



Common Sense

A Journal of a wholly new type

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BRIAN Mc GRAIL

Common Sense

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The fifth issue of Common Sense will appear in June 1988.

Notes for contributors: send articles in clean typescript,
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Leave wide margin on both sides, and wide gaps at top and
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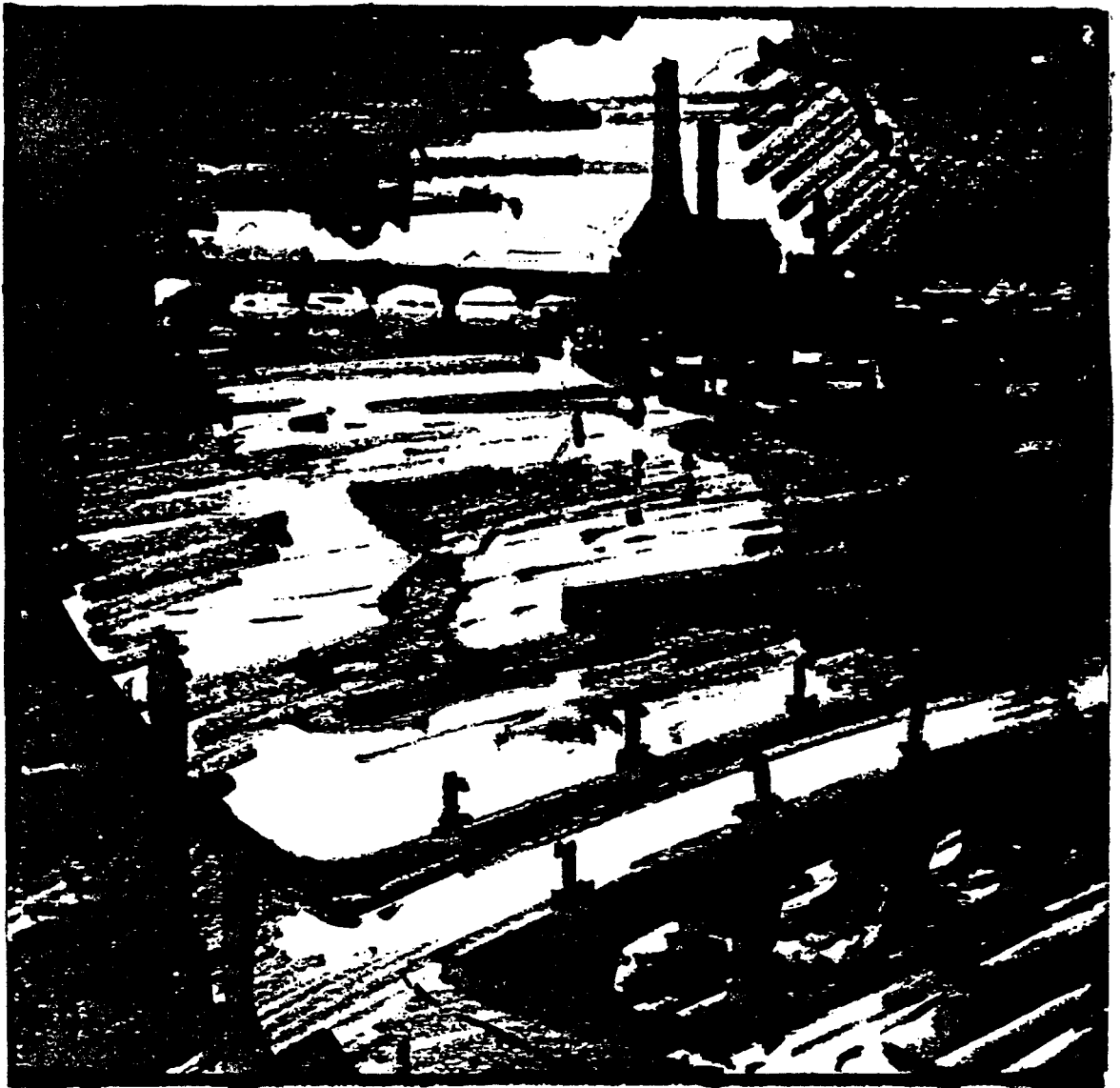
Announcement: Common Sense will have a fund raising Benefit
Concert on April the 27th 1988 at the Cafe Royal, Edinburgh.
Watch out for further information.

