Theodor OIZERMAN

PROBLEMS OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

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T. I. Oizerman is a Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and author of a number of detailed studies of the history of pre-Marxist, Marxist and contemporary bourgeois philosophy. Several of his books have been translated. The Formation of Marxist Philosophy has been published in German, Japanese, Polish and Hungarian, Alienation as a Historical Category, Basic Stages in the Development of Pre-Marxist Philosophy and The Philosophy of Hegel have also appeared in German, and various other works in English, French, Spanish, Bulgarian, Chinese, Czech and Greek.

Problems of the History of Philosophy is a theoretical inquiry into the process of development of philosophical knowledge which has led naturally to the emergence of the Marxist scientifico-philosophical world view. On the basis of comparative analysis of the philosophical doctrines of past and present the author delineates the specifically philosophical form of knowledge, the nature of philosophical problems, the essence of philosophical controversy, the basic feature of philosophical argumentation and the relationship of philosophy to other forms of social consciousness, and to everyday and historical experience. The divergence of philosophical doctrines and their polarisation into the opposite trends of materialism and idealism is followed step by step. In arguing the objective necessity for the scientifico-philosophical world view, the author traces the changing status of philosophy in the system of scientific knowledge of nature and society, the relationship between philosophy and the specialised sciences, the development of the subject-matter of philosophy, and its ideological content and function.

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by Robert Daglish

Т. ОЙЗЕРМАН

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Introduction

This book is part of much more comprehensive study which the author hopes to complete within the next few years. Even so, though not embracing all the problems implied in the title, it does deal with the specific nature of philosophical knowledge, its substance, form and structure, from historical angle and may, therefore, be described as a historico-philosophical study.

Historico-philosophical studies come in various shapes and sizes. Some of them investigate the development of the philosophical thought of a particular people. Some examine the development of philosophy on a world-historic scale with the philosophical thought of various nations emerging as historical stages in the development of world philosophy as a whole. Some deal with the various branches of philosophy, with the history of epistemology, ontology, dialectics, natural philosophy and ethics, or with certain philosophical trends, schools, the work of individual philosophers, stages of philosophical development, and so on. Each type of inquiry has its specific

task, but all presuppose the solution of the theoretical problems of the history of philosophy. For instance, the problem of contradiction in the history of philosophy cannot, in my view, be satisfactorily solved without a scientific conception of the particular qualities of philosophical problems and how, in particular, philosophy solves them. Moreover, to be able to trace the development of the concept of contradiction in the history of philosophy, one must be clearly aware of the basic features of the philosophical approach to cognition of reality, the ideological function of philosophy, the epistemological and class roots of the various philosophical approaches to the solution of this problem.

The subject of historico-philosophical research is *philosophy*; the problems of historico-philosophical science are *philosophical* problems. These propositions, it seems to me, are quite obvious but, notwithstanding Cicero's remark that proof only belittles the obvious, I believe that they still demand to be proved, theoretically grounded, and this is what a great part of this book is about.

Although no philosophical doctrine can claim to embrace all philosophical questions, there is not a single philosophical problem that does not fall within the scope of historico-philosophical science. Besides which, historico-philosophical science is concerned with problems that are not part of philosophy as such. These are the historical problems of the emergence and development of philosophy, its objective dependence on social conditions, its epistemological roots and so on. Nevertheless, historico-philosophical science is not a "marginal" discipline, its source lies not in the "crossing" of history and philosophy, of

two relatively independent fields of knowledge, but in the objectively conditioned historical process of the development of philosophical knowledge, its critical appreciation and, probably, its self-awareness.

The problems of the history of philosophy arise not because they are outside the competence of both philosophy and history. *Like all philosophical problems, they have been generated by the historical and everyday experience of all mankind, and particularly in the process of cognition—scientific and philosophical.* The historian of philosophy must certainly be a historian in the full sense of the term. But no matter how important it is for him to be scrupulously efficient in investigating the social conditions that give rise to a certain philosophical doctrine, his main task is to understand that doctrine, to appreciate it critically, to show its connection with other philosophical doctrines, a connection that must in some way or other be conditioned by the socio-historical process. Regarded from this standpoint, historico-philosophical science is a specific means of philosophical inquiry, it is the philosophy of philosophy or, to be more concise, metaphilosophy.

It is quite impossible to treat the history of philosophy purely "historically", empirically, without being guided by a broad and flexible "scale of values" derived from the very history of philosophy itself, from the history of man's historical development and his quest for knowledge. Even the application of the term "development" to the history of philosophy makes certain obvious philosophical assumptions, e.g. the assumption that certain irreversible processes of change and progress actually occur in philosophy.

Any attempt to discover an absolute recording system is just as futile in the history of philosophy as in physics. It immediately gives itself away, as a claim to complete impartiality, and no real philosopher can be completely impartial, any more than he can be without his own point of view. The adepts of impartiality ignore the obvious fact that historians of philosophy place different value on one and the same doctrine, and this happens not because they have been remiss in studying their sources and facts or because they have departed from the scientific standards demanded by historiography. The crux of the matter lies much deeper.

No exposition can be a word-for-word repetition of what a particular philosopher wrote. At the very least it will be a retelling in one's own words. But what serious investigator of the historical process of the development of philosophy would confine himself to a mere retelling, which does not usually imply understanding? Understanding and interpretation are inseparable from each other and the student of the history of philosophy must strive for a scientifically objective understanding of his subject, which is quite incompatible with refusal to take up any definite theoretical and, hence, conceptual position. For this reason the demand that one should remain utterly dispassionate in writing the history of philosophy is merely an invitation to remain in disagreement with oneself, with one's theoretical conscience. Science is impossible without criteria of scientificality, but in philosophy and the history of philosophy there is no unanimity on this question. Historico-philosophical science has therefore to work out criteria for the evaluation of philosophical doctrines, proceeding from critical

generalisation of the historico-philosophical process that is at work throughout the world.

It stands to reason that these criteria (and the methods of inquiry they entail) may prove completely unsatisfactory if the historian of philosophy adopts a sectarian philosophical position and assumes, for example, that only Thomas Aquinas created a system of absolute philosophical truths, whereas his great forerunners (with the possible exception of Aristotle) languished in darkness and the philosophers of any later period have merely departed from the true path laid down for them by "Doctor Angelicus".

The philosophy of Marxism, however, does provide a real theoretical basis for a scientific history of philosophy, since it scientifically summarises the whole development of philosophical thought up to the time of the emergence of Marxism and continues to do so as subsequent stages are reached. This also means that dialectical and historical materialism is not only historically but also logically based on the history of philosophy, which critically analyses the manifold conceptions of philosophy and formulates as a deduction from its whole development (and that of scientific cognition in general) the basic premises of dialectical and historical materialism. In this sense, it may be said that the scientific history of philosophy as a theoretical conception of the development of philosophical knowledge is an organic component of the philosophy of Marxism. The concept "philosophy of Marxism" is wider in scope than the concept "dialectical and historical materialism", because it also embraces the scientific history of philosophy as well as certain other philosophical disciplines (ethics, aesthetics, etc.).

Dialectical and historical materialism is fundamentally opposed to any group limitations or narrowness. One has only to recall how the founders of Marxism-Leninism criticised not only vulgar but also metaphysical, mechanistic materialism, and also the anthropological materialism of Feuerbach, or how highly they valued the brilliant ideas contained in the idealist teachings of Plato, Aristotle, Leibnitz, Rousseau and Hegel. From this we realise that Marxism is the philosophy in which objectivity and partisanship are organically united.

The philosophy of Marxism, while rejecting on principle the idea of a perfect and complete philosophical system (absolute science, as Marx called it), is constantly in motion, in development, on the road to new discoveries. It is constantly aware of and grappling with its unsolved problems and, while criticising its ideological opponents, also criticises itself, recognising that it is limited by the boundaries of knowledge achieved not only in the philosophical but also in the general scientific fields. Marxist philosophy is also the history of philosophy, and particularly the history of Marxist philosophy, of its progressive development, a history that provides the theoretical prerequisites and method for the investigation of any philosophical doctrine. Like any system of scientific knowledge, the philosophy of Marxism regards its scientific propositions only as an approximate reflection of reality, as the unity of relative and absolute truth, the latter being understood dialectically, i.e., relative within its own frame of reference. The significance of dialectical and historical materialism for the scientific history of philosophy is not to be found in any claim to offer the history of philosophy cut-and-

dried solutions and formulas, but in its ability to guide inquiry into the development of philosophy along a truly scientific path.

Since it applies what Engels called the "logical method", historico-philosophical science is itself a philosophical theory. It investigates such specific features of philosophy as the forms of cognition, its basic types, structure, problems, and development, its relation to other forms of social consciousness (particularly science, art, religion), the nature of philosophical controversy, change in the subject of philosophy and the affirmation of scientific philosophical knowledge, thus answering the question of the nature of philosophical knowledge.

If the basic question of any philosophy is ultimately the question of the relation of the spiritual to the material, is not the question "What is philosophy?" the basic question of historico-philosophical science?

The significance of this apparently elementary question becomes obvious to anyone who can perceive even in the most general form the distinction between philosophy and the specialised sciences, and who asks himself why different philosophical systems existed and continue to exist, while there are no fundamentally different, incompatible systems of mathematics or physics.

This is, of course, not merely a matter of definition, which would be of purely formal significance, but of making a critical generalisation of the development of philosophy, which to no small degree determines its social status and scientific prestige and enables it to solve correctly problems that were posed by philosophy in the past but still confront it today. Hence we reach the

direct conclusion that the major problem of historico-philosophical science is the problem of philosophy. To understand this amazing phenomenon of the spiritual life of society, the history of mankind's intellectual development, to understand this specific form of knowledge and self-knowledge, its necessity, its irremovability, its not immediately obvious but ever growing significance in the intellectual development of the individual, to discover its role in the ideological struggle which today, more than ever in the past, is a struggle between world views, to disclose the potential possibilities of philosophy and how to realise them—all this is an urgent necessity not only for the historians of philosophy but also for anyone to whom the question of the meaning of his own life does not appear utterly pointless.

Philosophy has suffered a strange fate. A synonym of science in the ancient world, it now seeks to achieve recognition as a science on a level with newly emerged sciences of modern times. How has this come about? Is it because philosophy, on account of its great age, has fallen behind its younger comrades and is no longer fit to compete in the Marathon of knowledge? Or perhaps there is no riddle at all and the answer is simply that what was a science in ancient times cannot by its very nature be a science today? As Francis Bacon remarked, the ancients were but children while we are people of a new age, entering upon our maturity. But it is doubtful whether the concept of maturity can be applied unconditionally to the human race at any stage of its development. Man always has everything ahead of him, in the future. There is, admittedly, another explanation of this delicate situation, tentatively proposed by Windelband. Is not philosophy, he asks, in the position of Shakespeare's King Lear, who gave away all his possessions to his daughters and was himself cast out into the street as a useless and troublesome old man?

At all events, philosophy now has to win its right of citizenship in the republic of science, although it has formally never been deprived of this right. This is an inner necessity for philosophy, a necessity that it must feel in the face of any other science, no matter how restricted its field of reference.

Philosophy's right to full citizenship is called in question first of all by everyday consciousness, secondly by certain exponents of the specialised sciences and, thirdly, by some philosophers. The everyday arguments usually boil down to the assertion that philosophy does not inspire confidence because it does not always take into account the demands of common sense. In the past many representatives of the positive sciences supported this commonplace argument, but nowadays, since the creation of the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics, they are more inclined to agree with Engels, who wrote: "Only sound common sense, respectable fellow that he is, in the homely realm of his own four walls, has very wonderful adventures directly he ventures out into the wide world of research."[1]

Some scientists reproach philosophy for not being able to answer the questions that are put to it or, worse still, for answering questions with questions to which the specialised sciences, thorough though they may be, are unable to find an answer. All these questions (whether they are

[1] F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1969, p. 31.

asked by science or philosophy), are difficult ones but it at least can be said in defence of philosophy that the people who ask the questions which it fails to answer cannot answer these questions either. On the other hand, if philosophy, instead of answering a question, asks one itself, we should consider whether the question is well formulated. If it is, philosophy has already made some contribution to the problem.

Philosophy's most dangerous enemies, however, are to be found within its own ranks. The biggest hue and cry was raised by the neo-positivists, who declared all the historically evolved problems of philosophy illusory and non-existent in reality, while the historico-philosophical process was presented as a history of continuous misapprehension. In making their claim, the neo-positivists failed to notice the fact that the mistakes of the great philosophers were great mistakes, and the neo-positivist campaign against philosophy has ended in inglorious defeat. They themselves have been compelled to admit the unavoidability of "metaphysical" (philosophical) problems. The problems they called pseudoproblems have turned out to be real problems to which neo-positivism has found no positive approach.

The neo-positivists acquired partially deserved influence with their special studies in logic, which have no direct bearing on their obviously subjectivist and agnostic philosophical teaching. The crisis of neo-positivism is largely due to an awareness of this now quite obvious fact. Neo-positivism was opposed by the natural scientists, including some who for a time had been under its influence. This is a highly important fact because neo-positivism, unlike other idealist doctrines, as I. G. Petrovsky notes, "parasitises to a great extent

on the actual achievements of modern science".[1] The statements by Albert Einstein, Max Plank, Louis de Broglie, Max Born and other outstanding men of science, criticising neo-positivist scepticism and substantiating materialist (and essentially dialectical) views, have convincingly demonstrated that philosophy is vital to theoretical natural science. The relevance of philosophical problems has thus been testified by non-philosophers who have devoted themselves to philosophical problems and made a considerable contribution to the development of philosophical thought. This naturally opens up promising vistas before the historians of philosophy.

In the past 10-15 years Marxist-Leninist historico-philosophical science has been enriched by numerous researches. The six-volume *History of Philosophy* (Moscow, 1957-1965) was the first attempt to make a global study of the development of all philosophy from the time of its inception to the present day. Naturally this collective work, in which many Marxist historians of philosophy from other countries besides the Soviet Union participated, sums up a considerable number of specialised historico-philosophical studies. The numerous works of Soviet historians of philosophy, concerning separate philosophical trends, schools and systems, undoubtedly contribute not only to historico-philosophical science but also to the development of dialectical and historical materialism. "At the present time," P. N. Fedoseyev writes, "the transition from a predominantly descriptive stage of historico-philosophical science to

[1] I. G. Petrovsky, "In Lieu of Introduction" in *Philosophy of Marxism and Neo-positivism*, Moscow, 1963, p. 4 (in Russian).

analytical inquiry into the logic of the development of philosophical thought is becoming increasingly evident."[1] All this paves the way for the systematic theoretical investigation of the fundamental problems of the historico-philosophical process.

Our task has been not only to solve the problems confronting us to the best of our ability but also to pose problems regardless of whether we ourselves can solve them at present. A common dogmatic distortion of the essence of philosophy is to be found in the view that the questions proposed by philosophy are far less important than the answers it supplies. On the other hand, when scientific Marxist-Leninist philosophy is under discussion, the dogmatist imagines that this philosophy has already answered all the questions ever posed in the past, and that one has only to wait for science and practice to pose new questions, which will immediately receive the right answers. In reality, however, by no means all the questions raised by philosophy's previous development can be solved at the present time. What is more, philosophy does not merely wait for questions to be fired at it from outside. Philosophy itself asks questions. It puts them not only to itself but to the sciences and to any sphere of conscious human activity. If in this book I have succeeded, even to some extent, in posing questions that for various reasons have escaped the general notice—questions that deserve to be discussed regardless of whether we can answer them or not—my labours will not have been in vain.

[1] P. N. Fedoseyev, "Philosophy and the Modern Epoch" in *October Revolution and Scientific Progress*, Moscow, 1967, Vol. II, p. 380 (in Russian).

Dialectical and historical materialism is a developing philosophical science in which, as in any science, there are unsolved problems. They should not be left in the background. Rather, we should draw the researcher's attention to them. And the historian of philosophy, since he is a representative of dialectical and historical materialism, naturally seeks in his specialised researches not merely to illuminate philosophy's historical past but to contribute to the solution of its present-day problems or, at least, their correct and constructive positing.

I am fully prepared to admit that although I have done my best to substantiate them, some of my conclusions are controversial. But I have also assumed that some of the propositions that are so well established in textbooks on philosophy and which, presumably owing to constant repetition, have come to appear infallible, are in fact by no means infallible and also require discussion.

Any inquiry, unlike a work of popular science, is published so that it may be discussed. This is my attitude in publishing the present work, in which I feel I have considered only questions that deserve scientific discussion.

Chapter One
THE LOVE OF WISDOM. ORIGIN OF THE NOTION OF "PHILOSOPHY"

1. SECULARISATION OF "DIVINE" WISDOM

In the days when the ancient Greeks first coined the term "philosophy" there was presumably no disagreement as to what should be considered wisdom. Anything incomprehensible, which had not existed before (such as philosophy), fell into the category of things which, in the tradition of mythology, were regarded as perfectly obvious and beyond all argument or doubt.

Wisdom was attributed to the gods (or at least to some of them). Athene was worshipped as the goddess of wisdom. She was portrayed in sculpture with an owl perched at her feet, the owl being regarded as a sacred bird, presumably because it could see in the dark.

What men then regarded as wisdom was knowledge of things of which they were ignorant or could not understand, particularly prophecy. According to mythology, the gods endowed the oracles and other chosen individuals with wisdom. Like all outstanding human virtues, wisdom was the gift of the gods. In Book One of *The Iliad* Homer says of Calchas, the supreme augur:

. . . . . and next
Rose Calchas, son of Thestor, and the chief
Of augurs, one to whom were known things past
And present and to come. He through the art
Of divination, which Apollo gave,
Had guided the ships of Greece. . . .

The mythological view of the world, which immediately preceded the first philosophical doctrines of Ancient Greece, was the ideology of the primitive communal system. The development of mythology, its transformation into a kind of "artistic religion", the emergence of theogonic, cosmogonic and cosmological notions, which were subsequently naturalistically interpreted by the first Greek philosophers, reflected the basic stages of development of the pre-class society. In this society the individual possessed no world view of his own. Philosophy could not yet exist because, as A. F. Losev has written, "here it was the tribe that thought, that set its goals, and there was no obligation upon the individual to think, because the tribe was the element of life and the element of life worked in the individual spontaneously, i.e., instinctively, not as consciously articulated thought".[1]

The emergence of ancient philosophy coincides with the period of the formation of class society, when mythology was still the dominant form of social consciousness. In fact, the first philosophers were philosophers just because they came into conflict with the traditional mythological view of the world.

While mythology still held sway over men's minds they never thought of asking themselves

[1] A. F. Losev, *History of Ancient Esthetics*, Moscow, 1963, p. 107 (in Russian).

the question, "What is wisdom?". Mythology answered this question, and many others besides, in the most unequivocal manner. The rise of philosophy replaced myths and oracular prophecy with man's own thinking about the world and human life, independent of any extraneous authority. People appeared who could astonish others by reasoning about things that no one had ever thought about or dared to call in question before. These people were at first, no doubt, regarded as madmen. They called themselves philosophers, i.e., lovers of wisdom. First came the philosophers, then the name "philosopher" appeared, and after that the term "philosophy".

Thales maintained that everything which existed had originated from water. According to Anaximenes, not only all things but even the gods themselves had come from air. The cosmos, Heraclitus taught, had given birth to both mortals and immortals. These assertions were revolutionary acts that established a critical mode of thinking independent of mythological and religious tradition.

We do not know whether the contemporaries of the early Greek philosophers actually believed that the Milky Way was the sprinkled milk of Hera. But when Democritus declared it to be no more than a conglomeration of stars, we may be sure that most people thought this was blasphemy. Anaxagoras, who claimed that the Sun was a huge mass of rock, brought persecution on his head.

The fact that the teachings of the early Greek thinkers were still not free from elements of mythology should not be allowed to overshadow their fundamental anti-mythological tendency. Myth, said Hegel, is an expression "of the impotence of thought that cannot establish itself independently".[1] The development of philosophy signified a progressive departure from mythology, particularly the mythological notion of the supernatural origin of wisdom. It was for this reason, as Hegel wrote, that "the place of the oracle was now taken by the self-consciousness of every thinking person".[2]

It is hard to say who first called himself a philosopher. Probably it was Pythagoras. According to Diogenes Laertius, Leôn, tyrant of Phliontes, asked Pythagoras who he was and Pythagoras replied, "I am a philosopher". The word being unfamiliar to his questioner, Pythagoras offered an explanation of the neologism. "He compared life to the Olympic Games," Diogenes Laertius writes. "There were three types among the crowd attending the Games. Some came for the contest, some to trade and some, who were wise, to satisfy themselves by observation. So it was in life. Some were born to be slaves of glory or the temptation of riches, others who were wise sought only truth."[3]

This account suggests that Pythagoras interpreted wisdom as something reserved for the chosen few. According to some other sources, however, he maintained that only the gods possessed wisdom. At all events, the teaching of Pythagoras reveals only a general tendency towards secularisation of "divine" wisdom.

Thus, the emergence of ancient Greek philosophy simultaneously implied the growing con-

[1] Hegel, *Works* in 14 volumes, Vol. 2, p. 139 (in Russian).
[2] Ibid., p. 77.
[3] Diogène Laërce, *Vie, doctrines et sentences des philosophes illustres*, Paris, 1965, p. 127.

viction that wisdom as the supreme ideal of knowledge (and conduct), without which human life could be neither worthy nor honest and would be virtually wasted, could be achieved through one's own efforts. This meant that the source of wisdom lay not in faith but in knowledge and the quest for intellectual and moral perfection. Thus we see that a contradiction between faith and knowledge arises at the very fountainhead of philosophy.[1]

Ancient Greek philosophy tells the story of the Seven Sages who founded the first city states. Some of them must have been legendary figures, but Solon, for example, is an actual historical figure whose reforms are associated with the rise of the State of Athens. Pythagoras, for whom the history of Greece was by no means the distant past, evidently had a more or less clear conception of the actually existing historical figures (Thales was said to be one of them) who afterwards came to be known as Sages.

[1] In mythology the word "wisdom" signifies merely a certain notion that is expounded rather than discussed. In philosophy it is not merely a word but a concept, which must be understood and defined. This is the beginning of the theory of knowledge, the epistemological roots of the debate in which philosophy becomes a problem for itself. The deepest source of this argument is social progress, which counterposes knowledge and science to faith and religion. As Y. P. Frantsev writes, "the facts indicate that in human history philosophical thought emerges when certain knowledge has accumulated that comes into conflict with traditional beliefs. Religious notions are based on faith. Philosophical thought, no matter how feeble its development, is based on knowledge as opposed to blind faith. The birth of philosophical thought is the beginning of the struggle against faith." (Y. P. Frantsev, *The Sources of Religion and Free Thinking*, Moscow, 1959, p. 501, in Russian).

The teaching of the materialists of the city of Miletus was directly continued by Heraclitus, who declared that "wisdom lies in speaking the truth, heeding the voice of Nature and acting in accordance with it".[1] This was, of course, addressed not to the gods, for whom there was nothing to heed, but to man and man alone. But while acknowledging the existence of human wisdom, Heraclitus nevertheless maintained that such wisdom was nothing compared with the wisdom of the immortals, since "the wisest man compared with a god appears but an ape in wisdom, beauty and all else".[2] This distinction between human and divine wisdom would seem to imply something more than the traditional conviction drawn from mythology. It is an acknowledgement (still vague and inadequately expressed, of course) of the fundamental impossibility of absolute knowledge.[3]

He who seeks wisdom must act in accordance with the order of things. Concretising this thought, Heraclitus maintained that one should

[1] A. O. Makovelsky, *Pre-Socratics*, Kazan, 1914, Part I, p. 161 (in Russian).

[2] Ibid.

[3] This elementary dialectical understanding of the nature of knowledge was lost in subsequent centuries by the creators of the metaphysical systems of absolute knowledge under the influence of the triumphs of mathematics and the natural science of the new age, which looked as if they were going to be able to obtain exhaustive knowledge of all that existed. The idea of the omnipotence of human reason belongs entirely to modern times. The ancient Greeks were far from holding any such notions. The ultimate expression of ancient Greek wisdom is Socrates' conviction "I know that I know nothing". Viewed from this standpoint Plato, who believed his soul had spent so long in the transcendental realm of ideas that he could describe this realm, is no heir to the Socratic conception of wisdom.

follow the *universal.* But what *is* the universal? It is fire, whose nature is a state of eternal flux. It is also Logos—absolute necessity, fate, which is sometimes identified with eternal fire and sometimes separated from it. The universal is infinitely varied. It pervades everything, gives birth to everything and destroys everything. Nothing can deviate from the universal. People do not understand the universal and fail to appreciate its limitless power even when they hear of it from the lips of the philosopher, because their own ignorance seems to them to be "their own comprehension". Heraclitus remarks bitterly, "Most men have no understanding of the things they encounter, and cannot be made to understand by instruction, and yet it seems to them that they know."[1]

Thus we find that wisdom presupposes above all *understanding* of what the majority of men *encounter,* of what *is known* to them in general, i.e., what they see, hear and know but cannot comprehend. This notion of wisdom is organically connected with the age of the formation of philosophy, when there were still no special scientific disciplines, discovering through special investigation directly unobservable phenomena and the relations between them. As yet the philosopher was able to argue only about things that all could observe: the Earth, the Sun, the stars, plants, animals, day, night, cold, heat, water, air, fire, and so on. The philosopher applied his powers of reasoning to everything that occurred in human life and that was known to everyone: birth, childhood, youth, age, death, unhappiness, happiness, love, hate,

[1] A. O. Makovelsky, *Pre-Socratics,* Part I, p. 150 (in Russian).

etc. No wonder, then, that the first works of the ancient Greeks and also the Chinese and Indian philosophers, took as "first principles" the sensually observable things that were familiar to all, but to which a very special significance was attached. Even the basic, "substantial" properties of these things were also drawn from everyday experience, the properties of heat and cold, love and hate, the male and female genital principles, etc.

Wisdom, or rather the quest for it, was seen by these early philosophers as the ability to reach a judgement about all manner of familiar things, proceeding from recognition of their intransient essence. Understanding of the universal reveals to the human mind that which is eternal, infinite and united in the countless numbers of transient, finite, multiform things. Thus not all knowledge (knowledge of one thing, for example) could be considered wisdom. Even knowledge of many things, Heraclitus adds, does not augment our wisdom. The path of wisdom, which no man shall ever travel in its entirety, is understanding of that which is most powerful in the world and therefore the most important for our human life.

According to Heraclitus, the most important, the most powerful and unavoidable thing is universal change, the disappearance of all that appears, the conversion of all things into their opposites, their unity in eternal fire, from which the Earth, air, soul and everything else is derived. It is this omnipresent unity of the infinite multiformity, the coincidence of opposites, that the philosopher seeks to understand as supreme truth pointing the right path in life. This path lies in contempt for passing things, awareness of the relative nature of all blessings, all distinctions and

opposites, understanding of the all-embracing and the all-determining. Although love of wisdom is separated from wisdom, which in itself is unattainable, it is quite clear that this selfless love and the knowledge it imparts are interpreted as attributes of absolute wisdom and in this sense (mainly because of their incompleteness) as relative wisdom.

Heraclitus's conception of the ideal of human wisdom and conduct has an aristocratic and pessimistic bias. At the moment, however, we are not concerned with these features of the "weeping philosopher", nor even with his dialectics, which is not a specific attribute of philosophical thought. The point is that his conception of wisdom reveals features which not only in ancient times but in subsequent epochs have been regarded as inherent only in philosophical knowledge and the philosophical attitude to the world.

Ancient Greece, where the concept of philosophy as love of wisdom (relative, *human* wisdom) first took shape, became the motherland of another and essentially different understanding of the meaning and purpose of philosophy, which was to exercise a substantial influence on all its subsequent development. I have in mind the Sophists. The word "sophist" is derived from the same root as the words "sophia" (wisdom) and "sophos" (wise man), and also means "craftsman" or "artist". The Sophists were the first in the history of philosophy to emerge as *teachers of wisdom,* thus rejecting the understanding of philosophy that goes back to Pythagoras. The Sophists were the first encyclopaedists of the ancient world. They studied mathematics, astronomy, physics, grammar, not so much as scholars, but rather as teachers, and paid teachers at that. They

became the founders of rhetoric, and they considered it to be an essential part of their instruction to teach the free citizen of the city state to reason, to argue, to refute and prove, in short, to defend his own interests by the power of words, argument and eloquence.

The Sophists identified wisdom with knowledge, with the ability to prove what one considered to be necessary, correct, virtuous, profitable and so on.[1] Such knowledge and abilities were undoubtedly needed by the citizen of Athens for taking part in public meetings, court sessions, debates, affairs of trade and so on. By their activities as teachers of rhetoric, by their theories which overthrew apparently immutable truths and substantiated often quite unusual views, the Sophists furthered the development of logical thought and flexibility of concepts, which made it possible to bring together and unite things that seemed at first glance to be quite incompatible. Logical proof was regarded as the basic quality of truth.

[1] Plato, expounding the views of Protagoras, describes in *Theaetetus* his understanding of wisdom as follows: "... I do not call wise men tadpoles: far from it; I call them 'physicians' and 'husbandmen' where the human body and plants are concerned." In the field of politics, according to Plato, Protagoras held that "the wise and good rhetoricians make the good instead of the evil to seem just to states; for whatever appears to each state to be just and fair, so long as it is regarded as such, is just and fair to it; and what the wise man does is to cause good to appear, and be real, for each of them instead of evil". (*The Dialogues of Plato*, Oxford, 1953, Vol. III, p. 265.) This understanding of wisdom as *worldly knowledge* comes into direct conflict with the previous conceptions of wisdom. However, the Sophists only take to its logical conclusion the anti-mythological conception of human wisdom, which arose with philosophy and was the first attempt to understand its specific content and purpose.

The universal flexibility of concepts which made its first appearance in the philosophy of the Sophists was markedly subjective in character. To prove meant to convince or persuade. The Sophists came to believe that it was possible to prove anything they chose to prove, and this eventually made the words "sophist", "sophism" and "sophistry" insulting to any man of learning.

The Sophists usually stressed the subjectivity and relativity of the evidence of the senses and of any deductions made from them. They were the first to grasp the fact which seems so obvious today that arguments can be found to support anything. This truth was partly interpreted by them in a spirit of philosophical scepticism and relativism, and partly in the form of recognition of the possible truth of contradictory perceptions, notions and judgements. In short, the Sophists taught a type of thinking that refuses to commit itself to any unconditional postulates except those a man needs for the achievement of the aim he sets himself. They strove to make commonplace notions and concepts versatile and to overcome their incompatibility that had become rigidly established by everyday usage. On this path some Sophists drew the conclusion that there was only a relative contradiction between good and evil, that religious beliefs were illusory, and that it was a mistake to believe, as most people did in those days, that the opposition between slaves and free men was fixed by nature.

Some of the Sophists were the ideologists of slave-owning democracy, others were its opponents, but both understood philosophy as worldly wisdom, and knowledge, as the art of rhetoric with the help of which the educated man could always overcome the uneducated and the ignorant.

The Sophists were the first to attempt the complete secularisation of wisdom, to make it accessible to anyone who acquired the necessary education. This democratic tendency of the Sophists, however, went hand in hand with an oversimplification of the tasks of philosophy, with disregard of philosophy's quest for understanding of the quintessential and universal in everything that exists, understanding of that which is most important in and *for* human life. These basic features of the Sophists' teaching were harshly criticised by Socrates and particularly Plato, who again raised philosophy to a pedestal beyond the reach of the mass of the people.[1]

[1] In the dialogue "Socrates' Apology" Plato expounds through Socrates the understanding of wisdom which was propounded by the first Greek philosophers. In seeking to acquire wisdom, Socrates relates, he first of all sought it among men of state. After talking to one of them, Socrates reached the conclusion that "... I am at least wiser than this fellow—for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows; I neither know nor think that I know." Having spoken with poets, Socrates saw that "... not by wisdom do poets write poetry, but by a sort of genius and inspiration; they are like diviners or soothsayers who also say many fine things, but do not understand the meaning of them".... Finally Socrates turned to ordinary people, to the craftsmen, and realised that "they did know many things of which I was ignorant, and in this they certainly were wiser than I was". But he went on "... because they were good workmen they thought that they also knew all sorts of high matters, and this defect in them overshadowed their wisdom".... (*The Dialogues of Plato*, pp. 345, 347). Thus, while not wholly rejecting the worldly wisdom upheld by the Sophists, Socrates sought merely to prove that human wisdom was incomplete, mixed with ignorance and therefore not to be compared with divine, absolute wisdom. Hence in "Protagoras" Socrates defines human wisdom as the transcending of one's own limitations: "The inferiority of a man to himself is merely ignorance, as the superiority of a man to himself is wisdom." (*The Dialogues of Plato*, "Protagoras", p. 186.)

Plato argued that neither true knowledge nor true virtue could be acquired extraneously, by means of education which at best would help to bring out the knowledge that was in a man's soul but of which he remained unaware, having obtained it during the soul's sojourn in another world.

Thus Plato reinstated that aristocratically intellectual understanding of philosophy as a love of wisdom for its own sake, inherent only in chosen natures, which had fully emerged in the first period of ancient Greek philosophy. According to his teaching, wisdom lies in understanding the abiding transcendental reality, the realm of ideas, and above all the absolutely just, absolutely true and absolutely beautiful, and in examining from this supersensual position all natural things and human affairs.

Inasmuch as Plato aspires to create a system of absolute knowledge (an essential difference between him and Socrates), he departs from the original conception of philosophy as love (quest) for the unattainable ideal of knowledge and life. His criticism of the Sophists' worldly wisdom turns out in the final analysis to be merely a repudiation of the earthly basis of wisdom. Like the Sophists, he seeks to be a teacher of wisdom, although he makes the reservation that wisdom cannot be taught to those whose souls have not been initiated. Plato's teaching thus emerges as a system of wisdom, not only in its theoretical but also in its practical aspects.

Plato's ideal of the state is a doctrine of the wise management of society ensuring the perfect embodiment of absolute justice, absolute truth and absolute beauty, thanks to which a social system will be established in which every man will occupy the place assigned to him, whether he be craftsman or farmer, guardian or ruler-philosopher. The theoretical substantiation of this reactionary Utopia, which reflected the crisis of the Athenian state, lies in the notion of *achieved* wisdom, which radically distinguishes Plato from his predecessors and from later philosophers of the ancient world.[1]

The point of departure of Aristotle's teaching is his criticism of Plato's doctrine of ideas and entails a revision of the Platonic conception of wisdom as knowledge of the transcendental. Aristotle rehabilitates reality as that which is received by the senses and strives to explain the qualitative variety of the material world, proceeding from the notion of the forms inherent in things, which in most cases are also perceived by the senses. Admittedly, Aristotle recognises, besides sensually perceived forms, the "form of forms" and the prime mover, since he can see no other way of explaining the world as a whole. Aristotle's idealism, however, differs essentially from that of Plato, who interprets philosophy as an ascent from this world to the next. Aristotle, on the contrary, believes it to be

[1] It is highly characteristic that Democritus, a major proponent of ancient Greek materialism and a contemporary of Plato, sees wisdom as understanding of the internal structure, the unity of nature, of matter, and as the correct interpretation of duty in human life. According to the teaching of Democritus, "three abilities spring from wisdom, the ability to take excellent decisions, to enunciate them correctly and to do what is necessary". Democritus' conception of wisdom is connected with his conception of the need to observe moderation: "Beautiful is due moderation in everything." The worldly wisdom of Democritus, whose political ideal is the slave-owning democracy, is equally alien both to the oracular philosophy of Plato and to the subjectivism of the Sophists.

the task of philosophy to examine the basic causes, the foundations and forms of nature. In this he sees genuine wisdom, while condemning the teaching of the Sophists as "only apparent and not real".[1] Wisdom, in Aristotle's view, coincides with knowledge, though not knowledge of single things, but of the essence as such. In the field of ethics Aristotle's understanding of wisdom anticipates the philosophy of the Hellenic period: "The man of Practical Wisdom aims at avoiding Pain, not at attaining Pleasure."[2]

It is true that Aristotle calls the prime mover God, but this assertion recalls the deistic views of the New Age, since God is not regarded as a subject of philosophical investigation. Aristotle describes as theologians Hesiod and other poets, the forerunners of ancient Greek philosophy, who on the basis of mythology evolved theogonic or cosmogonic theories, attributing the immortality of the gods to their drinking ambrosia and nectar, for example. Such an explanation, Aristotle remarks ironically, may have satisfied the poets themselves, but it goes beyond the bounds of our understanding. Theology, as Aristotle sees it, is not a teaching about God (or the gods) but the "first philosophy", whose subject is first causes and their foundations.

The problem of wisdom again comes to the fore and indeed forms the basic subject of philosophical meditation in the teachings of the age of decline of ancient society—in stoicism, scepticism, and Epicureanism. For the followers of these schools wisdom is not so much an ideal of

[1] *The Metaphysics of Aristotle*, London, 1857, Book III, Ch. II, p. 84.

[2] *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle*, New York, 1920, p. 175.

knowledge as a correct way of life which relieves the individual of avoidable sufferings, and of excesses that lead to suffering. One can trace the beginnings of these views in the first Greek philosophers, but their main conviction was that knowledge is an aim in itself. Only Hellenic philosophy proclaims the principle that knowledge in itself is of no value and is needed only because it teaches us the correct path in life.[1] Happiness, which, according to Epicurus, constitutes the goal of human life, may be obtained by limiting one's needs and renouncing pleasures that have deplorable consequences. The essence of happiness is perfect equanimity, ataraxia, renunciation of the world. "According to Epicurus," Marx notes in his Doctoral thesis, "no good for man lies outside himself; the only good which he has in relation to the world is the negative notion to be free of it".[2] But to become free of the world one must overcome one's fear of the gods and also fear of death. Hence the purpose of natural philosophy, particularly if it can prove that there is no force in the world capable of destroying the contented self-assurance

[1] According to S. Chatterjee and D. Datta, this understanding of the aim of knowledge, philosophy and wisdom is particularly characteristic of all systems of ancient Indian philosophy. "... All the systems regard philosophy as a practical necessity and cultivate it in order to understand how life can be best led. The aim of philosophical wisdom is not merely the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity, but mainly an enlightened life led with farsight, foresight and insight." (*An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, Calcutta, 1950, p. 12.) One of the differences between Indian and European philosophy is that in Indian philosophy this understanding of wisdom constantly predominates.

[2] K. Marx and F. Engels, *From Early Works*, Moscow, 1956, p. 143 (in Russian).

of the sage. In this context natural philosophy plays the auxiliary role of introducing and substantiating a "philosophy of life", which ultimately boils down to ethics. Thus wisdom comes to serve an "applied" aim; philosophy as a doctrine of the wise conduct of one's personal life is interpreted as intellectual therapy. Epicurus says: "Hollow are the words of the philosopher that do not serve to heal any human suffering. Just as there is no use in medicine if it does not rid the body of disease, so is philosophy of no use if it cannot banish the sickness of the soul".[1]

Ancient Greek stoicism, which regards philosophy as "exercise in wisdom", also stressed, like Epicureanism, the practical (in the highest sense) significance of philosophy, since its aim is to teach man "to live in accord with nature". Stoicism proceeds from a fatalistic conception of the predetermination of all that exists. Hence the demand to live in accord with nature presumes, on the one hand, a knowledge of nature and, on the other, unconditional submission to natural necessity. Man can change nothing in the predetermined order of things. He is a philosopher or sage who, having realised the inevitable, submits to it and renounces sensual pleasures in order to rejoice in virtue, which is to be acquired through recognition of the essence of things and through the triumph of reason over appetite.

Though differing in many ways from Epicureanism and stoicism, ancient Greek scepticism also reduces wisdom to the acquisition of intellectual composure, aloof from human cares and worries. Diogenes Laertius, referring to Posidonius, relates that one day Pyrrho "was at sea in a ship; his companions were terrified by the storm; only he, who had remained perfectly calm and composed in spirit, pointed to a pig that was munching something and said that the wise man should preserve equal indifference."[1]

It would seem that this evolution in the understanding of wisdom (and by the same token, philosophy) reflects the decay of the ancient city state and a social system that permitted the free citizen to take an active part in the life of the state. Now he feels that the ground is sliding from under him. Hence for him wisdom lies in the illusory assurance that one can live in society and be free of it at the same time.

Ancient Greek philosophy came into being as a powerful intellectual movement towards knowledge in its all-embracing theoretical form. It ends as a quest for repose in a society torn by antagonistic contradictions. This crisis does not, however, mean that there were no rational ideas in the doctrines of the Hellenistic age. These doctrines pose the question of the primacy of practical reason over the theoretical and for the first time systematically criticise the naively rationalistic notion of knowledge for its own sake, whose unexpected and tragic consequences are only too obvious in the age of capitalism and particularly imperialism, when science becomes not only a productive but also a destructive force. "Greek philosophy," says Marx, "begins with seven wise men, among whom is the Ionian

[1] Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, Moscow, 1947, Vol. II, p. 641 (in Russian).

[1] D. Laërce, *Vie, doctrines et sentences des philosophes illustres*, p. 193.

philosopher of nature Thales, and it ends with the attempt to portray the wise man conceptually".[1]

The subsequent history of Greek and Greco-Roman philosophy—the history of its transformation into the religious and mystical teachings of neo-Pythagoreanism, neo-Platonism, the later stoicism, etc.,—is in fact the prehistory of Christianity, which brought to an end the worldly wisdom of the ancient philosophers.

2. DEIFICATION OF HUMAN WISDOM

Christianity, which became the dominant and virtually the sole ideology of the European Middle Ages, absorbed the philosophical mysticism and irrationalism of the age of the final decay of the ancient world. "Christianity," Engels points out, "was not imported from without, from Judea, and imposed upon the Greco-Roman world.... It is—at least in the form in which it has become a world religion—the most characteristic product of this world."[2] The apologists of Christianity called the new religion that ousted Greco-Roman polytheism *philosophy*. Their basic argument was that the fundamental problems of Christian doctrine (God, the creation of the world) had already been posed by Greek philosophy, but only Christianity could supply the true answers. Augustine, Tertullian and other "fathers of the Church" gave a theological interpretation and elaboration of the philosophical mysticism and irrationalism of neo-Platonism

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *From Early Works*, p. 131 (in Russian).

[2] Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, S. 456.

and the other idealist doctrines related to it. Vulgarised neo-Platonism, eclectically combined with Epicureanism, scepticism and particularly stoicism, was the "theoretical source" of the Christian religion.[1]

Thus the New Testament or "divine revelation", recounted by the apostles of Jesus Christ, turns out to be, as its historico-philosophical analysis shows, a theological revision of the philosophical theories of later antiquity, with the addition of numerous borrowings from other "heathen" teachings. Nevertheless, to the medieval theologians and philosophers the Scriptures appeared to be radically different from the human wisdom of the ancients. This was the divine revelation, the indisputable source for all theorising about the divine and the things of this world. This meant that for the medieval thinker divine wisdom existed in a form accessible to man, i.e., expounded in the sacred books. The only problem was to be able to understand it, to interpret it correctly.

[1] "Stoicism in its vulgarised form," we read in Volume One, p. 383, of the *History of Philosophy* (Ed. G. F. Aleksandrov, B. E. Bykhovsky, M. B. Mitin and P. F. Yudin), "exercised a powerful influence on the moral views of the organisers of the early Christian churches; it has been established, for example, that the influence of Seneca is much in evidence in the epistles attributed by the Church to the Apostle Paul, and later, in Tertullian. Christianity is even more closely linked with neo-Platonism. Christian dogma has many important features in common with neo-Platonism. The divine trinity of Christianity corresponds to Plotinus' trinity—the One, Nous, Soul. Christianity made wide use of the neo-Platonist 'emanation' and spiritualism, its teaching on ecstasy and 'exaltation' as a state in which the soul comes nearer to the Deity and temporarily merges with it in the bliss of its direct contemplation, etc."

Theology is the metaphilosophy of the European Middle Ages. Theology, according to Thomas Aquinas, descends from the divine to the terrestrial, while philosophy seeks to ascend from the terrestrial and temporal to the divine and absolute. Philosophy commands only the truths of reason, whereas theology expounds superrational although not irrational truths, whose source is Divine Reason. Philosophy inevitably becomes the handmaid of theology. Love of wisdom is transformed into an intellectualised religious feeling. Metaphysical wisdom can be only the interpretation of theological wisdom, authentically expounded in the Bible. The philosopher cannot therefore arrive at any new or unexpected conclusions; the conclusions are given in advance and all that has to be done is to lay a logical path towards them, i.e., to justify Christian dogma in the face of everyday common sense, which is afraid not to believe in miracles and the supernatural in general, and yet cannot conceive how all this is possible.[1]

[1] It is worth noting, however, that some outstanding medieval thinkers, who were alien to Christianity, interpreted philosophical wisdom far more freely and independently, in this respect approaching Aristotle, whose followers they were. Thus Ibn Sina (Avicenna) declared: "Wisdom, in our view, may be of two kinds. First, it is perfect knowledge. Perfect knowledge with regard to a concept is such that it knows a thing through its essence and definition, and with regard to a judgement it is such that it is a reliable judgement on all the causes of those things that have causes. Second, it is perfection of action. This perfection lies in the fact that all that is necessary for its existence, and all that is necessary for its preservation, exists, and exists to the extent that it is worthy of its essence, including also all that serves for beautification and use, and is not merely a matter of necessity." We see here that human wisdom is assessed as the possible perfect knowledge. Only lower down the page does Ibn Sina, in the spirit of medieval tradition, citing the Koran, speak of divine wisdom which knows all things out of itself since it has created them.

The wisdom of the ancient Greeks, says Jacques Maritain, is restricted to the human scale. "It is, in fact, a philosophical wisdom that claims not to save us through unity with the Deity, but only to guide us along the path of rational cognition of the universe."[1] Religion, as we have seen, did not inspire ancient philosophy, and reflection on the Deity held little place in it even in those cases when it asserted that divine wisdom was infinitely superior to that of humanity.

Jacques Maritain, of course, is not satisfied by the "worldly" wisdom to which the finest of the classical Greek philosophers aspired. Such an interpretation of wisdom, he observes, tends towards a scientific understanding of reality, whereas the true wisdom is the wisdom of salvation, the wisdom of the saints. Maritain believes that the philosophers of the ancient East came near to this kind of wisdom in that they understood wisdom as the ascent of man from the terrestrial to the divine. Genuine wisdom, however, according to Maritain, is to be found only in Christianity and the forms of orthodox medieval theological and philosophical thought to which it gave birth. "The wisdom of the Old Testament," he declares, "tells us that, at bottom, our personality exists only in humility and may be saved only thanks to the divine personality.... This supernatural wisdom is a wisdom that gives itself, that descends...."[2]

[1] J. Maritain, *Science et Sagesse*, Paris, 1935, pp. 30-31.

[2] Ibid., p. 38.

In returning to the medieval mode of thought (we have in mind, of course, the dominant ideology of the Christian Middle Ages) Maritain sees a way of escape for capitalist society from the contradictions by which it is being torn apart.[1] Maritain has high praise for the proposition of Thomas Aquinas on the three kinds of wisdom: divine (revelation), theological, and metaphysical; the last, of course, occupies the lowest place in the hierarchy. No wonder, then, that Maritain condemns Averroism, which he defines as "an attempt to *separate* philosophical wisdom from theological wisdom".[2] Thus contemporary neo-Thomism leads us directly into the domain of the philosophical and theological notions that dominated the feudal society of Western Europe.

