

Science in Europe/Attack on Marxists Stirs Controversy

The faculties of British universities and colleges have been infiltrated by Marxists and extremists, according to a report which has caused a storm of controversy since its publication 2 months ago. Charge and countercharge have been echoing around the common rooms and through the pages of the journals ever since.

The report* was written by Professor Julius Gould, a sociologist from the University of Nottingham, and represented the views of a study group convened by an organization called the Institute for the Study of Conflict (ISC).

Marxists, said the report, "constitute a clear and present danger to the liberal mode." Although a minority, they had used their position to influence susceptible students and had set up "Front organizations," including the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science, to promote their views. "They thrive on perversions of theory and distortions of fact. They rely, like any other network, upon mutual support in the making of appointments. They depend for their influence in education upon their skill at exploiting the ambivalence of others—especially of administrators or of colleagues. There is nothing undemocratic—let alone McCarthyite—in insisting that such ambivalence is neither honorable nor necessary."

Two areas of higher education were picked out for special attention in the report: the polytechnics, which are colleges of higher education run by local education authorities; and the Open University, a national correspondence and TV-based institution set up in the 1960's. The social sciences, and particularly sociology, were the disciplines most seriously infected, according to Professor Gould. Publishers, most notably Penguin Books, but also Routledge and Kegan Paul, Macmillans, and Heinemann, have enthusiastically supplied textbooks with a Marxist leaning.

Responses to the report have ranged from enthusiastic endorsement on the

Right to outright condemnation on the Left. The staff of the Open University, at a meeting of the Association of University Teachers, condemned the report as employing "McCarthyite techniques of smear and innuendo" in a motion passed by a two-to-one majority. "To inhibit work in a Marxist and radical tradition would be an impoverishment of scholarship" the motion declared. Mr. Tony Benn, the Secretary of State for Energy, claimed that Marxists were constantly "hounded" in Britain.

The Conservative spokesman on Education, Mr. Norman StJohn Stevas, on the other hand, said that if the Conservatives were returned to office they would launch a major campaign on "democratic values." They would not, however, introduce a ban on Marxists as teachers, such as already exists in West Germany. (Professor Gould is also opposed to such a ban.)

Many academics who support Professor Gould believe that it was the rapid growth of sociology as a discipline which gave Marxism a beachhead. Professor Donald MacRae, a sociologist at the London School of Economics, says that the Hungarian uprising of 1956 liberated Marxism from the Soviet mold. An earlier generation of leftist academics had been members of the Communist Party; the new generation, liberated from the need to support Stalin and Bolshevik orthodoxy, became Marxist activists supporting a range of groups on the far Left. This coincided with the rapid growth of the social sciences: "What you got was a flooding into universities of people who considered themselves sociologists but were in fact simply Marxists."

Critics of the Gould report attack both its content and its conclusions. Professor Bernard Crick, head of the Department of Politics and Sociology at Birkbeck College, London, says that the report contains "a monstrous deal of argument against Marxism (much of which is quite good) in proportion to a small amount of penetration exposed . . . it is left decidedly unproven that all these saints and sinners, trendies and hard men, constitute a 'clear and present danger.'"

Dr. Richard Hoggart, Warden of Goldsmiths' College London and the author of *Uses of Literacy*, a pioneering study of working-class culture, takes a more

cautious view. He believes that there is a problem to be tackled, though he is regretful that Social Democrats like himself have ignored it and left it to organizations on the Right, like the ISC, to make the running. The numbers of academics on the extreme Left is small, he says, but can be influential out of proportion to its numbers. He agrees with Gould that the phenomenon needs to be carefully considered, though he believes the report to be alarmist and probably self-defeating. It will easily be ignored by the extremists, he says, and they will be supported by middle-of-the-road liberals who "always react sharply in favor of the accused against tendentious polemic. To produce such a pamphlet in such a form at such a moment is itself a lapse from university standards" he concludes.

In fact, the general view in the universities appears to be that the tide has already turned and Left-wing ideas which were dominant in the late sixties and early seventies are now less popular. This coincides with the end of the expansion of social sciences and an economic recession which has forced students to think hard about getting a job. Marx has given way to Mammon.

There remain, however, fierce controversies in the polytechnics, the colleges of education (where school teachers are trained), and in the Open University. Professor Gould believes that Open University students, who have to work alone with only occasional contact with their teachers, are peculiarly vulnerable to false doctrines. Two Open University courses are attacked in the Gould Report: a course called Patterns of Inequality taken by social science students and a course called Schooling and Society, part of the Education course. The second of these begins, claims Professor Gould, with 60 hours on Schooling and Capitalism; its theme is that education is a bourgeois conception intimately tied to the capitalist system.

Mr. Geoffrey Esland, a sociology lecturer at the Open University and one of the team responsible for the course, admitted in an interview with *The Times* that the theme of the course is "to question the common idea that education is generally a beneficial activity and to suggest that it merely reproduces those aspects of existing society which create injustice. It does certainly challenge the predominance of the liberal view of education." It is, he says, only one of more than ten Open University courses on education.