Tiger illustrations by Michael Gunn

THE AIMS OF COMMON SENSE

Common Sense aims to challenge the division of labour in contemporary society according to which theoretical discussion is monopolised by universities and confined to the pages of trade-journals read by professional and academic elites. It is run on a co-operative basis and reproduces articles submitted to it in typescript form.

The term "common sense" signifies: (i) shared or public sense and (ii) the interplay of differing perspectives and views. These meanings imply one another; both are undermined to the extent that a social division of labour prevails. For theory, the undermining of common sense means that philosophy becomes separated from empirical enquiry, to the impoverishment of both. The arid abstraction of analytical philosophy and the plodding boredom of positivism are the complementary results. For practice, the undermining of common sense means that political action is denied space for self-reflection and so goes forward in terms which confirm the social status quo. Common sense admits of no fixed definition. No less elusive than it is intelligible, it exists only where criticism and self-criticism are the order of the theoretical and political day. A continuing development of critical theory is the only brief which the journal Common Sense holds.



TEACHING POLITICS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF WEST GERMAN POLITICAL SCIENCE

HANS KASTENDIEK

It should be fair to say that in most analyses of political science, teaching is regarded as a function of the discipline, as one of its 'manifestations'. Sometimes teaching is taken as an indicator of developmental trends, sometimes it is included into development reports or statements on 'the state of the art' just to get 'the full picture'. Thus, teaching is ascribed a secondary status both in general substantiations of the discipline and in day-to-day professional performance. Leaving out the latter abuse, my point of concern in this paper is the function teaching has had for the foundation and the development of political science. To sharpen the point and to formulate my main thesis: Political science, at least in the case of West Germany, was **founded** to perform a specific teaching function and became **established** because of the expectations linked to its teaching capacity. There are some indications that the present status of West German political science within the system of higher and academic education might be **threatened/reduced** because it is notably its teaching function which has come under attack (under the present conditions of fiscal crisis, increasing academic unemployment, and resurgent resentments about the social use of social sciences).

The Emergence of West German Political Science as a Discipline of Academic Teaching

Like political sciences in other countries the West German discipline has often been at pains to map out and to define its field of topical responsibility and analytical competence vis-a-vis its academic neighbours and competitors. But without neglecting these efforts and endeavours we may say that neither the foundation nor the progression of West German political science were decided and promoted on these grounds of argument. The discipline got its thrust and motive power as an educational 'movement', and it was the teaching argument which paved the discipline's way and provided it with academic citizenship. West German political science was developed as a discipline of academic teaching, and it developed its research capacity from the institutional basis designed for teaching purposes. Academisation was, in the first instance, the building-up of full study schemes; in the second instance, however, the discipline became 'academised' in the sense of transformation to a discipline which strives for scientification. It was only in the seventies that academisation in the second sense became a dominant motif. Whether this was a consequence of West German political science approaching the status of 'a mature discipline' or a departure from its original teaching objectives is a point to be discussed later. In any case, by devaluing its teaching role the discipline lost the driving force of its development. In retrospect, this

was a crucial shift. Today, West Germany political science might have to face a major set-back as an academic discipline because it became questioned as a discipline of academic teaching. This rough account should not be read, however, as if this course of events has mainly resulted from the discipline's 'own faults'. The scope for deliberate orientation and reorientation was, from the beginning in the late forties, very much determined by external conditions.

