

NETWORK

NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

ESRC BLACKLISTING

The ESRC blacklisting of institutions with low completion rates for PhDs will continue. The council has made this perfectly clear not only in its official publicity, but in the comment in this issue of *Network*. The latest issue of its newsletter contains a full list of the officially recorded completion rates for those institutions currently receiving ESRC grants. At the top of the list, which covers the four year period 1980-84, are the high-completion institutions of Brunel, Henley Management Centre, Birkbeck College, London School of Hygiene, The Open University, Salford, and St David's. The low-completion institutions at the bottom of the list are Aston, Birmingham Polytechnic, Bristol, Cranfield, Dundee, East Anglia, Leeds Polytechnic, Liverpool, Bedford College, MBS, Middlesex Polytechnic, North East London Polytechnic, Paisley College, Queen's, Sheffield Polytechnic, South Bank Polytechnic, St Andrews, Stirling, Surrey, Trent Polytechnic, Bangor, Swansea, UWIST, and UMIST. All the latter were reported as having 0.00 per cent completion rates. The figures hide much more than they reveal, however. Many of the calculations are based on extremely small numbers and produce spuriously precise figures. Brunel and St David's, for example, had 100.00 per cent completion rates on the basis of just one student each; while Middlesex Polytechnic and UMIST had 0.00 per cent rates on the same basis: one student completing equals 100.00, one student not completing equals 0.00. Only 19 institutions had student numbers in double figures, and just four had twenty or more student awards. Lord Rothschild's inquiry recommended that ESRC purchase copies of the *Complete Plain Words*, perhaps he should also have recommended Darrell Huff's *How to Lie With Statistics*. On page 109 of his book Huff says 'Any percentage figure based on a small number of cases is likely to be misleading. It is more informative to give the figure itself. And when the percentage is carried out to decimal places you begin to run the scale from the silly to the fraudulent'.

ESRC has set up a commission under Dr Graham Winfield, chief executive of BOC and a newly-appointed member of council, to investigate the whole question of social science PhDs. The commission is working to a very tight schedule and invited comments through a press advertisement. Over 250 submissions have been received, including about 80 official responses from universities and colleges. Despite the fact that many submissions were received after the early closing date, all submissions are to be considered and the commission hope to report to council in October.

The BSA executive discussed ESRC policy on PhDs with members of the ESRC secretariat and Social Affairs Committee, and John Westergaard, Martin Albrow and Frank Bechhofer were delegated to respond to the Winfield Commission on behalf of the BSA. The BSA submission reiterates the problems of small numbers in calculating rates and questions the value of blacklisting whole institutions rather than the specific departments responsible. Perhaps the most substantial point made concerns the whole structure of

postgraduate research in the social sciences: is the PhD to be considered as an 'academic journeyman's certificate' (completable, almost by definition, in three or four years), or is it a recognition of originality of thought and breadth of learning. The former is more typical of the natural sciences, where students slot into existing projects and many may expect to broaden their knowledge in a post-doctoral fellowship. Both of these conditions are absent in the social sciences. ESRC policy is criticised in the BSA submission for failing to clarify whether it feels that current PhD work is *inadequate* as research training or is *misguided* in seeking to encourage scholarship. It concludes that 'any measures to revise and standardise conceptions of PhD research for the purposes of improving completion rates must, to be effective, be agreed by the academic community at large'.

ESRC STATEMENT

The following note has been received from the ESRC secretariat:

The 'News in Brief' piece in *Network* 34 (Jan 1986) about ESRC's sanctions policy contained a number of errors of fact and interpretation.

ESRC was not 'surprised by the strength of opposition to the blacklist'. The opposition was not nearly as strong as expected and some who have disagreed publicly with the policy have privately expressed their agreement with it. ESRC has no intention to 'quietly drop plans to repeat the exercise next year' but intends to raise the threshold for sanctions. Institutions where 25 per cent of ESRC-funded students initially registered in 1980, 1981 and 1982 have not submitted a thesis within four years will be debarred from receiving ESRC studentships for the two years commencing in 1987.

ESRC has taken and will continue to take account of exceptional circumstances preventing the submission of a thesis within four years. Allowance will be made for illness, accident, maternity leave, temporary suspension of registration or extension of time for special reasons (eg difficult language training). Students whose registration ceased within one year of the commencement of ESRC funding will not be included in the statistics. ESRC will obviously amend the data provided for it by universities if they are shown to be incorrect. Having taken account of these points, five of the fourteen institutions on ESRC's original blacklist (King's College London, Leeds Polytechnic, London University Institute of Education, University College Swansea and UMIST) have escaped sanctions this year.

Council has established a working group to take a fundamental look at the nature of research degrees in the social sciences and the problem of low submission and completion rates and this group will report to Council in October. Any individuals or groups wishing to present evidence or contribute ideas should contact Chris Caswill, ESRC, 160 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6BA (tel 01-637 1499 ext 235).

EDITORIAL REQUESTS

The Editor of *Network* would be grateful to receive unwanted back copies of *Network* which

IN THIS ISSUE

Sociology and Bias

Roger Scruton elaborates on his criticisms of sociology and its textbooks. Sociology today is biased and its teaching is a form of indoctrination. In a rejoinder, Robert Moore answers some of the points made about the new right at the British Association meeting.

* * *

Liberals and Sociology

Clement Freud, without deviation, hesitation, or repetition, outlines Liberal policy towards social sciences and sets this in the context of higher education policy. What would the Liberals do to improve the lot of sociologists?

* * *

Feminist Sociology

Michèle Barrett reflects on the gender teaching survey and asks whether the intellectual separation of gender issues from mainstream research and teaching should be ended.

* * *

Public Relations: Controversy

David Marsland, Jon Bernardes, and Tony Garrett respond to Jennifer Platt's call for sociologists to be more concerned about their public image. Should we fight back? And if so, how?

* * *

Computing

John Selby outlines the options for sociologists wanting a cheap but efficient word processing system for use at home. Find out whether your latest acquisition is already redundant.

* * *

And the Regular Sections

News and information, What's on and where, Reports and Publications, Opinions and Controversy. Reviews and book talk by Kevin Bonnett, Stephen Ball and Christopher Dandeker. Plus Book Ends.

Full contents on the back page.

OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY

Helen Jones has been appointed to a temporary lectureship in sociology at the University of Liverpool, and Janet Siltanen's temporary post at Edinburgh has been extended. Miriam David has moved from her lectureship at Bristol University to head the Department of Social Sciences at the South Bank Polytechnic. The research project on ethnic employment currently under way at Leicester University has appointed Janet Harvey and Susan Waters as Research Associates.

members no longer require. Any copies would be useful, but especially Issues 1 to 10. Anyone with contributions or suggestions for the content of *Network* should contact the Editor.

SOCIAL SCIENCE POLICY

The opposition political parties were invited to respond to Sir Keith Joseph's views on the future of social science, reported in the last issue of *Network*. Clement Freud has provided a detailed statement of the Liberal view (see this issue), while Labour and the SDP provided copies of their higher education policy statements.

Clement Freud says that Liberals recognise and support the need for continued support for teaching and research in the social sciences, and that more people should learn the methods and techniques of social scientists. Sociology's current problems are traced to over-optimistic

claims of the 1960s about the explanatory power of social science. Sir Keith Joseph is criticised, however, for his vindictiveness and 'intellectual totalitarianism', and for failing to recognise the need for more social research in areas of central government policy. Freud ends his article with the argument that the social science PhD should include a greater taught element and that there should be some kind of qualification for those who are unable to complete.

The Labour Party document 'Education Throughout Life' makes little specific mention of the social sciences. Supporting an extension of the Robbins principle and a need to increase the numbers of technologists, Labour holds and the latter 'must be achieved by extra funding and not at the expense of the quantity or quality of

arts and social science places'. Support is given to establishing a proper career structure for research staff, for inquiring into the level of academic pay, and increasing research funding, but nothing is said about tenure. It is hoped that Giles Radice, Labour spokesperson, will write for *Network* in the near future. The SDP's response to the Green Paper recognises the problems created for the humanities by the 'switch' of resources, but does not distinguish social science from other humanities. On higher education in general, the SDP agree that tenure should not be abolished but 're-negotiated in an atmosphere of dynamic growth'. The government's projections of the demand for higher education are described as 'sociologically ridiculous' and as 'arresting upward social mobility'.

CONTINUING SCRUTONY

The debate over the new right critique of sociology, reported in the last issue of *Network*, has produced a flurry of paper from all sides. Yet another unpublished letter to *The Times* has reached *Network*, this one from John Gibbins at Teeside Polytechnic. Gibbins makes the point that ideological approaches in social science are in retreat as sociology, a multi-paradigmed discipline, has become more 'conservative' as it has become institutionalised. Scruton, he implies, has an out-moded view of the subject. David Martin, in a column for *The Times* in November, gave a spirited defence of the subject against Scruton's claims. While recognising that 'there remains a patchy

tidemark washed up from the 1960s... and an underworld of debased coinage which provides the small change of jejeune social comment', Martin argues that the mainstream of sociology has been 'high, dry and painstaking' and oriented to the right of centre. Sociology provides the basis for much important work in the social sciences, history, and the arts, and its achievements are ignored by those critics who prefer snide comment.

The Salisbury Review, in its comments on the Green Paper on higher education, has reiterated its view of the 'cancer of sociology' which now oppresses most polytechnics, universities and schools. The editorial argues that sociologists have destroyed the normal customs of academic scholarship. Meanwhile, Roger Scruton has expanded his personal views of the British Association debate and the

nature of sociology textbooks (see this issue of *Network*).

His original piece in *The Times* referred to 'half-hearted' textbooks, and Scruton has now named those by Bilton *et al.* and by Worsley *et al.* as amongst those which he had in mind. The textbooks embody a bias in that they ignore the arguments of the right and present contentious positions as fundamental axioms. Roger Scruton has asked that anyone wishing to comment on his views and to further the debate should write to him (Department of Philosophy, Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London WC1) and try to convince him that he is wrong. *Network* will be happy to print any such comments or to receive more extended answers to his claims.

NEWS IN BRIEF

ESRC has agreed to consider the possibility of establishing a system for monitoring gender bias in applications and awards. The BSA executive is to make some practical proposals for achieving this end, and the matter has been discussed by the Equality of Sexes Committee. The executive has recommended a detachable form showing institutional affiliation, age, gender and ethnic background.

The Social Affairs Committee of ESRC has, like some of the other committees, exhausted its budget for research grants, but applications totalling more than £70,000 have been approved and queued to await funds. All projects approved in the near future will go to the end of this queue, and any money received by the committee will go towards clearing this backlog. It is rumoured that a major part of the problem has been the high cost of floating the

Economic Life initiative. The secretariat has emphasised, however, that the creation of successful initiatives is a major way of increasing the overall funding of the Committee.

In his talk to a conference on 'Looking Forward in the Social Sciences', Michael Posner, former SSRC chairman, gave some characteristically blunt and forthright views. He does, however, qualify some of his earlier views of sociology. He argues that in addition to applied research 'there must also continue and flourish empirical sociological investigation of the nature of our society, of our beliefs, of our voting behaviour, of our family formation, with no practical objectives in mind. This costs money, uses manpower, obtrudes itself to the eye of potentially unsympathetic political classes. The fact that the people who do it are sometimes sour of mind or subversive in intention, or alienated from ordinary *Financial Times* readers like me, is just too bad. We must pay for it all the

same. It is worth the odd five or ten per cent (not more, but not much less) of the Research Council's budget' (ESRC Newsletter, 56). It is a long road to Damascus.

Many sociology courses in polytechnics and colleges will suffer under the National Advisory Board's policy of cuts for 'non-protected' courses. These courses will face cuts in admissions from September 1986. In March the NAB announced that social studies will face a 16 per cent cut.

The 11th World Congress of Sociology is being organised by the International Sociological Association and will be held at New Delhi from August 16th-23rd 1986. Details about the congress and travel are available from ISA, Oude Hoogstraat 24, 1012 CE Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

SOCIOLOGY, BIAS, AND INDOCTRINATION

Roger Scruton
Birkbeck College

Editor's note: Professor Scruton was invited to elaborate on his views of sociology, first set out in *The Times* and *The Salisbury Review*. This article is his response, and he hopes that it will generate further comment from readers of *Network*. The article is followed by a brief reply from Robert Moore.

The editor of *Network* has invited me to explain and defend the charge that sociological writings in general, and A-level textbooks in particular display a left-wing bias – a charge that I made in an article in *The Times* (October 1985). I notice from the January issue of *Network* that the charges have been greeted with a certain incredulity and indignation, although I am not persuaded that the incredulity is wholly sincere.

My article was provoked by a paper read to the British Association for the Advancement of

Science by Professor Robert Moore, in which the 'New Right' was subjected to a cursory but hostile interrogation. At one point Professor Moore alleged that while 'the British New Right include sociologists, those of distinction have not published any serious sociological work since they came out'. Since the 'New Right' seems to mean all those who wish to defend positions to the right of centre in a language appropriate to our times, I was naturally tempted to interpret Professor Moore as saying that good sociology (for whatever reason) is intrinsically left-wing.

Now someone could think like Professor Moore (if I interpret him correctly) without thereby revealing a left-wing bias: for he might believe that sociological investigation actually establishes some left-wing position as reasonable or true. On the other hand, he might simply be re-affirming his political commitments, in a manner with which no reader of modern sociology will be unfamiliar. I happen to think

that there *is* good work produced by sociologists of a right-wing persuasion – whether or not you wish to call it 'sociology'. (For instance, there is the work of David Martin, Bryan Wilson and David J. Levy; all three writers have been published in *The Salisbury Review*, a journal which has been subjected to particular attack by left-wing sociologists.) But I admit that opinions will differ as to the merits of any particular author, and that Professor Moore may be entitled to his view (if it is his view). Nevertheless, in speaking as he did, it seemed to me to reveal a definite bias, and to illustrate, through that bias, precisely what is objectionable in so much of his subject.

How do you detect bias? I believe that there is a clear and identifiable distinction between education and indoctrination¹. Indoctrination, I contend, is revealed in the dominant role played by 'foregone conclusions', in the incorporation of those conclusions into a programme of action, and in the discounting, ignoring or

ridiculing of opposing views. It seems to me that standard A-level textbooks often contain extended passages of indoctrination, and that in very many of them a left-wing position is a foregone conclusion. Before illustrating that accusation, however, I should like to make an appeal to all sociologists. In the interests of academic values and scientific research, I should very much welcome proposals for the definition and detection of bias, together with illustrations from the social sciences. Obviously there are works written by academics which openly confess to a political purpose. Nevertheless, it is to be supposed that textbooks, and particularly those designed for use in schools, are not of this nature. I should add that the question whether a subject is biased or indoctrinatory is distinct, in my view, from the question whether it is, or can be, 'value free'. But on that subject too I should welcome the opinions of sociologists. And, if I am wrong in my accusations of left-wing bias, I can look forward to useful replies from the many right-wing sociologists – who, for some reason, do not turn up in representative numbers to meetings of the British Sociological Association.

Ponder, then, the following example from an A-level textbook, and ask whether it does have an indoctrinatory meaning: 'Inequality of power and advantage has been an extremely common, if not universal, feature of human societies, even if the degree of inequality has varied very greatly. It has almost always been the case that some group or groups have controlled or exploited other groups. At some points in the history of a given society people have rebelled and challenged this inequality; at other points they have meekly accepted their subordination.'² The passage introduces the discussion of inequality, in a book that openly proclaims the value of sociology as a catalyst of social change. Three conclusions are foregone in this paragraph, and throughout the ensuing discussion, and they are foregone in the interests of a political agenda: that inequality is tantamount to the existence of 'controlling' or 'exploiting' groups; that when people have rebelled against such groups it is in order to challenge 'inequality'; and that when they do not rebel it is because they 'meekly' accept 'subordination'. Now it is true that certain theories argue for these conclusions – the most important being Marxism. But Marxism is a theory with a political agenda, and people who neither accept the theory nor approve of the agenda will naturally not wish to see its conclusions being assumed throughout a discussion that ought to question them.

The political dispute concerning equality is wide-ranging. Nevertheless, there is a right-wing position which argues as follows: first, that it is not inequality but equality that requires controlling groups for its achievement; secondly that exploitation occurs not in the social distribution of goods and advantages (however unequal that distribution might be) but in coercive relations between people – and hence that there may be exploitation even where there is equality; thirdly, that inequality is not what is resented or rebelled against, but tyranny – including that tyranny which has 'social equality' as its goal; finally that subordination occurs only where there is coercion, and not where economic relations are based – as in a market – on consent. That position is by no means uncommon or academically disreputable – unless you think that Hayek and Nozick (both of whom have defended it) are academically disreputable. Yet it is not mentioned by the authors of the passage quoted, or, so far as I have been able to discover, by any other author of an A-level sociology textbook. Nor is any attention paid to the thinker who has questioned egalitarian values most thoroughly – Nietzsche – whose account of the 'slave morality', quaint though it may seem to philosophers, is a piece of genuine sociology. I do not say that any of those 'right-wing' ideas are correct: but they

provide a case to answer, and the very language of the paragraph quoted shows a determination neither to answer, nor even to raise, the question that they pose.

