentified.

⁸⁰ This letter from Harvey was not found.

⁸¹ Misspelt here and later. He means Griffin Barry.

⁸² Futures prices in principal grains on the Chicago Board of Trade exchange had reached record lows by the end of September 1931, with wheat selling for slightly more than 45 cents per bushel. Dramatic increases in European demand, however, saw prices rise quickly; by the end of October 1931, wheat sold on the Chicago exchange for more than 60 cents per bushel. It is unclear why this price rise would immediately result in additional speaking engagements for Russell during his tour, something Russell himself found "queer".

⁸³ Russell put the anecdote immediately into a Hearst column: "Marriage and Personality", *New York American*, 13 Nov. 1931, p. 15; in *Mortals and Others* (2009), p. 36.

Letter 12 To Peter Spence

San Francisco

Nov. 9, 1931

My Darling

I have only time to write a short note, as I am terribly rushed here. I arrived yesterday morning at 8.30. The last piece of the journey is across the bay by ferry—as beautiful as anything I know in the world. But after 5 nights and 4 days in the train I was made to spend the time dictating 400 words to a Jew. Then, immediately after a bath and shave, I had to see journalists till lunch. Then a formal lunch of 30 people—Then 1000 words to dictate to the Jew—Then more journalists—Then formal dinner—Then a speech on the radio⁸⁴—Then a party. Today similarly, except that I end by debating against a Rabbi⁸⁵ (who has been married 3 months) “That monogamy is doomed”. What a life!

I am staying with a rich and generous bachelor originally from Dublin,⁸⁶ whom I should like if he ever stopped talking. Even in this rush I have collected everybody’s sexual history. When one mentions anybody, people reply “yes, he used to be my brother-in-law”. Divorce makes conversation dangerous.

All goes well with me, but I have no time for anything except immediate duties. God, I shall be glad when it is over. I love you Darling and long for you. I do hope you are well.

B

⁸⁴ Neither dictated statement has been positively identified, although the shorter one may be B&R C31.26a. Russell spoke on the KOA NBC radio channel in San Francisco from 9:30–10 pm on an unidentified topic on 8 November 1931 (see “Another Brilliant Unemployment Relief Program Coming Tonight”, *San Bernardino Daily Sun*, 8 Nov. 1931, p. 19).

⁸⁵ Rabbi Jacob J. Weinstein (1902–1974) served as Russell’s debate opponent on 9 November (see “Monogamous Marriage Doomed: Bertrand Russell; Education Solution to Problem: Rabbi Weinstein”, *Emanu-El*, San Francisco, 72 [13 Nov. 1931]: 1, 13). A leading figure in Reform Judaism and “the most radical advocate for social justice ever to hold a major synagogue pulpit in Northern California” (see ROSENBAUM, *Cosmopolitans* [2009], p. 268), Weinstein served at Congregation Sherith Israel, one of the oldest synagogues in the United States, beginning in 1930; he was forced to resign after supporting a dockworkers’ strike in 1932. He subsequently formed the humanist-oriented School for Jewish Studies in San Francisco in 1935, relying on the writings of Russell and other progressive thinkers as “guides and mentors” (see FELDSTEIN, *Rabbi Jacob J. Weinstein* [1980], p. 62).

⁸⁶ Described as “San Francisco’s best-loved and most popular citizen” (ZEITLIN, “Some Late Great Bookmen of the San Francisco Bay Area” [1985], p. 22), Albert M. Bender (1866–1941) earned his fortune in the insurance industry before devoting his life to philanthropy and a cultivation of the arts.

Letter 13 *To Dora Russell*San Francisco.
Nov. 9, 1931.

My Darling

Here I am, too busy to write a proper letter, but quite flourishing. I am staying with an old bachelor named Bender who collects Chinese art. He has made presents to both you and me, yours a lovely bit of ivory work. I will bring it back with me. I hope you got John a birthday present from me. They keep me terribly rushed here—journalists, radio, Jews, etc. But I managed to get round the coast in a car. It is as beautiful a harbour as any I know, except perhaps Hong Kong.

I hope all goes well at home. I mustn't write more now. I have a journalist, a stenographer, a rabbi, and Moritz Schlick⁸⁷ coming between now (2: 30) and my big speech this evening. In the interstices I have to prepare my remarks. Best love, my Darling.

B

Letter 14 *To Dora Russell*

THE ARCADE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

11.11.31

My Darling

I enclose a lot of picture post-cards for the children in the school. There are not quite enough to go round, but you can give them to bigs and middles and I will send some later for the smalls. I met a man named Sullivan⁸⁸ in San Francisco who says he is going to send me money for the school. Would you please send him a prospectus and the poems. His address is

Noel Sullivan
Hyde Str. (near Chestnut Str.)
San Francisco Cal. USA

He didn't mention the sum. I hope it will be substantial.

This hotel⁸⁹ gives me a palatial suite and all my meals in return for a speech Sunday night.⁹⁰ I am keeping expenses down by always getting hospitality.

⁸⁷ Friedrich Albert Moritz Schlick (1882–1936) was the foremost proponent of logical positivism in the interwar period and leader of the Vienna Circle. Schlick and logical positivists relied heavily on the mathematical logicism developed by Russell and Alfred North Whitehead in *PM*.

⁸⁸ Born into an established California family and the nephew of a US Senator, Noël Sullivan (1890–1956) studied voice in Europe and resided in Paris for an extended period before returning to San Francisco in 1925.

⁸⁹ Built in 1927, the Arcady Hotel at 2619 Wilshire Boulevard featured nearly 400 rooms divided among two-, three-, and four-room suites.

⁹⁰ No full report of this speech was located; Russell spoke on “The Conquest of Happiness” in the lounge of the Arcady Hotel on 15 November (see “Sunday Evening Lecture”, *Los Angeles Times*, 14 Nov. 1931, p. 3).

I loathe the job worse than ever. I won't ever come again if I can possibly help it.

Love to everybody and especially to yourself.

B.

Queer place: The Rabbi who has me in charge⁹¹ was met at the station by his wife and mistress arm in arm.

Letter 15 *To Dora Russell*

THE ARCADY, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

15.11.31

My Darling

I have had no letters from England since I left New York, and I am getting very home-sick. This is a beastly place. I like the East much better. I went to dine with the Macadoo's (Wilson's daughter and son-in-law)⁹² and rather liked them. Otherwise I see only Jews and Judge Lindsey⁹³ and Upton Sinclair.⁹⁴ I don't have so many lectures as I should like, but I have immense numbers of interviews. They have to increase the advertizing because audiences are hard to get.