The institutionalisation of West German political science as a university discipline was a result of the deep ruptures of German politics and society, and the course of the discipline has been largely shaped by the development of West German socio-politics since 1945. The call for a genuine political science to be introduced into the academic system was, firstly, a response to the failure of the First Republic (1919-1933), to the perversion of German politics and society during the 'Third Reich' (1933-1945), and to the breakdown of the German state in 1945. Secondly, the discipline's foundation was claimed to be a vital contribution to building up a truly democratic order. Both the retrospective and the prospective lines of argument were directly applied to the political-academic field: for the proponents of a new political science discipline, the German academic system in general and the social and political sciences in particular had been co-responsible for the German catastrophies and thus could not be trusted to be promoters of democratic change. Very clearly, the plans and demands to create a new and special 'science of politics' were advanced as a major contribution to a necessary reform of the academic system. The problem was not if and how 'politics' could be a matter of academic concern; the objective was to guarantee a **responsible** and **competent** concern with 'politics' and to secure that academia would not hinder or even counteract democratic development again. From the very beginning the attempts to establish the new discipline were staged as a deliberate challenge to the existing academic disciplines. Self-confidently, political science was conceived of as being, of having to be, an oppositional discipline and not just another complementation to an expanding circle of political and social sciences.

This self-confidence rooted in several convictions and was supported by several factors. The founders and promoters were convinced that to build up the **discipline** did not mean to introduce a new **science** still to be substantiated. For substantiation they referred to occidental and European as well as German traditions of political analysis, to the development of academic political studies in other countries, notably the United States, and especially to advances in the conceptualisation and theorisation of politics achieved in Germany until 1933 and continued, under the conditions of emigration, by German scholars who, in many cases, were able to contribute substantially to the progression of political science abroad. Reference to political science abroad played a dominant role but, in the view of the proponents, the argument that the West German discipline could build on outstanding former works of German scholars was even more important. The fact that many of these scholars had been, in the German academic community until 1933, in a rather peripheral position, and all the more the fact that many of them finally were forced into emigration, without any remarkable resistance by the universities, strengthened political science promoters after 1945 in their conviction that the foundation of the discipline would be much more an **institutional reform** of faculties and universities than merely an academic event of theoretical discourse and progress. At the same time, this reform was seen as a precondition of breaking the established rules, conventions and informal networks which had dominated recruitment and promotion until 1933/45 and did not cease thereafter. Also in **personnel** terms, the new political science discipline was to be an alternative! (And, in fact, the discipline's staff since the late 1940s can hardly be blamed

for the NS - personnel continuities from 1933/45 which occurred heavily in many other disciplines, to some extent even in sociology which, like political science, claimed to be a distinct 'discipline of and for democracy' after 1945).

Initially, the efforts for building up a special political science were favoured by the socio-political and educational-political constellations of that time but very soon the emerging discipline had to face serious obstacles. The academic proponents were supported by political forces from the West German parties, notably the Social Democrats, and from the Western occupation authorities, especially the Americans. This 'coalition' combined the objectives of German promoters of a special political science with American notions of 're-education', the latter to be seen in the context of initiatives and activities in the politico-cultural field like the UNESCO-conference of 1950 on 'Contemporary Political Science'. Although this 'coalition' was able to push forward its case it proved also to be a limited alliance, a 'coalition' only in some points. Neither in the arena of West German party politics nor in Western occupation policy programmes did the university system become a subject of rigorous reform measures. On the one hand, the struggle for a new political science was backed, on the other hand and at the same time the universities which only changed by adaptation to the new socio-political situation were not touched in their traditional and principal structures. Vis-a-vis the universities and their disciplines political science still had to struggle for recognition.