The neo-Thomist Johannes Hirschberger presents the Middle Ages as existing in a state of infinite divine wisdom which manifests itself in everything, in the order of nature, society and so on. "As never before in any period of the spiritual history of the West, the whole world here lives in assurance concerning the existence of God, His wisdom, power and goodness, concerning the origin of the world, the reasonableness of its order and government, the nature of

[1] "History," Maritain says, "is an unimaginable drama between individuals and abused freedoms, between the eternal divine personality and our own personalities that are created.... If we wish to survive the nightmare of a banal existence of the indefinite pronoun *One*, in which the conditions of the modern world suppress the imagination of every one of us, if we wish to awaken ourselves and *our* existentiality, it is permissible for us to read M. Heidegger, but we shall certainly be better off in all cases reading the Bible." (Ibid., pp. 37-38.)

[2] Ibid., p. 56.

man and his position in the Cosmos, the meaning of his life, the capacity of his spirit to know the world and to arrange his own life, concerning his dignity, freedom and immortality, the foundations of the law, the system of state power and the meaning of history. Unity and order are the hallmark of the time."[1]

Needless to say, the idyllic existence described by this contemporary Catholic historian never actually existed. The Middle Ages knew the peasant wars, the wars between suzerains, between suzerains and vassals, between monarchs and the Pope of Rome. They knew also religious heresies, "worldly" free-thinking, and the Inquisition. But Hirschberger's assertions, like the beliefs of Jacques Maritain, fairly accurately reproduce the predominant scholastic purview of the Middle Ages, the essence of which is well expressed in the Gospel dictum "Blessed are the poor in spirit".

Dogmatic faith was indeed a synonym for all the wisdom accessible to man. Although Christian teaching maintained that man was created in the image of God, its true inspiration lay in the anti-humanist belief in the vanity of this world, i.e., of actual human life. Divine wisdom allegedly derived from infinite being and as opposed to the finite, transient life of man, which had to bear the additional burden of original sin, was a radical denial of "self-willed" human wisdom. Only the rise of the capitalist mode of production and the development of the natural sciences and mathematics were able to show philosophy a way of escape from the labyrinth of theology.

[1] J. Hirschberger, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, Freiburg, 1954, Bd. I, S. 280.

3. A NEW AGE AND A NEW IDEAL OF PHILOSOPHICAL KNOWLEDGE

Montaigne, the outstanding forerunner of the French Enlightenment, revived the ancient secularised interpretation of wisdom from the standpoint of a philosophical scepticism that placed havoc with theology and scholastics. Quite in the spirit of Epicurus, Montaigne declares that "all the wisdom and all the discourse in the world serves in the long run only to teach us not to fear death".[1] In his *Essays* Montaigne frequently refers to the sayings of the Bible, but only in order to extract from them the human wisdom they inherited from the human wisdom of the ancients, their moral maxims regarding the rational ordering of human life.

Pierre Bayle, another splendid exponent of bourgeois free thinking, interprets wisdom as a courageous desire to go through to the end in seeking truth, a fearless urge to cast aside misconceptions and prejudice, an unshakeable awareness of the fact that nothing is forbidden to reason. "Reason," he says in his *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, "has every right to hunt anything it wishes. But reason itself must not be defective. One should agree only with good and noble ideas and act only in accordance with them, no matter what those around us may say. In both respects the wise man shows equal courage."[2]

The founders of bourgeois philosophy, Francis Bacon and Descartes, go even further, since they not only repudiate medieval ideology but also

[1] Montaigne, *Les Essais*, Paris, 1962, Vol. I, p. 8.
[2] P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, Amsterdam, 1740, Tome second, p. 146.

substantiate the new ideal of knowledge—scientificality. Science is understood as authentic and systematic knowledge, drawn from a natural and not "supernatural" source, i.e., through perusal of the "Great Book of Nature", which lies open for all men to study and meditate upon. The New Age, as Maritain puts it, is characterised by a "*conflict between wisdom and the sciences and the victory of science over wisdom*".[1]

In one of his essays Bacon ridicules the "wisdom for a man's self" of the schoolmen, which, as he says, is by no means harmless but, on the contrary, is manifestly pernicious for society. "Wisdom for a man's self is, in many branches thereof, a depraved thing. It is the wisdom of rats, that will be sure to leave a house somewhat before it falls. It is the wisdom of the fox, that thrusts out the badger, who digged and made room for him. It is the wisdom of crocodiles that shed tears when they would devour."[2] But surely there is other wisdom besides this? Bacon does not deny it. Nor does he deny divine wisdom, but the whole significance of "natural philosophy" lies, so he believes, in methodical, rationally organised inquiry into the laws of nature, in order to multiply human inventions, which are far more capable of conducing to the benefit of mankind than all the pearls of wisdom of Ancient Greece. "Now the wisdom of the Greeks was professorial and much given to disputations; a kind of wisdom most adverse to the inquisition of truth."[3]

[1] J. Maritain, *Science et Sagesse*, p. 56.
[2] F. Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels Civil and Moral*, London, 1916, p. 73.
[3] F. Bacon, *Novum Organum*, New York, p. 94.

Descartes' position was that wisdom is not a particular kind of knowledge, distinct from all others and accessible only to a few: "The whole sum of knowledge and science is but human wisdom, which remains always one and the same, no matter how various the subjects to which it is applied. . . ."[1]

This new understanding of wisdom fully accords with the spirit of the New Age, which substitutes for the contemplation of commonplace, constantly observed reality the active drives of exploration and discovery, experiment, strict proof and testing of the results obtained.

Descartes helped to found not only the philosophy but also the mathematics and natural science of modern times. Wisdom, according to his teaching, is characterised not only by "good sense in affairs" but also by "perfect knowledge of all that it is given to man to know".[2] Perfect knowledge is reliable knowledge; his assumptions, firmly established, self-evident truths, are so clear and sharp that there can be no doubt as to the truth of them. Defining philosophy as the love of wisdom, and wisdom as knowledge "of the truths concerning the most important things",[3] Descartes, as a true spokesman of the young, progressive bourgeoisie, observes that "people who engage professionally in philosophy are often less wise and less rational than others who have never applied themselves to this study". . . .[4] None of his reservations to the effect that only God is wholly wise because only He

[1] *Œuvres de Descartes*, Tome X, Paris, 1908, p. 360.
[2] *Les pages immortelles de Descartes*, Paris, 1961, pp. 141-142.
[3] Ibid., p. 142.
[4] Ibid., p. 144.

has complete knowledge of everything, can weaken the revolutionary impact of the basic philosophical demand put forward by Descartes, the demand for scientific proof, which, as he constantly emphasised, can only be effected through independent, critical research, based on experiment and the "natural light" (*lumen naturale*) of human reason. There are four means of attaining wisdom or scientific, true knowledge, says Descartes. These are: cognition of self-evident truths; the experience of the senses; knowledge acquired through conversation with others; and the reading of good books. As for divine revelation, Descartes says that "it does not raise us gradually but all at once to infallible faith".[1] This statement sounds an ironic rather than devout note, particularly if one remembers that, according to Descartes, wisdom is not faith but knowledge, which cannot be acquired at one sitting.

Spinoza revives the Epicurean conception of wisdom, but on a new, rational basis that presupposes scientific, proven investigation of external nature and human essence. Epicurus assumed that the philosophical explanation of the phenomena of nature should be in accord with our sense perceptions, which he regarded as completely reliable. Spinoza, who followed Galileo and Descartes in fully appreciating the philosophical significance of Copernicus' discovery of the contradiction between sensual appearance and the essence of phenomena, argued the need for strict logical (geometrical) proof of philosophical propositions. From the standpoint of Epicurus, celestial phenomena as distinct from

[1] Ibid.

the terrestrial had permitted of the most varied explanations compatible with the evidence of the senses. And all these explanations were reasonable as long as they did not contradict the senses and were also conducive to peace of mind. In contrast to Epicurus, Spinoza argues that both the terrestrial and the celestial must be explained on similar lines, since necessity is everywhere the same and is expressed by the necessity of logic and mathematics.

Wisdom, according to Spinoza, is cognition of universal necessity and action in accordance with it. Therefore wisdom is not only knowledge but also freedom, which lies in mastery of oneself. Spinoza declares: "The wise man's business is to make use of things and to take as much pleasure in them as possible (but not to the point of surfeit, for this is no longer pleasure). The wise man should, I say, support and restore himself with moderate food and drink, and also with the scents and beauty of green plants, beautiful clothes, music, games and exercises, the theatre and suchlike, which anyone can partake in without harm to others."[1] How far this is from the medieval ideal of wisdom!

Spinoza's conception of the philosopher-sage is usually interpreted as if Spinoza believed the wise man should be a hermit, absorbed only in meditation and remote from all human joys. There is a modicum of truth in this, but it should not be exaggerated, particularly if we consider that in the 17th century scientists were few in number and had only just begun to form a separate profession. Wisdom for Spinoza was primarily the cultivation of the intellect combined with the quest for theoretical knowledge.

[1] *Œuvres de Spinoza. Traduites par Emile Saisset*, Paris, 1961, tome III, pp. 224-225.

In the idealist doctrine of Leibnitz wisdom is interpreted as "perfect science". Admittedly, Leibnitz regards metaphysics and the speculative system of the "truths of reason" as such a science, which he contrasts with empirical scientific knowledge, with the "truths of fact". The idealist interpretation of the principle of scientificality, the rationalist "substantiation" of theological notions, the juxtaposition of metaphysics to physics—all this was, of course, a concession to the feudal ideology reigning in Germany. All the same, it is science that he regards as the adequate expression of wisdom, and Leibnitz could appreciate science not only as a philosopher but as a brilliant mathematician and experimental scientist. Science is irrefutable. This belief is shared not only by materialists but also by the progressive spokesmen of idealist philosophy, and it is from this standpoint that they pose the traditional philosophical question of the nature of wisdom.

Of course, the concept of science existed even in medieval scholastics. Even the mystics did not always reject it. The science of the New Age, however—true science—introduces a fundamentally new concept of scientificality. This concept has to be accepted, although certainly not without reservations, even by the idealist philosophers, at any rate those who can be regarded as progressive thinkers. As for the materialists, they are enthusiastic advocates of scientific inquiry into nature.

Holbach's *System of Nature* is an encyclopaedia of the philosophical wisdom of French 18th century materialism. His stated aim is to lib-

erate man from the chains of ignorance, gullibility, deception and self-deception, to restore him to nature from which he has been decoyed by religion, by concocted systems and the shameful worship of error; to show him the true path to happiness. Man needs truth more than he needs his daily bread, because truth is knowledge of the actual relations between people and things. People are deceived only when they turn away from nature and refuse to consider its laws and ignore experience—the only source of knowledge. "When people refuse to be guided by experience and disown reason, the figments of their imagination grow huger with every passing day; they plunge joyfully into the depths of error; they congratulate themselves on their imagined discoveries and achievements, while in reality their thoughts are ever more closely confined in darkness."[1] Back to nature! This means casting aside the existence of the supernatural, putting down all the chimeras of religion. Nothing exists except nature. Nature is no abstract being but an infinite whole, an infinite variety of phenomena. Man is the highest creation of nature, and only by acting in accordance with its laws can he attain his ends. Virtue, reason, truth are not spiritualist essences, they are born of nature and only they deserve to be worshipped. Holbach makes a vigorous appeal to them: "Inspire man with courage, give him energy; allow him at last to love and respect himself; let him realise his own dignity; let him dare to liberate himself; let him be happy and free; let him be the slave only of your laws; let him improve his lot; let him love his neighbours; let him know delight and allow others to delight as well."[1]

Philosophical wisdom, according to the teaching of the French materialists, should not be a dispassionate contemplation and justification of what is. Its calling is to be militant, to expose slavish genuflection to the past, to tyranny, ignorance and indolence, to spread truth, humanity and happiness, to promote the reasonable reordering of human life. Its passionate protest against feudal oppression endows French materialism with a new aspect that qualitatively distinguishes it from all previous philosophies. This is expressed in the very definition of philosophy as love of wisdom. Helvétius says: "Philosophy, as the very etymology of the word proves, consists in love of wisdom and the search for truth. But all love is passion."[2]

German classical idealism, despite its constant polemic with French materialism, is at bottom inspired by the same bourgeois-humanist ideals that Holbach, Helvétius and their associates seek to substantiate. On closer inspection Kant's categorical imperative turns out to be an idealist, *a priori* interpretation of the ethics of enlightened self-interest. Despite the juxtaposition of practical reason to theoretical reason with the corresponding postulation of the need for a "practical" outlet beyond the bounds of experience and for acceptance of Christian dogma, Kant is unshakeably convinced that only science constitutes the real foundation of wisdom. It is in his *Critique of Practical Reason* that he for-

[1] P. Holbach, *Selected Works* in two volumes. Moscow, 1963, Vol. I, p. 137 (in Russian).

[1] Ibid., p. 684.

[2] Helvétius, *Man, His Mental Abilities and Education*, Moscow, 1938, p. 141 (in Russian).

mulates the conclusion: "Science (critically investigated and methodically organised) is the strait gate that leads to the *teaching of wisdom,* if by this we understand not only what man *does* as what should serve as a guiding star for *teachers,* so that they can well and clearly point out the way to wisdom. . . ."[1]

Kant's immediate successor, Fichte, goes even further in this direction. For him philosophy is a scientific doctrine. Admittedly, at the same time it is a subjective-idealist, voluntarist ontology, but this contradiction, which is inseparable from the idealist interpretation of scientific knowledge, does not detract from the historical significance of Fichte's broad philosophical posing of the problem of scientific philosophy. In Fichte's philosophy science is the highest form of knowledge, and philosophy can retain its leading place in man's intellectual life only to the extent that its understanding of the world becomes scientific and bears out the principles of all scientific knowledge in general. From this standpoint the traditional interpretation of philosophy as love of wisdom falls to the ground because philosophy, like any other scientific discipline, must now be systematic. Scientific doctrine, says Fichte, calmly allows any other philosophy to be what it chooses: passion for wisdom, just wisdom, world wisdom, wisdom of life and all the other wisdoms. This is not a denial of wisdom but a denial of its superscientificality, a denial that nevertheless conflicts with Fichte's own idealistically constructed system of perfect, absolute scientifico-philosophical knowledge.

[1] *Immanuel Kants Werke*, Berlin, 1914, Fünfter Band, S. 176.

Hegel's philosophy is a new stride forward on the path from pre-scientific philosophical wisdom to scientific philosophical knowledge, which is to be understood as the dialectical treatment of this wisdom—its negation and preservation. Hegel holds that the task of learning in his time is to raise philosophy to the rank of science. In his *Phenomenology of Mind* he pours sarcastic ridicule on romantic philosophising whose exponents regard themselves as prophets inspired from above. Their occupation is not research but holding forth. They "imagine that by veiling self-awareness in fog and repudiating reason they become the *initiated* ones whom God endows with wisdom while they sleep; what they actually receive and invent in their sleep is thus also dreams".[1] Hegel had in mind Schelling, Jacobi and other philosophers with leanings towards irrationalism. In contrast to them he argues that philosophical truth cannot by its very nature be immediate knowledge. It is by nature mediate. It develops, enriches itself, discovers its own contradictions. The task of the philosopher is to penetrate into the immanent rhythm of the developing concept and move with it, avoiding any interruption of this motion "through the will and already acquired wisdom".[2] Here he is speaking of the dialectical method, the dialectical motion of philosophical knowledge overcoming its traditional metaphysical limitations, dogmatism and the absolutising of results achieved.

In his introduction to the *Phenomenology of Mind* Hegel writes: "The true form in which

[1] G. W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Stuttgart, 1927, Bd. 2, S. 18.
[2] Ibid., S. 55.

truth exists can be only its scientific system. It has been my intention to bring philosophy nearer to the form of science, to a goal whose attainment would allow it to renounce its name of *love of knowledge* and become *actual knowledge.*"[1] Hegel's encyclopaedia of the philosophical sciences was in fact such an attempt, doomed to failure owing to the contradiction between method and system in Hegelian philosophy. This contradiction and the related absolutisation of historically limited philosophical knowledge was unavoidable without abandoning idealism. A positive solution to the problem of creating a scientific philosophy became possible only thanks to the materialist and dialectical philosophy of Marxism, a philosophy that by its categorical repudiation of dogmatic system-building, by the creative development of its own propositions, the critical assimilation of the achievements of science and practice, poses in quite a new light the question of the nature of philosophical knowledge and all that through the ages has been called wisdom.

4. PROBLEM OF WISDOM AS A REAL PROBLEM

Our brief excursion into the history of the problem of wisdom suggests the conclusion that in the course of history the significance of this problem has changed. It can also be said that the problem has never been discussed by the positive sciences. Perhaps wisdom has a bearing only on philosophy, and even then only to the extent that it is contrasted with the specialised sciences? Is

[1] G. W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 2, S. 14.

not the word "wisdom" too vague a designation for philosophical knowledge? Since it is not to be found in the vocabulary of the positive sciences, perhaps we should abandon the word "wisdom" altogether? Bertrand Russell once asked: "Is there such a thing as wisdom, or is what seems such merely the ultimate refinement of folly?"[1]

The word "wisdom" like many other words, has too many meanings. Wisdom has often been understood as the ability to draw a clear distinction between good and evil, as the ability to combine knowledge and conduct on the basis of a correct assessment of the main facts or typical situations. These definitions are correct in the sense that wisdom cannot be only knowledge, and that action not based on knowledge cannot be wise. But here we are faced with the question of the character of knowledge, the extent to which it implies understanding, and not just any understanding but understanding of something that matters in human life. It is obvious that knowledge which is merely a statement of facts, even if the gathering of these facts has entailed considerable research, is still far from wisdom, which manifests itself rather as a conclusion or generalisation. But even generalisation implies wisdom only when it contains an evaluation that can guide the solution of complex questions of theory and practical life.

Understanding, the practice of moderation in one's conduct and affairs, because all extremes are bad, have often been called wisdom. This is also true, of course, if the sense of moderation does not become mere half-heartedness and fear of

[1] B. Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, London, 1946, p. 11.

making radical decisions when they are needed This was what Marx meant when he said that moderation is a category of mediocrity.[1] Needless to say, the latter has nothing whatever to do with wisdom.

Wisdom is often regarded as awareness of one's own errors. There can be no objection to this, of course, because only the person who does nothing never makes mistakes, if doing nothing is not to be considered a mistake in itself. But the wise man differs from the man without wisdom in that he does not make so many mistakes or, at least, manages to avoid making any great and irreparable ones. Perhaps for this reason many have seen wisdom in caution, circumspection, the avoidance of haste. These qualities, though positive in themselves, however, can easily be transformed into the defects of vacillation, procrastination and inertia.

Folk wisdom often makes fun of the would-be wise, of those who think up all kinds of newfangled ways of doing something while a perfectly simple and reasonable solution to the problem is available.

When we speak of man as a rational being we are presumably trying to define his species. When we call a man intelligent or gifted we attribute to him qualities that not everyone possesses. Wisdom is not inherent in everyone, and yet at the same time it is closely related to universal human knowledge, which is potentially available to all men. Wisdom is to be found in folk sayings and proverbs, although false wisdom and servile attitudes are also to be found there.

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *From Early Works*, p. 196 (in Russian).

And yet it is a fact that man alone out of all the creatures in the universe, just because he is a rational being, may also be irrational. Does not this indicate some contradiction in wisdom that sometimes puts the whole concept in doubt?

"Man," Eric Weil justly observes, "is a rational animal, but this is not the kind of judgement enunciated by science; it is a project for transforming the world and negating error; it is the expression of man's highest and most human aspiration." Straightaway, however, quite in the spirit of stoicism and the obvious contradiction to what he has just said, Weil adds that man, when he declares himself rational, "is not speaking of a fact and not even claiming to speak of a fact, but expressing his ultimate desire, the desire to be free, though not of need (that he will never be, and it will not worry him any more than need worries an animal), but of desire".[1]

I regard wisdom not as an empty word, not as a name for a phenomenon that does not exist. In my view wisdom exists not only in philosophy; the belief that mere philosophising leads to wisdom is one of the chief illusions of pre-Marxist philosophy. Wisdom is to be acquired in many and various ways and manifests itself in various fields of knowledge and activity.

When Niels Bohr said that a new fundamental theoretical synthesis in modern physics demanded completely new, "mad" ideas, i.e., ideas that seemed incompatible with the established truths of science, this was an extremely rational or, to use another word, wise approach to a ques-

[1] E. Weil, *Logique de la philosophie*, Paris, 1950, p. 11.

tion that was of vital importance to the further development of natural science.

The Utopian socialists regarded capitalism as a moral evil and distortion of human nature, and condemned the exploitation of man by man as incompatible with humanity and justice. Marx and Engels, who exposed the capitalist system even more vehemently, held that it was completely untenable to deduce the need for the socialist transformation of society from a moral evaluation of capitalism. This world, notwithstanding Leibnitz's illusion, is not the best of all possible worlds, and a social system does not collapse merely because of its moral shortcomings. Marx and Engels proved the necessity for transition from capitalism to socialism by scientific analysis of the objective economic laws of the development of capitalism which were creating the material prerequisites for the socialist system.

In contrast to the Utopians, who believed that socialism was bound to be achieved as soon as socialist ideas became sufficiently widespread, the founders of Marxism argued that the socialist transformation of social relations would become a necessity only under certain historical conditions. This is not only a scientific, historically grounded positing of a question that is of tremendous import for mankind; it is also a wise one.

Lenin scathingly criticised the trite wisdom of the liberals and opportunists, who justified their fear of revolution with ponderous sentiments to the effect that one must learn from life, not be in too much of a hurry, too impatient and so on. Pointing out that Marx and Engels had been wrong in their estimation of the nearness of the socialist revolution, Lenin stressed that "*such*

errors—the errors of the giants of revolutionary thought, who sought to raise, and did raise, the proletariat of the whole world above the level of petty, commonplace and trivial tasks—are a thousand times more noble and magnificent and *historically more valuable and true* than the trite wisdom of official liberalism, which lauds, shouts, appeals and holds forth about the vanity of revolutionary vanities, the futility of the revolutionary struggle and the charms of counter-revolutionary 'constitutional' fantasies. . . ."[1] There is wisdom and there is also the "wisdom" that is fostered by fear and impotence; the latter is the consolation of the slave who seeks to reconcile himself to his present state in life.

Soon after the victory of the Great October Revolution Lenin spoke against the Menshevik Sukhanov, who was trying to prove that the socialist revolution in Russia had no historical justification since the material conditions for the transition to socialism did not obtain in Russia. "If a definite level of culture," Lenin wrote, "is required for the building of socialism (although nobody can say just what that definite 'level of culture' is, for it differs in every West-European country), why cannot we begin by first achieving the prerequisites for that definite level of culture in a revolutionary way, and *then,* with the aid of the workers' and peasants' government and the Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations?"[2] This posing of the question of the historical prospects of the Land of Soviets, equally free of fatalism on the one hand, and of subjective bias on the other, is indeed worthy to be called wise.

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, p. 378.
[2] Ibid., Vol. 33, pp. 478-79.

Wisdom exists because there are great questions to be answered that are of vital importance to the human race (and the individual); these questions take shape in men's minds and they cannot be left unanswered. Even if the answers do not provide a ready and complete solution, they always (if they are wise answers) conduce to the correct posing of further questions, and thus the solution that is bound to come sooner or later.

The philosophers were mistaken when they counterposed wisdom to science. This mistake is being repeated today by many contemporary idealist philosophers of the irrational school. One cannot agree with Walter Ehrlich, for example, who maintains that philosophy "should in fact, signify *wisdom* and hence a special kind of knowledge, that does not at all coincide with scientific knowledge, which is available to everyone (if one has the necessary time and education)".[1] No knowledge should be counterposed to science. There is no such thing as knowledge that is above science. What does exist is prescientific and unscientific knowledge, and this is what wisdom becomes if it is juxtaposed to science. Does this mean that wisdom should become a science or is becoming one? By no means! Science is a system of concepts, whose meaning is organically linked with the subject of the given science. Wisdom is not a system of concepts; the specific nature of wisdom cannot be defined by pointing to the subject of inquiry. Wisdom has no such subject merely because it is not an inquiry, although it is, of course, understanding.

[1] W. Ehrlich, *Philosophie der Geschichte der Philosophie*, Tübingen, 1965, S. 17.

This understanding is based on the *data* of science, but not only on them. Of no less importance to wisdom are everyday and historical experience.

Wisdom is not an ideal of knowledge, since not all knowledge, ideally conceived, becomes wisdom. The ideally exact and complete cognition of any physical structure has nothing to do with wisdom, which does not, of course, belittle the value of such knowledge. But wisdom is not an unattainable ideal. The rationalism of the New Age, which attempted to create a "perfect science" of wisdom, was obviously unaware that any absolute ideal is a meaningless concept. Ideals are historical; they are generated by social development, which subsequently transcends them in its movement forward. The ideal of knowledge, the ideal of social management as historically concrete ideals are entirely realisable, and for this reason the concept of absolute perfection cannot be applied to them. But does such a concept exist? Not, I believe, as a scientific concept.

Jacques Maritain is, perhaps, more consistent than Leibnitz when he maintains that perfect science is impossible and perfect wisdom exists only in the Scriptures. But this view makes sense only to the religious, and then only to those of them who regard the Bible as "divine revelation" and not a historical document. Philosophy, since it thinks in concepts, cannot stand on faith.

Philosophy begins with reflections on the nature of wisdom. Today the problem of wisdom retains its significance as a philosophical problem. But it would obviously be incorrect to assume that philosophy boils down to the study or attainment of wisdom, as Jean Piaget, for

instance, maintains: "The reasoned synthesis of beliefs, no matter what they may be, and of the conditions of knowledge, is what we have called wisdom, and this is what seems to us to be the subject of philosophy."[1]

We cannot agree with these definitions of wisdom and the subject of philosophy. Wisdom may be regarded as a specific form of knowledge, but the "reasoned synthesis of beliefs" may surely be called wisdom only with reference to the distant past, before the dawn of science.

One of the specific features of philosophy is that the universal and necessary significance of its propositions is constantly in the process of becoming and development. Is this characteristic of wisdom? Apparently not. Nevertheless the original meaning of the word "philosophy" retains its significance even today. It speaks of the possibility of human wisdom, but also of the fact that we shall never be replete with it.

Some contemporary philosophers with religious leanings hold that wisdom has declined into science and that art has been replaced by technology. It is my belief that these philosophers have a distorted view of both science and technology. Wisdom, of course, does not lie in the discovery of the structure of DNA, and art is not the mass production of motor-cars. But a new basis for both wisdom and art is emerging more and more in the latest discoveries of science and the achievements of technology.

Wisdom will not become a science, just as science will not become wisdom. Philosophy, no matter how high a value it places on wisdom,

[1] J. Piaget, *Sagesse et illusions de la philosophie*, Paris, 1968, p. 281.

should not identify itself with it. Philosophy can and should be a system of scientifically grounded knowledge. This conclusion has nothing in common, however, with the positivist ridicule of the quest for wisdom as a metaphysical pretension.

We know that neo-positivism's struggle against "metaphysics" quite unexpectedly brought the neo-positivists to the realisation that the problems of philosophy were unavoidable. This notable fact should be regarded as evidence that the problem of wisdom retains its significance in philosophy, just as the question of the rational ordering of human life is still being discussed in society. One can agree with Bertrand Russell, who for all his hesitations in assessing the significance of the content and meaning of philosophy, finally declares that there are certain general questions that cannot be answered in the laboratory, from which it does not necessarily follow that they should be presented to the theologists for the taking. It is for philosophy to deal with these questions.

"Is the world divided into mind and matter, and, if so, what is mind and what is matter? Is mind subject to matter, or is it possessed of independent powers? Has the universe any unity or purpose? Is it evolving towards some goal? Are there really laws of nature, or do we believe in them only because of our innate love of order? Is man what he seems to the astronomer, a tiny lump of impure carbon and water impotently crawling on a small and unimportant planet? Or is he what he appears to Hamlet? Is he perhaps both at once? Is there a way of living that is noble and another that is base, or are all ways of living merely futile? If there is a way of living that is noble, in what does it consist, and

how shall we achieve it? Must the good be eternal in order to deserve to be valued, or is it worth seeking even if the universe is inexorably moving towards death? . . .

"The studying of these questions, if not the answering of them, is the business of philosophy."[1]

It is not our purpose here to discuss *how* Bertrand Russell formulates the basic questions of philosophy and which of these questions he leaves out of his list. It would seem that these questions are mostly formulated in such a way that any correct answer to them is inconceivable. The philosophy of Marxism formulates these questions differently and does not, of course, confine itself to recognising their unavoidability. Dialectical and historical materialism solves these and other philosophical problems in alliance with natural science and the humanities.

Russell and the philosophers who have transferred their allegiance from positivist nihilism to a recognition of the inevitability of "metaphysics" adopt a different stand. In his efforts to avoid the dogmatism of the theologists, and dogmatism in general, Russell arrives at scepticism and moderate pessimism, which he sees as the only general position worthy of the philosopher (and the scientist in general). The theoretical formulation of this position is as follows. "Uncertainty, in the presence of vivid hopes and fears, is painful, but must be endured if we wish to live without the support of comforting fairy tales. It is not good either to forget the questions that philosophy asks, or to persuade ourselves that we have

[1] B. Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, pp. 10-11.

found indubitable answers to them. To teach how to live without certainty and yet without being paralysed by hesitation, is perhaps the chief thing that philosophy, in our age, can still do for those who study it."[1] A good many people would be prepared to take these words as the ultimate in wisdom, although it seems that in the state of uncertainty in which we are supposed to live, between the comforting fairy tale and the paralysis of hesitation which this British philosopher so rightly deplores, there is no room left for taking any important decisions at all.

We have examined various interpretations of the word "wisdom" in its relation to the origin and development of philosophy. In view of the multiplicity of meanings the word may suggest, it is probably better not to attempt any set definition. The innumerable meanings which it has acquired in the course of history and retains to this day, and which cannot therefore be discounted, would make any such definition purely arbitrary from the standpoint of the history of philosophy, whose function is to sum up the historical development of the philosophical conceptions of wisdom. However the mere enumeration of the semantic meanings of this word and recognition of the fact that these meanings bear some relation to one another are bound in one way or another to lead to a concept. Without claiming to give a definition, I would advocate regarding wisdom as a fact and not a figment, as a fact that can be understood and theoretically defined in conceptual form. In this case wisdom may be understood as the generalisation of the multifarious knowledge and experience of the

[1] Ibid., p. 11.

human race, a generalisation formulated as the principles of cognition, evaluation, behaviour and action. This is, of course, a too general definition, but it does help to move on from the original meaning of the word "philosophy" to an examination of the specific nature of philosophical knowledge.

Chapter Two
MEANING OF THE QUESTION "WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?"

1. PHILOSOPHY AS A PROBLEM FOR ITSELF

There are some questions that cannot be answered by the people who ask them but can be answered by others. There are some questions that have many answers. If one of these answers is correct, the solution to the problem is to choose the correct answer. This choice cannot be made blindfold. How then is one to know whether one has chosen correctly?

In philosophy there are hosts of different answers to the question "What is philosophy?". These answers cannot be described either as correct or as incorrect. The point is that every answer to a given question is above all an answer to another, more particular question. Thus, Aristotle's definition of philosophy is essentially a definition of Aristotle's own philosophy. But to what extent does Aristotle's philosophy, or that of any other philosopher, represent an authentic expression of the essence of philosophy which, as we know, is subject to historical change? A rose is a plant, but not all plants are roses. As the history of philosophy shows, nearly all philos-

ophers have been convinced that their teaching is a genuine expression of the unchanging essence of philosophy.

So, if there are many answers to the question "What is philosophy?", its solution cannot be reduced to choosing the most correct of the available answers. What we must do is investigate this great variety of answers and, in so doing, we shall probably find that both the questions and its numerous answers compel us to take a look at the multiform reality which philosophy seeks to understand. Then, in order to find the answer to a question which overfrequent repetition has made distasteful to philosophers it will be necessary not so much to compare the available answers as to investigate the *relation* of philosophical awareness to man's everyday and historical experience, to the so-called specialised sciences, to social needs and interests, because only the investigation of this historically changing relationship can explain both the fundamental nature of the question itself and the incompatibility of the various answers to it.

When the question "What is consistency?" is asked, we are obviously concerned with the meaning of a term. When people ask "What is it?", they usually point to the object that evoked the question, in which case we have no difficulty in answering if, of course, we happen to know what the object in question is.

Needless to say, the question "What is it?" may be purely rhetorical, but then it expresses rather the emotional state of the questioner and probably requires no answer at all. In some cases the question "What is it?" refers to a phenomenon that has been discovered but not yet studied. A description may then provide the answer to

the extent that the phenomenon is observable. If the phenomenon cannot be described or a description is of little use, the question remains open because we simply do not have the necessary empirical data for a satisfactory answer.

Things are quite different in philosophy. The meaning of the question "What is philosophy?" is bound up with the meaning of all philosophical questions in general and with the position philosophy has held throughout the millennia, and with the situation it is in today.

Of course, the question "What is philosophy?" may be an expression of the kind of casual interest that will always be satisfied by any *definite* answer. For instance, a tourist may ask about a building that happens to catch his eye. He receives an answer, makes a note of the *name* of the building and goes on to the next name. This is the kind of casual interest evinced by the educated person who asks about philosophy merely because it is something that is being talked about at the moment. Some educated people like to have concise answers to all questions that are likely to be raised in current conversation; they simply don't want to find themselves at a loss. But when it is the philosophers who ask themselves the question "What is philosophy?", we can have no doubt that they are asking about the meaning of their own intellectual life, and even whether it has any meaning at all. To a great extent the fact that philosophers are asking themselves this question means that they are aware of the need to justify the existence of philosophy, to prove its actual *raison d'être*. This means that doubt is being cast on the validity, if not of philosophy in general, at least on most of its past or still existing species. Evidently,

then we must study the origin of the specific differences between philosophies. Their historical origin is proved by facts. But are not these differences immutable? Until we have succeeded in proving the opposite, the question "What is philosophy?" will continue to sound like Pontius Pilate's famous question "What is truth?".

We experience no particular difficulty in answering such questions as "What is Schelling's philosophy?", "What is Nietzsche's philosophy?" or "What is the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre?" Not because these are simple questions but because their content may be strictly defined. But to answer the question "What is philosophy?" we must break away from that which distinguishes Schelling, Nietzsche and Sartre and many other philosophers from one another. But what is left after such an abstraction which rules out the distinctions between one philosophy and another? Abstract identity? But this is only an instance of concrete identity, whose significance is directly related to the significance of the distinction it implies.

The existence of a host of incompatible philosophies makes the solution of the problem "What is philosophy?" extremely difficult. But this very circumstance testifies to the fact that the difficulty of answering increases in proportion to the availability of the factual data for its solution. Unlike the non-specialists in philosophy, the philosophers have these data at their disposal. So to them the question "What is philosophy?" appears particularly difficult. Thus the question has a different ring for the student who is just embarking on a course of philosophy and for the philosophers themselves, who are not outside philosophy, who put the question to themselves,

and who realise that the answer cannot simply be referred to in a textbook.

Some educated people who regard philosophy as an occupation too serious or too exhausting to devote their leisure to it, and yet not serious enough to claim any of their working hours, are badly upset upon discovering that many notions, beliefs, concepts and truths that never gave them any cause for doubt turn out to be unclear, uncertain, and unsound as soon as they come up for discussion by qualified philosophers. They feel they have been cheated, when they find themselves deprived of the carefree certainty of what they imagined to be self-evident. And yet throughout the history of philosophy, an edifice in which every outstanding thinker instead of building the next storey begins once again to lay a new foundation, there are in fact no notions, concepts or truths that are not open to question. Questions that have been declared solved (and often actually have been solved) constantly revert to the status of problems. Is this not the reason why the question "What is philosophy?" has been discussed in philosophy from the time of its beginning to the present day?

All outstanding philosophical doctrines *negate one another*. This is the empirical fact from which historico-philosophical science proceeds. This negation may be abstract, metaphysical or it may be concrete and dialectical, but it is negation that characterises *every* philosophical system and, hence, the specific nature of philosophy, despite the fact that its immediate implication is merely that some philosophical systems differ from others. These at first glance "antagonistic" relations between philosophical doctrines have always placed in doubt the unity of philosophical

knowledge. But if there are only philosophies and no philosophy, does not the question "What is philosophy?" lose all meaning? Is philosophy possible as a science? The significance of these questions has grown historically as the gap between various philosophical systems has widened. And the fact that the philosophical systems of the distant past are constantly re-emerging and developing in new ways gives even greater urgency to these questions, since it is not only the philosophical systems of a given historical period that oppose one another but all the philosophies that have ever existed.

In philosophy there is no such thing as a single definition of concepts, not even of the concept of philosophy itself. We know that Ludwig Feuerbach often used to declare: My philosophy is not a philosophy at all. But no one would ever think of asserting that Feuerbach was not a philosopher. The rise of Marxism as a philosophy denoted the *negation* of philosophy in the old sense of the term, the abolition of philosophising, as opposed to the positive sciences and practice. Nevertheless this old philosophy has continued to exist and to evolve new systems. This does not mean that the old philosophy has not been abolished, for this old philosophy is already a system of obsolete views.

In the positive sciences truth usually overcomes error in the course of a period of history that can be surveyed with relative ease, that is to say, it takes only so long as is needed to assimilate, check and look for fresh confirmation, and so on. The historico-philosophical process does not fall into this pattern. It is impossible to say how long will be needed for philosophical truth to triumph over philosophical error; some

philosophical truths established centuries ago still have not broken through the crust of prejudice. The reason for this lies not so much in philosophy as in the historically determined socio-economic conditions, which are not immune to change either in theory or practice. But whatever the reason, the fact still remains, and this forms, if not the philosophical, at least an extremely important source of the question "What is philosophy?".

It may appear that the incompatibility of most of the great philosophical doctrines, the incompatibility of the various interpretations of the very concept of philosophy makes it extremely difficult to distinguish philosophical questions from the non-philosophical. And yet philosophers of radically different schools usually agree with one another as to which questions may or may not be considered philosophical. No one would think of treating Lamarck as a philosopher because he wrote *The Philosophy of Zoology*, although certain philosophical questions are considered in this work. This applies not only to philosophers but to readers with a sound knowledge of philosophy, who are also quite capable of distinguishing the philosophical from the non-philosophical. What is more, when reading a non-philosophical work, such as a poem or a novel, they have little difficulty in picking out the philosophical ideas it contains and, when studying certain ostensibly philosophical works, are able to state with assurance that they lack philosophical ideas.

So it is probably easier to distinguish the philosophical from the non-philosophical than, say, the chemical from the physical. The distinguishing features of philosophical judgement are nearly

always self-evident, since a negative definition of philosophy (i.e., a definition of what does not constitute philosophy) is not usually hard to make. But the specific nature of philosophy still remains a problem. So the question "What is philosophy?" may be classed as one of the basic philosophical questions and as such, to be discussed not by those who know nothing about philosophy but by those who have dedicated themselves to its study. Thus it becomes a question not so much for others as for oneself. The posing of this question testifies to the development of philosophy's self-awareness, manifestation of its self-criticism.

Thus, philosophy differs essentially from other systems of knowledge in that it is constantly questioning itself as to its own nature, goal and terms of reference. This specific feature of philosophy was quite evident even in the days of Ancient Greece, when Socrates proclaimed as a philosophical credo the dictum of the Delphic oracle, "Know thyself". As is shown by the dialogues of Plato, this task always leads to discussion of the actual meaning of philosophy.

Hegel pointed out that the schools which followed Socrates' dictum "Know thyself" are investigating the "relation of thinking to being", trying to reveal the subjective side of human knowledge, in consequence of which "the subject of philosophy becomes philosophy itself as a science of cognition".[1] The development of philosophy in modern times has demonstrated even more impressively that philosophy's self-knowledge, the conversion of philosophy into a subject

[1] Hegel, *Works* in 14 volumes, Vol. 2, p. 91 (in Russian).

of special philosophical inquiry is the *sine qua non* of its fruitful development.[1]

It should not be assumed, however, that whenever a philosopher asks the question "What is philosophy?", the question always has one and the same implication, and it is only a matter of his being dissatisfied with the answers. In fact, what he is looking for is not a perfect definition but a new range of philosophical problems, which is counterposed to the old and is declared to be of great importance and actually defining the concept of philosophy.[2]

[1] Friedrich Schelling was right when he asserted that "the very idea of philosophy itself is the result of philosophy which as an infinite science is also the science of itself". (*Schellings Werke*, Erster Hauptband. Jugendschriften 1793-1798. München, 1927, S. 661.) Of course philosophy turns out to be a "science of itself" not because it is an "infinite science", which embraces everything. The essence of the question, however, which Schelling did express correctly, is that the idea of philosophy is the result of its *historical* development, and the contradictory content of this idea is the reflection of the actual contradictions of the development of philosophy and of all that determines both the form and the content of its development.

[2] When Fichte flatly declares that there are probably not more than half a dozen people in the world who know what philosophy actually is he is, of course, referring to the philosophical questions raised by his own philosophy which, so he believes, turn philosophy into a genuine science capable of helping to bring about a reasonable reformation of human life. Fichte declares that the primary task of philosophy is to answer the question "What is man's destiny, his purpose, in the Universe?". The final, culminating goal of "any philosophical investigation" is to answer the question "What is the purpose of the scientist or—which is the same thing, as we shall see later—the purpose of the highest and truest of men. . . ." (J. Fichte, *The Vocation of the Scholar.*) This understanding of philosophy as the science of man, and this understanding of man as the being who most adequately realises his ra-

Thus, discussion of the question "What is philosophy?" constantly discloses the enrichment of philosophy, the renewal of its range of problems by the history of mankind. This is why the question has retained its meaning throughout the centuries. In our day it becomes particularly relevant because man has acquired power over the mighty forces of nature and this, owing to the antagonistic nature of social relationships, is not only a blessing but also presents an unprecedented threat to the very existence of the human race.

The contemporary ideological struggle, which to some extent determines the course of historical events, again and again raises the old but eternally new questions of the meaning of human life and the "meaning of history", of the nature of man and his relations to the environment, to external nature and to himself, of freedom of will, responsibility and external determination, of progress, and so on. Those who maintain that philosophy is a historically outmoded means of comprehending empirical reality naturally declare these and other problems to be pseudo-problems. This attitude in contemporary bourgeois philosophy often turns out to be an indirect apology for "traditional", i.e., capitalist, relations. As for the thinkers who seek a positive solution to these philosophical questions, they ultimately realise the need for a radical solution of social problems. For them the question "What is philosophy?" coincides in some measure with the

tional social essence in science, signifies, in Fichte's view, that philosophy is a *scientific teaching*, i.e., the solution of the questions posed by Kant. Obviously this new understanding of the meaning and purpose of philosophy is at the same time a new positing of the question "What is philosophy?".

problem of the rational refashioning of the life of society.

The scientific and technological revolution, its astonishing achievements, contradictions, prospects and social consequences give rise to what are in effect philosophical problems. Present-day philosophical irrationalism takes a pessimistic view of the "monstrous" scientific and technical advances of the present age. Such philosophical laments over the "breakdown of technological civilisation", the "end of progress" and the inevitability of global disaster are closely connected with the question "What is philosophy?" because it implies an evaluation of human reason, of science. Thus this question, which in its original form arises from the empirical observation of a vast number of incompatible philosophical systems (in this form it is mainly of interest to philosophers), is today *growing* into a question of the historical destiny of mankind and thus becomes a social problem that concerns every thinking person. Now it is a matter of how far mankind is capable of understanding itself, of controlling its own development, of becoming the master of its fate, of coping with the objective consequences of its cognitive and creative activity.[1]

[1] The social significance of the question "What is philosophy?" receives special treatment in the work of Martin Heidegger. His line of reasoning runs approximately as follows: nuclear age, nuclear energy—inner essence of matter having some incomprehensible relation to all existence—determines our future. But the primary source of science is philosophy. Philosophy as the awareness of the unknowability of existence, this is the watchword that "seems to be written on the gates of our own history and, we would make so bold as to say, on the gates of the contemporary world-historic epoch, known as the nuclear age." (M. Heidegger, *Was ist das—die Philosophie?*, Tübingen, 1956, S. 15.) Heidegger, as often happens, allows himself to

2. HOW PHILOSOPHY DELIMITS, COGNISES AND DETERMINES ITSELF

The question "What is philosophy?" also asks what are the subject-matter, significance and limits of philosophical knowledge. No research, no science is possible without the ability to determine its own frame of reference. The clearer the subject, its problems and aims, and even its capabilities, the stricter the process of definition becomes.

For most of the specialised scientific disciplines, particularly the applied ones, the problem of self-delimitation solves itself empirically. Things become much more complicated with the so-called fundamental science,[1] where the subject

be diverted from the actual historical process, i.e., the antagonistic social relations in consequence of which the discovery of nuclear energy achieved practical realisation in the atomic bomb. The danger that the bomb presents for mankind stems, according to Heidegger, from the development of philosophy, from the desire to know the essence of existence. From this standpoint, which implies an obscurantist interpretation of scientific and technological progress and cognition in general, Heidegger examines the question "What is philosophy?" as an intimation of mankind's tragic fate. This "is not a historical question, which sets out to reveal how what is called 'philosophy' emerged and developed. This is a historical question in the sense that it is a fateful (geschickliche) question" (Ibid., S. 18).

[1] As E. K. Fyodorov proposes, one should include in the classification of sciences worked out by Engels "only the fundamental sciences, precisely because they investigate the basic (and varied) forms of the motion of matter". Philosophy, it would seem, could be included among the fundamental sciences but it does not investigate any specific form of the motion of matter. Nor can it be classed with the other, "non-fundamental" sciences which, as Fyodorov points out, "applied the results of the fundamental sciences to the study of specific natural objects". This fact alone makes philosophy a problem for itself.

of inquiry (and the frame of reference) cannot be strictly delimited. If, for example, mathematical, physical and chemical methods of research are being more and more widely applied outside the actual framework of mathematics, physics and chemistry, this not only indicates the significance of these methods for other sciences but also, to a certain, though inadequate extent, characterises the subject of mathematics, physics, etc. The questions "What is mathematics?", "What is physics?" strike no one as lacking in theoretical meaning. Discussion of how these questions should be treated may, of course, prove fruitless if they go no further than mere definitions, but they are undoubtedly effective when they touch upon the new problems, discoveries and methods that alter the scope of the given science and break down obsolete conceptions.

Not without reason Bertrand Russell wrote more than half a century ago: "One of the greatest triumphs of modern mathematics lies in the discovery of what mathematics actually is." This sounds paradoxical. Does this mean that till comparatively recently mathematicians *did not know* what mathematics was? And did this not prevent them from making outstanding discoveries? No definite answer can be given to these questions. Of course, they knew, but within limits that were to be enormously expanded by the latest discoveries, owing to which the former conceptions of the subject of this science became unsatisfactory and limited the prospects of its development.

The fact that mathematicians give different answers to the question "What is mathematics?" does not seem to worry them much. The discoveries made by some mathematicians are ac-

cepted by other mathematicians, regardless of whether they agree about how the concept of mathematics should be defined. In philosophy, on the other hand, where differences of opinion crop up all along the line, there can, of course, be no unanimity either over the question "What is philosophy?". This question thus becomes a problem and, in posing it, philosophers are compelled to explain why there are cardinal differences of opinion over the definition of a science (or field of knowledge) which all the participants in the argument agree that they are engaged in.[1]

One of the major triumphs of philosophy in the last hundred years or more of its existence lies in the discovery of what philosophy actually is. This discovery was made by Marxism and constitutes one of the paramount elements in the revolution in philosophy that was brought about by Marx and Engels. The significance of this discovery is made all the greater by the fact that the question of the subject of philosophy differs essentially from the same question applied to other sciences. Delimitation of the subject of inquiry in philosophy also differs from the analogous process in any other science. The very thing that makes philosophy different from other sciences is that it cannot confine itself to particular questions.

