

Forum for History of Human Science NEWSLETTER

No. 1 - Summer 1989

The Forum for History of Human Science (FHHS) is a new organization that has been formed to promote scholarship in the history of the social and behavioral sciences. "Human science" is broadly defined, and encompasses anthropology, economics, geography, history, linguistics, political science, psychiatry, psychology, sociology, and statistics, as well as aspects of the biological and physical sciences, medicine, education, law, and philosophy. The primary aim of the organization is to foster research and education in the history of human science and to encourage communication among scholars, scientists, and others working in the area.

A preliminary meeting to discuss organizational goals and strategies was held during the joint History of Science Society (HSS)/ American Historical Association conference in December 1988 in Cincinnati, Ohio. A seven-member Steering Committee was elected there, with Jim ^{James} Capshew, University of Maryland, to serve as chair, and planning is now underway for FHHS sponsored activities at the 1989 HSS meeting (see announcement below). HSS has recently adopted bylaws for Interest Groups and FHHS will take steps to achieve this status in the belief that historians of science, who have traditionally emphasized the natural sciences, and historians of human sciences share many scholarly concerns, and that such affiliation will be mutually beneficial.

Membership is open to interested individuals; dues are \$10 a year. Please make checks payable to FHHS and direct them and any inquiries to Laurel Furumoto, FHHS Corresponding Secretary, Department of Psychology, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA 02181; telephone (617) 235-0320, ext. 3020 (messages ext. 3019).

FHHS Session and Business Meeting--Gainesville, FL, Oct. 26-29, 1989

Coinciding with the History of Science Society annual meeting in Gainesville, Florida this fall, FHHS will be hosting a session on **Subjectivity and Pluralism in the Human Sciences at the Turn of the Century**. Participants will include Elazar Barkan (Harvard University), "Primitives' Rationality: The Challenge of Pluralism"; Henrika Kuklick (University of Pennsylvania), "Mind or Minds: Disciplinary Differentiation in American Social Science"; and David Leary (University of New Hampshire), "The Psychologist's Dilemma: To Subject the Self to Science -- or Science to the Self?". John Brooks (University of Indiana) will chair the session and Robert Richards (University of Chicago) will serve as commentator. FHHS will also hold a business meeting and social hour during the HSS meeting on Saturday night, Oct. 28, at 8 PM.

Steering

FHHS - Organizing Committee

James Capshew (chair)
133 E Street SE
Washington, DC 20003
(Department of Psychology, *History*
University of Maryland)

Laurel Furumoto (corresponding secretary)
(see address above)

John Brooks (recording secretary)
409 North Park Ave.
Bloomington, IN 47401

Ben Harris (treasurer)
Psychology Department
University of Wisconsin -- Parkside
Kenosha, WI 53141

Tim Alborn (at large)
History of Science Department
Science Center 235
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA 02138

Elazar Barkan (at large)
Social Studies
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA 02138

Jack Pressman (at large)
Dept. of History of Health Sciences
Univ. of California--San Francisco
Room U-464 Box 0726
San Francisco, CA 94143

Sources in the History of Human Science

One of the proposed functions of the Forum for History of Human Science is to encourage cross-communication among people doing historical work in specialized branches of the behavioral and social sciences. One way of accomplishing that aim is to promote a working literacy among such people in those areas of the history of human sciences that fall outside their respective specialties. In that spirit, members of the Forum's Steering Committee will be providing bibliographical essays, of which the following on the history of economics is the first. These "scouting reports" are intended as initial steps toward more meaningful communication, not as the last word on the existing secondary literature. It is hoped that they will prove useful for those desiring to inform their own work by building bridges to neighboring fields, for those planning survey courses on the history of human sciences, or for those advising students who are working on a subject outside their specialty. Taken together, they should also adequately introduce historians of natural science to various subjects relating to the human sciences. Future issues of the FHHS Newsletter will extend the range of the survey beyond the field discussed here, as well as appending relevant sources to such accounts when necessary.

History of Economics

Historians seeking entry into the "dismal science" of economics will encounter an available supply of secondary resources that is far from dismal in terms of quantity but more mixed, for their purposes, in terms of accessibility. They will mainly encounter works written by and for economists, serving a number of purposes including the clarification of points of analytic detail, methodological disputes, and professional genealogy. Given this range, the style and scope of sources in the history of economics can vary from exceedingly technical and narrow to engaging and broad.

Josef Schumpeter's classic *History of Economic Analysis* (1954) set the trend of reaching back into history to defend a positive, "scientific" methodological stance, comparable to the "internalist" approach in the history of science. This mammoth, encyclopaedic work, which tends to detach economists' ideas from their broader context in order to analyze them from a modern perspective, established the starting point for one major line of research and debates in the history of economic thought. Subsequent authors who have taken a similar approach while disagreeing with Schumpeter's particulars include Hollander (1973, 1979, 1985) and Stigler (1965), as well as most writers of article-length studies. Historians with little or no background in economics will encounter difficulty comprehending these sources and will likely find them less relevant to their purposes.

Unlike their counterparts in many of the physical sciences, economists have often also turned to history to criticize aspects of their discipline. This trend dates back to the first English-speaking monograph devoted exclusively to the history of economics by J.K. Ingram (1888). Ingram was a leading proponent of the historical school of economics then engaged in hearty dispute with the classical orthodoxy (on the historical school see Koot (1987)). More recent examples of histories of economics written primarily as critiques of contemporary theory include Dobb (1973), Meek (1967), and Deane (1978). More popular sources like Galbraith (1987) also fit this category. While generally more accessible than technical "internalist" sources, the general historian must take greater than usual care to account for the methodological agenda of such writers.

Out of these two conflicting, yet similarly internalist approaches developed a set of more contextual studies, starting some thirty years ago with Mark Blaug's *Ricardian*

Economics (1958). Work by Winch (1965, 1969), O'Brien (1970, 1975), Maloney (1985), and Schabas (1989), among others, has substantially added to this approach. Combining biographical background with broader social and intellectual themes, such writers have opened the way for a more thorough understanding of how economic thought fit into the wider world of the nineteenth century. Many of them, while still schooled in economics, have also applied training in intellectual or economic history to their work. Non-economists who have added to a growing number of contextual studies in history of economics include Appleby (1978), Berg (1980), Hilton (1988), and Semmel (1970).

As with the history of other human sciences, specialized journals devoted to the study of the history of economics are relatively recent phenomena. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the first and most important journal of that type, *History of Political Economy*. Over the years *HOPE* has devoted roughly equal space to technical, contextual, and archival studies, with a generally high standard of quality in each area. Of particular interest to the historian of science is the special issue (1972) devoted to the "marginal revolution." Newer specialized journals include *Economics and Philosophy*, *Research in the History of Economic Thought and Methodology*, *Perspectives in the History of Economic Thought*, and the *History of Economic Thought Newsletter*. Relevant historical articles can also be found, with some digging, in journals such as *Economica*, *Oxford Economic Papers*, *The Manchester School*, *The Journal of Law and Economics*, and *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*. A useful series published by Croom Helm, entitled *Contributions to Political Economy* (Wood 1982-), compiles articles from various sources on a large number of major economists.

Future prospects in the history of economics, allowing for a continued ebb and flow of internalist debate, point toward more explicit links being forged between economics and economic history (see Blaug (1986)), more information about non-British schools of economics (see, e.g., Furner (1975) on America, Meek (1963) on the Physiocrats, and Welch (1984) on the *Economistes*), and work on economics as it entered the twentieth century.

Tim Alborn

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