In contrast to later talk to the effect that the new discipline's foundation had occurred parallel to the foundation of the Federal Republic (which was formally constituted in 1949) its emergence was a laborious process. West German political science was not introduced into the academic system by or as a result of a clear-cut decision - it had to be developed and established step by step. Evidently, the most significant steps were achieved on the terrain of academic teaching. Two lines of development have to be discerned: the introduction of new chairs for politics at university level and the foundation of academies (or colleges) for politics outside and below the academic status of universities. Some of the new chairs were decided already in the late forties when there was much concern to induce universities to develop programmes for a more comprehensive civic education. Initially, the proponents of a political science claimed 'politics' should become a compulsory element in the study course of each student whatever his or her main subjects. At least, 'politics' should be assigned a prominent role in all sorts of a 'studium generale', widely discussed in the immediate postwar years. In many cases, however, it took several years to get the new chair-holders appointed. As time passed by, the general motivation of universities to promote a 'studium generale' also had calmed down. Political science at universities now had to (and could) wholly concentrate on the development of its still rudimentary institutional shape. For substantiation of this objective, however, the major non-university academy for politics, the **Hochschule für Politik** at Berlin, should prove to be the pace-maker. It was its integration into Free University of Berlin which finally established West German political science as an academic discipline of equal rank to other social and political sciences.

The German Academy for Politics which was re-founded in 1948 and started its work early in 1949 began as an institution for what might be called higher adult education, however on the basis of a regular study scheme (full studentship required participation in lectures/classes on every working-day's evening during four semiannual terms, leading to a diploma examination). But what had started as an offer for further education soon developed into a truly academic institution: by stages the study scheme was extended to 4 years, and the examination provisions subsequently were

adapted to university standards; consequently the Academy's graduates became accepted by the Free University as doctoral students. When, in 1959, the Academy was transformed into an institute at this university, it not only could add a fully-fledged study scheme to the latter but also could provide the emerging discipline of political science with a standard model of an academic teaching programme and a shining example for academic recognition.

To some extent, the Berlin institute's departure from further education and the academisation of its study scheme were due to a propensity, both of staff and students, to gain a university-like status in the first place, then a university status, for themselves. But the course of events also followed from deliberate policies to promote the establishment of the discipline within the university system. The founders of the Berlin Academy had been most vigorously engaged in the propagation of a new 'science of politics' and played a dominant role in the foundation of the Association for the Science of Politics in 1951 and in the activities of this organisation which later was called German Association of Political Science. For them, and also for other proponents, it was quite clear that the new discipline, apart from its contributions to the 'studium generale', had to constitute itself via the development of comprehensive teaching programmes and examination schemes.

The 'founding fathers' (there were no 'founding mothers') soon recognised that the general educational thrust of the new discipline had to be complemented by, if not changed towards, specific references to the training aspect of the teaching programmes, ie to the employment prospects of future graduates. This would not have been such a problem if graduates had been anticipated merely to add new positions to the labour market, eg as party and trade union functionaries or as teachers in adult education, or to add new qualifications to professions which traditionally do not have a structured profile in terms of recruitment like journalism. In these cases, training could be expected to occur mainly 'on the job'. And there was no problem with regard to those students (notably in the discipline's early years) who studied the subject for further education, to complement their professional knowledge for jobs already taken. In fact, for these professions and cases, a comprehensive teaching programme would have sufficed even if it did not develop towards university standards. But, as mentioned earlier, the intentions of the new discipline were much more ambitious. In particular, political science graduates should contribute to breaking the traditional predominance of jurists in the upper ranks of the German civil service, an objective to transform the 'legalistic' attitude patterns of state bureaucracy and to dissolve the traditional power of the jurist profession in German society and politics in general. As this profession had been, on the whole, rather conservative, if not reactionary, to break the 'jurist's monopoly' was a concern which had clear political motives and was expressed quite explicitly. Similar criticisms and objectives were advanced with regard to the professions of school teachers, especially Gymnasium teachers (secondary schools, similar to the British grammar schools). At best, teaching politics had been neglected, but far too often it had been misguided. Participation of the new discipline in teachers' training schemes would be indispensable.

In both cases, political science was fighting on two fronts, against the vocational professions and against the academic disciplines in charge of the training of these professions. In the first case, political science lost. Surely, it did not break the 'jurist's monopoly' in public administration: on the contrary, the percentage of eg Berlin graduates appointed to civil service posts, declined steadily in the 1950s. And those who succeeded in entering the civil service mostly did so not via normal recruitment procedures. At the end of the fifties the German Association for Political