Consider, now, a typical case of indoctrination by omission: the chapter on 'Development and Underdevelopment' by Peter Worsley's *Introducing Sociology* (written by Worsley himself). Here Worsley rehearses, in language apparently neutral, factual and impartial, the well-known Marxist and Leninist accounts of Third World underdevelopment. André Gunder Frank, Lenin, Frantz Fanon, Immanuel Wallerstein, Gramsci, Perry Anderson and Samir Amin are all discussed in some detail, and the debate revolves around the question whether underdeveloped countries are likely to produce a 'proletariat' that will rise up and throw off the yoke of capitalism. This piece of agenda-fixing is by no means untypical of the author, or of sociological approaches to the economics of development. Surely, the very least that an author should do, when discussing this issue, is to consider some representative liberal or 'right-wing' theories – those of P.T. Bauer, for instance, or Jean Baechler, or W.W. Rostow, all of which are well enough known, and well enough argued to present a case to answer. And consider how many questions are begged in Worsley's description of communism – the system which he recommends as the only viable alternative to 'capitalist imperialism': '(a) it has no "other-worldly" content; it is a theory based on "historical materialism"; (b) it is based on a collective and corporate ethic of "serving the people", rather than on individualism and acquisitiveness; (c) it is strongly egalitarian; (d) institutionally it has developed the "democratic-centralist" party as the agent of social mobilisation; modernisation is not left to the individual or the market.'³ What of the many who have argued – with Aron, Cohn, Voegelin and Besancon – that Marxist communism is actually a form of secular religion? What of those who have rejected this service to 'the people' as a form of idolatry, dangerous in the human sacrifice that it authorises, and destructive of individual freedom? What of the critics of 'strong egalitarianism', who argue that it sorts oddly with the denial of individual enterprise? What of the many who have pointed to the economic destructiveness of 'democratic centralism', and the necessity for a market if economic relations are to be rationally conducted? Of course, it is true that Worsley cannot take issue with every opponent of communism: but not to mention arguments that have convinced so many, while describing the history of Third World development without even mentioning the consequences of communist planning in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia or Cuba – is not this oversight, so convenient to the author's agenda, some testimony to his bias?

It would be interesting to explore other varieties of bias in sociology: for instance, the tendency, in Haralambos's textbook to discuss political programmes in the place of sociological explanations (see especially his discussion of feminism). But space is lacking and I must therefore leave the matter in the reader's hands.

When I wrote of the 'spurious equivalences' in which sociological writing specialises, I had in mind not merely the argument concerning 'structural violence' (according to which, wherever there is social hierarchy there is also violence) but also such received ideas as those expressed in the first of my examples ('inequality = control = subordination'). The questions that I would like to ask of all sociological textbooks – in particular those written for A-level students – are these: to what extent are politically contentious conclusions foregone? To what extent are opposing positions (I mean, *truly* opposing positions) discussed and elaborated? To what extent is the main concern one of formulating a political programme rather than explaining and understanding the social world? And to what

extent are crucial questions begged by such shoddy devices as that of the spurious equivalence? I should be interested to know if there are any sociology textbooks which, faced with those questions, deliver a response that is recognisably right-wing. And if they do so, would they be dismissed by the majority of sociologists (and not just by Professor Moore) as for that reason bad sociology?

Notes

¹ Roger Scruton, Angela Ellis-Jones and Dennis O'Keeffe, *Educating and Indoctrinating*, Sherwood Press, London 1985.

² Tony Billon et al., *Introducing Sociology*, London, Macmillan, 1981.

³ Peter Worsley (ed.), *Introducing Sociology*, London, Penguin, p.142.

A REPLY TO SCRUTON

Robert Moore
Aberdeen University

Roger Scruton takes exception, in the end, to one phrase in one part of my British Association lecture. In the passage in question I was replying to Ray Honeyford's denunciatory comment that sociologists used abstractions to explain behaviour by saying that the right-wing sociologists used abstractions too! To which my colleagues might simply reply that if you read a silly journal you're bound to get involved in silly arguments.

Let me set the comment in context. My lecture paid tribute to the conservative tradition in sociology, and by implication to Nisbet's contention that sociology is a conservative tradition. I said, 'few practicing sociologists in Britain have been uninfluenced by it, either in shaping their own intellectual development or in taking a critical departure from it', and later, 'The New Right have a long conservative tradition in sociology to draw upon and the issues that concern them have been researched and argued for more than one hundred years...'. In discussing the US New Right I spoke of the important contribution of sociologists like Bell, Lipset, Glazer, Nisbet, Moynihan and Berger in developing a critique of liberal politics and policies and I asserted that 'Even their polemics seem to be well-informed from a social scientific point of view – as evidenced by Glazer's attack upon affirmative action.' I happen not to agree with Glazer, but he must be taken seriously and engaged intellectually.

You might say, then, that my comments were made in sorrowful rather than polemical terms (is sorrow bias?) at the lack of social scientific content in the work of the contemporary New Right in Britain. I took as a particular example the *Salisbury Review* on race, and tried to show its intellectual shortcomings.

My intellectual debt to Wilson and Martin is considerable. Wilson belongs to the best conservative tradition and may not be appropriated by the New Right so easily. Martin has indeed recently produced a volume in the sociology of religion (1980). So let me rephrase the comment on which Scruton focused, as a question which makes it quite clear that I was asking about the contemporary work of scholars in today's New Right, 'What serious work has been written, since 1980, by sociologists who are either long term members or recent converts to the New Right? We hear that intellectuals are 'moving to the right' – but where do I find the sociology books that are part of this new movement of ideas? Perhaps Scruton himself could tell us about the sociological inputs to the Peterhouse Group and the *Salisbury Review*, because they are hard to find in its outputs.

I am glad that *Network* is having such a civilising influence on Professor Scruton. In your columns he refrains from putting the most scandalously biased words into my mouth. He will now see, I hope, how a little democracy and the chance of a right to reply, improves the quality of discourse no end.

LIBERAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Clement Freud MP
Liberal Education Spokesman

The emphasis in our higher education policy ('Investing in Opportunity', published in November 1985) was on increasing participation – both in terms of numbers and in terms of involving those who have a place more closely in what they learn and how their institution is organised. Within that general ambition, there are a variety of practical, often small-scale measures that could be taken. Many of these are, in a way, lessons that we have learnt from the Open University, like a possible move towards modular arrangements of courses, more part-time study and, more importantly, the realisation that a much wider section of the population wants to and is able to study to a very high level. In terms of the financial input necessary to encourage such developments in the sector as a whole, we are committed to level funding, although the balance between the university and the public sector is not yet determined – I think we have to keep an open mind about those sorts of details. We are convinced that the present system – and even more, the cuts that have been imposed in recent years – are wasteful and irresponsible. Increasingly, the present government seems to have abandoned any concept of long-term thinking, for short-term expediency. They are thus guilty of wasting the nation's talents and declining to invest in the one resource that remains certain – the people of the country.

Within our general opposition to what has been forced on higher education, the financial and rhetorical attacks on the social sciences assume a particular significance. In our policy document, we noted that many of those to whom we wanted to offer new opportunities would wish to study social sciences and humanities. Such preferences may be their final choice or an introduction to the rest of what is available. I do not believe that this is because the social sciences are an easy option, or necessarily less rigorous but because they are more accessible and may be considered more 'relevant' to the student. Nor do I regard this situation with horror.

Whilst I accept that we need to increase the amount of work being done in the areas of science and engineering, I do want to see some bridging of the conventional dichotomy, which the present 'switch' has, I believe, served to reinforce. As well as the frequently discussed

need to look at the impact of new technologies on society, I would like to see less overtly ambitious developments like a real attempt to increase computer literacy amongst non-scientists. I would also like to see more people being educated in the methods of social scientists – not just things like survey techniques or regression analysis, but the handling and testing of evidence, construction of explanations and the encouragement of a healthy scepticism.

As a lay-man, I do not see much future in the grand-claim tradition of sociology. It seems that the disillusionment with social scientists is due as much to the apparently sterile debate between positivists and others as the – related – perceived failure to deliver to match the claim. Such disillusionment is obviously intensified by the failure of our economy to meet rising expectations. I think that social science also suffers in a particularly acute way from the general anti-intellectual stance of the English. To have the apocryphal 'man on the Clapham omnibus' dismissing carefully formulated and carried out research projects as 'it is all common sense anyway' is exacerbated by distorted images of the over-enthusiasms of the 1960s. In this situation, social scientists have become easy targets. Having said that, I can see no excuse for the vindictiveness of Sir Keith Joseph. At one level, he is clearly 'shooting the messenger' (although his own stay as Housing Minister might have been less disastrous had he heeded some of the evidence gathered by those he now disparages). However, at another, his attempts to abolish the Research Council altogether smack of a quite illegitimate intellectual totalitarianism, matching that of moves towards a centralised school curriculum. Liberals strenuously reject both.

It is, moreover, a dangerous irony to be so dismissive when not only is the need and room for such research even greater, but when the approaches pioneered by social scientists are influencing other disciplines – the work of Keith Thomas or Ross McKibbin might stand out here. To the outsider, it seems that pioneering and important work is going on, which does, even in the conventional sense, contribute to our understanding of society. Projects like the Oxford Mobility Study or, more recently, the work on the General Election by Heath, Jowell and Curtice, seem to me to combine the highest standards of research with theorising and the development of new insights.

And there should be no question that we need such work. Not only does the welfare state need the sort of manpower the social sciences can equip so well, but the sorts of areas in which we desperately need some clarification – and I would think immediately of industrial relations, the elderly, or incomes strategies, seem to be growing every year. Whilst some of these are, in political terms, unfashionable, there is a healthy development in the opposite direction – the growth in research being done at the local level. I am continually frustrated by the lack of such work carried out at governmental level: the DES, my most frequent such contact, introduces changes and new policies (and here I am thinking of student grants and the assisted places scheme) with no prior research and totally inadequate monitoring. The contrast with, say, ILEA or the ACC is glaring.

There are two specific issues on which I would like to see some changes. The first concerns the relationships between the institutions of higher education, where most research is still done, and those other research organisations such as the NFER, or PSI. It seems worth considering whether research students could not usefully be seconded to such bodies and a greater exchange of personnel as well as ideas encouraged. The sort of organisations I have in mind often resemble the Rothschild 'consumer/contractor' model in ways which are impossible and undesirable at a national-funding level, but are also engaged on different sorts of work, providing different and useful experience.

My other concern is for the organisation of post-graduate work. To an extent I believe that it applies to other disciplines, especially the humanities. It would be to move in the direction proposed by Rothschild, for a greater 'taught' element in a PhD, and some sort of qualification and recognition for the research student who drops out before completion. I do think this would not only help with completion rates but would also be a more overtly efficient way of preparing social scientists and helping the student.

My concluding thought is that much of the present hostility to the social sciences – and higher education in general – is misplaced. The process of clarifying the questions and problems – which social science at its best does superbly – is in itself not unworthy. Many of the answers can properly only be provided by the political process.

OBITUARY: I.P. DESAI Robert Moore

Personal notes, reminiscences and autobiographical jottings have a small but useful rôle in sociology. The entries in my own diary would qualify as only the slightest of ephemera and of very little interest to others. I was not, however, to know that I was to be probably the last British social scientist to speak to I.P. Desai. I wish now I had kept a more detailed record of our meeting. These notes may be of some passing interest to readers of *Network*.

I.P. Desai died in late January 1985. With M.N. Srinivas he was a founder of modern Indian sociology and a mentor of many contemporary holders of senior posts of sociology and anthropology in India. On the 14th of January 1985 I visited I.P. at the Centre for Social Studies in the University of South Gujarat at Surat. Desai was living an ascetic life in one room at the Centre. He dressed in traditional style, was only eating one meal a day and spending some hours in meditation every day. I.P. was withdrawing and it seemed to me, preparing himself for withdrawal from life itself. Nonetheless his retreat was not complete and he had in the previous week participated in a meeting of the Indian Sociological Society at

which it had been argued that caste should not be used as a parameter of backwardness but that it should be assessed through secular parameters. There appeared to be a broad consensus of sociologists in this politically highly explosive view.

Of growing political significance also are questions surrounding the status of women and I arrived at Surat half way through the seminar on violence against women in India in which I.P. was participating. But he did not stay for the whole of every session.

Our private discussion lasted nearly two hours. I.P. was 74 years old and his intellect was extremely sharp. We ranged over many areas, as well as some trivial professional gossip. I.P. asked about the history of sociology in Aberdeen and was particularly interested in the connection with Robert MacIver. He felt that MacIver's work was more durable than much of the sociology that had come after it. We agreed that MacIver's *Social Causation* was one of the most intellectually robust works and still highly relevant to methods courses.

According to I.P. changes in Indian society were reflected in the practice of Indian social

scientists and he commented that today it was possible for high born young women to work as sociologists and anthropologists in the villages, they only needed to learn the language to do so. A few years ago this would have been quite impossible. Whilst India had a strong tradition in social statistics there was still a great need for qualitative research which would from time to time include sending young people into the villages.

Our main focus in our discussion was the question of ethnicity. I.P. asserted that he clearly understood the meanings of ethnography and ethnology but he did not like the idea of ethnicity. He emphatically rejected the idea of Gujarati ethnicity, as being quite meaningless, 'I am a Gujarati and a Gujarati speaker and I am Hindu and an Indian.' But we agreed that terms like ethnicity were often developed to give leverage on specific problems and that they need not have universal validity.

I was cross examined by I.P. on what he saw as the decline of modern Britain and he asked me for an account of the miners' strike and then a number of detailed questions. Like many

HOME COMPUTERS FOR SOCIOLOGISTS

John Selby
Coventry (Lanchester) Polytechnic

Sociologists are getting less and less secretarial support. The number of secretarial and clerical jobs in higher education shrinks more rapidly than the number of academic posts. Many sociologists, especially younger ones and returning women, have part-time jobs which give them reduced access to clerical support. At the same time, the increasing competition in the job market forces people to publish as much as they can. These conflicting pressures generate a vicious spiral of more drafts of articles chasing fewer secretaries. One possible escape from this spiral is to buy a home computer.¹ This expensive solution, though superficially attractive, also terrifies many of us for two main reasons. First, though it seems like a conventional consumer decision, it is a consumer decision taken in a market which is changing very rapidly and in which there is not yet a body of accessible expertise available. Washing machines have been around for a long time, they have not changed their basic functions. We all hate sitting in laundrettes and know what clean underwear looks like. Computers are not like this in that they are relatively new, their basic functions are changing all the time, many of us have no experience of them and we have no way of judging the relative merits of one machine against another. With a washing machine, you just bung your clothes in, press a few buttons and take the clean clothes out at the end. You do not need to know what goes on inside. With a computer, you are involved in the process and have to do more than just switch it on and leave it to get on with the job.

Two things compound the problem. The first is the growing band of computer freaks who lapse into some kind of arcane jargon that makes Talcott Parsons read like *The Sun*. The second is advertising hype of the kind usually found in the pop business. No wonder some of us freeze into indecision or rely on an apparently knowledgeable salesperson to guide us. (V. Stewart, 'How not to write a best-seller', *The Guardian*, 28.2.1986 gives an example of the dangers involved.) Somehow we need a way of cutting through this so that those of us who are currently either proudly or shamefacedly ignorant can decide rationally whether or not to join the club.

The Uses of Home Computers for Sociologists

Most people probably have some idea of what computers can do in general terms, but it is important to be clear about the particular needs of sociologists. Let us focus on our two major tasks, research and teaching. In each of these, the main benefits will come from a word processor, which (*eventually*) enables you to be much more efficient in the way in which you use words. In writing articles and research proposals and reports, you will be able to refine what you have written, take an existing article

and re-write it in a different format for a different journal if the first submission is rejected or even, dare I hint at such a malpractice, publish seven virtually identical articles on the basis of one piece of research. You will be able to keep notes on file on a computer disc and find them much more easily than in a filing cabinet and quickly re-hash and amend them for insertion into an article. It is particularly useful for collaborative research work where you can run off a draft, talk about it and then sit in front of the machine and tidy up the draft together.

In teaching, the main use is in writing and updating handouts and reading lists to students; these change from year to year, but retain some similar material. Cutting, pasting and printing from the resultant thick, inflexible mess is both time-consuming and produces ugly and illegible results. A word processor is also useful in writing references. As we often have to write a number of letters for the same student, it is useful to keep a copy on disc and amend it for each particular job application.

There are other potential uses of home computers in research and teaching. In research, it is very useful to use a database programme (a kind of electronic card index) to store and classify references, which will be much easier to find than in a conventional card box. It is also possible to use a spreadsheet (a kind of flexible, self-calculating grid) to produce tables for articles and also, by using a 'graphics package', produce graphs and charts. There are 'statistics packages' which will do simple statistical analysis, but for any large scale work you will need a large and expensive machine. It is also possible to design computer-aided learning packages but for these to be useful your home machine needs to be the same or compatible with computers to which students have access. Designing these is, moreover, a difficult and skilled task. One final use, currently beyond most budgets, is to use the computer for access to sources of data, such as the ESRC Data Archive or ultimately such things as Books in Print or Sociological Abstracts. These are likely to be realistic possibilities within five years, though the current home computer may not be able to do it.

The Cost of Buying a Home Computer

I am going to divide the costs into two parts, time costs and money costs. The first set of costs often get forgotten. There is a widespread assumption that all you need to do is get hold of a computer and all the associated bits, sit down in front of it and all of a sudden your efficiency will improve. In the first place, you have to learn to operate the computer and you need to be able to type quite well, though computers can teach you this. Second, a vast amount of time gets wasted when something goes wrong for completely unattractive reasons. Third, and most importantly, your efficiency only improves when you have spent a great deal of time transferring material which you currently have on paper into the computer. Thus, all your current handouts which you update and modify with Tippex, scissors and photocopier and get re-typed by someone else when it becomes necessary, have to be typed in yourself. You will not experience any benefit until the second time around. Finally, and not insignificantly, though you will be able to throw away the Tippex bottle, you may get fussier about layout and style because word processors allow you to play around with things on the screen before printing them. Starting from scratch, which I do not recommend and I will explain why below, you will invest tens of hours in all this and the savings will take quite a while to come. It is worth it, but be prepared.

The financial costs are obviously quite large and you must not expect to get away with spending less than £500-£600 and you may

need to spend quite a bit more. You will need a computer, at least one disc drive, a printer and a monitor or television. Do not forget that you will need to buy software (a word processing programme at least), discs, paper, ribbons and you may as well buy various leads to connect things together as well as plugs and adaptors. All the bits and pieces can add up to a great deal and nobody mentions them when they quote prices at you.

Making decisions

First, find yourself a computer freak, preferably at your place of work. They are usually evangelists who will be happy to show you how their machines work. They may call it a 'skill exchange', but this is merely Illichian for letting your friends play with your favourite toy. Spend some time practising on a machine and talking to colleagues who already use computers. Find out about the machines which are available at your place of work and how easy it is to get access to them. This is background information which will help you get a feel for your needs without investing a great deal of time and money. Starting from scratch can be very wasteful.

