

'Nevertheless (Austin) did succeed in haunting most of the philosophers in England, and to his colleagues it seemed that his terrifying intelligence was never at rest. Many of them used to wake up in the night with a vision of the stringy wiry Austin standing over their pillow like a bird of prey. Their daylight hours were no better. They would write some philosophical sentences and then read them over as Austin might in an expressionless frigid voice and their blood would run cold. Some of them were so intimidated by the mere fact of his existence that they weren't able to publish a single article during his lifetime.'

Warnock (on Austin)

#### BREEDING GROUND FOR PHILOSOPHERS

'(Austin's) third child of fourteen is very clever and about to go up to my school, Winchester. He talks and looks very much like Austin and we have great hopes for him.'

Warnock

Thus spake Zarathustra

'... Amongst the Englishmen who are staying with me here there is also the very agreeable Professor of Philosophy at University College London, Robertson, editor of the best English philosophical journal, Mind, a quarterly review... All the great men of England are amongst its contributors: Darwin (whose splendid essay 'Biographical Sketch of an Infant' is in No III), Spencer, Tylor etc. You know that we here in Germany have nothing comparable in quality to the English with this journal, or the French with Th. Ribot's Revue Philosophique... I thought again, while he spoke of Darwin, Bagehot etc., how much I would like you to penetrate into this, the only good philosophical milieu that now exists. Will you not contribute something to this journal?...'  
- Nietzsche in a letter to Paul Rée, August 1877

The title of Richard Norman's article in EP14 should have been "Dialectic" and not "On Dialectic" as printed. The title of Sean Sayers' article should have been "On the Marxist Dialectic" and not "The Marxist Dialectic" as printed.

Sean Sayers writes: 'I attach some importance to this, since my paper concerns not the Marxist dialectic in general, but only a specific aspect of it: viz. what Mao calls "the universality of contradiction".'

# News

## ST ANDREWS

In St Andrews, there is virtually no philosophy going on that could be called Radical. The reasons for this seem to me to be essentially political ones.

In the first place, St Andrews is a very conservative university: at a recent referendum an overwhelming majority voted to leave the NUS. The S.R.C. (!) is a Tory stronghold: the I.S. Society consists of less than a dozen people. The general result is rampant apathy.

Secondly, St Andrews is strictly a university town and there is no pressure to make courses relevant to anything.

Thirdly, several other areas of possible radical theory - politics, sociology, anthropology are without foundation because there are no departments covering these disciplines.

Finally, the university and town are dead outside of term time because all students and most lecturers leave - consequently there is no on-going feeling.

Any radical theorist, then, has immediate feelings of isolation arriving here and these feelings are exacerbated because of the distances involved in travelling to conferences, meetings etc which are usually held in South England. Within the university, the organisation of radical activity inevitably falls to the lot of a very small group. We did suggest at the beginning of last year that the philosophy postgraduate students run a radical seminar group, but too many seemed to be intimidated by the old-guard lecturers to risk such a course. The only radical philosophy that has gone on over the past

year was 2 general seminars I gave on Foucault - although I've come to the conclusion that Foucault could hardly be called politically radical.

PETER SMITH

## CAMBRIDGE

We've been trying to get a Cambridge FP group off the ground for over a year. We conceived of it as a general 'countercourse' sort of thing - providing an alternative series of seminars to Cambridge Analytic philosophy for anyone interested, though possibly with some radicalising effect. Within the philosophy faculty such a project would have been disastrous chiefly because of the apathetic conservatism of most students - who'd be interested in a counter course providing scope for investigation of other philosophical traditions but not in anything explicitly 'radical'...

