

## XVth INTERNATIONAL PHILOSOPHY CONFERENCE

Varna 16 - 22 September, 1973

1877 delegates from nearly every country in the world attended the Fifteenth International Philosophy Conference, which took place at Varna from the 16th to the 22nd of September, 1973. The Conference had as its general theme, «Man, Science and Technology», although in actual fact the papers that were read and discussed related to all branches of philosophy. Emphasis was laid upon the epistemology of the positive sciences, the methodology of the sciences of man (especially psychology and sociology), ethics, the philosophies of art, history, religion and law, and upon certain areas of symbolic logic and semantic analysis. On the other hand, a relatively limited place was afforded to ontological topics, which were examined chiefly from a gnosiological (criteriological?) aspect or in accordance with a generative method in relation to social or even «ideological» functions of ontological concepts.

The philosophical trends that found dominant expression at this conference were phenomenology, represented by P. Ricoeur (France) and others; «pneumatocratic» and theologizing philosophy, represented by a number of delegates from West German, Dutch and Swiss universities, such as A. Mercier and F. Brunner; the philosophy of logic and linguistic analysis, with proponents chiefly from amongst the delegations from Great Britain and the United States of America, such as A. J. Ayer, P. Strawson and others; and marxism. Marxism was advanced particularly by the delegates of the Eastern nations, while the directions that it has taken in the Western world — Sartre's «Critique of Dialectical Reason», the Frankfurt school its Catholic interpreters — received very much less attention. Of the last-named group, the Rev. G. Welter, from the Gregorian University of the Holy See, took part in the conference.

During the first two days four general sessions were devoted to the themes of the philosophy of science, ethics, the philosophy of education and the philosophy of technology. The introductions, and especially the discussions that followed, took on a certain sharpness due to the dogmatism of a few delegates from both Eastern and Western countries, who tended to exclude somewhat arbitrarily methods of approaching the problems that differed from those which they themselves adopted. A similar sort of edge was observed in the discussions of some work-groups, particularly those that had as their theme man and his personal freedom.

For the next three days the members of the conference were divided up into twenty-four work-groups. Thanks to the chairmanship of Professor R. Klibanski, the best organized and the most productive discussions were those of the groups «Language, Reason and Act», «Glossology and Anthropology», «Philosophical Aspects of Psychology» and «Contemporary research in the History of Philosophy». With tact, understanding and effectiveness Professor P. Ricoeur directed the discussions of the group «Human Reason and History», during which Professors E. Moutsopoulos and A. Bagionas read papers on the topics «Can historicity be reduced to categories?» and «World history and human causation according to J. B. Bossuet» respectively.

Apart from the official conference programme, very interesting meetings of members of the World Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP) took place, on the subject of Dialectics. Interesting views were put forward at these sessions by A. J. Ayer (Oxford), who passed judgement upon dialectics using the methods of logical analysis and denied that it was possible of total theories of historical development to have scientific character; A. Schaff (Warsaw), who related dialectics to total historical developments and regarded Ayer's criticisms as clearly and simply formal; and P. Ricoeur (Sorbonne), who maintained that the

object suited to dialectics was personal experience and that its aim was to lead to a description and interpretation of its meaning.

Participants from Greece were Professor I. Theodorakopoulos, with his introduction «Man and Technology»; Professors E. Moutsopoulos and A. Bagionas (who read the papers mentioned above); Mr. Benakis, director of the Center of Research in Greek Philosophy, who delivered a communication on «Contemporary research in Byzantine Philosophy - a general presentation»; and Mrs A. Kelesidou-Galanou and Mrs. M. Dragona-Monachou, associates of the Center, with their papers «Essence and Existence of Man» and «Stoic Philosophers on the Existence of God». Mr Jason Xenakis, of Pierce College, Athens, spoke on the topic «Freedom and the Travelling Philosopher». Miss K. Papoulia of the National Research Foundation also participated.

A volume containing all the introductions and papers in synopsis was distributed, as well as the first two volumes of the Proceedings of the Conference. These first two volumes contain the introductions that were delivered at the general sessions and papers read in the work-groups that had as their theme the philosophy of the sciences, the philosophy of technology and theories of value. Papers read at the remaining work-groups will be included in two subsequent volumes.

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