Next assess your needs. These are likely to be quite modest at first and will not demand an IBM micro, no matter what a dealer might claim. Most sociologists who wish to buy a home computer will want it for word processing, at least initially. This means that you will need a good clear visual display which will show 80 columns, rather than the 40 which some machines offer. You will need a separate television or monitor; a spare black and white set will be quite adequate. The machine you buy will need a disc drive and a good keyboard with a positive feel to it; do not imagine you can get away with a Spectrum and a tape recorder.

If you have ready access to a computer at work, it may be worth considering buying the same type, because it is much easier to become familiar with one machine. You will also be able to carry your work to and from home on discs. I have even heard that some people, but surely not sociologists, take copies of software from work and use them at home, but this is a breach of copyright. Even if you do not do this, you could stagger your purchases and delay buying a printer, by using one at work to run off your material, or use a high quality printer at work for those rare occasions when it is necessary. You may be able to pick up a second-hand machine, but this may be risky and depends on a good guarantee.

You will need a printer of your own, but there is no need to spend a fortune. Most cheap (dot matrix) printers now produce very good quality work much more quickly than a daisywheel and cost much less.

Further, if there are children in your household, do you wish to share the machine? This may be quite reasonable because they are likely to get bored and allow you sufficient access to get on with your work, but it will need to be a machine on which they can play games. You may even end up playing a few of them yourself after they have gone to bed. Do not, however, believe the advertiser's story that children need a BBC machine, because they've all learned BBC Basic. Adults can manage more than one machine; children can do it quite happily.

Finally, what should you buy? Unfortunately there is no simple answer, because it depends on your needs. I have included a very quick summary table which sets out the main possibilities.

There are other machines which are worth considering including the Atari 130, the Apple IIe or IIc and the Tatung Einstein. The first has not sold well in Britain though it is part of a series which has sold very well in the US, the

Obituary continued from page 4

Indians, he had been following the strike closely.

Before we parted I found a common interest with I.P. that few Western sociologists would share, namely a great love for the country-craft, the marvellously swift and graceful sailing vessels which used to trade between India and the Middle East. We both regretted their replacement by the truck and we engaged in sentimental reminiscences. I promised to visit him again on my next trip to India.

It was a great privilege to meet an intellectual of such wide experience and such a gentle manner. I left the Centre for Social Studies wondering if by the age of 74 I would have achieved an equal intellectual sharpness.

BUYERS' GUIDE

(A) IF YOU HAVE A SPARE TELEVISION

Brand and approximate price of complete outfit	Comments
Sinclair QL £500	Now heavily discounted and rather idiosyncratic machine. Price includes no disc drive but microdrives which are not as good. See John Scott's review in <i>Network</i> 33, October 1985: 8-9. Extra software is included.
Commodore 64 £550	Machine about to be superseded by the 128 and hence heavily discounted. Idiosyncratic machine, but the world's best seller with masses of games, as well as good word processors and other 'professional' software. The Commodore 128 is only just available and is expensive. Avoid the Commodore Plus 4.
BBC MS 128 £900	An overpriced machine but a very good one with all kinds of possibilities and much educational software including social science simulations, statistics etc. The BBC Model B+ may be available soon at discounts. This is also a very good buy.

(B) IF YOU NEED TO BUY A TELEVISION OR MONITOR

Brand and approximate price of complete outfit	Comments
Amstrad PCW 8256 £500	The best value machine for starting on because it has a very good word processor and printer included. There is also other very good software available. Can be started up very easily. Only one plug needed. No games or spelling checker.
Amstrad CPC 6128 £575	A good all-round choice which will offer you the opportunity to play games as well as a wide general set of features. More flexible than the 8256, including a spelling checker to proof-read your typing.
Atari 520 ST £1000	Very advanced machine with a great many features and potentially the machine that is going to set the standard for the future. Still very new in the UK and perhaps a bit of a gamble.

Apples are good, flexible, but expensive and the Talung is a reasonable machine which has not sold well and is now heavily discounted. An Apple might be worth buying if you have them at work, but the others are only sensible if you have contact with someone who already has one.

Conclusions

The important thing to realise is that this article, written in February may well be out of date by the time it is published, because the market is changing all the time. Be prepared for

the machine you buy to be superseded by something cheaper and better almost before you have become used to it. The success of any decision you take will depend less on the particular choice of machine, than on the links you can develop with other users both before and after purchase. There will always be teething troubles which can usually be solved by talking to someone who has already been through them. Unless you have a lot of informal support, it is better to buy from a dealer who knows something about the machine and can advise you, rather than from a discount store.²

Notes

¹ I will not comment at length on the collective implications of this individual solution to a common problem. It clearly accelerates the shrinkage in secretarial work, and hence in mainly female employment, and no doubt has implications for the post-Braverman debate; but I leave that for others to discuss. This is a piece of consumer journalism, not sociology!

² Technical Note: This article was written on an Amstrad CPC 6128 using the protext word processing package on a cartridge.

CONTROVERSY

NO FUTURE FOR SOCIOLOGY?

David Marsland
Brunel University

Increasingly professional sociologists are employed outside the education system – in local and central government, in social and commercial research agencies, in industry in the broadest sense. This is acknowledged in the BSA's 35th Annual Report, recently distributed, where the intention is announced of using *Network* 'to make clear that the needs and requirements of sociologists not employed in academia should be more clearly recognised and catered for'.

Attending to reality

It seems to me that this recognition of reality is more than a little overdue, and is gravely weakened by its manifest defensiveness. Faced by cuts and threats of cuts, we go hard for expansionist recruitment, and widen the campaign on tactical and expedient grounds to include 'sociologists not employed in academia' – as if one might say 'polar bears living elsewhere than in the arctic', or 'mammals which lay eggs'. But as the membership register of the Social Research Association demonstrates, very many sociologists are

employed outside the education system. They are not exotic rarities. Moreover, even those of us who are employed full-time in education are necessarily and unavoidably implicated through our teaching and our research in the same real world beyond the dream-image of academia in which sociologists outside the education system are more obviously involved.

Professional sociologists, like every other category of professional workers, simply have to take account – hopefully successfully – of at least the following aspects and layers of reality:

● Legitimate power holders

It is not a lot more sense 'waiting for Kinnock' than 'waiting for the revolution'. In a democracy we have to be able to work with any government elected by the people. If we manage to give an impression of being 'anti' on principle or out of habit, we are bound to lose out, and deserve to.

● Sources of finance

Only amateur sociology can dispense with realistic accommodation with the controllers of finance. This includes naturally (if too much for my taste) government, and therefore elides with my first category of reality. But it also includes foundations and trusts, publishers, private companies, and industry more broadly. We can

hardly claim, I suggest, to have organised ourselves in such a way as to maximise the flow of funds from this range of sources into sociology. No wonder we are losing out.

● Audiences and reputation makers

Every move we make in a public arena affects our reputation. Each book or article written, such interaction with influentials in work contexts or in our local communities affects little by little our reputation and our status. The alternative is not freedom but fiction. Yet we continue to behave too much as if we didn't care, or as if it didn't matter what the world reckons us for.

● The media and other image makers

It's little use agonising about first principles in the higher reaches of theory, or fantasising about government censorship, if the world has not so much as heard of sociology, or misapprehended altogether our basic purposes. In our sort of society, as we teach even innocent first years, the media have a crucial role to play in the shaping of images. Yet we have done precious little to explain ourselves to the media in their own terms, or to use them positively to support our endeavours as social scientists. We have let sociology get defined as a soft and

CONTROVERSY

useless option and allowed sociologists to become construed in the market place of images as wayward radicals. Real professionalism would require us and enable us to challenge these false images and change them.

● Customers and clients

These include unavoidably our employers and our bosses, the sponsors of our research work, and not least our students. I doubt we have managed yet to do half as well as we easily could at winning their whole-hearted backing for sociology. We have too often seemed more interested in fashionable political campaigning than in improving our teaching, more inclined to publish our books than to follow up on research into useful practical action, less willing than colleagues in some disciplines to look for ways of increasing efficiency and saving money. Yet our customers and clients are a crucial part of the reality context in which we live and work. In the long run their reactions determine the prosperity of sociology as an enterprise.

Errors for correction

Jennifer Platt's article in *Network* 34 went a long way towards reminding us of these realities, and their power over the development of sociology. The suggestions she made for improving the condition of our discipline seemed to me sensible and helpful. I was invited to follow up. I am inclined to go for more radical solutions.

These depend on our acknowledging that we may have made some real and quite serious mistakes in our recent history, and on making a genuine attempt to correct them. For example:

● Left-wing bias

This is not 1968, of course, but our textbooks, our teaching and our public positions have become more rather than less one-sidedly left-wing since those heady days. Our basic teaching material is systematically anti-capitalist (see Marsland, 'Seeds of Bankruptcy', Educational Research Trust, 1986), and suspiciously unilateralist (Marsland, 'Neglect and Betrayal', Institute of European Defence Studies, 1985). We remain largely uncritical in our allegiance to an egalitarian concept of welfare, and decidedly biased against market forces as appropriate mechanisms for the allocation of resources in a democratic society (D.C. Anderson et al - 'Breaking the spell of the Welfare State', Social Affairs Unit, 1981).

Marxist ideas are more prevalent and influential than they have ever been in sociology. The literature in nearly every field of the discipline is dominated by class analysis.

Social policy debates find sociologists almost without exception in the Labour camp or to the left of it. Even apparent anti-Marxism follows Lenin in its concern to avoid enemies to the Left. Thus Anthony Giddens in *Sociology: a Brief But Critical Introduction*, page 169, commends us to 'outflank Marx from the left'. Such all encompassing one-sidedness is unjustifiable and unacceptable. It is bound to bias teaching and hamper research. It has inevitably damaged our reputation, weakened our claims to resources, and ensured that governing and other established elites remain thoroughly unsympathetic towards sociology. Unless we can manage to present a more balanced and more genuinely pluralist image to the world, our position will go from bad to worse.

● Critical negativism

Is there any wonder recruitment into sociology is so weak in quantitative and qualitative terms? We are apparently content not to turn out educated young men and women headed for a range of successful, productive careers, but merely to produce critical saboteurs of society as it is, as it is likely to remain, and as most people want it to be. We have hugged to our hearts a concept of a critical role for sociology which is as self-indulgent as it is intellectually incoherent.

There is enormous scope for positive, practical work by graduates thoroughly trained in the ideas and methods of sociology - in local and central government, in commercial research and development, and in industry. But this would require us to encourage in our students a more common-sensical, better balanced, less hysterical approach to social relations than our avowedly 'critical' role allows. At the same time our critical work seems remarkably one-sided in its targets - judges and policemen rather than criminals; employers rather than employees or union leaders; the USA rather than the Soviet Union, etcetera, etcetera. Unless we can subsume our criticism within scholarship, incorporate within it self-criticism, and allow to sociology a positive, creative role in society, no amount of public relations efforts or recruitment campaigns will save us.

● Isolationist impracticality

You can reckon on sociologists being energetically involved in preventing the award of an honorary degree to the Prime Minister, in organising campaigns for predictable political causes, or in rushing round the country to prove the government's inner city policies aren't working. Outside these established arenas,

however, we tend to remain closeted in academia, nervous of getting our hands dirty in the rough and tumble of the extra-mural world. The public stereotype of sociologists as useless, impractical, and socially incompetent is even more damaging than our left-wing image. In 'Sociologists and social policy' (*Social Policy and Administration*, Vol.17, No.1, 1983) I have argued for us getting into the outside world, other than merely as researchers, much more, and much more actively than is common in Britain. We have failed to give sufficient recognition to fellow sociologists outside education precisely because their roles are seen within sociology as odd and even suspicious. We preserve our futile purity as Pilate washed his hands - and with the same effect. The world of the real future ignores us. And so it will continue, I suggest, until we find sociologists routinely and regularly involved in every sector of social life, and joining in on all sides of every important practical argument. We have to play our part like any other professionals in the life which pays for academe.

● Ex-cathedra snobbism

Do you find much modesty in our textbooks? Much doubt in our official pronouncements? Much willingness to allow that common-sense might just occasionally be wise and true? Or that psychologists, or economists, or even biologists, might just for once be right? We do, I think, rather commonly give the whole world the impression that sociologists have the right answers, that sociology and only sociology provides a key to the universe. Perhaps this is why we prefer our academic purity, where theories remain immaculately unchallengeable by dispute with mere facts or by competition with alternative opinions, and unpolluted by the irredeemable complexity of life? We seem somehow to have got ourselves onto an awfully high horse, and we shall have to get off it before the world takes us seriously.

Sociology beyond its adolescence

No doubt I exaggerate, and I trust my colleagues will forgive the impatience which occasions it. Our discipline has so much to offer, is so much more than ever needed. But the world of power and money, of makers of images and reputations, the world of our customers and clients, this world, *the only world*, will not accept us, unless and until we make some fundamental changes in our basic methodological assumptions and in our concept of sociology itself. The alternative is penurious survival as a sectarian movement on the margins of society.

SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY

Jon Bernardes Wolverhampton Polytechnic

As a polytechnic lecturer who specialises in sociological aspects of family life and social policy, I would like to take up some of Jennifer Platt's themes from Soapbox (January 1986).

Social welfare today

Looking at the present state of the UK, I am deeply saddened - not simply by economic decline and by actions and inactions of recent governments, but more by two things. Firstly, the failure of social science to speak up for, and be heard in defence of, the growing number of victims - the old, the sick, the disabled, female carers, the poor, the unemployed, the young,

the inner cities. Secondly, the fact that social science has been under attack (there is such a thing as healthy criticism) but that social science and especially sociology has become a punch-drunk, weary and only half-heartedly defensive victim (cuts, Rothschild, ESRC, NAB, UGC, NELP, OU). The future of the welfare state is, in some small part, in our hands - or it could be - if we choose to respond and initiate a vigorous attack rather than merely retreat and retrench.

Failures of recent years

Three enormously admired traditions have each lost power and credibility in recent years. The reformist/incremental tradition, from the Webbs down to Richard Titmuss and Peter Townsend,

seems to have lost all voice - witness the reception of Townsend's *Poverty in the UK* and, more recently, the attack on those who pointed to social causes of urban strife as 'moaning minnies'. The Liberal education/enlightenment tradition which viewed education and research as valuable for their own sake seems to have been all but destroyed in favour of 'vocational relevance'. Thus all social research, which by its nature tends to reject the 'social engineering' model, has come under increasing fire. The radical/critical tradition - notably of Marxist scholarship - has lost all credibility, regardless of its value and virtues, in the increasingly paranoid witch-hunting we have seen at NELP and the Open University and, most recently, in

CONTROVERSY

attacking the Anglican bishops as 'Marxist theologians'!

Fighting back

In my view, defence is pointless – only a vigorous counter-attack can carry the battle. My work centres upon developing alternative theoretical models of, in particular, 'family life' with a view to generating new methodologies and analyses clearly directed at policy issues.

Marten Shipman has suggested that 'social research may reduce the gap between reality and belief' – this is to recognise that so much of yesterday's social research is today's orthodox social science and will soon be tomorrow's everyday commonsense. We ought perhaps to make 'the achievements of sociology' a key study area or conference issue. What we often miss, however, is that our work may be not only very powerful but also very often simply mistaken and even dangerous. In my own area, I face the huge task of confronting the decades of damage done by assuming the existence of 'the nuclear family'.

We must, then, develop a deep sense of our own responsibility – an old model of 'the family' is still used today to justify all sorts of biological reductionism in oppressing women and all sorts of misery in limiting male involvement in child care and downgrading waged and unwaged female labour even further. We need to develop a sense of community and begin to exert control over our colleagues, especially in terms of some agreed standards of methodological adequacy. We need to be able, like the natural scientists, to

distinguish good and bad research and decisively disown those we judge to be quacks, amateurs and simply bad practitioners. Also, as the UGC and poly directors are finally recognising, we need to attend to public relations – when advertising helps win elections, we need advertising to help us win friends.

Central to all this, of course, is the need to rebuild sociology. In my view this means subordinating all the strategy of concentrating on human social life *as lived* rather than ever-increasing refinement of abstract models, increasingly absurd attempts to ape natural science methods, or even more absurd jargon-ridden private debates. I have argued that we do not really know what 'the family' is at all and have merely built a social scientific edifice to reinforce 'family ideology'. Traditional family sociology fitted people into sociological categories and models – it is time to base sociology upon the categories people themselves use.

Given these efforts, we then have available the possibility of influencing the future of the welfare state in a positive, thoughtful and deliberate way which – whilst it will inevitably and properly be a matter of political decision-making – will at least derive from a thorough and competent sociology which focusses upon everyday lives as actually lived.

For example, in all the rhetoric of 'family policy' debates no politician ever stops to ask if 'the family' exists anyway nor whether our image of 'the family' is such a particularly good

thing. Rather than publically shame and ultimately imprison failed parents perhaps we should recognise that 'family life' has always been a rather tense and dangerous situation (the irony is that for many people they are attacked for abandoning children and attacked for staying with and abusing them – we seem unable to accept that parenthood itself may require serious analysis and support). Rather than do untold and unseen harm to millions who find themselves unhappy with their lot and asking 'What's wrong with me?', perhaps we should be exploring the enormous complexity and diversity of modern 'family situations' and the enormous range of complex stresses and strains imposed (quite often with only partial consent) on huge numbers of men, women and children. Genuinely better 'family policy' is not a matter of the loudest political voice but ultimately a matter of doing good sociology.

You cannot do good sociology by doing more of what has already failed and nor can you do it in retreat. We must regroup, rebuild and take up the offensive – we owe it to ourselves and our colleagues to do so. But far more is at stake here – the future happiness or misery of the old, the sick, the unemployed, the underprivileged and the poor, the overburdened carers and perhaps most sad, an entire generation of the young. Better theory, better research methodology, better sociology is ultimately not just for our own good but, though it is politically unpopular to say so, it is for the good of the entire society.

RELATIONS IN PUBLIC

Tony Garrett

It was with a mixture of interest and frustration that I read Jennifer Platt's 'Soapbox' article in *Network* 34. Sociology has always been self-conscious of its vulnerability as a legitimate, intellectual endeavour. Fortunately this is what distinguishes it from other related disciplines within the social sciences and humanities. Sociology, well practised and written is contentious stuff indeed. It undermines political certitude, intellectual arrogance and prejudice. At its best it is utterly intolerable, at least to those who have most to lose from its irrepressible propensities to question, argue and generally disestablish 'the given'. Senior cabinet ministers, secretaries of state for education and science, even the odd professor of aesthetics sense feelings of insecurity and anger at the 'threat' posed by sociologists in their analyses of the social institutions and power relationships which give the aforementioned their respective identities and authority within society.

