

way it feeds the craving it attempts to satisfy - where do we go from here? One feels that Ken Coates' apt description of I. S. as 'a rather shrill, if also intellectually infertile, sectarian grouping' would find echoes in all the groupuscules, but has any one done a close enough analysis of them to really know? But it is Ralph Miliband who really throws us the tastiest morsel, though morsel it remains.

Having dismissed the groupuscules as minority movements he returns at last to the Communist Party, bigger than the rest put together but one of the smallest CPs in the capitalist world, and getting smaller; he says:

Nor is there any good reason to think that the Communist Party will eventually be able to fill the gap that exists on the left. In order to do so, it would have to transform itself so thoroughly as to become a new-party: it is not a realistic expectation. (my emphasis)

Maybe it's time to throw away the bike and put a deposit down on a car?

Tom Steele

News

Dialectic project

At time of going to press, plans are being finalised for the one-day conference on 8 January. This will include discussion of Richard Norman's article (parts 2 and 3) and a critique of Norman by Rip Bulkeley. Contributions are expected on Hegel, Lukacs and philosophy of science. For further information on the project, and to join the mailing system, write to Richard Norman, Keynes College, University of Kent at Canterbury.

Working Group on Marxist Philosophy of Science

It is proposed to set up a national working group in this field, within the framework of the national RP Dialectic project. Would people who are interested please contact either Rip Bulkeley, 29 Richmond Road, Oxford, tel. 0865 52000 or Madan Sarup, 61 Ardoch Road, London SE6 tel. 01-698 9717

RP Newsletter

Newsletter 3 was produced by the Bristol Group last term; they plan to produce number 4 this spring. Number 3 includes news from the Womens' Philosophy Group and the Bristol RPG. The newsletter is now the medium for circulating financial and business news about RP and will be later linked to festival and AGM planning. Individual and group contributors and subscribers should write to the group at the address on page 1 - send stamps.

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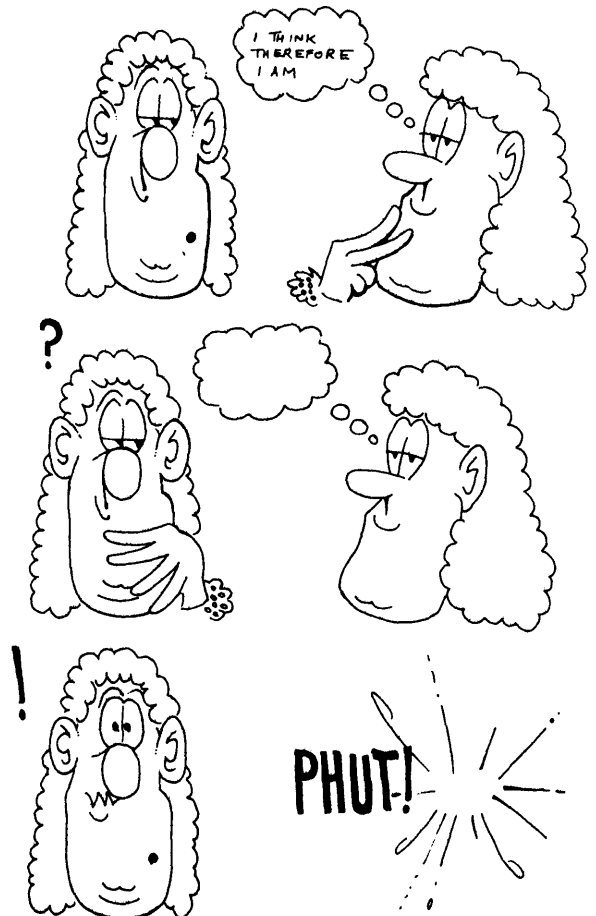
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Please Don't Say You Won't Play With Me Any More!

'Ask yourself the following question. (Warning: I am not going to answer this one for you!) Suppose that someone you have known for many years turns out to be a robot. You find out in some reliable way that, instead of being "born of woman", he was manufactured in a secret laboratory in a remote part of the Soviet Union. What would your reaction be? Would you stop ascribing consciousness to him? Or what? (Don't say it couldn't happen; you can't be sure it couldn't. I am asking you to suppose that it has.)'

In 'Body and Mind', Units 1 and 2 in the Open University's Problems of Philosophy course, p54



Open Meeting

A couple of dozen people came to the last Open Meeting at South Bank Polytechnic on 4 December 1976.

News of Groups:

Though the Bristol Group had produced many copies of the Radical Philosophy Newsletter, in practice the meeting itself had to be the main format for communicating news about the progress of different groups as Bristol had not received one reply to their requests for information from the others. There was encouraging news about the formation of a sympathetic group at LSE, but the very survival of some groups, which were not represented (Birmingham and Lampeter, for example), was a matter of rumour.