[1] "Why is it," Heinrich Rickert asks, "that philosophers talk so much about the concept of their science instead of working out the problems in their field like other scientists? They have not even reached agreement about the definition of their subject." (H. Rickert, "Vom Begriff der Philosophie" in: *Logos,* Tübingen, 1910/11, Band I, S. 1.) Rickert, of course, gives his solution to this question with which other philosophers are not in agreement, though not because they do not agree with his definition of the subject of philosophy, but because they uphold other philosophical views.

The self-delimitation that has taken place in philosophy consists primarily in excluding from its frame of reference a certain range of problems, namely, the problems dealt with by other specialised sciences. This process of elimination does not occur, however, at the will of the philosophers themselves, but according to the development of the specialised sciences. Philosophy has been freeing itself from particular questions (and thus delimiting itself) *historically* in the course of more than two thousand years. Does this means that philosophy, since it has been concerned with particular questions, has not been philosophy? Obviously not. Philosophy remained philosophy even when it was trying to answer questions that subsequently became the particular questions of physics, chemistry and so on. Today philosophy and the specialised sciences have largely completed the process of delimitation of their spheres of influence. Philosophy no longer deals with specialised problems, but the answers to these questions given by mathematics, physics, chemistry and other sciences are of enormous importance to philosophy, because without these answers philosophy cannot know itself and establish its identity.

Thus the question "What is philosophy?", which in the past arose because philosophy and the specialised sciences were not sufficiently delimited, now arises just because this delimitation has taken place. The processes of the differentiation and integration of scientific knowledge actually pose philosophical questions and intensify the need not only for philosophy to assimilate scientific achievements but also for philosophical

inquiry into the structure of scientific knowledge. Philosophy can cope with this task to the extent that it becomes a specific science.

It follows from this that the question of whether philosophy is a science, or whether it can become one, is one of the variants of the question "What is philosophy?". Some people hold that science is only a science because it deals with certain, particular questions. Science, however, is characterised not only by its "particular" subject but also by the means—the scientific means—of its inquiry. In this sense philosophy can and should be a science. The elaboration of philosophy as a specific science is a task that modern bourgeois philosophers tend to dismiss. Nevertheless a considerable number of philosophers hold their own views as to the vital importance of this task. One can therefore understand the anxiety expressed by the aged John Dewey in his last university lecture: "The most important question in philosophy today is, What is philosophy itself? What is the nature and function of the philosophical enterprise?"[1]

Present-day bourgeois philosophers quite often declare the concept of philosophy to be indefinable while stressing that the impossibility of answering the question "What is philosophy?" does not imply that it is a meaningless question. Only the neo-Thomists, and only the most orthodox at that, prefer not to exert themselves over this question and offer standard definitions instead. Regis Jolivet, for instance, defines philosophy as "natural (as opposed to theological.—*T.O.*) science

[1] M. Adler, *The Conditions of Philosophy. Its Checkered Past. Its Present Disorder, and Its Future Promise,* New York, 1965, p. VII.

concerning the first causes of things and their foundations".[1] This definition, of course, belongs not to Jolivet but to Aristotle, from whom it was borrowed by Thomas Aquinas. It is hardly necessary to prove that it is inapplicable to the majority of philosophical doctrines of the past and present since they directly or indirectly deny the possibility or necessity of metaphysical systems of the classical type.[2]

[1] R. Jolivet, *Vocabulaire de la philosophie,* Lion-Paris, 1946, p. 140.

[2] Admittedly, philosophers who do not obey the rules of the confessional are well aware that the question "What is philosophy?" is a real philosophical problem. Evidence of this is to be found in the shape of Adler's book *The Conditions of Philosophy,* which we shall discuss later, and also a work by Jose Mora *Philosophy Today.*

J. A. Hutchison, making out the philosophical case for Protestantism, seeks to prove that the answer to the question "What is philosophy?" can be supplied only by religion. "An integral part of the task of philosophy is to ask the questions: What is philosophy? What are its methods? What is its function in human life?" (J. A. Hutchison, *Faith, Reason and Existence,* New York, 1956, p. 10.) Hutchison, however, maintains that philosophy can answer neither this nor any of the other questions. "Philosophic problems never get solved; at best they are clarified, at worst muddied" (Ibid., p. 21). It is here, in Hutchison's view, that religion comes to the aid of philosophy because it is concerned with essentially the same questions. "The relations between philosophy and religion may be summarised by stating that all philosophies have religious foundations and religions have philosophical implications" (Ibid., pp. 28-29).

Whereas Jose Mora is fairly typical of the modern bourgeois philosophers in doubting the possibility of overcoming the hopeless pluralism of philosophical systems, J. A. Hutchison, hoping to solve this problem by making philosophy the handmaid of religion, expresses even more clearly the atmosphere of social crisis revealed in the very way bourgeois philosophers today approach the question of the meaning and implications of philosophy.

From our point of view the answer to the question "What is philosophy?" presupposes inquiry into the genesis and development of philosophical knowledge, the struggle between philosophical trends, changes in the subject and problems of philosophy, its relationship to the specialised sciences, its ideological function, and so on. Thus it is important to understand that we are in fact confronted not with *one* question but with a whole set of problems, the content of which has not remained unchanged in the course of history.

3. FIRST HISTORICAL FORM OF THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE

Inquiry into the historical process of the genesis of philosophy entails examination of the relationship between emergent philosophical knowledge and the fairly copious information about everyday experience that man already possessed in the ancient world. From the very first this relationship becomes a juxtaposition of philosophising, the search for truth alone, to both mythology and the pursuit of purely practical aims. I see the reason for this juxtaposition in the disappearance of the original *immediate* unity between knowledge and practical activity, i.e., the emergence of theoretical knowledge, which by its very nature is relatively independent of practical activity.

The emergence of theoretical knowledge both in the past and the present comes about only to the extent that knowledge can be relatively independent of practice. Geometry, judging by the etymology of the word, began as land surveying and became theoretical knowledge only after it began to acquire a relative independence from its practical function.

Today theory's relative independence of practice has grown considerably in comparison with the past. Indeed this is what enables modern natural science to launch new branches of industrial production, whose foundations have been laid by research not devoted to any practical goal, and by discoveries with no immediate applied significance. The unity of scientific theoretical knowledge and practice is a mediate unity, implying the existence of numerous intermediate links both in the sphere of scientific research and in practical activity. It is the absence of immediate unity (identity) between theoretical knowledge and practical activity that creates the need to implement the achievements of theoretical knowledge in production and social practice in general.[1]

[1] The theoretician's "aloofness" from immediate practical tasks should not be regarded as indifference to these tasks, to social and political problems. This is rather a *concentration* of attention, of intellectual interests and efforts, without which neither science nor philosophy can achieve any outstanding results reaching far in advance of current practice. The biologist studying the nervous system of the rain worm or the biochemical evolution of flowering plants is directly inspired by his thirst for knowledge, not by any notion of the possible practical use to be derived from his research. It should also be noted that certain theories (this refers mainly to philosophy) are highly important not so much to practice as to the development of other theories that may have direct practical application. The progressive division of labour inevitably results in some scientists' being concerned with "pure" theory while others develop, concretise, abstract theoretical propositions, and discover means of applying them in practice, which, of course, also entails theoretical research, the discovery of certain definite laws, and not merely the practical application of abstract theoretical propositions which generally cannot be directly applied.

Ancient Greece possessed no narrowly specialised scientists. The philosophers were the sole representatives of theoretical knowledge, and this knowledge was at a historical stage that ruled out any possibility of its being systematically applied in production or any other sphere of practical activity. The effective linking of theory and practice, and particularly their complex and, of course, contradictory unity are the product of the historical development of both theory and practice, and their interaction. This to some extent explains why the first philosophers regarded the cognitive function of philosophy as something totally unrelated to practical (including social) activity, why they regarded philosophy as a quest for knowledge for knowledge's sake. It is quite obvious that peoples' various practical (not only production but also political) activities in those days could not, of course, be based on theoretical knowledge. And philosophy —the most abstract of all forms of theoretical knowledge—plainly demonstrated these objective features of the historical process of the development of theoretical knowledge.

In Plato's *Theaetetus* Socrates explains that knowledge of separate objects and arts is not yet knowledge in itself. He even suggests that he who does not know what knowledge is in general can have no notion either of the craft of bootmaking or any other craft. Hence one can be a craftsman without having any notion of craft, i.e., possessing only manual skill. The philosopher on the other hand, according to Socrates, is interested in knowledge for its own sake, knowledge as such, regardless of its possible application. From this standpoint then philosophy has its roots in pure curiosity; it begins from wonder,

from questioning, from reasoning, the goal of which is truth, and not what is of practical utility.

Socrates, through whom Plato expresses his beliefs, is not exactly contemptuous of the knowledge of the craftsman and the farmer or of the knowledge and skill that are required for participation in public life. He simply maintains that this has nothing whatever to offer philosophy. In contrast to the Sophists, who taught philosophy as the ability to think, speak and persuade that is needed in intercourse with other people, Socrates declares that those who have a true calling for philosophy "...have never, from their youth upwards, known their way to the Agora, or the discastery, or the council, or any other political assembly; they neither see nor hear the laws or decrees, as they are called, of the state written or recited; the eagerness of political society in the attainment of offices—clubs, and banquets, and revels in the company of flute-girls—do not enter even into their dreams. Whether someone in the city is of good or base birth, what disgrace may have descended to any one from his ancestors, male or female, are matters of which the philosopher no more knows than can tell, as they say, how many pints are contained in the ocean. Neither is he conscious of his ignorance. For he does not hold aloof in order that he may gain a reputation; but the truth is that the outer form of him only is in the city; his mind, regarding all these things with disdain as of slight or no worth, soars—to use the expression of Pindar—everywhere 'beneath the earth, and again beyond the sky', measuring the land, surveying the heavens, and exploring the whole nature of the world and of every thing in its entirety, but

not condescending to anything which is within reach."[1]

Plato's philosopher, who in this case is expounding a belief that had already largely taken shape in the Ionic period of materialist philosophy, is so remote from all the daily cares and anxieties of man that his ignorance of what is known to all gives him the reputation of being a foolish person, and his helplessness in practical matters makes him an object of ridicule. "When he is reviled, he has nothing personal to say in answer to the incivilities of his adversaries, for he knows no scandals of anyone, and they do not interest him; and therefore he is laughed at for his sheepishness.... Hearing of enormous landed proprietors of ten thousand acres and more, our philosopher deems this to be a trifle, because he has been accustomed to think of the whole earth."[2]

One could cite similar passages from other

[1] *The Dialogues of Plato*, pp. 272-273.

[2] Ibid., pp. 273-274. Max von Laue saw this contemplative attitude of ancient Greek philosophy as the inspiration of theoretical inquiry that has retained its significance for the natural sciences today. "I also doubt," he wrote in his article "My Creative Path in Physics", "whether I should have devoted myself entirely to pure science if I had not come into close contact with Greek culture and the language of Ancient Greece, which is possible only in the classical gymnasium. Notwithstanding a few exceptions, it is from the Greeks that we are able to learn the joy of pure cognition." (Max von Laue, *Gesammelte Schriften und Vorträge*, Braunschweig, 1961, Bd. III, S. VII.) One can disagree with Laue over his appreciation of the role of a classical education and the contemporary significance of ancient Greek culture. But it is quite obvious that the meditations of the ancient Greek philosophers on the nature of philosophy reflect the conditions in which theoretical scientific knowledge in general is likely to arise.

philosophers of Ancient Greece but this is hardly necessary to prove the obvious truth that in ancient times theoretical knowledge in the form in which it then existed could not be the foundation for practical activity, limited though that activity was in those days. It is generally known, however, that the ancient conception of philosophy was largely shared by the philosophers of subsequent historical epochs, when the theoretical knowledge provided by mathematics and mechanics was already being applied in industry. Francis Bacon himself provides us with a striking example. He advocates all-round development and practical application of "natural philosophy" (natural science), which he virtually counterposes to metaphysics, i.e., philosophy in the traditional sense of the term. This for him remains lofty knowledge of the mind, which teaches us that "...it is a very plague of the understanding for vanity to become the object of veneration".[1] And Bacon is right in his way. Although philosophy always performed a definite social function, it was not and could not be the kind of theoretical knowledge that would provide a scientific basis for man's practical activity. In other words, the juxtaposition of philosophy to practice, which coincided with the emergence of philosophy, like the juxtaposition of philosophy to the positive sciences (which fully revealed itself in modern times, when these sciences broke away from philosophy), was connected with the objective logic of development of theoretical knowledge.

The point, of course, is not that philosophers did not want to solve practical problems, par-

[1] F. Bacon, *Novum Organum*, p. 87.

ticularly in the field of politics. The example of Plato, and especially his theory of the ideal state, as well as his practical political activity, indicates quite the opposite. The crux of the matter lies in the fact that philosophy was not and could not yet be a specific *scientific* form of theoretical knowledge. This was what Marx and Engels had in mind when they wrote: "For philosophers, one of the most difficult tasks is to descend from the world of thought to the actual world."[1] This helplessness of philosophy comes out especially clearly in the German classical idealists, whose teaching nevertheless suggested ways of converting philosophy into a specific science—philosophical science that was brought into being by Marxism.

4. PHILOSOPHY AS AN ALIENATED FORM OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

It would be a mistake to consider the juxtaposition of philosophising to practice, to everyday human pursuits, anxieties and interests, only on the epistemological plane, in relation to the theory of knowledge. This historically inevitable juxtaposition, which was progressive in the conditions of slave society, indirectly reflected the growing contradiction between mental and physical labour, the contradiction between free men and slaves, whose labour in the course of the development of ancient society gradually ousted the labour of small property-owners with the result that productive activity became a servile occupation, unworthy of the free man. The pursuit of theory was the free man's occupation, particularly as such pursuits were not yet, strictly speaking, labour, and certainly not productive labour. Mental labour in its most highly developed form, i.e., the theoretical, arises not as labour but as freedom from labour, as a subjective need, and not a necessity. However, certain specific features of this early theoretical activity probably express the specific features of theoretical inquiry in general.

The transition from the slave to the feudal social system brings no essential change in the juxtaposition between mental and physical labour, but the spiritual dictatorship of the Church destroys the cult of the theoretical contemplation of life that was evolved in ancient times. Bourgeois philosophy, which wins its spurs in the struggle against the religious apology for the feudal system, naturally reinstates the ancient notion of philosophy as a science of reason, the notion that rational human life is possible only thanks to philosophy. The inventors of the metaphysical systems of the 17th century seek to substantiate the characteristic conviction of the ancients that philosophy should be independent of practical life, a conviction that in reality reflects only the independence of practical life from philosophy.

The idealists counterpose "pure" theory to empiricism, thus recording to a certain extent a state of affairs that actually exists and elevating it to an immutable principle of philosophical knowledge and of the philosophical attitude to reality. In contrast to the idealists, the materialists condemn this juxtaposition of philosophy to empirical knowledge and advocate the alliance of philosophy with the natural sciences, thus directly expressing new trends in the development of

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, Moscow, 1964, p. 491.

theoretical knowledge stimulated by capitalist progress.

The juxtaposition of philosophy to empirical knowledge is only one side of the coin. Its other side, as we have already stressed above, is philosophical "elevation" over everyday practical life with its petty interests, cares and anxieties. This intellectual aristocratism, which constitutes the intimate kernel of philosophising, is quite understandable among representatives of the highly educated section of the ruling class of slave society. It also finds nourishing soil in feudal society, particularly in the Christian interpretation of this world as a place of vanity and transient concerns. But why does intellectual aristocratism become one of the basic philosophical traditions which can be easily traced in the development of bourgeois philosophy, even in the period when it is actively breaking into the social and political movement and raising the banner of struggle against the feudal system and its ideology? Can it be attributed to insufficient development of philosophical theory, condemning it forever to the contemplative attitude? This is probably only one of the reasons. The main reason, I believe, lies in the fact that the "contemplative nature" of philosophy and its alleged impartiality, are conditioned by the position of the ruling classes in an antagonistic society, for whom the social *status quo* is not a historically transient stage in the development of society, but the "natural" condition of civilisation. Characteristically, the ideologists of the pre-revolutionary bourgeoisie recognised the necessity for the destruction of the feudal system as a necessity for the restoration of natural human relations and realisation of the demands of pure

reason, which stood in opposition to the selfish partisanship and particularism of the ruling feudal estates.

Thus the apparent impartiality of pre-Marxist philosophy is just as much an objective fact as is any appearance, which, as we know, contradicts essence but at the same time expresses an essential contradiction. In this sense apparent impartiality, as an essential characteristic of a historically defined philosophical knowledge, deserves special investigation. Virtually all pre-Marxist philosophy shares this illusion and lives by it, so to speak. Understandably, then, the creation of the philosophy of Marxism, which is aware of and openly proclaims its partisanship, regarding partisanship as constituting the definiteness of philosophy, was a revolutionary break with a philosophical tradition sanctified by the millennia. But this break at the same time revealed the social essence of philosophising. On the other hand, the opponents of Marxism saw in this discovery of the social essence of philosophy the disavowal of philosophy. This notable fact indicates not only the class nature of bourgeois philosophy; it also characterises the contradictions in the historical process of the emergence of scientific philosophical knowledge.

The juxtaposition of philosophical consciousness to everyday life, as something alien to any lofty aspirations, implies yet another essential social element and stimulating theme of philosophising, which is not usually pointed out in special historico-philosophical studies. This juxtaposition reflects in its own peculiar way the emergence and spontaneous development of certain antagonistic contradictions of class society, contradictions which quite often horrify even the

representatives of the ruling classes. Consequently, the juxtaposition of philosophy to the historically defined practice of the slave, feudal and capitalist systems should be regarded positively.

To elucidate our proposition let us turn to the famous legend of Thales, as related by Plato: "I will illustrate my meaning by the jest which the clever witty Thracian handmaid is said to have made about Thales, when he fell into a well as he was looking up at the stars. She said, that he was so eager to know what was going on in heaven, that he could not see what was before his feet."[1] But Thales was indeed capable of knowing things that were remote. For example, he foretold the eclipse of the sun. Nor was he a stranger to practical pursuits, as Aristotle relates: "When Thales was reproached for his poverty on the ground that philosophy yielded no profit, Thales, so they say, foreseeing on the basis of astronomical data a rich harvest of olives, before the winter was over, invested a small sum of money which he had accumulated with the owners of all the oil mills in Milet and Chios; Thales struck a cheap bargain with the oil mills because no one was competing with him. When the time of the olive harvest came round, there was a sudden demand for oil mills. Thales then began to lease out the mills he had chartered at any price he wished to charge. Thus having amassed a large amount of money in this way, Thales proved that even philosophers may grow rich if they wish without difficulty, but that this is not where their interests tend."[2] Thales, however, did not continue the enterprise he had so

[1] *The Dialogues of Plato*, p. 273.
[2] *Politique d'Aristote*, Paris, 1950, pp. 27-28.

auspiciously begun but abandoned it and turned once again to philosophising, as it was then understood, i.e., as knowledge for knowledge's sake, although astronomy and geometry (they were then components of philosophy) also had practical significance. We know that Thales supervised the digging of a canal and solved certain other problems of a practical nature. But philosophising, according to ancient tradition, is elevated above all these mundane pursuits, and particularly self-interest, money-making and the desire for riches, since the essence of philosophy lies in a tireless quest for the ideal of knowledge and the life truly befitting man.

Let us consider this legend from the standpoint of the major social events of the time, which were specially studied by Engels in his work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Describing the decay of Greek society under the influence of the developing commodity-money relations, Engels points out that the mass of the free population of Attica, mainly small peasant farmers, were in fee to an insignificant group of rich men, to whom they were compelled to surrender five-sixths of their annual harvest as rent or to repay debts for mortgaged plots of land. If this was insufficient to repay the debt, the "debtor had to sell his children into slavery abroad to satisfy the creditor's claim. The sale of his children by the father—such was the first fruit of father rights and monogamy! And if the blood-sucker was still unsatisfied, he could sell the debtor himself into slavery. Such was the pleasant dawn of civilisation among the Athenian people".[1]

[1] K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Moscow, 1970, Vol. 3, p. 278.

Solon's reform abolished mortgages on land and prohibited penalties for debt that made the debtor the slave of the creditor. Solon, however, was not expressing the interests of the propertyless classes of Attica. A representative of the hereditary aristocracy, he was probably prompted by the sense of tribal unity deeply ingrained in the minds of all members of the tribal community. But this unity was incompatible with money-commodity relations, whose emergence brought into play, as Engels points out, men's lowest instincts and passions and developed them to the detriment of all their other qualities. "Naked greed has been the moving spirit of civilisation from the first day of its existence to the present time."[1] This insatiable lust for gain was subsequently idealised by some ideologists of the exploiting classes. Nearly all the ancient philosophers, however, sharply condemn greed, although the majority of them justify slavery. This condemnation of the lust for gain may be attributed to the fact that commodity-money relations had not yet become the dominant social relations that they were to become in the age of capitalism.

The bourgeois philosophers of the 17th-19th centuries, however, were very far from singing the praises of the profit motive. They also condemned greed, but now not because commodity-money relations had not yet taken the helm but, on the contrary, because capitalism was reducing all social relations to the one urge for profit. Hegel calls the society of the burghers ("bürgerliche Gesellschaft") the kingdom of poverty and calculation. This was no concession to feudal society, but an awareness of the humiliating status of philosophy in the realm of capital, where philosophy exists only as a specific form of non-productive labour.

Marx points out that capitalism is hostile to certain forms of spiritual activity. Is it surprising then that even these forms of spiritual activity, despite the fact that they *objectively* express the needs of capitalist progress, take up arms against its most deformed aspects? When Hegel wrote that "revulsion against the excitement of immediate passion indeed prompts one to take up philosophical study",[1] he was sincerely expressing his attitude to the capitalist reality of his day, even though bourgeois-democratic reforms seemed to him the culmination of world-historic progress.

We should not assume that the philosophers of the progressive bourgeoisie were prompted by the same motives as the capitalist entrepreneurs. Bourgeois philosophy (and art), in so far as it does not become an obvious apology for capitalism, strives to transcend the commonplaces of bourgeois life and in a sense actually succeeds in doing so.[2]

[1] K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 333.

[1] Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke,* Stuttgart, 1928, Bd. 11, S. 569.

[2] The social status of theoretical natural science was for a long time not so very different from that of philosophy. Its status changes radically when along with the technical sciences it becomes a mighty intellectual source of technical progress. Even so, the theoretical scientist constantly feels his *alienation* in the world of capitalist business. Albert Einstein's reflections on the reasons that prompt people to enter the shrine of scientific research are characteristic. The motives may vary, of course, but one

Thus the notions of the philosophers who believe that thanks to their theoretical activity they have risen above a world that does not inspire them (even though they may acknowledge it as the only possible world), have their real foundation in the antagonistic nature of social progress. "The *philosopher*," Marx says, "sets up himself (that is, one who is himself an abstract form of estranged man) as the *measuring-rod* of the estranged world."[1] But this very same philosopher, while remaining a thinker of the ruling or exploiting class, cannot comprehend the true source of the alienation of creative work. On the contrary, because of this alienation he feels he is psychologically independent of those social forces whose interests he expresses, often without experiencing any personal allegiance.

Philosophy as alienated social consciousness in antagonistic society, as Marx and Engels point out, "was only a transcendent, abstract expression of the existing state of affairs" and just because of "its *illusory distinction* from the world was bound to imagine that it had left far beneath it the existing state of affairs and the real world of people. On the other hand, since philosophy was in *reality* not distinct from the world, it could not pronounce upon it any *real judgement*, could not apply to it any real force

of the strongest "... is escape from everyday life with its painful crudity and hopeless dreariness, from the fetters of one's own ever shifting desires. A finely tempered nature longs to escape from personal life into the world of objective perception and thought." (A. Einstein, *The World as I See It*, New York, 1934, p. 20.) Note the similarity between this and Hegel's observation cited above.

[1] K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow, 1969, p. 149.

of discrimination and hence could not *practically* intervene in the course of events, and at best was obliged to content itself with practice *in abstracto*."[1] This observation is fundamentally relevant to our understanding of the organic connection between the contemplativeness, the apparent impartiality of philosophy, its alienated form of existence and its protest against alienated social relations.

5. SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS OR SCIENCE?

The correct posing of the question "What is philosophy?" also entails clearing up the relative distinction between the sciences and the forms of social consciousness, since philosophy is directly related to both. The sciences are defined (and distinguished from one another) by the subject they investigate; it is the subject of a science that determines its social function. Accordingly, the social function of physics differs essentially from that of political economy.

With regard to the forms of social consciousness, it should be noted that they are distinguished from one another exclusively by the character of the social function which they perform, and are thus defined by it. It is hardly necessary to prove that art has its own social function, religion its own social function, and moreover this difference of function cannot be attributed to a difference in their subject of inquiry, in the first place because art and religion are not concerned with inquiry, and secondly, because their specific nature is not defined by any subject whatever.

[1] K. Marx, F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 43 (in Russian).

"Consciousness (das Bewusstsein)," Marx and Engels say, "can never be anything else but conscious existence (das bewusste Sein), and people's existence is the real process of their life."[1] This proposition is equally applicable to social and individual consciousness. Consciousness of existence differs essentially from investigation of existence—nature and society. Consciousness exists before any investigation takes place, and does not depend on it. The fact that the results of inquiry become part of consciousness does not do away with the qualitative difference between science (inquiry) and consciousness. Morals, for example, are a form of social consciousness. They have no particular subject of inquiry, but they reflect social existence. Ethics has a subject of inquiry, and that subject is morals.

Thereby, because social consciousness reflects social existence it does not become *cognition* of social existence; for it to become cognition there must be inquiry, research, which does not always take place and, of course, does not always achieve its goal. The cognition of social existence, like any cognition, has no limits. As for social consciousness, within the framework of historically defined social existence it acquires a relatively perfect form, which changes essentially not in accordance with the progressive process of cognition, but mainly because of deep-going socio-economic transformations. This is what Marx means when he points out that in studying social revolutions "it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science,

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 37.

and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out".[1] It stands to reason that social consciousness, once it has become the subject of scientific inquiry, may in certain historical conditions become scientifically substantiated consciousness, which does not, however, exclude its specific nature. We shall examine this question in particular when we analyse the ideological function of philosophy.

One should not, of course, metaphysically juxtapose consciousness and knowledge. Consciousness of social existence implies knowledge of it, but this is not yet scientific knowledge because in consciousness no line is drawn between objective content and subjective imagination. It is also clear that knowledge acquired through inquiry also becomes part of the content of consciousness. But this dialectical unity of consciousness and knowledge does not eliminate the essential difference between them.

In science not only objective reality—natural or social—but also its reflection are subjected to analysis, which separates the true from the untrue; the latter, however, also reflects reality, although in an inadequate form. Therefore science is a peculiar type of reflection, which with the aid of its methods of research and testing forms a kind of theoretical filter. This cannot be said of the forms of social consciousness, if, as has already been stated, they do not become specific scientific forms of consciousness of social existence.

[1] K. Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1971, p. 21.

The position which philosophy occupies in the history of man's intellectual development is determined in no small degree by its being both a form of social consciousness and an inquiry; in this latter respect it is, in principle, similar to any other science. As a form of social consciousness philosophy has fulfilled, and is still fulfilling, its social function, analysis of which does not, of course, reveal its subject of inquiry. In this sense, i.e., as a form of social consciousness, it became for the first time the subject of scientific inquiry only thanks to Marxism.

Pre-Marxian philosophers had no notion of philosophy as a form of social consciousness. They conceived of philosophy as a science or a super-scientific form of knowledge, independent of historically determined social relations. Hence the illusion of philosophy's "impartiality", which has not only economic but also theoretical roots. The concept of social consciousness was evolved by Marxism, by the materialist understanding of history, which singled out *social* existence as the special object of scientific philosophical inquiry.

The emergence and development of scientific philosophy became possible thanks to the creation of a scientific form of social consciousness, i.e., Marxism. The social function of Marxist philosophy is inseparably linked with its subject of inquiry, with the most general laws of the mutation and cognition of all natural, social and human existence. Marxist study of the development of philosophy entails overcoming the illusions that blur philosophy's vision of its own true essence. For the first time the history of philosophy has been understood in its relation to social needs, socio-economic processes, and the class struggle. The materialist understanding of history has become the scientific theoretical basis for philosophy's self-consciousness, the critical summing up of its own development.

The concept of development, since it has only the *general* attributes inherent in any process of development, would appear to be inapplicable to the historico-philosophical process. Philosophy's development has so many peculiarities of its own that a one-sided conception of these peculiarities quite often leads bourgeois philosophers to deny the fact of its development altogether. Study of the specific nature of development of philosophical ideas is a special task, which cannot be handled within the framework of this book. But to obtain an answer to the question we have posed we must at least have a general notion of this process.

It is paradoxical that philosophy arose historically as a pre-scientific form of scientific knowledge. For centuries philosophy was considered the chief science or at least the predominant element in man's intellectual history. The development of the specialised sciences and the elaboration of the concept of scientificality have shown, however, that this concept cannot be applied to philosophy, to the mother of the sciences. The history of science presents a clear picture of systematic progress. In the history of philosophy such a pattern of advancing knowledge can be traced only by means of special inquiry, whose necessary assumptions are usually rejected by the majority of philosophical doctrines.

Without going into this question in any greater detail, we will assume that the specific nature of the historical development of philosophy from its inception to the emergence of the scientific philosophy of Marxism may be defined as "spiral

development", i.e., a form of progression which involves constant return to initial theoretical positions but at the same time forward movement that shapes the prerequisites for the conversion of philosophy into a specific science. These prerequisites, however, can be realised only in a kind of historical conditions that occur independently of the work of philosophers, that is to say, socio-economic conditions, the accumulation of historical experience, the development of the sciences concerning nature and society.

Formation is the unity of the processes of inception and destruction, the transition from one state to another, the necessary moment of development. Hegel's understanding of formation is characterised mainly by his recognition of its reversibility; whereas he regarded development as change that is irreversible in character. Admittedly, Hegel made an absolute of the reversibility inherent in formation because he was examining the abstractions "pure being" and "nothing", which, according to his doctrine, are constantly transmuting into each other. But it was the same Hegel who argued that the result of this transmutation is the emergence of a *definite* existence, thus acknowledging that the reversibility of formation is not absolute, but relative.

The inconsistency of Hegel's characterisation of formation is overcome by the philosophy of Marxism, which characterises this process as transition from one definite quality into another, in view of which the extent to which formation may be reversed is limited by its content and conditions.

Formation as a *moment* of development should not be understood as a process occurring in a minimal amount of time. The formation of class

society, both the feudal and capitalist formations, took place over a number of centuries. The processes of formation in animate and inanimate nature are, of course, even more prolonged, taking millions of years.

Lenin, in discussing the transitional period from capitalism to socialism, points out that this period is characterised by the existence of qualitatively different, even mutually exclusive social structures. The same may be said, by analogy, of philosophy. Examination of the historical process of the formation of scientific philosophical theory reveals at all stages of the development of philosophy coexistence and struggle between faith and knowledge, between superstitions and scientific opinions, between unfounded, sometimes completely fantastic notions and real discoveries. Within the framework of the historical process of the formation-development of philosophy there are reversions that would be impossible in the development of scientific knowledge, where one and the same mistake is not repeated or, at least, not in the same manner. In philosophy, on the other hand, everything quite often seems to begin all over again, although, of course, repeated progressions from points already passed in the development of philosophy place limits on reversion to the old, on the "arbitrariness" of formation. The progress of philosophy gradually restricts the bounds of reversibility but never eliminates it altogether; in this reversibility there is also a positive element, namely the return to old questions on the basis of the new data provided by science and historical experience.

The pre-Marxian philosophers, owing to their theoretical and class limitations, generally failed to understand the specific nature of the historico-

philosophical process and the role of formation in the development of philosophical knowledge. Their own philosophical doctrines seemed to them to have originated in their own heads, so to speak. These philosophers created complete systems of philosophical knowledge, and the more complete they were the more quickly they were destroyed by subsequent development.

Alexander the Great's empire collapsed soon after the death of its founder, the struggle of the diadochs being only the inevitable manifestation of its internal weakness. Philosophical "empires" also collapse, and the wider the sphere of reality they attempt to "conquer" without sufficient means of establishing themselves there, the faster they collapse.

Scepticism (in its various forms, from that of the ancient Greeks to Humism and 19th and 20th century positivism) is a historically inevitable retreat of philosophy from the positions it had allegedly conquered, a retreat which is conducted, so to speak, in perfect order, but is not generally accompanied by understanding of the true causes of philosophy's defeat.

Thus the history of pre-Marxist philosophy proceeds not steadily forward from one conquest to another; philosophy constantly *zigzags* in time, that is to say, tries in different ways to accomplish a task of which it is still not clearly aware. Philosophy gropes historically for its subject and is constantly diverted from it, although the development of the positive sciences gradually and unswervingly defines the limits of philosophical inquiry, which speculative idealism sought to establish *a priori*.

The progress achieved in philosophy in the course of its historical development is resumed

not only positively, i.e., as theoretical propositions which retain their significance even though they may be contested or repudiated by opponents, but also in the form of increasing numbers of dissected, differentiated propositions, which reveal new problems and directions of inquiry, indicate difficulties and the possible ways of overcoming them, and disclose the inadequacy or faultiness of previous solutions, which does not, however, prevent repeated attempts to return to a path already discredited by the development of philosophy. These retrogressive movements, this stubborn upholding of errors that have already been overcome give philosophical expression to the aspirations of reactionary and conservative social classes, and also the inconsistency of the progressive forces.

The inception of the philosophy of Marxism brings a qualitative change in the character of the development of philosophical knowledge. This development still has certain specific features conditioned by the peculiarity of philosophical questions, which are never "closed", because new scientific data and historical experience make it possible constantly to enrich the solutions to philosophical problems that have already been achieved. The process of formation, which predominated in pre-Marxian philosophy, becomes a subordinate process in the development of the philosophy of Marxism. Thus formation is organically included in the process of development of scientific philosophy, which no longer throws away what it has won but proceeds unswervingly forward, conquering new "territory", perfecting its methods of inquiry, taking into account the achievements of other sciences and penetrating deeper into the subject of its inquiry. The history

of Marxist philosophy is a striking example of this positive process of development. It shows that Marxist philosophy is not something static and immutable, created once and for all the millennia to come in the development of the human race; it is its own principle maintained throughout its subsequent philosophical development and constantly enriched by new historical experience and the achievements of the specialised sciences.

On the other hand, the bourgeois philosophy that has survived in various changing forms since the emergence of dialectical and historical materialism, remains, owing to its ideological hostility to Marxism, in this historically obsolete process of formation, i.e., in a state of motion from an "existence" which is not yet real existence, toward "nothing" and then back again, galvanising the philosophical doctrines of the distant past and interpreting old questions in the spirit of the new ideological needs generated by the crisis of the capitalist system.

The spirit of denial of the possibility of positive knowledge in philosophy becomes the prevailing tendency in bourgeois philosophy from the second half of the 19th century onwards. Its development is at the same time a process of decay, which may not prevent the posing of new questions and even the more profound examination of certain traditional ones, but does rule out the formation of a scientific philosophical world view; the world view provided by dialectical and historical materialism is naturally unacceptable even to the most outstanding bourgeois philosophers of modern times, since they remain *bourgeois* thinkers. This is what lies at the bottom of the characteristic modern bourgeois philosophy of denial

that any philosophical science is possible. The contradiction between the scientific philosophy of Marxism and modern bourgeois philosophy, which denies the principle of scientificality, makes the traditional question "What is philosophy?" appear to be an insoluble problem, although it has already been solved by the historical process of the formation and development of dialectical and historical materialism.

6. CRITICISM OF THE EXISTENTIALIST INTERPRETATION OF THE QUESTION "WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?"

We have already mentioned that Martin Heidegger interprets the question we are considering as decisive not only for philosophy but for civilisation itself. Whatever our attitude to this obviously insufficiently substantiated, abstract posing of the question, it is undoubtedly distinguished by an awareness of the question's truly outstanding importance. Unlike other philosophers, Heidegger does not try to reduce the problem to a search for some more or less acceptable definition of philosophy. He is also well aware that the posing of this question by the philosophers themselves, their dissatisfaction with the existing answers and their constant returning to the original question shows that what we are discussing is not merely the difference between philosophy and non-philosophy, but the origin and essence of philosophical knowledge itself, the status of philosophy and perhaps even its very existence. Heidegger says, "If this question is not to remain merely a subject for casual conversation, philosophy as philosophy must become a problem

worthy of our serious attention. But is it? And if it is, to what extent?"[1]

Heidegger argues against the one-sided rationalistic interpretation of philosophy as the science of reason, founded on the fundamental juxtaposition of reason and intellect (German classical idealism). He sees the inadequacy of this understanding of philosophy in the fact that it presumes the meaning of reason. He also tries to differentiate his position from those who see philosophy as some kind of irrational knowledge; in order to single out the sphere of the irrational one must also define the limits of reason. But this is just where the problem lies. No one has yet decided what reason is. Perhaps it has merely usurped the title of "lord of philosophy"? What right has it to the title? Who gave it that right? It may be that what we call reason is merely a sideshoot of two thousand years' development of philosophy, in which case reason is not the source of philosophy, but vice versa. And since the history of philosophy is the history of its gropings in quest of truth, is not reason in fact groping? The aberrations of human thought? Is not thought then something fundamentally different from reason? Is not reason a degraded form of thinking?

Heidegger tries to straddle both rationalism and irrationalism, but he develops a fatal list in the direction of the latter. This can be seen not so much in his criticism of the rationalist cult of reason, in which there is a fair portion of truth, as in his obviously anti-intellectual conception of indefinable irrational existence. Heidegger tries to trace the sources of this conception in the teaching of the early Greek philosophers, and suggests that we return to the original Greek definition of philosophy, from which it, in a certain sense, begins its existence. "The Greek word as a *Greek* word suggests a way."[1]

[1] M. Heidegger, *Was ist das—die Philosophie?*, S. 19.

Heidegger stresses that the definition of philosophy as *love* of wisdom has nothing to do with love. "Feelings, even the finest of them, have nothing in common with philosophy. Feelings, as people say, are something irrational."[2] Then what does this first of all definitions mean? Apparently not so much love as wisdom, as the unattainable object of this love? But Heidegger goes on to discuss "logos", which is everything—word and fate and all-determining being. The Greeks' use of the word "logos" indicates, according to Heidegger, that for the Greeks man and human consciousness were not yet juxtaposed to existence, being, but existed within it and were themselves existence. Thus, according to Heidegger, the Greek "logos" implies that there was as yet no polarisation of subject and object, of consciousness and being, that the rupture had not yet occurred which, according to the existentialist conception, has since determined the history of Western philosophy, science and civilisation as a whole. Hence the conclusion that philosophy—of this the first Greek philosophers were aware, but immediately aware, and therefore were not philosophers but something bigger—is the correspondence of human existence to existence or being as the hidden basis of all that exists both as appearance and object. "The answer to the question 'What is philosophy?' lies in our coming into

[1] Ibid., S. 12.
[2] Ibid., S. 9.

accord with that to which philosophy is heading. And that is: the being of that which exists".[1]

Man, according to Heidegger, is essentially always and everywhere in accord with being, but he is not aware of this, because he is immediately in the power of that which exists—the objects that surround him, impersonal human relations—and therefore does not consider the demands of being. Philosophy is a return to one's own self, to primeval being, the conscious realignment of one's existence with it, realisation of the existential human essence.

If in ancient Greek philosophy, according to Heidegger, the essence of language was immediately revealed as "logos", subsequent philosophy lost this initial intuition of being, and modern man can recover it only by constantly returning to the ancient Greek source of philosophy. "The specially impropriated and unfolding accord, which answers (entspricht) the demand of the being of that which exists is philosophy. We learn to know what philosophy is when we discover how, in what way philosophy exists. It exists as a means of accord, accord that is in harmony with the voice of the being of that which exists. This accord (Ent-sprechen) is a statement (ein Sprechen). It is at the service of *language*."[2]

[1] M. Heidegger, *Was ist das—die Philosophie?*, S. 33.

[2] Ibid., S. 43. Marx and Engels, criticising the speculative idealist obscuring of reality, point out: "The problem of descending from the world of thoughts to the actual world is turned into the problem of descending from language to life." (K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 491.) Reviving the speculative idealist tradition, Heidegger converts the philosophical problems of reality into a riddle of language. Unlike the advocates of linguistic philosophy, for whom the analysis of language becomes a means of emasculating the true substance of philosophical problems, Heidegger applies this type of analysis and, in so doing, merely makes a mystery of them.

Thus philosophy is a constant questioning about the being of that which exists, man's striving to find a path to his being, which at the same time is being in general, an attempt to coordinate his existence with it. This is never anything more than a questioning, than an attempt, because being is unknowable. Unknowable, too, is the being which is we ourselves; the most philosophy can achieve, and then only if it is filled with the true (existentialist) mood—is to be aware that being *is*, that it is the being of all that exists. Thought, language and other intellectual activity—none of these can break through to being; they get caught up in existence and, only by being aware that this is merely existence, can we listen to the "voice of being", heed it and respond to its call.

The fact is not hard to grasp that being in Heidegger's philosophical vocabulary is still the same Kantian unknowable "thing-in-itself". But in contrast to Kant, Heidegger believes that philosophy only has meaning in so far as it turns away from the knowable that which exists and tries to understand (not to know, which is impossible) the presence of the unknowable being of that which exists, thus realising that that which exists, precisely because it exists, is not being.

In this way Heidegger philosophically substantiates and gives his blessing to the alienation of philosophy from science—the basic trend of development (decline) of contemporary idealism. The sciences are interpreted as flourishing and complacent knowledge of that which exists, which

is not being and thus has no meaning. The sciences are therefore an escape from the being of that which exists, a timid denial of being and a self-deception. Philosophy is radically opposed to science if, of course, it follows Heidegger's categorical imperative of "fundamental ontology". It has no subject-matter in the sense that the sciences have a subject-matter because its subject-matter is being, which cannot be mastered since we ourselves belong to it. Being therefore is undefinable. So, too, is philosophy. It is not knowledge but consciousness, and what is more, entirely individual, since social consciousness is totally committed to that which is impersonal and estranged from being.

Philosophy, Heidegger maintains, must repudiate all positive inquiry into any reality; philosophy is the denial of any vital meaning of any knowable reality and any theory (science) which studies it. Philosophising does not overcome the alienation of the human personality; its sole purpose is to overcome the illusory notion that this alienation can be overcome. This "solution" to the question of the essence of philosophy, as one can easily appreciate, turns out to be a brief exposition of the existentialist philosophy. However, if we ignore Heidegger's characteristically irrationalist interpretation of being, the conclusions he reaches basically coincide with the beliefs of some bourgeois philosophers that human life cannot be essentially changed, that social progress is no more than an illusion, and that the awareness of this fact, which assumes that we have repudiated the scientific and technological "superstitions" of our time, is the highest achievement of philosophy. This means that the crisis of idealist philosophising is portrayed as the final

solution to the sought-after initial question of philosophy.

We have considered at some length Heidegger's pretentious attempt to interpret the question "What is philosophy?". As we know, Heidegger regards his "fundamental ontology" as a radical departure from all previous philosophical tradition, or to be more exact, the tradition beginning from Socrates. And yet Heidegger's consideration of the question "What is philosophy?" shows that he has remained entangled in the nets of the speculative-idealist approach to the problem. He gives no concrete examination of the development of philosophy, its place in social life, or its relation to the specialised sciences. The fact that philosophy arises as theoretical knowledge in its pre-scientific form, and then stands in opposition to the specialised sciences which have broken away (or taken shape independently) from it, is absolutised by Heidegger, who obviously fails to notice that the philosophical knowledge that is contrasted with the specialised sciences is by no means independent of them. In arguing the unknowability of the being of that which exists, and thus erecting an ontological foundation under his juxtaposition of philosophy to scientific knowledge, Heidegger actually ignores social being, which to a significant extent determines philosophy. The golden age of philosophy, he believes, lies in the past, and what it must do today is reach back to this ancient Greek source. The beginning of philosophy is regarded as the highest point of "existential understanding" because "existential understanding" is metaphysically juxtaposed to knowledge, to inquiry. Inquiry, research is concerned with objects; "existential understanding" is an entirely special cog-

nition of that which exists, stemming from "primeval understanding", from the *a priori*, from that which precedes the perception of external objects, which, according to Heidegger, are something derivative, shaped by some specifically human means of cognition and existence. Repeating the mistakes of most of the pre-Marxist philosophers, Heidegger interprets the definitions characterising his philosophy as the universal definition of every true philosophy in general.

Abstraction, anti-historicism, idealism, deep-seated incomprehension of the role of materialism in the development of philosophy, illusions concerning the impartiality of philosophy, the romantic idealisation of its alienation—all these long since obsolete features of speculative philosophising we find in Heidegger in a form that has been rejuvenated with the help of phenomenology. The failure of Heidegger's attempt at *understanding* is inseparable from the existentialist, idealist interpretation of history, nature, man and cognition.

Dialectical and historical materialism dispels the mystification that surrounds the problem of philosophy, and deals with it by investigating the actual philosophical problems that have been posed by philosophy and the sciences, by the history of mankind and contemporary historical experience.

Chapter Three
PHILOSOPHY AS A SPECIFIC FORM OF COGNITION

1. QUALITATIVE DIVERSITY OF KNOWLEDGE

Investigation of the fact of knowledge is one of the paramount tasks of philosophy. But philosophy itself is a definite fact of knowledge, which can be analysed to discover its specific features. In this chapter we shall attempt to consider the special nature of the philosophical *form* of knowledge. But is such an approach to the question justified, if we have in mind not the past, but the present and future of philosophy? Is not this special nature merely an expression of the immaturity of philosophical knowledge, which is to be overcome in the age of science?

Any concept of a specific form of cognition assumes a recognition of the existence of qualitatively different cognitive relations to reality. Is this posing of the problem compatible with the materialist principle of the unity of cognition, which in all its forms is ultimately the reflection of objective reality?

Idealism has for long maintained the existence of knowledge that is above or prior to experience; faith, it claims, is a special type of knowledge.

The philosophy of Marxism rejects this idealist conception just as it rejects the metaphysical juxtaposition of various forms of knowledge and means of obtaining it. The unity of human knowledge, however, is not an abstract identity; it comprises certain essential distinctions, qualitative as well as quantitative.[1] From this standpoint the posing of the question of the qualitative peculiarity of the philosophical form of cognition (and knowledge) seems fundamentally necessary.

The psychology of cognition delimits the sensory reflection of reality and abstract thinking as qualitatively distinct stages of cognition. Sense data are comprehended and synthesised by thought. The sensory reflection of the external world, however, is not the only material for thought; thought has a certain independent significance of its own. Visual, auditory and tactile images, and emotional experiences, are definite human reactions and at the same time a specific form of knowledge about external reality and about the individual himself, who sees, hears and feels, and about the other people to whom the given individual has more than a theoretical relationship.

Sensory reflection of the external world is not scientific knowledge, and it is not always bound to become scientific. All of us have certain definite ideas about our acquaintances, our near ones and ourselves. This knowledge, which is a mingling of perception and reminiscence, truth, illusion, opinion, emotional experience, misapprehension, would lose its significance if it assumed a theoretical character. This is everyday knowledge, embracing not only the more or less subjective notions of one person about another, but also many notions about all kinds of things which are known to us because we perceive, use, touch them, and so on, fairly often.

Dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge, as distinct from the psychology of knowledge, which is concerned with the individual knower, draws a qualitative distinction between empirical and theoretical knowledge. This distinction cannot in principle be treated merely as the division between sense perceptions and thinking, because empirical facts are established by theoretical means as well. V. A. Lektorsky is quite right in saying, "Both empirical and theoretical knowledge assume logical, rational mediacy and indubitably belong to the rational stage of knowledge."[1]

Mathematics certainly cannot be classed as empirical knowledge, which does not imply, of course, that it bears no relation to the world perceived by our senses. Astronomy is to a great extent a mathematical discipline, but one of its primary features is instrumental observation, which may be termed practical scientific research.[2]

[1] The concept of qualitative distinction requires some explanation. It is quite often identified with radical, fundamental, essential distinction, which obviously ties it down to certain limits. It should be noted, however, that phenomena may differ from one another qualitatively even when they express one and the same essence.

[1] V. A. Lektorsky, "Unity of the Empirical and the Theoretical in Scientific Cognition" in *Problems of Scientific Method*, Moscow, 1965, p. 107 (in Russian).

[2] "Astronomy," V. A. Ambartsumyan writes, "as in former times, continues to remain a science of observation. The patient accumulation of facts, the constant effort to make one's observations as accurate as possible, frequent repetition, if necessary, of similar observations—all this constitutes the unshakeable tradition of astronomy. The

Theoretical physics represents unity of theoretical (largely mathematical) and empirical knowledge. History as a science differs qualitatively from political economy if only because it studies that which no longer exists.

A. A. Zinovyev, discussing the qualitative difference between the two levels of scientific research, classifies the first level as "observation of separate phenomena, connections, processes and so on, their selection, comparison, mental analysis and synthesis; all kinds of experiment; abstraction of separate properties and relations of objects, the formation of concepts, generalisation, establishing of empirical laws, making of hypotheses, modelling, use of deductions, etc. . . . The first level in such understanding is valid scientific research in the full sense of the term, the basis and fundamental content of science in general. The majority of discoveries are made at this level".[1] Zinovyev classifies the second level of research as the building of theories, which he characterises as totalities of concepts and judgements referring to a fairly wide range of subjects and united in a single whole with the aid of definite logical principles. Moreover, it is stressed that a theory is not simply a totality of knowledge but also "a description of a certain standard means of obtaining knowledge in a certain sphere of research. . . . In fact, only a description of the

peculiarities of astronomy, as a science of observation, have manifested themselves particularly clearly in the last few decades." (V.A. Ambartsumyan, "Some Peculiarities in Modern Development of Astrophysics" in *October Revolution and Scientific Progress*, Moscow, 1967, Vol. I, p. 73, in Russian.)

[1] A. A. Zinovyev, "Two Levels in Scientific Research" in *Problems of Scientific Method*, Moscow, 1964, p. 238.

means of obtaining knowledge allows us to define the various types of theory; means of obtaining knowledge may be described in various ways, depending on the particular data of the subject-matter, the conditions of its investigation, the character of the problems involved and other circumstances."[1]

Self-knowledge is qualitatively different from knowledge of the external world, although the one is impossible without the other. It is quite often absolutised by psychologists and philosophers and interpreted as a means of cognition independent of the external world. This does not, however, give grounds for denying its qualitative distinctiveness.

Thus qualitatively different forms of knowledge exist both outside science and within the framework of science. For centuries philosophy has existed partially outside science, partially within it. Dialectical and historical materialism is a scientific philosophy, but it is qualitatively different from any other science, whose mode of existence necessarily presupposes strict limitation of the subject of inquiry.

The notion of the qualitative distinctiveness of the philosophical form of cognition was conceived along with philosophy. We have seen that in the beginning the specific feature of philosophy was understood as its distinctiveness from everyday and applied knowledge. Subsequently the notion

[1] A. A. Zinovyev, op. cit. The author suggests that the above-mentioned delimitation of levels of scientific research should also be applied to philosophy, where the transition from the first level to the second is usually made without sufficient grounds. Without going into this proposition, so as not to depart from our main theme, we would emphasise that it deserves thorough investigation.

of the specific nature of the philosophical form of cognition was associated with its being distinct from the specialised sciences and the methods of research used by them. All this, however, is not enough to elucidate the special nature of the philosophical form of knowledge, particularly as there are differences of opinion between the various philosophical doctrines on this question as well. Perhaps this means there is no unified form of philosophical knowledge? It would be unscientific and anti-historical to identify the mode of philosophical inquiry of the ancient thinkers, on the one hand, with that of modern thinkers, on the other, materialists and idealists, rationalists and empiricists, etc. But no matter how varied the types of philosophical doctrines, they all possess something that makes them philosophical. It is this specific nature of the philosophical form of knowledge that we must investigate.

2. SPECULATION, LOGIC, FACTS

The belief evolved in ancient times that the distinctiveness of the philosophical form of knowledge lay in the speculative mode of thought, in which knowledge is formed by means of logical deduction, by conclusions drawn from the analysis of everyday notions and concepts, by elucidation of the meaning of words, and so on. Sensorily observed facts may from this point of view be the subject of explanation, or serve to confirm a conclusion, but in no way can they be a criterion of its truth.

This view was idealistically substantiated by Plato. In *Phaedo*, for instance, it is stated that

the soul thinks "best when the mind is gathered into herself and none of these things trouble her—neither sounds, nor sights nor pain, nor again any pleasure—when she takes leave of the body, and has as little as possible to do with it, when she has no bodily sense or desire, but is aspiring after true being".[1] Plato deduces the specific nature of the philosophical form of knowledge from his notion of the supersensuous subject-matter of philosophy. However, since philosophy is not an empirical description of what is observed, Plato's understanding of philosophical speculation contains a rational kernel as well.

The thinking person, Plato says, approaches everything (in so far as this is possible) with only the forces of intellect, rejecting as far as possible everything that he is told by his eyes, ears, touch and every kind of emotion, etc. Only in thought, according to Plato, is true being, or at least a part of it, revealed to the mind. Plato substantiated this idealist-rationalist interpretation of the philosophical mode of cognition with ontological arguments as well: his teaching on the existence of the human soul before the birth of the human individual, on its independence of the body and immortality. All these postulates were not merely proclaimed but were speculatively "proved", on the one hand, with the aid of principles that were considered self-evident, and on the other, by appealing to everyday experience and common sense. Also in the *Phaedo*, Plato's Socrates, referring to the myth that people's souls exist before their birth and after death are consigned to a subterranean kingdom, tries to deduce

[1] *The Dialogues of Plato*, p. 416.

logically the thesis of the immortality of the soul. In doing so, he proceeds from an abstract proposition which to him and his collocutors appears to be an axiom: opposite arises from opposite. Thus, if something becomes bigger, it was smaller before; if, on the contrary, something is growing smaller, it means that it used to be bigger. But if opposite arises from opposite, then "...the living come from the dead, just as the dead come from the living".[1]

Plato supported these arguments, which are reminiscent of the "proofs" employed by the Sophists, with others no less speculative. If the thesis on the existence of the soul before birth was "proved" by interpreting cognition as recollection (the soul remembers what the man does not remember or does not know, or rather, does not know that he knows, consequently, this knowledge was obtained before the soul inhabited a human body), the "proof" of the argument that the soul continues to live after the death of the individual, is obtained by concretising the previously stated proposition on opposites: although all opposites arise from opposites, an opposite itself cannot be opposite to itself. Hence the soul cannot become something opposite to itself, i.e., lifeless or, let us say, visible, changing, self-destroying, disintegrating.

Plato criticised the materialist conception of the soul as the harmony of the parts forming the body, a harmony which he compares with a well tuned musical instrument. But a musical instrument, said Plato, may be tuned well or not so well, whereas a soul cannot be more or less a soul. If the soul were the attunedness of the parts

[1] *The Dialogues of Plato*, p. 424.

of the body, then a bad and sinful soul would be non-attunedness and consequently would not possess the quality of soul.

Today such idealist speculations would not convince even the theologians. Modern idealism prefers to express propositions related to those of Plato as *beliefs* without claiming any strict logical proof for them. Speculation should not, however, be identified with its idealist interpretation; the atomic theory of Democritus was also the fruit of speculative reasoning. The essence of speculation is the logical process and the naiveté, the faultiness, of Plato's reasoning is exposed by logic, which shows the vagueness, the indefiniteness of the propositions which he takes as initial, self-evident truths. But the question of the meaning, the correctness, the significance of the speculative mode of reasoning is not thereby removed from the discussion. Historically, philosophical speculation took shape in close connection with the successes of the mathematicians, some of the most eminent of whom were Plato's pupils. This is what V. Steklov has in mind when he says that "mathematics always was and is the source of philosophy", that it created philosophy and may be called the "mother of philosophy".[1] One may disagree with the categoricalness of that statement, but it clearly expresses a valid though not altogether impartial point of view. Significant from this standpoint are the metaphysical systems of the 17th century, whose creators were convinced that philosophical reasoning based on the principles of mathematics takes us beyond the bounds of experience.

[1] V. Steklov, *Mathematics and Its Significance for Philosophy*, Berlin, 1923, pp. 30-31 (in Russian).

The rationalists held that mathematics is the one and only correct form of theoretical knowledge. Kant, who believed that "the doctrine of nature will contain science in the actual sense of the term only to the extent that mathematics can be applied therein",[1] firmly rejected the possibility of mathematising the philosophical mode of inquiry. This sprang not from an underestimation of mathematics, but from a conception of the specific nature of philosophy that was clearer than that of the 17th century rationalists.

Philosophical definitions, Kant pointed out, differ essentially from those of mathematics. Philosophical definitions "are made only in the form of exposition of the concepts given to us, while those of mathematics take the form of construction of originally created concepts; the former are made analytically by means of dissection (the completeness of which is not apodictically reliable), and the second synthetically; hence mathematical definitions *create* the concept itself, while those of philosophy only explain it".[2]

Kant's point of view is that definitions, in the precise sense of the word, are possible only in mathematics. Mathematical definitions cannot by their very nature be incorrect, because any mathematical concept is actually given only as a definition and consequently contains precisely

[1] *Immanuel Kants sämtliche Werke in sechs Bänden*, Leipzig, 1922, Vierter Band, S. 551.

[2] Ibid., Bd. 3, S. 555. What Kant calls the exposition of concepts, Hans Reichenbach calls their explication, thus arriving at the same conclusions as Kant nearly two hundred years after him: "An explication can never be proved to be strictly correct, for the very reason that the explicandum is vague and we can never tell whether the explicans matches all its features." (H. Reichenbach, *The Direction of Time*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1950, p. 24.)

what the definition has put into it. So, in mathematics there is no argument about definitions.[1] And since mathematical definitions cannot be untrue, it is only in mathematics that axioms are possible.

Admittedly, since philosophy elucidates the concepts it uses, it cannot do without definitions. But whereas mathematics begins with definitions (because there can be no concept without them), in philosophy definitions should only complete the inquiry. This idea does not, of course, apply to the exposition of philosophy, which, like any exposition, differs essentially from an inquiry, the result of which cannot be foreseen.

Declaring that the mode by which philosophy reaches its conclusions is qualitatively different from that of mathematics, Kant tried to give epistemological grounds for the possibility and necessity of a specifically philosophical type of speculation. Such speculation, according to Kant, proceeds from the fact, asks how this fact is possible, and reveals the conditions that make the

[1] This view of Kant's on the nature of mathematical definitions is obsolete. The definitions of multiples, which were given by G. Cantor, the founder of the theory of multiples, and by E. Borel, N. Bourbaki and other mathematicians, show that arguments about definitions are possible even in mathematics. "At all events it should be observed that no matter what difficulties may arise in defining the concept of multiples, the concept itself has been a powerful means of studying and verifying the categories of objects under consideration (mathematics) or the verbally described field (logic)." (R. Faure, A. Kaufmann, M. Denis-Papin, *Mathématiques nouvelles*, tome I, Paris, 1964, p. 2.) It is clear, however, that in modern mathematics the difficulties of defining concepts are not to be compared with the difficulties that arise in philosophy, and in this sense Kant's ideas have not lost their significance.

fact possible. Mathematics, Kant said, consists of synthetic judgements that have indubitable universality and necessity. In fact, it never occurred to him to prove this proposition. It struck him as being self-evident and requiring only explanation. So now the question to be answered was what made this fact possible. And Kant replies: the *a priori* nature of space and time.

In his *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant proceeds from the fact of the existence of morality. How is morality possible? he asks. His well-known answer is that the condition for the existence of morality is the *a priori* moral law, the categorical imperative. Further analysis of the fact culminates in the conclusion that the moral consciousness presupposes such postulates as recognition of the immortality of the soul, God—and the republican order of society.

Thus what Kant considered to be a fact was nothing of the kind. He mistook the appearance of the fact, which is, of course, also a fact, for its essence. This appearance was not accidental; since only Euclid's geometry existed, it was bound to appear to be the only possible one. The conclusions reached by Kant were inevitable for any thinker who based his theory of knowledge on the thesis that Euclidean geometry was the only possible geometry.[1]

[1] This was why the creation of non-Euclidean geometry compelled even the neo-Kantians to renounce Kant's transcendental aesthetics. Thanks to non-Euclidean geometry, as A. N. Kolmogorov has pointed out, "the faith in the immutability of axioms that have been sanctified by thousands of years of the development of mathematics was overcome, the possibility of creating new mathematical theories by means of correctly executed abstraction from the essentially illogical limitations formerly imposed was understood and, finally, it was discovered that such an abstract theory could in time be given broader and entirely concrete applications".

Hegel criticised Kant's understanding of philosophical speculation for the very reason that Kant believed it unnecessary to deduce logically that which was accepted as fact. Philosophy, in Hegel's view, does not so much proceed from facts as arrive at them. Since philosophy is thought, it proceeds from thought and strives to know the content of thought (the content of science) as the product of its own development. Thus Hegelian panlogism ontologically substantiates the traditional belief regarding the ability of philosophy by means of reason alone, "by pure thought", to arrive at discoveries which are in principle beyond the scope of empirical knowledge. Kant, as we know, rejected this rationalist illusion. Hegel reinstated it on the basis of dialectical idealism, which understands the relationship between sense and reason as contradiction, negation and the negation of negation. "Philosophy," Hegel wrote, "takes *experience*, immediate and reasoning consciousness as its *point of departure*. Bestirred by experience, as by some irritant, thought proceeds in such a way as to rise above the natural, sensual and reasoning consciousness, and rises to its own pure and unadulterated element. . . ."[1] However, this initial negation of sensory experience, according to Hegel, is completely abstract, with the result that the initial philosophical conception of the universal essence of sensorily observed phenomena turns out to be similarly abstract. Philosophy removes this abstract negation, this alienation, and addresses itself not to people's everyday experience

[1] G. W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Stuttgart, 1929, Bd. 8, S. 56.

but to the whole totality of data of the specialised sciences. But even this cannot satisfy philosophy because the specialised sciences synthesise only empirical data, and this synthesis does not take us beyond the bounds of possible experience or physical reality. In Hegel's view dissatisfaction with knowledge of that which is empirically given, with accidental content, is the stimulus that spurs philosophical thought to break free from this empirically limited universality in order "to enter upon the path of *development out of itself*",[1] i.e., to register pure ideas and move within them.

Hegel counterposes philosophical thinking to that of the natural sciences, since the latter, according to his doctrine, is concerned with the alienated form of the absolute. This juxtaposition revealing the real relation between them is theoretically expressed in the doctrine of philosophy as pure thought, that is to say, thought purified of all empirical content.

According to Hegel, philosophy's ability to know the absolute is commensurate to its ability to negate dialectically the empirical as the outward, alienated expression of absolute reality. Absolute reality is attained by pure thought because this thought itself "is thought which is identical with itself, and this identity is at the same time activity consisting in the fact that thought juxtaposes itself to itself in order to be for itself and in this other self to remain still only in its own self".[2] This is why, according to Hegel, thought is autonomous, independent of sensorily perceived reality and, hence, of experience in which this "external" reality finds its expression. Philosophical thought, since it expresses the "absolute idea", like this transphenomenal reality, "is present in itself, relates to itself and has itself for its subject".[1] Herein, Hegel declares, lies the essence of philosophy as a specific and at the same time the highest form of consciousness, forming the spiritual centre of all the sciences, the science of sciences, or absolute science, which alone has as its subject the truth as it is in itself and for itself, and not in its alienated objectivised form.

There is no need to prove that the inadequacy of Hegel's initial philosophical position—the identity of being and thinking—makes his conception of the logical process of cognition inadequate also. The dialectics of the transition from the sensual to the rational, from the empirical to the theoretical and back virtually escapes Hegel. Idealism prevented him from seeing that thought is based on empirical data, even when it enters into contradiction with them. And yet Hegel is right about many things. Theoretical knowledge is indeed not reducible to the diversity of empirical data. Agreement with sensory data cannot be the principle of theoretical thought, since these data are themselves to be critically analysed. Sensory data are what separate individuals may have at their disposal, but science belongs to all mankind. Theoretical thought commands a wealth of empirical data that are completely inaccessible to separate individuals. On the basis of the whole historically developing social practice, the accumulation, the summing up of its data, there evolves a relative independence of theoretical

[1] G.W.F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 8, S. 56.
[2] Ibid., S. 64.

[1] Ibid., S. 101.

thought from the empirical data that may be at the command not only of separate individuals but of all mankind at each separate stage of its development. This finds its expression in theoretical discoveries that reach far beyond the bounds of present experience, paving the way for subsequent observations and even creating possibilities which, on being realised with the help of certain definite theoretical means, make it possible to register empirically that which has been discovered by means of theory, i.e., to confirm the truth of "speculative" conclusions.

Hegel discovered and at the same time obscured the real, historically culminating process of the development of the ability of theoretical cognition, whose power is certainly not dependent on the quantity of sensory data that it may have at its command. Hegel portrayed this process as escape beyond the bounds of all possible experience, transition from physical to transphysical reality, to the realm of the noumena, which Kant, who understood cognition only as the categorial synthesis of sensory data, declared to be, though existent, fundamentally unknowable.

Hegel correctly pointed out the dialectical juxtaposition of theoretical and empirical knowledge, but he absolutised this juxtaposition. His mistake lies not in the fact that he believed this juxtaposition to be unlimited; it is indeed unlimited, but only potentially.

The genuis of Hegel's doctrine on the power of thought, on the role of the logical process in discovering facts and laws is, despite its idealist distortion, particularly obvious today. Modern "speculative" theoretical thought, particularly in mathematics and physics, has led to discoveries that irrefutably testify to the progressive relative

independence of theory from empirical data. Moreover, it comes to light that the free (in the dialectical sense, i.e., also necessary) motion of theoretical cognition, which Hegel considered to be the attribute of philosophy, forms the essential characteristic of theoretical thinking in general, in so far as it attains a sufficiently high degree of development.[1]

Counterposing philosophical cognition, particularly in its dialectical form, to non-philosophical cognition (mainly empirical), Hegel wrote: "True cognition of a subject should be on the contrary such that it defines itself from itself, and not by receiving its predicates from outside."[2] This proposition is a vivid example of the idealist mystification of the perfectly correct, in fact, brilliant idea of the nature of theoretical thought, which does not merely describe the properties in the object under investigation but logically deduces them, thus revealing their interdependence, showing that which cannot be immediately observed and penetrating through appearance to essence, so as afterwards to explain the necessity of this appearance, tracing the motion and mutation of the subject thanks to which its empirically observable properties arise. The necessity for such a "speculative" inquiry, which is today becoming obvious in all fields of theoretical knowledge, first emerged in philosophy inasmuch as

[1] Speaking of the neo-Kantian F. Lange, who tried to disprove the dialectical method, Marx observes in a letter to L. Kugelmann (March 27, 1870): "Lange is naive enough to say that I 'move with rare freedom' in empirical matter. He hasn't the least idea that this 'free movement in matter' is nothing but a paraphrase for the *method* of dealing with matter—that is, the *dialectical method*." (K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 1956, pp. 290-291.)

[2] G. W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 8, S. 103.

it has more to do with the analysis of concepts than any other science. It was in this sense that Hegel discovered the essence of the dialectical method. Emphasising the main aspect of Hegel's dialectics, Lenin pointed out, "The determination of the concept out of itself (the thing *itself* must be considered in its relations and in its development)."[1] This remark throws light on the possibility of the materialist interpretation of what seems at first sight to be Hegel's completely absurd and mystical idea of the self-motion of the concept. And this in its turn brings us to an understanding of the nature of philosophical "speculative" thinking, which Hegel characterised precisely as the self-motion of the concept.

We have examined certain points that characterise the speculative nature of philosophy, deliberately referring to the idealist philosophers in whose doctrines this speculativeness reached its highest development and at the same time became a form of mystification of reality. Analysis of philosophical speculation discloses certain peculiarities and tendencies in the development of theoretical knowledge (including that of the natural sciences). It may be conceded that speculation, which to a certain extent breaks away from facts, is of course a very dangerous path, on which mistakes may occur at every step and discoveries take the shape of lucky finds. All the same this is the path that theoretical knowledge must inevitably take, undaunted by the danger of becoming a mere concoction of ideas. This is the path taken by philosophy, and it characterises the specific nature of the philosophical form of cognition.

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 221.

In contrast to the idealists, the French materialists of the 18th century made no claim to have discovered a transcendental reality (they denied its existence); nor did they oppose philosophical knowledge to that of science. They advocated an alliance of philosophy with the natural sciences. However, the teaching of these materialists reached out far beyond the bounds of the scientific data of their day, not despite these data but on the basis of them. This reaching out beyond the bounds of available knowledge inevitably became mere conjecture, hypothesis and often, of course, error. But it was on this hazardous path that the materialist philosophy of the 18th century made its greatest discovery—the discovery of the self-motion of matter. This idea that matter moves itself could not be empirically proved in the 18th century; it was an anticipation of future knowledge, and such anticipation is perhaps a more difficult task than the prediction of future events. This idea was obviously at odds with the mechanistic understanding of motion, but it was in tune with the spirit of the natural sciences, which were ever more confidently taking the path of explaining nature out of nature itself. The denial of the supernatural, and the atheism that was the logical deduction from it, were the theoretical sources of the idea of the self-motion of matter. The philosophers, who proposed and substantiated this idea, thus expressed one of the basic sides of theoretical and particularly philosophical thought—the speculative thrust forward which is absolutely essential for the development of knowledge.

The first atheists appeared when there were still not sufficient scientific data to disprove the tenets of religion. But the theologians had even

less data with which to substantiate their beliefs. Atheism was a heroic undertaking not only because the atheists were persecuted. Atheism was also a feat of the intellect. From this standpoint one can appreciate the true value of the fearless philosophising which, armed with logic, broke through into the unknown, and the astonishing assurance of every one of these philosophers that he was revealing the truth, despite the fact that his predecessors had obviously fallen into error. Truly, as Heraclitus remarked, man's character is his demon.

When we speak of the speculative nature of any scientific theory, we realise that this theory will sooner or later be confirmed or discredited by experience, by experiment. Philosophy is far more speculative than theoretical natural science, but it cannot appeal to future experiments or observations. What is it then that sets a limit upon the philosopher's speculative licence, if he is not to be intimidated by mere isolated facts, since they can neither confirm nor deny his conception? Logic? Yes, of course, the philosopher respects logic; it is his own chief weapon. But a logical inference is possible only from logical premises, which are not contained in logic itself. Logic provides no criteria of the truth sought by the philosopher or any theoretical scientist. We assume that the significance (and to a certain extent the truth) of philosophical propositions is to be inferred from their being applicable in various sciences and practical activity.

Philosophical propositions may be regarded as a kind of theoretical recommendations. If these recommendations arm science in its pursuit of the truth, arm man in his practical, transforming activity, then they acquire, thanks to this, the

possibility of real verification. So the point is not that philosophical propositions are true because they work; this approach to the question is alien to Marxism and, as we know, is propagated by pragmatism. The point we are making is that in so far as philosophical propositions become part of the diversity of human activity they may be indirectly tested, corrected and improved. This reveals yet another important characteristic of speculative philosophical thought. Philosophical propositions, even when they are not true, possess (to a greater or less extent) an implicit or explicit idea which becomes obvious in so far as these propositions are applied. The true significance of Hegelian dialectics was revealed by Marx and Engels, who saw it as the algebra of revolution. The hidden significance of present-day philosophical irrationalism is revealed in its characteristic apology for an "irrational" (chiefly capitalist) reality.

Hegelian dialectics embodies a great truth, which has been fully revealed by history. Philosophical irrationalism is a tremendous error, which nevertheless reflects a definite historical reality and is therefore by no means devoid of meaning. Ideas that afterwards turn out to be untrue, though they were once believed to be true,[1] also

[1] This is probably what Max Planck has in mind: "The significance of a scientific idea often lies not so much in the amount of truth it contains as in its value. . . . But if we consider that the concept of value has always been completely alien in its very essence to such an objective science as physics, this fact will appear particularly astonishing, and the question arises of how to understand the fact that the significance of an idea in physics may be fully estimated only by taking into account its value." (M. Planck, *Vorträge und Erinnerungen*, Stuttgart, 1949, S. 282.)

have quite considerable and often positive significance in the history of science as well.

Thus the peculiarities of philosophical thought that we have considered are to a certain extent (and in various historical periods) inherent in any theoretical thought in general, in so far as it achieves high levels of abstraction. It is not the speculative mode of developing concepts that is specific to philosophy, but the *degree* of speculativeness of thought, organically connected, as it is with the concept of philosophy (and some philosophical doctrines in particular), with its apparatus of categories, initial theoretical propositions, etc. But degree is a definition of quality and in this sense actually helps us to define the specific nature of the philosophical form of cognition, excluding at the same time the metaphysical juxtaposition of philosophy to other forms of theoretical inquiry.

3. INTUITION, TRUTH, CREATIVE IMAGINATION

Our characterisation of the philosophical form of cognition as predominantly speculative must be supplemented by an analysis of intuition, whose cognitive significance has been proved by modern science. Dialectical materialism has dispelled the mysteries surrounding the concept of intuition, and shown that intuition is actually a part of the sensory and rationalist reflection of objective reality. Marxist epistemology tackles the question of intuition not only with a view to tracing the paths that lead to scientific discoveries but also in connection with the analysis of everyday experience, which includes the involuntary (unperceived by the consciousness) memorising of perceptions and their equally involuntary and

unexpected recall, the "discovery" of something that one thinks one has never known, never noticed, and never memorised. This recognition of what has been involuntarily memorised was given an idealist interpretation in the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, which states that cognition is in essence an intuitive process of recognising that which is already present in the consciousness.

The problem of intuition is particularly relevant to an understanding of the specific nature of philosophy, since through two thousand years or more philosophy has not possessed the necessary factual basis for the extremely wide theoretical generalisations that constitute its basic task. And since philosophy cannot refuse to answer the questions by which it is faced, it has had only one choice: epistemological scepticism or acknowledgement of the great cognitive value of philosophical hypotheses, which as a rule entail conjecture, intuitive conviction, imagination, assumption of postulates, and so on. Philosophical hypotheses have never been suppositions, i.e., statements that no one is prepared to vouch for. On the contrary, they have always been put forward as convictions, psychologically absolutely incompatible with any notion that they may only *possibly* be true. Philosophers have never employed formulae such as "it seems to me" and their statements have been of a categorical nature. Epistemologically these statements may be correctly understood as intuitions, as long as this word is not taken to mean only direct cognition of truth, of course.

The philosopher's intuitive assertions have been made in various ways, depending on historical conditions and the level of development of

science and culture. Sometimes they have appeared as beliefs based on the sensory perception of reality, sometimes as mystical, imperatively proclaimed "revelation", sometimes as the adoption of some "self-evident" proposition as the point of departure for a train of logical reasoning, and so on. In all cases, however, philosophers have consciously or unconsciously relied on intuition. Yet it should not be assumed that intuition has been the specific organon of philosophy. It has played (and continues to play) a substantial part in the natural sciences.[1]

[1] Analysing the origin of physical theories, Einstein points out that no logical path leads directly from observations to the basic principles of theory. "The supreme task of the physicist," he says, "is to arrive at those universal elementary laws from which the cosmos can be built up by pure deduction. There is no logical path to these laws; only intuition, resting on sympathetic understanding of experience, can reach them." (A. Einstein, *The World as I See It*, p. 22.) It would appear that this remark of Einstein's has nothing in common with the conception of intuition as an alogical process. It suggests rather that an intuitive conclusion is not a conclusion drawn from a series of deductions, but a kind of break in the continuity of theoretical research, a dialectical leap, founded on an accumulation of experience and knowledge which, given a certain degree of intellectual ability, leads to an intuitive conclusion.

For confirmation of this idea we may refer to the profound observation of N. N. Semyonov: "If one is to consider scientific thought 'logical' and 'rational' only to the extent that it proceeds in strict accord with the axioms, postulates and theorems of formal mathematical logic, then the scientific thought that is actually practised is bound to appear irrational. In fact, science begins to look like a madhouse, in which only an appearance of order is maintained with the help of attendant logicians, but certainly not by the inmates, who dream only of how to upset this order." (N. N. Semyonov, "Marxist-Leninist Philosophy and the Problems of Natural Science", *Kommunist*, 1968, No. 10, p. 62.)

The intuitionists grasped this peculiarity of the development of philosophy and absolutised it without noticing that intuition itself requires critical research and assessment. They maintained that the specific nature of philosophy is, in fact, the intuitive discovery of its initial propositions.

The high assessment of the cognitive significance of intuition given by the rationalists, and also some empiricists of the 17th century (John Locke), implied no belittlement of logic, logical deduction and proof; rationalism's ideal was the mathematical method. It would therefore be a crude mistake to regard the rationalists as intuitionists. Such an approach would mean that any acknowledgement of the cognitive significance of intuition implies acceptance of the positions of intuitionism.

Intuitionism is an irrational doctrine, interpreting intuition as an alogical act of cognition of irrational reality. Henri Bergson held that Kant had performed an outstanding service in proving the impossibility of intellectual intuition. But Bergson went on to deduce from this something that Kant himself had never thought of: that the only possible intuition is superintellectual intuition, which forms the basis of the specifically philosophical vision of the world. The intellect, Bergson said, is essentially practical in its origin and function, its business is "to guide our actions. The thing that interests us in actions is their result; the means matter little as long as the goal is attained."[1] Stressing the link between intellect and the material world of objects, which, according to Bergson, is lifeless and static, the French intuitionist argued that the basis and

[1] H. Bergson, *Œuvres*, Paris, 1959, p. 747.

origin of all things is pure duration, whose by-products are matter and intellect. It is this non-material duration, this metaphysical time that is perceived through intuition.[1]

Bergson assumed that the basis of any great philosophical system is "primary intuition", which the philosopher then tries to express as a system of deductions. The intuitive vision of the world, however, cannot be adequately expressed through logic, it is "something simple, infinitely simple, so extraordinarily simple that the philosopher has never been able to express it. And this is why he has been talking all his life. He could not formulate what was in his mind without feeling obliged to correct his formula, and then to correct his correction."[2]

Bergson's mistake lies not in his belief that "primary intuitions" are the initial propositions of philosophy. He is wrong because he interprets intuition as the irrational cognition of the irrational, ruling out all possibility on principle of any other, non-intuitive path to the initial philosophical proposition, or any possibility of its adequate logical (theoretical) expression, i.e.,

[1] Intuitionism, therefore, consists not only in a definite interpretation of the process of cognition, but also in the subjective erasure of the qualitative distinction between reflection and object reflected. A case in point is Benedetto Croce, who regards objects as intuitions, i.e., denies that they have any existence independent of the knower: "What is cognition through concept? It is the cognition of the relations between things; things are the essence of intuition." We emphasise this ontological aspect of intuitional idealism to illustrate the fact that recognition and high appreciation of intuition's cognitive significance has nothing in common with intuitionism or with idealism in general. This, incidentally, is proved by the history of philosophy.

[2] H. Bergson, *Œuvres*, p. 1347.

deduction, proof, elucidation. In the actual history of philosophy things have been far more complicated than this. When Thales declared that everything originates from water, he cited facts in support of his theory (so we are told by Aristotle) and deduced logical arguments, but this, of course, is not enough. Facts and arguments are aided by intuition, which it would be more correct to call, despite Bergson, not primary but secondary, because it is based on experience and knowledge. Even so, facts and knowledge were obviously not enough to provide the foundation of a fundamental philosophical belief.

Lack of empirical and theoretical data is characteristic not only of the philosophy of the ancient world. Philosophy seeks to know the general forms of the universe, whereas the data at its disposal are always historically limited and in this sense insufficient. "Mankind therefore," Engels writes, "finds itself faced with a contradiction: on the one hand, it has to gain an exhaustive knowledge of the world system in all its interrelations; and on the other hand, because of the nature both of men and of the world system, this task can never be completely fulfilled. But this contradiction lies not only in the nature of the two factors—the world, and man—it is also the main lever of all intellectual advance, and finds its solution continuously, day by day, in the endless progressive evolution of humanity. . . ."[1]

Thus, the synthesis of empirical and scientific knowledge in general can never be complete. It is this that gives the philosophical (and also the natural scientific) conception of the whole, the

[1] F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1969, p. 50.

general, the infinite, the intransient, the character of a hypothesis which, even in those instances when it actually does synthesise the scientific data of its time, constantly demands correction and development in the light of new scientific discoveries.

The philosopher, as distinct from the natural scientist, cannot stop thinking about the universal, the infinite, the intransient, the whole, and so on. Even if he renounces "metaphysics" and deliberately concentrates on research into, say, only epistemological problems, he is bound to be confronted even in this field with the task of theoretical synthesis, the formulation of conclusions that have general and necessary significance, and such synthesis and the conclusions it entails can never be founded on the full abundance of empirical data that they require. On closer examination it turns out that this difficulty occurs in all fields of theoretical knowledge, since induction always remains incomplete and the universality of a law formulated by natural science is proved not so much theoretically as confirmed in fact. But it is also theoretically conceivable that there are facts that do not confirm this law. Natural scientists can afford to ignore this because there is an unlimited number of phenomena that proceed according to the given law, the universality of which is qualitatively limited and, if necessary, may be quantitatively limited as well.[1] It is a different matter in philosophy, which aspires to know that which is most general and unlimited both qualitatively and quantitatively.

[1] Niels Bohr notes the positive scientific significance of this circumstance in analysis of the philosophical interpretation of the quantum theory: "As has often happened in science when new discoveries have led to the recognition of an essential limitation of concepts hitherto considered as indispensable, we are rewarded by getting a wider view and a greater power to correlate phenomena which before might even have appeared contradictory." (N. Bohr, *Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge*, London, 1958, pp. 5-6.)

The productive ability of the imagination, which Kant regarded as fundamental to the process of cognition, plays, in philosophy at any rate, a leading role if, of course, this ability is interpreted materialistically and not as the *a priori* mental construction of an empirical entity, independent of any empirical data and preceding them. Kant denied that intellectual intuition, which he saw as a rationalist illusion regarding the ability of "pure" reason, could have knowledge going beyond the limits of experience. In this sense intellectual intuition is indeed impossible. However, the concept of intellectual intuition need not be interpreted in the spirit of 17th century rationalism, which Kant rightly opposed. Modern science allows us to trace intuition scientifically, as an inseparable element of the creative imagination of the scientist, that is to say, imagination based on facts, knowledge and searching inquiry.

Thus Marxist philosophy is opposed to intuitionism not because intuitionism acknowledges the existence of intuition while dialectical materialism denies it. "As a fact of knowledge every form of intuition is an undeniable reality, existing in the sphere of cognition for all who are concerned in this field," writes V. F. Asmus. "But as a *theory* of facts of knowledge, every theory of intuition is a *philosophical* theory, idealist or materialist, metaphysical or dialec-

tical."[1] Hence it is a question not of whether there does or does not exist a specific cognitive ability that differs essentially from the consistent logical deduction of a series of inferences, but of how such reflection of reality is possible, how it relates to the experience and knowledge of the individual knower. If Newton, as legend has it, did notice an apple fall from a tree and "all of a sudden" discover the law of universal gravity, this intuition of his must obviously have been preceded by prolonged consideration of a whole range of problems, such as Galileo's discovery of the law of the equality of the velocities of all falling bodies, great and small. So the problem lies in correct interpretation of the fact of intuition, which is always to be found in the history of cognition, and in discovering the possibilities of applying scientific, critical methods of inquiry and testing to this cognitive ability.[2]

The notion of intuition as immediate perception of *truth*, a notion upheld both by the rationalists of the 17th century and the anti-rationalist

[1] V. F. Asmus, *Problem of Intuition in Philosophy and Mathematics*, Moscow, 1965, p. 60 (in Russian).

[2] V. Steklov has pointed out that one of the elements of intuition is the ability to detect a law from observing separate instances of its manifestation, i.e., the ability to draw correct conclusions based on *incomplete* induction: "Thousands of people looked at the swinging lamp in Pisa Cathedral, but none of them with the exception of Galileo ever thought of deducing from this fact a general law of the swing of a pendulum. For Galileo, however, this was enough to produce the law (approximate, of course) of so-called isochronism that would apply to any pendulum." It goes without saying that this by no means sums up the logical (and psychological) nature of intuition, but philosophically it does link intuition with reflection of objective reality, and also indicates the epistemological roots of erroneous intuitions, of which there have been plenty both in natural science and philosophy.

intuitionists, is obviously untenable because the history of natural science and philosophy furnishes countless instances of mistaken intuition. "Reliance on so-called intuition has too often turned out to be misleading," observes Hans Reichenbach.[1] Mario Bunge in his serious study *Intuition and Science* thoroughly criticises idealist conceptions of intuition and then deals concretely with the forms of intuition, which manifest themselves in sensory perception, imagination, "accelerated deduction", appreciation and so on. He condemns the idealist cult of the intuition and opposes both overestimation and underestimation of this form of cognition, to which science owes not only great discoveries but also numerous mistakes. One can hardly disagree with Bunge's conclusion: "The various forms of intuition resemble other forms of knowing and reasoning, in that they must be *controlled* if they are to be useful. Placed between sensible intuition and pure reason, intellectual intuition is fertile. But out of control it leads to sterility."[2]

Thus there is nothing more deceptive than the belief that intuition is infallible. This truth is indirectly acknowledged even by the intuitionists, since each one of them is convinced that he, as distinct from other philosophers (including intuitionists), has a monopoly right to intuitively perceived truth. The assertion that intuition is the specific organon of philosophy indicates recognition of the fundamental impossibility of scientific philosophy. Intuition, as I see it, occupies no bigger place in philosophy than in

[1] H. Reichenbach, *The Direction of Time*, Berckeley and Los Angeles, 1956, p. 16.

[2] M. Bunge, *Intuition and Science*, New York, 1962, p. 111.

theoretical science, creative art or invention. But perhaps it makes sense to speak of a specific kind of *philosophical* intuition, just as we speak of the peculiar intuition of the artist? It would be absurd to deny the peculiarity of the philosophical form of knowledge but even less convincing to say that it is no more than philosophical intuition. Analysis of philosophical doctrines leads to the conclusion that the relative unity of the philosophical form of knowledge embraces certain essential differences, oppositions and contradictions. Whereas some philosophers, at any rate subjectively, proceed from intuitive beliefs, others on the contrary take the facts established by science or everyday experience as their point of departure.

The psychology of philosophical creativity is an entirely uninvestigated field, but the available odd assortment of facts (philosophers' own accounts of how their ideas took shape, for instance) offers no factual grounds for admitting the existence of a special kind of philosophical intuition. Such an admission is demanded by the intuitionists who refer us to their own philosophical creativity, but even if we accept their declarations as evidence we can only allow intuition a special role in their particular philosophical work. Most philosophers, however, are not intuitionists, but opponents of intuitionism.

Scientific analysis of the testimony of the intuitionists, no matter how sincere they themselves may be, reveals an obvious underestimation of the extent to which they have been influenced by other philosophers, philosophical traditions, scientific data, definite historical conditions, and so on. Ideas that took shape in intuitionist doctrines under the obvious influence of other

theories that as a rule are not intuitionist are constantly interpreted as "primary intuitions", completely independent of all previous philosophical development. This is particularly striking in Bergson himself. His basic ideas were formed under the influence of the irrationalist tradition in Germany and France; his "metaphysics of becoming" interprets irrationally the principle of development that gained almost universal even if superficial recognition in philosophy and natural science at the close of the 19th century. Analysis of Bergson's attitudes to Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Dilthey, Maine de Biran, Boutroux, Darwin and Spencer, and to the advocates of natural scientific materialism, would undoubtedly reveal as minimal the role of intuition in the creation of his system, which has often been described as the most original in the history of philosophy.

So intuition, like speculation, is a specific feature of the philosophical form of knowledge, although both these peculiarities of cognition are present in any theoretical inquiry.[1] Evidently there are no grounds here either for inferring the existence of any features of philosophical thought that are peculiar to that mode of thought alone.

[1] Louis de Broglie emphasises that this side of the question is highly relevant to the understanding of both intuition and philosophy. Science, he writes, "since it is essentially rational at bottom and in its methods, can make its most splendid conquests only by means of perilous leaps of the intellect in which there come into play abilities, released from the heavy fetters of strict reasoning which are called imagination, intuition and subtlety". (Louis de Broglie, *Sur les sentiers de la science*, Paris, 1960, p. 354.) It is characteristic that de Broglie sees in imagination (which is, of course, to be understood not in the ordinary sense of the word), intuition and subtlety the expression of one and the same cognitive ability.

Once again it is a matter of the degree to which speculation and intuition are employed by philosophy. The scale varies considerably, however, in different philosophical doctrines and at different stages in the historical development of philosophy.

4. INTERPRETATION AS A MODE OF PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY

The discovery of hitherto unknown phenomena, of processes and properties, and the laws that govern them, and of the ways and means of practically applying these laws—such are the main tasks of science, which are performed by direct and instrumental observation, by description, experiment, theoretical analysis of facts, by generalisations, special methods of research and testing, etc. Philosophy is armed with no techniques of experimentation, no instruments of observation, no chemical reagents; these and all its other deficiencies have to be replaced by the power of abstraction.

The philosopher has at his disposal facts obtained by his personal observation or facts established by special scientific research. Whereas the chemist is immediately concerned with things, most of the philosopher's material is knowledge of things gathered from the sciences and other sources. Thus philosophy, at any rate as it exists in the present age of ramified and developed specialised sciences, is concerned with more or less prepared and tested factual data supplied by science and practice, with certain definite phenomena in the material and spiritual life of society, which it seeks to comprehend, generalise and interpret as a whole and integrated view of the

world. Does this mean that discoveries are, in fact, impossible in philosophy? No, this is certainly not the case. The essence of the matter is that philosophical discoveries are based on knowledge that is already available, on knowledge that is analysed, appraised or, to put it briefly, interpreted by philosophy.

Interpretation plays a major part in all theoretical inquiries and in any field of knowledge. Engels called Leverrier's discovery of the planet Neptune a great scientific achievement. By analysing the facts recorded by other astronomers, Leverrier inferred the existence of a hitherto unknown planet and calculated the point at which it would become visible. This discovery was based on interpretation of facts already known to astronomers. But in order to interpret them as Leverrier had done, it was necessary to be convinced of the possible existence of yet another planet in our Solar system.

Today, thanks to the development of theoretical research, application of mathematical methods and so on, interpretation as a method of inquiry figures far more prominently in natural science than it did in the past. Modern science has given the concept of interpretation various special meanings. V. A. Shtoff writes: "One may observe three types of interpretation that are employed in scientific cognition: (1) interpretation of formal symbol logico-mathematical systems; (2) interpretation of the controls of mathematical science, and (3) interpretation of observation, experimental data and established scientific facts."[1] This classification of the types

[1] V. A. Shtoff, *Modelling and Philosophy*, Moscow, 1966, p. 169 (in Russian).

of interpretation makes no claim to be exhaustive since the author is mainly concerned with mathematics, logic and natural science. Nevertheless it confirms the idea of the growing role of interpretation in science. But why do we raise the question of the special role of interpretation in philosophy? The reason is simply that in any specialised science interpretation is only *one* of the methods of inquiry, whereas for philosophy, which does not go in for fact-gathering and processing of raw materials, so to speak, it is of decisive importance.

In the past, philosophers often enriched the natural sciences with great discoveries. This was possible because the gap between philosophy and the specialised sciences was relatively narrow. Descartes and Leibnitz were not only philosophers but also mathematicians and natural scientists in their own right. Natural science was largely empirical in character and its theoretical problems were dealt with by philosophy (natural philosophy), which anticipated or even formulated in speculative terms some outstanding scientific discoveries. Lorenz Oken, the German naturalist, provides a vivid example. "By the path of thought, Oken discovers protoplasm and the cell, but it does not occur to anyone to follow up the matter along the lines of natural-scientific investigation."[1] The later development of theoretical natural science deprived natural philosophy of its previous significance, since it could no longer anticipate the discoveries of science, which had travelled far beyond the bounds accessible to the philosophy of everyday experience. Natural philosophy, although it continues to exist to this day, has long since become a historical anachronism.

[1] F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, Moscow, 1972, p. 207.

Thus the development of the specialised sciences and of specific methods of scientific research has progressively reduced the role of philosophy in disclosing new phenomena and laws of nature, but at the same time it has enhanced the significance of the philosophical interpretation of natural scientific discoveries, as something that is essential both to natural science and to philosophy itself. Such interpretation steadily sheds its ontological character and becomes increasingly related to the theory of knowledge. Far from being merely a philosophical compendium of natural scientific discoveries, it offers a critical, epistemological explanation of their significance. Lenin's analysis of the crisis in physics at the close of the 19th century is a striking example of the scientifico-philosophical interpretation of the achievements of natural science.

Any interpretation proceeds from facts or from what is considered to be a fact. Its key function is to explain these facts (or what are considered to be facts), to reveal their relation to other facts, to assess the notions connected with these facts, to revise them if necessary and to draw new conclusions. Philosophies are distinguished by what facts (or assumptions) they take as their point of departure, and also by the significance or interpretation which they place upon these facts.

Thomas Aquinas and Hegel proceed from the notion of the existence of an absolute, divine reason. The "prince of scholastics" believes divine reason to be outside the world, infinitely superior to the world, and to have created it out of

nothing. Hegel, on the other hand, maintains that divine reason does not exist outside the world, because it comprises its essence, just as it is also the essence of human reason. Hence the divine and the human are not so far distant from one another. These opposed conceptions (within the framework of idealist thinking) show how important the role of interpretation is in philosophy. The example given is the more significant because the initial propositions of both thinkers are not facts but assumptions, which in themselves amount to a definite, theological interpretation of the world, which in Hegel becomes so filled with real content that it ultimately comes into conflict with its inappropriate form.

Any definition of a concept if, of course, it is not the only possible one, and in most cases this is precluded because the concrete in science is a unity of different definitions, is an interpretation which is supplemented by another interpretation, i.e., another definition. So different interpretations may supplement as well as preclude one another, although in the former case they are as a rule not simply summed up but taken into account in the theoretical conclusion that synthesises them.[1]

[1] Lajos Jánossy points out that different but equally legitimate (at the given level of knowledge) interpretations of certain phenomena are possible in natural science: "Einstein's interpretation of the Michelson-Morley experiment and similar experiments is not the only possible interpretation from the point of view of logic. Before Einstein, Lorentz and, independently of him, Fitzgerald assumed the existence of ether. They also believed that electro-magnetic phenomena connected with ether were described by Maxwell's equations.... The Lorentz-Fitzgerald interpretation is mathematically no different from Einstein's; we can adopt either Einstein's or the Lorentz-Fitzgerald standpoint and obtain the same answers to all the problems of physics which we may now consider experimentally solved." (L. Jánossy, "Significance of Philosophy for Physical Research" in *Problems of Philosophy*, 1958, No. 4, p. 99, in Russian.) In philosophy, as distinct from physics, such essentially different and yet equally legitimate interpretations are impossible. In philosophy, therefore, different interpretations are the expression of different trends and are always in a polemical relation to one another. Nevertheless it would be wrong to assume that contrasting philosophical interpretations are always in the relationship of truth and error to each other; the truth often emerges when both contradictory interpretations are rejected. The scientific understanding of historical necessity, for instance, presupposes rejection of both fatalism and voluntarism.

