



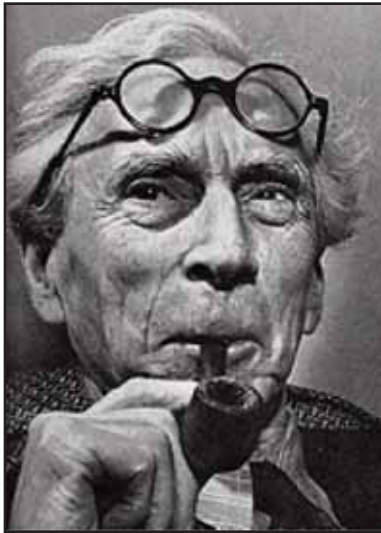
The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Center for Biographical Research  
Brown Bag Biography

Thursday, January 15, 2009

12:00 noon to 1:15 p.m.

Henke Hall 325, 1800 East-West Road

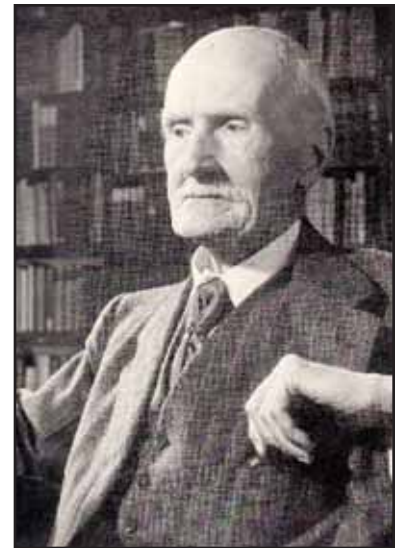
# William Bruneau



## *Liberals Under Stress: Bertrand Russell and Gilbert Murray, 1900–1956*

Bertrand Russell and Gilbert Murray were fast friends from 1900 until Murray's death in 1956. At the beginning both were self-described liberals and members of the British Liberal party. The Great War almost destroyed their friendship, and caused Russell and Murray to reconsider the "practice" of liberalism. Russell became a rootin'-tootin' socialist by 1915, and a pacifist and Labour party member. Murray on the other hand took up organized internationalist causes all through the War and afterward, remaining a faithful Liberal party member even as that party slowly faded away.

Under the stresses of war, social change, and economic upheaval, neither man moved far from his earliest liberal principles—but they diverged radically on the application of those principles. Biographers have to figure out how far their subjects' lives are driven by ideas and principle, and how far by emotional preferences and by changing physical circumstance. The Russell-Murray relation sheds clear light on that fundamental biographical question. Incidentally, it has much to say to North American and European politicians in a decade of war and depression not very different from the period 1914–1939.



**William Bruneau**, Professor Emeritus of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia, is the author most recently of *Jean Coulthard: A Life in Music* (Ronsdale, 2005), and two chapters in *Gilbert Murray Reassessed*, edited by Christopher Stray (Oxford UP, 2007). He is currently editing volume 18 of the *Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, and is at work on a history of UBC.

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