⁹¹ Herman Lissauer (1892–1957) led the Beth Israel synagogue in San Francisco from 1916 to 1926; he later worked as the director of research within the Warner Brothers movie studio beginning in the 1930s.

⁹² Russell refers here to Eleanor Wilson McAdoo (1889–1967), the daughter of former President Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924), and her husband, William Gibbs McAdoo (1863–1941), Wilson's Secretary of the Treasury from 1913 to 1919 who unsuccessfully sought the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party in 1924. Russell provides a more unflattering portrait of William McAdoo in **Let. 27**.

⁹³ Benjamin Lindsey (1869–1943) championed juvenile justice reforms as a judge in the Denver court system before the First World War; he eventually lost his job after co-authoring a book in 1927 supporting companionate marriage. “I am much disgusted by the injustice and persecution to which you have been subjected”, Russell wrote to Lindsey shortly after returning from his 1929 US tour, noting wryly that “I continue to be surprised by the fact that America persecutes Americans for the opinions which it hires foreigners at great expense to express” (Russell to Lindsey, 14 Jan. 1930, RA3 218). Russell praised Lindsey for his advocacy of companionate or trial marriage in both *Marriage and Morals* and *The Conquest of Happiness*; in the latter book, Russell noted that “to suggest that this should be made possible is, however, immoral, as may be seen from the fate of Judge Lindsey, who has suffered obloquy, in spite of a long and distinguished career, for the sole crime of wishing to save young people from the misfortunes that they incur as a result of their elders' bigotry” (*CH*, p. 80). Lindsey had moved to California after being disbarred in Colorado in 1929.

⁹⁴ Muckraking journalist Upton Sinclair (1878–1968) gained an international audience by exposing the unsanitary horror of the Chicago meatpacking industry in *The Jungle* (1906). Russell described Sinclair as “one of the most distinguished of American authors” (see RUSSELL, “Possibilities of Fascismo” [1923], p. 4), who in his books reinforced Russell's own views about the flawed nature of capitalist society in the United States.

I think of little John being 10 tomorrow. It seems a long time since that Moheing in Sydney Str.⁹⁵ How happy I was! When I am homesick my mind is always filled with songs that you used to sing, especially on the morning when we reached Singapore.⁹⁶

I have only just over a month more in this beastly country. I won't come again, even if it should mean giving up the school.

Goodbye for now. I hope you are well.

B

Letter 16 *To Peter Spence*

THE ARCADY, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

16.11.31

My Beloved

Your dear long letter written on election day and next day has just reached me. I do love you and long to be with you, my Darling. It is horrible that I couldn't be with you during all your bad time. It has been hanging over me ever since I knew of it, and I have felt hellishly lonely among all these sadistic bores. Don't imagine for a moment that the misfortune was due to anything but pills. In view of some of the things you say, it was probably just as well. Next time we will do all that is best for it from the start. I am sure you will be in every way good at maternity.—They always shave the pubic hair on these occasions; I remember Colette without it.⁹⁷ But it soon grows again, so you needn't worry. I fancy the reason painters don't put it in is that Greek women shaved it,⁹⁸ as orientals still do.—I don't agree one bit with Ottoline.⁹⁹ If

⁹⁵ Russell and Dora lived at 31 Sydney Street, a terraced house in Chelsea, between 1921 and 1927; John Russell was born there on 16 November 1921. By "Moheing" Russell must mean "moheling", i.e. circumcision.

⁹⁶ Russell and Dora reached Singapore in late September 1920 on their journey to China.

⁹⁷ Constance Malleon (1895–1975) was a British actress—with the stage name of Colette O'Niel—who became one of the most influential women in Russell's life after they met in 1916 and became lovers. Russell's reference to "these occasions" and Colette's removal of her pubic hair possibly indicates that Peter's miscarriage was deliberately induced, since Colette had procured several abortions while she was intimately involved with Russell before he married Dora (see SLATER, "Lady Constance Malleon, 'Colette O'Niel'" [1975], pp. 6–7).

⁹⁸ Although Russell's source outlining female genital depilation in ancient Greece is unknown, Greek women adopted the practice for cultural and sanitary reasons (see LEE, *Body, Dress, and Identity in Ancient Egypt* [2015], pp. 79–82).

⁹⁹ Lady Ottoline Morrell (1873–1938) and Russell had commenced an affair in 1911; although their physical ardour cooled during the First World War, she remained Russell's closest confidante until her death. Morrell had initially been unimpressed when Russell informed her of his relationship with Peter. "This shocks me dreadfully", she wrote privately, noting that it "shows such extraordinary want of respect and deference to Dora and to this girl" (quoted in SEYMOUR, *Ottoline Morrell* [1992],

Griffen goes on being nice to Dora, all will be well,¹⁰⁰ and in any case all will be well if and when you are pregnant again.—I am unhappy from overwork. I suppose some day this time will be over, but it passes very slowly. Harvard has asked me to go next year as a regular lecturer,¹⁰¹ but I won’t. Never again. O my Heart, I do want to be with you. I am home-sick, and sick with longing for you. I love you very deeply.—Griffen is a Dear, and Dora is lovely. I ought not to have suggested that her letter was histrionic.¹⁰² All will be well, Darling, and we will be happy together. Meantime I am having a hellish time.

Mustn’t write more—work to do.

Take care of yourself—

B

Letter 17 To Dora Russell

16.II.31

Darling

I replied to enclosed saying I couldn’t decide without consulting you.¹⁰³ In addition to an official reply to Woods (who is a dear man), I wrote a private note¹⁰⁴ saying how awkward it would be for me to be away next autumn. I wish to refuse the offer, but don’t like to without your authorization, as \$5000 (with pickings) might be very useful. (I shall be getting less for books, as no one here can afford books now.) If you think there is no undue rashness in

p. 502). But Morrell’s attitude towards Peter changed after meeting her while Russell was in America (see **Let. 20**).

¹⁰⁰ Russell’s positive view of Griffin Barry expressed here changed rapidly during the tour when he learned of Barry’s desire to claim paternity of his children with Dora (see **Let. 21**).

¹⁰¹ See the next letter.

¹⁰² See n. 65.

¹⁰³ James Woods, the chairman of Harvard’s philosophy department, wrote to Russell (through William Feakins) on 5 November 1931 asking if he would be the next William James Lecturer, a position that had been established by Edgar Pierce in 1929 that could be taken up in the fall or winter term. Russell responded to Woods on 16 November indicating that he was “strongly tempted to accept”, but that he had done “no serious work for a long time and should now have difficulty producing anything worthy of Harvard.” A “minor point”, Russell informed Woods, involved his aversion to being away from home and leaving Dora with a “very heavy burden”, something that he had promised not to do again. As he indicates in this letter to Dora, he asked Woods for more time to give a final answer pending consultation with Dora. For copies of the Russell–Woods correspondence, see Rauner Special Collection Library, Dartmouth College, Grenville Clark Papers, Series iv—Harvard Corporation, box 2, file “Harvard Corporation, Conant, James B.—1940”.

