of those who stood away from the polls (there was a 60 per cent turnout) came from this section, except in the areas where the Communists had influence.

D M K Repays Swatantra Debt

The email but significant Tamil population in the constituency was much woed — Chittoor is only some fifty miles from the Madras border. The D M K arrived in strength. They took up their usual postures of Tamil chauvinism and made much of the fact that the Swatantra support had won them Tiruchengode and that debts had to be paid. They also ran a rather strong smear campaign that Sanjeeva Reddy was a great protagonist of Hindi and had, therefore, to be humbled.

Despite Munshi’s protest and Rajaji’s ingenuous disavowals, a D M K Swatantra alliance is consolidating and developing. It should be recalled that it was on the advice of Rajaji that Annadurai, about a decade ago, broke away from Nai-ker’s D K and set up his party: It is strongly rumoured that he will use his very considerable prestige to persuade the D M K, at a later stage, to establish more formal organisa­tional links with the Swatantra and even later to merge with it, Rajaji knows well enough — and Annadurai and his colleagues know that he knows that the D M K uses the Dravidasthan slogan and its radical economic programme merely to ride the wave of Tamil chauvinism. He believes that given time and patience, the Ganatantra Parishad change of labels could also be used as a pointer to the future for the D M K.

The Congress also mobilised its Tamil stalwarts: Kamaraj, Bhakta­vatsalam and T T K — who pleaded for the plane time, or the fare blandly as he would if he were ask­ing for the plane time, or the fare. But in every effort and surprisingly little dissension, it was not even able to hold its own.

One point has to be said in favour of its main campaigners, particularly Sanjeeva Reddy. While never campaigning together with the Con­munists, they took care never to embarrass the latter. Actually, one or two Congress campaigners who tried to make out that they were as good anti-Communists as the Swa­tantra were tactfully removed from the scene.

The general Congress answer to the Swatantra sneer that the Con­gress acceptance of Communist support was unethical was the one given by T T K on the eve of poll­ing: “the alternative to Congress leadership today, he said, could only be Communism or any movement which was leftist to the Congress and not to any movement that was rightist and that, too, to a party like the Swatantra Party, which joined hands with the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, which did not depend upon the apparatus of democracy to get into the saddle of power but which believed purely in the fascist methods”. (Hindu, “August 24).

A pointer. Not, of course, the only or even the most crucial pointer. But a bifurcated opposition is bound to have a polarising impact on a heterogenous ruling party. And that is the true meaning of Chittoor.

Book Review

Bertrand Russell Speaks His Mind

Parthasarathi Dasgupta

WHENEVER Bertrand Russell speaks his mind (which has been often over the past sixty-five years) he creates a stir in the intellectual, and strangely enough, in the non-intellectual world as well. The present volume* will prove to be no exception, though perhaps all of what he says here has appeared in one form or the other in his past writings. The book consists of the thirteen dialogues between Mr Woodrow Wyatt and Mr Russell that were filmed for television in 1959. The dialogues are in the form of questions and answers and the subjects range from philosophy, religion, war and pacifism and power, to happiness, the role of the individual, the H-Bomb, and the possible future of mankind.

The range is considerable, and Mr Russell whose joy in uninhibited dis­* Bertrand Russell Speaks His Mind


cussion is well-known warms up right from the beginning, and he replies to the questions in his inimitable way with quips and jokes even in the most austere moments. The questions that Mr Wyatt puts forward are varied in their nature. Some are commonplace and yet many have a deceptive appearance in them. For example, he begins these dialogues by plumping the uncomfortable question 'What is philosophy' and asks it as blandly as he would if he were asking for the plane time, or the fare from London to New York. Mr Russell is not to be put off, as he says, ‘... philosophy consists of speculations about matters where exact knowledge is not yet possible,’ and on the difference between science and philosophy he says, ‘... you’d say science is what we know and philosophy is what we don’t know. For that reason questions are perpetually passing over from philoso-

THE ECONOMIC WEEKLY
Perverted Nationalism

It is stated by way of preface that there was no prepared script and so the dialogues are quite spontaneous. There seems to be no order and plan other than that each dialogue runs for some ten pages. Each answer generates its own questions and all this makes the reading lively. There is so much of wisdom in every page that it is perhaps not possible to single out any dialogue as definitely more outstanding than the others. However, the one which is perhaps the most interesting is that on nationalism.