The course on Patterns of Inequality has been criticized by Mrs. Cox as "intellectually dishonest" for implying that

**The Attack on Higher Education: Marxist and Radical Penetration* (ISC, 12 Golden Square London W1), price \$11.25. The group included Professor Edward Shils of Peterhouse, Cambridge, and the University of Chicago; Professor Anthony Flew of the University of Reading; Professor David Martin of the London School of Economics; and Brian Crozier, a former journalist who is now director of the ISC.

poverty and inequality are exclusively found in capitalist societies. The course concentrates on Britain and makes no attempt to compare it with any other country—an intellectual trick that is, says Professor Gould, often used by Marxists. Or, as Professor David Martin puts it: “The Marxists do not play fair. They never compare our society with any existing society, only with societies that do not exist.”

The history of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science, started in 1969, is an example of the use of a worthy cause to promote a Left-wing campaign, according to Professor Gould. To begin with, the society included many liberal scientists, but rapidly became radicalized under the influence of Professor Steven Rose of the Open University (a biologist) and his wife Hilary Rose, now professor of sociology at Bradford University. Today what is left of the

BSSRS is indeed a Marxist organization, though its influence is so small that it scarcely matters. To represent a more moderate view of scientific responsibility, a new organization, the Council for Science and Society, has been founded. So far, it is still firmly in moderate hands.

The Gould report makes no attempt to estimate how many Marxists there are in British higher education. Nor does he suggest that the study of Marxism is an improper activity, or that the Marxist interpretation of history or sociology should be proscribed. Many distinguished academics, including the historians Professor Eric Hobsbawm and Christopher Hill, the late J. D. Bernal, a biologist, and historian of science Dr. Joseph Needham have made no secret of their socialism, nor has it been thought to detract from the work they have done. The distinction, as Gould sees it, is between those who can operate in a schol-

arly way despite their political convictions, and those who have abandoned all pretense of scholarship in favor of propagating a Marxist—or, as they usually put it, a “radical”—view.

There seems, despite the anxieties of the Left, no danger of a witch-hunt. But it is now claimed, without much convincing evidence, that it is harder to gain a tenured position on a university faculty if you are known to be Left wing. One candidate at Oxford is said to have been turned down simply because he had a book published by a well-known Left-wing publisher. This is not a consequence of Professor Gould, more a case of the ebb and flow of intellectual fashion, which now favors the Right rather than the Left. The universities, most consider, face greater danger from a shortage of money than they do from the activities of Marxists in their midst.

—NIGEL HAWKES

Laetrile at Sloan-Kettering: A Question of Ambiguity

A painful case of overexposure to laetrile has beset the Sloan-Kettering Institute, a leading cancer research center. A team of researchers at the New York City institute has spent some 5 years testing the alleged anticancer properties of the apricot pit extract under the close attention of the press and suspicious eye of laetrile cultists. A string of predominantly negative results was announced at a press conference held this June, but the institute has now been zapped with charges of suppressing pro-laetrile evidence.

Its accusers are an anonymous group of institute members known, after their underground newsletter, as Second Opinion. A founder member of the clandestine group revealed himself at a counter-press conference held this month to publicize Second Opinion's criticism of Sloan-Kettering's trial of laetrile. He turned out to be Ralph Moss, second in charge of the institute's public affairs office. He was fired the next working day.

The institute's entrapment with laetrile began in 1972 at the behest of Benno Schmidt, a member of its board. When he had to answer letters with the reply that laetrile had no effect against cancer, Schmidt said, “I would like to

be able to do so with some conviction.”

Though Schmidt's request would have been hard to refuse, the institute deserves credit for knowingly walking into a minefield. Any negative results would be blasted by the laetrile cultists as a kangaroo court verdict on the pit, any positive results would be widely disbelieved in the biomedical profession, and even the attempt to get results would draw criticism from doctors of dignifying the apricot nostrum with more attention than it deserved. Perhaps as much in prayer as in prediction Lewis Thomas, president of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, was quoted as saying that “This institution can answer the laetrile question fairly quickly” (*Science*, 7 December 1972).

The laetrile project went forward under the direction of Lloyd Old, the institute's vice-president for basic research, and Chester Stock, vice-president for chemotherapy research. Robert Good, the immunologist who became head of the Sloan-Kettering Institute in 1973, was glad on arrival to see laetrile under trial. But in retrospect, he now says, “I sure as hell wish the Sloan-Kettering Institute had not taken on the testing. It has been such a bag of worms. It has

nothing to do with science, it has to do with politics.”

The institute's first problem occurred when Kanematsu Sugiura, the scientist put in charge of laetrile testing, got what might in one perspective be called the “wrong” results. He found that laetrile tended to inhibit the growth of secondary tumors in mice, although it did not destroy the primary tumors. Sugiura did the experiment three times, with the same results, and has since repeated it another three times, again with the same outcome.

Sugiura, now 85, is an emeritus member of the Sloan-Kettering, and his abilities are held in high regard by both Good and Stock, even though they believe, in the light of subsequent work by others, that laetrile does not have the positive effects Sugiura noticed in his experiments. “He has had more experience in tumor testing than anyone in the institute—I still consider him a very capable observer,” says Stock. According to Good, “I think from everything we know that he is a reliable scientist, and he has an extraordinary record through the years of being right.”

Sugiura's first group of experiments was completed in 1973 but was not published in the usual way. Asked about the departure from customary scientific practice, Stock explains that “If we had published those early positive data, it would have caused all kind of havoc.” Good adds that “the natural processes of science are just not possible in this kind of pressure cooker.”

A major cause of the heat was that Su-