Interpretation is inseparable from theoretical inquiry in any form, since the latter can never be merely a statement of facts, i.e., it always uses certain assumptions, theoretical premises, deductions and so on. The neo-positivists, in working out the principle of verification, attempted to distinguish "protocol statements" as pure statements of what is observed, which as such could be taken as criteria of the truth of empirical propositions. This attempt, as we know, failed to produce the desired results and in the end the neo-positivists came to the conclusion that any statement is an interpretation, since it presupposes singling out that which is stated and placing it in relation to other facts. Bertrand Russell maintained that the theory of relativity reduced the difference between heliocentric and geocentric systems to different types of interpretation of one and the same fact: "If space is purely relative, the difference between the statements 'the earth rotates' and 'the heavens revolve' is purely verbal: both must be ways of describing

the same phenomena."[1] One cannot agree, of course, with the conversion of statement into interpretation, but it is also quite clear that this cognitive procedure does not preclude explicit or implicit assumptions and hence various interpretations.

Any interpretation entails the application of the knowledge we possess to the facts that we wish to study. We speak of the application of knowledge and not of truths, because these are not one and the same thing. Ptolemy's system was not true but it summarised certain observations and contained some true notions and, for its own time, was scientific and made it possible to explain and predict certain phenomena. In philosophy it is particularly important to avoid confusing knowledge with truth. The most thorough knowledge of the mistaken propositions which have at various times been put forward by scientists or philosophers and have been accepted as true does not necessarily give us knowledge of the truth, although it must be admitted that knowledge of error does help us to learn the truth.

Knowledge as the theoretical basis of interpretation may be knowledge only of that which has been asserted by certain men of learning and that has been confirmed, will be confirmed or, on the contrary, rejected, in the future. Democritus' conception of absolutely solid, indivisible atoms and absolute vacuum, which provided the theoretical basis for an interpretation of the world precisely because it contained elements of truth, actually limited the possibility of explaining the *qualitative* diversity of phenomena. In the

[1] B. Russell, *Human Knowledge*, London, 1956, p. 33.

time of Democritus, however, neither explanation nor even description of the infinite qualitative diversity of natural phenomena were as yet possible.

Interpretation depends not only on the character of knowledge (primarily the objective truth contained in it) but also on its volume. The ancient Greek philosophers, though they possessed an extremely limited fund of theoretical knowledge (much of which contained only elements of truth), tried to provide an integrated, i.e., philosophical interpretation of reality. This obvious discrepancy between the theoretical basis of interpretation and the interpretation itself inevitably led them to naive, erroneous and sometimes fantastic conclusions.

The development of science constantly increases the volume of knowledge, and scientific methods of inquiry and testing tend to bring that knowledge increasingly nearer to objective truth. Nonetheless the possibilities of interpretation are always limited by the availability of knowledge, and any further increase in its volume changes the substance and form of interpretation according to a recognisable pattern. This is true of any science but most of all of philosophy, which seeks to interpret not separate phenomena but their multiform totalities, the basic forms of existence and the knowledge of it. No wonder then that in philosophy there have always been different and even mutually exclusive interpretations of nature, matter, consciousness and so on. From this point of view the errors of philosophers may be regarded as incorrect interpretations of actual facts, and it quite often turns out that their initial propositions are not statements but interpretations of facts. This, however, is no reason

for distrusting the possibility of the achievement of truth in philosophy, since philosophical interpretation, like any other form of knowledge, is ultimately confirmed or denied by the whole mass of evidence provided by science and practice.

In natural science the attempt to interpret certain facts from the positions of a definite theory periodically makes it necessary to build new theories or substantially amend the old ones. In philosophy, many of whose propositions cannot be directly proved or disproved by experiment, by facts, no such necessity exists. However, the accumulation of facts, the multiplication of scientific discoveries and outstanding historical events, compel philosophy to alter its interpretation of reality. Whereas the development of classical mechanics brought into being mechanistic materialism, successful research into non-mechanical forms of the motion of matter revealed the untenability of the mechanistic interpretation of nature. Advancing scientific knowledge of the nature of the psyche has forced most idealists to renounce their former naive view of the relationship between body and soul.

Inquiry into the historical process of change, into the development of the philosophical interpretation of nature, of society, of man and his ability to acquire knowledge, is one of the major tasks of historico-philosophical science. Thanks to this kind of research we overcome the impression that philosophy has drifted from one mistake to another, and are able to trace the unique progressive development of philosophical knowledge, the development of philosophical argumentation, and the fruitful influence of the specialised sciences on philosophy.

In the bourgeois philosophy of the last century, in connection with attempts to restore, to find new ground for the juxtaposition of philosophy to the positive sciences, one finds an increasing tendency to discredit the cognitive significance of interpretation. According to Wilhelm Dilthey, interpretation is a specifically natural scientific mode of inquiry, which yields only probable knowledge. Dilthey attacks "explanatory psychology", which in his view merely extrapolates scientific methods (research into causal relations, advancing of hypotheses) into the mental sphere, whereas the life of the intellect, unlike that of external nature, is something that is directly given to us and must therefore be known intuitively. "Nature," Dilthey wrote, "we can explain; the life of the soul we must understand."[1] In contrast to interpretation and explanation Dilthey proposed *description* of the content of consciousness in a way that could be directly understood: "The methodical advantage of psychology lies in the fact that it has a direct and living spiritual connection in the form of the emotional experiences of reality."[2]

Dilthey believed the principle of intuitionist descriptive psychology, precluding all interpretation, to be the basis of a new "philosophy of life", in which he saw the summing up of the whole historical development of philosophy and its conversion into the main science of human spirit. According to Dilthey, direct description of a psychological condition, as distinct from interpretation, which allegedly takes us back from the known to the unknown, is *understanding*. Dilthey called what was basically an irrational conception

[1] W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Stuttgart, 1957, V. Band, S. 144.
[2] Ibid., S. 151.

of philosophical knowledge "hermeneutics", giving a new sense to a term employed in classical philology and to some extent in philosophy (Schleiermacher), for describing a special type of interpretation (myths, ancient literature, art and so on).[1]

Martin Heidegger's existentialist hermeneutics is a further development of Dilthey's conception and its treatment in the spirit of Husserl's phenomenology, which broke away from psychologism and juxtaposed to explanation of the phenomena of the consciousness their "eidetic" essential perception. Interpretation, Heidegger believes, is subjective by nature, because the interpreting subject provides the yardstick of judgement. On the other hand "understanding", according to Heidegger, corresponds to being and therefore from the very beginning, i.e., in its pre-reflex form, is "existential understanding". However, Heidegger did not succeed in disclosing the objective content of "existential understanding", the doctrine of which turns out to be ultimately an irrationalist and obviously subjective interpretation of the cognitive process and its object.[2]

[1] L. V. Skvortsov has this to say on the subject: "Dilthey's interpretation of 'understanding' as an emotional reliving of the psychological implications in the philosophical doctrines of the past precluded any possibility of their *scientific* analysis, which presupposed not only the comprehension of one or another doctrine but also its assessment from the standpoint of *adequacy*. Thus Dilthey deprives the history of philosophy of its *objective* basis." (L. V. Skvortsov, *A New Rise of Metaphysics?*, Moscow, 1966, p. 75, in Russian.) Dilthey's denial of the significance of interpretation in philosophy is a subjective *interpretation* of what he calls "understanding".

[2] We have no intention of rejecting as a whole Heidegger's proposition on the subjective nature of interpretation, which is confirmed by the very fact of the existence of existentialist and idealist philosophy in general. The objective interpretation of phenomena, which presupposes their examination in the form in which they exist outside and independently of consciousness, and hence the acknowledgement of the objective content of conceptions, concepts and theories, becomes possible only from the positions of materialist philosophy and natural science.

Thus irrationalist criticism of interpretation boils down to denial of the cognitive significance of natural science, which is treated as a basic inability to understand existence. But since existentialism limits philosophy to the investigation of "human reality", through which it tries to reach the allegedly unattainable being in itself, existentialism cultivates to an even greater extent than other idealist doctrines the subjectivist interpretation of existence.

To recapitulate, philosophy does not renounce interpretation even when it declares war upon it. The nature of philosophy is such that it cannot fail to express its attitude to the fundamental realities that are of essential importance to man: to the phenomena of nature, of personal and social life, to science, art, religion and so on. And this attitude, since it is theoretical in character, inevitably becomes an interpretation.

The epistemological analysis of interpretation as a specific way of reflecting reality shows that its key feature is not expression of the subjective attitude of the thinker to certain definite facts, but a scientific *quest* for the connection between observed phenomena and for the connection of these phenomena with others whose existence is recognised or presumed on the basis of the available data. In this sense interpretation may be regarded as linking. It goes without saying that this "linking" may be subjective, insufficient-

ly grounded or, on the contrary, objective and well grounded. But in both cases the interpretation of one fact (or knowledge of it) is possible only when there is another fact (and corresponding knowledge of it), when the whole is split up into parts and the relation between them is examined. And since the essence of phenomena is above all their internal interconnection, interpretation is also a mode of cognising the essence of phenomena.

Re-interpretation of philosophical propositions, concepts and categories is a legitimate form of development of philosophy. Thus, for example, the evolution of the category of necessity may be historically presented as the origin and development of various definitions of necessity and the overcoming of this diversity of interpretations in the unity of the scientific definition of the category. The objective basis of this cognitive process is provided by social practice, by accumulation of knowledge of the unity and interdependence of phenomena, and by the multiplication of data on nature and society.

The philosophy of ancient times, strictly speaking, has as yet no *concept* of objective necessity; its notions on this score are obviously not free of mythological images and are to a considerable extent metaphorical in character. The medieval conception of necessity is mainly a theological interpretation, and not so much of empirically stated processes as of the corresponding Christian dogmas. Only in modern times, first in astronomy and then in other sciences of nature has a concept of necessity been formulated to which philosophy (mainly materialist philosophy) attaches universal significance.

In the middle of the 19th century, i.e., in a

period when the mechanistic interpretation of the necessary connection between phenomena reigned supreme in all fields, Marx and Engels evolved the concept of *historical* necessity as the specific form of essential connection not only of simultaneously existing phenomena but also of social phenomena that replace one another in time. In doing so they broke through the narrow horizon of the metaphysical interpretation of necessity, confronting it with the dialectical-materialist interpretation of this objective relationship of phenomena, an interpretation which natural science, in its own way, of course, and on the basis of its own data, also subsequently achieved.

The history of philosophy shows convincingly how the selfsame propositions, differently interpreted, acquire clearly opposite meanings and significance. Take, for example, the fundamental proposition on the irreconcilable opposition between scientific knowledge and religious faith. This principle is substantiated, on the one hand, by the materialists, and on the other—surprisingly enough—by mystics, irrationalists, philosophical theologians of Protestantism, and particularly the neo-orthodox.

There is no need to explain why the materialist argues that science and religion are irreconcilable. But why does the religious irrationalist agree with him? Because, from his point of view, the great truths of religious revelation are absolutely inaccessible to science. Therefore between religion and science there really is an absolute contradiction, which expresses the infinity that divides man from God. Thus two irreconcilably hostile world views substantiate with equal consistency the thesis that knowledge and faith are

fundamentally opposed, interpreting both knowledge and faith in opposite ways, juxtaposing faith to knowledge in the one case, and knowledge to faith in the other.

The neo-orthodox Protestant theologians, who take this juxtaposition to an extreme, reach the point of asserting that we *do not know* whether God exists and we *do not know* what we believe in; we only believe in the existence of a deity, in His absolute justice, etc. Unlike the materialists, on the one hand, and these Protestant theologians, on the other, the Catholic theologians and philosophers of the Thomist school argue that science and religion do not essentially contradict each other and so natural science can and should substantiate Christian dogmas, which are above reason in that they take their source from God, but not against reason since God is absolute reason. The neo-positivists, despite their hostility to the Thomist approach, accept the thesis that knowledge and faith are only relatively opposed since they reduce scientific knowledge and truth itself to a form of faith. Some neo-positivists, it is true, maintain that there is common ground between science and religion, the latter being part of the emotional life, and infer from this that religion is irrefutable, since only scientific theories can be refuted. So the indisputable fact of the fundamental opposition between science and religion is interpreted in a great variety of ways and this constitutes much of the substance of some philosophical doctrines.

The content of philosophical concepts, as we have already pointed out, changes historically with the result that things which have nothing whatever in common are quite often designated by the same term in the history of philosophy.

When the existentialist declares that houses, trees, and mountains possess no *existence*, we cannot contest this statement by merely referring to the dictionary meaning of the word "existence". We must analyse the particular meaning that existentialism has given this word, show the untenability of the subjectivist interpretation of existence and reveal the connection between "human reality" and the reality that exists independently of it, and so on.

Philosophical propositions, considered outside their real historical and theoretical context (which is always implied when they are expressed by philosophers), are mere banalities. Take the statement, for instance, that people themselves make their history. Today this proposition may be regarded as tautological. To appreciate its real scientific significance, however, one has only to recall that it was first put forward to counter the theological conception of providentialism, which was replaced by the naturalist conception of predetermination, upheld by the pre-Marxian materialists, who nevertheless maintained that people themselves make their own history. But how is this possible if external nature, the nature of man himself, the results of the activity of previous generations of people are independent of the generations at present living?

The philosophy of Marxism has proved that neither external nature nor the nature of man are the determining force of social development. In the process of social production, of providing for themselves and others, people transform external nature and, in so doing, transform their own nature as well. The development of the productive forces ultimately determines the character of social relations and people's mode of

life. But the productive forces are people themselves and the instruments of production they have themselves created. It follows, therefore, that people themselves do create their own history, but create it not according to their whim but in accordance with the current level of the productive forces which every succeeding generation inherits from its predecessor. The more each new generation takes part in the development of the productive forces, that is to say, the more significant its contribution to the material basis of the life of society, the more does that generation create conditions that determine its social being, the more freely does it create its own present and future.

So the proposition "people themselves create their own history" becomes genuinely scientific only thanks to the materialist understanding of history, which fills it with concrete and multiform historical content. A great distance has been travelled between the Marxist interpretation of this proposition and the way it was interpreted by the pre-Marxian materialists who remained on positions of a naturalist-idealist understanding of history.

Marx said that philosophers had only *interpreted* the world in various ways, but the task was to change it. This famous proposition states, on the one hand, that interpretation had been the basic form of the development of philosophical knowledge and, on the other, condemns philosophy that limits its task to mere interpretation of what exists.

The critics of Marxism wrongly interpret Marx's proposition as a demand that we should renounce all interpretation of reality and, in so doing, abolish philosophy and replace it with

revolutionary action.[1] This is an obvious misunderstanding of Marx, who by his whole teaching sought to prove the necessity for unity of revolutionary practice with revolutionary theory, i.e., with an explanation of the social reality that substantiates ways and means for its revolutionary transformation.

Of course, this proposition of Marx's is a thesis which can be correctly understood only in the whole context of Marx's teaching. Marx was counterposing the revolutionary interpretation of reality to the conservative interpretation. In condemning the philosophers who *only* interpreted the world as it is, Marx was condemning a definite, committed position in philosophy.

G. V. Plekhanov called historical materialism a materialist *explanation* of history. The essence of this explanation is that it reveals the laws of change and development of society, the negation of the old by the new.

The revolution in philosophy brought about by Marx and Engels implies not the denial of interpretation as philosophy's characteristic form of inquiry, but denial of its idealist and metaphysical varieties to which the founders of Marxism counterposed the dialectical-materialist conception of interpretation.

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[1] Henry D. Aiken, for instance, writes: "The philosophical problem, said Marx, is not to understand the world, but to change it." (H. D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology*, Boston, 1957, p. 185.) As we see, the statement attributed to Marx is utterly absurd—in order to change the world we must deny the need to *understand* it. Actually Marx's position was quite the opposite and he criticised the would-be revolutionaries who refused to consider the available scientific data on society.

5. THEORETICAL SYNTHESIS OF DIVERSE CONTENT

Every science seeks to achieve a theoretical synthesis, and not only of the range of questions comprising its subject, but going beyond that range. Besides bringing into being such sciences as biochemistry and chemical physics, this has made it possible to apply mathematical methods in sciences that for centuries developed independently of mathematics. However, while noting the progressive tendency in the specialised sciences to strike out beyond their own field of research, we must emphasise that the specialised sciences are called specialised because they are concerned with research and synthesis of ideas within the framework of their own deliberately limited field. The specific nature of philosophical synthesis, on the other hand, consists in the fact that it cannot be reduced to synthesis of purely philosophical ideas.

Philosophers are often reproached for not minding their own business, i.e., for discussing not only philosophical problems but those of physics, biology, history, linguistics and literature. The reproach is justified if the philosopher claims to be able to solve special, non-philosophical problems. But it is quite obvious that the philosopher cannot solve philosophical problems while ignoring the achievements of the specialised sciences.

One of the basic defects of Hegel's grandiose historico-philosophical conception is that he reduces the development of philosophy to the dialectical synthesis of philosophical ideas. In his history of philosophy Hegel indisputably proved the paramount importance of the synthesis of

philosophical ideas to the development of philosophy and thus exploded the metaphysical juxtaposition of some philosophical doctrines to others. But Hegel virtually lost sight of the fact that philosophy synthesises, interprets and gives meaning to the scientific discoveries of its time and the methods by which they were made. The importance of these philosophical generalisations, which was relatively small in the ancient and medieval epochs, has enormously increased in modern times and particularly today, when philosophy has sometimes, putting it bluntly, to go and learn mathematics, theoretical physics, theoretical biology, and so on.

Having said this, we must at once stress the peculiar nature of the philosophical synthesis of scientific advances. This synthesis is determined above all by its initial philosophical premises, materialist or idealist. Moreover, one cannot ignore the multiformity of materialism and idealism, their relation to dialectics, metaphysics, rationalism, sensualism, etc. Understandably the possibilities of philosophical generalisation of scientific discoveries are extremely limited in the case of the idealist and metaphysical doctrines. But even so, despite distortion of the actual significance of scientific discoveries, these doctrines constantly seek to comprehend scientific discoveries, express their attitude to them and give them some appraisal, if only a negative one.

Philosophy cannot exist without this attitude of critical comprehension and summing up not only towards previous philosophy but also towards the science of its day. In the present age, when science has become part of everyday life, penetrated the general consciousness and brought about a revolution in production and consumption, both

material and spiritual, this is particularly obvious. It is enough to recall how great an influence the theory of relativity, quantum mechanics, cybernetics, and the contemporary scientific and technological revolution have had on the development of philosophical thought. Present-day philosophical irrationalism, though it sets itself up against science, which it scorns as a system of depersonalised knowledge, with a significance that is unrelated to truth, nonetheless constantly considers the advances of science and interprets them in a subjectivist spirit.[1]

But philosophy is not solely concerned with making theoretical generalisations about the natural sciences. Equally important for its own self-determination is its attitude to mankind's historical experience and the everyday experience of individuals (one of whom is the philosopher himself). This does not imply that philosophy is

[1] José Ortega-y-Gasset in his book *What is Philosophy?* characterises the past sixty years of the 19th century as the most unfavourable for philosophy. "It has been a strikingly anti-philosophical period." (J. Ortega-y-Gasset, *Was ist Philosophie?* München, 1967, S. 28.) Ortega attributes this decline in philosophy to the "imperialism of physics" and the "terrorism of the laboratory" or, in other words, to the outstanding achievements of natural science. However, the further course of events, so Ortega asserts, has shown that natural scientific knowledge is symbolic, conventional and is moving further and further away from knowledge of the mysterious essence of the universe and human life. Physics has not been able to become metaphysics, and the metaphysical demand has remained unsatisfied. It is this disillusionment over the ability of the natural sciences to produce a coherent view of the world that, in Ortega's opinion, has evoked a revival of philosophy in the 20th century. This notion, which is shared not only by irrationalist philosophers, is a typical example of the idealist interpretation of the latest advances in natural science.

bound to embrace the philosophy of history; strictly speaking, the latter emerged only in modern times. We are concerned with something else. Historical events, particularly the events of the philosopher's own day, shape his attitude to the world, his frame of mind, and determine his attitude to philosophical tradition and also to problems which, though not philosophical in themselves, excite philosophical interests, suggest new philosophical ideas or lead to the revival or rethinking of old ideas that once appeared obsolete.

In a later chapter I shall specially consider philosophy as the social consciousness of a historically defined period. Such researches, which could be described as the sociology of philosophy, usually play a subsidiary role in historico-philosophical studies. In my view they deserve much more attention, since they make it possible to appraise the role of philosophy in concrete historical terms, to disclose the changes in its range of problems, its social inspiration and its partisanship or political commitment. For the time being I shall confine myself to suggesting that the analysis of actual historical experience makes it possible in a number of cases to reveal the genesis of philosophical conceptions which at first glance appear to be merely the further immanent development of previous doctrines.

Hegel's dialectics, of course, cannot be understood in isolation from the history of dialectics from Heraclitus to Kant, Fichte and Schelling. But how is one to explain this leap in the development of the dialectical understanding of the world that is marked by Hegel's philosophy? By the achievements of the natural sciences at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th cen-

turies? They did, of course, contain some brilliant dialectical conjectures but Hegel, judging by what he has to say about the natural sciences, simply underestimated them or even failed to notice them altogether. I would suggest that Hegel's dialectics, since it cannot be reduced to a mere inquiry into the interconnection of the categories, was inspired by the epoch of bourgeois revolutions, which broke down the feudal relations that had dominated Europe for centuries and destroyed that apparently changeless, natural way of life in which the romantics observed a pristine unity of personality and being that was afterwards lost.

It has been stated above that philosophy critically comprehends, analyses and synthesises man's everyday experience. This subject, as the history of philosophy shows, is not ousted by the development of the specialised sciences which, in creating a new and unusual picture of the world, compel philosophy to reappraise the data of everyday experience.

The fate of the individual, his emotions and aspirations, his life and death have always been one of the most important themes in philosophy. The tendency to ignore this range of human problems, so characteristic of neo-positivism, is regarded as one-sided "scientism". The philosophical untenability of scientism lies not in its being orientated on the problems raised by the development of the sciences but in its turning away from the question of man, which in recent times, and particularly today, has become the key problem of philosophy.

The early Greek philosophers were, it is true, mainly concerned with cosmological problems. But the essential thing about this most ancient

form of philosophising is that the Greeks, as we have already emphasised, proceeded from everyday human experience, criticised commonplace notions and evolved ideas that differed from them. These philosophers concentrated on those elements of everyday experience that could be interpreted as a confirmation of their views; they had nothing else to appeal to.

In modern times, when the achievements of mathematics and celestial mechanics rather than immediate everyday experience have become the point of departure for philosophical reflection on the nature of the universe, what may seem to be extremely remote abstract systems of metaphysics always lead up to the questions of the essence of man, his position in the world, his purpose and so on. To a considerable extent these problems determine the concept and specific form of philosophical knowledge.[1]

Thus, since philosophy synthesises, critically analyses and interprets the diverse types of human knowledge and experience, both the posing and solution of philosophical problems are synthetic in character. In philosophy qualitatively different types of knowledge, which cannot be reduced to the mere scientific reflection of reality, merge into a single whole, and at various stages

[1] Existentialism claims that it alone is the "philosophy of man". The weakness of the claim is obvious to anyone who has studied the history of philosophy. Is this not why Karl Jaspers maintains that philosophy has always been existentialist? But even this does not accord with the facts of philosophical history. "The question of man," M. B. Mitin writes, "is an old and eternally new problem. From ancient times man, his essence, aims and actions, his past and future have formed the subject-matter of philosophical inquiry." (M. B. Mitin, *Philosophy and Modern Times*, Moscow, 1960, p. 41, in Russian.)

in its development one or another type of knowledge may predominate. At the same time, however, philosophy remains *theoretical* knowledge. In this connection it must be stressed once again that theoretical knowledge is by no means always scientific in character, that is to say, theory and science are by no means one and the some thing. Scientific knowledge may be theoretical or empirical; philosophical knowledge, however, cannot in principle be empirical. But the important point is that philosophy, while developing as theoretical knowledge, may be unscientific and even anti-scientific.

Thus the distinction between *theoretical* and *scientific-theoretical* knowledge, which we do not usually find in bourgeois historians of philosophy, helps us to elucidate the specific nature of philosophy even when, as in the Middle Ages, for example, it is largely swallowed up by theology, which, though it was called a science, certainly was not one.

Wilhelm Dilthey in his article *The Essence of Philosophy,* suggesting that the various philosophical doctrines cannot be reduced to a unity, emphasises that the thing they have in common is the principle of scientificality, the demand for universally applicable knowledge. "Philosophy," he writes, "means striving for knowledge, knowledge in its strictest form—science."[1] According to Dilthey, the chief attribute of scientificality is the reduction of all assumptions to their legitimate logical foundations. He draws no distinction between science and theory, i.e., any theory, if it answers the demands of logic, may be considered scientific. Hence follows the obviously ill-founded conclusion that all philosophical doctrines strive to realise the ideal of *scientific* knowledge. However, the history of philosophy indicates quite the opposite. All philosophical doctrines attempt theoretically to prove, substantiate, deduce their propositions from certain assumptions; they all try to uphold the principle they have adopted. As for the ideal of *scientific* knowledge, it has not always existed, of course, not to mention the fact that it has undergone historical change.

[1] W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften,* Stuttgart, 1957, V. Band, S. 348.

Dilthey tried to reconcile rationalism and irrationalism. But irrationalism is clearly opposed to science (particularly natural science) and rejects the ideal of *scientific* knowledge in principle. Dilthey counterposed to natural science the irrationally interpreted "sciences of the spirit". Modern irrationalism substantiates its denial of the philosophical significance of the natural sciences with a system of carefully thought-out, refined and not obviously unscientific arguments. This means that the drawing of a dividing line between theoretical synthesis and scientific synthesis, which of course is also theoretical in character, has fundamental significance. Theoretical knowledge, as the whole history of pre-Marxian philosophy testifies, has existed in two basic forms: philosophical and scientific. This fact is ignored by those philosophers and historians who fail to see that idealism, no matter how perfect its theoretical form, is organically hostile to science, which is basically materialist.

Wilhelm Windelband, even more adamantly than Dilthey, argued that the significance of philosophy, its cultural and historical role throughout history, lies in the scientificality that has

constantly inspired it and whose key feature, in his opinion, is the desire for knowledge for knowledge's sake. When Windelband claims that the history of Greek philosophy is the history of the birth of science, there is no reason to object. But he is clearly wrong in extending this argument to the whole subsequent history of philosophy. "*The history of the name of 'philosophy',*" he writes, "*is the history of the cultural meaning of science.* When scientific thought asserts itself as an independent urge towards knowledge for knowledge's sake it acquires the name of philosophy; when subsequently the unity of science breaks up into its separate branches, philosophy is the last, culminating generalising knowledge of the world. When scientific thought is again reduced to the degree of being a means of ethical education or religious meditation, philosophy becomes a science of life or the formulation of religious beliefs. But as soon as scientific life is once again liberated, philosophy, too, re-acquires the character of self-sufficient knowledge of the world and, when it begins to renounce this task, it transforms itself into the theory of science."[1]

I have no intention of underestimating the role of philosophy in the development of the sciences, or the role of the sciences in the development of philosophy. Windelband correctly notes a certain common rhythm that is to be observed in the changes that both philosophy and science undergo in the course of world history. But as a typical representative of idealist historiography he utterly disregards the enormous part that non-philosophical factors play in the history of both philosophy and science, factors such as the development of social production, and changes in social relations. For him the sole motive force in philosophy and science is the desire for knowledge. Like Dilthey, he offers a very elastic interpretation of the concept of science, regarding it, for example, in the Middle Ages as a means of ethical education and religious meditation. His grounds for this kind of interpretation of science are given in the above-mentioned refusal to make a fundamental distinction between theory and science. Yet the concept of theory is incomparably wider than the concept of science. That is why not every theory is a scientific theory. The scientificality of a theory is determined not so much by its form as by its content. This is extremely important to bear in mind when studying the countless philosophical theories that have replaced one another through the centuries.

Idealism by its very nature cannot be a scientific theory. At best it may acquire scientific form but never scientific content.

It may appear that the distinction between theoretical and scientific theoretical knowledge, while undoubtedly important to the understanding of pre-Marxian (and particularly idealist) philosophy, loses its meaning when applied to dialectical and historical materialism, which, having put an end to the opposition between philosophy and the positive sciences and practice, is a scientific philosophy that fully accepts and applies in practice the principles of scientificality that have historically taken shape in science. But since there is still a difference between scientific philosophy and the specialised sciences, the above-mentioned distinction becomes the distinction between scientifico-philosophical and scientific knowledge.

[1] W. Windelband, *Präludien,* Tübingen, 1924, Erster Band, S. 20.

It has been stated above that any science presupposes the conscious segregation of a definite group of objects from the infinite diversity of phenomena of nature or society. The progressive limitation of the subject of inquiry is a characteristic tendency of the development of the sciences, which constantly breaks down the object of research into parts. This tendency, due to new scientific discoveries, gives rise to new scientific disciplines and therefore becomes one of the conditions of scientific progress, and though the circle of objects of scientific cognition is constantly expanding, scientific research is becoming increasingly specialised, despite the constant integration of scientific knowledge owing to the interaction and interpenetration of the sciences.

The philosophy of Marxism can limit the subject of its inquiry only by excluding questions that are not actually philosophical. Such limitation is basically methodological and epistemological in character, since dialectical and historical materialism, unlike the specialised sciences, cannot limit itself to any *part* of nature, society or the process of cognition. This is clearly demonstrated in the Marxist philosophical study of any problem, for example, the problem of matter (as an objective reality existing outside and independently of the consciousness) or of cognition as its reflection.

The principle of maximal limitation of the subject of philosophy, proclaimed by some doctrines, mainly those of positivism, contradicts the very nature of philosophy and its function of providing a world view. This principle, which presupposes the transformation of philosophy into a specialised science, is fundamentally unscientific. The specialised sciences, no matter how different they may be from one another in subject-matter and method of research, are united in the sense that they are all specialised, and this characterises not only the subject-matter but also the specific form of scientific research. In this sense philosophy, even scientific philosophy, differs essentially from any other science in that it cannot be a specialised science. And this also characterises not only the content of philosophy but also the specific form of cognition that we call philosophy.

Consideration of philosophy as a specific form of cognition brings us to the conclusion that the peculiarities of philosophical thinking do not belong to philosophy alone; in some measure they are inherent in scientifico-theoretical thinking in general. These peculiarities are possessed by various philosophical doctrines in varying degrees and are manifested both positively and negatively. Analysis of the philosophical form of thought proves the untenability of the metaphysical juxtaposition of philosophy to the sciences and the possibility of a specifically scientific form of philosophical knowledge that is fulfilled in dialectical and historical materialism.

Chapter Four
DEFINITION OF PHILOSOPHY AS A PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM

1. DIFFICULTIES OF DEFINING PHILOSOPHY DUE TO THE PECULIAR NATURE OF ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Abstract objects are relatively easy to define simply because they are abstract, i.e., they are only an idealised image of a definite reality, the deliberate construction of abstract scientific thought. The concept of the abstract object is in fact no more than the meaning of a term (for instance, the absolutely black body in physics) as established by its definition. It is another matter when we speak of *real* objects in all their diversity, contradiction and changeability, such as nature, life, man, art, and so on. It was of these objects that Engels was thinking when he said that their definition had only formal significance. *Omnis determinatio est negatio*—any definition is negation. Spinoza's dictum should, of course, be understood not in the trivial sense that every definition negates other definitions, for that may not be the case, inasmuch as the concrete in theoretical thinking is a unity of different definitions. Every definition is not only an assertion, it is also a negation of its own limited content because it is one-sided, and the concrete object that

it seeks to define is many-sided. Every definition is a limitation of the content of a concept and therefore is itself limited.

Concrete and, consequently, diverse, many-sided objects can be defined only in a logically concrete manner, and the logically concrete takes the form of motivated transition from one definition to another, resulting in a system of definitions. Every separate definition is abstract, one-sided and therefore untrue because there is no abstract truth (at any rate in relation to concrete objects). Viewed from this standpoint, the existence of a host of definitions of philosophy does not appear to be something exceptional, incomprehensible or discreditable to philosophy. The problem lies elsewhere. Can this mass of definitions be welded into a unity? And if this is impossible, how can one concretely define the concept of philosophy (the concrete being a unity of different definitions), while allowing for the divergence of philosophical systems, trends, doctrines and conceptions that has been going on for thousands of years and continues (perhaps with even greater intensity) to this day, and whose natural result is the abominable pluralism of definitions of the concept of philosophy?

In considering this question we must duly appreciate the historically changing significance, range and subject of philosophy, and also of the term "philosophy" itself. But despite all the differences of opinion concerning the concept of philosophy, philosophy has remained philosophy, i.e., has been distinguished from all other theoretical knowledge both in form and in content. And if this is so, then does not this create a possibility of scientific synthesis of the various definitions of philosophy? If such a synthesis is possible, it can

be made only from theoretical positions that preclude all eclecticism, and only as a result of strict critical analysis, selection and working over of the various definitions of philosophy.

Unity of various definitions can be substantial, concrete unity only if we single out the actual tendencies of development of philosophy, the progress of philosophical knowledge which dialectically negates its precedent, less developed forms. This synthesis or rather critical rethinking consequently presupposes special historico-philosophical research. Since such an inquiry goes beyond the bounds of this book, we shall confine ourselves to posing the problem and making a preliminary analysis of the possibilities of synthesis of the various definitions, bearing in mind that none of them can be taken ready-made from the history of philosophy, since they all have to be essentially rethought on the basis of past definitions.

Wilhelm Windelband, having declared his belief that any attempt to synthesise the innumerable definitions of philosophy "would be a completely hopeless task", explains the futility of such an attempt (which he himself does not entirely renounce, however) on the grounds that "there is no logically definable unity of the essence of philosophy that corresponds to the universality of its name".[1] But the meaning of the word "philosophy" has not changed by accident; in cases when the word has been used arbitrarily, the casually attributed meaning has not usually survived. The fact that the name "philosophy" has been given to the most varied forms of knowledge, apparently completely alien to philosophy, in certain respects actually facilitates the understanding of philosophy and its role in the spiritual development of mankind. The essence of philosophy, as Dilthey wrote, "has turned out to be extremely mobile and variable: the constant raising of new problems, adaptation to the conditions of culture; now it plunges into individual problems, regarding them as important, now it turns away from them again; at one stage of knowledge it believes it can solve problems that it afterwards abandons as insoluble".[1]

So the concept of philosophy with its many and changing faces must be viewed from its positive side, the more so that in this constant process of change the basic stuff of philosophy comes to light and survives.[2]

[1] W. Windelband, *Präludien*, S. 11.

[1] W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band V, S. 365.

[2] Referring to this fact, Dilthey sets himself the task of singling out the *intransient*, perennial substance of philosophy: "We have to define not what is regarded as philosophy here and now but what always has and always will form its content" (Ibid., S. 364). And what is this intransient substance of philosophy? Dilthey replies: "Always we observe in it the same urge towards universality, towards substantiation, the same urge of the spirit to know the given world as a whole. And always it is the arena of struggle between the metaphysical striving to penetrate the inner kernel of this whole against the positivist demand for the universal significance of its knowledge" (Ibid., S. 365). From Dilthey's standpoint, the contradiction between the transient and the intransient in the very content of philosophy is the sourse of the diversity of philosophical doctrines and their incompatibility. Hence the difficulty of defining the concept of philosophy, because such a definition, in order to be universal, must register its intransient content and, consequently, ignore the transient, although the latter is just as essential as the historical form of philosophy created by life itself.

But the difficulties arising over the definition of the concept of philosophy cannot be reduced to the contradiction between the intransient and the transient in philosophy, because the intransient is formed historically out of the transient, and the antithesis between the two is relative.

If the essence of philosophy amounted to that which was identical in all philosophical doctrines, it would be an abstract and meagre essence or rather the mere appearance of essence. Whereas the real essence has numerous aspects—identity, difference, contradiction, etc. If we appraise the essence of philosophy from this point of view, the most general feature of all philosophical doctrines, which has survived in philosophy for thousands of years, turns out to be least of all characteristic of philosophy in its developed form. The historically transient problems of philosophy cannot be regarded as unimportant. What is more, the delimitation of what in the past was called (or actually was) philosophy from that which remains philosophy today, although not a particularly difficult task, is relevant only in so far as it explains the need to apply the word "philosophy" to questions that no longer have anything to do with philosophy.

It is commonplace that the subject-matter of philosophy has in the course of history been prone to change. The problems that up to a certain point in time were exclusively the province of philosophy gradually came under investigation by the specialised sciences. Does this mean that certain problems which "abandoned" philosophy were never really philosophical problems and remained with philosophy simply because for the time being there was nowhere else for them to go? We do not support this idea, although we fully appreciate the wrath of philosophers who protest against the application of the term "philosophy" to questions that, at any rate by the beginning of the 19th century, had ceased to qualify as philosophy. Evidently referring to Newton's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*,

Hegel pointed out that Newton had called his physics a philosophy of nature. "With the English," Hegel observed ironically, "the term philosophy retains this meaning even today, and Newton is still hailed there as a great philosopher. Even in their price lists instruments that cannot be classed as magnetic or electrical apparatus, such as barometers and thermometers, are called 'philosophical instruments'."[1] Hegel was particularly indignant about this because he believed thought to be the sole instrument of philosophy.

It was Hegel who pointed out that Hugo Grocci's theory of law had been called a philosophy of international state law, and that in England political economy was also called philosophy. He cites as an oddity the name of the English journal: *Annals of Philosophy or Magazine of Chemistry, Mineralogy, Mechanics, Natural History, Agriculture and Art.* The sciences which in this case are called philosophical would be more correctly described as empirical sciences, Hegel observes. But why are they called philosophical? Is it merely a matter of misusage based on the medieval university tradition according to which the natural sciences were included in the philosophical faculty? Hegel, however, points out that

[1] G.W.F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 8, S. 50-51. B. P. Weinberg in his introduction to Newton's *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* points out that the Royal Society for Promoting Natural Knowledge arose in 1662 out of the "Invisible or Philosophical College" that had been created in 1645. The Royal Society publishes its *Philosophical Transactions*, reporting research into all branches of natural science, which is to this day called "natural philosophy". When elected to the Royal Society, Newton announced his intention of devoting every effort "toward the success of philosophical knowledge".

in modern times, when the sciences took shape and began investigating a wide variety of empirical material, "any knowledge whose subject is cognition of the stable measure and the *universal* in the sea of empirical singularities, the study of *necessity*, of *law* in the apparent chaos of an infinite multiplicity of accidents ... has come to be called *philosophy*".[1]

In our view this observation clears up the question of why the word "philosophy" was still being so loosely used in the 18th and 19th centuries. We have already mentioned that philosophy takes shape historically and for a number of centuries develops as the first and, in fact, the only form of theoretical knowledge. For Aristotle, for example, no other theory existed except philosophy; he considered geometry and physics to be branches of philosophy, distinguishing from them what later came to be called metaphysics as the "first philosophy". In modern times, when not only mathematics and physics but also biology, law and other sciences have broken away from philosophy, they continue for a long time to be called philosophical because they are concerned with *theoretical* generalisations and do not merely describe observed facts. Is this not why Carolus Linnaeus called his classification of the vegetable world a "Philosophy of Botany"? This was the work which Rousseau described as the most philosophical he knew. And Rousseau was a philosopher in a far more definite sense than Linnaeus, although we do find profound philosophical ideas in Linnaeus as well.

We have already mentioned Lamarck's "Philosophy of Zoology". It is no accident that this

[1] G. W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 8, S. 50.

work expounding the theory of evolution should have acquired such a title. Lamarck was well aware that the hypothesis he had developed, although based on certain empirical data, reached far beyond the bounds of direct observation. Besides, in order to explain certain observed facts, the relative purpose of living organisms, for instance, Lamarck constantly had recourse to the arsenal of philosophical concepts.

Unlike his eminent French predecessor, Charles Darwin had at his disposal far more plentiful empirical material with which to substantiate his theory of evolution. Despite the English tradition, however, he did not call his famous work philosophical. Instead he designated the special subject of his research in the title: *The Origin of Species*. In Darwinian theory biology finally breaks free of philosophy as a *theoretical* discipline. Previously it had broken away only in its empirical, largely descriptive section. One cannot divorce the name "philosophy" from that which was previously (for whole centuries) called philosophy merely on the grounds that the specialised sciences, having split off from philosophy or taken shape in other ways, have adopted as their subject of inquiry that which was formerly studied by philosophy. If many scientific disciplines, now independent of philosophy, were once its departments, this in our opinion has a bearing on the significance of philosophy not only in the past. At any rate, in seeking a scientific definition of the concept of philosophy we cannot ignore this important fact which characterises philosophy's historical destiny.

Some positivist philosophers, citing the fact that many scientific disciplines were described as philosophical while they were evolving, draw the

conclusion that research becomes scientific only to the extent that it segregates itself from philosophy. They ignore the fact, however, that the specialised sciences that have broken away from philosophy and become special fields of research are not now concerned with the same problems that philosophy treated of in the past; the questions themselves have become more specialised. Such questions could have been posed by philosophy only in general terms, preliminary to special investigation. But in their more general form these questions everywhere retain their significance in philosophy even today.

It cannot be said, therefore, that cosmological, physical and biological problems are entirely removed from the concept of philosophy after they become the subject of specialised research. Rather, thanks to the results obtained by the specialised sciences, these problems acquire new meaning for philosophy, since the results of these special researches are not merely interpreted or assimilated by philosophy but open up before it new horizons, possibilities and problems.

Thus, the limitation of the concept of philosophy to its present range of problems cannot provide the basis for a definition of philosophy, since we as philosophers (and historians of philosophy) are interested not only in what philosophy has become as a result of its development, but also in what it has been in the course of its history. This is not to imply that we are somewhat deviously trying to return to the idea of the immutable essence of philosophy that we ourselves rejected. Our task is rather to single out the fairly numerous, so we believe, specific features of philosophy which make it possible to understand philosophy in its development. Analysis

of various definitions of philosophy serves this aim directly. The empirically established basis for their diversity is not merely divergence of opinion concerning one and the same object, but the real diversity of philosophical doctrines, since it is this fact that distinguishes the development of philosophy from the development of any other branch of knowledge.

It was the sceptics among the ancient philosophers who enunciated the belief that the existence of incompatible philosophical doctrines is, first, inevitable and, second, insuperable. The opponents of scepticism in subsequent periods re-establish the notion that the diversity of philosophical doctrines is due to the erring of philosophical thought in quest of the truth, which, as distinct from error, does not exist in the plural. The errors of philosophy, however, are regarded as accidental.

Some philosophers of modern times have tried to single out the elements of truth in various philosophical doctrines, i.e., to make a positive appraisal of their diveristy; but these attempts have as a rule been eclectic in character. Hegel in his criticism of philosophical scepticism, in whose views on philosophy he detects the prejudices of commonplace consciousness, argued that one should not exaggerate the distinctions between philosophical doctrines since the essence of philosophy has always been one and the same and all these countless differences (and contradictions) of philosophical belief exist in the heart of fundamental identity by virtue of its dialectical nature. No matter how different philosophical systems may be, he says, their differences are not so great as the differences between white and sweet, green and rough; they are at one in agreeing that they

are all philosophical doctrines, and it is this that is left out of consideration.[1] In itself this statement of the philosophical character of all philosophical doctrines does not get us very far, of course. But Hegel goes much farther in his teaching on the dialectical unity of the diverse philosophical doctrines, which constitutes the basis of his historico-philosophical conception: he sees them as temporally developing stages, principles of one and the same encyclopedic philosophy, diverse in content, which arrives at its ultimate perfection in his own philosophical system.

Hegel obviously exaggerated the element of identity and played down the element of difference (contradiction) in philosophical doctrines, although he often stressed that difference, contradiction, is no less important than identity, and is inseparable from it. Nonetheless, according to Hegel, errors in the development of philosophy occur *only* through absolutisation of universal truth (absolute knowledge), which every philosophical system presents to the world. Moreover, in saying this, Hegel does not consider it necessary to trace the cause of this absolutising, despite the fact that it is treated as law-governed.

In general, Hegel portrays the development of philosophy as the *harmonious* process of the advance of knowledge in which "the latest philosophical doctrine in time is the result of all previous philosophical doctrines and must therefore embrace in itself principles for all of them".[2] But the actual relationship of any philosophical doctrine to its predecessors is far more complex:

[1] G.W.F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 18, S. 561.
[2] Ibid., Bd. 8, S. 59.

continuity, progress, the development of philosophy through the critical impropriation of previous advances of philosophical knowledge, all this does not preclude irreconcilable contradiction between philosophical trends, incompatibility of philosophical doctrines, since these doctrines reflect various historical situations, demands, interests and take different attitudes to religion, science, and so on. The relationship of continuity between philosophical doctrines is not a relationship of determinism. Like any other form of social consciousness, philosophy is conditioned ultimately by social being.

While rejecting the metaphysical juxtaposition of philosophical doctrines which is characteristic of scepticism, one must make certain essential amendments to Hegel's understanding of the relationship between them. According to Hegel, it is in the final analysis the "absolute spirit" which philosophises and never makes mistakes, so all the mistakes arise only out of the historically limited human form of expressing this absolute self-knowing self-consciousness. Correct understanding of the interrelationship of philosophical systems (and different definitions of the concept of philosophy) must overcome not only the metaphysical conception of the history of philosophy, whose untenability was brilliantly proved by Hegel, but also Hegel's own idealist monism, in the framework of which the historical law of the unity and conflict of opposites could not find adequate expression.

It is quite impossible even to enumerate all the definitions of philosophy that have been given in the course of the history of philosophy. Nor is this necessary. It would be desirable, of course, to offer a rational classification of these defini-

tions, but it is doubtful what principle could be used for a sufficiently comprehensive classification.

At first glance the principle might seem to be obvious: the fundamental opposition between materialism and idealism. However, although the content of every definition of philosophy is undoubtedly determined by the materialist (or idealist) character of the philosophical doctrine, there are certain definitions of the concept of philosophy to which both the materialist and the idealist would subscribe, although they would, of course, interpret them in entirely different ways. This is where the formal character of definitions makes itself felt. "The only real definition," Engels wrote, "is the development of the thing itself but this is no longer a definition."[1]

It seems to me that the best way of arriving at a more or less clear and systematic notion of the variety of philosophical definitions, bearing in mind the above-mentioned fundamental historico-philosophical fact of the progressive divergence of philosophical doctrines, is to review the basic mutually exclusive definitions of philosophy. Moreover, it should be remembered that the polarity of materialism and idealism manifests itself even within such opposed doctrines as sensualism, rationalism, naturalism, pantheism, and so on. Each of these doctrines defines philosophy in its own way. Therefore it is a matter of finding out how far the opposition between different definitions of philosophy goes, to what degree they exclude or, on the contrary, supplement each other. In this way we shall to some extent es-

[1] F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 405.

tablish the scope of the concept of "philosophy", the boundaries of its historically changing problems.

2. DIVERSITY OF DIFINITIONS OF PHILOSOPHY

Let us try to arrange the basic definitions of philosophy in a pattern, indicating with even and uneven numbers the most contrasting definitions.

