

# **BERTRAND RUSSELL ON EDUCATION**

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Joe Park

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**JOE PARK**

Volume 7

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published in 1963

This edition first published in 2013

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

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*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-415-65780-8 (Set)

eISBN: 978-0-203-07241-7 (Set)

ISBN: 978-0-415-66212-3 (Volume 7)

eISBN: 978-0-203-07265-3 (Volume 7)

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*Bertrand Russell*  
*on Education*

BY  
JOE PARK

*London*  
GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD  
RUSKIN HOUSE MUSEUM STREET

FIRST PUBLISHED IN GREAT BRITAIN  
IN 1964

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN  
*in 11 on 12 point Baskerville type*  
BY UNWIN BROTHERS LIMITED  
WOKING AND LONDON

## *Preface*

The John Dewey Society for the Study of Education and Culture is committed, as its name indicates, to furthering the study of the complex of events that relates the processes of education to the larger culture. It seeks to obtain the kind of knowledge that will serve to strengthen the institution of free education in a democratic society.

Since 1937, the Society has sponsored publication of a series of yearbooks that have dealt with the urgent problems that have confronted both teachers and schools. It has also published the 'John Dewey Lecture Series', in which creative thinkers from various intellectual disciplines have concerned themselves with important questions of educational policy.

With the present volume, the Society expands its previous publishing programme by inaugurating the 'Studies in Educational Theory' series. Prompting this new undertaking is the assumption that to understand our present condition and appraise our prospects, it is essential that we comprehend the basic ideas that have shaped the minds of contemporary men. One way in which to reach this understanding is to make a critical assessment of the work of the truly seminal thinkers of our era.

Although Bertrand Russell has frequently made forceful and barbed criticisms of various aspects of John Dewey's philosophy, the John Dewey Society has found a very compelling—and very simple—reason for choosing him as the subject for the first volume of the new series: he is one of the truly vigorous and creative thinkers of the twentieth century. In the role of the hair-shirt philosopher, he has dared to raise and pursue questions that have been avoided by more timid or circumspect men. The price of avoiding a confrontation with the world of ideas he has so courageously expounded is our self-diminution. As Maurice Edelman recently put it, in his review of one of Russell's books, 'It is . . . possible that Bertrand Russell, this frail flesh-and-blood link with our more civilized past, may have supplied the basic wisdom for man's survival beyond the Nuclear Age.'



Although scholars from many disciplines have turned their attention to Russell's work and appraised its significance for a number of fields, and an extensive literature on him has emerged, no thorough study on Russell's contribution to education—an area to which he devoted no small part of his energies—has yet appeared. Professor Joe Park's book, based as it is on interviews with Russell as well as diligent research in his writings and the sources of his thought, will do much to remedy this deficiency and will enlighten all who think seriously about education.

The 'Studies in Educational Theory' series of the John Dewey Society is sponsored through its Commission on Education, consisting of the following members: Archibald Anderson, University of Illinois; R. Freeman Butts, Teachers College, Columbia University; Robert E. Mason, University of Pittsburgh; Harold Shane, University of Indiana; William D. Stanley, University of Illinois; and Lindley J. Stiles, University of Wisconsin.

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*Washington University*  
*Chairman*  
*Commission on Publications*

## *Acknowledgements*

The author is particularly indebted to Dean Payson S. Wild, Vice-President and Dean of Faculties of Northwestern University, and to the Graduate School of Northwestern University for financial support which enabled him to travel to Great Britain during the summer of 1961, where he interviewed Lord Bertrand Russell, Dora Russell, and several other prominent British educators. These interviews enabled the author to correct a number of erroneous conceptions and impressions, and they furnished much valuable material used in preparing the description of the Beacon Hill School and in evaluating Russell's influence in educational circles.

Mr Toby Weaver of the Ministry of Education in London and Miss Dorothy Gardner, Institute of Education, The University of London, located Dora Russell. Mr Weaver made available the library at the Ministry of Education, and through his efforts an article written by Dora Russell describing the Beacon Hill School was discovered.

Special thanks are due to Lord Russell for his generous hospitality and for granting an extended interview. Dora Russell, likewise, most graciously allowed the author to interview her at length.

Professor B. J. Chandler of the School of Education, Northwestern University, read Chapter II and provided numerous helpful suggestions. Dr Eli Krumbein of the same institution read much of the manuscript and advised the author on several occasions. Neither of these persons, however, is responsible for any errors of fact or judgement. This responsibility falls upon the author.

JOE PARK



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