

REPORTS

OPEN MEETING

There will be another Open Meeting of the Radical Philosophy Group (see "London Meeting" Report of last meeting) at University College London, Department of Philosophy, 19 Gordon Square, London W.C.1 at 11.00 a.m. on Saturday 30th June. Barry Wilkins is preparing an Agenda. Please send suggestions for topics, as items for an Agenda, to:

Barry Wilkins, Department of Philosophy, University College, Cardiff.

He will send copies of the Agenda to all subscribers to the journal and to all local contacts.

LONDON MEETING

The first of the projected Open Meetings was held in London on Saturday 31st March. About 30 people attended. Once again the discussion revolved mainly around questions of organisation. The proposal was again put forward that we should have a Central Committee consisting of representatives elected by local Radical Philosophy Groups. In support of this proposal it was argued:

1. that the people who had so far been organising things like the magazine had been too cut off from local groups, and that such a structure would help to involve the local groups more directly in Radical Philosophy activities;
2. that a democratic central committee would be able to designate and authorise individuals to undertake specific tasks, and that this would make it easier to get national activities, like conferences, under way;

Other people, however, felt that it would be better to continue with completely open meetings; they argued that there did not exist a structure of local groups capable of supporting the proposed arrangement, and that it was unlikely that such a structure would ever exist, since support for Radical Philosophy took different forms in different places and the formation of a local group was in many cases not appropriate or possible; hence the proposed arrangement, though intended to bring more people into the running of Radical Philosophy activities, would actually have the effect of excluding people, and might well lead to the disintegration of any viable organisation at all.

The issue was argued at great length throughout the morning session, so after lunch we decided to talk about more specific matters before returning to it.

Journal

Sean Sayers and Richard Norman said that another group of people would have to be found to take over the production work after RP5. It turned out that the only group of people with sufficient numbers and

time to take this on would be one in London based mainly on people at Middlesex Polytechnic. It was agreed that they should take over the production work starting with RP6 at the end of the summer. The editorial work of reading and evaluating contributions would continue to be done by a wider group, and it was in fact decided that editorial meetings should from now on be open. Anyone who would like to take a share in the editorial work (which would involve reading articles and attending editorial meetings) should get in touch with Jonathan Ree (Middlesex Polytechnic at Hendon).

Conference

There was a good deal of support (though not universal) for the idea of a national conference in the summer; however, no group of people could be found who were willing to do the work. Martin Field said that he would try and investigate the possibilities. [It now seems that there is no chance of organising anything for this summer. The question of whether to try and put anything on at a later date can perhaps be raised at the next Open Meeting.]

Book

The possibility was mentioned of trying to produce a book which would be a critique of the current philosophical orthodoxy, probably consisting mainly of chapters written by different people on each of the traditional areas of philosophy (epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, etc.). The production of the book could be preceded by an investigation into the nature and content of existing university philosophy courses. It is hoped that contributions can be got from students, discussing just what it's like to undergo such a course. Anyone interested in helping with the work should get in touch with Peter Binns (School of Philosophy, University of Warwick, Coventry).

Future Meetings

We returned to the question of organisation. It was agreed that we could go some way towards involving local groups and other local contacts more directly in future meetings were to have a specific agenda. People would see more point in attending if they knew more specifically what was going to be discussed and what decisions would have to be made. It was suggested that a convenor should be appointed to organise the next meeting and to draw up an agenda. Barry Wilkins (Dept. of Philosophy, University College, Cardiff) was asked to do this, and agreed. All items of business for inclusion on the agenda should be sent to him. The agenda will be sent out to all subscribers to the journal, and to all local contacts (local sellers of the journal and organisers of local groups).

It was also agreed that people would be more encouraged to attend if the meetings were to include some philosophical discussion, perhaps with someone reading a paper.

At the end of the meeting there was some criticism of the way it had been chaired. Some people felt that the discussions, particularly on the organisational question, had been allowed to drag on too long, in too chaotic a fashion and without getting anywhere. As I was chairing the meeting, I would say that though the argument could have been cut short by taking a vote and finding a majority on one side or another, this

would still have left us just as divided and would be no real solution. We have to argue the matter out and find a way of working together. At any rate, it was decided that the first business of the next meeting should be to elect a chairman whose job it would be to implement the agenda and get the things on it properly discussed.

Richard Norman

CARDIFF

Sixteen people from University College, Cardiff attended the Radical Philosophy London Conference in April 1972. The conference generated a fair amount of enthusiasm, and it was decided to try to set up a radical philosophy group in Cardiff. A group was formed in the first week of May 1972 and met weekly throughout the rest of the summer term, with an average attendance of about ten people.