A more successful venture was a small reading group which we set up. At first we told all the radically minded philosophy students (about 8!) but students from other courses like English and social sciences kept turning up. Initially some of us saw it as offering critical rather than just alternative philosophical discussion. For instance two main tasks could have been:

(1) to understand exactly how analytical philosophy in its content can genuinely be seen as part of bourgeois ideology - the conceptions of the subject implicit in Empiricism, its approach to explanation in the non-natural sciences etc. How its various approaches to meaning are ideological, both by the role invoked for the individual in discourse, and demands for meaning invariance and

## Journals received

Science for the People, VIII, 1 (January 1976)

Camera work, 1 (February 1976), 2 (April-May 1976), 3

Social Work and the Welfare State, a radical pamphlet published by SCANUS, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DU

Socialist Revolution, No. 27

Radical Science Journal, No. 4

Philosophy Today, Vol. 19 No. 4, Vol. 20 No. 1, Vol. 20 No. 2/4

Cultural Studies, 9

History Workshop: A Journal of Socialist Historians, No. 1

Sozialistische Politik 36, August 1976 (Wissenschaft als allgemeine Arbeit)

# HISTORY WORKSHOP

a journal of socialist historians

## Issue 2 - Autumn 1976

Charles van Onselen: Randlords and Rotgut, 1886-1903: the role of alcohol in the development of European imperialism and Southern African capitalism

Tim Mason: Women in Nazi Germany (conclusion)

Anne Summers: Militarism in Britain before the Great War

Gudie Lawaetz: Mai 1968 on film

Hywel Francis: The South Wales Miners' Library

Edward Allen Rymer: The Martyrdom of the Mine: autobiography of a 19th century pit agitator (conclusion)

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consequent acquiescence within a particular ideological problematic. Together with this, (2) we thought of trying to see what is useful and enlightening within recent analytical philosophy, and what could consequently occur at the interface of the analytic and Marxist traditions: For instance, in social explanation - the relevance of the work of, say, Davidson, stressing the social function of interpretation of action as the origin of subjective categories. Also how the work of Feyerabend, Lakatos, Putnam etc. effects questions of meaning and scientificity. Meaning variance shows language up as the medium of ideology and ideological change, and in view of these and other considerations, scientificity of rational activity lies if anywhere, in the heuristic powers of conceptual frameworks. This led us to see, say, Althusserian Marxism, as trying to formulate such a scientific framework, with an extensional language of social formations, contrasted with the subjective categories invoked by all empiricist/analytic gestures towards the social. But this is just a beginning and all-in-all this could be an extremely fruitful area. (If any other groups are interested in this, contact us.)

But the reading group itself has turned out to be rather different, being rather more alternative than critical. We've tried to understand what various non-analytic thinkers are trying to do, and have discussed them in largely Marxist terms. So, though valuable to us, educationally, not much of an analytic-Marxist dialogue got going. It seemed to be more of a switch, than a transition, in perspective.

This term we had three meetings, in which we discussed the following short papers: Habermas' "Knowledge and Interests", Althusser's "Marxism and Humanism" and Levi-Strauss "History and Dialectic". The spectra of familiarity with, and interest in, the issues involved were broad, and as a result discussion has been rather bitty, and often misguided and at cross-purposes, though when it did get going, good and productive. The group-dynamism also presented problems - notably with people's lack of confidence in commenting after someone (always male) gives some seemingly informed spiel, and difficulties in articulating our dissatisfaction with analytic philosophy, and feelings about "radical philosophy".

Of course we hope to continue next year, though I and some others involved are changing to Social and Political Sciences (because we can study more interesting and relevant philosophy that way than in the philosophy faculty!). So it may turn into more of a 'radical theory' group, though personally I'd be interested in maintaining the critical/Analytic-Marxist dialogue bit, not wanting to lose touch myself, and hoping to keep some radical philosophy alive within the Philosophy Faculty itself. Most

students within it are surprisingly unaware of the horizons of their tradition and beyond. In Cambridge Marxism seems to be considered no more relevant to philosophy than to, say, mathematics. But maybe we can do something to remedy this. Despite total lack of enthusiasm for anything in Cambridge, especially anything political, there seems to be some scope and interest.