I am somewhat frustrated and concerned by the fact that Platt's article may inspire inappropriate reactions to this latest episode in sociology's identity crisis. There is a danger that many may regard sociology's troubles as soluble by cunning and effective PR. It is not my intention to demean Platt's laudible attempt to awaken sociologists to the recent spate of adverse and scurrilous publicity. The current dilemma is neither superficial nor temporary, though the manner in which strategies and tactics are formulated to combat it may, however, be of similar nature and duration. The point here is that sociology is a casualty of a much more complex and deep-rooted series of

changes taking place within British society. Public relations exercises and image management are not the only answers to sociology's current crisis. It is unlikely that sociology can continue to exist, or for that matter progress by stealth alone. This would tend further to reduce its intellectual and public credibility, a project dear to the hearts of its most earnest and influential critics. For sociology to posture as something that it is not, would surely invite further condemnation of its enterprise.

I'm afraid it has been fashionable to proclaim oneself as a sociologist, at least in this country. We seem to have endured more than our fair share of frenzied attacks on our intellectual and professional integrity: from the media inspired claims that the LSE in the 1930s was a 'hot-bed of communism', through the hysteria of the Gould Report, to the current ritualistic diatribe of the so-called 'new Right'. While we should always acknowledge and meet serious criticism of our endeavours, it is important to recognise the fact that often our critics' motives are as callous and mischievous, as their knowledge and understanding of sociology is patently shallow.

Sociologists are not alone in their comprehension and response to the issues which have given rise to political prescription of the production of knowledge in response to technological imperatives and the new 'economic realism'. I am afraid that we won't be able to 'disentangle our politics from our professional intellectual activity' anymore – our critics will not let us. And perhaps it is not a weakness, as you seem to suggest. Could your strategy for sociology be regarded as a component of a much broader initiative? It would seem that sociology's current crisis is not confined to its particular, intellectual and

professional boundaries. The much vaunted 'new right' is correct in its assumption that scholarship and academic freedom are at the centre of this very public debate about sociology. However, while sociology may seem to be singled out for special attention, it is the wider threat to the aforementioned principles and practice of scholarship and academic freedom that should be a matter of concern for not only conscientious members of the BSA, ALSISS and the SRA, but all those who willingly accept the custodianship of the nation's intellectual culture, irrespective of the branch of knowledge chosen to give it expression. There is no reason why sociologists can not lead the academy in this matter. Politicians, and the public, the professions and the media, but most important of all, practitioners from other disciplines should also participate in what sociologists mistakenly regard as their own plight. It is essential to win allies among those disciplines traditionally indifferent and even hostile to our subject. This will entail difficult and sustained debate, but such arguments are worth winning. What is happening to sociology *should* be of concern to teachers and researchers outside of the wider sphere of the social sciences. Set this against the current fetish of the funding of knowledge (on the basis of an academic discipline's relative degree of responsiveness to vague notions of the national need) then the agenda is set for a much more comprehensive and urgent debate of interest to all the aforementioned parties. Although Platt makes some interesting suggestions, disguising ourselves and our discipline will not get us past the gate-keeper, least of all will it inspire confidence in those who might be prepared to participate with us in arresting the threat to intellectual freedom and professional practice.

BSA (SCOTLAND)

Problems of the Modern State

The increasing centrality of, and interest in, the activities and form of the modern state prompted BSA (Scotland) to hold a one-day conference examining these and related issues on Saturday 1st February 1986, at the University of Edinburgh.

The Conference began with a thoughtful historically grounded paper from Derek Sayer (Glasgow) entitled 'This Sceptered Isle: Peculiarities of English State Formation' in which he identified peculiarities of the process of state formation in England. These included how early state central institutions developed in England, the importance of legal institutions in the English state, and the significant continuities of English state institutions – unbroken from the 12th century through to the very recent past. Collectively, these peculiarities implied the importance of cultural revolution to English state formation, which was facilitated by institutional and legal continuity. In her talk, 'The State, Gender and the Family' Mary McIntosh (Essex) developed a vigorous case for a moderate functionalism in explanations of the family, and argued that in relation to the state it is useful to analyse its functions (combined with historical analysis) despite the teleological implications of this approach. McIntosh argued the need to examine how gender divisions are used to support a particular capitalism and its reproduction.

In a lively and equally provocative paper 'Production, consumption and the state' Pete Saunders (Sussex) argued that sociologists had ignored the importance and interests of consumers. He argued that in economics, politics and culture there were strong reasons to argue that consumption was more dominant than production in determining social relations and social forms. Marxists in particular have belittled the importance of individual autonomy in the cultural realm through consistent emphasis upon the production sphere. Saunders emphasised the importance of returning state administered consumption to the consumers. In the final paper Gianfranco Poggi (Edinburgh) developed a new interpretation of the state in advanced industrial societies in what he called the state's charter (its claim for legitimacy in terms of rationality, unity, and political functions) and performance problems (overload, fiscal crisis etc.). He argued that the state was no longer able to fulfil the performance functions implied by its charter roles.

John Holmwood, Desmond S. King

'School and After: Work – or the Broo?'

In November the Scottish Branch of the BSA and Glasgow University's Sociology Department organised a one-day conference entitled 'School and After: Work – or the Broo?' Over 70 people came to hear Robert Moore (South Bank Polytechnic) on 'Education, work and cultural practice: beyond the new vocationalism', David Raffe (Edinburgh University) on 'Some causes and consequences of youth unemployment', Ken Roberts (Liverpool University) on 'The changing structure of the labour market' and Terry Rees (University of Wales, Cardiff) on 'Youth unemployment and state intervention in Europe'.

Moore argued that from the seventies there had been a process of educational paradigm change, away from a broadly liberal-humanist context to a technicist one in which education tends to be assimilated into a behavioural model of skills acquisition. He illustrated this

with a brief history of the MSC. At its inception the problem was seen as the failure of industry to develop and sustain an adequate training system, but after 1979 it came to be posed in terms of the failure of the education system to prepare young people adequately for 'the world of work'. The successful imposition of the technicist paradigm has led on the one hand to a weakening of teachers' abilities to introduce critical or radical perspectives into teaching about 'the world of work', and on the other a denial of the relevance of the material cultural experiences of young people themselves, and of the manner in which their membership of working-class communities is the primary source of occupationally effective knowledge. This process, Moore argued, has been accompanied by the accentuation and perpetuation of the cleavage between critical knowledge perspectives and material class experiences.

Raffe developed some of the themes introduced by Moore, agreeing that current education and training innovation owed little to changes in the labour process, but arguing that they were importantly shaped by developments in the labour market, in particular by the effects of youth unemployment and of employers' selection practices. A review of recent trends, drawing on analyses of the Scottish Young People's Surveys, showed that the recent rise in youth unemployment had been generated by the same factors which caused adult unemployment to rise. There was little evidence that youth-specific factors, or substantial changes in the labour process, had been a major factor. YTS was a response to the political opportunities created by the problem of youth unemployment, and its successful redefinition as a problem of education and training, but this determined its strategy which was to innovate from the bottom up. As such it ran counter to the pressures arising from the 'selective function' of education, itself intensified by unemployment, for educational change to diffuse from the top down. The paper concluded with a discussion of differentiation on YTS and its future development.

Roberts presented findings from his Department of Employment sponsored project on the changing structure of youth labour markets, which has involved surveys of employers and 17–18-year-olds in Chelmsford, Liverpool and Walsall. This project illustrates the value of disaggregating national trends such as jobless growth, and the shift of employment from manufacturing to services, and from blue- to white-collar occupations. The implications differ considerably between males and females, with different levels of qualifications, and according to where they live. Youth labour markets are being polarised more sharply than the UK labour force in general. Current trends are benefiting mainly better-qualified school-leavers, particularly in areas well stocked with high-technology manufacturing firms and service sector employment. The costs of current changes are concentrated among less qualified young people, especially in areas dependent on traditional, now declining manufacturing and commercial activities. The result is wider inequalities between and within areas. Moreover, Britain's systems of school examinations, occupational stratification and gender divisions prevent labour market forces harmonising supply and demand, even in the long-term.

Finally, Rees argued the need for a truly comparative analysis of youth unemployment and state intervention in Europe. She identified some of the factors which might contribute to such an analysis: these included the political ideology of the State, the level and pattern of youth unemployment, the level of fear of social

disintegration, the state of youth labour markets and the relationship between the state, industry and trade unions. The style of response in Europe both at EEC and State level was examined, drawing on examples of particular countries to illustrate the potential for comparative analysis.

Paul Littlewood

BSA (Scotland) holds one-day conferences each term. For further details or suggestions of themes and speakers for future events, contact: the Secretary, P. Littlewood, Dept. of Sociology, Adam Smith Building, University of Glasgow, Glasgow. The next conference will be held in Edinburgh on the topic: 'Gender and Class in Women's History', 10 May 1986.

SOCIOLOGY OF WAR AND PEACE

Report on one-day conference

This new study group held its first one-day conference on war in the twentieth century on January 6, 1986 at the University of Leicester. There was a reasonable attendance of about thirty participants and it was good to see a healthy mixture of academic disciplines represented including history, politics, economics and philosophy. The papers were wide ranging in scope and stimulated productive discussion. Paul Hirst explored some of the links between Kant's discussion of the nature and conditions of peace and the theoretical weaknesses in the intellectual basis of the current 'peace' movement. Roger Scruton clarified some of the conceptual issues posed by the problem of war and went on to emphasise the inadequacies of economic reductionist explanations of the causes of war. James Fulcher discussed the evolution of war strategy in Japan and explored some of the structural sources of divisions over policy within the Japanese state. Other sessions were led by Michael Mann on the social and strategic impact of world wars in the twentieth century and Arthur Marwick who concentrated on the domestic changes wrought by World War I, particularly in respect of the changing position of women in the labour market. A lot of ground was covered in a short time and most participants appeared to have enjoyed themselves. Another conference on the crisis in current British defence policy is being planned for September 1986.

Christopher Dandeker

THEORY GROUP

Sociology and Anthropology Conference Report

The conference, in January 1986, was the first meeting of the Theory Group to be held in Bristol and the first, for some time, to explore the relations between sociology and anthropology; it could almost certainly also claim the honour of being the first conference of the year as it started on the 2nd January. The many participants who travelled from the further reaches of the country on New Year's Day are much to be congratulated on their enthusiasm and commitment.

The opening paper was from Richard Turton of Hatfield Polytechnic. His central theme was the applicability and relevance of ethnographic techniques to the study of processes in advanced industrial societies. In particular, he argued, the techniques developed by anthropologists for the examination of conflict resolution in small groups are capable of

illuminating the complex formal and informal procedures involved in arbitration in industrial societies, especially 'final offer arbitration'. Whilst there is a rich set of themes for the anthropologist of industrial relations to draw on, there is also a particular problem, the problem of fieldwork. Gaining access to the participants in complex and sensitive negotiations is difficult, though not impossible. Whilst ethnographic 'studying up' is time-consuming and risky, it offers rewards not available to more superficial questionnaire methods.

Christopher Badcock of the LSE addressed himself to the question of holism in both sociology and anthropology. Both disciplines have commonly located the distinctively human in cultural phenomena: in language, exchange, ethical codes and so on, and have tended to understand these holistically. In fact, Badcock argued, holistic ethics and social thought could themselves be understood as rationalised inducements to altruistic behaviour. Drawing partly on the recent work of Trivers, Badcock distinguished between kin altruism, in which benefit accrues to members of a common gene pool, reciprocal altruism, in which both parties gain advantage, and induced altruism, which denotes selfish behaviour as it were from the standpoint of the exploited party. Approaching human behaviour in these terms both removes the foundation for sociological holism and makes possible an urgently needed rapprochement between modern Darwinian theory and the social sciences.

Where Badcock's paper had an essentially unifying theme, looking at elements common to a wide range of behaviours, Kate Day of Edinburgh University took up instead the question of diversity in relation to privacy. Privacy is increasingly problematic in a modern world of new technology but has largely been given low importance in anthropological literature. The idea that privacy is a basic physiological or psychological need cannot be established; but equally, understood in the form: 'privacy is when access between persons and contextual outsiders is intentionally restricted', it can be shown that individualism and the public-private dichotomy are not solely products of modernity but are present as themes in a wide number of societies.

Kieran Flanagan from Bristol University asked to what extent we may have a hermeneutics of ritual actions. His paper drew on the work of Gadamer and Ricoeur to look, not at speech and texts, but at public ceremonial action - bowing. Though physical in character, the ritual obeisance could be understood as a performative utterance creating or cancelling a set of rights and obligations; hermeneutics makes possible an enormously enriched understanding of the way in which rituals seek to deliver certainties and mark out boundaries. At the same time, the essential ambiguity, the capacity of one gesture to bear multiple meanings in any one context or in differing ones, must be recognised.

In a paper that was sharply critical of work in contemporary psychology, Professor Mary Douglas of Princeton University sought to outline the contribution social anthropology could make to the study of risk acceptability. It is well established in anthropology that physical dangers and risks are often culturally related to moral rules, embedded in institutions and expressed in cosmologies. Similar ideas are operative in scientific culture where, for instance, the perception of nuclear energy has moved from an emphasis on benefit to an increasing stress on danger. 'Risk' is the closest analogy in contemporary society to the moral-physical danger notions studied by anthropologists. However, 'risk' is a contrived concept tied to notions of probability and

gaming and related, in psychology, to the choices of the individual, who is then conceived implicitly in the Enlightenment mode as a sovereign, rational being acting independently of his or her fellows. Social anthropology offers, by contrast, the possibility of a different calculus of the probabilities of risk; one in which risk taking is seen in its relation to institutions and structures, producing a genuine and useful sociology of disaster, of famine and of other risks.

Paul Heelas of Lancaster University contrasted anthropological and sociological approaches to the emotions, drawing attention particularly to the advances made in recent sociological work on the emotions by Hochschild and others. Taking the example of anger, we can contrast psychodynamic (endogenous) with sociodynamic (exogenous) theories, and can also contrast theories stressing the regulation and control of aggression with those stressing its constitution via processes of arousal and enforcement. This makes possible a complex patterning of theories about the relationship between aggression, anger and ritualisation. The difference between the social learning and the catharsis of anger may be a matter of social context, adding to the importance of the growing body of research into emotion-talk and its cultural variability.

Joanna Overing from the LSE took up the question, without which no conference in Sociology and Anthropology would be complete, of rationality and relativism. She drew on Feyerabend's work in the philosophy of science to articulate the notion of incommensurability in relation to translation. Illustrating by reference to material drawn from her fieldwork among the Piaroa of the Orinoco rainforest, she showed how individual terms in natural languages articulate conceptual sets which may be strikingly incommensurable, whilst at the same time denying the validity of the extreme relativist viewpoint in which all translation between world-views appears impossible.

In the final paper, Liz Hart from Birmingham University returned to the theme with which the conference had opened: the use of ethnographic methods in advanced industrial societies. Her work dealt with cleaners in a hospital and a university hall of residence. The simple category 'part-time worker' was found to conceal a range of important distinctions made by the women themselves on the basis of age, work experience, hours of work and skill. The fact that all such workers were women has made the feminist focus, with its emphasis on patriarchy and on the de-skilling of women's work an important one; at the same time it must be enriched with an understanding, drawn from anthropology, of the essentially idiomatic classifications that are critical to the organisation and experience of work on the wards.

John Bird and Jem Thomas,
Bristol Polytechnic

HULL SOCIOLOGY OCCASIONAL PAPERS

The Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at the University of Hull has begun a series of Occasional Papers. The first in the series is Sheila Cunison's 'Making It in a Man's World': *Women Teachers in a Senior High School* (50pp). It is available from The Secretary, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX, for £1.50 incl. postage. Cheques payable to University of Hull.

LANCASTER REGIONALISM GROUP WORKING PAPERS

A new series is being produced. The full list available is shown below. To order, please send cheques (payable to Lancaster Regionalism Group) to the Group at Cartmel College, University of Lancaster, Lancs LA1 4YL. Prices include postage.

- Deindustrialisation in Lancaster*, Linda Murgatroyd, 1981, 91 pages, £3.00
Paternalism, Management and Localities, John Urry, 1980, 25 pages, £1.00
Deindustrialisation, Households and Forms of Social Conflict and Struggle, John Urry, 1981, 30 pages, £1.00
Problems of Comparability in Local Studies: The Case of the Deindustrialisation of Lancaster, Alan Warde, 1981, 54 pages, £2.00
Women and Unemployment, Sylvia Walby, 1981, 35 pages, £1.00
Gender and Occupational Stratification, Linda Murgatroyd, 1982, 45 pages, £2.25
Control at Work: North Lancashire Cotton Weaving 1890-1940, Michael Savage, 1982, 76 pages, £3.50
Changes in the Occupational Structure of Lancaster 1901-1951, Alan Warde, 1982, 69 pages, £3.25
Explaining Peripheral Change, Dan Shapiro, 1984, 32 pages, £2.00
Gender Relations in Job Loss: A Study of Thirty Establishments in the North West, Sylvia Walby, 1985, 70 pages, £3.25
Scientific Management and the Service Class, John Urry, 1984, 50 pages, £2.50
Midwifery and Medicine: Sexual Divisions and the Process of Professionalisation, Annie Wiltz, 1985, 40 pages, £2.50
Spatial Variations in Voting in Britain, Alan Warde, 1985, 50 pages, £3.00
Microelectronics and Restructuring, Dan Shapiro, 1985, 35 pages, £2.50

CRITICAL SOCIAL RESEARCH

Volume 2, no.1 is now available from the editors, c/o Dept. of Sociology, 18 Buccleuch Place, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh. The price is £1.50 for the individual issue, or £3.00 for a subscription to vol.2 (2 issues). Departmental rates are £3.00 for one issue and £6.00 for the volume. Please make all cheques/postal orders etc. payable to 'Critical Social Research'.

