

Bertrand Russell Society Formed

The first (organizing) meeting of the Bertrand Russell Society was held in New York City on February 8th, 9th, and 10th, 1974. The Society has two major objectives: to make Russell's views better known, and to promote causes he believed in.

The Society is developing programmes for furthering Russell's purposes. Present areas of interest include: the promotion of Russell's writings; the encouragement of new scholarly and popular writings on Russell's life and thought; applications and misapplications of science; disarmament and peace; human rights; the importance of rational thinking; Russell's ideas as attractive alternatives to student mysticism, cynicism, apathy, and alienation; Russell's views as aids to self-understanding; Russell's thoughts on power, politics, and government. In sum, the Bertrand Russell Society is interested in making better known - and in making greater use of - Russell's insights into the human heart, the human mind, and the human predicament.

At its meeting the Society adopted a constitution, set up committees, and elected the following officers: Peter G. Cranford, of Augusta, President; Robert Davis, of Los Angeles, Vice-President; Katharine Tait, of Falls Village, Connecticut, Treasurer; and Jack Pitt, of Fresno, Secretary. The Society is a democratic one. According to its constitution, ultimate power resides in the membership. 10% of the members can request a vote of the membership at any time on any issue.

The Bertrand Russell Society owes its existence primarily to one man's enthusiasm for Russell's writings; he is now the Society's President. Peter Cranford is a 65-year old clinical psychologist in private practice. He came upon Russell's *Conquest of Happiness* by chance, in a bookstore, and found that people benefited greatly from reading it. (Thus far, he has given away 600 copies to friends and patients.) This led Cranford into reading more Russell. He would like to see *The Conquest of Happiness* put into every hotel room, alongside the Gideon Society's Bible. The two books might not be altogether strange bedfellows.

Dr. Cranford enlisted the cooperation of about a dozen people - most of them subscribers to *Russell* - who were interested in working with him to start the Bertrand Russell Society and in becoming members. This group is largely but by no means exclusively academic. A majority have Ph.D. degrees. Six members are presently associated with colleges and universities. Special fields represented include physics, psychology, philosophy, biochemistry, and German. The Society's Treasurer, Dr. Tait, is Russell's daughter. The group also includes an architect, an archivist, and an advertising writer.

The Society has had the benefit of advice from The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation Ltd., and the Bertrand Russell Society of Japan, as well as the Russell Archives.

The next meeting of the Society - the first Annual Meeting - is scheduled for February 7, 8, 9, 1975. The city has not yet been chosen.

Anyone interested in Bertrand Russell is invited to become a member. Dues are \$12 a year (students \$5), and include a subscription to *Russell*. For more information about the Society and about membership, write Peter G. Cranford, President, Bertrand Russell Society, 2108 1/2 Walton Way, Augusta, GA 30904.

News about the Society will continue to appear in *Russell*.