1. Philosophy is the study of being, regardless of its special, particular, transient modifications. This definition of philosophy is to be found in ancient Indian and also ancient Chinese philosophy. In the philosophy of the Eleatic school it stands in contrast to the continuous becoming of Heraclitus. Aristotle defines philosophy as knowledge of essence in itself or of the essence of all that exists: "And that which from time immemorial and now and forever is the subject of inquiry and has always given rise to difficulties—the question of what is being—this question may be reduced to the question of what is essence."[1]

The metaphysical systems of the Middle Ages and modern times also define philosophy as the study of being. In modern bourgeois philosophy this definition is accepted by the neo-Thomists, a substantial number of Christian Spiritualists, and also the Existentialists and N. Hartmann's "new ontology". This means that it is accepted by those philosophers who claim to have finally overthrown the metaphysical systems, who counterpose ontology to metaphysics, but interpret the former as a doctrine of being, that is, indepen-

[1] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Moscow, 1934, pp. 113-114 (in Russian).

dent of the objective world perceived by the senses. Among Existentialists this view is formulated most clearly by Karl Jaspers: "While scientific cognition goes to individual objects that everyone must know about anyway, philosophy is concerned with the wholeness of being."[1] Martin Heidegger defines philosophy as awareness of the original, pre-reflex "existential understanding", and constantly emphasises that the main thing in philosophy, since it overcomes the errors of metaphysics, is the particular (phenomenological, hermeneutical) mode of thought relationship to being.[2]

Whereas the idealists interpret being as a supersensory reality, quite frequently describing being as God, materialism, on the other hand, strips the veils of mystery from the concept of being, characterising it as sensorily perceptible reality, nature. Thomas Hobbes reduces the subject of philosophy to study of the bodies, thus giving the concepts of being and substance features of the actually observed and measurable. The materialists identify being with matter, and regard the spiritual as a property of being. Ludwig Feuerbach, criticising Hegel's conception of abstract "pure" being, wrote: "What man understands by *being*, if he considers the matter, is *presence*, *being-for-oneself*, *reality*, *existence*, *actuality*, *objectivity*. All these definitions or names express the same thing from different points of view. *Abstract* being, being *without* reality, *without* objectivity, *without* being-for-oneself, is of course nothing, but *in this nothing I express only the nonentity of this abstraction of mine*."[1]

Examination of being as the subject-matter of philosophy signifies as a rule the belief that the philosopher's task is to study the world as a whole. In this case the juxtaposition of materialism and idealism shows itself in the very understanding of the wholeness, the unity of the world, since in itself recognition of this unity of the world is not yet a formulation of the materialist or idealist position. Even the proposition "being is primary, consciousness secondary" is entirely compatible with the idealist system of beliefs if, of course, being is interpreted as a special form of spiritual reality.

2. Philosophy is the study not of being but of cognition, or morality, or happiness, or of man in general. Such definitions of philosophy emerge in ancient times and constantly compete with opposing definitions of philosophy both in metaphysics and ontology. In Indian philosophy Buddha rules out of philosophy such questions as: Is the world eternal? Is it non-eternal? Is it finite? Is it infinite? Is the soul the same as the body? Is it different from the body?[2] He declares these and some other questions to be indeterminable and at the same time having no bearing on the main problem—the elimination of suffering.

[1] K. Jaspers, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, München, 1959, S. 10.

[2] "Philosophy is a universal phenomenological ontology, which proceeds from the hermeneutics of 'here-being' (*Dasein*), which as the analytical study of *existence* has fixed the end of the guideline of all philosophical questing to the place whence it *springs* and at which it afterwards *arrives*." (M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*; Tübingen, 1953, S. 436.)

[1] L. Feuerbach, *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft*, Frankfurt am Main, 1967, S. 310.

[2] S. Chatterjee and D. Datta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, p. 120.

In modern times, owing to the development of the science of nature, the tendency to exclude ontological problems from philosophy flows directly into agnosticism and subjectivism. Hume questioned the existence of any objective reality that was independent of the consciousness and thus limited the sphere of philosophical inquiry to the study of mental activity, particularly the act of knowing. He was not interested in knowledge in general, however, but in the study of man, in self-knowledge, in which he saw the only way of overcoming the age-long errors of philosophy and arranging human life on rational lines.

Kant, who unlike Hume, acknowledged the existence of a reality independent of the knower, nevertheless dismissed the problem of being on the grounds that it is unknowable. Accordingly he defined philosophy as a doctrine of the absolute boundaries of all possible knowledge. These boundaries, according to Kant, are determined by the very mechanism of cognition, its *a priori* forms, which may be applied only to sensory data but not to the transcendental "thing in itself". Hence the "metaphysics of nature" in Kant's system does not imply study of a reality that is independent of the knower, but investigation of the fundamental principles of natural scientific knowledge. The ideas that are a fit subject for philosophical (psychological, cosmological, theological) inquiry are *a priori* in character, i.e., they are not the result of knowledge but precede it. The investigation of these ideas must be reduced to epistemological analysis of their origin, since there are no grounds for asserting that any objective reality corresponds to them. Like Hume, Kant believed the second most important theme of philosophy to be morality (practical reason), the

study of which aims at proving, on the one hand, the autonomy of the moral consciousness and, on the other, the necessity of postulating the existence of God, immortality of the soul, freedom of the will, i.e., everything that theoretical reason deems incapable of proof.

The definition of philosophy as the study of cognition is also developed by the positivists, who argue that philosophy should be reduced to the theory of knowledge, on the grounds that all other possible objects of cognition are studied by the specialised sciences and there is nothing left for philosophy but to study science itself, the fact of knowledge. Besides making this assertion, which acknowledges actual tendencies in the development of cognition, the definition of philosophy as knowledge of knowledge is also substantiated from the standpoint of agnosticism and subjectivism, according to which knowledge cannot be the reflection of a reality independent of the knower, even if the existence of that reality is admitted to be theoretically capable of proof. Herbert Spencer wrote: "...In so far as any Philosophy professes to be an Ontology, it is false." And further on: "To bring the definition to its simplest and clearest form—Knowledge of the lowest kind is *un-unified* knowledge; Science is *partially-unified* knowledge; Philosophy is *completely-unified* knowledge."[1] This definition of philosophy incidentally implies that philosophy, while refusing to study unknowable being, both investigates the structure of knowledge and synthesises all the knowledge of phenomena available to man in the specialised sciences. In the

[1] H. Spencer, *First Principles*, New York, 1901, pp. 136, 140.

course of positivism's further evolution new limits are set on the concept of philosophy by epistemology. For Ernst Mach philosophy is the psychology of knowing. Modern positivism reduces inquiry into the process of knowing to analysis of its linguistic form.

3. Philosophy is the study of *all that exists*, and not any particular sphere of reality or cognition. From Hegel's point of view, a philosophical system is an encyclopedia of philosophical sciences, interpreting even questions studied by the specialised sciences but from its own peculiar speculative position which is beyond their scope. "Philosophy," Hegel wrote, "can be preliminarily defined in general as the *thinking examination* of objects." What he means by this is that "philosophy constitutes a peculiar mode of thought, a mode of thought by which it becomes cognition, and cognition by means of concepts. . .".[1] This implies that philosophy studies not only *everything*, but rather that which exists *in everything*, constituting its universal essence. Hegel is not satisfied by the definition of philosophy as a doctrine of being, since the latter has always been understood as something distinct from thought. But thought, according to Hegel, is also being. What is more, it is the substance-subject, i.e., the creative, developing essence of the world. Hegel interprets being as the first stage in the self-development of the "absolute idea", i.e., as the immediate, sensorily perceptible, alienated expression of the absolute. Being does not account for the whole of existence; nor is it that which philosophy discovers in what exists as the substantial, that which constitutes the chief object

[1] G.W.F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 8, S. 42.

of its inquiry. This is why the subject-matter of philosophy must be not being, but what exists.

For all his hostility to Hegel's idealism, Feuerbach also defines philosophy as the study of what exists. "Philosophy is cognition of *what is*. The highest law, the highest task of philosophy is to conceive of things, to know things *as they* are."[1] It is quite obvious that this definition of philosophy is pointed against Hegelian and the speculative-idealist understanding of philosophy in general, which, as Feuerbach explains, makes a mystery of what is, and tries to conceive of things and essence not as they are. A convinced materialist, Feuerbach defines philosophy as knowing *objective* reality, knowing that which exists in its self-sufficing objectivity and, therefore, as knowledge that is objective in its content. However, this definition of philosophy does not imply any delimitation of the subject-matter of philosophy from that of the specialised sciences.

4. Philosophy is the study of that which does not exist in reality, of that which is juxtaposed to all reality and any knowledge of it as a measure or value scale, that which has a significance not in the least diminished by the fact that, as an ideal, it does not possess present being. This definition of philosophy is most consistently upheld by the Baden school of neo-Kantianism. Thus, according to Windelband, "philosophy is the *science of normal consciousness*. It investigates empirical consciousness in order to establish at what points of the latter this immediate evidence of normative general necessity is manifest."[2] By the term "normal consciousness" Win-

[1] L. Feuerbach, *Philosophische Kritiken und Grundsätze (1839-1846)*, Leipzig, 1969, S. 178.
[2] W. Windelband, *Präludien*, S. 37.

delband means awareness of the absolute norm as the criterion of evaluation of *all* that exists. But for this very reason "normal consciousness" is placed outside what exists, and "belief in the reality of absolutely normal consciousness is a matter of personal faith, and not scientific cognition".[1] Whereas Plato believed that Absolute Good, Absolute Truth and Absolute Beauty existed as transcendental realities, neo-Kantian idealism, taking up more realistic positions, declares them to be non-existent, but possessing significance. It goes without saying that this "realism" is of a highly subjective nature.

Edmund Husserl's phenomenology defines philosophy as a doctrine that deliberately excludes from its field of study the external world and that which is considered to be knowledge about it, i.e., scientific data. Philosophy, interpreted as intuitive "essential vision", also refuses to recognise the necessary existence of the ideal essences, ideas and meanings that it cognises in the consciousness of man (but which are independent of that consciousness). The concept of existence presupposes time and hence temporal being and is therefore not to be applied to ideal being, which is outside time and cannot be interpreted as a fact. "Contemplation," Husserl says, "contemplates *essence* as *essential being*, and does not contemplate and does not assume in any sense *existence*. Accordingly contemplation of essence is not matter-of-fact cognition, and does not imply a trace of any assertion concerning individual (let us say, natural) existence."[2] Thus truth is juxtaposed to what exists and philosophy refuses

[1] W. Windelband, *Präludien*, S. 44.

[2] Husserl, "Philosophy as an Exact Science" in *Logos*, 1911, Book I, p. 29 (in Russian).

to study existing objects of cognition so as to be able to appraise them from positions of the higher values and true essences, the nature of which necessarily excludes the present and empirical by their very characteristics of existence.

5. Philosophy is *theory*, i.e., a system of notions, concepts, knowledge and the methods of acquiring them related to a definite reality (or to all that exists) as the subject of its inquiry. This means that philosophy has its own specific circle of questions with the result that it reaches conclusions that cannot be reached outside philosophy, and makes discoveries the possibility of which is implied not only in the methods of philosophical inquiry but also in the availability of objects of research within its terms of reference. This definition of philosophy is wholly compatible with the definitions of philosophy as a study of being or of all that exists, or as a study only of cognition, and values that do not actually exist. There is no need therefore to illustrate this definition, since it is accepted by nearly all philosophers, no matter how far they differ in their definitions of the concept, essence and the subject-matter of philosophy. This definition could have been omitted altogether since it appears to be self-evident. But the point is that there is an opposite definition of philosophy, i.e., denial of the possibility of philosophy as theory and condemnation of those philosophies that are elaborated as theories and therefore allegedly fail to answer their purpose.

6. Philosophy is not theory but a kind of intellectual activity having a functional purpose but no object of inquiry. This definition springs from the neo-positivist interpretation of philosophy. Neo-positivism rejects the historically formed

philosophical problems as imaginary, but does not substitute for them any new problems. Instead it demands of philosophy that it should stop being theory and turn into a method of analysis of scientific or everyday propositions. We find an anticipation of this definition of philosophy in the immediate forerunner of neo-positivism Hans Cornelius, who characterises philosophy as "the desire for *final* clarity, for conclusive explanation",[1] which is alien to the positive sciences.

However, the classical formulation belongs to Ludwig Wittgenstein: "The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a theory but an activity. A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations. The result of philosophy is not a number of 'philosophical propositions', but to make propositions clear. Philosophy should make clear and delimit sharply the thoughts which otherwise are, as it were, opaque and blurred."[2]

[1] H. Cornelius, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, Leipzig, 1903, S. 7. Incidentally, this "functional" definition of philosophy was already to be found in the work of Charles S. Pearce, the founder of American pragmatism, who in 1878 published the article "How to Make Our Thoughts Clear". But Pearce did not infer that philosophy had no subject of inquiry of its own and must therefore be not a theory but merely a method. This conclusion was reached by his immediate successor William James, who wrote that pragmatism "is a method only". Moreover James asserted that this method had long since been known to philosophers: "There is absolutely nothing new in the pragmatic method. Socrates was an adept at it. Aristotle used it methodically. Locke, Berkeley and Hume made momentous contributions to truth by its means." (W. James, *Pragmatism*, London, 1907, pp. 50, 51.) The originality of pragmatism, according to James, lies in its having liberated this method from all the various theories that constantly hampered it.

[2] L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London, 1955, p. 76. Evidently this definition of philosophy inspired one of organisers of the Vienna Circle Moritz Schlick, who defined philosophy *as action*. "At present we see in philosophy—and this is the key feature of the great revolution that has taken place in it—not a system of results of cognition, but a system of *actions*. Philosophy is activity by means of which the meaning of statements is confirmed or explained. Philosophy explains statements and science verifies them." *(Erkenntnis*, Erster Band, 1930-1931, Heft I, Leipzig, S. 87.) It is not hard to see that this definition (and understanding) of philosophy is one of the extreme forms of what B. Bykhovsky has called the "de-objectification of philosophy", which vividly illustrates the crisis of bourgeois philosophical thought.

Later on Wittgenstein went even further in his rejection of philosophy as theory and tried to reduce it to a logical procedure of analysis of language, in which he perceived not only the source of *all* philosophical error, but also the source of the philosophical problems themselves. "Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language."[1]

The representatives of the philosophy of linguistic analysis in England have carried to its logical conclusion Wittgenstein's idea of the need to turn philosophy into critical analysis of language with the aim of banishing from everyday and scientific usage the "metaphysics" concealed there. The comparison of philosophy to an "intellectual policeman",[2] whose function is to

[1] L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford, 1953, p. 47.

[2] The comparison belongs to A. J. Ayer, who in his article "The Vienna Circle" maintains that science gives us knowledge of the world and philosophy cannot compete with it in this field. "But where in that case does the philosopher come in? One thing he can do, of course, is to act as a sort of intellectual policeman, seeing that nobody trespasses into metaphysics." (A. J. Ayer, *The Revolution in Philosophy*, London, 1956, pp. 78-79.) The British positivist Ernest Gellner, who like Bertrand Russell opposes

guard against what is forbidden, rather well describes the actual function (not only heuristic but in several respects also socio-political) of the philosophy of linguistic analysis. It stands to reason that despite its assertions this philosophy is not only a method but also a quite definite idealist-agnostic theory.

7. Philosophy is a science, at any rate it can and should be one. This proposition cannot be strictly regarded as a definition of philosophy since it is implied in many definitions of philosophy (as a science of being, a science of cognition, and so on). But it is worth singling out because the opposite view maintains that the specific feature of philosophy is that it is not a science. Accounting philosophy a science implies that it is a system of interconnected, substantiated concepts, logically arranged according to certain definite principles. Such a definition of philosophy arose in Ancient Greece, where philosophy was a synonym of science. Aristotle holds that science in general can only exist in so far as we know the cause of a certain thing, and know that this particular cause is the cause of this thing. "Scientific knowledge and its object differ from opinion and the object of opinion in that scientific knowledge is commensurately universal and proceeds by necessary connections, and that which is necessary cannot be otherwise."[1]

the philosophy of linguistic analysis, rightly observes regarding its claims to have overcome metaphysics: "The general public often supposes that Linguistic Philosophy is an attack on *metaphysics*. But metaphysics is a red herring. In reality, it is simply an attack on *thought*." (E. Gellner, *Words and Things*, London, 1959, p. 198.)

[1] *The Works of Aristotle*, Chicago, London, Toronto, Geneva, 1952, Vol. I, p. 121.

Aristotle's *Analytics* is not only a treatise on logic, but also an extensive conception of science, which is understood as a definite structure of knowledge, and not all knowledge at that, but that knowledge which relates to a necessary series of phenomena. As Aristotle aptly observes: "Thus, to have a true opinion that the diagonal is commensurate with the side would be absurd."[1] Descartes, whose name we associate not only with the beginning of modern philosophy but also with fundamental discoveries in natural science, believed that philosophy is above all science: "This science must contain the first rudiments of human reason and in addition serve to extract from any object the truths that it contains."[2]

Hobbes who, like most of the philosophers of the period of early bourgeois revolutions, disapproved of Aristotle's teaching, nevertheless explains the concept of philosophy as a science in an Aristotelean spirit: "*Philosophy is such knowledge of effects or appearances as we acquire by true ratiocination from the knowledge we have first of their causes or generation: And again, of such causes or generations as may be from knowing first effects.*"[3]

Although philosophy was treated as a science even in the Middle Ages (Albert Bolstedt, for instance, called it "scientia universalis"), the ancient concept of science was systematically developed only in modern times as a result of the brilliant advances in mathematics which created an ideal of scientific knowledge that inspired all the outstanding philosophers of those days—ma-

[1] Ibid., pp. 121-122.

[2] *Œuvres de Descartes*, Tome X, p. 374.

[3] *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*. Vol. I, London, 1839, p. 3.

terialists and idealists. Even the juxtaposition of philosophy to other sciences as a kind of science of sciences usually stems from demands for strict scientificality which, so the philosophers believe, cannot be realised in the specialised sciences. No wonder, then, that along with this juxtaposition, historically justified by the as yet feeble development of natural science, there is to be found in the progressive philosophical doctrines of modern times an awareness of the fact that philosophy has not yet become a genuine science and also the belief that it can and must become one. Hence the question of what is needed to make philosophy a genuine science is constantly discussed by progressive philosophers.

In his *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant poses the question on which his whole system pivots: "Is metaphysics possible as a science? If it is possible, under what conditions? In other words, in what sense is philosophy possible as a science?" Speaking of the failure of all previous attempts to build a scientific philosophy, Kant observes: "In this sense philosophy is only an idea of a possible science, which is nowhere given *in concreto*, but which we strive to approach in various ways."... "Until this happens," Kant continues, "philosophy cannot be taught; for indeed, where is it? Who commands it? And by what mark shall it be known? We can only teach philosophising, that is to say, exercise the gift of reason on certain available examples in following its principles, while always retaining the right of reason to investigate the very sources of these principles and confirm or reject them."[1]

[1] Kant, *Sämtliche Werke* in sechs Bänden, Leipzig, 1912, Dritter Band, S. 630.

Kant held that by creating a "critical philosophy" he had solved the problem of turning philosophy into a pure science. Fichte saw the solution to this problem in his *Wissenschaftslehre*, and Hegel in his *Science of Logic*, in an encyclopedia of the philosophical sciences. In the bourgeois philosophy of the second half of the 19th century and first half of the 20th, the idea of a scientific philosophy was idealistically interpreted by the neo-Kantians, who tried to create a "scientific idealism", by the positivists, and by Husserl's phenomenology, whose founder conceived it as "rigorous science". All this offers grounds for regarding the definition of philosophy as science as one of its key definitions.

8. Philosophy is not, cannot be and should not be, a science. This definition (and understanding) of philosophy was enunciated by Greek scepticism, which did not, however, seek to demolish the ideal of scientific knowledge, but simply maintained that this idea is unrealisable, at any rate for philosophy. This attitude of the Sceptics to the idea of a scientific philosophy was subsequently expressed by other philosophical schools. At present it is represented by neo-positivism, on the one hand, and the irrationalist doctrines, on the other.

Neo-positivism regards "philosophical propositions" as "metaphysical" or devoid of scientific meaning because they are in principle unverifiable and logically incapable of proof. When Karl Popper proved that the major theoretical propositions of natural science are also unverifiable in principle (in the neo-positivist sense of the term, of course) and counterposed falsifiability to verifiability as an attribute of any scientific theory concerned with facts, this did not lead to a revision of the neo-positivist definition of philosophy as

non-science in principle. Thus, A. J. Ayer in his article *Philosophy and Science* maintains that philosophy can hardly be considered a science, since its propositions cannot in principle be scientifically verified. "The philosophers," A. J. Ayer says, "have their theories, but these theories do not allow them to make predictions; they cannot be proved or disproved by experiment, as is the case with scientific theories."[1]

While neo-positivism, despite its inherent subjectivism and agnosticism, regards science as the most effective means of knowing phenomena and in accordance with its conception of science criticises philosophy as a specific form or unscientific belief, modern philosophical irrationalists, while agreeing with the neo-positivist formula "philosophy is not a science", interpret this formula as an expression of the superiority of philosophy to science, which, they allege, is fundamentally incapable of decyphering irrational reality and constantly gets further away from it just because of its achievements, which are vain attempts to rationalise the irrational, to express the inexpressible in concepts, to present internally chaotic reality as an orderly realm of regularities and laws. This line of thought had already made itself felt in the irrationalist philosophy of the 19th century. Emile Boutroux, for instance, expressed it quite categorically. "Philosophy," he wrote, "either becomes exclusively scientific as a synthesis of the sciences and then cannot be called philosophy any more, or else it remains philosophical, in which case it is anti-scientific."[2]

[1] A. Ayer, "Philosophy and Science" in *Problems of Philosophy*, 1962, No. 1, p. 86 (in Russian).
[2] E. Boutroux, *La nature et l'esprit*, Paris, 1926, p. 154.

Religious irrationalism reproaches science for its lack of religion, for its indifference to the "mystery" of the universe and the human soul. From this standpoint philosophy towers above science by being closer to the transcendental through its religious attitude of mind. "Philosophy," Nicholas Berdyaev maintained, for example, "is one of the ways of objectifying mysticism; but the highest and fullest form of this objectification can be only positive religion."[1]

The Catholic existentialist Gabriel Marcel believes that the idea of scientific philosophy contradicts the nature of philosophy, which never commands the truth but always seeks it, since it is aware that even revealed truth is essentially inexpressible. Only the "particular truths" of science can be expressed because they are impersonal; their value and their impersonality are inseparable from each other. "...For in so far as it is accepted as itself, that is to say, independent of the research of which it is the result, it tends to appear as exterior to the subject. Here lies the root of scientism, understood as degradation of true science."[2] From this point of view one may of course assert that only philosophy is a true science, and thus agree with the definition of philosophy as a special kind of science. But it is quite obvious that this "true science" which no one has yet created is the negation of actual science with all its actual achievements.

Truth and being, from Marcel's point of view, are identical and unknowable; neither may belong

[1] N. Berdyaev "Philosophical Truth and Intelligentsia's Truth" in *Vekhi*, Moscow, 1909, p. 21 (in Russian).
[2] G. Marcel, *Présence et immortabilité*, Paris, 1959, pp. 15-16.

to man. Philosophy is "metaphysical disquiet", the individual's search for his own centre. Therefore "...the only methaphysical problem is: What am I?"[1]

The definition of philosophy as a science, as well as the definition that it is not, cannot and should not be a science, are of enormous importance for an understanding of the objective, historically formed relation between philosophy and science, which to no small extent determines the significance of philosophy. In this sense one finds a real connection between logical definitions and the historical, objective conditionality of philosophy. This connection deserves special examination since it may throw light on the evolution of philosophical definitions.

9. Philosophy is a world view (*Weltanschauung*) possessing specific features that distinguish it from other types of world view. This definition, just like the two previous ones, is partial, i.e., is part of wider definitions of the concept of philosophy, but its significance is not thereby reduced. In other words, the argument as to whether philosophy is or may be a world view, has played and continues to play a tremendous role in philosophy's development, despite the fact that the concept of world view is variously interpreted by philosophers. Some admit the possibility of a world view, others deny it. There are rationalist, irrationalist, voluntarist, subjectivist, "scientist", and various other definitions of the concept of world view.

Wilhelm Dilthey in his list of the types of world view distinguishes them as religious, poetic and "metaphysical"; all these types take their

[1] G. Marcel, op. cit., p. 21.

source not from knowledge but from the will to knowledge, position in life, historical situation, which are contrasted to theoretical, scientific knowledge as allegedly not expressing the essence of man's spiritual life. A world view is thus characterised as specifically human knowledge—as though some other non-human knowledge exists! The idea behind this interpretation of world view lies in its denial of the importance of the objective content of a world view, in stressing its purely personal features that are said to have nothing to do with knowledge. Dilthey's ideas are further developed in Karl Jaspers' psychology of world views, which intensifies the irrationalist colouring of this concept.[1]

Materialism has always associated the concept of world view with denial or criticism of idealism, with the conceptual synthesis of scientific views of nature, society and knowledge, with the theoretical substantiation of humanism.

10. Philosophy is not a world view, either because philosophy is a science, and world view is not scientific in character, or because world view summarises scientific data, whereas philosophy is nourished by its own source and does not regard science as being on the same scale as itself. The denial that philosophy is a world view is thus based on extremely varied arguments; it is to be found in the works both of those who accept the idea of a scientific philosophy and those who do not.

[1] Jaspers writes: "When we speak of world views, we think of forces and ideas, the last and final thing in a man, both the subjective thing such as emotion, power and persuasion, and the objective thing such as the objectively formed world." (K. Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, Berlin, 1922, S. 1.)

Since the term "world view" was coined only in modern times and was not widely used in philosophy until the second half of the 19th century, the question of the relationship between philosophy and world view was never consciously posed in the majority of philosophical doctrines of the past. To this must be added the fact that in some modern European languages the term virtually does not exist, with the result that many works written in English or French use the German *Weltanschauung*.[1]

However, denial of the world-view character of philosophy cannot, of course, be attributed to these philological facts. Some base their denial on the idea that only religion can have a world view, while others justify it by the need for a strict delimitation of the tasks of philosophy and repudiation in principle of the possibility of a world view as a scientific theoretical synthesis. The evolution of neo-positivism is a unique combination of these two tendencies. In their first collective declaration of programme the members of the Vienna Circle announced that they were engaged in evolving a scientific world view.[2] Later, however, they abandoned this aim and

[1] In French it is usually translated as "conception du monde", in English "world view", and in Italian "concezione del mondo". These translations only convey part of the meaning of the German "Weltanschauung" or the Russian "Mirovozzreniye" and it is no surprise to find that in D.D. Runes' American Philosophical Dictionary the term "world view" is not given, while "Weltanschauung" appears in its place. A. Lalande's *Vocabulaire critique et technique de la philosophie* (Paris, 1956, 7e ed.) gives neither "conception du monde", nor "Weltanschauung".

[2] *Wissenschaftliche Weltanschauung. Der Wiener Kreis. Veröffentlichungen des Vereins Ernst Mach*, Wien, 1929.

proclaimed the holding of a world view to be a matter of faith, inspired by emotional considerations, and reduced the task of philosophy to elaboration of the logical syntax of science, and so on.

Thus, the definitions stating that philosophy is a special type of world view, and also the opposite definitions are of substantial importance, since they call for the theoretical analysis of the relationship between philosophy and world view, which is no less important than the relationship between philosophy and science.

Before launching upon our analysis of the above-mentioned definitions, it must be emphasised that all these definitions, even if their number were considerably increased, would not provide a full conception of the virtually unencompassable variety of mutually exclusive concepts of philosophy. One could, of course, compile a dictionary of definitions of philosophy, but even this would not reflect all the definitions because, as has already been said, the same definitions are interpreted in a multitude of different ways, giving rise to completely different notions of the essence, subject and tasks of philosophy. The rationalist Hegel and the irrationalist Schopenhauer understood philosophy as a doctrine of the spiritual essence of the world, but the universal mind in Hegel's philosophy and the world will in Schopenhauer's express mutually exclusive trends in the development of idealist philosophy. Naturally, these differences come to light as soon as the definitions are subjected to philosophical analysis. Nevertheless the fact that incompatible philosophical doctrines can define philosophy in exactly the same terms does to a certain extent blur the distinction between these doctrines.

Although we have not cited all the possible definitions of philosophy, those listed here show clearly enough that such definitions cannot on principle be synthesised. But this does not mean that they exclude each other in all respects.[1] The definitions we have marked with uneven numbers quite often supplement one another and can therefore be coordinated to a certain extent. There are, for example, philosophers who define philosophy as a scientific theory, a special kind of science, a science of being or even of all that exists.

[1] Dilthey, reinstating Hegel's standpoint but interpreting it in the spirit of historical relativism, holds that all definitions of philosophy are essentially of equal value since each of them expresses a certain historical stage of philosophy's existence and self-consciousness: "Each definition was only one of the elements of the concept of its essence. Each one was only the expression of the view that philosophy held at a certain moment in its development.... Each one describes a special circle of phenomena for philosophy and excludes from it other phenomena called philosophy from that circle. The great juxtapositions of standpoint, each of which opposes another with equal force, are expressed in the definitions of philosophy. Each of them defends itself. And the argument could be settled only if it were possible to find a standpoint superior to all parties." (W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, V. Band, S. 363.) This, of course, is not how matters stand in reality. The various definitions of the concept of philosophy represent not only historical stages in its development, but difference and even complete opposition between simultaneously existing philosophical doctrines. These definitions cannot be recognised as equal any more than the doctrines which they represent, since philosophy develops and thus overcomes certain systems of views and their corresponding definitions. It is indeed impossible to evolve a definition of philosophy that would be "superior to all parties". One must get away from the notion that there are a multitude of philosophical parties and not mix up the main parties, the main trends in philosophy with their modifications, with factions which are important only within the framework of the main trend which they represent.

The definitions, marked with even numbers, can also to some extent be unified. Those who deny philosophy as a doctrine of being or of existence in general reduce philosophy to epistemological analysis, to a specific mode of analysing the forms of knowledge, and they are naturally inclined to regard it not as objective knowledge, and hence not as science, as a world view, as a theory with its own circle of questions. Moreover, a large part of the contrasting definitions (marked with even and uneven numbers) have quite often been combined. Besides the philosophers who claim that philosophy is a doctrine of being, and their opponents, who argue that philosophy is possible only as a theory of knowledge, there have been a good many philosophers who reject both definitions and believe that philosophy is a doctrine of being and of cognition. Hegel proceeded from the unity, the identity of being and cognition (thought). Feuerbach, who turned Hegel's teaching upside down and put it on a materialist basis, argued the unity of cognition and being that could not be reduced to cognition. Hence, of course, Fischer was wrong in stating that the decisive turn brought about by Kant in philosophy, lies in his making the subject of philosophical inquiry not being but cognition. The study of cognition in Kant's philosophy is at the same time a study of being.

No matter how narrowly a philosopher limits the concept of philosophy, excluding various fundamental problems, he is compelled directly or indirectly to answer these very questions. The same may be said of the positivists, who exclude from philosophy the problem of objective reality. In practice, in their analysis of cognition or even only its logical or empirical form they arrive at a

subjective-idealist interpretation of objective reality. Thus it turns out that this or that definition of philosophy only formally removes certain fundamental philosophical problems, since in essence they cannot be dismissed from philosophy.

The history of philosophy shows that exclusion of any fundamental problems from the concept of philosophy amounts merely to pushing them into the background, i.e., bringing forward other questions, the answer to which turns out to be directly or indirectly an answer to these "eliminated" problems.

The definitions cited differ from one another in what they include in philosophy and what they exclude from it, and also their interpretation of the form of philosophical knowledge (theory, science, method, world view, etc.). But since the basic philosophical problems cannot be completely removed, that is to say, they can be excluded only in definitions, definitions of philosophy largely fail to express the content of philosophy and are even misleading about it. Engels' remark about the formal character of definition and Spinoza's idea that a definition is a negation of the limitations of one's own subject are both extremely apposite in this context.

At best a definition indicates the key aspects of a philosophical doctrine, expressing what its creator believes to be most important in that doctrine. We can say that the existentialist, Bergsonian and pragmatic concepts of philosophy are primarily definitions of the existentialist, Bergsonian and pragmatic philosophies, although each of their creators was trying to give a concept of philosophy in general. Consequently their definitions are as difficult to coordinate as their doctrines. And even if they can be coordinated, this will be only a synthesis of definitions, and not of the doctrines that they represent; the limited diversity of philosophical definitions conceals an unlimited diversity of philosophical doctrines, whose incompatibility cannot be overcome even if certain common views on certain questions are discovered in some of them. It is not just a matter of the incompatibility of the materialist and the idealist doctrines, but of the incompatibility of the various historical forms of materialism, the various idealist doctrines, and so on.

Of course, in natural science, too, there are mutually exclusive theories, but here they exist as divergences over certain definite questions, which presupposes common ground on other questions that are not in dispute. To be more exact, mutually exclusive theories in natural science, in so far as they are only partially recognised, are merely hypotheses which do not rule out agreement between opponents on questions that are considered already solved. Only in philosophy does the split run *all along the line* between the two opposing philosophical doctrines. Moreover the mutually exclusive philosophical conceptions are quite often equally mistaken, although there can of course be other cases where one of these concepts is approaching objective truth and another (or others) is getting further away from it.

The truth in philosophy is not unanimously acknowledged. There are many reasons for this. Some are connected with the theory of knowledge in general. In philosophy objective truth cannot be checked experimentally or by any other relatively simple means. This is a typical situation all through the history of philosophy, whereas it is fundamentally untypical in the natural sciences,

and particularly in the applied sciences. Does this mean that the concept of philosophy cannot in general be given any substantial definition? We believe it does, if one goes no further than an empirical statement of the obvious diversity of incompatible philosophical systems. Anyone who believes the progressive divergence of philosophical knowledge to be a permanent form of the development of philosophy is, of course, morally obliged to give up the idea of defining the concept of philosophy. Only by recognising the pluralism of philosophical systems as a historically transient form of the formation-development of philosophy, i.e., by admitting the possibility and necessity of overcoming it, can we arrive at a definition of the concept of philosophy which, it is true, will not embrace all the philosophical doctrines that have ever existed, but which will express the prospects of development of scientific philosophy.

It goes without saying that those who rule out any possibility of philosophy's being a science and consequently any possibility of its development through scientific teamwork, as in the natural sciences, cannot possibly agree to such a definition of philosophy. For such people the progressive divergence of philosophical doctrines is the highest manifestation of the free philosophical spirit, whose sole need is self-assertion. In other words they are rather like novelists, each trying to write a novel that bears no resemblance to any that has been written before.

Thus, from our standpoint, the scientific definition of philosophy requires theoretical premises that are fully accepted only by dialectical and historical materialism. Recognition of the historically transient character of the diversity of philosophical doctrines does not, of course, imply denial

of its necessity and progressive significance for certain historical periods. In other words, this progressive divergence of philosophical beliefs, the polarisation of philosophy into irreconcilably opposed systems has played its progressive role. It was essential because humanity had to develop and exhaust all the possible philosophical hypotheses in order to be able to accept the one which is most fully confirmed by experience, practice and scientific data.

This divergence of philosophical beliefs was justified while the development of science and practice had not created the necessary preconditions for the development of scientific philosophy. Philosophy seeks to know the infinite, the universal, the intransient, to know the essence of essence. Hence it is inevitable that at certain stages in its development there should be mutually exclusive conceptions and doctrines. But since philosophy *develops* and does not merely vary in time, these historically inevitable errors are overcome and not merely replaced by fresh errors. Even idealist philosophy is compelled to turn to positive scientific data to reinforce its ill-chosen positions. The diversity of incompatible philosophical beliefs loses its historical justification not because of the convergence of philosophical beliefs, which is impossible in principle, but because of the development of a scientific approach to the solution of philosophical questions, an approach which demands of a philosophical doctrine that it should be not just something that a certain thinker *invents*, but a special kind of investigation, understanding and interpretation of reality.

Leaving the motley variety of incompatible philosophical doctrines to the past, Marxist-Leninist philosophy offers in place of this pluralism of

speculative conceptions the *all-round* development of philosophical propositions that are confirmed by life, practice and science. This theoretical position differs fundamentally from the prevailing belief in bourgeois philosophy, which holds that philosophising is a kind of striving for knowledge which is rewarded by a certain intellectual satisfaction but not by any fruit that may be described as truth. The supporters of this view regard philosophy as a labyrinth from which only those who have no love of philosophy or overestimate their philosophical potential wish to escape. Ariadne's thread does not exist. There is no need for it. Philosophy will never become a science, i.e., will not betray itself and consequently will always remain a realm of absolutely sovereign philosophical systems, like Leibnitz's world of the monads, with the only difference that it will know no coordination, subordination of predetermined harmony. Any common ground between different philosophies seems from this standpoint to be merely unoriginal. Philosophising must remain only an attempt whose unrealisability may be interpreted according to mood either as failure or as eternal promise. Hence there can be no definition of the concept of philosophy; definitions are made only for the sake of the uninitiated.

The philosophy of Marxism, which besides rejecting mysticism and idealism, also rejects the scornful treatment of established scientific facts, truths and laws, naturally does not accept this latest, somewhat snobbish conception of philosophical élitism. Dialectical and historical materialism is elaborating a concept of philosophy which proceeds from recognition of the objective necessity for philosophical science and the fact that this necessity is being historically fulfilled.

3. PHILOSOPHY AS A SPECIFIC WORLD VIEW

Since numerous definitions of philosophy exist and our task is not merely to state the fact but to give a definition of the concept of philosophy related to the understanding of all philosophical doctrines, the question arises: Is it not possible to set aside what distinguishes these definitions and thus arrive at what they have in common? This operation can, of course, be performed but, as was pointed out earlier, it cannot bring us to a concrete understanding of philosophy, which like anything concrete in science must be a unity of different definitions. However, even a one-sided, abstract definition of philosophy has some significance, if it is not overestimated. Marx observes: "*Production in general* is an abstraction, but a reasonable abstraction, because it actually delineates the general, fixes it and thus liberates us from repetition.... Definitions that are valid for production in general have to be made in order to ensure that because of the unity that stems from the fact that the subject, man, and the object, nature, are one and the same, the essential difference is not forgotten."[1] What Marx says about the concept of production in general (which can also be said of the concept of nature in general, society in general, etc.) is naturally also applicable to an appraisal of the general concept of philosophy. Too much should not be expected of it, and yet we need it not only as an indication of identity, but also as the first stage in the ascent from the abstract to the concrete, which the philosophical investigation of philosophy must

[1] K. Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Rohentwurf), 1857-1858*, Berlin, 1968, S. 7.

inevitably perform. If there is any such common attribute in the definitions of philosophy which we have considered they must be well concealed, for there is no outward sign of them. And yet it is still worth trying to detect this general definition of philosophy which is not given in *any* of the other definitions and is hence precluded by many of them, a definition which, one can say in advance, will not reveal everything that makes up the specific nature of philosophy but may, possibly, point the way to its discovery.[1]

We believe that world view is such a general, but not specific, definition of philosophy. However, it is clear from the above-mentioned definitions of philosophy that a considerable number of philosophers do not regard philosophy as a world view. Thus the question may be put as follows: If, for example, the linguistic philosophers maintain that philosophy is not a world view, is their own philosophy a world view? To this question there is, in our opinion, only one answer—yes, it is. It is not hard to show that the linguistic philosophers, despite their limiting of the tasks of philosophy to the investigation of language, are, in fact, expressing beliefs on all the basic problems of scientific knowledge, social life, ethics, politics, and so on, i.e., analysis of language is a means by which an extremely wide range of questions is treated. The same may be said of Husserl's phenomenology and other philosophical doctrines according to which philosophy is not a world view.

The denial that philosophy is a world view turns out to be an extremely contradictory theoretical position. In some cases world view is declared to be "metaphysics", in others, a subjective postulation, in others, a system of beliefs. But this means that world view exists and the only matter for argument is philosophy's relation to it. As I see it, all philosophical doctrines imply a world view, because no limitation of the range of questions dealt with allows one to avoid answering the more general philosophical questions, even if one remains unaware of these questions.

Every philosophy is a world view, although world view is not necessarily philosophy. There is the religious world view, the atheistic world view, and so on. The polysemy of the concept "world view" is constantly revealed both in scientific and everyday usage. One speaks of the heliocentric world view as opposed to the geocentric world view, and this is profoundly meaningful if one thinks of the revolution in human consciousness that was brought about by the great discovery of Copernicus. A world view may be mechanistic, metaphysical, optimistic, pessimistic, and so on. It is quite legitimate to speak of the feudal, bourgeois, communist world views. Marxism as a whole is a definite world view, the philosophy of

[1] One cannot agree with Karl Steinbuch, who holds that definition of the concept of philosophy is of no essential importance. "Philosophy," he says, "has existed for thousands of years, but there is still no generally recognised definition. In exactly the same way there is no definition of mathematics or of physics and technology. But not one of these disciplines is any the worse for it." (K. Steinbuch, *Automat und Mensch*, Berlin-Heidelberg-New York, S. 354.) Karl Steinbuch, I would suggest, does not take into consideration the fact that the scientific definition of any particular science (i.e., analysis of its subject-matter, method and theoretical foundations) becomes possible only at a certain, comparatively high, stage of its development. At such a stage, refusal to make a definition puts a brake on development. As for the absence of any "generally accepted" definition of philosophy, this fact is, of course, largely due to the struggle between philosophical schools.

Marxism is also a world view. In pointing out the polysemy of the "world view" concept, it is not our intention to cast doubt on its scientific meaning; on the contrary, we wish to emphasise it.[1]

Definition of the concept of world view, like that of nature, life, man, presents considerable difficulties, which should not, however, be allowed to create the impression that without this definition we have no idea what it is about. The concept treats of fundamental human beliefs concerning nature and personal and social life, beliefs that play an *integrating, orientational* role in consciousness, behaviour, creativity and people's combined practical activity. According to the character of these beliefs (religious, scientific, aesthetic, socio-political, philosophical) we distinguish the various types of world view, which incidentally are connected with one another and at some points (sometimes with glaring contradictions) actually merge. The orientational function of a world view presupposes certain definite notions (scientific or unscientific) concerning man's "whereabouts" in the natural and social scheme of things. These notions help us to discover possible paths of motion, to choose a definite direction corresponding to our particular interests or needs. The orientational function of a world view is made possible by its integrating function, that is to say, the kind of generalisation of knowledge which enables us to single out relatively remote goals, to substantiate certain socio-political, moral, scientific ideals, criteria, etc.

Thus, a world view, whatever its form, substantiates *principles*—ethical, philosophical, natural scientific, sociological, political, etc. These principles deserve special examination, but even without that it is clear how great a part they play in research work, for instance. We may quote from the scientists, who are usually reticent in making any statements about the role played by world view, philosophy or anything of the kind. Max Planck in his lecture *Physics in the Struggle for a World View* said: "The research scientist's world view will always determine the direction of his work."[1]

Today this belief of the materialist Max Planck has been taken up by most theoreticians of natural science. The great discoveries of science in the last half century have revolutionised our understanding of nature to such an extent that the question of world view has become particularly important to the scientists themselves. This is reflected in their changed attitude to philosophy.

Scientists in the modern world literally reach out to philosophy and the contemptuous attitude towards it that Engels once ridiculed is sustained mainly by those exponents of science who have little to show in their own fields of research.

This striking enthusiasm of scientists for philosophy (particularly noticeable today in the capitalist countries, where indifference to philosophy lingered on by inertia until some 25 or 30 years ago) has even affected the neo-positivists,

[1] Discussing the difficulty of defining the "world view" concept, P. V. Kopnin suggests that it is due to the polysemy of the word "world" with its various meanings in geography, astronomy, cosmogony, and the social sciences. This fact does not, however, diminish the significance of the concept. The philosophy of Marxism, Kopnin points out, "resolves the problems involved in the concept of world view that are confirmed and manifest in the actual development of the numerous branches of science".

[1] M. Planck, *Vorträge und Erinnerungen*, Stuttgart, 1949, S. 283.

some of whom have renounced their philosophical nihilism and noted the prime importance of the philosophical world view for natural science. Philipp Frank, for instance, declared in the fifties that the most eminent scientists always strongly stressed the point that a close tie between science and philosophy is indispensable.[1] He shares the view of de Broglie that the separation of science and philosophy that occurred in the 19th century "has been harmful to both philosophers and scientists".[2]

Philosophy is essential to science, particularly in periods of revolutionary change, when the latter's basic assumptions are being reviewed. According to Frank, the examples of Newton, Darwin, Einstein and Bohr show that "actually great advances in sciences have consisted rather in breaking down the dividing walls, and a disregard for meaning and foundation is only prevalent in periods of stagnation".[3]

Admittedly, Frank, since he still remains a neopositivist, dismissing the problem of objective reality and its reflection, speaks of the necessity

[1] Ph. Frank, *Philosophy of Science*, New York, 1957, p. XI.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., p. XVI. In his *Philosophy of Science* Frank quotes Engels to the effect that philosophy takes its revenge on natural scientists who treat it with contempt. Elsewhere he almost repeats Engels without actually quoting him when he writes: "It may seem paradoxical, but the dodging of philosophical issues has very frequently made science graduates captives of obsolete philosophies" (Ibid., p. XVIII). This admission of one of the leaders of neo-positivism, a doctrine that ties philosophical problems to a particularly narrow frame, is highly symptomatic. It indicates that the modern scientist's swing towards philosophy is impelled by a desire for a philosophically grounded and systematically developed world view.

not of a philosophical world view but of a "philosophy of science". But his philosophy of science, like any other philosophy, inevitably implies a certain world view.

World view is a wider concept than philosophy. So in calling philosophy a world view, do we not multiply the difficulties confronting us in arriving at a scientific definition of the concept of philosophy? After all, if philosophy is a world view, it is certainly a world view *sui generis*, of its own peculiar kind, in other words, a *philosophical world view*. This gets us into a kind of logical circle. But the way out is to find the specific features of the type of world view that can be called a philosophy. What then is the peculiarity of the philosophical world view? Unlike the spontaneously formed religious world view, a philosophy is always a *theoretically substantiated* world view. But the natural scientific world view, for example, the mechanistic world view, was also theoretically substantiated. The same applies to the bourgeois, or, as Marx and Engels called it, legalistic world view. Hence there are various types of theoretically substantiated world views. The peculiar feature of the philosophical world view consists mainly in its being a synthesis effected *by means of the most general categories* that are of equal significance for all the sciences. Remembering what was said earlier about the specific nature of the philosophical form of cognition, it may be stated that the philosophical world view is a theoretical synthesis of the most general views of nature, society, man, and cognition, a synthesis implying an *appraisal* of all that makes up the content of these general views, an appraisal that is not only epistemological, but also ethical, social, and so on.

The philosophical world view is not, therefore, a generalisation that simply sums up the available data as fully as possible; *attitude* and *appraisal* are key attributes of the philosophical generalisation, because the philosopher singles out what he believes to be *most important* in the knowledge available, what he believes to be most important for man.

The significance of the appraising attitude for the philosophical world view is not difficult to show by comparing existentialism with classical philosophy, for instance. The long-standing philosophical tradition, whose beginnings we noted far back in the ancient world, declared that philosophy, rising above everyday consciousness and thus above personal, subjective, human appraisals and opinions, regards all that exists from the standpoint of eternity, i.e., from positions of universal human reason, which is superior to the anthropological limitations of individual human beings. Existentialism repudiated this initial philosophical principle and proclaimed that the human "I" is human only because it is finite. Existentialist philosophising is examination of the world from the standpoint of transient human existence, from the positions of man who is aware of his mortality, his absolute oppositeness to the intransient "being in itself". The existentialist "I" is diametrically opposed to the "I'" of Fichte, which knows neither death, nor fear, nor insuperable anxiety as to one's existence in the world, and so on. Thus, this appraising world-view principle expresses the specific nature of existentialism.