The current issue contains articles on the problems of conducting qualitative research (Researching Family Clothing: The Breakdown of a Field Relationship), Historical Demography (Victorian Values and the Fertility Decline: The Case of Scotland), and Russian Science Fiction (The Dialectic in Space: Soviet Science Fiction as Ideological Critique), plus some other features. Something for everyone. The editors are happy to receive any articles, polemics etc. Please contact us at the above address. CSR is currently being abstracted by Sociological Abstracts Inc.

TROUBLE AND STRIFE

Issue 7 of *Trouble and Strife*, radical feminist magazine, out now. With articles on feminism in Japan, motherhood, legislating against pornography in the US, 'Irish Women United'; interview with Jean Breeze, dub poet; *Fat is a Feminist Issue* reviewed, and more! Available £1.95 from bookshops or £6.00/£4.50 annual subscription (3 issues) from *Trouble and Strife*, c/o Women's Centre, 50 Bethel Street, Norwich.

OCCASIONAL PAPERS IN SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY

Department of Sociology, University of Surrey

Several new papers have been added to our Series recently, including studies of policing, unemployed people, social work with families, and an introduction to the methodology of comparative narratives.

Margaret Norris, *Beginner's Guide to the Use of Repertory Grid in Research* (£1)

Nigel Fielding, *The Training of Probation Officers*, (£1)

Michael Hornsby-Smith and Elizabeth Cordingley, *Catholic Elites: a Study of the Delegates to the National Pastoral Congress*, (£1.50)

Angela Dale, *The Role of Theories of Labour Market Segmentation in Understanding the*

Position of Women in the Occupational Structure, (£1.75)

Peter Abell, *Comparative Narratives; a Non-Technical Introduction to Qualitative Analysis*, (£1.50)

Carola Bennion, Angela Dale, B.H. Hesse, Laurence Joshua, Paul McGloin, Graham Munn and Sue Tester, *Neighbourhood Watch: the Eyes and Ears of Urban Policing?* (£2.25)

Jane Tunstall, ed, Anthony Maluccio, Jane Rowe, Paula Sinanoglu and Noreen Tingle, *Working with Natural Parents: Implications for Social Work Practice*, (£1.50)

Martin Smits, Sue Simmons, Roger Burrows, Pam Lloyd and Tony Martin, *Unemployed Discourse: Some Notes Towards a Social Analysis of Accounts of Unemployment*, (£1.50)

Copies of papers may be obtained from the Departmental Secretary, Sociology Department, University of Surrey, Guildford GU2 5XH. All prices include postage and

packing. Payment with your order is preferred; cheques should be made payable to University of Surrey.

SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION New Outlet

One problem that arises for supervisors of higher degrees and organisers of research projects is how to disseminate the findings. Some reports are too long to be an article, and too short to be a book, but deserve publication. Sociologists of education can now submit theses, interim reports, working papers, and other material that runs from 10,000-16,000 words to a new journal - *Research Papers in Education*. This will take only papers of 10,000 words or more, and appears three times a year. Papers for consideration should be sent to D. Upton, NFER-Neelson, Darville House, 2 Oxford Road East, Windsor.

Is there a need for such a journal to cover other aspects of sociology?

EVENTS

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

BSA Conference 1987
University of Leeds

Call for papers

Science and technology are now playing a central role in the structuring of class, gender and ethnic relations in contemporary societies. At the same time sociologists have become increasingly aware that the sciences, technology and medical knowledge are themselves shaped by social and political relations. The conference aims to draw together the work - developing in a wide range of sociological specialisms - dealing with the social construction, nature and impact of science, technology and medicine.

Sociologists, historians and philosophers of science and technology, and economists, political scientists and anthropologists will be interested in this theme. Beyond sociology, it should appeal to those whose field of professional practice or administration lies in such areas as computing, new technology, management and labour relations, women's issues, ethnic relations, strategic and arms limitations issues, cultural affairs, innovation and economic policy and development.

Current interests and issues imply several broad headings. These will inform the conference organisation and are as follows:

1. Epistemology - the influence of positivism and naturalism and their critics on perceptions of natural science and how these shape images of medicine, the science-social science relation, the science-technology relation and the social science-policy relation.

2. Sociology of Scientific Organisations and Practices - current research in the sociology of science possibly under the following heads:

- a) ethnographies of science
- b) the social construction of scientific knowledge
- c) organisation of and for science
- d) scientific practices.

3. Science, Culture and Ideology - science and technology in modern life and thought with particular reference to topics such as scientism, naturalism and reductionism, science fiction and the media, Utopias and racism and science.

4. Science, Technology and the Labour Process - the 'de-skilling' debate and the place of science and technology in the workplace and management strategies against the background of professionalism, class relations and trade unionism.

5. Science, Technology and Social Change - the impact of new and alternative technologies, and their origins; leisure, new social and political movements and post-industrialism. Science and technology in the Second and Third worlds; technology transfer, appropriate technology and the 'green revolution'.

6. State and Social Control - 'technocracy', the role of the mass media, policing, information and military technology and the arms race; the environmental and peace movements. The impact of sociological research and research practices.

7. Science, Technology and Policy - the relationship between science, technological innovation and the economy; the 'British crisis' and policies for science, technology and medicine.

8. Gender - the gender relations of science and technology: for example, the role of women in science, the 'masculinity' of science, technology and women in the workplace and the impact of reproductive and domestic technology.

9. Open Stream - following past practice a section for the presentation of papers unrelated to the conference theme.

Abstracts (150-250 words in length) should be sent by 1 July 1986 to: The 1987 Conference Organising Committee, BSA, 10 Portugal Street, London WC2A 2HU.

1987 Conference Organising Committee:

Maureen McNeil, University of Birmingham; Maggie Monteith, 'Rights of Women', London; David Robbins, University College of Aberystwyth; Ian Varcoe, University of Leeds.

DEVELOPMENT AND SCIENCE STUDY GROUPS

PROPOSED JOINT MEETING
Call for papers

Successful joint meetings have been held in the last year by both these groups and it has been suggested that there might be interest in a joint session on science (technology?) and development. The format and contents of such a meeting would be dictated primarily by members' responses but it might be reasonable to aim for a one- or two-day session to be held in London or Manchester. Topics might include technology transfer; gender and technology; the social organisation of appropriate technologies; scientific personnel and educational curricula in underdeveloped countries; and science and colonialism.

The two group convenors, Alison Scott (Department of Sociology, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ) and Steve Yearley (Department of Social Studies, Queen's University, Belfast BT7 1NN) would welcome offers of papers; proposals for topics to be included; and indications of members' likely interest.

MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Joint Meeting of the British Medical Anthropology Society and the Society for Medical Anthropology (USA)
30th June - 3rd July 1986
New Hall, Cambridge

To mark the 10th anniversary of the BMAS a joint meeting will be held in Cambridge this summer. The intention is to give those in the UK

and Europe working in this field a chance to meet and exchange ideas with their North American colleagues. The conference is open to all anthropologists and others interested in the anthropology of health and health care. The meeting will cover a wide range of issues and symposia; topics will include: Anthropology of Health Care Providers, Gender & Health, Boundaries of Technology and Caring, Alternative Therapies & Holistic Health Care, Anthropology of Reproduction, Anthropology & Mental Health, Primary Health Care (local, national and international aspects), Cognitive Aspects of Illness & Health, Ethnic Minorities & Health Care.

For further details write to Dr. C. McCormack, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London WC1E 7HT.

MEDICAL SOCIOLOGY

The annual conference of the Medical Sociology Group will be held at Alcuin College, University of York from Friday, 26th to Sunday, 28th September 1986. Further details available from Hilary Homans (convenor of the group), Dept of Nursing, Health and Applied Social Studies, Bristol Polytechnic, Redland Hill House, Bristol BS6 6UZ.

Activities of the group are to be found in *Medical Sociology News*. Subscription rates: waged £5; nonwaged £2.50; overseas £8. Send the appropriate remittance to Steve Platt, Editor, *Medical Sociology News*, MRC Unit for Epidemiological Studies in Psychiatry, University Department of Psychiatry, Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Morningside Park, Edinburgh EH10 5HF. Cheques should be made payable to BSA Medical Sociology Group.

For further details of regional groups' activities, write to:

North-East: Malcolm Colledge, School of Behavioural Science, Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic, Northumberland Building, Northumberland Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8ST.

Wales & South West: Herman Gilligan, Institute of Health Care Studies, University College of Swansea, Singleton Park, Swansea, SA2 8PP.

Scotland: Christine Mason, Department of Community Medicine, Ninewells Hospital, Dundee, DD1 9SY.

London: Ann Bowling or Ulla Gustafsson, Centre for the Study of Primary Care, 384 Commercial Road, London E1 0LR.

Sociology of Health and Illness: A Journal of Medical Sociology. Orders and enquiries regarding subscriptions should be addressed to: Subscriptions Department, Basil Blackwell, 108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF. Special rate for BSA members £17.50.

BRITISH ASSOCIATION

Planning for the Sociology Section (N) of the British Association which meets at the University of Bristol this year, is well advanced. Papers will be presented over three days. The first session on Tuesday 2nd September will be devoted to 'The Limits of Science - Reproduction and Motherhood'. This session will include the Presidential Address by Prof. Hilary Rose; other speakers include Ann Oakley

and Audrey Leathard. On Wednesday morning a joint session with the economists is planned on the social economics of health, including a paper from Peter Townsend. Thursday includes a programme hosted by the Bristol Sociology Department, as well as a BAYS (British Association Young Scientists) Lecture to be given by Michael Haralambos, author of the best-selling 'A' level text. This should prove particularly interesting to students of 'A' level Sociology. Further details and the final programme can be obtained from the British Association, Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB, and/or from this year's local secretary, Dr. Ruth Levitas, Department of Sociology, University of Bristol.

TEACHING SOCIOLOGY

One-Day Conference:

Friday 20th June, 10am, at Ealing College of Higher Education, St. Mary's Road, Ealing, London W5.

The conference will focus on issues in the teaching of sociology. It will include discussions on various aspects of presenting sociology to students specialising in the subject as well as to those who are doing sociology as part of a more general or vocational course. There will be workshops on using video and computer managed learning.

There will be a small admission charge to cover coffee and lunch.

Further details from Alison Baker at the above address.

ERVING GOFFMAN

An Interdisciplinary Appreciation

This conference will be held at the University of York on 8-11 July, 1986. Plenary addresses will be given by Randall Collins (California, Riverside), Anthony Giddens (Cambridge), Rom Harré (Oxford), Adam Kendon (Australia National University), Stephen Levinson (Cambridge), Jonathan Miller (broadcaster and opera director), Emanuel Schegloff (California, Los Angeles), Gun Semyn (Sussex), Philip Strong (Warwick), Robin Williams (Durham). About thirty further papers will be given in concurrent sessions.

Further details can be obtained from either Paul Drew or Tony Wootton of the Department of Sociology, University of York, Heslington, York, YO1 5DD. Bookings not later than 16th June 1986.

THE 1986 SUMMER SCHOOL

September 8th-12th, 1986
University of Essex

SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND THE PhD PROCESS

Full or Part-Time, funded or non-funded UK students pursuing a higher sociological degree by thesis are invited to apply for the annual summer school. The school will be limited to a maximum of 35.

Applicants will be selected so as to provide a broad mix of research stages, styles and problems and will be informed if they have a place by the middle of June. It is BSA policy to give members of the BSA priority.

The Conference is funded by the ESRC and all successful applicants (whether sponsored by the ESRC or not, whether full-time or part-time) will have their accommodation, travel and subsistence paid for by the ESRC.

The conference will aim to: bridge the isolation experienced by many PhD students through a forum where students can meet each other, exchange experiences, problems and solutions, and provide each other with mutual support; chart the stages of the PhD process - from the initial formulation of a 'sociological problem' to the stages of publication and later career - and to examine some of the central common problems faced; review some of the sociological research skills that participants find most worrying.

Applications to Brenda Corti, Sociology Dept, University of Essex. Closing date: June 1st, 1986.

GENDER AND CLASS IN WOMEN'S HISTORY

One Day Conference
University of Edinburgh
10 May

Further details from Paul Littlewood, Dept of Sociology, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8RT. Phone 041-339 8855.

THE PHILIP ABRAMS' MEMORIAL PRIZE

The Executive Committee of the British Sociological Association has established this award to provide scope for recent graduates to develop the discipline while honouring the name of Philip Abrams in recognition of his interests in Sociology and his encouragement to sociologists not yet established.

The Competition

The prize will be awarded for a piece of previously unpublished work on a topic selected from a list of subjects available from the BSA at the address below.

Entries need not be essays or articles, but may also include projects, audio or video tapes, films etc. Written work should be of a maximum of 6,000 words. Other work should be of an approximately similar length. All work will be reviewed anonymously by a small committee (President, Chairperson and Editor of *Network*) drawn from the Executive of the BSA.

Criteria of Eligibility

A piece of work may be submitted by an individual who has obtained a first degree in Sociology or allied discipline, since 1980. However, we would be willing to advise anyone who would like to submit but falls outside the designation. Entrants do *not* have to be members of the BSA.

The Prize

(i) A cash prize of £200 to be presented to the winning entrant at the BSA's Annual General Meeting in Leeds in April, 1987. Although the Committee reserve the right not to award any prize.

(ii) If written, the prize winning work will be submitted to the Editor of *Sociology* for review in the normal way. If it is rejected by *Sociology* the Association would assist the award holder to publish the work elsewhere. In the case of other work the BSA would assist with dissemination.

Entry Forms and Style Sheet can be obtained by writing to the Hon. General Secretary, BSA, 10 Portugal Street, London WC2A 2HU, to whom all essays should be submitted by Friday 6th February, 1987.

STATE AND SOCIETY

Kevin Bonnett
(Cambridgeshire College)

R.F. Alford & R. Friedland, *Powers of Theory*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, 502pp, £30 and £9.95.

P.B. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer & T. Skocpol etc, *Bringing The State Back In*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, 390pp, £9.95.

W. Grant ed, *The Political Economy of Corporatism*, Macmillan, 1985, 274pp, £25 and £7.95.

P.J. Williamson, *Varieties of Corporatism*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, 244pp, £25.

Political sociology is at an important transitional stage in its changing conception of the relation between state and civil society. Three of these books attempt to solve this problem and provide a programme for future work; not surprisingly, they do not succeed in recasting the discipline. Pluralist conceptions of policy formation have been subject to a prolonged take-over battle at the hands of the European Board of Corporatism Inc, whilst the long march of Marxist state theory has reached exhaustion and met the limits of its own premises. Theorists are seeking new ways of conceptualising societal interests and their linkage to the state, whilst simultaneously hoping to find an adequate account of the state itself – not only its structure, but also distinctive state 'interests' or 'initiatives'. Current work by Giddens, Mann and Ingham addresses these themes, and the volumes under review contribute with varying impact to the quest.

Both *Bringing the State Back In* and *Powers of Theory* are ambitious attempts to find a new way forward in political studies. The former is programmatic, offering a range of historical and comparative essays guided by the theme of state autonomy within societal interests. The latter offers a quasi-textbook format which attempts to synthesise current perspectives. The papers that Evans *et al* present derive from an SSRC (US) Committee on States and Social Structures – and so perhaps unites diverse individual research interests under the editorial umbrella. The editors provide programmatic 'top and tail' essays: Skocpol's is provocative, but the closing one is dully compromised. Topics range from Taiwanese development to war and state making as organised crime, and Weir and Skocpol's important essay on policies in the 1930s in Sweden, Britain and the US is revised for inclusion. Broadly, the papers attempt a compromise in which 'it is fruitful to assume both that states are potentially autonomous and, conversely, that socio-economic relations influence and limit state structures and activities' (viii). Skocpol advocates a state-centred approach which eschews the 'society-centred' approach of both pluralism and Marxism. The focus shifts to state-building and to the organisational structure and capacities of the state. For Skocpol, state autonomy occurs when officials (including the military) take initiatives independently of societal interests – as in revolutions from above or welfare system design. The state has distinct 'interests' in domestic order and international relations and a state-defined 'national interest' is therefore not reducible to particular interests. The focus thus shifts to state elites; and 'the most likely conditions for increased state autonomy are constellations in which the pact of domination has serious cleavages within it, in which threats from below induce the dominant classes to grant greater autonomy to the state, or in which subordinate classes acquire sufficient power to undo monolithic political control by the

dominant classes' (64). Thus the cruder claims about general autonomy for officials are belied by more subtle analyses in the essays. However, one may wonder whether it is really fruitful to lay so much stress on autonomy rather than on the character of the complex linkages of mutual determination between state and society; the actual studies often achieve this, despite the simpler programmatic claims.

Powers of Theory is a lengthy book, and rather indeterminate in character. It is neither a monograph nor a textbook. It is replete with exposition of substantive studies, but aims to be theoretical. The main substance consists of myriad brief summaries of authors and studies, with varying amounts of critical discussion. The aim of the book is to impose some order on these studies by allocating them to 'perspectives' and then to effect a synthesis by adding them together, 'superimposing, as it were, the perspectives on each other by means of a language both derived from and critical of each of them...'(3) The three perspectives are seen to focus on levels of analysis and aspects of power which are distinct and not mutually exclusive – hence allowing simple cumulation of the views. Pluralism is seen to focus on the individual: power is situational and is the outcome of overt conflicts between relative equals. The managerial or elite view focusses on organisations, which are seen as the institutionalised result of elite initiatives and conflicts; this is the realm of institutional power, autonomous from external influence. Thirdly, class or Marxist views concentrate on systemic power, which concerns the reproduction or transformation of existing relations between capitalism state and bureaucracy (6–7, 421–2).

Three pairs of political practices are seen to coincide with these levels of analysis associated with the perspectives. Firstly, 'liberal' and 'conservative' policies are both at the market/pluralist level: the former seeks to equalise access to markets (eg. civil rights), while the latter seeks to deregulate and leave outcomes to free markets. Secondly, 'reform' (such as welfare state measures) and 'reaction' (policies maximising sectional gains) are both phenomena of relatively autonomous bureaucratic organisations, where the state allocates values. Thirdly, 'socialist' and 'fascist' politics aim to politicise all institutions through mass mobilisation.