JULIAN QUAN

#### LAMPETER RPG

In relation to its size Lampeter has a reasonably large Philosophy Department; around 90 people take Philosophy as one of their Part 1 courses, and on average 15 to 20 people go on to take Philosophy Honours as their degree subject. Generally speaking the Department itself is of a liberal nature - it attempts to attract mature students and encourages student participation in general policy-making (although this aspect is limited by University of Wales Regulations to which the Department itself must adhere). On the whole the Anglo-Saxon approach prevails, although there are new courses in Oriental Philosophy, German Idealism and Marx.

When the Lampeter RPG was set up this was welcomed by the staff, in fact our inaugural meeting, Do we shoot philosophers or listen to them? was a paper given by a lecturer in the Department. Nevertheless, owing to a general lack of direction, not to mention a host of secondary factors, the Lampeter RPG, which has been active, and inactive, for around three years, almost completely collapsed this summer. A motion by the Chairman of the Executive called for the dissolution of the RPG on the grounds that we no longer fulfilled a function within the college. Fortunately this motion was unanimously jumped on. It was agreed that the group had been inactive but the 'lack of interest analysis' was firmly rejected. As stated above the prime reason for stagnation was lack of specific motivation for the group as a whole, and this manifested itself in chaotic organisation meetings being rarely publicised, and so forth.

The group was looked upon by its members as a forum for an amorphous bunch of malcontents who rejected the basis and the implications of what was being served up in our institutions in the name of philosophy. Hence to many of the members it was merely contingent that the few speakers who came to Lampeter were Marxists; Marxism was a form of radicalism and this conceptual challenge to the philosophical status quo was enough.

However, as a result of the dissolution motion and the lively discussion which ensued the Lampeter RPG has now, hopefully, transcended the desire to simply reject (certain brands of philosophy) as its *raison d'être* - we plan to build ourselves into a group with clearly defined

aims and goals, not the least of these being Marxism and materialism.

We have a very extensive programme planned for next Academic Year. As well as speakers we plan to have regular discussion groups, and even more regular committee meetings where we hope to discuss policy, publicity etc. In the past the group has been sporadic and unstructured - with any luck, next term, we will be highly organised and operating on a regular basis.

CHRIS LAWN

#### DIALECTIC

On a torrid Saturday in June thirty people met in the basement of Birkbeck College to discuss plans for a collective FP project on dialectic. The meeting was divided into a general discussion and a planning session. The discussion was opened by Sean Sayers and Richard Norman, who spoke about the diverging positions taken up in their respective articles in FP14, the points at issue between them, and why they saw these issues as central to the study of dialectic. Other speakers stressed the importance of the specifically social, as distinct from logical or ontological, orientation of the Marxian dialectic, and the need to consider the dialectical tradition within the wider history of modern philosophy, both bourgeois and Marxist.

After lunch everyone spoke briefly about their individual reasons for being interested in dialectic - both as relating to particular authors and texts, from Hegel, Marx, Engels and Lenin to the English Hegelians, Lukacs, Mao, Heidegger, Habermas and Foucault, and in connection with different fields and objects of theory - philosophy of science, sociology and social/critical theory, theory of value, class consciousness, logic. The response to the idea of a collective project was, so far as the temperature permitted, generally lively and positive; though some deep divisions were apparent between individual viewpoints, perhaps most importantly regarding the project's relation to dialectical materialism. No attempt was made to establish an agreed collective 'platform', though some notes offered for discussion on the thematic connections between different aspects of dialectical theory reflected the need to keep the project from lapsing into eclecticism.

The meeting agreed that one long term possibility is to produce a book consisting of papers, translations and other material, but that the immediate aim should be to hold a conference in September 1977. Other smaller meetings will be arranged and announced during coming months. A co-ordinating group of six people was nominated to put together information about the work that people are currently doing or planning to do, and encourage work on topics which are in danger of being neglected. It was agreed that circulating notes, papers,



bibliographies etc among active participants in the project is essential; a mailing system has been set up for this purpose. Anyone interested in contributing to the project is asked to write to Richard Norman, Darwin College, University of Kent, Canterbury, giving brief notes on their own directions of inquiry and on other areas in which they would like to see work done.

## OPEN MEETING

The last Radical Philosophy Group Open Business Meeting took place at the end of the long hot dialectic planning meeting at Birkbeck College London on 26 June.