The philosophical world view thus has two starting points, as it were. On the one hand, the world, as everything that exists outside and independently of man, and on the other, man himself, who does not exist outside the world, and regards it as the external world only because he distinguishes it from himself as reality existing independently of him, while recognising at the same time himself as a part of the world and indeed a special part, which thinks, feels and is aware that the world, as distinct from the part which is him, is infinite, eternal, indestructible, and so on. This attitude of man to the world forms the basic peculiarity of the philosophical world view, a peculiarity that may be defined as *bipolarity,* not only objective but also subjective, since some attach primary importance to the former, and others to the latter.

Man's attitude to nature, to society—his epistemological, ethical, physical, biological, social attitudes—these are all questions of his philosophical world view. The *man-nature, nature-man* relationships imply an element of confrontation since man as an individual differs from both nature and society or humanity. But when we come to analyse this relationship, we discover not only this distinction but also the related identity, i.e., the natural in man, the social in man. The psychophysical problem ceases to be a special problem of the natural sciences and becomes a philosophical problem, since the question of the *spiritual-material* relationship acquires universal significance. Similarly, the problem of the knowability of the world is a philosophical world-view problem precisely because it is posited in the most general form (not the knowability of certain concrete phenomena—this question has no philosophical meaning, even if it is stated that a particular phenomenon cannot be known), and also because, of course, it refers to *man.* Can man, humanity,

know the world? Some philosophers, in answering this question, have in mind the separate human individual and draw the appropriate conclusions; others, on the contrary, speak in terms of mankind, whose cognitive activity is not limited by any temporal boundaries. Different conclusions are obtained, of course, when the question is posited in this way.

Thus we see that philosophy as a special kind of world view is equally a conception of the world and a conception of man, knowledge of both and a special mode of generalising this knowledge which has the significance of a social, moral, theoretical orientation in the world outside us and in our own world; it is the expression of a comprehended relationship to reality and the theoretical substantiation of this relationship, which manifests itself in man's decisions, behaviour, spiritual self-determination, and so on.

The philosophical world view is above all the posing of questions which one is aware of as the *main questions*. These questions arise not only from scientific researches but also from individual and socio-historical experience, as we have already indicated. They may be called the main questions because, in posing these questions, philosophy enters upon a discussion that is important for all mankind. Such, for example, are the famous questions, the solution of which, according to Kant, constitutes the true vocation of philosophy:

(1) What can I know?
(2) What must I do?
(3) For what may I hope?[1]

[1] Kant, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 3, S. 607. In his *Logik* Kant supplements this list with a fourth question that generalises the preceding questions: "What is man?". (*Immanuel Kants Logik*, Leipzig, 1904, S. 27.) This supplementary question is not usually taken into consideration in popular expositions of Kant's philosophy.

These questions express and interpret but, of course, do not exhaust the content of the philosophical world view. In answering these questions Kant poses new ones. Questions give rise to questions and, in so far as they are all recognised as of importance both for the individual and the whole human race, and not only for the present but also for the future, so do they retain their philosophical, world-view significance.

The fact that philosophy as a world view implies criteria of appraisal applicable to an unlimited range of facts and knowledge has often been interpreted by idealists as absolute juxtaposition of the ideal to the real. Thus, Heinrich Rickert seeks to substantiate the absolute meaning of ideals and the value criteria of all that exists by postulating a realm of values which does not have the status of being but has undoubted significance in the world of phenomena and therefore belongs to the world, although it cannot be defined as existing. Correspondingly the world view is defined as unity of the knowledge of being and awareness of the absolute values, or norms. "By world view," Rickert says, "we understand actually something more than mere knowledge of the causes that brought us and the rest of the world into being; an explanation of the causal necessity of the world is not enough for us. We also want to have a grasp of the world that will help us, as one often hears said, to understand the meaning (Sinn) of our life, the significance of our 'I' in the world."[1]

[1] H. Rickert, *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, S. 6. In their interpretation of the philosophical world view the neo-Kantians, like the irrationalists, characteristically deny its connection with natural science. Thus it is understandable

Needless to say, Rickert's mistake lies not in his demanding from the world view something more than "mere knowledge of the causes", namely, an explanation of man's place in the world. The world view is indeed a unity of knowledge and appraisal, but the whole point is that the criteria of appraisal, the norms of value, despite the beliefs of Plato, Kant, the neo-Kantians and other idealists, are not absolute but historical, i.e., they change and develop. The anti-historical interpretation of value criteria puts them in opposition to being, i.e., deprives them of real existence, which incidentally the neo-Kantians themselves realise when they assume that non-existence does not deprive absolute value of its unconditional significance. However, they lose sight of the very notion that absolute values, the absolute ideal, arose historically and has changed historically in content; it is enough to compare Plato's ideal of justice with that of Kant or the neo-Kantians. Thus, absolute values lose the timeless significance attributed to them, and become historical values which are nevertheless endowed with unconditional significance outside history. But this merely implies an attempt to perpetuate historically determined values and value criteria, and thus also to perpetuate their real socio-economic basis.

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that Friedrich Lange should reproach the materialists who elaborate a world view on the basis of science: "The mere intention of building a philosophical world view exclusively on the foundation of the natural sciences should today be branded as philosophical superficiality of the worst sort." (F. A. Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus,* zweites Buch, Leipzig, 1875, S. 190.) Lange obviously oversimplifies the question of the theoretical foundations of the materialist philosophical world view, reducing its content merely to generalisation of the data of the natural sciences.

Marxist philosophy, disclosing the historically relative character of the knowledge and appraisals forming the world view, at the same time completely excludes the relativist belittlement of the role of the world view. Marxist philosophy reveals its objective content and progressive development, the objective laws of the origin and development of the scientific philosophical world view, which, however, does not lay claim either to absolute knowledge or to the appraisal of reality from absolute positions. Thus from the standpoint of Marxism, philosophy as a world view is primarily a formulation of theoretical positions, from which an appraisal can be made of the *significance* of any knowledge, experience, activity and historical event.

Philosophy is interested in the knowledge and the significance of the knowledge or phenomenon that is not limited by the boundaries of some special field of human activity and, consequently, is fit for more or less general application. This or that scientific proposition rises to world-view status only in so far as it is found possible to apply it outside the special field of knowledge where it was first formulated and applied, that is to say, in so far as it becomes a principle that is relevant to all knowledge, all human activity. Needless to say, the further development of science and philosophy, limiting the possibilities of applying this knowledge beyond the bounds of a specialised field, also limits its world-view significance. This limitation is at the same time also concretisation and enrichment of the content of the theoretical proposition.

The natural scientific proposition on the existence of an infinite number of worlds became part of materialist philosophy because it gave rise to the conclusions that the Universe could not

have been created and cannot be destroyed. These conclusions undermined theism, creationism and provided solid grounds for the atheist world view.

The mechanistic explanation of the phenomena of nature acquired world-view significance when it was carried beyond the bounds of mechanics and natural science in general. Descartes, who regarded animals as a special kind of machine, Hobbes, who declared that the human heart is a pump, Lamettrie, who claimed that not only the animals but man himself is a machine, were the people who transformed the mechanical explanation of phenomena into a philosophical world-view principle. Marx pointed out that the atoms of Democritus amount to a natural scientific theory, which in the hands of Epicurus, thanks to his using it to explain human behaviour, becomes a philosophical theory.

Extrapolation, universalisation of certain propositions and even the principles of *specialised* science, i.e., their conversion into world-view principles, may arouse legitimate objections. After all, it is quite obvious that absolutising the principles of mechanics cannot lead to a scientific understanding of non-mechanical phenomena, particularly the individual and social phenomena of human life. This is true, of course, but one has to take into consideration the fact that the mechanistic world view, which ousted the theological and also the hylozoistic interpretation of the world was undoubtedly a tremendous step forward in the development of cognition. And this is its historical justification.

Science and philosophy's overcoming of mechanicism did not involve its being replaced by a new, one-sided theory about the nature of phenomena. The progress of science and the development of

dialectical materialism has increasingly tended to rule out such unfounded universalisation of principles, the bounds of whose application are revealed by the development of related sciences.

Darwin's evolutionary theory evoked furious attacks not so much from the biologists as from the theologians and idealist philosophers, because it rejected the teleological explanation of the vital processes and thus became the basis for the materialist repudiation of all teleology in general.

World-view conclusions from the discoveries of natural science are often drawn by natural scientists themselves. It sometimes happens that philosophers oppose the world-view comprehension of scientific discoveries, since these discoveries come into conflict with their own world view. Some idealists, for instance, argued that Darwin's theory had no significance beyond the bounds of biology. Bergson tried to disprove the theory of relativity not on natural scientific but on philosophical grounds.

One and the same natural scientific discovery is differently interpreted in different philosophical doctrines. From Darwin's teaching, for instance, some philosophers deduced the reactionary, pseudoscientific conception of social Darwinism. A philosophical world view is never a mere summing up, a simple generalisation of the data obtained by the natural sciences; it is a unique integral interpretation of these data from certain philosophical (for instance, materialist or idealist, rationalist or irrationalist) positions.

Our characterisation of the philosophical world view would be incomplete if we did not take into account its emotional charge, which is conditioned by its social, practical basis, by people's various aspirations, needs, beliefs and hopes, their attitude

to the world around them and to themselves. If we describe as emotions people's feelings about their relationship to the world around them and themselves, it becomes clear that the philosophical (and *scientifico*-philosophical) world view cannot confine itself to the analysis and comprehension of the theoretical aspect of this relationship. The personal character of human emotions acquires general expression in any philosophical world view. Hence philosophers not only discuss various questions, explain and interpret certain phenomena or processes; they condemn some views and affirm others, condemn one thing and defend another, in other words, they feel, struggle, hope, believe and so on. And this is true not merely of the personality of the philosopher taken separately from his doctrine, but also of the doctrine itself, in which human passions are transformed into a specific philosophical form, but of course do not disappear. This is why the scientifico-philosophical world view has a social and emotional implication.

The scientifico-philosophical world view develops by means of theoretical synthesis of scientific data and historical experience with certain definite social, party positions, which thus become part of its content, and form its social inspiration and moral ideal. Hence a world view is a *critical* summing up of scientific data that makes it possible to draw conclusions not directly obtainable from any of the specialised sciences. Needless to say, the critical character of the scientific philosophical world view does not consist in correcting the findings of the specialised sciences; philosophy does not possess the expertise for that. The scientifico-philosophical world view takes into consideration both the history of cognition and its

promise for the future, and thus rules out any absolutising of the conclusions reached by science at any particular, historically limited stage in its history. Any specialised science inevitably and with good reason limits its field of vision. But this restriction cannot be absolute because the fragment of reality which it studies is part of the whole and in some way expresses that whole. In this sense, any science in some way or another considers the world as a whole. Not a single science can absolutely isolate the object of its specialised research.

On the contrary, it must be aware of its connection with the whole, which any scientist directly appreciates as a connection with the research targets of other sciences. No one can be a specialist in all fields of knowledge, and this is not essential for any science. But what is undeniably needed in any specialised science is an awareness of historical horizons, of prospects, of the methodological assumptions of scientific knowledge at the level it has reached. And this is what the scientifico-philosophical world view, the building of which, as the development of Marxism has shown, presupposes complete overcoming of the metaphysical juxtaposition of philosophy to the specialised sciences and social practice, gives the scientist. N. N. Semyonov says, "Philosophy can play its active part in the development of the scientific world view only if it takes its place on a par with the other sciences as their fully established colleague, that is to say, as a specialised science with its clearly defined subject of inquiry, available for thorough and concrete study like the subject-matter of any other science."[1]

[1] N. N. Semyonov, "Marxist-Leninist Philosophy and Problems of Natural Science", *Kommunist*, 1968, No. 10 p. 49.

The contradiction between the all-embracing character of human knowledge and its necessary embodiment in a specialised scientific form, the contradiction between specialisation and the trend towards integration of scientific knowledge—this is what makes the scientifico-philosophical world view absolutely necessary, growing as it does from science and social practice, from the greatest social movement yet known in the history of man, the objective content of which is the communist transformation of the world.

Marxism's scientifico-philosophical world view is a radical dialectical repudiation of philosophy in the old sense of the word, i.e., the philosophy that could not find any rational means of comprehending the data of science and practice so that it could on equal terms with the other sciences, without claiming any special benefits or privileges, serve the theoretical cognition and practical transformation of the world. "It is no longer a philosophy at all, but simply a world outlook which has to establish its validity and be applied not in a science of sciences standing apart, but in the positive sciences. Philosophy is therefore 'sublated' here, that is, 'both overcome and preserved'; overcome as regards its form, and preserved as regards its real content."[1] The conversion of philosophy into a scientifico-philosophical world view is the fulfilment of a trend that was present embryonically in the very earliest materialist doctrines; as philosophical thought has developed, this trend has steadily gathered strength, becoming with the emergence of Marxism a law of development.

[1] F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 166.

Chapter Five
NATURE OF PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

1. QUESTIONS THAT CANNOT BE LEFT UNANSWERED

The first theoretical questions sprang historically from the soil of everyday observation of the phenomena of nature and human life, private and public. But everyday experience, though it may allow one to a greater or less extent to describe phenomena, does not offer sufficient material to explain the causes, the essence, the laws of phenomena. The philosophers and naturalists of ancient times and the Middle Ages were, as a rule, unaware of this, that is to say, they failed to grasp the fact that mere everyday observation is not enough to enable us to solve theoretical problems, and gave their answers without more ado.

Thales did not confine himself to stating that a magnet attracts metal; he asked why this happened. For his answer he resorted to the well-known and, as it seemed to him, perfectly comprehensible conception of the soul. Heraclitus did the same when he maintained that a drunken man could not stand straight because his soul, a bright

fire and hence extremely dry by nature, had become damp.

Lucretius asked why sea water is salty. His reply was that the sea sweats, and sweat, as everyone knows, is salty.[1] The ancient Romans did not do without salt in their cooking, which was quite sophisticated, but they were ignorant of how salt is formed. The questions could only be answered by someone with a scientific conception of the chemical elements and their compounds, able to carry out experiments. Such knowledge was not available to the ancients. Their answers were based on extremely daring analogies. The modern man finds it hard to understand why the thinkers of early times believed their assumptions, which were at least unfounded, to be firmly established truths. They were already adept at distinguishing between opinion and truth, but they all seem to have believed that other people, the "crowd", were purveyors of opinion, and not themselves.

Plato says: "If You put a question to a person properly, he will give a true answer of himself."[2] One may agree that leading questions imply a certain answer that is not immediately obvious. But Plato is talking about *any* question. The proper posing of *any* question, however, presumes a knowledge of *any* question, which is, of course, impossible. This means that he failed to make a distinction between *pedagogical* questions and

[1] Lenin highly appreciated this feature of ancient philosophy. In his notes on Lassalle's book about Heraclitus he writes: "The philosophy of the ancients and of Heraclitus is often quite delightful in its childish naïveté, e.g., p. 162 —'how is it to be explained that the urine of persons who have eaten garlic smells of garlic?'." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 343.)

[2] *The Dialogues of Plato*, p. 425.

investigatory questions, the posing of which can only help to give some direction towards what is unknown.

The formation of specialised scientific disciplines is inseparable from the development of special methods of observation, inquiry and testing, by means of which the scientist discovers phenomena and relations between them that are inaccessible to everyday experience. As the specialised sciences develop, the posing of theoretical questions tends to become, like the answers to these questions, more and more the result of inquiry, that is to say, it loses its immediate, direct form. Specialised, theoretical questions occur only in the mind of the specialist, and are of direct interest only to him. Here, as in other spheres of scientific activity, the social division of labour exerts its inevitable effect.

So, whereas in the course of their development the specialised scientific disciplines tend to get further away from immediate (everyday) experience, philosophy is always closely connected with it and hence with the questions that spring from it. This is true not only of materialist doctrines but also of the most abstract idealist theories, which would seem at first glance to be completely out of this world.[1]

[1] Ortega-y-Gasset, who polemicises with the "spirit of abstraction" from the standpoint of an idealist "philosophy of life", observes quite reasonably: "Ordinary folk believe it is quite easy to get away from reality, whereas in fact this is the most difficult thing in the world. It is easy enough to say something about a thing or to draw a thing that makes no sense at all, that is to say, is quite unknowable. To do so one has only to string words together without any visible connection, as the Dadaists did, or to scrawl a lot of irregular lines. But to be able to construct something that is not a copy of the 'natural' and yet nevertheless

Everyday experience tells us about many extremely important things. It tells us that people are born and die, fall asleep and wake up, experience joy and sorrow, treat each other in different ways, love and hate, strive for various goals, grow old, become sick, and so on. It would be naive to assume that these facts, which the early philosophers sought to understand, are of no interest to the philosophers of today. They have, it is true, become the subject of specialised research. All the same they are still of great interest to everyone and cannot therefore fail to hold the attention of philosophers.

Philosophy is mainly interested in what is known to everyone and yet still remains incomprehensible. "The known in general is what it is because it is *known,* but not yet *cognised,*"[1] Hegel says. A man who begins to reason about what is known but not cognised makes a problem of something that previously seemed clear to him mainly because he had never thought about it before. Everyone knows that horses are born of horses, that a cherry-tree grows from a cherry-stone, and so on. The philosophy of early times, proceeding from such commonplace facts, arrived at generalisations: like is born of like, everything has certain definite beginnings ("seeds of things"), nothing comes of nothing and nothing becomes nothing. These abstract propositions are inferences from everyday experience, although they generalise too widely for the limited data available.

contains some meaning, one must possess extremely subtle gifts." These words amount to an apology for idealism, which rejects the idea of the *reflection* of reality and at the same time builds speculative constructions that are by no means devoid of a certain meaning.

[1] G.W.F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke,* Bd. 2, S. 33.

The ancient atomistic materialism, though based on the facts of everyday experience, strikes out resolutely beyond its boundaries. The arguments of the atomists show that their speculative notions about absolutely solid atoms and absolute vacuum were an attempt to explain such facts observed in everyday life as the motion of bodies, differences in the specific weight of substances, etc. S. I. Vavilov writes in this connection: "The most natural conclusion is that the atomism of the ancients is not some amazing feat of insight, an anticipation of the future of science, but a qualitative formulation that followed almost inevitably and unequivocally from everyday observation."[1]

We see that the first philosophers are interested mainly in what everyone knows, in what everyone has grown so accustomed to that no one thinks of questioning it. The fact that philosophy begins with a theoretical examination of the world that is open to everyone is a great step forward in mankind's intellectual development, because man's environment had up to then been cloaked in a fog of religious notions. In this sense philosophy opens up a world that everyone has seen and perceived but does not yet know, something real, compared with the unreal of which religious legend talks with such assurance.

At every step people encounter phenomena that are well known to them and yet so incomprehensible that they never pause to think of the mystery behind the obvious. Such commonly observed phenomena may be compared with subliminal perceptions. But there comes a moment when a man starts asking questions about the familiar and

[1] S. I. Vavilov, *Works* in six volumes, Moscow, 1956, Vol. 3, p. 45.

commonplace. Why does fire burn? Why is ice cold? Why does a stone that is thrown up return to earth? Man starts philosophising because the familiar has suddenly become mysterious, and he wants to solve the mystery. He may, for instance, become interested in what distinguishes dream from reality. This question will never occur to the non-philosopher, who is firmly convinced that he will never mix up what he has dreamt with what exists in reality. The philosopher may be equally convinced of the same thing, but he demands a reason for it, so that the difference between these two phenomena can be established not on the basis of personal impressions but by proceeding from a definite criterion of reality.

In the works of philosophers, ancient and modern, we find explanations of such psychological states as joy, grief, compassion, anger, despair, hope, pride and contempt, despite the fact that anyone who does not study philosophy is perfectly capable of distinguishing one state from another on the basis of his own experience. But the philosopher seeks to detect the inner connection between different psychical states. He may, for instance, single out feelings that are pleasant and unpleasant and take them as basic, elementary emotions. He then tries to classify the multiplicity of human emotions as various modifications of pleasure and non-pleasure, i.e., to reveal the universal forms inherent in emotion and sensibility, to trace the unity of all these manifestations, to assess each one of these emotions ethically, proceeding from a conception of what constitutes the highest Good for man, and thus substantiate a clearly defined moral ideal.

According to Greek mythology, the souls of the dead descended into the subterranean kingdom

of Hades, where each received a reward or punishment for its deeds on earth. The ancient philosophers (idealist as well as materialist) are not satisfied with this claim because it is merely a claim and has nothing to support it. Even those who agree with it remain dissatisfied because every assertion about that which is not seen to be obvious must be substantiated. The necessity for substantiation, for reasonable grounds, emerges in the form of questions. What is the soul? How does it differ from the body? Is it possible for the soul to exist apart from the body? Did the soul exist before the man was born? Will it exist after his death? If so, why? How then does death differ from life? Is death an absolute evil? Or perhaps it is not an evil at all but a blessing? Is death to be feared? How can the fear of death be conquered? All these questions arise from everyday experience as soon as one begins to analyse it and thus break away from the religious explanation of things, which rules out any independent asking and answering of questions on one's own account. For as soon as a man answers questions, particularly questions that were never asked before his time, or which he poses in a new way, he becomes a philosopher. And then it turns out that, proceeding from everyday experience and the notions arising from it, he comes to conclusions that in one way or another contradict these notions. This contradiction must be resolved. But everyday experience is too restricted. It becomes necessary to refer to *historical* experience, to the experience of all mankind whose countless generations hand down their accumulated knowledge to one another. It becomes necessary to turn to the numerous specialised sciences, each of which is discovering objective truths in its admittedly restricted field. The

history of philosophy shows, however, that philosophers very rarely had the courage to take this decisive step.

Thus we see that philosophy never loses interest in the evidence of everyday experience and the questions that it raises. This unique quality of philosophy, which casts light on the origin of many philosophical problems, is interpreted quite wrongly by idealism. We shall now examine some idealist interpretations of the essence of philosophical problems, since this will help us to elucidate their actual specific qualities.

Henri Bergson, obviously ignoring the indissoluble unity of cognition and life and treating the latter as the essence of all that exists, asserts that the basic philosophical questions cannot be solved by the soulless methods of science, which are alien to immediate, directly perceived life. Natural science's theory of time, he believes, does not account for its true nature—duration, becoming—which is revealed only to the vital sense, to intuition and instinct, which are independent of science. The inability of science to solve philosophical problems, particularly the problem of becoming, arises from the nature of thought, which can conceive of motion only as the sum of states of rest because "*the mechanism of our everyday cognition is cinematographic in character*",[1] and science is not in principle in any way different from everyday cognition. "Modern science," he says, "like that of ancient times, proceeds according to the cinematographic method. It cannot do otherwise; all science is subject to this law."[2] Bergson, who wrote these lines at the beginning

[1] H. Bergson, *Œuvres*, p. 753.
[2] Ibid., p. 773.

of the century, did not foresee that the development of cinematic equipment and its use in biology, physics, astronomy and other sciences would open up fresh possibilities for a more profound understanding of the processes of motion, change and growth.

Existentialism, in asserting philosophy's permanent affinity to the "human reality", seeks to prove that philosophical problems, unlike those of science, always have a personal significance, a meaning for the individual. Pointing out the tendency of science to turn everything personal into a subject of specialised inquiry, pointing out the progressive differentiation of scientific knowledge, and its technological significance, existentialism declares that scientific problems relate only to things, whereas philosophical problems treat of being, of life, which cannot be subjected to scientific inquiry precisely because it has no objective form.

What is studied by science is allegedly *outside* human existence, whereas philosophy, according to Karl Jaspers, "asks about being, which is cognised thanks to the fact that *I myself am*".[1] Science, Jaspers says, is not capable of pointing out the purpose of life or answering the question of its own meaning; such questions as God, freedom, duty are alien to it. Gabriel Marcel, developing the same theme, argues that science is concerned with problems, and philosophy with mysteries.

If one considers the existentialist interpretation of the specific nature of philosophical problems, it becomes clear that existentialism absolutises and makes a mystery not only of philosophy's link with everyday experience, but also of the charac-

[1] K. Jaspers, *Philosophie*, Berlin, 1932, Bd. I, S. 324.

teristic features of the problems of idealism and of philosophical problems in general. Needless to say, many philosophical problems, particularly in the form in which they are posed by idealism (and particularly existentialism) are indeed alien to science. But it is one thing to state this fact, and another to pretend that it is true of *all* philosophy.

Existentialism turns philosophical problems into mysteries, unknowable mysteries. This is not, of course, a new interpretation of philosophical problems regarded from the standpoint of the history of philosophy. Zeno of Elea's aporia, and Greek scepticism in general, implied a denial of any possibility of solving philosophical problems. According to Kant, the problems arising from the basic, *a priori* metaphysical ideas, are theoretically insoluble. Kant's doctrine on the antinomies implied that turning a philosophical problem into an antinomy was as far as theoretical inquiry could proceed. Hartman's assumption of the insoluble residue that remains in any philosophical problem is a toned-down version of this idea of Kant's.

Existentialism seeks to put a new interpretation on the old proposition of the fundamental insolubility of philosophical problems. Inquiry into any philosophical problem from this standpoint amounts to nothing more than making it "open" to the consciousness, i.e., in bringing home its intransient meaning. The existentialist truth of a philosophical problem consists precisely in this "openness", which makes no claim to be a solution. Existentialist truth is truth *for* man, but by no means objective truth, what the existentialists term "impersonal" or "depersonalised" truth. Science, on the other hand, resolves problems by "closing" them, locking them up in files and forgetting about them. This is a justifiable claim in so far

as science has nothing to do with "human reality". Even when it investigates man, it deals with things. Thus, the essence of philosophy, according to the existentialists, lies not in answering the questions posed, but in the way the questions are posed. Paul Ricoeur, who is near to existentialism, declares categorically: "The great philosopher is the man who discovers a new way of asking questions."[1]

It is not hard to see that existentialism absolutises one of the actual features of philosophical problems, the fact that they are originally comprehended as questions, which the thinker puts to reality and hence to himself. The historical beginning of philosophy is important not for its statements but for the questions that they imply. When Thales declares that everything comes from water and returns to water, the most interesting thing about this belief is the question: Does everything consist of one thing? Is not the whole sensibly perceived multiformity of things merely the mode of existence of some one thing?[2]

Anaximander of Miletus, Anaximenes and Heraclitus answer the same question. These thinkers are original not because one says the origin of all things is "indefinable matter", another "air" and the third "fire", but because in developing the question posed by Thales they ask what properties this one substance must possess for so many things

[1] P. Ricoeur, *Histoire et vérité*, Paris, 1955, p. 78.

[2] It should not be assumed, however, that Thales' answer is not—historically, of course—of any scientific interest. Bertrand Russell writes: "The statement that everything is made of water is to be regarded as a scientific hypothesis, and by no means a foolish one. Twenty years ago, the received view was that everything is made of hydrogen, which is two thirds of water." (B. Russell, *History of Philosophy*, pp. 44-45.)

to have originated from it. The Eleatic school denies that the diversity perceived by the senses could arise from one or even many sensibly perceived principles. Their fundamental belief may be formulated as a question: Does not the sensibly perceived arise from that which is not perceived by the senses and does not possess the properties of sensibly perceived things?

W. Heisenberg points out that what primarily interests the natural scientist in philosophy is "the statement of the question, while the answer takes only second place. Statements of questions appear to him extremely valuable if they turn out to be fruitful in developing human thought. The answers, on the other hand, are mostly of a transient nature, losing their significance in the course of time thanks to our wider knowledge of the facts."[1] In support of this idea Heisenberg refers above all to Democritus and Plato and stresses that even for the *modern* theory of elementary particles the questions posed by these thinkers have retained their striking importance, whereas their answers have naturally lost their value. Heisenberg is perfectly right in assuming that philosophical problems *outgrow* in significance their limited solutions provided by philosophers and, let us add, natural scientists as well. However, a closer examination of these questions that were posed so long ago reveals that they retain their significance in the present in so far as they have been reified and developed, and this was possible only because they were in some way or other answered.

It would be naive to expect scientific answers even from the philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries, let alone the philosophers of the ancient

[1] M. Planck, *Zum Gedenken,* Berlin, 1959, S. 44.

world. The surprising thing is that in Anaxagoras's theory of homoeomeries we find a brilliant insight into the molecular structure of matter, and in Democritus and Leucippus, the idea of the existence of atoms. The history of alchemy, like that of ancient and medieval philosophy, left to coming generations of researchers answers that are mainly of significance as evidence of the posing of certain questions. However, what the existentialists present as an eternal law of development of philosophy, actually characterises only certain periods in the development of philosophical and also natural scientific knowledge. It is not eternal fate but the concrete history of philosophical problems that allows us to trace the development not only of questions but also of answers. Eduard Spranger is profoundly mistaken therefore when he declares quite in the spirit of existentialism: "No one obtains in philosophy an answer that is wiser than the question that provoked it."[1] In one historical situation the questions that philosophy poses are more important than the answers it gives to them, in another historical situation the picture may be quite different.

The existentialist devaluation of philosophical answers is a revival of the sceptical interpretation of the results of philosophical development, an unsubstantiated extension of trends that were inevitable at certain stages in the development of philosophy to the nature of philosophical knowledge in general. Existentialist philosophy restricts its task to the scrupulous analysis of questions, and understandably so since scientific data are considered to be valueless for providing answers. The existentialists maintain, for example, that the

[1] *Universitas,* Stuttgart, Juni 1964, Heft 6, S. 563.

problem of man is of great urgency and the answers to the questions it asks are becoming ever more difficult to find, despite the fact that dozens of scientific disciplines are engaged in the study of man. Here they obviously ignore the fact that it is the multitude and diversity of scientific data about man that create quite natural difficulties when it comes to making a philosophical generalisation, not to mention the additional fact that the intensification of antagonistic contradictions of the present age has added to the urgency of the problem.

The statement of the fact that philosophical problems take shape initially on the basis of everyday experience becomes its distortion when everyday experience is declared to be the *only* source of philosophical problems. This is basically the position of neo-Thomism. Otherwise it would have to renounce the teaching of "Doctor Angelicus", which reflected the historical limitations of his age and the condition of science at that time.

The American neo-Thomist Mortimer J. Adler asserts that philosophy "relies on and appeals only to the common experience of mankind which, at its core, is the same for all men, at all times and places".[1] From this proposition on the changeless "core of common experience" that is the same for all times and peoples Adler infers that the problems of philosophy bear no relation to those of science, and that the solution of these problems does not depend on the level of scientific knowledge. The untenability of this argument lies first of all in the attempt to create a dichotomy between everyday experience and scientific experiment. Everyday experience, according to Adler, is

[1] M. Adler, *The Conditions of Philosophy*, New York, 1965, p. 171.

something that we acquire unconsciously, without the intervention of the will. "These are the experiences we have simply by virtue of being awake —with our senses alive and functioning, with an awareness of our inner feelings or states, but without asking any questions, without trying to test any conjectures, theories, or conclusions, without making a single deliberate effort to observe anything."[1]

At bottom Adler counterposes everyday experience not only to scientific knowledge but to knowledge in general, since ordinary consciousness does not, in his opinion, form part of everyday experience, but is only its interpretation. He states that everyday experience asserts nothing and denies nothing: "It is neither true nor false; it is simply whatever it is."[2] This implies that everyday experience is in principle irrefutable, since only assertions or denials are refutable, whereas everyday experience is an assemblage of spontaneously formed impressions and feelings as a result of which the individual eats, drinks, sleeps, wakes up, notices the passing of the seasons, of day and night, distinguishes life from death, rest from motion, heat from cold, and so on. By cutting down the sphere of experience to the bare minimum and excluding from it the elements related to the development of society, its material and spiritual culture, man's labour activity, Adler makes this metaphysically interpreted experience the sole object of philosophical comprehension. From this standpoint all philosophers at all times have possessed exactly the same material and differ from one another only by giving different interpretations of it.

[1] Ibid., pp. 102-103.
[2] Ibid., p. 102.

Once we assume a core of immutable human experience it is but one step further to assume changeless human nature. One myth is enlisted to support another. But in fact they only expose one another. There is no such thing as this changeless everyday experience that asserts nothing; nor is there any such thing as changeless human nature. Everyday experience whose significance in the process of the formation of philosophical problems is quite obvious, historically develops and becomes richer thanks to production, cognition and science, so that even the elementary facts that people's consciousness has registered throughout the ages are variously apprehended and therefore play very different roles. The people of tribal society, for instance, of Ancient Greece, of the Christian Middle Ages, and the epoch of the Renaissance apprehended the elemental forces of nature, the immediate social environment, human birth, death, and so on, in different ways. Adler may retort, of course, that appraisal of various phenomena, the attitude adopted towards them, does not form part of everyday experience and can only be regarded as its interpretation. But this argument falls to the ground because we are not talking about theoretical conceptions, but about how people of various epochs *apprehended, experienced* certain events. Despite Adler's assertions, everyday experience is never "simply whatever it is", that is to say, it is always *coloured* in some way, quite apart from its interpretation.

Adler refuses to consider people's experience of life in all its diversity. He refuses to take into consideration what *distinguishes* the everyday experience of one people from that of another, of one historical epoch from that of another. The whole content of everyday experience is reduced

to a narrowly interpreted *individual* experience; in other words, Adler completely ignores social and historical experience. So, philosophical problems are, so to speak, shut up in a cage of narrow and unchanging everyday experience. With its capacities thus rigidly curtailed philosophy is denied the right to pass judgement on matters outside the commonplace.

The next conclusion that neo-Thomist restriction of philosophy to the metaphysically interpreted sphere of everyday experience imposes is also self-evident: philosophy can obtain nothing from science. Neo-Thomism ignores the philosophical problems posed by the sciences, although it is not averse to using scientific data to "confirm" theological speculations. It may easily be assumed that the neo-Thomist understanding of the peculiar nature of philosophical problems perpetuates the opposition of philosophy to science under the pretext of ensuring philosophy's "autonomy", that is to say, its right to preach anti-scientific views.

Both existentialism and neo-Thomism approach the question of the specific nature of philosophy without regard for history, whereas, in fact, it is essential to distinguish at least a few periods in the history of philosophy. There was a time when philosophy was able to anticipate the problems of the specialised sciences that had not yet come into being. The character of philosophical problems changed substantially in the period when these sciences arose and philosophy became juxtaposed to them. It was at this point that rationalist metaphysics posed the problem of knowledge beyond experience, i.e., superscientific knowledge, which is alien to the sciences. Incidentally it is not hard to see in this approach to the question the

quite justifiable need to overcome narrow empiricism which was understood in philosophy earlier than in natural science. Paradoxical though it may seem, the metaphysical problem of knowledge beyond experience arose on the basis of the scientific development of the New Age.

The problems of the origin of theoretical knowledge, the relationship between the rational and the sensual, between theory and practice, the problems of proof, logical inference, criterion of truth and theoretical research in general—all these problems which inspired philosophy in the 17th century took shape under the direct influence of mathematics, mechanics and the experimental science of those days. The investigation of these problems fertilised not only philosophy but also the specialised sciences.

Thus the reduction of philosophical problems to everyday experience is an obviously untenable position. Ontological as well as epistemological problems reach out far beyond its bounds. Philosophical problems both in origin and content are organically related to the whole multiform historical, and particularly spiritual, activity of mankind. Some philosophical problems are directly connected with the development of special scientific knowledge, others have an indirect bearing on them. Even the philosophical problems that express the essential content of man's personal life undergo considerable changes under the influence of the specialised sciences.

There are some philosophical problems, of course, that do not fit in with the scientific approach. But they, as a rule, do not fit in either with the evidence of everyday experience. So, the declaration of logical positivism to the effect that philosophical problems are, in fact, not problems

at all, but imagined questions that disappear in the light of logical semantic analysis, turns out to be theoretically unfounded. Logical positivism neglected to make a qualitative typological analysis of philosophical problems. Nor was it able to detect the kernel of truth that is to be found in the way many philosophical problems are posed by speculative-idealist philosophy.

Needless to say, there have been and still are pseudoproblems as well as real problems in philosophy. Medieval scholastic philosophy, particularly when it was laying itself out to substantiate the Christian dogmas, invented a good many pseudoproblems. Ignoring the scholastic "problems" that are not philosophical at all ("Can God create a rock that He is unable to lift?") one may cite the question of whether God could create the world out of nothing as an example of a pseudoproblem. The hallmark of the pseudoproblem is unfoundedness of *all* its implied concepts and assumptions. No one has ever proved that there was a time when the world did not exist. Absolute genesis is a conception that cannot be confirmed by even one example. Nevertheless the theologian propounds the question not only of absolute genesis but also of the creation (a personal act, presuming the existence of a creator), and, what is more, out of nothing. But what is *nothing*? If it exists, then it must be *something*.

The neo-positivists, who have turned the concept of the pseudoproblem into a universal weapon for combating "metaphysical" philosophy, have been unable to supply even a half-satisfactory definition of this concept. This is natural enough because they have put too wide an interpretation on the concept of the pseudoproblem without drawing any distinction between it and the

problem which, though obscured and falsely propounded, is actually quite real. Most of the philosophical problems which the neo-positivists (and others) regard as pseudoproblems are in fact merely problems that have been wrongly propounded. The problem of the first cause is, I would say, a typical pseudoproblem because the concept of cause and effect has significance only when applied to individual phenomena, and becomes quite meaningless in relation to the Universe as a whole. On the other hand, the problem of a preordained harmony propounded by Leibnitz would seem to be a real problem, wrongly formulated, concerning the unity of the world and the universal connection of all phenomena. Equally real, though wrongly formulated, so it seems to me, is the problem of innate ideas, which to Locke and other empiricists appeared to be utterly devoid of meaning. M. K. Mamardashvili points out: "The proposition of 17th-century idealist rationalism on innate ideas was influenced by the fact that in scientific knowledge, taken as a separate element (an 'idea'), one finds not only properties generated by the presence of the separate object of this knowledge existing outside the consciousness, but also properties generated in it by the connection with other knowledge and the general system of thought. This is the actual subject and source of the rationalist thesis, the real problem of the theory of innate ideas concealed behind the historical context of their specific assimilation and expression."

These examples show that there is no formal attribute that makes it possible to draw a fundamental line of distinction between the pseudoproblem and the wrongly stated problem; only the actual development of cognition and special

research can give a concrete answer concerning any individual problem, pseudo or wrongly stated. The neo-positivists obviously made things easier for themselves when they declared all historically formed philosophical problems to be non-existent in reality. As J. Piaget observes, "nothing gives final grounds for defining a problem as scientific or metaphysical".[1] The *a priori* juxtaposition of scientific and philosophical problems undoubtedly restricts the ability of science to solve problems that are misstated owing to lack of information or other historically determined causes. Science, Piaget says, is capable of solving any problem, i.e., it "is essentially 'open' and retains its freedom to embrace more and more new problems, which it wants to solve and can solve to the extent that it finds methods of interpreting them".[2] Thus, we have no right to reject *out of hand* the problems propounded by idealism merely because they are inevitably stated in mystifying terms; these problems must be deciphered. This is how scientific inquiry into idealist philosophy should be conducted, in the teeth of vulgar criticism.

The interrelation of real, imaginary and misstated problems reflects, though far from directly, the fundamental dichotomy between materialism

[1] J. Piaget, *Sagesse et illusions de la philosophie*, Paris, 1965, p. 60.

[2] Like philosophy, the history of the specialised sciences has had its pseudoproblems and misstated questions. Even here it is impossible to give a formula dividing one type of problem from the other. The problems must be investigated and only then can it be decided what they are worth and what content they express. "There are no criteria," Max Planck writes, "for deciding *a priori* whether from the standpoint of physics a problem has meaning or not." (M. Planck, *Vorträge und Erinnerungen*, Stuttgart, 1949, S. 224.)

and idealism. It would be a tremendous oversimplification to present the situation as if real problems have been dealt with only by materialist philosophy. No matter how hostile materialism and idealism may be to one another, these dichotomies are dialectical, since materialism and idealism usually discuss the same questions, from which it should not be inferred, however, that the questions themselves are neutral and bear no relation to their possible solutions. Philosophical problems are not simply sentences that end in a question mark. They may be assertions or denials, they are not free of certain assumptions and quite often they represent a tentative formulation of a certain principle that demands substantiation. The opposition between materialism and idealism manifests itself not only in the different answers given to questions that are common to both philosophical theories, but also in the existence of opposite—materialist and idealist—sets of problems, in the existence of materialist and idealist ways of stating these problems. From this standpoint it may be said that materialism, like idealism, has special questions of its own. Specifically idealist questions are partly pseudoproblems and partly wrongly stated problems with a perfectly real content.

The metaphysical juxtaposition of philosophical and scientific problems is just as bad as ignoring the qualitative difference between them, described above. This qualitative distinction depends not so much on the specific nature of philosophical problems as on their content.

Optimum universality is a qualitative characteristic in so far as we are discussing not one or another truth that has general and necessary significance, but also the nature of truth in general,

not only the most general laws of all that exists, but also the content of any law. What is truth? What is knowledge? What is law? What is matter? What is man? What is the world? The very form of these questions differs from the questions that usually confront the physicist, the chemist or any other natural scientist. For the chemist, such questions as "What is metal?", "What is a metalloid?", "What is an element?" are of secondary importance, because his primary interest is in the special properties of each individual metal, metalloid or element, or their compounds. The question of the "What is...?" type is, of course, not without meaning in chemistry or any other specialised science, but in philosophy it is of primary importance.

The form of the philosophical question, like any form, expresses the peculiar nature of its content. Diderot says: "the physicist ... will reject the question '*What for?*' and concentrate only on the question 'How?' ".[1] The question "What for?", particularly in natural philosophy, makes a teleological assumption, and the physicist, consciously or unconsciously basing himself on materialism, repudiates it. The physicist is far more interested than the philosopher in the question "How?" than the question "Why?". Philosophy, on the other hand, is not satisfied with knowing merely how certain processes take place. It wants to know why they take place in one way and not another. The philosopher, for instance, asks not only "Do we know the world?" or "How do we know the world?" He also asks "Why is the world knowable?", "Why do we know it?".

[1] D. Diderot, *Œuvres philosophiques*, Paris 1961, pp. 236-237.

More than a century ago positivism declared the question "Why?" to be impermissible, metaphysical and basically insoluble. Yet the history of science shows that in any special field of research this question may in a certain context acquire profound scientific meaning. Newton did not explain why bodies attract one another not because he thought it a waste of time but because he was well aware that science did not yet possess the necessary data to answer this question.[1] Nor does modern physics see this question as a pseudoproblem, although, in attempting its solution, it has got no further than the hypotheses of which Newton so heartily disapproved.

The natural scientist asks the question "Why?" primarily in connection with the concrete data of observation or experiment, and this immediately distinguishes the natural science form of stating this question from its philosophical statement. For example, after Albert Michelson's famous experiment failed to produce the expected results, the question naturally arose as to why it had failed. Einstein replied to this question as follows: ether does not exist and the speed of light is constant, i.e., cannot increase through the compounding of velocities. There were other answers to this "Why?". This was no accident because the very form of the question allows a multiplicity of answers.

[1] "I have not been able to discover the cause of those properties of gravity from phenomena, and I frame no hypotheses; for whatever is not deduced from the phenomena is to be called an hypothesis; and hypotheses, whether metaphysical or physical, whether of occult qualities or mechanical, have no place in experimental philosophy." (I. Newton, *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, London, 1903, Vol. II, Book III, p. 314.) It should be noted, however, that Newton did nonetheless "frame" hypotheses, viz., his corpuscular theory of light.

When the natural scientist makes a definite hypothesis, which is confirmed by certain facts, and it is then discovered that other facts contradict his hypothesis, the question "Why?" arises once again. This was the situation in physics when it was found that some facts testify to the wave and others to the corpuscular nature of light. The answer to this "Why?" was given by de Broglie, who proved that the nature of the electron is both corpuscular and wave.

It should be noted, however, that the question "Why?" confronts natural scientists not only in a particular form, but also in its wider philosophical aspect. "Science," M. V. Keldysh points out, "has still done very little to elucidate such grandiose problems as the origin of life on Earth, or the foundations of the organisation of animate matter; we do not know how animate matter appeared and why the development it acquired was inevitable."[1] In this case, as we see, the questions "How?" and "Why?" have *equal status*.[2] In making a distinction between the two we should not regard them as fundamentally incompatible.

To declare any "Why?" a forbidden form of question means taking up the agnostic position, which is what positivism actually did. It is an-

[1] M. V. Keldysh, "Natural Sciences and Their Significance", *Kommunist*, 1966, No. 17, p. 31.

[2] Karl Popper is quite consistent when he throws out "How?" as well as "Why?", declaring them both meaningless for theoretical natural science: "Questions of origin are questions of 'Why and how'. They are relatively unimportant from the theoretical standpoint and in general have only a specific historical interest." (K. Popper, *Misère de l'historicisme*, Paris, 1956, p. 142.) Natural scientists today are usually well aware that neo-positivism places taboos on certain parts of science. Its best exponents can be proud of the fact that they never recognised any such restrictions.

other matter that it took philosophy thousands of years to realise the significance of this question.

The meaning of the question "Why?" becomes still more obvious when we turn from the study of nature to the study of society. Natural processes, in so far as they are studied in their natural form without the intervention of social production, take place spontaneously and, consequently, cannot be regarded as being at all dependent on mankind. The socio-historical process, on the contrary, is even in its spontaneous form a result of people's common activity. The student of social life has no right to consider historical events, economic or political facts (for instance, the revolution of 1905 in Russia, private ownership of the means of production, race discrimination) without asking the question "Why?". Needless to say, some historians, economists and sociologists restrict their task to establishing and describing facts, the course of events, and so on. In this case, ignoring the question "Why?" often becomes a refusal to make a *critical* analysis and appraisal of social phenomena.

The philosopher is less able than any other student of the humanities to ignore the question "Why?". In fact, he can never avoid it. This is not to say, of course, that merely by posing the question the philosopher safeguards himself againts a non-critical attitude to social reality; the substance of the question is as important as its form, not to mention the answer. For example, when speaking of private property, the philosopher, just because he is a philosopher, cannot and usually does not evade the question of why it exists. But if he makes no concrete analysis of this question and simply asserts that private

property exists because human nature is such, he is no different from the ordinary bourgeois apologist economist. But let us take the philosopher who does deal with the question in concrete terms. Is private property to be identified with man's impropriation of the substance of nature in general? How does ownership of the means of production differ from ownership of other things, personal goods, for example? Have other forms of property existed in the history of mankind? Or are "private property" and "property in general" synonymous phrases? Is human nature unchangeable? It is not hard to realise that this posing of the question "Why?" reveals how many aspects it may have. We must not conclude, however, that a thinker can state his question correctly merely by wishing to do so; the correct statement of the question presupposes both a certain level of knowledge and also certain social prerequisites.

