

SRI BHAGAWAN MAHAVEER JAIN EVENING COLLEGE

(AFFILIATED TO BANGALORE CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)



IVth Semester BCom English Notes

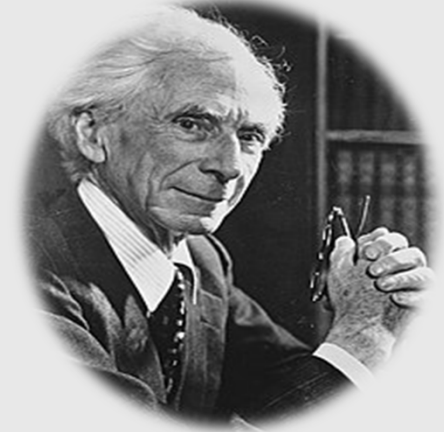
Chapter-7

NATIONALISM – AN INTERVIEW

-Bertrand Russell

Prepared by: Sangeeth SG

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)



- Bertrand Arthur William Russell (1872–1970) was a British philosopher, logician, essayist and social critic best known for his work in mathematical logic and analytic philosophy.
- In the early 20th century, Russell led the British "revolt against idealism". He is considered one of the founders of analytic philosophy along with his predecessor Gottlob Frege, colleague G. E. Moore and protégé Ludwig Wittgenstein.
- Political and social activism occupied much of Russell's time for most of his life. Russell remained politically active almost to the end of his life, writing to and exhorting world leaders and lending his name to various causes.
- Like George Orwell, Russell was a champion of freedom of opinion and an opponent of both censorship and indoctrination. In 1928 he wrote: “The fundamental argument for freedom of opinion is the doubtfulness of all our belief... when the State intervenes to ensure the indoctrination of some doctrine, it does so because there is no conclusive evidence in favor of that doctrine .. It is clear that thought is not free if the profession of certain opinions make it impossible to make a living.”

Concerns Raised in the Chapter

- Question about nationalism.
- The danger of nationalism.
- The solution: World Government

Historical Point of View



- The Cold War was a period of geopolitical tension between the Soviet Union and the United States and their respective allies, the Eastern Bloc and the Western Bloc, after World War II. The period is generally considered to span the 1947 Truman Doctrine to the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union. The term "cold" is used because there was no large-scale fighting directly between the two superpowers. The conflict was based around the ideological and geopolitical struggle for global influence by the two powers, following their temporary alliance and victory against Nazi Germany in 1945.

- In 1955, Russell released the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, co-signed by Albert Einstein and nine other leading scientists and intellectuals, a document which led to the first of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs in 1957. In 1957-58, Russell became the first president of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which advocated unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain.

- In the interview Russell is declaring his political stance against the cold war and the air of unrest, the call for a new destructive atmosphere created by the tension between communist and anti-communist nations.

Question about Nationalism

- Nationalism is the identification with one's own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations.
- 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, in 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 emphasizes how a person is taught from his very childhood what a grand thing it is to kill foreigners.

The Danger of Nationalism

- Nationalism poses a very great problem. While nations have drawn apart on account of ideological differences, they have also come together by virtue of ideological commonness, so much so that possibly today an average American hates a leftist countryman more than he hates a fellow Canadian, who in fact he does not hate at all.
- The countries which are intensely nationalistic, like those in the Middle East or the newly born nations in Africa are so puny that when disturbances arise in them, what finally emerges is the struggle between the two great blocks.
- Russell admits that it is the tension between the Communist and the non-communist nations that is the greatest threat to world peace.
- It is to these concerns that he points in detail at his discussions on 'Communism and Capitalism', 'The H-Bomb' and 'The possible future of mankind'.
- What does is the fact that each has the capacity to kill off the other, and with all the military build up. the chances of a war, and with it those of total annihilation, go on increasing.

The Solution : World Government

- 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.

Further Insights into Bertrand Russell and the Context of the Interview

➤ A Conversation with Bertrand Russell (1952):

<https://youtu.be/fb3k6tB-Or8>

➤ CAPITALISM, SOCIALISM & COMMUNISM EXPLAINED SIMPLY:

<https://youtu.be/53vmQNVBm0w>

Thank you

- For queries contact :cupofrumi@gmail.com