¹⁰⁴ Not located.

refusing, please cable c/o Feakins, just saying “Refuse Woods”, or, alternatively, “Accept Woods”.¹⁰⁵ But I hope you won’t think it too rash to refuse. I hate these journeys to America more and more. Love.

B

Letter 18 *To Dora Russell*

GOLDEN STATE LIMITED

Somewhere in Arizona.

21.11.31

My Darling

Just before leaving Los Angeles I got two letters from you. Your letters have been so kind and lovely, Dearest—they make me long to be at home to tell you how deeply touched I am by them.—I suppose Crompton must have his £99.¹⁰⁶ But it is going to be hard to pay Miss Otter. The man who got me out to California went broke, and paid me \$700 less than he had contracted for. Perhaps Crompton wouldn’t mind waiting till Miss Otter has been paid. Tell him that then, if necessary, I will sell stock, but I should like to wait and see whether I need.

I am sorry about Griffen’s job.¹⁰⁷ I don’t mind so *very* much about Peter’s mishap, because the financial worry would have been very great, and it is a good thing she can finish her Oxford career.

Don’t pay any attention to Roy¹⁰⁸ about Miss Erskine.¹⁰⁹ She doesn’t like him at all. And you would find her a bore.

Los Angeles is a beastly place, but I liked the poor man who couldn’t pay me. He is an unsuccessful Jew [fact!] who was a Rabbi but announced that he didn’t believe in God or immortality or capitalism. He has a wife and three children, and is desperately in love with a married lady.¹¹⁰ Scandal would finish him financially and leave his children starving. All of them are nice people,

¹⁰⁵ Dora wrote to Russell on 27 November recommending that he turn down the Harvard offer while also suggesting that both she and Russell might want to eventually move to the United States to make a living “using Woods as a stepping stone” (RA2 710, box 8.11). Russell subsequently wrote to Woods on 3 December 1931 formally refusing the James Lectureship. A telegram from Dora either asking Russell to accept or refuse the offer is not in the Russell Archives.

¹⁰⁶ It is assumed this sum related to legal fees owed to Crompton Llewelyn Davies.

¹⁰⁷ Since the two letters from Dora to which Russell refers were not located, the precise nature of Griffin Barry’s job loss cannot be determined. He had recently decided to become a writer, “a goal he pursued with characteristic indolence” (see *SLBR* 2: 305).

¹⁰⁸ Russell likely refers here to Roy Randall, one of Dora’s lovers.

¹⁰⁹ Unidentified.

¹¹⁰ Details of Herman Lissauer’s personal life mentioned here by Russell cannot be confirmed. Lissauer’s apparent secularism—in addition to the fact that he eventually left the rabbinate to work in the motion-picture industry—might be confirmed by his

and trying to behave reasonably, but all are worn out by the strain. He defended monogamy against me in debates,¹¹¹ but very half-heartedly. We spoke to half-empty halls, with the knowledge of impending bankruptcy. It was sad. I think he will end by suicide.

I saw Judge Lindsey, no longer a judge, and quite deflated. He is not a bore now. He and his wife still talk of sending their child to us.¹¹² He is pathetic. I also saw Upton Sinclair, who remains rotund and complacent; otherwise everybody I have seen is melancholy. There is a playwright named Patrick MacGill whose wife took her three children from England to Los Angeles because one was consumptive.¹¹³ He is owed £1000 on plays actually running,¹¹⁴ but can't get it. His wife and children are literally starving. The landlord is turning them out, and the immigration officer deporting them. But I got some people interested in the case, and I think it will be all right. The world is hell just now. We must love each other and stick together.

All day I have been travelling across the Arizona desert. It is uninhabited except for a few rare groups of houses, and one town, Douglas, where they

complete exclusion from Fred Rosenbaum's exhaustive history of San Francisco's Jewish community (see n. 85) and any connection to the large Beth Israel congregation that he led for ten years.

¹¹¹ Russell debated Lissauer on the question of monogamy in Los Angeles on 12 November and in San Diego on 17 November (see “Debate Chairman Named”, *Los Angeles Times*, 10 Nov. 1931, and “Russell, Rabbi Far Apart in Forensic Clash”, *San Diego Union and Daily Bee*, 18 Nov. 1931, sec. 1, p. 2. His “second and final” speaking engagement in Los Angeles (apart from his personally arranged lecture at the Arcady Hotel on 15 November) on “The International Outlook” was on 16 November (see “Russell Lecture Set for Tonight”, *Los Angeles Times*, 16 Nov. 1931, p. 16).

¹¹² It does not appear that Lindsey and his wife, Henrietta, sent their adopted daughter to Beacon Hill School. Despite Russell's unflattering portrayal here, Lindsey won election to the California Superior Court in 1934 and served with distinction until his death in 1943.

¹¹³ Irish poet Patrick MacGill (1890–1963) achieved considerable acclaim—and notoriety—after he published *Children of the Dead End* (1914), an autobiographical novel detailing the exploitation of children and unskilled workers in the agricultural and industrial sectors in Ireland and Scotland. MacGill continued to publish prose and poetry before he left with his wife, Margaret Gibbons, and their three daughters for the United States in 1930; thereafter, as Russell indicates, he never achieved the popular success he had once enjoyed.

¹¹⁴ MACGILL's “Suspense: a Play in Three Parts”, had been produced on Broadway in August 1930 to largely negative reviews.

smelt copper.¹¹⁵ This place is more like hell than even Astrakhan.¹¹⁶ Alkali desert on one side, a vast stretch of flat coarse desert grass on the other, a raging dusty wind, and vast factories belching poisonous chemical smoke so that one can hardly breathe. The people live in mean little shacks all huddled together. The men are “toughs”, the women anaemic.

I went into Mexico again for a few hours—the Rabbi¹¹⁷ took me in his car. It was lovely there and I wished I could have stayed.

I hate, *hate*, *hate* this tour. Formerly I have been cheered by the cheques, but this year they are poor.

Now I must go and dine.

Fondest Love, my Dearest.

B

Letter 19 *To Dora Russell*

THE METEOR BETWEEN ST. LOUIS AND OKLAHOMA

Nov. 23, 1931.

