

Foreword

Commemorating Philosophy

My father-in-law, who's ninety-four, is still a keen philatelist and subscribes to the *Gibbons Stamp Monthly Magazine*. He recently drew my attention to an interesting article in the September issue of the magazine this year. The article was 'Philosophy and philately: has Britain failed to acknowledge its philosophers on stamps?' by Dr Nick Hervey. The article, which was well illustrated with stamps carrying photos of philosopher from different parts of the world, made the point that while all nations honour their philosophers, Britain was lacking in this respect.

The intensive research by Dr Hervey showed that the only occasion on which a British philosopher made it to a stamp face was in 1972. The stamp was issued in India and not Britain. It was honouring Bertrand Russell two years after his death. Dr Hervey explained that it was issued as 'a reflection of his role as Chair of India League which campaigned for Independence of India.' I checked this on the internet and found that Russell 'was the Chairman of India League's Committee for Action from 1932 to 1939. The political campaigner and journalist presided over meetings and wrote the preface of the report "The Condition of India"'.

Doing my own search, I found that the case of philosophers who were honoured by the Queen is slightly better. A number of modern philosophers made it to the honours list. I understand that the first philosopher to be awarded the Order of Merit was Bradley (1924). The same honour went to Samuel Alexander (1930), Russell (1949), and Isaiah Berlin (1971). Iris Murdoch was made a Dame in 2008 for her services to literature, although she was a philosopher. Recently Sarah Broadie was made Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 2019. She is Professor of Moral Philosophy at St. Andrews University, Scotland. This is of course not a comprehensive list, but it gives an indication of some recognition of philosophy, although the case of philosophy has been diluted in some of these awards by combining them with other considerations.

Part of the problem is that philosophers in this country are academics and not popular intellectuals, as is the case in France, for example. Philosophers may need to do more to popularise their profession in Britain than they have previously done.

Finally, I am pleased to introduce this volume of *The Wednesday* to our readers. I hope that it popularises the cause of philosophy and brings to the attention of readers many philosophers and philosophies across time, as well as ideas, poetry and art.

The Editor