In the first term of its existence the Cardiff radical philosophy group discussed a number of different topics ranging from Sartre's ethics to the justification (if any) for torture. However, the discussions understandably returned time and time again to questions about the nature of philosophy, and the perennial 'what is radical philosophy, anyway?' These discussions were not helped by staff and students who insisted, with the aid of familiar and well-worn jargon, that philosophy can only be a 'second-order discipline' consisting of 'conceptual analysis' and nothing more. As term progressed the absurdity of this doctrine became more evident, and correspondingly discussions became more fruitful.

Initially, some members of staff took an interest in the meetings of the group, but for the most part this interest soon faded out. Only two staff members are actively involved in the group. Other members of staff still occasionally come to meetings, but usually only when the topics are of particular interest to them.

The first meeting of the group in the autumn term (a paper and discussion on the nature of education) was well advertised, and about 40 people turned up. This was one of the best meetings we have had - the paper was provocative and well argued, and the discussion was lively and stimulating. Later meetings in that term were less well advertised, and numbers fell to around 6-8 at the end of term.

During the autumn term it became obvious that the hard core of people who attended meetings regularly and who were prepared to organise meetings, advertise them etc, was really quite tiny, and that the majority of people who came to the meetings came only to those whose topics were of particular interest to them. This made it very difficult to obtain any kind of continuity or progress from week to week in the discussions. The meetings became very much isolated discussions on (more or less) isolated topics. This tendency continued and grew in the spring term this year.

In the autumn and spring terms discussions have taken place more or less weekly on a very wide range of topics, including: the nature and justifiability of civil disobedience, generosity, Marx's conception of communism, 'Is radical philosophy enough?', the liberation of women, Whitehead's philosophy of process, Marx's views on alienation and the nature of man, relativism in science, and many more. But, generally speaking, the discussions which have taken place at these meetings have been isolated and disconnected.

In the summer term we are going to try to set up study groups on a number of topics in order to try to get some continuity into the discussion of those topics, and also (hopefully) to try and make some progress. The topics suggested so far are: Aesthetics; Marx's materialist conception of history; Gramsci; Marcuse; Intention, action and morality. About four or five people are interested in each group, but whether or not the groups get off the ground remains to be seen. The weekly meetings will continue, and it is hoped that any fruitful work done in connection with the study groups will be presented to the weekly discussion meetings.

A radical philosophy group is being organised by the students at University College, Swansea, and although there has been little contact so far between Cardiff and Swansea people interested in radical philosophy, it is hoped by people in Cardiff that some joint meetings may be held in the future. People from other colleges are, of course, welcome to come to the meetings in Cardiff. In fact anyone interested in philosophy (not only those who study philosophy formally in educational institutions) would be welcome to come to these meetings. I will send details of the Cardiff meetings to anyone who would like to attend.

At the end of the summer term a lot of the people are leaving Cardiff who have supported the radical philosophy group since it started a year ago. Without greater support from the people remaining in Cardiff the future of the group seems uncertain. However, all possible efforts will be made in order to continue holding meetings next academic year.

Barry Wilkins
Department of Philosophy

SWANSEA

General dissatisfaction over the examination system combined with a desire to change the course content has been a central issue with philosophy students at Swansea. A feeling, somewhat hard to express, that philosophy does not seem to be concerned with what really matters, and the general apathetic attitude towards the department's 'philosophy society', was the last issue at several student meetings during the past academic year.

Many of us think that British philosophy is at an impasse - there is something wrong but it is difficult to say exactly what. Concern with the trivial; the whole mythology of academic neutrality; the slogan 'philosophy leaves everything as it is', contribute to the lack of genuine philosophic enquiry.

A series of meetings originally held to discuss examination reform and proposals for course changes led to discussions about the nature of contemporary philosophy. Copies of *Radical Philosophy* were sold, read and discussed. Towards the end of the Lent term a group was formed with membership open to anyone, staff or student, from any faculty, who is interested and willing to contribute to our work. So far the group has held seminars on 'Marxism and Leninism', and a series of open meetings which have been arranged for next term, beginning with a paper on 'Marxism and Crime'. Meanwhile we hope to make contact with other members and extend a welcome to any visitors, speakers etc from other groups.

OXFORD RADICAL HISTORIANS

In the Spring term of 1972, a questionnaire sent to history undergraduates at Oxford University revealed widespread discontent with history courses. Out of the 70% response, only 5% said they were satisfied. Most of the students complained about the syllabus, mainly on the grounds that it was too huge, and about the methods of teaching; they wished there were seminars to supplement the existing system of lectures plus donnish chats.

At the end of the term the students who had administered the questionnaire organised an open meeting, with the aim of making the discontent they had discovered more coherent and effective. They felt they needed an autonomous organisation rather than the existing student-staff consultative apparatus. At this meeting they began to work out not only a policy on practical matters, like examinations, but also a programme of theoretical tasks. They set up study groups to work on Oxford history as ideology; on the contrasts between history courses at Oxford University and elsewhere; and on the connections between social anthropology and history. In the summer term they had a few more meetings, and some outside speakers came and gave talks.