My Darling

Three letters from you reached me at Oklahoma, where I stayed 23 hours.¹¹⁸ It is lovely coming east, because letters are so frequent. As I have £325 in my account, I wired to you to pay Crompton’s bill,¹¹⁹ contrary to what I had written in a letter you will get presently.¹²⁰ There is a lot that is interesting in your letters. It is news to me about the legal status of Harriet.¹²¹ So far as I am concerned I would just as soon have her and the next one reckoned as mine; it is only for Barry’s sake that it is worth while to do things. Don’t ever do them on my account. I think all you say about the disposal of

¹¹⁵ The desert border town of Douglas, Arizona, was incorporated in 1901 and named after James Douglas, a pioneer in the American copper industry who located the massive Copper Queen Smelter there for the Phelps Dodge conglomerate that operated mines in Bisbee, Arizona, twenty-five miles to the west of Douglas.

¹¹⁶ Russell had visited the city of Astrakhan on the Volga River near the Caspian Sea during his tour of Russia in 1920: “Astrakan seemed to me more like hell than anything I had ever imagined. The town water-supply was taken from the same part of the river into which ships shot their refuse. Every street had stagnant water which bred millions of mosquitoes; every year one third of the inhabitants had malaria. There was no drainage system, but a vast mountain of excrement at a prominent place in the middle of the town. Plague was endemic” (*Auto.* 2: 334).

¹¹⁷ Presumably Herman Lissauer.

¹¹⁸ Russell lectured on “The Scientific Outlook” at the University of Oklahoma on 23 November 1931 (see “Power-Crazed Men Perilous, Russell Warns”, *The Oklahoma Daily*, 24 Nov. 1931, pp. 1, 2).

¹¹⁹ This telegram was not found in the Russell Archives.

¹²⁰ See the previous letter.

¹²¹ Although the precise details of the situation are difficult to ascertain because Dora’s letters to Russell are not extant, Griffin Barry sought to claim paternity of his children while Russell was away in America.

your money is quite just.—Don’t mind having Griffen at Xmas if that suits him. I suppose Peter may wish to come part of the holidays, but her illness has rather influenced her moods, I think, though probably that is temporary.

Queer place America. Just now a burly Irish-American of 48¹²² introduced himself to me, having recognized me from my pictures. He and a hotel detective had a drawing-room on the train, and invited me in for a drink. He began at once telling me of his wife’s beauty and the excellence of his four children, and in the same breath boasting of all the prostitutes he had had. He said he didn’t like nice women. He was deliberately getting drunk, and asking me to tell him why he wanted to. Said he hadn’t been to confession for three years, but would call in a priest if he were dying. At Los Angeles Dorothy Peterson, Liveright’s former love, asked me to dinner with a couple named Mair,¹²³ very nice people—he is a writer, she is half Spanish and half Irish, an earnest lady, not very young, devoted to good works. It was she who undertook the relief of the MacGill family. After a while the husband went away, whereupon Mrs Mair began to make love to me and finally begged me publicly to come home with her. I made some excuse (she was already tipsy), whereupon she vanished for a few minutes and returned so drunk that she had to be almost carried home. She is an anti-Semite married to a Jew, and hating the fact that their child is a Jew. She talks of sending the child to us. It must have a terrible lot of complexes already. (No one has been anywhere near definite about sending children to us.) I think religion, and especially Catholicism, is the cause of most of the drunkenness here.

How right of you to go for C.A. about Mac!¹²⁴ I am sure you are right about Louise Bryant;¹²⁵ she made a disagreeable impression on me.—The story about Captain Whalley is “The End of the Tether” in the volume called *Youth*.¹²⁶ If I haven’t got that volume, you might as well buy it—we ought to

¹²² Unidentified.

¹²³ The identities of the Mair family members cannot be determined.

¹²⁴ Although the precise context of Dora’s remark about these two individuals cannot be determined, Russell refers here to Clifford Allen (1889–1939) and Ramsay MacDonald. Allen had worked closely with Russell in the No-Conscription Fellowship during World War I, but the two men broke their friendship over Allen’s conciliatory stance towards Bolshevism. Allen also supported Ramsay MacDonald’s 1931 decision to form a National Government—viewed by Dora and Russell as a betrayal of the Labour Party (see n. 47).

¹²⁵ See n. 51.

¹²⁶ *The End of the Tether* was a novella written by JOSEPH CONRAD that featured the heroic character of Captain Whalley, a steamship captain who came out of retirement to invest his meager life savings in a decaying steamer plying a trade route in the Indonesian islands to attempt to guarantee the financial future of his daughter. This novella was published in *Youth* (1902), a volume that included a reprinting of

possess it.

Now that I am coming East I feel less lonely. Los Angeles is loathsome. Now I am on my way to New York,¹²⁷ which seems almost like home. This time I shall stay with the Rypins¹²⁸ (you remember him in Russia?). I stayed with them in San Francisco and had a slight affair with Mrs Rypins,¹²⁹ from whom however I heard nothing afterwards until she turned up at my debate in New York. I had not known they were there. I like them both, and shall be grateful for friendliness.

Less than four more weeks now of this country. I shall be thankful when I get onto the ship. It is dreadful to waste so much of one's few years of existence away from everybody one is fond of. Your letters are a great joy. Much much love.

Your

B.

Letter 20 *To Peter Spence*

54 RIVERSIDE DRIVE AT 78TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

Nov. 29, 1931.

My Darling—

I wrote you a beastly little letter yesterday,¹³⁰ and as soon as I had posted it I got the first nice letter I have had from you for ages—the one in which you tell of your visit to Ottoline. I had a very nice letter from her too,¹³¹ which I will send you, as she suggests. It was very delightful to get your letter, and my anger evaporated. As to the future, we can't settle anything while I am away. And I am more tied to Dora than appears on the surface; but as to that, a great deal depends on her. If she wants to live with Barry, and he can support her and two children, that will simplify the problem. Your letters until this

Conrad's most famous work, *Heart of Darkness*. (Russell's library has a 1923 printing.) Conrad exerted a profound influence on Russell; after meeting him for the first time in September 1913, he informed Ottoline Morrell that "It is impossible to say how much I loved him" (11 Sept., RA3 Rec. Acq. 69).

¹²⁷Russell travelled to New York to debate Jay Lovestone (1897–1990), former head of the Communist Party of America who had been expelled from his position in 1929, on the question "Is Proletarian Dictatorship the Road to Freedom?" on 27 November (see "Russell Warns Reds of Violence", *New York Times*, 28 Nov. 1931, p. 10).

¹²⁸See n. 76 and n. 77.

¹²⁹Russell refers here to his 1929 American tour.

¹³⁰This "beastly" letter to Peter was not located.