Open Meetings:

Most of the time was actually spent on the question of whether and how open meetings could be made more effective. Chris Arthur proposed an annual meeting carrying more weight. Various suggestions were then put forward about how more weight could be achieved: by preparing people in advance for the discussion; by excluding certain purely technical questions (such as printing or distribution costs) while not giving in to the elitist pressure that could come from their being settled elsewhere; by communicating and reminding people about decisions afterwards; by perhaps having the group which is running the Newsletter use it to carry out all this organisation; by running the annual meeting at an annual philosophy conference. Some fears were voiced about defining the sovereignty of an annual meeting with a floating attendance - though the present ineffective open meeting is a smaller, more frequent meeting just like that.

The meeting voted for the principle of a new 'Annual Business Meeting', and asked Colin Gordon to look into the practical difficulties and report to the next open meeting.

Dave Murray wanted a thrice-yearly Radical Philosophy readers meeting to discuss the latest issue - a function which, according to Jonathan Ree, it had always been hoped the open meetings would fulfil.

Distribution:

The meeting agreed without a vote that, subject to financial provisos from the distribution collective at Brighton, Radical Philosophy should go into the Producers Distribution Cooperative, which was discussed at the previous open meeting. The hoped-for long-term advantage has to be to reach potential new subscribers by prompter delivery to more bookshops, for the Cooperative's cut would be added to that already made by bookshops, which return to us 5p less than it costs to produce a copy.

Coopting Groups into Editorial Meetings:

Daniel Jenkins presented to the meeting the following motion from the Bristol group: 'Radical Philosophy (Bristol) notes that one of the functions of Radical Philosophy Journal is to serve the needs of the local groups. We further note that one of the functions of the local groups is to serve the needs of the journal. Radical Philosophy (Bristol) therefore recommends to the Open Meeting of 4 December and the editorial meeting of 5 December that it should debate the issue of co-opting local groups into the "Editorial Board". Radical Philosophy (Bristol) holds the position on this question that it would be a good thing if local groups were co-opted onto the Board, both for local groups and for the journal. The motion was passed unopposed. The previous editorial meeting had in fact already agreed to this proposal, and articles had been sent to Bristol and to Birmingham.

Philosophy Festival:

Nick Jenkin from Sussex reported the turn of discussion when 6 undergraduates had met to plan a philosophy festival at Sussex in the spring. In short, they disliked the very idea of a festival in the manner of last year's at Oxford (though many people at the meeting expressed their satisfaction with the Oxford one). Rather than a large gathering with guest speakers from the academic world, workshops on agreed topics, etc, they wanted a more intimate debate to discuss new, truly radical ways of learning. There is amongst Radical Philosophy supporters a recurring unsatisfied desire to talk philosophy to non-academics or in a non-academic style.

But most of the people present felt that an Oxford-style festival was desirable all the same. The Bristol group agreed to consider running one. Since the meeting, they have offered to run the next festival on Friday, Saturday and Sunday 22-24 April.

Noel Parker

Oxford RPG

The Oxford group has had a reasonably successful first term of the academic year which we hope to consolidate and build upon. Although the 'hard core' of RP activists remains relatively small considering the size of the philosophy industry here, our meetings have been well attended and have drawn people representing a wide (if fluctuating) range of interests.

Our most successful venture has been a popular series of weekly introductory meetings on 'Other Philosophy' which we hope to continue this term. Last term Roy Edgley started off the series with a consideration of the 'English tradition' and

this was continued with Joanna Hodge on Gadamer, Colin Gordon on Foucault, Graham Burchell on Althusser, and Paul Hirst on Marxism and Philosophy. With a degree of naivete we also invited Charles Taylor to speak on Hegel and the Left - a mistake we subsequently felt worth apologising for. One problem the series has highlighted is the shifting composition of those attending the meetings and the lack of a continuous interest in Radical Philosophy and its work beyond specific areas of academic interest. That this is, perhaps, evidence of an academicist orientation to RP may be supported by the fact that a meeting called to discuss the supplement on 'Philosophy from Below' in RP 15 was very poorly attended, and that there is a general reluctance to discuss future planning of RP's activities.

Apart from this main series of meetings there is a reading group on Capital and a Dialectic group, both of which are thriving.

An RP poster with graphics by Trevor Jago and space for news of meetings etc can be obtained from David Berry, 51 Blenheim Road, Moseley, Birmingham.

Australian bookshops

RP is sold in Australia at Intervention Bookshop, Dixon Street, Sydney, and the People's Bookshop, Rundle Street, Adelaide.