In spite of the normally destructive effect of the summer vacation, in October 1972 they brought out an impressive piece of agitprop, a pamphlet called *Histerectomy*, which provided an array of analyses and criticisms, post mortem examinations of 'the history corpse'. They also organised a meeting to deepen and extend their analysis, which drew 120 undergraduates. They saw their activity in the light or recent experience of student radicalism. Andrew Lincoln, one of their key members, wrote at the time of the 'failure by English students critically to assess their own condition', and claimed that 'when the sit ins came they were more often a final frenzy before a relapse into fatigued quietism than a creative and expansive act of consolidation.' The theory of student radicalism embodied a contradiction: 'the revolutionary student was to be fully committed to workers' control, while himself spending uncritically his everyday life within the treadmill of bourgeois university life.' The way forward, according to the Radical Historians, was indicated by various alternative classes, and by the magazine *Radical Philosophy*.

The main activity to emerge from these analyses so far has been a series of eight meetings in Spring Term 1973. The meetings, or rather seminars, were attempts to work out serious alternatives to the theoretical assumptions of the history course, or at least of part of it. The coverage of the meetings included Aristotle, Hobbes and Rousseau, and thus they amounted to a counter course, since these are the coverage of the notorious Political Thought paper which is a compulsory part of the history BA at Oxford University. There were one hundred students at the first meeting or seminar, twenty at the last.

Reactions to the Radical Historians have varied. Until very recently, history dons at Oxford have ignored them completely. The *Times Higher Education Supplement* (9 ii 73) cannot get over their 'high level of academic seriousness' which, according to their correspondent, is 'not a familiar image of student radicalism'. Meanwhile the Radical Historians themselves are very modest about what they have achieved. They point out that they are likely to secure only minor changes in syllabuses and methods of assessment; that there is a danger that as an undergraduate organisation the group will

expire when its key members have taken their final exams this summer; that their activities have been confined to Oxford University; that they have failed to make contact with many students; and that they have not taken direct action such as intervening in lectures.

It seems to me, however, that the real achievement of the Radical Historians is very great, because they have not been content merely to state their objections to the theories of their teachers, and they have not decided to leave these theories uncriticised either. They have realised that the conditions in which they will be able to produce the necessary criticisms do not yet exist, so they have set about trying to create them. They have appreciated that the theories they criticise are entrenched in a monopoly position protected by academic institutions, and that they can only be discredited by organised effort. They have not only published their criticisms in a pamphlet; they have also tried to make radical criticism a real force amongst the people studying their subject.

Inquiries about the Radical History Group can be sent to Andrew Lincoln at Balliol College, Oxford.

J V R

PHILOSOPHY IN HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Middlesex Polytechnic, Thursday - Friday,
28th-29th June, 1973.

This conference is a response to the growing feeling that philosophy courses in universities, polytechnics and colleges of education cannot fulfil the demands made on them. Philosophy courses are increasingly expected to fit into wideranging multidisciplinary student programmes, or to provide an interdisciplinary synthesis; but they tend to be taught by teachers who, whether they like it or not, have been trained only in philosophy as a narrow academic specialism. This conference has been organized by the philosophy section at the Middlesex Polytechnic, to discuss these issues and to allow people concerned with the problems raised to pool their ideas.

More information and booking forms from:
Doreen Harris, Middlesex Polytechnic at Enfield,
Queensway, Enfield, Middlesex.

BRISTOL DAY CONFERENCE

"Ideology and the University"

A Day Conference on this topic is being arranged in Bristol on Wednesday, 13th June. All welcome. Further details from:

The Organizers, "Ideology & the University"
12a Cotham Road, Bristol 6.

"It is essential to destroy the widespread prejudice that philosophy is a strange and difficult thing just because it is the specific intellectual activity of a particular category of specialists or of professionals and systematic philosophers. It must first be shown that all men are 'philosophers', by defining the limits and characteristics of the 'spontaneous philosophy' which is proper to everybody." (Gramsci)

Radical science journal

Many of us who have been involved over the years in radical movements in science have for some time felt the lack of a journal which could tackle the analysis of science in society at a deeper level. Both the social sciences and philosophy are relatively well served in this respect, but we are not aware of any single English language journal in which substantial theoretical articles of up to 10,000 words could be, or are, regularly published. It is hoped that RADICAL SCIENCE JOURNAL will fill the gap, acting as a forum for radical critiques of the history, philosophy, ideology and current practice of science and technology. We expect it to have a readership among scientists, students of science, and those concerned about the current role of science in society.