¹³¹In a letter to Russell dated 18 November 1931, Ottoline Morrell provided her opinion of Peter after their first meeting: "I have just had a visit from your Peter. She was very shy poor thing at first—and I was shy—but after a bit we got on very well and I liked her immensely.... She is true and loyal and honest and has lots of humour and understands you and has the qualities I imagine bring out your best side" (RA1 710, box 2.52).

last one had made me go back to what I thought before you were pregnant, that you would ultimately marry some one nearer your own age, and that it would be a mistake to build on the assumption that our relations were permanent. I am a little afraid, too, of your occasional cruelty, which would become very difficult if I were completely bound up with you. But I think this won't seem so important when I am in England; at this distance, everything gets exaggerated.

In less than a month now I shall be home—probably I shall land on the 27th. If you are at T.H. then it will be heavenly. I think all these nightmares will disappear in your arms. The miscarriage was a profound instinctive shock to us both, and for the moment it upset things, but probably that will pass.

The episode here has helped me through a bad time; I wish your men were less retiring.¹³² It is not merely an episode: if Mrs. Rypins were ever in England, I should want to see something of her. But that, if it occurs at all, will be rare and brief.

Today I go off to the Middle West again,¹³³ returning to New York only just before I sail. All this time I have been worried to death about money, but the £ is going down,¹³⁴ which will help me to pay Miss Otter. Money problems have had a good deal to do with my mood. So has fatigue.

Goodbye for now, Beloved. I am sure all will be well as soon as we are together; this separation drives one to the verge of madness. A thousand kisses and all my heart.

B.

Letter 21 *To Dora Russell*

54 RIVERSIDE DRIVE AT 78TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

29.II.31

My Darling

Your letters sound very troubled about the legal status of Harriet and the prospective child. I am willing to fall in with anything that makes matters easier for you. But if Griffen is going to have the children legally his, he must meet the financial responsibility. I am sorry, for my part, that he feels as he does, and I should have been glad to let everything go on as it was. But if he is going to claim ownership, he will have to find a means of earning money. It

¹³² See **Let. 25**.

¹³³ Russell's first stop in the Middle West was Akron, Ohio, where he delivered a lecture on "The International Outlook" on 30 November (see "Russell Assails Patriotism, Sees U.S. Domination", *Akron Beacon Journal*, 1 Dec. 1931, p. 21). He told Rachel Gleason Brooks, his missionary friend from China, that the lecture was under the auspices of H. S. Subrin (letter of 9 Nov. 1931). They arranged to meet in Akron. He told her that he, too, "enjoyed our talk immensely" (letter of 22 Dec. 1931).

¹³⁴ Between 23 October—the day Russell arrived in New York—and 27 November, the value of the pound had declined from \$3.96½ to \$3.51½.

is not fair that you should do it all.—I feel that with Griffen and Peter pulling us opposite ways, there is a danger that you and I may get more separated than we wish. You know, Darling, that I have a profound affection for you, and an immense respect. I never remain physically attracted to any woman for more than about seven years, so I cannot build any permanent relation on physical attraction. But I want my relation with you to be permanent. I want to grow old with you about, and I want John and Kate to have the example of your courage and indomitableness. And I want the stimulus of your mind. I had grievances some time back, but I have none now. I don't want to restrain you from anything you want to do, and clearly you will want to be with Griffen a good deal, but I do want you to know that I value you, and shall feel maimed if I lost you.

A man named Sidney Hook,¹³⁵ a friend of Calverton,¹³⁶ wishes definitely to send his boy to us next autumn. He is a Jew philosopher, rather nice and very intelligent. His wife doesn't want to send the boy, but he seems certain that he will win.¹³⁷ You might send him the literature. I don't know his address, but you can send it

c/o/ V. F. Calverton, 52 Morton Str. N.Y.C.

I don't know if you have this address for Calverton, but it is right. There is an article by Sidney Hook in the October *Mind*,¹³⁸ which is probably at T.H. among things waiting for me. The article is (roughly) a Communist interpretation of formal logic.

Today I go off to the Middle West again. It seems I can't get home till Dec. 27, alas.—Mrs Rypins has made my time here pleasant. She is not beautiful, but kind and generous and with a very nice nature. I get so lonely on these tours that I am grateful for kindness. I do long for home.

Goodbye for now, Darling.

B.

¹³⁵ After receiving his doctorate from Columbia University in 1927, Sidney Hook (1902–1989) spent his entire academic career at New York University. He initially embraced communism, but adopted increasingly conservative viewpoints in response to the totalitarianism practised by Stalin in the Soviet Union. Russell and Hook developed a warm friendship in the 1930s and 1940s but increasingly grew estranged as their political viewpoints diverged in the 1950s.

¹³⁶ Adopting the pseudonym “Victor Francis Calverton”, George Goetz (1900–1940) founded the independent journal *Modern Quarterly* in 1923 and became one of the leading Marxist literary and cultural critics of the interwar period in America. Calverton's daughter, Joy Corbett, had attended Beacon Hill School.

¹³⁷ Hook's wife, Carrie Katz, won the argument. Their son, John Bertrand Hook (1930–2016), did not attend Beacon Hill School in the 1932 term, presumably due to his age; he had only been born in September 1930. HOOK recalled his first face-to-face meeting with Russell at this time in a “portrait” of him in his *Out of Step*, pp. 358–9.

¹³⁸ “Experimental Logic”, *Mind* 40 (1931): 424–38.

Letter 22 *To Peter Spence*

ALL WELL IGNORE WORRIED LETTER¹³⁹

Letter 23 *To Peter Spence*

NEW YORK CENTRAL LINES, EN ROUTE

Dec. 2, 1931

My Darling

I am very sorry I got into a state—your letter would not have worried me so much if I had not been so *very* remote. I have now quite got over the effect, and feel as full of love and happiness in the thought of you as before. I am very busy and rushed these last 2 weeks, and can't write much, but be easy in your mind—all is well psychologically.

I have just been staying with the Brudno's at Cleveland,¹⁴⁰ a family of whom I am very fond. They used to consist of parents and two daughters, but one died recently, which was a terrible tragedy. I had at times thought I might have an affair with the daughter who survives, but that won't happen.¹⁴¹ They are affectionate kind people, who warm one's heart.

Now I am on my way to the University of Michigan, where I shall meet thousands of professors and lecture on the philosophy of physics.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Presumably, this is the missing “beastly little letter” of 28 November referenced by Russell in **Let. 20**. In the only letter found in the Russell Archives written by Peter to Russell during the tour, she acknowledged receipt of this telegram and the letter Russell regretted sending: “I got your cable on Wednesday and your worried letter to-day, and I am filled with remorse and a longing to comfort you. My letters much have been much worse than they seemed to me but also they were probably not so bad as they seemed to you. I know I am beastly when I am unhappy” (4 Dec. 1931, RA2 710, box 8.19).

