

Radical Philosophy Twelve

Philosophy Festival

The Radical Philosophy Group will hold a conference at Balliol College, Oxford, on 10, 11, 12 January 1976. The aim of the conference is to enable people to meet and talk with one another on the basis of a common concern with the connections between politics and theory, in the context of the rise of radical theory groups (like the RPG) in the last few years, in England and elsewhere. There will be a combination of workshops and plenary sessions.

A PLENARY SESSIONS

- 1 An opening address indicating the nature and purpose of the Radical Philosophy Group, and of the conference, and situating these in their political and social and theoretical context.
- 2 A presentation by students - possibly on course criticism.
- 3 A closing session on the achievements of the conference: 'What is to be done?'

B WORKSHOPS

Those interested in learning more details about a particular workshop should get in contact with the person(s) concerned, and anyone wishing to organise or contribute to a workshop should contact us. Workshops organised so far fall into two categories: general and text-based.

GENERAL WORKSHOPS

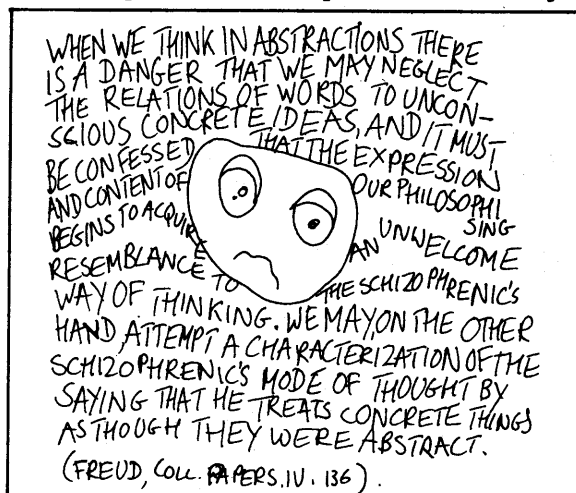
- 1 China
Jonathan Rée will describe the nature and role of philosophy in China since the Cultural Revolution, on the basis of a recent visit.
- 2 Marxism and Psychoanalysis
Sue Lipshitz and Kate Soper will discuss the relationship between Marxism and Psychoanalysis, with particular emphasis on the concepts of fetishism, alienation and repression. It is hoped that this will provide the basis for a comparison of the theories and methods of Marx and Freud in analysing the structures of capitalism and the structures of the unconscious.
Suggested reading:
Freud: *Fetishism* (1927), *Repression* (1915), *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920)
Marx: *Capital I*, chapter 1
H. Marcuse: *Eros and Civilisation*
N. Geras: 'Aspects of Fetishism in Marx's Capital' in *Ideology in Social Science* (ed. Blackburn)
3 'Is Mental Illness a Myth?'
Sean Sayers will compare the psychiatric approach and the psychoanalytic approach, and consider the 'humanistic' (phenomenological-idealist) critique of the concept of mental illness.
Suggested reading:
Freud: *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* and *Studies on Hysteria* (esp. case of Elizabeth von R.)
Kraepelin: *Lectures on Clinical Psychiatry*
Szasz: *Ideology and Insanity*
Sayers: 'The Concept of Mental Illness' (RP5)

4 Sartre and Marxism

(Jonathan Rée) Sartre's *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, which came out in 1960, was an attempt to provide new foundations for a Marxist understanding of history and society, on the basis of a post-existentialist concept of praxis. The book has not been widely read or widely influential, but it can be argued that it has defined and explored the limits within which Marxist theory has operated for fifteen years.

5 Moralism and the Teaching of Moral Philosophy

(Andrew Collier) The formalism of much philosophical ethics as taught in British universities hides a fundamental assumption - that morality is a distinct and uniquely important category of practical reason. But it is possible to challenge this assumption and raise questions which moralism systematically ignores: of the possibility and scope of a non-moral form of practical reasoning; of the repressive function of morality; of politics and morality as alternative practices concerning the



same problems; and of the relevance of the human sciences to practical reasoning.

Suggested reading:

Engels: *Ludwig Feuerbach and the outcome of Classical German Philosophy*

Nietzsche: *Twilight of the Idols*

W. Reich: *The Sexual Revolution* (esp. ch.1)

6 Contradiction and Dialectic

(Roy Edgley). Roy Edgley writes: 'The current crisis in world affairs is also an intellectual crisis, which at its most abstract and philosophical level centres on the concepts of reason and science. The dominant 'value-free' versions of these developed in Western capitalist society have been articulated in analytical philosophy and Anglo-Saxon philosophy of science. The Marxist alternative is dialectic, and its embodiment scientific socialism. This workshop will discuss some ideas on these topics roughly outlined in my paper "Science, Social Science, and Socialist Science: Reason as Dialectic", which I'll send to anybody who writes to me at Sussex University.'

Further suggested reading:

Marx: *Capital I*, part I, chap.1, section 4.

