

No luck in the Russell Archives

by Kenneth Blackwell

THERE IS EVIDENCE that Russell wrote at least three syllabi and a leaflet before the First World War which have never turned up, either in the Archives or in other collections. The syllabi were all for courses of lectures which he gave. Bibliographical descriptions of them follow. It seems fairly certain that at least the three syllabi were written, but as no copies have turned up and there are no definite references to some of the items in printed form, it is a little doubtful that they were all published. The most important of the syllabi is that of the lectures on free trade in 1904. Very little is known of the content of this series of lectures. Rivalling it in importance is the syllabus of lectures on theory of knowledge in 1914. Discovery of this syllabus would, it is hoped, aid scholars in understanding the nature of the "paralysis" inflicted upon Russell by Wittgenstein in the summer of 1913. The syllabus might indicate how he altered his theory of judgment following Wittgenstein's objection to the theory as it was presented in the unpublished book, "Theory of Knowledge". As for the women's suffrage leaflet, it is by no means certain that it was even written.

Some effort has been made to locate copies of these writings, but the effort has not been exhaustive. Discoverers of any of these writings will have the reward of knowing that they have added something new to the extant corpus of Russell's writings. If you think you would like to make a try at finding any one of them, write to me and I will tell you the avenues I have explored so far.

A1

[SYLLABUS OF LECTURES ON GERMAN SOCIAL
DEMOCRACY] 1896

[Syllabus of lectures on German social democracy]. [London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 1896]. 4? pp.

The lectures were delivered in February and March 1896 (A2a, p. v). The first mention of the syllabus is in a letter to Russell from Sidney Webb on 4 December 1895; Webb comments that the syllabus is "first-rate". Copies of the syllabus were to be distributed with the *Fabian News* of February 1896 (v. 5, pp. 45, 46).

A6

[SYLLABUS OF LECTURES ON FREE TRADE] 1904

The *Westminster Gazette* of 6 January 1904 noted that: "The first lectures of the newly-organized Free Trade Educational Committee . . . will be delivered by the Hon. Bertrand Russell, beginning on Friday, January 15th, at 6 p.m., at the New Reform Club, 10, Adelphi-terrace, Strand. Tickets of admission, for which no charge is made, will be sent on application to Miss [Ivy] Pretious [later Tennyson], hon. secretary, at the above address, together with a full syllabus of these lectures." For additional information on the lectures, see R. A. Rempel, "From Imperialism to Free Trade: Couturat, Halévy and the Development of Russell's First Crusade", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, forthcoming July 1979.

A8

[CAMBRIDGE MEN'S LEAGUE FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE] 1908

The inaugural meeting of the Cambridge University Men's League for Women's Suffrage was held in Trinity College on 28 November 1907. A. N. Whitehead was elected President. "Those present decided that the work of the Society should be mainly educational, and that there should be no public meetings for the time being. Since that date the Society has grown to more than double its original size, though no organized propaganda has as yet been executed. The Hon. Bertrand Russell had promised to write a short pamphlet to be circulated throughout the University' . . . [The Secretary,] Mr. [J.] Brooke [of Emmanuel College] further informs us that the constitution of the new Society provides for its immediate affiliation to the central body of the Men's League as soon as the University, as a whole, has been officially informed of the new Society's existence by the circulation of Mr. Russell's pamphlet" (*Women's Franchise*, Lon., 1 [20 Feb. 1908], 394). We cannot, from the above, be certain that the pamphlet was actually written and distributed.

A13

[SYLLABUS OF LECTURES ON THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE] 1914

Russell was engaged to give lecture courses on Theory of Knowledge and Logic at Harvard University in the spring of 1914. On 9 November 1913 he sent Ralph Barton Perry, chairman of Harvard's Department of Philosophy, a "syllabus" of his Theory of Knowledge lectures; Perry acknowledged receipt on 1 December 1913. Elizabeth Ramsden Eames draws attention, in the Introduction to her forthcoming edition of *Theory of Knowledge: the 1913 Manuscript*, to the remark in Russell's letter that section B of his lectures "will be shorter than it should be because I cannot arrive at satisfactory views on the subjects concerned." She provides evidence for thinking section B was to cover theory of judgment. It is not known whether the syllabus was intended to be printed and distributed, or whether it was merely for the use of Perry, who was to teach Russell's course until he arrived; in the former case, distribution of the syllabus would probably have taken place in 1914.

The Bertrand Russell Archives