¹⁴⁰ Russell established close friendships with Emil Brudno (1878–1958), a Cleveland physician, his wife, Mollie (née Rothenberg, 1880–1961), and their two children, Miriam (1909–1992) and Ruth (1911–1931), after lecturing in Cleveland at Mollie Brudno's invitation during his 1927 American lecture tour. Russell lectured on the international situation in Cleveland on 1 December (see “Sees Chaos After Two More Wars”, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 2 Dec. 1931, p. 5).

¹⁴¹ Russell had, in fact, commenced an affair with Miriam Brudno during his 1929 American tour, and this relationship proved to be one of the most important of Russell's life. After his marriage with Peter collapsed in 1949, he resumed his sexual relationship with Brudno, and they even appear to have contemplated marriage. These plans fell through, as Russell indicated to Brudno early in 1951: “Thank you for your letter. Every time I remember our last evening together and the plans we made, my heart aches. You are in my mind whenever I am not thinking of work, and when you are in my mind I am sad, not only because I have missed a great happiness, but also because I feel I could have helped you to bring to fruition the great possibilities that I felt in you when you were young, and that I am sure exist” (29 Jan. 1951, RA3, Rec. Acq. 1,104).

¹⁴² Russell lectured on “The Philosophy of Physics” at the University of Michigan on 2

Darling, I hope you will be able to come to T.H. during the vacation. I long to see you.

This tour is HELL. Love.

B.

Letter 24 *To Dora Russell*

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN UNION, ANN ARBOR

Dec. 3, 1931

My Darling Love

The last lap of my tour is getting rather hectic and I haven't much time for letters, but as always happens I don't mind it so much as at first. Owing to the drop in the £ I shall have earned very nearly Otter's £2000, and I can make the rest up out of income. It is lucky.—What a bad business about Griffen and the authorities!¹⁴³ They are maddening. They will of course be worse than ever now.

I saw the Brudnos. They are dears, especially Mrs. Brudno. They suffered terribly from the death of the youngest daughter. Their warmth of heart is what I like. But I don't think Miriam is as nice as she was.¹⁴⁴

I hope you and John and Kate will be able to come to Southn.¹⁴⁵ I don't know my boat, but it will arrive 26th or 27th. Don't be late this time—last time I thought you were all killed.—I do long to be home.

Goodbye Darling. Must lunch with philosophers.

Your

B.

Letter 25 *To Peter Spence*

Cleveland

Dec. 4, 1931.

My Darling Love

I haven't had time to write you a really proper letter since the one in which you told me of your visit to Ottoline. She wrote to me at the same time, a charming letter, full of your praises—obviously having liked you much better

December (see "Philosophy Upset by New Theories in Modern Physics", *The Michigan Daily*, 3 Dec. 1931, p. 2).

¹⁴³Dora's letter is not extant. Griffen Barry's problem with the UK authorities stemmed from his neglect to register as an alien.

¹⁴⁴This was not the sentiment Russell conveyed privately to Miriam Brudno herself after Russell stayed with her family in Cleveland during the tour. Describing the "exquisite joy" of their private encounter on 4 December, Russell claimed that "I found myself thinking that I loved you more than anyone except my children.... I think I love you as much as I have ever loved any woman, but there is no pain in my love, except when I feel that your spirit is dimmed and you are avoiding suffering that might make you great" (5 Dec. 1931, RA3 Rec. Acq. 1104).

¹⁴⁵Southampton, Russell's original planned port of arrival from America.

than she did Dora. I am so relieved that you liked her.—I wonder how matters have been going with you and Papineau, also you and Baker.¹⁴⁶ I found Mrs. Rypins comforting when I was feeling low, but I doubt if I should have cared for her if I had met her in Europe. I get a sense of being a lovelorn orphan in a cold world when I wander round this place.—The day before yesterday I spoke in the University of Michigan to 2000 people on the philosophy of physics; yesterday I came back to Cleveland by air. It was the first time I had flown, and I thought it delightful. I love the Brudno’s, mother and daughter equally, or perhaps the mother rather more; they are really delightful warm-hearted people.

Barry is making fusses about the legal status of his children. I think it may lead to Dora’s living with him altogether, which would simplify matters between you and me.

Dear Heart, don’t worry about the nasty letters I wrote. I have got over the mood now. I love you, my Darling.

B.

Letter 26 *To Peter Spence*

THE NEW DUNLAP HOTEL, JACKSONVILLE, ILLINOIS

Dec. 10, 1931

My Darling Love

Today, after a long time without a letter, I got yours of Nov. 24, and I was *very* glad of it—it was a dear letter. I don’t mind about Papineau, having taken the only medicine for jealousy that I know, which is to give cause for it oneself.¹⁴⁷ My existence here is unreal, except for the cheques. I have emotions limited to the duration of the tour. It is very hard work, and I hate the loneliness; thank God it is nearly over. This will probably be my last letter. I sail on the *S.S. Adriatic* (White Star)¹⁴⁸ on Dec. 18, for *Liverpool*, where I shall probably arrive early on Dec. 27. It seems to me, as I am not arriving at Southampton, that you and I might spend the night in London—~~or if I arrive very late on the 26th.~~ If you approve, you can send a wireless to the boat, say on the 24th, and I will send you details of time of arrival when I know them. I

¹⁴⁶Russell appears to refer here to one of Peter’s lovers about whom no biographical information can be located. Papineau is mentioned again by Russell in his correspondence with Peter during his 1935 tour of Scandinavia. See STEVENSON, “No Poverty, Much Comfort, Little Wealth” (2011), p. 115. The Baker to whom Russell refers is probably the biologist, John R. Baker (1900–1984), with whom Peter corresponded in the early 1930s (letters in RA).

¹⁴⁷Russell presumably refers here to his visit to Helen MacLeod Fiske mentioned later in this letter.

¹⁴⁸Commissioned in 1906, the *Adriatic* was the second White Star Line passenger liner bearing the name. White Star withdrew the vessel from transatlantic service in 1933 and scrapped it in 1935.

shall arrive at Euston.¹⁴⁹ The publicity of Telegraph House will be much more bearable if we have had a night alone first. When I get on to the boat I shall begin to feel human again. Consider my existence: 3 days ago I got into the train at 11 at night,¹⁵⁰ and travelled till 12 next day; this brought me to the University of Illinois, which has 20,000 undergraduates; there I conversed with professors, lectured,¹⁵¹ and conversed again till midnight; next morning I had 6 hours in the train, which landed me among a crowd of Jews,¹⁵² to whom I gave a heartfelt lecture on the topic “Is civilization becoming intolerable?” After the lecture, more conversation; then the night in the train and till one o’clock today travelling, and now a girls’ school¹⁵³ which has sent a special message that I am not to offend against religion or morals.¹⁵⁴ Tomorrow 24 hours journey to Toronto. More Jews there, and then New York, interviews and acting for the movies;¹⁵⁵ then more rapid journeys,¹⁵⁶ finally a debate against a Rabbi¹⁵⁷ and then the boat.