Obviously, this synthesis is solely an aggregation of typological distinctions which relies on some dubious assumptions. It is not clear that the perspectives they distinguish are really so neatly distinct and bounded that they address separate realms of politics in mutually compatible ways, never treading on the mode of power or level of political action that is the preserve of other perspectives. In order to sustain this cumulation of the theories, they have to impose an unrealistic degree of coherence on each perspective, and they have to portray them in such a manner as to be ultimately non-competitive with the others. It is peculiar in the light of the trenchant criticism they offer of pluralism that it simply appears as part of the solution. The managerial/elite/bureaucratic perspective is a mass of incompatible studies, where Ball and Dahrendorf rub shoulders with Skocpol and Giddens. Although their summaries can be informative, too often they simply pile up aimlessly with wholly incompatible positions presented together as more bricks for the synthetic structure. This fault is worsened when, for example, Giddens is covered in twenty-nine lines or Wallerstein in nineteen. Pluralism, we learn, is more about political culture and individuals than about groups, and all the

managerial/elite theories stress organisational autonomy. Many Marxist views are well summarised, but they do not necessarily even combine coherently amongst themselves as the authors effectively leave us to assume.

Most readers will learn something from this huge literature survey – it is almost a crash course in political studies – but they are unlikely to find satisfaction in the theoretical solutions on offer. One indicator of the problems in forcing studies into categories is Alford & Friedland's scant treatment of corporatism under the heading of managerial/elite theory. This hardly captures the flavour of the studies, following Schmitter, which attempt to steal the pluralist crown and provide a new paradigm for studying the state-society relation. Indeed, in *The Political Economy of Corporatism*, Schmitter rejects the current emphasis on state autonomy in favour of ever-increasing mutual penetration by state and organised interests – a vision which culminates in the ideal-typical vision of an 'associative order' founded on a basis distinct from market, state, or community systems. Moreover, if we are to speak of state autonomy, argues Schmitter, it is not a matter of the will of state servants, or the functional necessities of the state's place in a mode of production, but instead such autonomy relates to the goals of the state for international and domestic security, together with a thriving domestic economy. In addition, the state might protect its legitimacy by delegating awkward tasks to non-state organisations. Whatever the merits of these views, they demonstrate how all the levels of political analysis described by Alford and Friedland remain contested terrain theoretically. Whether corporatist theories really should trespass beyond the specific domain of interest-groups and policy formation is open to debate, but current work attempts a broader applicability. Grant's volume demonstrates this in its pursuit of macro, micro and meso corporatism. Studies range from national and international studies (Marin on Austria and Sargent on the EEC) to local authorities (Cawson) and local economies (King). Grant's useful introduction offers a good definition of corporatism and defends its broad application. He makes the important point that weak national corporatism may coexist with strong at the meso (industry/region) or micro (firm/locality) level. The whole volume relates to the substantive national studies and to the International Business Organisations project based at Berlin, and is therefore more than programmatic in tone. However, the evangelical tone is not entirely gone from corporatist writing – they look for it everywhere. If it is not much in evidence, does this show weak corporatism, or that corporatism does not apply at all? For as soon as the definition of corporatism is pinned down to specifics – policy intermediation by monopolistic interest organisations, let's say – then it becomes obvious that many other forms of linkage between state and interests cannot be subsumed under the concept. Excessive inclusiveness is a constant danger as precise definitions are diluted in practice to stretch the applicability of the model. There is a residual resistance to diminishing the status of the concept so that it is merely one pattern of state-interest relation amongst others. Corporatism and pluralism as models can be over-sized tools to apply to fine-grained phenomena – leading to such dubious substantive hypotheses as the dual politics thesis of Cawson and Saunders.

Overall, these substantive studies provide limited evidence for the centrality of corporatism in the policy process, but they do demonstrate themes which are pursued in the more abstract chapters. Exclusion from corporatist processes

can be an important source of discontent. Not only consumers but key economic groups such as the City of London may not fit in (though their 'self-regulation' is a less interesting topic than their modes of influence and constraint over policy – an overly institutional bias in the literature tends to stress the former). Above all, Crouch offers rigorous argument for the view that corporatist deals may be positive sum, and not mere class incorporation. In sum, as a guide to current mainstream work in the area, the book exemplifies both its strengths and limitations; it is indispensable for those interested in the area.

It is unfortunate that Williamson's *Varieties of Corporatism* does not seriously deal with the substantive studies at all. His book is rigidly conceptual, seeking to construct the 'correct' ideal-typical characterisations of classical corporatist ideology, authoritarian corporatist practice, and contemporary neo-corporatism. For the second, he gives substantive historical accounts of fascist Italy and the Portuguese Estado Novo, for the third he merely examines competing definitions and their substantive implications. The result is a useful reference source on corporatist ideology, a sound discussion of economic power in old corporatism, and nothing on current evidence. Williamson does raise valuable questions but assumes that the answers are to be found in abstract theorising. Thus state theory deriving from Offe and Flange justifies a negative view of corporatism as incorporation; the structural constraints on the capitalist state provide the real explanation for the outcomes of corporatist bargaining. Corporatist theories thus tend to confuse form with the substance of policy effects.

Such criticisms have force, but a retreat to structural guarantees of outcomes will not help us explain the complexity of the political and administrative processes. State interests are no more given and unproblematic than class interests. The search is still on for approaches adequate to the complexity of the processes where interests and projects come to be defined and strategies are pursued through the means of state organisation and capacity. If corporatist approaches close off this search by a narrow solution they have betrayed their potential; when premature mergers of incompatible perspectives are attempted, they fail. The discipline is now ready for substantive work and theoretical propositions to come together.

LANGUAGE AND SOCIOLOGY

Stephen J Ball
(King's College, London)

Martin Montgomery *An Introduction to Language and Society*, London, Methuen, 1986, 211pp, £4.25 pb.

James Milroy and Lesley Milroy *Authority in Language*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985, 189pp, £16.95 hb.

Tony Hak, Joke Haafkens and Gerhard Nijhof (eds) *Working Papers on Discourse and Conversational Analysis*, Konteksten, Rotterdam, 1985, 212pp, £4.50 pb.

There was a time in the early to mid-1970s when it seemed as though language was moving to the centre of the sociological stage. The work of Sacks, Drew, Cicourel, Goffman, McHoul, Stubbs and others were bridging the disciplinary gap between sociology and linguistics. Language offered a focus for the search for rules underlying social behaviour and was a new and exciting candidate for the course of social order in society. Language was a vehicle for welding micro and macro through the

analysis of talk and structure. That brief period of detente looks in retrospect both naive and rampantly over-optimistic. While much good work was done, little of lasting significance was achieved. The sociological interest in American linguistics and ethnomethodology seems now to have been firmly displaced by a fascination with French post-structuralism. Inside sociology 'discourse' has replaced talk, conversation and language as the key word and seems to offer a much broader range of analytical possibilities. The concentration on spoken language is now a partial concern. Linguistics and sociology may be becoming once again estranged.

An Introduction to Language and Society is in the series Studies in Communication (another demarcating term), edited by John Fiske. It is a basic text aimed at students coming to communication studies for the first time. It contains a great deal of lively material and suggestions for fieldwork activities which sound both sensible and enjoyable. In many ways it is a model introductory text. The reader is led gently through four aspects of communication: language development; speech diversity; social interaction; and language and representation. The scope is wide, but the presentation is clear and escapes being superficial – although only just in some cases, e.g. in the section on Black British English. But there is little indication in the section on language and ethnic identity of the political issues embedded in the issue of dialect use for ethnic minorities and the links to educational assessment and racism. This is not a neutral academic debate, the new student needs to be forewarned. The question of gender is also surprisingly marginalised in the representation section. Such passing treatment gives no indication of the ways in which language is inherently gendered (and its importance in gender development in early childhood) or the processes by which women find themselves oppressed in and through social interaction. The tension for any text writer is whether to give precedence to the traditional structures of the discipline or to substantive areas of analysis. Montgomery opts for the former and thus misses many opportunities to link this presentation more directly with sociological and political concerns. The discussions of advertising (pp.115–20), the depiction of nuclear weaponry (pp.178–84), and the representation of civil disorder in the press (pp.184–92) are tantalising in this respect and give some impression of what might have been.

The Milroys' book (James and Lesley) *Authority in Language* is from the series Language Education and Society, edited by Michael Stubbs. It addresses a concern that has been ever present since linguistics was first uttered, a concern that links academic debate with public interest, and a concern that is of considerable contemporary political relevance. That is the view that some forms of language are 'correct' and some are 'incorrect' and that correct forms should be prescribed. From Norman Tebbit's point of view this issue lies at the heart of the 'problem' of education in this country. When 'bad English is as good as good English', he says, then we are on the slippery slope to permissiveness, civil disorder, political unrest and the breakdown of society. In other words the 'problem' is one of standards. The Milroys present a meticulous historical and contemporary examination of the problem of prescription. They are attempting to insert some conceptual clarity into an arena of dubious logic and muddled thinking. Speech must be distinguished from writing, the language system from its forms of use, and linguistic from social value judgements. They indicate the important differences between community norms and individual usage and the crucial effect of

variation and change in language. In effect the question of prescription serves as a focus for a whole set of fundamental discussions drawn from the field of linguistics and sociolinguistics. Montgomery's structure is reversed. The critical key in the developing argument against prescription is Hymes' concept of *communicative competence*. None of us are single style users of speech, although we may differ in our ability to recognise and select the type of language that is appropriate to the occasion (social, cultural and economic factors come into play). The danger is, especially in schools, that inadequacies in repertoire are taken to be indicative of general linguistic inadequacies. Teachers have generally been accused of not policing the repertoire boundaries firmly enough. The sacred forms are too often muddled with the profane for the liking of some commentators. The problem is, though, that prescription can easily shade over into discrimination. There is no appropriate framework for dealing with a range of linguistic styles. The basic point is that competence, contextual skill, is more important in terms of general linguistic adequacy than is arbitrary correctness. Correctness is merely the norm in one particular context. If we accept the argument that competence is not transferable then we must accept that rigidly correct speakers may be linguistically deficient. The political and sociological significance of all this is brought out more clearly in the final ten pages. Biases of all kinds based on naive assumptions about the power and virtues of correctness seem to penetrate all our social institutions – schools, universities, the law, armed forces, business, politics, industrial relations. Non-standard speakers can find themselves labelled inadequate, or worse, on the basis of primitive folk wisdom. Prescriptive ideologies are pernicious political weapons in class, gender and race relations. Again the pity is perhaps that these issues, which really provide the justification of the analysis, are tucked away so discretely and do not play a more central role in the unfolding of the argument of the book. The gap between the sociological and the linguistic is highlighted again.

The collection *Working Papers on Discourse and Conversational Analysis*, edited by Hak, Haafkens and Nijhof, is based on a series of seminars and debates held in the Netherlands during 1984. The volume is both interactive and developmental, several papers contain direct refutations and debates with others, others deliberately attempt to build upon and elaborate arguments and modes of analysis introduced by colleagues. This is a form of publishing not well developed in this country but it provides a lively and engaging, and occasionally, highly personal read. It is sometimes almost like eavesdropping on a private argument. Here the links between linguistics and sociology are taken to be thorough and complete. Indeed Nijhof, in his paper on the 'Textual Constructions of pregnancy' claims that 'sociology is textsociology' (p.77). Sociology is a science of meanings, meanings lie in the effect of relations of signs, relations of language signs are defined as text, therefore . . . And the key elements in the theories discussed in the volume are essentially sociological in kind. The relationship of structure and agency, determination and action, is taken up in enunciation and preconstruction. Enunciation being the on-going work done by the utterance or passage under scrutiny, and preconstruction is 'the taken-for-granted context against which the speaking or writing occurs' (Torode, p.14). The intrusion of a hidden discourse into one that is revealed; the macro assumptions that underpin micro meaning-

making. 'Proper' discourse analysis, Torode argues, involves a search for both aspects within the text. Here he is drawing on Pecheux. In the following paper Hak builds on this with a discussion of Voloshinov. These and the other theoretical pieces are not easy to come to grips with and often rely on the finest of interpretations and the most sophisticated of textual interpretations. But they are worth some perseverance.

The analytical pieces are generally more accessible. Several deal with medical settings. Haafkens and van Haster use discourse analysis to examine the ways in which mental health problems are 'constructed' in the talk of professionals. And they identify the influence of 'powerful', official discourses in such talk. Nijhof portrays health care as a 'battlefield in language', he explores the ways in which pregnancy acquires and changes meaning. Pregnancy is represented in talk both as a 'natural condition' that is under threat from the overbearing world of medicine and as a social phenomenon constituted by doctors and patients (echoes of the Wendy Savage case). In the second meaning the power of clinical necessity is eventually subordinated to the world of nature. In the paper by de Boer a similar analysis is applied to the world of psychiatry and specifically to the construction of sex-specific stereotypes. She suggests that such stereotypes interfere, as unexamined assumptions, in psychiatrists' decisions whether or not to hospitalise patients. Structures embedded in official reports indicate that unrevealed standards are applied to cases which lead to more women being hospitalised. Finally, in this group, Davies explores the talk between patients and their General Practitioners. She characterises patients' talk as a form of story-telling, as an account of 'troubles'. In contrast to other analyses of patient talk she sees the patients as competent members, skillfully engaged in accomplishing their agenda, casting the GP as sympathetic listener and often countering attempts to intervene or redirect the talk. The doctor appeared to want to reassure but not to take seriously the patients; jokes, friendliness and niceness are deployed to deflect the story-telling. In these ways the patient's troubles are redefined. It is not too difficult to imagine that analysis of student-tutor talk, say over essay marks, would reveal a similar structural conflict for control of the conversation.

Inowlocki's paper develops the idea of story-telling in a different way in an examination of the talk of neo-Nazi activists about violence. She shows how life stories are used to link the informants into German history and thus the meaning of neo-Nazism. In the final section of the collection a debate is presented through a series of papers by Torode with responses by ten Have, Wiejers and Hak. One exchange is centred upon a reanalysis of the interview talk of Paul Willis' 'lads'. Torode argues that Willis' neglect of discourse as a topic leads to certain misemphases and missed opportunities. For Torode the talk of Spanksy and Joey, two key informants, reveals the centrality of the home and the boy-mother relationship as the source of their basic cultural orientation. Sexuality, masculinity, servitude and fraternity are rooted in talk about the home, in the discourse of the male working class. The key elements of sex, war and laughter picked out by Torode seem to set up Willis' work for a thorough-going psychoanalytic reinterpretation. I look forward to it. Torode's second point is the differences between Spanksy and Joey in their talk as indicators of fractional differences in their working class positioning. He suggests that Willis is incorrectly assuming an undifferentiated

British male working class.

The interesting point about this paper is surely the way in which discourse analysis is used to ask new, sometimes challenging questions about a classic piece of sociological research. This suggests a generative and serious interplay between otherwise well bounded areas of scholarship. The relationship between language research (beit linguistics, discourse analysis or conversational analysis) and sociology is potentially powerful and complementary but more often these days it seems to be an arms-length relationship, hedged in with mutual suspicion. Sociology seems to want to take language seriously but open-mindedness is not always easy to maintain.

SOCIAL THEORY

Christopher Dandeker
University of Leicester

S.N. Eisenstadt and H.J. Helle, ed, Macro-Sociological Theory; Perspectives on Sociological Theory, Vol.1, Sage, 1985., 196pp, £9.95 pb.

H.D. Helle and S.N. Eisenstadt, ed, Micro-Sociological Theory; Perspectives on Sociological Theory, Vol.2, Sage, 1985., 168pp, £9.95 pb.

Frank Hearn, Reason and Freedom in Sociological Thought, George Allen and Unwin, 1985, 220pp, £6.95 pb.

The two volumes edited by Eisenstadt and Helle comprise a selection of papers given at the 10th World Congress of Sociology in Mexico during 1983, published under the auspices of the International Sociological Association. The papers reassess developments in sociological theory which have taken place in the context of the critical reaction against structural-functionalism and positivist methodologies in the 1960s and 1970s. According to Eisenstadt this critique led to a shift away from a focus on functional imperatives or needs of social systems to one which emphasised the social construction of reality, and thus the knowledgeability and autonomy of actors, together with an emphasis on conflict and power in the shaping of institutional orders rather than a concern to stress consensus on values. These issues cut across the traditional distinction between macro and micro sociology, or, *pace* Lockwood, the sociology of face to face interaction and the sociology of interdependence between institutions.

As is often the case with collections of conference papers, the quality of the contributions is rather uneven. In addition, given Eisenstadt's view that recent theoretical debates on the relationship between agency and structure, triggered by the works of Giddens, Lukes and others (no mention of Bhaskar), mean that 'the confrontation between micro and macro now belongs to the past' (vol.1, p.3), it is rather odd to see that distinction providing the editorial basis of the two volumes.

In Volume 1, there are some interesting discussions of the agency-structure issue, particularly the papers by Margaret Archer (already published in the *British Journal of Sociology* in 1982) and Jeffery Alexander. Archer critically assesses Giddens' view of structuration and takes him to task for failing to consider the fruitfulness of efforts to re-unite action and structure to be found within general systems theory or the neo-functionalism of writers such as Buckley. She suggests that the idea of morphogenesis is more successful than that of structuration, particularly in respect of producing specific theoretical propositions about when and how much freedom is available

to actors - a point which reminded me of similar arguments made by Lockwood in his seminal article on system and social interaction. Archer's impressive paper deserves a closer reading.

Jeffery Alexander analyses, in a sensitive fashion, the advantages and disadvantages of symbolic interactionism and phenomenological sociology, and suggests that these traditions enrich collectivist (structural) accounts of social order rather than replace them. Taking his point of departure from a disjunction between an empirical focus on individuals on the one hand and a presupposition that social structures are comprised of individuals on the other, Alexander shows that the latter view leads inevitably to a model of society as random or disorderly. Yet writers like Husserl, Mead and to some extent Schutz, were concerned to focus on the dialectic between individuals' social construction of reality and the collective resources drawn upon in that process of construction. It is writers like Garfinkel and Blumer who have tended towards radically individualist accounts of social order, thus emphasising one of the poles in the dialogue between subjective and objective idealism which constitutes the ground of phenomenological sociology.