Engels: *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*

Goldmann: 'Is there a Marxist Sociology?' (RP1)

Popper: 'What is Dialectic?' (*Mind*, 1940, re-printed in *Conjectures and Refutations*)
 Blackburn (ed.): *Ideology in Social Science* (articles by Geras, Godelier and Colletti)
 Bottomore: 'Karl Marx: Sociologist or Marxist?' (in his *Sociology as Social Criticism*)

7 Economics

John Taylor and Paul Soper will present a critique of different explanations of the present economic crisis in Britain

8 Carlos Castaneda

(Peter Somerville) Peter Somerville writes: 'I should like to concentrate on what I regard as the key elements of don Juan's teaching, namely (1) his ethics, (2) his epistemology, and (3) his metaphysics. (1) is the warrior ethic, which is absolutely crucial for the path of knowledge. I want to examine the nature of this ethic, and to explore its relation to, and function within, different modes of production, its specific difference from other, similar ethics and so on. (2) is his doctrine that mode of life has priority over mode of thought, i.e. the doctrine that meaning and understanding at the level of speaking and conversation are very much determined by the social roles being played and by the forces at work in social reality. This is of course an old doctrine, but it is one to which don Juan gives a special twist, since for him there is no difference between social reality and natural reality, or between social reality and reality in general. (3) is his doctrine of the *tonal* and the *nagual*. Suggested reading:

Castaneda: *The Teachings of Don Juan, A Separate Reality, Journey to Ixtlan and Tales of Power*

9 Alternative technology, the Lucas Aerospace Workers

(David Elliott) David Elliott writes: 'One way to shift the locus of control in society is to confront the status quo with new forms of opposition which it has not yet learnt to accommodate. The current critique of science and technology by radicals is just such a project. Technology is a fundamental part of the capitalist infrastructure and the ideology of scientism and the mythology of use-or-abuse technology provide legitimising mechanisms within the superstructure. But it is not enough to confront the ideology. There must also be a confrontation at the level of control over the use of technology at the practical level. Community amenity group struggles, the alternative technology movement are fine, but tend to be isolated. The recent initiative by the Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards' Committee, who are campaigning for the "right" to work on socially useful and needed technologies in a socially and environmentally appropriate way", represents a dramatic move in the right direction. The combine's attempt to extend collective bargaining to include issues of choice, design and control of products and productive system implies a radical challenge to traditional management prerogatives. And, unlike that of "co-operatives" or "participation" it is a transition strategy which does not involve the workers with managing the system, but stands in opposition to it. There is much to be learnt from the combine's experience, which will doubtless inform the development of our ideological critique and technological practice. But more important, it will provide the organizational base for further struggles.'

10 History

Members of the History Workshop collective will present a workshop, probably on the relationship between history and intellectual history.

GENERAL WORKSHOPS on the following topics are also envisaged

- 11 *Ethnomethodology*
- 12 *Science and Myth*
- 13 *Critique of Technological Society*
- 14 *The Work of Leonard Williams on Ethology*
- 15 *Hegel*
- 16 *The Work of Alfred Sohn-Rethel*

TEXT-BASED WORKSHOPS

17 Feyerabend

(John Krige, Roy Edgley)

Reading: *Against Method* (NLB 1975); 'Against Method' (Minnesota Studies for the Philosophy of Science, vol. IV, 1970); 'How to Defend Society against Science' (RPII)

18 R. D. Laing

(Andrew Collier) Laing's writings are characterised by three things: his attempt to re-think psychoanalytic theory in terms of existential phenomenology; his studies of the family contexts of people labelled as schizophrenic; and his vision of 'micro-politics', a liberation struggle at the level of the small group. His thought raises a philosophical question and a political one: Does psychoanalysis require his programme of conceptual revision? and What is the place of micro-politics in political and ideological struggles generally?

Reading:

R. D. Laing and A. Esterson: *Sanity, Madness and the Family*; *The Politics of the Family*; 'The Obvious' (in *The Dialectics of Liberation*, ed. Cooper)

Peter Sedgwick: 'R. D. Laing: self, symptom and society' (in *Laing and Anti-Psychiatry*, ed. Boyers and Orrill)

Juliet Mitchell: *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (two chapters on Laing)

19 Trevor Pateman

(Trevor Pateman)

Reading: Trevor Pateman: *Language, Truth and Politics* (published by Jean Stroud and Trevor Pateman)

20 I. I. Rubin

(Chris Arthur)

Reading:

Rubin: *Essays on Marx's Labour Theory of Value*
 Chris Arthur is also hoping to make available his own paper on 'Abstract Labour'.

21 Lecourt and Bhaskar

(Alison Assiter)

Reading:

Dominique Lecourt: *Marxism and Epistemology* (NLB)
 Roy Bhaskar: *A Realist Theory of Science* (Books, Leeds)

Accommodation and food are being arranged. Please see the leaflet enclosed in this issue for details or write to Dave Berry, Hertford College, Oxford
 The conference fee is £1 (75p for students)
 Cheques should be made payable to 'Radical Philosophy' and sent to Dave Berry.

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