¹⁴⁹ Euston railway station in North Central London.

¹⁵⁰ See n. 158.

¹⁵¹ Russell’s lecture on 8 December did not take place at the University of Illinois (Urbana—Champaign). He was a last-minute replacement for Lincoln Steffens, the noted American journalist—he had recently contracted bronchitis—in the Hillel Open Forum series held in the Champaign high school auditorium (see “Civilization on Brink, Says Noted Briton”, *Urbana Daily Courier*, 9 Dec. 1931, p. 2). Russell’s lecture topic was “The Outlook for Civilization”.

¹⁵² The location of this lecture delivered on 9 December cannot be determined.

¹⁵³ Russell spoke on 10 December at the MacMurray College for Women, founded originally in 1846 by the Methodist Episcopal Church as the Illinois Conference Female Academy.; his lecture topic was “The Outlook for Civilization” (see “MacMurray College Notes”, *Jacksonville Daily Journal*, 6 Dec. 1931, p. 7).

¹⁵⁴ This communication is not in the Russell Archives.

¹⁵⁵ It is assumed Russell refers here to his filmed re-creation of his 17 December debate—see n. 157.

¹⁵⁶ The full nature of these “rapid journeys” after Russell left Toronto cannot be identified. Russell later informed Celeste Holden that “at the last moment, Feakins got a number of fresh engagements for me” (20 Dec. 1931, RA3 Rec. Acq. 254) before his 17 December debate in New York City, but only one additional speaking engagement in Reading, Pennsylvania, on 14 December could be located (see “Russell, Forum Speaker Tonight”, *Reading Times*, 14 Dec. 1931, p. 14).

¹⁵⁷ Russell debated the question “Is Modern Morality a Failure?” with Rabbi Stephen S. Wise (1874–1949), a leading figure in Reform Judaism and the American Zionist movement, in Carnegie Hall on 17 December 1931 (see “Russell Debates ‘New Morality’ with Dr. Wise”, *New York Herald Tribune*, 18 Dec. 1931, p. 21). Russell described this debate as “great fun, the best I have ever had” (to Mollie Brudno, 21 Dec. 1931, RA3 Rec. Acq. 1104). In the same letter to Brudno, Russell reported that the “next day, until it was time for me to sail, he and I acted the debate over again for the movies.” No record of this film can be traced. The Russell–Wise filmed debate was the first of “a series of short films in which prominent men debate current subjects” in New York (see “Now They’re Debating”, *Detroit Free Press*, 30 Dec.

I had 2 days’ gap while I was in the Middle West, so I went to see the Iowa lady¹⁵⁸—I know you told me you would never forgive me if I did, but I think you will. She turned out quite unlike her letters—sincere and earnest and very lonely. I should have been needlessly unkind if I had not gone, and I liked her very much. I was there 2 days and a night. She has retired to a remote country place, where she plants trees and lives a bucolic life.

1931, p. 13). RA has correspondence between Wise and the debate organizer and Wise’s notes for the debate (Rec. Acq. 1,733).

¹⁵⁸ Russell’s 1931 pocket diary identifies the “Iowa lady” as Helen MacLeod Fiske (1894–1983) of Iowa Falls, Iowa; she had moved to that city with her infant son following the death of her husband, Douglas A. Fiske, a prominent Minneapolis lawyer, in 1928. Fiske attended Cornell College in Iowa, copyrighted a play—“Isolde’s Husband: a Play in 3 Acts”—in 1934, and worked as a journalist in Iowa Falls for the remainder of her life. Based on Russell’s text in this letter, it appears that Fiske wrote multiple letters to him before the tour that are not found in the Russell Archives; their content seemed to displease Peter based on her apparent threat prohibiting him from visiting Fiske during his tour. The timing of his visit to Fiske cannot be determined with complete accuracy. He wrote **Let. 25** on 4 December from Cleveland, and he lectured in Detroit on 5 December on “The Future of Civilization” (see “Russell Tells of World Woes”, *The Detroit News*, 6 Dec. 1931, p. 16). It seems probable that he left Detroit on 5 December after lecturing and travelled by train to Iowa Falls to visit Fiske. His reference in this letter to getting into the train on 7 December at 11:00 p.m. might indicate his departure from Iowa Falls to reach the University of Illinois the next day. It does not appear that Russell had the opportunity to visit Fiske as he travelled from California to New York before he spoke in Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois beginning 30 November in Akron. Ultimately, his statement in this letter that “I liked her very much” appears to be an understatement. Douglas Fiske, Jr., Helen’s son, recalls Russell’s visit in 1931: “Oh, I remember Bertie quite well. I could hardly understand him because of his British accent, you know, but I remember him being here with his grey tweed suit on and his white hair. And he wanted to marry my mom and take us both back to England, and she didn’t want to go because she had just remodelled this house and she liked to work outdoors. So she turned him down—she didn’t want to go to England” (telephone interview by M. D. Stevenson, 26 June 2017). This account is supported in part by a previously unknown letter Russell sent to Mrs. Fiske on 24 January 1932, after he returned to England, in which he encourages her writing career as a playwright and asks her to move to England to be near him: “My vision of our future, I hope, will seem to you attractive. I imagine you living in London, and myself with you three days a week. I should get you to know all my friends, and to go about with me until you had your own circle. We should be lovers (without that, no important relation between a man and woman is possible), but the really important thing would be that we should fructify each other’s ambition: we should both write better and be more productive because of each other. I think I can promise that I should be mentally stimulating; indeed, you have already some evidence of that. And I know you could do wonderful things for me” (digital copy of letter provided to Stevenson by Douglas Fiske, Jr.). Russell also offered to employ Fiske as a secretary for \$1,000 per year to supplement her writing income. As Fiske’s son indicates, she eventually declined Russell’s entreaty—no doubt a wise decision given the turbulent state of his life then.

Don't bother about whether you get ploughed, though of course it would be better not to be. If you are, I shall take all the blame on myself.

I long to be with you, and also with John and Kate. Loneliness makes me nearly mad when I am here. Goodbye Beloved. I am *so* glad you are really well again. Love and many kisses.