In a similar vein, Verhoeven's paper in Vol.2 examines Goffman's frame analysis in respect of the differences and similarities between Goffman's works and those of Blumer, Schutz and Garfinkel. All four start 'with the interpreting individuals acting in relation to each other in small units' (p.97), although Goffman's frame analysis 'appears as a positivistically inspired reaction against the solipsism of other macro-sociological paradigms' (p.97). Johnson and Picon's paper (also in Vol.2) reconsiders the intellectual foundations of symbolic interactionism and in particular questions recent accounts which stress the 'objectivist Mead' or the latter's social realism, in contrast with Blumer's individualism. In an interesting discussion, Johnson and Picon re-emphasise the links between Mead, James and Dewey, and argue, not altogether convincingly, that Mead and James provide the basis for the transcendence of the dualism between nominalism and realism.

Other papers in Vol.1 reassess the significance of structural-functionalism in sociological theory. In general, these constitute very much a positive critique in the sense that reform rather than revolution is favoured (see the paper by Tominaga). Evolutionism needs to be tempered with a recognition of historical diversity (Eisenstadt), whilst the master-concept of differentiation needs to be accompanied by the idea of de-differentiation in respect of an adequate account of social change (Tyriakian). These papers do not really get to grips with the issues surrounding the methodologies of sociology and history, which is what any critical assessment of social evolutionism should do.

The significance of Marxism is reassessed by Therborn who reviews the problems and prospects of class analysis in a contemporary sociological research. He concludes that although Marxist class analysis is a well-entrenched feature of modern sociology it needs to produce more on the relevance of class to economic theory, the role of the state as employer, class and gender, and the collective labourer in the context of modern corporate capitalism. Notwithstanding his comments on gender, it is hardly surprising to find that the author fails to consider seriously the view that classes are not necessarily the most important actors on the historical stage.

The papers in Vol.2 which have not been discussed above reassess developments in interactionism, ethnomethodology and

Book Talk

phenomenological sociology. Helle, in an interesting paper charts the intellectual roots of micro-sociology from Kant through Simmel and Dilthey to Weber and Mead. Turner and Joas reconsider role theory and the problems relating to the links between structural and interactionist dimensions of analysis, with Joas focusing on the case of the development of role-taking ability in the process of socialisation. Atkinson and Frank discuss the links between ethnomethodology and linguistic analysis, with the former stressing the productive links that can be made between ethnography and conversation analysis. For me, Frank's paper seemed to say rather too little in too many pages. Similar comments might be levelled at the paper by Berger *et al* on an 'expectation states' theory. For example: 'This raised questions about multi-characteristic situations that were outside the scope of the initial status characteristics formulation, posing a "theoretical problem" that, combined with other pressures (including the purely theoretical one

of generalising the theory), led to the extension of the initial status characteristics theory to more complex multi-characteristic, status situations'. I found pages of this hard to take, and only a mouse appeared at the end.

An issue not touched on by these two volumes – the relationship between theory and practice – provides the main theme of Frank Hearn's *Reasons and Freedom in Sociological Thought*. Hearn reconstructs the changing relationship between reason and freedom at two related levels: the history of sociological thought and the historical development of societies. His point of departure is Wright Mills' discussion of rationality without reason in modern industrial capitalism. Here reason has come to be equated with technical rationality, or as a means of domination rather than as a basis for the extension of human freedom. The development of instrumental rationality in society is matched and reinforced by the positivistic divorce between fact and value in the sciences, which constitutes a break with the enlightenment view

that reason and freedom were united; to know was to advance human freedom. Hearn argues for a critical sociology on the one hand and a revival of the public sphere on the other. All this should be fairly familiar to anyone who has read Habermas, Adorno and Marcuse. This book is a work of synthesis and is obviously intended as a text book. Hearn's conclusions derive from Mills, Gouldner and Habermas, but as with the latter's arguments, the links between what an ideal speech community is and how best to implement it remain obscure except for a brief positive discussion of Touraine's sociology of intervention. The latter is in my view little more than an advocacy of 'back all underdogs', and the issue of whether the practical implementation of a vigorous public sphere is more or less likely under capitalism or socialism is not confronted directly. Anyway, a lot of ground is covered, much of it sensibly and in a stimulating manner. I found the discussion of modernism particularly interesting.

Book Ends

The review by Christopher Dandeker in this issue covers some of the many books on theoretical sociology published during the last few months, and some similar themes recur throughout these books. In *Neofunctionalism* (edited by Jeffrey Alexander, Sage, £31 and £15.50) ten contributors explore a number of issues which have emerged from the continuing debate over Parsonian sociology. Eisenstadt, Smelser, and Barber offer papers on, respectively, the political systems of empires, structural differentiation in nineteenth century education, and professionalisation, and a number of other contributors try to demonstrate that functionalism is alive and well. Mark Wardell and Stephen Turner in *Sociological Theory in Transition* (George Allen and Unwin, £18 and £7.50) have compiled a volume which explores various aspects of the relationship between social theory and political criticism, with a number of contributors examining the status of such key concepts as structure and action. Papers by David Rubinstein and by Scott Lash and John Urry critically examine some of the issues raised by Alexander's contributors, while Barry Hindess offers a characteristically acute discussion of humanism and structuralism. The editors' conclusion argues that the great problem facing sociology today is the replacement of the original goal of understanding society by a 'research enterprise defined by the agenda of "clients"' (page 165): to prevent this, sociologists have to unite theoretical and practical discourse in the same way as the classical sociologists. Christopher Lloyd's *Explanation in Social History* (Basil Blackwell, £24.50) is, in fact, a review of philosophical discussions of explanation which advocates the 'realist' approach of Harre and Bhaskar. The book contains extremely useful and thorough summaries of the points of contention in debates on covering laws, methodological individualism, Kuhnian paradigms, structuralism, and hermeneutics, and attempts to map out some of the diversity in current theoretical positions. (His map is presented on page 194.) The stated objective is to further the integration of sociology and social history which Philip Abrams advocated in *Historical Sociology*, but the book's major limitation is that no sustained applications of the general argument are presented to exemplify the case. It should, however, be a useful text and overview for the area.

Jorge Larrain has established a reputation for his work on ideology, and his *A Reconstruction of Historical Materialism* (George Allen and Unwin, £13.95 and £6.50) extends his exploration of Marxism. His starting point is a critique of orthodox Marxism, and he rejects both the critique offered by Giddens and the reconstruction offered by Habermas. The way forward, Larrain argues, is through an analysis which is centred on practice. We now have a further part of Habermas's own reconstruction available in *A Theory of Communicative Competence* (Heinemann, £15.95). This is a translation of Volume One, and Volume Two is promised for the near future. The volume is subtitled 'Reason and the Rationalisation of Society' and confronts some of the prevailing sociological theories of action (teleological, normatively-guided, dramaturgical, and communicative action), the central part of the book being a critical discussion of Weber's theory of rationalisation. Volume Two will centre on the works of Mead and Durkheim. Critical theory also appears in the new impression of Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* (Ark Paperbacks, £3.95), where Weber again appears as the central protagonist.

Weber is the eponymous hero of *Max Weber: A Skeleton Key*, by Randall Collins (Sage, £15.50 and £6.50). The book is a good, short introduction to Weber's life and work, with separate chapters on methodology, the Protestant ethic, rationalisation, historical development and world religions. A final chapter, entitled 'Weber's Sociological Encyclopaedia' presents an overview of the first part of *Economy and Society*. Collins is a self-styled 'conflict sociologist' and emphasises this aspect of his work – Collins promises a further, and larger book on Weber later this year. *The Ethnomethodologists* (Wes Sharrock and Bob Anderson, Tavistock/Ellis Horwood, £4.25) is the latest publication in the 'Key Sociologists' series. The book is a readable and forceful statement of the ethnomethodological position, which shows the historical origins of Garfinkel's work and illustrates the approach through studies of conversation and scientific work. The book certainly shows that ethnomethodological writing need not be obscure, and the argument throughout is crystal clear. *Power, Action and Belief* (Sociological Review Monograph, Routledge and Kegan Paul, £8.95) is a

collection edited by John Law, which is united by a common concern with recent developments in the sociology of knowledge. Mary Douglas examines radical scepticism, Cousins and Hussain discuss ideology, the ubiquitous Hindess reviews the concept of 'interests', and other contributors discuss art exhibitions, Portuguese navigation, scallop fisherman, and the Socialist Workers Party. *Reflexivity* by Hilary Lawson (Hutchinson, £5.50) is concerned with the method of discourse analysis elaborated by Derrida, and traces similar concerns in Nietzsche and Heidegger: each offers an alternative solution to the problem of reflexivity.

Though it is not a book on theory, *Key Variables in Social Investigation* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, £17.95 and £8.95) is perhaps best considered here. Bob Burgess has edited the book on behalf of the BSA, and it is a belated follow-up to the earlier *Key Variables and Comparability* volumes. The contributors are trying to show how certain concepts – age, gender, ethnicity, health, education, class, work, leisure, politics and voluntary associations – can be translated (operationalised?) for the purposes of empirical research. There is, perhaps, a greater reluctance to propose solutions to the problem than was the case in the predecessor volumes, reflecting the greater diversity in social thought, but the contributors provide useful discussions of the range of meanings commonly attached to the concepts. The book should be valuable for undergraduate students undertaking their own fieldwork as well as providing pointers for more advanced researchers. Even if few solutions are proffered, the problems have been clarified in a stimulating way.

* * *

An important publication in industrial sociology and social stratification is *Class, Politics and the Economy* (Stewart Clegg, Paul Boreham, and Geoff Dow, Routledge and Kegan Paul, £30 and £9.95), though its contents are extremely wide-ranging. Readers of Clegg and Dunkerley's *Organisation, Class and Control* will be familiar with the encyclopaedic style of the present book, and it should soon become as popular as its predecessor. Clegg and his colleagues begin from the question of class in classical economics, in Marx, and in Weber, concluding that the differences between Marx and Weber do not preclude the

Book Ends

construction of a fruitful synthesis. On this basis they draw a model of capitalist societies as comprising petty bourgeois, corporate, new middle, and working classes. Chapters on each class are followed by two chapters on class and politics, concentrating on trends since 1974 in a number of countries.

Redirections in Organizational Analysis by Mike Reed (Tavistock, £8.95) is a useful discussion of some of the implications for studies of organisations in the wake of recent developments in the area. The book documents the breakdown of the dominant systems theory, the emergence of 'alternative' approaches from Silverman onwards, and the approaches to have emerged in the wake of the ending of consensus. Particularly useful is Reed's incorporation of mainstream theoretical debates, and he argues for a re-orientation of the field on the basis of the analyses of structure and agency in Giddens and in Harris's *Fundamental Concepts and the Sociological Enterprise*. This is illustrated through the re-working of case studies from Selznick, Gouldner, and Corzier. Eva Etzioni-Halevy concentrates on the classic discussions of organisation in her *Bureaucracy and Democracy*, (Revised Edition Routledge and Kegan Paul, £5.95). She draws on the neo-Machlaviellian 'elite' writers Michels and Mosca to construct an argument for the autonomy of politics and the threat which bureaucracy poses for the existence of democracy. The first part of the book reviews the arguments of Weber, the pluralists, theorists of technocracy, and writers on corporatism; the second part applies the argument to political events in a number of western societies.

Concerned with democracy in industry is *Just Managing*, by Peter Cressey, John Eldridge, and John MacInnes (Open University Press, £20 and £7.50). The book reports on some research on Scottish companies which the authors carried out for the Department of Employment. Their Research Paper *Industrial Democracy and Participation* gave an overview of their general survey, and the present book looks at six companies in a variety of industries. *Top Decisions* by David Hickson and colleagues (Basil Blackwell, £25) is a useful summary of the Bradford studies, based on an extension of the Aston school. The book explores strategic decision-making in a variety of organisations in terms of the dimensions of ownership, purpose, and formalisation. The approach stresses the diversity of interests and their varying powers to determine decisions. They draw on a fruitful combination of Alan Fox with Burns and Stalker to relate attempts at participation to strategies of management. Managers, they argue, still see management as a technical function – 'just managing' – and this limits their willingness to take participation seriously. Michael Poole's *Industrial Relations* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, £16.95) is an impressive, but perhaps formalistic comparative study of national diversity. Poole eschews country-by-country comparison, and argues for the use of a set of analytical concepts and measures on comparative research. He starts out from his basic definitions to construct a series of models, presented in numerous diagrams, of the relations between employers, labour, and the state, and uses these models as ways of measuring diversity. The basic framework is that of the action frame of references, familiar from the recent work of Duncan Gallie, in which orientations and actions result from cultural choices made under situations of constraint.

David Ashton's *Unemployment Under Capitalism* (Wheatsheaf, £18.95 and £7.95) draws on recent work on the British and

American labour markets, including the author's own investigations of youth and young adults, to look at the causes of unemployment and the effectiveness of policies aimed at reducing its level. Variations in culture, state formation, business organisation, and the labour movement between Britain and the United States explain variations in their current labour market systems, and Ashton argues that policies must recognise this fact. Unemployment, he claims, is increasingly a consequence of the discrepancy between the rate at which existing jobs are made obsolete and the rate at which new jobs are produced; and these rates vary between nations. *Employment, Unemployment, and Marriage*, edited by Jacqueline Burgoyne and Robert Chester, is a special issue of the *International Journal of Social Economics* (Volume 12, No.2, MCB University Press, £14.95). Contributors include Lydia Morris on the Port Talbot redundancy study and Janet Finch on egalitarianism within the household. The papers derive from a seminar organised for the National Marriage Guidance Council in 1984. *Longitudinal Analysis of Labour Market Data* by James Hockman and Burton Singer (Cambridge University Press, £32.50) is a collection of econometric and statistical papers on labour markets. Topics covered include life industries and job changes, and a friendly econometrician assures me that the technical papers are excellent.

Becoming Clerical Workers by Linda Valli (Routledge and Kegan Paul, £19.95) follows in the footsteps of Paul Willis to explore some of the issues raised in David Lockwood's *Blackcoated Worker* and, more recently Rosemary Crompton and Gareth Jones' *White-Collar Proletariat*. Valli adopts an ethnographic approach to the ways in which girls at school acquire orientations towards secretarial and clerical work. The fieldwork was carried out in the American midwest, and she argues that work identity is acquired not through 'socialisation' as conventionally understood, but through strategies of production and reproduction within schools. The book contains a useful methodological appendix outlining the research techniques. Rosemary Deem and Graeme Salaman have edited *Work, Culture and Society* (Open University Press, £20 and £7.95), based on course units prepared for an Open University Course. The book includes chapters on factory work and work organisation, labour markets, housework, and non-employment, and contributors include Craig Littler, Mary Maynard, Stephen Wood, and the Cambridge labour market group. A full review of the up-dated course units themselves will appear in the next issue of *Network*.

* * *

An important publication in urban sociology is *Localities, Class and Gender* by members of the Lancaster Regionalism Group (L. Murgatroyd *et al.*, Pion Books, £12). The focus of the work is Lancaster itself, with papers by John Urry and Linda Murgatroyd investigating the occupational and gender divisions in the local economy and the deindustrialisation of the area. Other studies, however, are concerned with Nelson and Preston, and Dan Shapiro contributes a piece on the North of Scotland. Sylvia Walby gives a handy overview of theories of woman's work and presents some useful regional data. *New Research in Central-Local Relations* by Michael Goldsmith (Gower, £18.50) is a collection of papers on local and national government in Britain, with particular discussions of housing, education, and health, the main point of reference being Gerald

Rhodes' *Control and Power in Central-Local Relations*. Valerie Karn, Jim Kemeny, and Peter Williams in *Home Ownership in the Inner City* (Gower, £16.50), report on their Department of the Environment-funded research on home ownership in Birmingham and Liverpool. The Department refused to publish the report on rather strange grounds and insisted on a number of alterations to the text. These objections were no doubt due to the authors' pessimism about home ownership and their call for greater public investment and subsidisation. *The Problem Housing Estate* by Frances Reynolds (Gower, £18.50) is a report on an estate in a Midlands city, the research being carried out by interview methods. Reynolds, like Karn and her co-workers, is pessimistic about the prospects of 'problem' areas: they are likely to enter a vicious circle resulting in 'areas of concentrated and hopeless deprivation' (p.184). Council housing is also the central theme of *Housing and Health* by D.S. Byrne *et al.* (Gower, £15). The authors investigated the relationship between housing and health in Gateshead, drawing up a set of housing areas for use in studying perceptions of health and experience of illness. The conclusion is, again, that current government policy is exacerbating a bad situation and that improvements need to be made in the quality of the housing stock and the organisation of the health services.

* * *

Robert Reiner's *Blue-Coated Worker* was an important study in both criminology and the sociology of work. In *The Politics of the Police* (Wheatsheaf, £8.95) he undertakes a more detailed investigation of the involvement of the police in 'political' issues. A substantial historical introduction argues that the legitimacy of policing that had been established in Britain by the 1950s came under challenge during the 1960s; the remainder of the book explores some of the prevailing images of the police and policing and concludes with support for a gradualist approach to rebuilding legitimacy. Mary Jeanette Hageman's *Police-Community Relations* (Sage £17.75 and £8.95) is based on the American situation and draws on humanistic psychology 'so that agents in the criminal justice system can develop working relationships/partnerships and maintain a positive attitude to protect their own health and well-being and to show goodwill to all persons' (p.8).

Investigating Robbery by Michael Banton (Gower, £16.50) is a study of robberies in Bristol which comes to the controversial conclusion that most robberies are detected and that the level of detection would not be improved by increased police resources. Increased levels of robbery reflect 'the circumstances of modern urban living' and, as Durkheim might have argued, must be accepted as a 'normal' feature of life today. Dermot Walsh in *Heavy Business* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, £16.95) uses interviews with imprisoned robbers to try to reconstruct the motives for their crimes. Walsh argues that burglary and robbery are likely to increase as opportunities expand, changes in policing will have little impact. Neal Shover attempts a sympathetic study of those involved in crime in *Aging Criminals* (Sage, £31 and £15.50), showing how those who persist in criminality until their early 40s show a decreasing involvement in crime after that age. The reasons for this, he argues, are related to the typical experiences of criminal careers, and not to the biological process of aging itself. *Growing Out of Crime* by Andrew Rutherford (Penguin, £3.95) looks at the other end of the age scale. He argues that young people grow out of crime and that formal intervention can

Book Ends

only exacerbate their involvement in crime.