Most of the discussion was about the magazine: a financial report (which was quite encouraging) was approved; as were plans for reprinting various back issues, and for exploring the sale of microform rights and for developing contacts with the Radical Publications Distribution Cooperative Reports were also given on the progress of the Feminist Philosophy Group, which involves Brighton, Canterbury, Colchester and Bristol in a collective project, and on the forthcoming Radical Philosophy Newsletter, which is being produced in Bristol.

Various discussions following the meeting have thrown up the suggestion that Open Business Meetings ought to be abandoned, since most of the business bores normal people stiff. On the other hand, Open Business Meetings are, formally at least, the supreme decision-making body of the Group, and should not be abandoned unless they can be replaced by other democratic channels. A possible solution would be to substitute an annual general meeting, possibly coordinated with an annual conference, for the Thrice-yearly Open Business Meetings.

## Next Open Meeting

The meeting will be on Saturday 4 December.

The business meeting will be preceded by a morning meeting, at which David Murray will talk about anti-science ideology: 'the marriage of mysticism and scientism'. The meeting will begin at 11am and will be in the lower common room of the Students Union, Polytechnic of the South Bank, Fofary Street, SE1. This is 100 yards from the Bakerloo line exit of Elephant & Castle tube station.

Readers may be interested to learn of a new MA degree which is to be introduced at the University of Kent. The 'M.A. in Philosophy (Socialist Studies)', starting in 1977, is made up of three courses in the first two terms, and a dissertation in the third term and the summer vacation. The three courses are: Dialectical Materialism (basic problems in the Marxist philosophical tradition: materialism and idealism, truth and practice, dialectic, etc); Marx (Marx's social and political philosophy), and Varieties of Contemporary Socialism (Lukacs, Gramsci, Marcuse and the Frankfurt School, anarchist and libertarian schools of thought, etc). The teaching will probably be by David McLellan, Richard Norman, Sean Sayers and Tony Skillen. Details from the Registry at the University of Kent, Canterbury.

"Religion, Ideology, Philosophy and Development in Africa" is the title of a proposed conference in Khartoum in November 1977. Information from Rip Bulkeley, 29 Richmond Road, Oxford OX1 2JL, who can supply a non-authoritarian prospectus.

## Subscribe to Radical Philosophy



A new series of philosophy books of interest to readers of Radical Philosophy is to start in September: Philosophy Now, edited by Roy Edgley and published by Sussex University Press.

The aim of the series is to help to push English philosophy out of its academic ivory tower. Its means will be to undermine, by argument and example, the ideology by which linguistic analysis has isolated itself from the practical problems facing society, from substantive issues in other disciplines, and

from contemporary Continental thought. The books will be in paperback as well as hardback, reasonably inexpensive, and mostly short.

The first two will be:

Ben Gibbs:

Freedom and Liberation

Richard Norman:

Hegel's Phenomenology

Others in the pipeline include:

Jonathan Rée (ed):

Philosophy and Its Past

Istvan Meszaros:

Sartre: A Critical Tribute

Tony Skillen:

The End of Kingdoms

Paul Feyerabend:

The Rise of Western Rationalism

Brian Medlin:

Revolution

The Sociology Group of the Communist Party and Marxism Today are organising a weekend conference on 'Class and Class Structure' on 27-28 November at the Polytechnic of the South Bank, London SE1. Speakers will be Vic Allen, Stuart Hall, Paul Q Hirst, N Poulantzas, John Westergaard and Alan Hunt. The registration fee is £2 or £1 for students, and should be sent to the CP Sociology Group, 16 King Street, London WC2. It is advisable to book early.

Following the highly successful Radical Philosophy Festival at Oxford earlier this year, we are planning a sequel for next year. Probably it will be in Brighton in March or April. Full information in the next issue of Radical Philosophy. Meanwhile, anyone who has suggestions or requests about the form and content of the festival, or is willing to help with planning and organisation should write to RP Festival, 40 Langdon Park Road, London N6 5QG