B

Letter 27 *To Dora Russell*

THE NEW DUNLAP HOTEL, JACKSONVILLE, ILLINOIS

Dec. 10, 1931

My Darling Love

It is ages since I have had a letter from you, but I have been moving even more rapidly than usual, which accounts for it. I shall sail on the *Adriatic* (White Star) on Dec. 18, arriving at *Liverpool* Dec. 27, so I shan't get to T.H. till Dec. 28. This is the best I can do; all the fast boats avoid Xmas on the Atlantic. I have only a week more, so I shan't write again. Will you get Harrington to order my weekly $\frac{1}{4}$ lb of Golden Mixture¹⁵⁹ from now till further notice?

The tour has grown fast and furious towards the end, which is good financially, but very tiring. I forgot whether I told you that in California I dined with the MacAdoo's, Wilson's daughter and son-in-law. I rather liked her, but he is a prize humbug: a courtly Southern gentleman of the old school, sprung from the slums; so dry that he offers nothing to his dinner guests, but so fond of young ladies that he takes them up in an aeroplane with a bottle of whiskey to facilitate seduction.¹⁶⁰ They insisted on using my title: Mrs. MacAdoo met me in the hall, to beseech me to let her use it.—The day before yesterday I went to a place I had never heard of to speak, and after getting there discovered that it contained an enormous university.¹⁶¹—I loathe being here, and long for home. Goodbye, Darling. Much love.

B.

P.S. If you have any photos of the children taken last year or this, please send some to

Mrs. Emil Brudno, 2512 Euclid Heights Boulevard, Cleveland O.

I promised them to her.

¹⁵⁹ Russell's preferred pipe tobacco brand, manufactured by Fribourg and Tryer.

¹⁶⁰ Russell seems to accurately capture several of William Gibbs McAdoo's biographical characteristics here, including growing up impoverished in Georgia and becoming one of the leading temperance advocates in inter-war America. Since 1922, McAdoo and his wife owned a Los Angeles mansion in the Hollywood Hills at 5 Berkeley Square, a "reliable site to entertain the various elite personages that passed through Southern California", which no doubt included Russell during his time in California (see CHASE, "William Gibbs McAdoo" [2008], p. 306).

¹⁶¹ Presumably, this refers to Russell's visit to the University of Illinois on 8 December.

Letter 28 To Peter Spence

ROYAL YORK HOTEL TORONTO

Dec. 12, 1931

My Darling Love

I hadn't meant to write you again but I got such a sad letter from you today that I must—It was about your mother and Papineau both being unkind.¹⁶² Don't worry about your allowance. I can make it up to you while you stay at Oxford, after which there should be no difficulty. Your mother may calm down after a while, when she finds she has no power over you. I do think Papineau is rather horrid—even when very drunk he ought not to make jokes about hemorrhages.¹⁶³—Darling, we will have a night together in London before going to T.H. Send me a wireless, and *don't forget to give your address* for my answer. I hate to think that just when you are unhappy you will be getting horrid letters from me. I hope my telegram will have reassured you.

Here is my time-table for today:¹⁶⁴

- 2.30 a.m. Waked from sleep in train by telegram saying journalist would interview me at 7.
- 7 a.m. Interview during breakfast¹⁶⁵
- 8.15–9.15 Bath and shave
- 9.15–11 Interview with journalists and parsons
- 11–11.30 Read your letter and others, and send wires.
- 11.30–12 Interview with writer of enclosed, who drove the car so badly when I spoke at the Charles Fox Club.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Russell appears here to refer to Peter's 4 December letter quoted in n. 139. She noted that “Oh my Beloved how I long for you—it is hateful to have my mother abusing you. I enclose a letter I had from her yesterday—it is worthy to be included in a text book on ‘The Family.’” It is assumed that Peter's lover Papineau was mentioned in the attached letter from her mother; this attachment is not found in the Russell Archives. Peter had earlier written to Dora indicating that her mother had “implored me to give up ‘those horrible Russells’” (29 Nov. 1931, RA3 1027, box 8.04).

¹⁶³ Russell inserted a “?” over this word, presumably uncertain of its spelling.

¹⁶⁴ For a detailed overview of Russell's 12 December speaking engagement in Toronto, see MASON, “‘The Sins of Civilization’” (1983), which reprints the Toronto *Globe's* report: “Russell Sees War as ‘Darkest Sin’, He Tells Audience”, 14 Dec. 1931, p. 1.

¹⁶⁵ See “Doles When Given to Rich Respectable, Says Russell”, *Toronto Daily Star*, 12 Dec. 1931, p. 1. R. E. Knowles (1868–1946) conducted this interview in Russell's dining car when he arrived in Toronto.

¹⁶⁶ No enclosure to this letter is extant in the Russell Archives, and the identity of the writer to whom Russell refers cannot be determined. The Charles Fox Club might refer to Brooks's, the famous Whig political club in London that claimed Charles James Fox (1749–1806), the influential abolitionist and first Foreign Secretary in British history, among its early members, although no reference to a speaking engagement by Russell at Brooks's is known.

- 12-2.15 Lunch with 30 Professors, who put me through a viva¹⁶⁷
 2.15-3.15 Autographing books in a book shop
 3.15-4 Wash and brush up
 4-5.30 Tea-party of 200 women, with another quiz
 5.30-6 More telegrams, and taking ticket for tomorrow
 6-6.30 Write to you
 6.30-8 Dress, dine and prepare lecture
 8-10.15 Lecture, and answering questions
 10.15-11 Party at women's press club
 11-bed Party with writer of enclosed.

For this I get £100, but I think I deserve it. It is not an exceptional day. If my letters have seemed inadequate, you will understand. I can *just* get through each day, and that is all, except on the rare occasions when I have no lecture.

The people of Canada differ from those of U.S. by being more snobbish.¹⁶⁸ I can't get them to drop my title—nothing else about me interests them.

Don't be too sad, Darling. All will be well when we meet. I am sad when I have time—it is less unpleasant not having time—but it is only due to separation—All my love, Beloved.

B

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¹⁶⁷ "Bertrand Russell arrived in the city on a lecture tour. Professor [George S.] Brett asked him if he thought a course in Symbolic Logic should be provided for graduate students. Russell replied that there should be someone on the staff capable of teaching such a course!" (SLATER, *Minerva's Aviary*, p. 367).

¹⁶⁸ In "On Snobbery", written during or soon after (see n. 26) his Toronto visit, Russell stated: "Not that snobbery is confined to England: it is almost more in evidence in the self-governing Dominions and is by no means unknown to America" (*New York American*, 30 Dec. 1931, p. 13; in *Mortals and Others*, p. 48).

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