* * *

A number of interesting publications have appeared in the area of welfare and health. Graham Room at Bath University was recently awarded a massive grant to monitor poverty policy in the European Community, and his book *Cross-National Innovation in Social Policy* (Macmillan, £27.50) elaborates on some of the principles behind this research. The book explores the ideas of evaluation and action research, and the implications they have for studying the power and interests of those who formulate policies. Room develops the interesting theoretical framework set out in his *Sociology of Welfare*, drawing heavily on the arguments of Marshall, Goldthorpe, and Halsey, to analyse the development of conflict over welfare provision. Philip Bean, John Ferris, and David Wynes have edited *In Defence of Welfare* (Tavistock, £8.95) to bring together a variety of writers concerned with the break-up of the welfare state since 1979. Contributors include Barbara Woolton and Hilary Rose, and the topics examined range from market principles to the ethics of altruism and citizenship. The editors argue for a re-thinking of the basis of welfare provision, rather than a return to the Fabian Welfare State, but are pessimistic about both possibilities. *Feminists and State Welfare*, by Jennifer Dale and Peggy Foster (Routledge and Kegan Paul, £5.95), begins with an historical account of the formation of the Welfare State which focuses on the impact of feminist theory and practice: women's organisations were able to help shape welfare provision, but at the expense of distinctively 'feminist' ideas, and women entered the welfare state at its lower levels. The bulk of the book, however, concerns the contemporary position of women as producers and consumers of welfare. They are critical of both 'liberal' and 'separatist' approaches as solutions to the problem of creating a non-sexist system of welfare provision.

A System of Scientific Medicine (Howard Berliner, Tavistock, £7.50) is a study of the role of the big American philanthropic foundations, such as Rockefeller and Carnegie, in establishing scientific medicine. The particular focus of the book is the Flexner Report of 1905, and Berliner examines the conflicts and power struggles between the foundations and the medical profession, and between the two main foundations themselves. In *Healers and Alternative Medicine* (Gower, £6.50), Gary Easthope examines the non-scientific 'magical' medicine of such groups as the Filipino psychic surgeons, Psionic Radionics, and the healers of Lourdes. Easthope argues that such forms of healing do work, and that the reason for this is sociological. A concluding chapter rather dauntingly entitled 'What is Man?' outlines a developmental view of identity and argues that healers, implicitly, use such a theory to transform the patient's identity and alleviate symptoms.

Social Workers and Their Practice in Welfare Bureaucracies by David Howe (Gower, £15) applies ideas from industrial sociology to social service departments. The context is the author's own experience of the Seeborn re-organisation and a survey of fieldworkers. Drawing on the Braverman debate and discussions of the professions and power, Howe argues for greater control by social workers over their own conditions of work. *Dynamic Interviewing* (Frank Maple, Sage, £11) is an American introduction to counselling which sets out the principles which the author

believes should structure the relationship between counsellor and client. Another practical handbook is *Caring For Old People* (J.A. Muir Gray and Heather McKenzie, Penguin, £2.95), which advises families on how to handle the everyday problems of elderly relatives. Nick Heather and Ian Robertson in *Problem Drinking* (Penguin, £3.95) start out from the assumption that alcoholism is socially constructed rather than a disease. They attempt to set out an alternative to the conventional approach of alcoholics anonymous. Sally Sainsbury has given an interesting account of Deafness in *Deaf Worlds* (Hutchinson, £25). The book is based on interviews with deaf people, using sign language to carry out the interviews, and is concerned with the issue of the segregation or integration of the deaf - in particular, how the deaf acquire information about the world and communicate with others.

* * *

The sociology of culture has seen a diverse range of books this year. *Commercial Television and European Children*, edited by Scott Ward, Tom Robertson, and Ray Brown (Gower, £18.50) is a digest of research results from a conference held in France in 1984. Most of the original papers are printed, but the authors also draw on the discussant's comments to present their own conclusions. They focus on the effect of advertising on British children and come to the unsurprising conclusion that the effects of television are mediated through the family. *Watching Dallas* (Ian Ang, Methuen, £3.95) looks at Dutch women's reaction to the soap opera. The author's rather controversial argument is that 'feminist discourse bears some similarity to the structure of popular romantic fiction' (p.122), but that continuous soap operas cannot present the utopian 'happy ending' found in that form of fiction. Unhappiness is the norm in soap operas, which induce 'feelings of resignation and fatalism' and so are incompatible with feminism. Watching television is just one form of leisure activity, but John Clarke and Chas Critcher in *The Devil Makes Work* (Macmillan, aim to explore the whole range. The book gives an overview of approaches to leisure and a 'Cook's tour' account of the history of leisure from 'Merrie England' to youth culture, before going on to present a critical view of the relationship of 'leisure' to 'work' and 'employment' in capitalist society.

Anthony Marsella and his colleagues have edited *Culture and Self* (Tavistock, £8.95) to compare the western concept of self with the concepts found in India, China and Japan. George De Vos, for example, argues that Japanese culture, with its emphasis on conformity and group loyalty, involves a concept of self which is radically different from that of the west. In *Japanese Society* (Cambridge University Press, £5.95) Robert J. Smith argues that such Japanese peculiarities derive from the conscious and deliberate creation of tradition by the Meiji rulers. The book is the published version of a lecture series, and is an interesting and readable account of Japan. Michael J. Bristol's *Carnival and Theatre* (Methuen, £21) is a study of Elizabethan theatre and its relationship to the exercise of authority and to plebeian culture. Bristol traces the origins of this dramatic form to the tradition of collective involvement, epitomised in carnival and its rejection of established authority. Drama of a different sort is the theme of *Initiation* (Jean La Fontaine, Penguin, £3.95 and Manchester University Press hardback, £15), which looks at ritual drama and initiation into secret societies. Case studies discussed include the

freemasons, the Chinese triads, the Kenyan mau mau, and numerous other groups. Ritual initiation, she argues, is one important way in which the authority of the established order is perpetuated.

* * *

A final selection of diverse titles. Anne Oakley's well established *Sex, Gender and Society* (Gower/Maurice Temple Smith, £4.95) has appeared in a revised edition. Oakley argues that 'nothing that has happened since 1972 would lead me to alter the basic themes', and the book is substantially unchanged. *Women and Equal Pay* by A. Zabalza and A. Tzannetos (Cambridge University Press, £19.50) reviews the evidence on relative pay after the equal pay legislation. The authors conclude that there has been a real improvement since 1970 and that this was due to the legislation.

Men in Families by Robert A. Lewis and Robert E. Salt (Sage, £31 and £15.50) is an edited collection covering men as husbands, men as fathers, and men in wider kinship networks. David Olson and Roxanne Markoff have produced the massive *Inventory of Marriage and Family Literature* (Sage £82.50), the eleventh volume in the series. The book is a classified bibliography covering more than 3000 articles published during 1984. The book is indexed by subject, author, and keywords, and gives full details on where to obtain the articles or to contact the authors.

The Ideology of the New Right, edited by Ruth Levitas (Polity Press, £22.50 and £6.95), brings together a number of contributors to discuss this resurgent style of political thought. The coverage extends from business pressure groups and the Moral Majority to racism and Roger Scruton, and themes raised include market economics and authoritarianism. *Social Choice and Public Policy* by Michael Laver (Basil Blackwell, £21.50 and £7.95) uses health and housing to illustrate a theory of policy formation. Laver's concern is with the question of individual and collective benefit in policy-making and the issue of rationality.

Turkey in the World Capitalist System, edited by Huseyin Ramazanoglu (Gower, £18.50), brings together a number of published and unpublished papers on the political economy of Turkey. The editor himself gives a useful historical account of the development of Turkish capitalism, while he and other contributors examine labour migration, uneven development, and military intervention. Beverley Hooper's *Youth in China* (Penguin, £3.95) draws on first hand experience to document the life style and experiences of young people in China following the life cycle through from school to marriage. *Modern English Society* (Methuen, £8.95) is the third edition of Judith Ryder and Harold Silver's textbook. New chapters are included and the text is updated, but the coverage is rather selective: the chapter on affluence and inequality, for example, makes no reference to the Affluent Worker study and the projects it has sponsored, and the Nuffield Mobility study appears mainly via a quote from James Bellini's *Rule Britannia*. The revised edition of *Human Societies* by Geoffrey Hurd and his colleagues (Routledge and Kegan Paul, £20 and £7.95) follows the same format as its predecessor, taking a comparative approach to economic and political development, urbanisation, stratification, and other topics. Most of the chapters have been rewritten, some have been dropped, and a new chapter on health has been written.

John Scott

BSA BOOKS AT REDUCED PRICES

STUDIES IN SOCIOLOGY

A series edited by Anthony Giddens and published for the BSA by Macmillan

		our price	shop price
Knowledge & Ideology in the Sociology of Education	G Bernbaum	£2.25	£ 2.95
Politics & Sociology in the Thought of Max Weber	A Giddens	£2.25	£ 2.95
Strikes & Industrial Conflict	G Ingham	£1.10	O/P
The Organisation of Crime	M McIntosh	£0.75	O/P
Professions and Power	T Johnson	£2.25	£ 2.95
Marxist Sociology	T Bottomore	£2.25	£ 2.95
Power: A Radical View	S Lukes	£1.95	£ 2.50
Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class	M. Mann	£2.75	£ 3.50

NEW STUDIES IN SOCIOLOGY

A series edited by Michael Mann and published for the BSA by Macmillan

Calvinism and the Capitalist Spirit	G Poggi	£2.95	£ 3.95
The Challenge of Corporatism	O Newman	£5.50	£ 6.95
The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism	R Holton	£4.95	£ 6.95
Politics in the Semi-Periphery	N Mouzelis	£5.95	£ 7.95

EXPLORATIONS IN SOCIOLOGY

Knowledge, Education & Cultural Change	ed Brown	£6.25	£ 7.75
Sociology & Development	ed de Kadt/Williams	£3.20	£ 5.95
Power and the State	ed Smart et al	£4.95	O/P
Law, State and Society	ed Hunt et al	£9.50 hb	O/P
Practice & Progress: British Sociology 1950-80	ed Abrams et al	£5.95	£ 6.95
Rethinking Social Inequality	ed Robbins et al	£8.70	O/P
Diversity & Decomposition in the Labour Market	ed Day et al	£8.70	£16.50
Gender, Class and Work	ed Gamarnikow et al	£4.95	£ 5.95
The Public and the Private	ed Gamarnikow et al	£4.95	£ 5.95
Political Action and Social Identity	ed Rees et al	£5.50	£ 7.95
Restructuring Capital	ed Newby et al	£6.95	£ 8.95

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Key Variables in Social Investigation	ed Burgess	£6.95	£ 8.95
The Sexual Politics of Reproduction	ed Homans	£5.95	£ 7.95
Exploring Society	ed Burgess	£3.50	non net
Medical Sociology in Britain 4th edition	ed Field et al	£2.00	£ 6.00
BSA Members Register (1984 edition)	ed Burgess	FREE	—
Sociology: Information & Opportunities	BSA Executive	FREE	—

ORDERS TO BE SENT TO BSA, 10 PORTUGAL STREET, LONDON WC2A 2HU WITH PAYMENT

Please send the books marked to

.....

I enclose a cheque for £.....

Michèle Barrett

Did you notice the results of the 'Gender Teaching Survey' published in a recent issue of *Network*? This exercise was done to find out whether feminism had made any long-lasting and general impact on the way sociology is taught. For that to happen, male sociologists would need to change their teaching habits. Was the survey going to show that this had happened? Or would it reveal that 'feminist sociology' was something that feminist sociologists did with consenting students in the privacy of their own classrooms?

Of course in sociology, and particularly in the BSA, feminism is quite visible and some think, no doubt, all too audible. The BSA has been infiltrated to a relatively high level and feminism registers clearly now in the choice of conference topics, the contents of publications and the public policies of the BSA. The feminist assault on the professional institution has probably been successful at the usual cost of such feminisation – a significant drop in status. But let us not carp about all those professors who wanted a gentleman's club rather than the campus cafeteria that we now have in the BSA.

The public visibility of feminism can, however, be misleading. The far harder battle is for the hearts and minds of sociologists – as teachers, text-book writers, syllabus designers and examiners. This was the point of the survey, and my reaction to the results was one of disappointment. It seems that specialist courses on gender or women's studies have been 'accepted but not necessarily respected'. Grudging pluralism wins the day. But the odds are stacked against the part-time woman in the department with 18 full-time permanent men. Also it seems that several people claimed to be teaching topics about gender on their other courses but that the survey respondent did not in fact believe what they said. This is an interesting situation. Some replies remarked on a discrepancy between the attention that specific (presumably male) teachers said they have to gender and the knowledge the (presumably female) respondent had of them more generally. Maybe it would be worth comparing the replies with course outlines, reading lists and exam papers? Or even ask the students the same question and see what they think is in these courses? Certainly in my own department this would have been an interesting exercise. Perhaps feminists should be thankful for small mercies. Ten years ago these chaps wouldn't have bothered to look as if they were sympathetic. So change is on the agenda, but it can't in my view go very far or very fast unless some sacred cows are challenged.

The first one is the double-edged principle of a lecturer's autonomy. In some places, particularly perhaps those where the staff are very divided, this obviates the need for any discussion at all about what goes into the courses and their relationship to each other. Effectively this is defensive pluralism – if you are in the job you have the right to teach what you like. The Godot theory of pedagogy even suggests that this is good for students, as it acts out sociology's theoretical diversity. To challenge the principle of autonomy is very difficult, partly because it is in general, and in moderation, one that has great academic merit. Partly, too, none of us individually wants to be the victim of our colleagues' interference in our teaching. Yet universities might have a lot to learn from polytechnics, where collaborative syllabus planning and collective responsibility for the curriculum are far more common.

The second problem we have to deal with is intellectual. Sociology is being garbled by government cuts and the opportunities open to

young sociologists are negligible. One by-product of this is the lack of intellectual challenge from below to the ideas of all of us now ageing in the system. (It's quite possible just to carry on without being forced to listen to new work and new developments – though it's a tribute to the intellectual commitment and tenacity of today's graduate students and unemployed sociologists that their voice is heard above the appalling job situation.) A complete rethinking of the categories with which you work is extremely difficult. I have found this myself in trying to reconsider my work from the point of view of its ethnocentrism/racism.

Sometimes I wonder if the enormity of the feminist argument within sociology really has been heard. Let's take the debate running recently in *Sociology* about women and stratification theory, about whose technicalities I remain as ignorant as many people. Perhaps in 'Soapbox' I can get away with saying that John Goldthorpe seems to be rejecting the feminist critique of stratification models precisely because if you take women seriously (hopping in and out of the labour market as they do) it makes nonsense of the existing theory. This leads him to the conclusion that women can't be taken seriously; feminists probably think it proves that their critique of stratification assumptions in sociology always was an absolutely fundamental one.

Thirdly, it seems to me that the sociology curriculum will never change significantly in relation to feminism unless the current intellectual separatism among feminists themselves is broken down. In sociology there is a strong lobby for what is called 'feminist methodology', which might illustrate the problem. In the first place this is based on a complete relativism – men have their truth and we have ours – which I would reject. Surely we want good methodology, which sexist methodology isn't but neither necessarily is so-called 'feminist methodology'. In practice the epithet 'feminist' has been hijacked for a subjectivist position within sociology that some of us rejected back in the 70s along with Garfinkel et al. (The debate between epistemological realism and subjectivist relativism runs on several axes, of which feminism is not necessarily the most important.) This intellectual separatism seems to me to be quite different from political separatism – the autonomy of feminist political organising – which I would defend to the hilt. But as an academic strategy, whether applied to research or teaching, it has many dangers. Chief among these, perhaps, is the fact that it requires *no change* from men, and nor does it confront the social organisation of masculinity. It simply sets up an alternative channel of work for women, and principally about women. In doing this it plays right into the hands of the grudging pluralism that we need to fight.

The Gender Teaching Survey concluded that we need both the development of specialist courses and the integration of gender issues into the mainstream sociology curriculum. This is a task that encounters many resistances, but one which I certainly support. But I don't think it will produce 'feminist sociology': it should produce a sociology that can deal with gender as part of its general project to understand society as a whole.

DATA PROTECTION ACT

The Association is to computerise the names and addresses of all members later this year. In addition information now contained in the *Register of Members*

WORK, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIETY

At its meeting in February the Executive Committee decided that the Association's new journal, *Work, Employment and Society*, would be published directly by the BSA as an 'in-house' venture. The first issue is scheduled to appear early in 1987 and it is hoped that members will do everything they can to ensure that their institutions subscribe. Further details (contents, subscription rates, etc) will be circulated when available. In the meantime we would like to hear from any member who will be attending the ISA Conference in India in August and who would be prepared to take and distribute small amounts of promotional material for the new journal. Assistance from members attending meetings of the following research committees would be particularly welcome: Participation, Workers' Control and Self-Management; Sociology of Organisation; Social Stratification; Sociology of Work; Sociology of Leisure. Please contact Mike Milotte, BSA, 10 Portugal Street, London WC2A 2HU, as soon as possible.

CONTENTS

No 35 May 1986

News and Information	1-2
Sociology, Bias and Indoctrination	
Roger Scruton	2-3
Robert Moore	3
Liberal Attitudes Towards Higher Education	
Clement Freud	4
Home Computers for Sociologists	
John Selby	5-6
Controversy	
David Marsland, Jon Bernades, Tony Garrett	6-8
Reports and Publications	9-11
Book Talk: Political Sociology, Language, and Theory ...	13-16
Book Ends	16-18
The Soapbox, Michèle Barrett ..	20

The next issue of *Network* will be published in October 1986. All material for this issue should be sent directly to the editor, John Scott, Department of Sociology, University of Leicester, LE1 7RH (0533-554455). The deadline for all copy is 22nd August 1986.

will also be held on the computer. The Association will be registering under the Data Protection Act and we are required to obtain your permission for these details to be held in this manner. If you are NOT willing to give your permission would you please write to: Anne Dix at the BSA office by Friday, 23 May 1986.