Mr Russell distinguishes between the two aspects of nationalism, the cultural and the political. While he advocates the former he considers the other as unmitigated evil. To him the State is primarily an organization for killing foreigners. The State has also the power of propaganda, there is propaganda control over education with an idea to make people think what the State thinks and that primarily consists in loving one's own nation and thinking ill of other nations. Inculcating the view that one's own country is always right in everything whereas other countries are always wrong. Russell even recalls a verse that he was made to learn as a child — "Confound their knavish tricks, frustrate their politics and make them fall!" and emphasises how a person is taught from his very childhood what a grand thing it is to kill foreigners.

We, coming from a nation which is not much integrated emotionally or otherwise, find this rather strange. Goaded by the many disruptive forces operating in our country and burdened with the problem of general poverty our government have possibly forgotten to instruct our schools to teach us to hate foreigners. The kind of nationalism that is not much integrated emotionally or otherwise, find this rather strange. Goaded by the many disruptive forces operating in our country and burdened with the problem of general poverty our government have possibly forgotten to instruct our schools to teach us to hate foreigners.

The Solution: World Government

What then is the solution? How are we to make sure that the human race survives? Russell does not suggest that we take recourse to religion and start looking for the 'higher things' in life. To him, the only way to ensure man's survival is to establish a world government with a monopoly of all the important weapons of war, a world government whose business it should be to take account of all conflicts between different states.

With the possible exception of the first dialogue on philosophy, the topics chosen for discussion were those that interest not only Russell but also the public. There is no dialogue, for example, on the nature of mathematics, a subject on which Russell spent the greater part of the first twenty years of his intellectual life. May be Russell is somewhat inhibited because his audience is the general public, but from the passion in his views and the note of urgency in his remarks one cannot help feeling that he has undergone a complete change, a change which has been gradual. Writing as far back as 1910 in his "Philosophical Essays", Russell had said, "In a world so full of evil and suffering, retirement into the cloister of contemplation, to the enjoyment of delights, which, however noble, must always be for the few only, cannot but appear as a somewhat selfish refusal to share the burden imposed upon others by accidents in which justice plays no part. Have any of us the right, we ask, to withdraw from present evils, to leave our fellowmen unaided, while we live a life which, though arduous and austere, is yet plainly good in its own nature?"

What in 1910 was perhaps a doubt appears now to be a certainty, and at 87 (at the time of the interview), he seems somehow to shy away from discussions on abstractions. At any rate, the occasion presents a wonderful opportunity, and he lashes out at his television viewers about their parochialism, prejudices, fanaticisms, and taboos, conventions against which he has been battling for some forty years now. He is often pungent; "...only about one per cent of my writings are concerned with sex, but the conventional public is so obsessed with sex that it hasn't noticed the other ninety-nine per cent of my writings." Often he appears to be cynical: "The human race has survived owing to inefficiency, but inefficiency is now diminishing, and therefore the human race is threatened with extinction." And as always, he is liberal in the best English tradition; "The East-West tension which is threatening us all in the most terrible fashion is mainly due to the fanatical belief in communism and anti-communism."

Enlightening Realisation

Throughout these dialogues one can discern a note of angry futility in Russell's tone as he moves from subject to subject and brings out the many many defects that are in us and in the systems that we have created, defects which he feels can easily be removed by a little bit of reason, which somehow seems to elude us. And as we read through every dialogue and come to the very end we are struck by a sudden realization which, though commonplace, seems now to be very rich and very
rare. The world, we realise, is indeed yet very Imperfect.

As I have said in the beginning, by way of content there is nothing new in this book. All the questions are old; and the answers that Russell gives are very old too. He has said them many times elsewhere. But what is novel about this little volume is its form, the form of questions and answers. It is not like the common exposition in which the author makes a number of propositions and tries to illustrate and substantiate them with examples of his own. In such expositions the general reader has nearly always a large number of questions which the author does not anticipate. Wyatt is one of us, and as Russell goes on expressing his views, Wyatt puts forth questions and counterquestions which would have occurred to most of us. It is perhaps in this sense that the book is valuable. And when one adds to this that the original television viewers could observe Russell as the dialogues were under way, one hopes that may be now, the public will have a true image of the last of the rationalists, the image of a brave old man, who has loved the world not only well but wisely too.

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