

NOTES

Professor Julius Gould, whose Report on the radical 'threat' to higher education is examined in the news section, finds it strange that Radical Philosophy should have concerned itself with such 'unphilosophical' topics as Chile and Northern Ireland. Claudia von Braunmühl's report from West Germany in this issue vividly conveys the political and intellectual climate of a state where the wishes of Gould and his fellow (academic and military) counterinsurgency specialists have already been amply fulfilled. The facts contained in this article are not being published for their incidental philosophical 'interest', but because of their direct political importance. At the same time, they show how an apparatus of political repression can be reinforced by the legitimisation afforded by a certain philosophy. One of the conditions for effective resistance to the former is the confrontation and critique of the latter.

Paul Patton's article takes up once more the question of Louis Althusser and his philosophy. Why add at this stage to the ample existing literature of exegeses, critiques and auto-critiques? Firstly, Althusser's work is reaching and influencing a continually widening audience. (The new paperback editions of his writings, published by

NLB, are a token of this continuing diffusion.) Secondly, as Patton shows, Althusser's critics have been heavily selective in their lines of approach. The (once talismanic) Althusserian concept of theoretical practice is here analysed in depth and situated, perhaps for the first time in English, in terms of its strategic function, where it comes from in philosophy, and what it obscures or elides.

Roy Edgley's article, reprinted from Educational Research (February 1978) by permission of the National Foundation for Educational Research, attacks the fundamental premisses of the Callaghan government's 'Great Debate' on state education policy: both the edifying vision of capitalist industry as the pace-setter for 'rising standards' in mass education, and the overt and tacit rationales for the adjustment of education to purported economic priorities.

The other articles in this issue each open up a new or neglected field. Martin Barker argues that Marxism has misrecognised the political import of Kant's philosophy. Rip Bulkeley analyses the effectivity of philosophies as instruments of racial oppression, and sketches a materialist history of racialism. Graham Burchell reflects on the French Communist Party's abandonment of the doctrine of proletarian dictatorship, the political strategy of Eurocommunist revisionism, and Balibar's theoretical critique of the PCF.

THE RADICAL PHILOSOPHY GROUP

The Radical Philosophy Group grew out of the convergence of two currents which had been largely formed by the student movement of the 1960s - on the one hand, discontent, especially among students, with the sterile and complacent philosophy taught in British universities and colleges; on the other hand, a revival of interest in the theoretical work on the left and a recognition of the need to confront the ideology enshrined in orthodox academic disciplines. The Radical Philosophy Group has always contended that these two problems can be tackled together - that philosophical inquiry into fundamental issues must lead to the exposure of conservatism masquerading as formal reason.

Academic philosophy in this country has generally accepted and defended the frame of reference of the dominant bourgeois culture. This culture is supported and mirrored by the elitist isolation, the internal hierarchies and demarcations, of academic institutions. The Radical Philosophy Group therefore works for reforms in courses and assessments for the enlargement of students' control over their education, for the breaking down of barriers between philosophy and other disciplines and between academic institutions and the outside world.

The Group has held several conferences, and local groups have been formed which have organised meetings and agitated on local issues. Radical Philosophy is the magazine of the Radical Philosophy Group, and has come out three times a year since January 1972. It aims to criticise the current state of philosophy in the English-speaking world and to encourage philosophical discussion on the left, and welcomes any contributions which will serve these aims.

DAS ARGUMENT

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