This is a major venture. It is our intention that both contributions and distribution will be international in character. The publication date for the first issue is 1 November 1973. There will be three issues annually. Price will be 30p per issue or £1 annual subscription (post-paid). Titles of articles under consideration for the first issue include:

Ideology of tribalism
The psychology of deference
The ideology of nature
Management sciences in the control of organisations and individuals
Selected translations of Lorenz' publications from the Nazi period

We welcome articles for consideration. They should be sent to Radical Science Journal, 9 Poland Street, London W1. We would also like to set up a wider network of contacts and distributors. The journal has an editorial collective. Members include:

Derek Burns	Gustav Metzger
David Dickson	Jonathan Rosenhead
John Goodman	Chris Ryan
Chris Green	Margot Waddell
George Cross	Gary Wersky
Mike Hales	Sue Wolff
Peter Harper	Bob Young
John Lamb	Jim Young

"Vain is the word of a philosopher which does not heal any suffering of man" (Epicurus)

Socialist Economists

The C.S.E. was formed to bring together socialist economists in developing political economy within the socialist movement. Within a broadly Marxist perspective, we embrace all left political tendencies. We include interested trade unionists and students, not just 'professionals'; and though based in Britain we regard the development of international links as an important part of our work.

The basis of the organisation is as follows:

We hold an annual conference in December each year on a broad topic of general interest (next one on imperialism).

We publish the Bulletin three times a year.

We organize smaller seminars/workshops (forthcoming ones on value theory & theory of money - also continuing seminar on economics of women).

Local groups are encouraged.

Policy is decided by annual conference and administered by an elected committee and secretary; the Bulletin has an elected editorial board; a regular newsletter provides information to members.

Membership of the C.S.E. runs from December 1 for one year. It covers participation in all activities, and the year's issues of the Bulletin and newsletter. Membership costs £3, or £1 for those on limited incomes (students, retired, unemployed). Libraries can subscribe to the Bulletin only for £6 per year. Sets of back numbers are available to libraries only, at the same rate.

BULLETIN OF THE C.S.E. - WINTER 1972
The Marxian Theory of Crisis, Capital and the State - David Yaffe
Post-Keynesian Economic Theory and the Theory of Capitalist Crisis - Jan Kregel
Capitalism in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century - Michael Barratt Brown
Capitalist Crisis and Organis Composition - Andrew Glyn
Marx on the Rate of Profit - Ian Steedman

Cheques/money orders payable to "Conference of Socialist Economists". Overseas subscriptions in £ sterling please.
 Send to: C.S.E., c/o R. Murray, I.D.S., University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE.

SALES IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Copies of *Radical Philosophy* may be obtained from the following:

ABERDEEN: Alison McNaughton (Craigpark, Wellington Rd.)
 ABERYSTWYTH: Roger Siviter
 BANGOR: Stewart Smith (4 College Road)
 BATH: Michael Rose (Hum. and Soc.Sci.)
 BELFAST: Bob Eccleshall (Dept. of Pol.Science, Queen's)
 BRADFORD: Paul Walton (School of Soc.Sci.)
 BRISTOL: Keith Graham (Phil.Dept.)
 CAMBRIDGE: David Leon (25 Emery Street)
 CARDIFF: Barry Wilkins (Phil.Dept.)
 EAST ANGLIA: Nick Everitt (Phil.Dept.)
 EDINBURGH: Fritz Neubauer (Pollock Halls of Res.)
 Ted Ninnes
 ESSEX: Ted Benton (Soc.Dept.) Colin Beardon (Rayleigh Tower)
 GLASGOW: David Hillel Ruben (Dept. of Moral Phil.)
 KENT: Richard Norman (Darwin, Sean Sayers (Keynes)
 LAMPETER: H.M. Jones (Phil.Dept.)

LANCASTER: Howard Feather (Cartmel College),
 Andrew Bidewell (Bowland College)
 LEEDS: Hugo Meynell (Phil.Dept.)
 LEICESTER: David Henley (Dept. of Maths.)
 LONDON: Jeff Mason (Hendon Tech.) Jonathan Ree (Hendon),
 J.M.Cohen (Birkbeck), G.A.Cohen (U.C.L.),
 Ted Welch (Birkbeck), Steve Torrance (Enfield),
 Roger Harris (Enfield), Philip Edwards
 (N.London Poly), Noel Parker (L.S.E.), Chris
 Powell (L.S.E.)
 MANCHESTER: John Harris (Phil.Dept.)
 OXFORD: Janet Vaux (17 Rawlinson Rd.)
 SHEFFIELD: Joe Warrington, (Phil.Dept.)
 SUNDERLAND: Jon Taylor (Dept. of Education,
 Sunderland Poly.)
 SUSSEX: John Mephram, Ben Gibbs (Arts Building).
 SWANSEA: Dave Lamb (16 Uplands Crescent)
 WARWICK: Peter Binns (Phil.Dept.)
 YORK: Gerry Kelman, Ian Hills, (Goodricke College)