The question "Why?" may be relevant or irrelevant. There is nothing easier than to accompany every statement with a portentous-sounding "Why?" without going to the root of the question, the fact or subject about which something has been said. Such questioning becomes a kind of children's pastime that, of course, has nothing in common with the essential philosophical question. Children who merely ask "Why?" and adults who imitate children, or remain at their level, do not become philosophers by doing so. If the positivists tried at times to reduce philosophical questions to the child's "Why?", it only goes to show that in their noisy polemic against essentialism, which was supposed to be restoring medieval conceptions of occult (i.e., fundamentally unobservable) qualities, they failed to notice the *essence* of philosophical questions and the essen-

tial relationships in reality to which they refer.[1]

Analysis of the form of the philosophical question discloses the specific content that cannot be

[1] It should be emphasised, however, that the child's "Why?" is by no means always irrelevant. It implies an *immediate* relationship to surrounding phenomena that is free of the usual conviction felt by most adults that these customary, apparently commonplace facts are of no interest and too well known to warrant attention, particularly since everyone has work to do and not enough time and is no longer a child, etc., etc. Plato and Aristotle believed surprise to be the beginning of all philosophy. They did not mean the simple feeling of surprise we experience from something unexpected, something we have never heard or seen, but surprise at something that was quite common and well known and never aroused our surprise before. Max Planck regarded the ability to be surprised as the beginning of the theoretical approach to phenomena. In his article "Meaning and Limits of Exact Science" he wrote: "The grown man loses the ability to wonder not because he has resolved the wonderful riddle, but because he has grown accustomed to the laws of his picture of the world. But why these and not other laws exist is just as surprising and inexplicable for the adult as it is for the child. He who does not understand this situation, and does not recognise its profound significance, who has gone so far that he finds nothing to wonder at, discovers in the end merely that he has forgotten how to think deeply." (M. Planck, *Sinn und Grenzen der exacten Wissenschaft*, Leipzig, 1942, S. 12-13.) Hence Max Planck does not find the question as to *why* these and not other laws are to be observed in the world around us a meaningless question. He believes that those who never pause to consider such questions, i.e., philosophical questions, are incapable of thinking deeply. No wonder then that the child's "Why?" strikes Planck as significant and essentially not childish at all. "Indeed," he writes, "man in the face of measurelessly rich and constantly renewing nature, no matter how great his progress in the field of scientific knowledge, always remains a wondering child and must be constantly ready for new surprises." (M. Planck, *Vorträge und Erinnerungen*, Stuttgart, 1949, S. 379.)

reduced to the subject-matter of the specialised sciences. In other words, it is not a particular way of stating the problem that makes it philosophical, but its content. Hence even non-philosophers, when they come up against these problems, also philosophise. This shows that philosophical problems cannot be solved by mathematics, physics or chemistry, although mathematics, physics and chemistry may contribute to their solution. Even so, such questions as—What is law? What is truth? What is the nature of the most general laws? Why is the world knowable? Why is knowledge a reflection of objective reality?—like all other philosophical questions, cannot be answered by any of the specialised sciences because they are related to the content of *all* the sciences. Therefore, while rejecting the idealist proposition that philosophical problems are above science, we maintain that they can be solved only scientifically. This means that the solution of philosophical problems is founded on the sum-total of scientific data, but the actual solving of these problems, at least in their direct form rests with philosophy.

So there actually are questions that only philosophy can answer, although not without the help of the other sciences. And it is these questions that are actually philosophical problems. This apparently obvious statement (what is philosophy for otherwise?) still demands elucidation, however, since problems that for centuries were considered to be philosophical are constantly passing into the sphere of the specialised sciences and, thanks to this, acquiring scientific solutions.[1]

[1] Karl Steinbuch, whose world view combines natural scientific materialism with elements of the positivist interpretation of cognition, states that all questions are at first

Close analysis of such problems shows that they were specialised questions and philosophy studied them only because there was no appropriate specialised science. Thus, the questions which philosophy has been studying for thousands of years may be divided into two basic types. First, the most general questions, which arose, developed and received certain definite solutions in the course of the history of philosophy. Second, the particular questions mentioned earlier that gradually broke away from philosophy.

The process of the separation from philosophy of questions that are investigated by the specialised sciences, which in our time is reaching its

studied by philosophy and then solved by the specialised sciences. Obviously failing to distinguish the questions weaned away from philosophy by the development of the specialised sciences, from the philosophical questions that by their very nature cannot be the subject-matter of specialised science, Steinbuch arrives at the mistaken conclusion: "The history of science can count many examples of how certain problems remained for long the subject of philosophical speculation, but were later investigated by the exact sciences. A typical example is to be found in the atomistic conception of the structure of matter.... As soon as the problem is subjected to the methods of inquiry of the exact sciences, it becomes clear that this form of inquiry has distinct advantages compared with the pre-scientific and a glance back arouses a feeling of superiority or confusion." (K. Steinbuch, *Automat und Mensch*, S. 4-5.) The illusion which Steinbuch culls from the positivist study of the history of philosophy and science lies in the conviction that sooner or later all philosophical questions will be studied by the specialised sciences. This illusion is based on the notion that philosophical problems have no specific content, that they differ from the problems that have already broken away from philosophy, merely by the pre-scientific manner in which they are stated, which makes it impossible for them to be studied scientifically. This is a variety of the neo-positivist reduction of philosophical problems to pseudoproblems.

culmination, makes for further development and enrichment of the specifically philosophical problems or, in other words, makes the questions that philosophy now studies more philosophical, i.e., questions that by their very nature cannot be solved within the framework of the already existing or conceivable specialised scientific disciplines. Naturally the relationship between philosophy and the specialised sciences changes accordingly: philosophy no longer concerns itself with the preliminary preparation of questions that are destined for the specialised sciences. Instead of its previous function of speculatively anticipating the scientific positing of questions, philosophy, to the extent that it concerns itself with the problems of the specialised sciences (by no means the whole range of its subject), performs the function of providing a world-view comprehension, generalisation and comparative analysis of scientific discoveries and methods of inquiry, the function of theoretical elaboration of the methodological problems of science. This change in the relationship between philosophy and the specialised sciences is also determined by the fact that, at present, anticipation of the future discoveries of natural science is possible only on the basis of theoretical analysis of the special empirical data obtained by experiment and instrumental observation, and this, of course, can be done only by the theoretical scientist and not by the philosopher. The fact that in the 20th century philosophy did not anticipate the discoveries made by the theory of relativity, quantum mechanics and cybernetics, that these discoveries were just as much a surprise to the philosophers as to the great majority of scientists, is to be explained, in our view, by the changed character of philosophical problems

and hence the very function of philosophy and the nature of philosophical inquiry. Once philosophy gives up the study of specialised questions, it naturally cannot anticipate their subsequent solution.[1]

The proposition that there are different types of philosophical problem may give rise to objections that we must consider in some detail. First objection. Are not general and, particularly the most general, philosophical problems in effect wrongly formulated problems, since every general question can and should be broken down into the particular questions of which it is composed? And if so, then are there any philosophical problems in general, or do they exist only to the extent that the general questions have not yet been fully comprehended and analysed?

To be sure, any general question, including the philosophical, can be broken down into a number of particular questions. But the philosophical question differs from other non-philosophical

[1] We believe that the works on the philosophical problems of natural science written by dialectical materialists are intended not to anticipate future discoveries, but to make a theoretical, methodological analysis of the achievements of science with the aim of furthering the development of dialectical materialism and providing methodological assistance for the specialists. We agree with I. T. Frolov, who writes that dialectical materialism, unlike natural philosophy, "is concerned with a 'second reality', created by science, i.e., in the case of the cognition of the laws of living systems with a 'biological reality', which changes as the science of life develops.... Philosophy can fulfil its role by joining in the general flow of knowledge, by revealing the general in the specific. This is the *world-view* task of philosophy, its function of generalisation. This function takes the form of a theoretical interpretation of specific knowledge that weds it to the general system of the world view."

general questions in that it still retains its meaning and significance even after being broken down into particular questions, and even after the solution of these particular questions by the specialised sciences. Moreover, the significance of the philosophical question increases thanks to its being broken down into a number of specialised, particular questions. When these have been solved, the significance of the general philosophical question is once again appreciated. For example, the problem of infinity is undoubtedly acquiring an ever more clearly defined philosophical content owing to the fact that various aspects of this problem are being successfully investigated by mathematics, physics, and other sciences. The philosophical question of the nature of man, as we have already stressed, has become even more relevant thanks to the fact that anthropology, psychology, physiology, history and other sciences have investigated certain particular aspects of it.

Second objection. Obviously it is possible to abstract particular questions from the general. But to what extent may general questions be separated from the particular? A considerable portion of general, philosophical questions are the same particular questions applied to an unlimited sphere of inquiry. In this case are not philosophical and non-philosophical problems merely two sides of one and the same coin?

Such questions as the relationship between the spiritual and material, the problem of man, the problem of infinity, inevitably become the subject of special scientific inquiry while remaining at the same time highly important philosophical problems, whose philosophical solution depends to a great extent on the advance of the specialised

sciences. Mortimer J. Adler calls these questions "mixed" questions, assuming that as distinct from purely philosophical questions they are solved by the joint efforts of philosophy and the specialised sciences. But the whole point is that with the exception of pseudoproblems there are no *purely* philosophical questions, whose content and solution can be independent of the data supplied by the specialised sciences. Besides, the questions Adler calls "mixed", and which in his proposed classification of philosophical questions are classed as questions of the third order,[1] are in fact (if

[1] According to Adler, first-order philosophical questions are "primarily questions about that which is and happens in the world or about what men should do and seek, and only secondarily questions about how we know, think or speak about that which is and happens or about what men do and seek". (M. Adler, *The Conditions of Philosophy...*, p. 43.) This definition of first-order and second-order philosophical problems is treated as axiomatic, because we must first have a conception of the world to be able to appraise that conception. Hence, Adler declares, metaphysics is prior to epistemology (Ibid., p. 45). But Adler's mistake lies in his forgetting the development of philosophy, in the course of which during various historical periods various problems acquire first-order, dominant, major importance. In ancient pre-Socratic philosophy cosmological questions held the centre of the stage. In the time of Aristotle the "first philosophy" was what his commentators were later to call metaphysics, while questions of the theory of knowledge were in a subordinate position. But it would be obviously anti-historical to extend this subordination of problems that was formed in the philosophy of the ancients and accepted by medieval scholastics, which mainly followed Aristotle, to the whole subsequent development of philosophy. Kant regarded it as his main task to create a new, critical metaphysics of nature and metaphysics of morals. Yet epistemological problems predominate in his philosophy. In Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel the problems of metaphysics, ontology and epistemology essentially coincide. In the neo-Kantian doctrine epistemological problems (along

one does not adopt the stance of speculative-idealist metaphysics) philosophical problems of the first order.

Thus, the specialised questions that in the past engaged the attention of philosophy leave the philosophical fold and are solved by the specialised sciences. The questions that are studied by both philosophy and the specialised sciences are obviously at the same time general and particular. Psychology, anthropology, history, medicine, and biology study man in different ways, each concentrating on a certain special form of human existence. Philosophy, on the other hand, generalising the achievements of these sciences, tackles the problem of man as a whole, i.e., solves the question of the nature of man and its historically proceeding change, the relationship between the individual and the social, the anthropological and the social, the material and spiritual life of society, the most general laws of social development, the laws of man's practical activities, cognition, artistic assimilation of the world, alienation, and so on. In the framework of philosophy not one of these questions is particular, and they are all merely different aspects of one and the same question that *interpenetrate* one another. Thus, for example, the question of the relationship be-

with axiology) hold the dominant place. The same applies to the positivists, the neo-positivists and many other trends in present-day bourgeois philosophy. The desire to define once and for all which philosophical problems are paramount, and which are of secondary importance, springs from the idealist and religious conception of the perennial philosophy and ignores the link between philosophy and certain historical needs and social problems. The latter circumstance, for example, determined the fact that the problems of historical materialism are of key importance in the philosophy of Marxism.

tween the individual and the social, which in psychology has a specialised character, cannot in philosophy be solved without investigating all the other above-mentioned questions. This interdependence of philosophical problems, their general correlation, their historically emerging comprehensive unity place these questions essentially apart from the questions of any specialised science, where each question is related only to a *certain* part of other special questions, but of course not to the whole range of problems of the given science. The advance of specialisation within each specialised science indicates a growing relative independence of the questions it studies. The situation is quite different in philosophy, where the interpenetration of philosophical problems creates quite considerable difficulties for research, since the solving of one philosophical problem actually entails the solution (at least in general outline) of all the other problems of philosophy.

Philosophy is often reproached for studying "premature" questions, whose solution has not been prepared by the development of the specialised sciences. But natural science, so it seems to us, did pose (and continues to pose today) quite independently of philosophy similarly "premature" and "untimely" questions that obviously cannot yet be solved but nevertheless merit attention. Today, when philosophy does not as a rule claim any anticipatory (always in some measure "speculative") solution of particular problems, these problems are handled by the natural scientists themselves, but not, of course, as the natural philosophers used to handle them.

Thus, the urge to answer this or that particular or general question before sufficient empirical

material has been accumulated, may be felt in any field of knowledge. It arises not simply from impatience but rather because the lack of empirical data is revealed only in the process of the inquiry that has been stimulated by the "premature" positing of such questions. Consequently, even in natural science there are questions that cannot be left without at least a preliminary answer. Their progressive significance is undeniable. In philosophy such questions occupy a far bigger place, and this also characterises the specific nature of philosophical problems. It sometimes happens that a man sets himself a very restricted problem and solves it completely. It may also happen that a man sets himself a tremendous problem, but manages to solve it only partially. The specialised sciences as well as philosophy need such "dreamers". This comparison may also be applied to the characterisation of philosophical problems.

2. PROBLEMS, OLD AND NEW, ETERNAL AND TRANSIENT

In the specialised sciences problems tend to follow one another in succession. A new problem arises when the previous problem has been solved. Naturally the theoretical mechanics of the 20th century is not concerned with the problems of Newton's time. These problems have been solved, that is to say, they are no longer problems. We must remember, of course, that even in the natural sciences (not to mention mathematics) there are certain problems that were posed centuries ago and have not been solved to this day. This, however, is an exception to the general rule.

The history of science is the history of the rise and development of hundreds, and later thousands, of specialised scientific disciplines. Every one of these disciplines has its own specific problems which could not have existed before that particular scientific discipline came into being. The very possibility of evolving new scientific disciplines presupposes the invention of new technical means of instrumental observation, new experimental apparatus, and the discovery of hitherto unsuspected targets for research.

Science develops through the conscious, purposeful activity of scientists, but it is not devoid of an element of spontaneity, in the sense that it is in principle impossible to foresee the future and, hence, the problems that will arise in connection with it. The undiscovered is by no means always known to be discoverable. Because he ventures beyond the bounds of what is directly observable, the scientist very often does not know what he does not know. Thus, the advance of knowledge is also a matter of finding out what has not yet been discovered, because this enables us to find the blank spots where there appeared to be none. Every one of these blank spots on the map of knowledge is a problem. This means that the problems of any specialised science record what has not yet been discovered but which new knowledge tells us is discoverable.

The history of any specialised scientific discipline gives us a more or less accurate notion of the chronology of its problems. The fact that some problems that modern astrophysics, for example, or chemistry, posed centuries ago have not yet been solved does not change the general picture, because such problems were posed in the distant past not by astrophysics or chemistry but by philosophy and, consequently, they were then *philosophical* problems.

Philosophical problems are qualitatively different from the problems of any specialised science because in their *original* historical form they usually lacked scientific method and were purely hypothetical or, at best, anticipatory. It is possible, of course, to speak of a pre-scientific form of posing even certain natural scientific problems but this, as has already been pointed out, relates to the history of philosophy and not the history of science. The fact that philosophical problems are qualitatively different from those of the specialised sciences was wrongly interpreted by August Comte as evidence of the fundamentally pre-scientific character of any philosophical proposition. Actually this fact tells us something quite different. It tells us that philosophy was developing even when there were no specialised sciences. A significant number of philosophical problems arose in this pre-scientific historical epoch. But to infer from this that they were destined always to remain a pre-scientific form of proposition would be to ignore the fact that philosophical problems not only arise but also *develop*. Such an approach is bound to lead to the metaphysical conception that philosophical problems are immutable and eternal. "The philosophers of all times and all nations have concerned themselves with the same problems," writes Heinrich Schmidt, the author of a philosophical dictionary well known in the West.[1] This traditional view is intimately connected with the idealist juxtaposition of philosophy to the socio-histor-

[1] H. Schmidt, *Philosophisches Wörterbuch*, Stuttgart, 1957, S. 459.

ical process, to the sciences and practice. This view of philosophy and the juxtaposition it implies are not merely an idealist fantasy; they are a reflection of the real, objective appearance of the historical process. They therefore demand scientific analysis.

Kant assumed the *a priori* nature of the basic philosophical problems, that is to say, he believed them to be originally inherent in reason and an essential part of its specific content. But what may be *a priori* for one individual is *a posteriori* for the human history that precedes his appearance in the world. Kant attached no importance to the *development* of philosophy: for him the basic philosophical problems were to be found (*cut and dried, moreover*) in the work of Plato and, like Plato, he called them *ideas.* He did, however, add that they were *ideas of human reason,* which of course, contradicts Platonism.[1] Consequently Kant significantly altered the approach to the problems that he found in Plato, not to mention the fact that he enriched philosophy with new problems that were alien to Platonism in that they were related to the development of the natural science of modern times. This

[1] Characteristically Kant did not include in his conception of fundamental philosophical problems the problems of the theory of knowledge which formed the backbone of his own teaching. This was because he regarded epistemological inquiry merely as prolegomena to the new, transcendental metaphysics which he sought to erect on the basis of philosophical criticism. For this reason Kant failed to understand the historical prospects of development of epistemological problems in philosophy. He imagined that he had succeeded in posing and solving all epistemological problems, a belief which he acquired not so much from self-esteem as from his unhistorical approach to the history of philosophical problems.

example shows that it is possible to clarify the concept of the eternal philosophical problem, which is usually accepted quite uncritically by the idealists.

The problem of the unity of the world, the problem of the rational and the sensual, the problem of man, the problem of freedom, like many other philosophical problems, may indeed be described in a certain sense as eternal. The process of the cognition of the world has no limits and the problem of the unity of the world will never be complete and incapable of further change and development. For as long as man exists the problem of man will retain its actuality and any solution to it will remain as incomplete as the history of mankind itself. Even the definition of man as a being distinct from all other beings will always remain a problem, because it is man who gives himself these definitions and he will go on defining himself forever. Hence we are entitled to describe some of the fundamental philosophical problems as eternal in the sense that they always retain their significance for man, for humanity, and for the history of cognition. In every historical epoch the propounding of these problems implies not merely the continuation of an existing tradition but also the discovery of new horizons.

On the other hand, there are no eternal problems in the sense in which the idealist philosopher, metaphysical or agnostic, interprets them. There are no problems independent of history. There are no immutable problems whose content remains forever one and the same despite the changes occurring in history; there are no insoluble problems. The latter point should be particularly stressed because the problem of the unity

of the world, the problem of man, and all other eternal problems acquire fresh solutions in every historical epoch according to the level of knowledge that has been achieved and the character of social change. Subsequent development is at one and the same time the development of eternal problems and their historically defined (and hence inevitably limited) solutions. Eternal problems have their own history; they do not merely change but are actually transformed.

To be able to understand the specific nature of philosophical problems one must take fully into consideration their historical transformation, owing to which *transient philosophical problems* arise alongside problems that retain their eternal significance. Thus, for example, in the ancient Chinese teaching of "Tao" and in Heraclitus's "logos" we have no difficulty in perceiving the original naive statement of the problem of a universal law governing all existence, an approach that had not yet freed itself of religious notions. Universal law here means a *single* law of absolute necessity holding sway over everything, and not various types of interconnection constituting *various* laws. How does this naive notion differ from the religious idea of eternal and immutable fate? The history of philosophy has not yet fully investigated this question, but in Heraclitus, for example, it differs in so far as "logos" coincides with a natural process, i.e., with fire, in which case "logos" becomes a law immanent in nature and not something dominating nature from the outside. But does there exist any law that may be applied to everything? Here we come to the historical definiteness of the problem.

The development of the scientific conception of law is related to the discovery of definite laws

in certain fields of activity. Archimedes' law provides a good example illustrating the evolution of the scientific conception of law. The specialised sciences have proved by their discoveries that there are countless laws governing various phenomena, that these laws bear definite relations to one another, some of a more and others of a less general nature. There is no *one* law for all phenomena. The discoveries of the specialised sciences prove that it is naive to believe in any one universal law, but they themselves create a basis for a new scientific propounding of the question of the nature of laws, the most general laws of development of all that exists, the distinction between laws of social development and laws of nature, and so on.

The present author believes that the problem of a *single law* is a historically transient problem of philosophy, despite the fact that it constantly recurs in the philosophy of modern times. This does not mean, however, that the problem of one, universal law is a pseudoproblem, because it incorporates (even in the naive form in which it was originally stated) the idea of most general laws, an idea which admittedly has become established in philosophy only thanks to the dialectical negation of its pre-scientific prototype.

Problems that are in a certain sense eternal and also problems that are transient do not enter into philosophy at all stages of its development. It has already been shown that early Greek philosophy had no notion of social progress. The idea was equally unknown to medieval philosophers. This problem was able to gain a place in philosophy only when the constantly accelerating expansion of social production became the dominant economic tendency of social development, that is

to say, in the age of the early bourgeois revolutions.

Ancient philosophy, right up to the Hellenic period, did not in effect concern itself with the problem of freedom, which is one of the major philosophical problems. Aristotle draws a distinction between voluntary and involuntary human action, but does not discuss the essence of the problem.

The problem of alienation, which is central to German classical philosophy, plays no significant part in any previous philosophies. It is true that the seeds of the idea of alienation may be perceived in Plato's doctrine of the soul languishing in the human body, in the Platonic conception of things as a corrupted form of transcendental ideas, in the neo-Platonic theory of emanation, in the scholastic interpretation of the legend of original sin, and so on. Essentially, however, the idea of alienation is a product of modern times. The theories of natural law, current in the 17th and 18th centuries, treat of the alienation of everyone's right to everything in favour of the state. But this is still not the problem of alienation, even in its legal aspect, because the essence of the question is reduced to the legal restriction of arbitrary action in the interests of the individual, restriction of the arbitrary action that is inseparable from man's "natural" state, alien to civilisation.

In Fichte's doctrine the concept of alienation is used to analyse the relationship between the opposing "Ego" and "non-Ego". The absolute subject generates a reality that opposes it and at the same time constitutes a necessary condition for its activity. These ontological and epistemological aspects of the concept of alienation still do not express its essential social content. It is

only Hegel who in analysing social development discloses the actual historical content of the problem of alienation, although it is at once obscured by the idealist identification of alienation with the dialectical process in general: the dichotomy of unity, contradiction, the unity and contradiction between subject and object, and so on.

Feuerbach rejects the idealist universalisation of the concept of alienation, limiting the sphere of application of this concept to religious and speculative philosophical consciousness. Kierkegaard, who subjects Hegel's panlogism to irrationalist criticism, treats the problem of alienation as a problem of the transience of all that is human, burdened, as it is, with wickedness, original sin and the wilfulness of existing in the face of an infinitely distant and unknowable God. This subjectivist conception of alienation as the essence of everyday existence has been further developed in existentialism.

In his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* Marx places the problem of alienation on a fundamentally new basis. He gives an all-round criticism of the speculative-idealist and also of the anthropological conceptions, enriches the problem with a specific historical, economic and political content, reveals its material sources and proves its historically transient character.

I have touched very briefly upon the history of the problem of alienation, whose significance in the philosophical doctrines of the 19th and 20th centuries is quite obvious, merely to show how a new philosophical problem comes into being.[1]

[1] I have made a special study of the problem of alienation in the following works: *The Formation of the Phi-*

This problem actually acquired tangible shape only in modern times and has retained its significance because alienation is still a social reality which can be overcome only through the communist transformation of social relations. Despite the traditional historico-philosophical view, we maintain that the key to the understanding of philosophical problems is to be found only in the dialectical materialist analysis of their emergence, development and transformation into other problems. It would be an oversimplification to ignore the fact that one and the same name quite often conceals problems that are entirely different.

Of course, if we interpret the embryonic form of existence of philosophical problems in the spirit of preformationism, we shall have no difficulty in concluding that the philosophers of Ancient Greece were already posing modern philosophical problems. However, it is enough to compare the discussion of what are formally the same problems in the philosophy of various historical epochs to realise that these problems differ essentially from one another. Thus, for example, what the ancient philosophers have to say about the soul as a peculiarly delicate form of matter may formally be regarded as the first positing of the question of the relationship between the spiritual and the material. In reality, however, the problem is only touched upon and Engels had every reason to emphasise that this fundamental philosophical question "could for the first time be (put forward) in its whole acuteness, could achieve its full significance, only after

losophy of Marxism, Moscow, 1962, and *The Problem of Alienation and the Bourgeois Legend of Marxism*, Moscow, 1965.

humanity in Europe had awakened from the long hibernation of the Christian Middle Ages".[1] The same may be said of many other philosophical problems.

Some contemporary philosophers counterpose to the metaphysical conception of immutable philosophical problems a historico-philosophical relativism which maintains that there are no intransient problems at all, because each great philosopher has his own problems and it is this that lends his teaching its permanent significance. The most resolute defender of this subjectivist interpretation of the history of philosophical problems is the Paul Ricoeur we mentioned earlier, who declares that it is the task of the historian of philosophy "to launch a direct attack on the idea of eternal problems, of problems that are immutable".[2] Ricoeur presents intransient problems as immutable problems, which is of course an oversimplified approach.

The point of departure of Ricoeur's historico-philosophical conception is the notion that philosophy is a specific expression of the unique existential originality of the philosophical genius.

From this standpoint every attempt to typify or classify philosophical problems is presented as the result of an oversimplified view of philosophy and a failure to comprehend the fundamental difference between philosophical knowledge and scientific knowledge, in which answers are alleged to be far more significant than questions and to have the more value the less they reflect the investigator's individuality. Philosophy, on the

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, 1970, Vol. 3, p. 346.

[2] P. Ricoeur, *Histoire et vérité*, Paris, 1955, p. 61.

other hand, is the realm of self-validating human subjectivity, which rejects the formula "I possess truth" in favour of the belief "I hope to exist in truth". For this reason every outstanding philosophical system is grounded in the conviction that "if my existence has any meaning, if it is not for nothing, this must mean that I hold a place in life that invites me to pose a question which no one in my place has ever posed before".[1] It would be absurd to deny the greatness of the philosopher who poses a question that nobody has posed before him. But why should we deny the greatness of the philosopher who solves the problems that his forerunners propounded? Simply because, according to the contemporary idealist "philosophy of the history of philosophy" (one of whose representatives is Paul Ricoeur), philosophy does not solve questions, but merely propounds them.

The essence of this conception lies not merely in the admission that philosophical problems are insoluble. The contemporary idealist "philosophy of the history of philosophy", by formulating new criteria of the value of philosophical knowledge, also seeks to pose questions that no one has ever posed before, and chief among these problems is the question whether philosophical problems do not belong to a category of problems that should not be solved but only discussed, elucidated and explained. Is not the very attempt to solve a philosophical problem tantamount to forgetting the specific nature of philosophical problems, confusing them with the problems of the specialised sciences? In the specialised sciences it is possible to possess knowledge, but philosophy is

[1] P. Ricoeur, op cit., p. 65.

merely the hope of *existing* in truth. Ricoeur's propositions remind one of the reasoning of the religious person who dares not believe in the possibility of attaining divine wisdom which, though expressed in Scriptures, nevertheless remains unknowable.[1]

But philosophy is not theological wisdom. Philosophy poses and solves problems, and if its solutions later require development or revision, this by no means discredits them.

Lenin wrote, "The genius of Marx consists precisely in his having furnished answers to questions already raised by the foremost minds of mankind."[2] This did not, of course, prevent Marx from posing new questions which no one had posed before him. On the contrary, Marx was able to pose new questions also, because he had solved the problems posed by his predecessors.

To sum up on this question, we may conclude that the qualitative difference between the problems of philosophy and those of the specialised sciences is relative, like all other differences incidentally. Metaphysical absolutisation of this difference leads to scientifically unfounded con-

[1] This modification of the Socratic "I know that I know nothing" is specially substantiated in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Éloge de la philosophie* (Praise of Philosophy). "What the philosopher does is to move ceaselessly from knowledge to ignorance, and from ignorance to knowledge, achieving in this motion a kind of rest...." (M. Merleau-Ponty, *Éloge de la philosophie et autres essais*, Paris, 1965, p. 11.) It is not hard to see that this conception of philosophy reflects a disillusionment with philosophy and at the same time an apology for the intellectual anarchy reigning in contemporary bourgeois philosophical studies.

[2] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 23.

ceptions regarding the immutability of philosophical problems or equally unfounded conceptions implying that problems have no objective meaning. Both views are equally one-sided and fail to recognise the diversity of philosophical problems and their development.

As we have already seen, philosophical problems are originally formed out of people's everyday experience. Thanks to the development of the specialised sciences and theoretical explanation of human history the scope of philosophy undergoes substantial change and is enriched with new problems concerning the natural and social sciences. Idealist philosophy ignores this tendency or, as in the case of neo-positivism, interprets it in the spirit of nihilistic repudiation of the objective content of philosophical problems in general. No one can understand these problems correctly who sees only a yawning chasm between the sciences and philosophy and makes no effort to bridge it.

Chapter Six
THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF PHILOSOPHY

1. THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF PHILOSOPHY AS A PROBLEM

The point of departure in the study of any science is the definition of its subject-matter, that is to say, the elucidation of what basic questions it sets out to solve. This is not to be confused with the definition of subject-matter provided at the beginning of a textbook for the beginner, to whom any such definition will for some time appear incomprehensible and somewhat formal because he does not yet know the basic concepts, categories and departments of the science in question and its connection with other, related sciences. The definition of the subject-matter of a science has quite a different and far deeper meaning for those who have already mastered its problems and gained a notion of its history and methods of inquiry, since they will understand its place in the system of knowledge and realise that this place cannot be retained forever permanent and unchanged. When studying a science we become aware of the changes which its subject-matter has undergone in the course of historical development and understand the inev-

itability of discussion of this subject-matter among people who specialise in that particular science. Such discussion is essential to the development of science and takes place not because scientists do not know what they are doing, what they are investigating, or what they are teaching.

The scientific definition of the subject-matter of any science cannot, of course, be the starting point of its actual historical development, since such a definition becomes possible only at a relatively advanced stage of its development and is the summing up, the generalisation of the path travelled and the results achieved. Thus, for example, the scientific definition of the subject-matter of political economy as a science investigating the laws of social production and the distribution of material goods at various stages of social development was provided only by Marx, although political economy had existed as a science as far back as the 17th century.

The definition of the subject-matter of any science entails considerable difficulty also because it is by no means sufficient merely to indicate the objects that it investigates; it is essential to explain on what basis these objects have been chosen as the subject-matter of the given science. Further, it is essential to define these chosen objects of inquiry as being qualitatively different from others and consequently excluded from the frame of reference of the given science.[1] These

[1] Definition of subject-matter is seen to be important even in sciences that are largely empirical and which do not so much define as simply record their subject of inquiry. P. N. Pilatov points out that the selection and definition of such a subject as the steppes presents considerable difficulties. And yet the area covered by steppe in the USSR depends on how the concept of steppe is defined.

definitions and explanations concerning the subject of inquiry should not, however, be allowed to restrict the possibilities of scientific development, which brings to light targets of investigation that had not been previously envisaged but which, once discovered, have to be included in the subject-matter of the science, even if its definition specifically excludes these targets. In such cases the definition has to be revised in the interest of the further development of the science. In other words, the definition of the subject-matter of any science should remain open and should take into consideration its prospects of development, that is to say, it should not only point out what it is investigating but should also indicate possible or probable directions of inquiry. So, any definition of the subject-matter of a science is necessarily approximate and should remain so because the range of questions that it investigates is bound to change. The boundaries of possible change in the subject-matter of a science are determined by its specific nature, its place in the system of scientific knowledge, and the demands of social practice.

If we take a science like biology, we see that it would have been possible about one hundred and fifty years ago to indicate the visible, immediately definable objects of its inquiry, as animals and plants. Accordingly, biology consisted of two main scientific disciplines, zoology and botany, each of which could be broken down into the disciplines subordinate to it, whose subject-matter could be defined without any special difficulty: ornithology, entomology, ichthyology,

Some scientists, for instance, hold that there are 4 million sq km of steppe while others put the figure at 1.6 million.

anatomy, morphology, etc. As biology developed it acquired new disciplines. The study of the microscopic structure of plants led to plant anatomy, then came the theory of evolution (Darwinism), to be followed later by genetics. New means of observation made possible microbiology. The application of chemical and physical methods of research to biological processes laid the foundations of biological chemistry, biological physics, molecular biology, bionics, etc. Today it would be more correct to define biology not merely as a science, but as a system of sciences, each with its own specific subject-matter. This does not negate the unity of biological knowledge, but it does indicate the relative independence of its major branches, its diversity and range. Biology could, of course, be defined as a complex science, but it is not really a matter of terms but of being aware of the fact of the differentiation, the splitting up of its subject-matter. Many sciences are characterised by a similar versatility of inquiry at the present stage. From this standpoint it would be correct to speak of the components of the subject-matter of any science that had become significantly developed, just as Lenin does in characterising the components of Marxism.

Unlike biology, mathematics investigates objects whose presence cannot be directly recorded because they are not really objects but their idealised spatial forms and quantitative relationships. Engels pointed out that, in order to become mathematical objects, real objects and their relationships must assume an "extremely abstract form".[1] Like logic, mathematics abstracts itself from the content and this abstraction, which is

[1] F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 52.

justified by the fact that what it studies is specifically relationships that have a universal and necessary significance, constitutes the basic prerequisite for its existence as a science which does not rely on observation and experiment but achieves new conclusions and discoveries by purely logical means. "The subject-matter of mathematics," A. D. Alexandrov points out, "is composed of the forms and relationships of reality which objectively possess such a degree of indifference to content that they may be completely abstracted and defined in general form with sufficient clarity, accuracy and wealth of relationships to serve as the basis for a purely logical development of theory. If such relations and forms are called quantitative in the general sense of the term, it may be stated briefly that the subject-matter of mathematics is quantitative relationships and forms taken in their pure state."[1]

As we know, the fact that mathematics takes quantitative forms and relations in their pure state has been idealistically interpreted by some philosophers as meaning that the subject-matter of mathematics is an *a priori* construction without any relation to any empirically definable reality. Without going into these subjectivist interpretations of the subject-matter of mathematics at length, we would merely emphasise that they are epistemologically connected with the peculiarities of mathematics itself, with the difference between it and those sciences in which theoretical conclusions are based on the analysis of empirical data and may be experimentally tested.

[1] A. D. Alexandrov, "A General View on Mathematics", in *Mathematics, Its Content, Method and Significance*, Moscow, 1956, p. 68 (in Russian).

It should also be noted that the speculative character of mathematics, like the unlimited possibilities for its application in other sciences, has led some philosophers and mathematicians to infer that mathematics does not have any particular subject of inquiry that may be singled out from the whole diversity of reality, but is rather a universal method of investigating the subject-matter of any science. Karl Popper, for example, maintains that "pure mathematics and logic, consisting as they do of proofs, do not provide us with information about the world, but merely elaborate the means of its description".[1]

We have touched upon these aspects of biology and mathematics only to make it easier to find out what is investigated by philosophy. On the one hand, the targets of philosophical inquiry (nature, society, man, cognition, and so on) may be given approximately the same degree of empirical definition as the objects studied by biology. On the other hand, philosophy, as is shown by its whole history, is concerned with idealised forms of reality, abstract objects and categories, which quite often evoke doubts concerning the objective reality of their content. We have in mind not abstract objects such as the ideal gas in physics but, for instance, the monads of Leibnitz, Schopenhauer's universal will, and Schelling's absolute identity. For the materialist, we may be sure, all these are imaginary objects. But they cannot simply be discarded, because they are interpretations (albeit, idealist interpretations) of objective reality, of what actually exists, and consequently these imaginary objects are not meaningless; they

[1] K. Popper, *Open Society and Its Enemies*, Vol. II, London, 1945, p. 13.

have sufficient meaning to make a mystery of the actual subject of philosophical inquiry, which idealism cannot avoid. Thus, the subject-matter of philosophy is not easily established. It comes to light gradually as a result of historico-philosophical inquiry. So it is not enough to stop at delimiting the empirically stated, abstract and imaginary objects of philosophical inquiry because they are epistemologically all connected with one another. Inasmuch as it becomes the subject of philosophical inquiry nature is not only that which is empirically given and capable of being perceived by the senses. Philosophy analyses the system of categories expressing nature: substance, matter, motion, space, time, unity, essence, phenomenon, law, necessity, etc. The subject of philosophical inquiry thus emerges as a system of categories.

The distinction between concrete and abstract objects of inquiry in philosophy is the distinction between the theoretically abstract and the theoretically concrete. Any objects exist for philosophy in a logically generalised form because philosophy studies the specific forms of universality, specific in the sense that they entail the most general definitions of nature, society, cognition, man's personal life, and so on. Categories are scientific abstractions, most general concepts, which may have quite different meanings in various philosophical doctrines. One has only to compare the materialist understanding of sensation as reflection of the external world with the subjective idealist proposition of Ernst Mach on sensations as "elements" of reality. Categories, however, are not simply forms of thought. They also reflect essential aspects of objective reality in which, apart from thought, there exist causality, necessity, law, essence, and so on.

There are certain philosophical doctrines which interpret the category of essence as a meaningless fiction. According to Wittgenstein, "...there is only *logical* necessity"[1]. Pre-Marxist materialism usually denied the objectivity of chance. Contemporary irrationalism regards the concept of objective law as a "scientific prejudice". Existentialism discards general scientific categories as well as those that are accepted by most philosophical doctrines, substituting for them such categories as fear, anxiety and the absurd. Moreover, each of these categories is given a meaning that differs from the generally accepted. So, examination of the subject-matter of philosophy as a system of categories does not reveal an object of inquiry common to all philosophical doctrines, although it does indicate some of the object's essentially common features.

Characterising the subject-matter of philosophy as that which is concrete in reality and becomes abstract in philosophical speculation, as that which is concrete in philosophy and can become so only thanks to the synthesis of various definitions and categories, we arrive at the conclusion that these concrete-abstract objects of philosophical inquiry are not always real objects, independent of consciousness (the analysis of idealist philosophy makes this quite plain), and they are to be understood primarily as problems in the sense suggested in the previous chapter.[2] This conclusion would

1 L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, p. 181.

2 It is not hard to show that in any science the subject of inquiry, since it is singled out from the totality of other subjects and draws the attention of the investigator, is understood by means of a series of questions to which the investigator tries to supply answers. At the beginning of the 18th century Friedrich Wöhler, believing

appear to be unavoidable since when analysing any philosophical doctrine a general notion of the subject-matter of philosophy is completely inadequate for elucidation of the subject-matter of that particular doctrine. From this standpoint the subject-matter of philosophy is a totality of problems formed on the basis of everyday and historical, individual and universal experience, science and practice. There is not one philosophical system that embraces all these problems. Even those of an encyclopaedic character are bound to restrict themselves to a certain range of questions, excluding certain problems that played a significant part in a previous philosophy and sometimes attaching special importance to certain questions (or one particular question) that have not previously received much attention. Philosophical doctrines that do not claim to be encyclopaedic or reject in principle the possibility of encyclopaedic philosophical systems usually give pride of place to one particular philosophical problem, subordinating others to it or even rejecting them

that organic substances were compounds of chemical elements existing in inanimate nature, posed the question of whether it would be possible to create organic matter from the elements discovered in it by chemical analysis. The answer to this question was the synthesis of urea. This is a purely hypothetical example and I have no intention of implying that Wöhler posed the question in exactly this form. All I wish to do is to bring out the logic of the discovery, since it was not arrived at by chance. The definition of the subject-matter of science (and philosophy) as its problems does not, in our view, contain an atom of subjectivism, although it does emphasise the subjective side of scientific research by suggesting that the scientist himself determines the subject of his inquiry, limiting or expanding it as he chooses. This point has to be particularly stressed because cognitive activity includes the posing of problems and cannot therefore be reduced to investigation of that which is given from outside.

altogether, that is to say, selecting a relatively narrow range of philosophical themes. Such are William James's treatment of the problem of truth, the problem of the human individual in philosophical anthropology, the problem of language in contemporary English analytical philosophy, and so on. However, within the framework of the basic, specialised theme an attempt is usually made to examine, admittedly from a certain angle, and, as a rule, one-sidedly, all the problems of philosophy. Hence the restriction of philosophical problems becomes no more than a means of solving an unrestricted range of philosophical problems. This restriction or, in other words, selection of problems, which a philosopher performs, significantly characterises the direction of the doctrine he creates. However, in any science the investigator is compelled to confine himself to certain definite problems, but in philosophy this is mainly a matter not of specialisation but of the basic world view that is assumed.

The fact that philosophical doctrines differ not only in how they solve certain questions but also in *what* questions they pose has profound historical causes. Philosophical problems do not arise simultaneously in a particular epoch; they take shape, develop, and are transformed in the course of the development of society, philosophy and the sciences. V. F. Asmus writes of the uneven development of philosophical problems: "In different countries, in different stages of their history and among different philosophers, we do not find the same range of questions or identical, equally thorough elaboration of them."[1]

[1] V. F. Asmus, "Some Problems of the Dialectics of the Historico-Philosophical Process and Its Cognition" in *Problems of Philosophy*, 1961, No. 4, p. 118.

This unevenness of emergence and development of certain philosophical problems does not depend on the arbitrary will of individual thinkers, for in choosing certain problems or discovering new problems they express the demand of the time, the level of knowledge already achieved, and so on.

Consequently this indicates that the subject-matter of philosophy changes according to objective conditions.

It is not only philosophy that changes. Any science changes, because it, too, develops and is subordinated to the general laws of the process of development. Not every new discovery indicates a change in the subject-matter of the given science. If this were so, it would be changing at a great rate all the time. A change in the subject-matter of a particular science should be understood as a radical, fundamental change in the whole range of its problems and also its methods of research. The introduction of alternating quantity into mathematics in connection with the discovery of analytical geometry, and also the differential and integral calculus, provides a convincing example of how the subject-matter of a science actually changes. As Engels noted, this became a turning point in the development of mathematics, because up to this time mathematics had been a science of constant quantities.[1]

[1] The further development of mathematics has also entailed change of subject-matter. This is pointed out by A. N. Kolmogorov: "Both as a result of the internal demands of mathematics and also of the new requirements of science, the circle of quantitative relations and spatial forms investigated by mathematics has greatly expanded: it now comprises relations existing between elements of the arbitrary group, vectors, operators in functional spaces, the whole variety of forms of spaces of any number of

Another, equally striking example is the revolution in physics caused by the discovery of radioactivity, the electron, the special theory of relativity, and so on.

The changes in the subject-matter of science in the course of its historical development naturally make it particularly difficult to define. People sometimes protest that the objects investigated by science, by physics, for example, have not changed throughout its existence. But did physics previously study the microcosm, the elementary particles, etc.? All this has come into the subject-matter of physics as it has developed. Hence it is clear that increasingly profound knowledge of objective reality brings to light new, hitherto unknown objects of investigation, as a result of which the subject-matter of the given science changes. Consequently, science itself takes part in the process of change of its subject of inquiry, which in such cases should be understood not only as something objective and existing independent of science, but also as the circle, the system of questions with which science deals, the latter being organically connected with the former. This means that the change in the subject-matter of science is a special kind of cognitive, objectively conditioned process taking place in the sphere of reflection of objective reality.

Change in the subject of inquiry is therefore not something peculiar to philosophy. This is a general law of the development of scientific knowledge. But the development of philosophy differs qualitatively from the analogous process

dimensions, and so on." (A. N. Kolmogorov, "Mathematics", an article in *Big Soviet Encyclopedia* [Second Edition], Vol. 26, p. 476 [in Russian].)

in physics, biology and mathematics. In philosophy we have not only changes in the subject of inquiry but also a perpetual controversy as to what this subject is (or should be). We have a quest for its subject of inquiry and various, sometimes diametrically opposed conceptions of this subject.

There was perhaps not a single prominent philosopher in the pre-Marxist period who did not claim to have revolutionised philosophy. Not without reason, for instance, the historians of philosophy speak of the Cartesian revolution. Kant believed his doctrine to be a Copernican turning-point in philosophy. Any number of examples could be given. But it is essential, of course, to distinguish between real revolutions in philosophy and philosophical declarations to this effect, that is to say, between the objective content of the historico-philosophical process and its subjective form of expression. The "revolution in philosophy" which the British neo-positivists write about in a collective work of this title, is rather just another palace revolution in the history of positivism. It is quite obvious, however, that the stop-go effect in the historico-philosophical process has a different quality from what we find in the history of the specialised sciences. So, while noting the specific nature of the philosophical form of knowledge, of philosophical problems, many of which are examined by all philosophical theories, and the general definability according to world view, common to all philosophical doctrines, we believe that it would be wrong to infer that the subject of philosophical inquiry was integrated in all periods of history. The existence of certain general problems in ancient Greek philosophy, in the philosophy of modern times and in Marxist-

Leninist philosophy does not by any means prove that the subject-matter of philosophy was one and the same in all these periods.[1]

We said earlier that every philosophical doctrine implies a specific world view, and that herein lies the objective unity of philosophical knowledge, which in principle has nothing to do with the fact that a considerable number of philosophers do not regard their philosophy (or philosophy in general) as a world view. Naturally the question arises as to whether this methodological approach (delimitation of the objective content and subjective form of expression) may be applied to the question of the subject-matter of philosophy as well. Is not the subject of inquiry basically the same in all philosophical doctrines? We maintain that the answer to this question can only be No, because the subject of inquiry, the objects of study, are *consciously* selected by the investigator within the framework of the field of knowledge in which he is working. Since philosophy is not

[1] Strictly speaking there is no such unity even in the history of the specialised sciences since the changes in the subject of their inquiry over the centuries inevitably entail qualitative differences that show that the changed subject of inquiry is not what it was before, that it is becoming or has already become something different. In another case the change of subject of inquiry is restricted by unjustifiably narrow limits, whereas the introduction of new departments in any specialised science and the multiplication of new objects of investigation are a clear indication that the subject-matter of that science has altered. It may not have altered completely, of course, because it will still retain its connection with the previous development of knowledge, but this connection should not be interpreted as unity of the subject of inquiry, because the science in question has passed on to a new range of questions that it neither posed nor attempted to solve in the past.

concerned with specialised questions, this selection of subject-matter, if it does not turn out to be in fact only a new interpretation of what is already accepted, is bound to be (to some degree) a venturing beyond the bounds of its field of study.

The most scrupulous investigation of pragmatism, personalism, structuralism, philosophical anthropology and many other philosophical doctrines offers no grounds whatever for the conclusion that these doctrines study the most general laws of development, as the philosophy of Marxism does. Failure to appreciate the fundamental difference in subject-matter between Marxist philosophy and other philosophical doctrines undoubtedly detracts from the essence of the revolution in philosophy brought about by Marxism.

Since philosophy, however much it may change, still remains philosophy, the proposition that the subject-matter of philosophy changes qualitatively in the process of its development presupposes acknowledgement not only of the specific nature of the philosophical form of knowledge but also the specific nature of the objective content of the various philosophical doctrines. This fact, which is characteristic of the problems of philosophy, makes it possible to determine the limits within which the subject-matter of philosophy changes and also that which is common to the subject-matter of various philosophical theories. This common ground may be defined as the fundamental themes of philosophy, and it is by investigating these fundamental themes that we are able to prevent the metaphysical opposition of certain philosophical doctrines to others.

2. FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHICAL THEMES

In the cosmological meditations of the ancient philosophers, particularly the materialists, we discover the first fundamental theme of philosophy—the problem of absolute reality, independent of man (and mankind), upon which man depends and which is boundless, intransient, and infinitely exceeds his strength. Heraclitus said: "The world, which embraces everything and is not contingent with any other worlds or any creator, was not created by any of the gods or people; it has always existed and will exist forever as living fire, now flaring up, now dying down."[1] Greek mythology depicted the world bounded by the limited geographical notions of the ancients as having been wrought out of chaos by the might of the god titans, who in their original form were animistic personifications of the spontaneous forces of nature. Philosophy breaks with these notions and the first materialists try to explain the world out of itself, to replace the supernatural forces incomprehensible to the thinking person by natural, generally observable processes and phenomena. The original materialist conception of the world's unity, of the prime cause, and of the primordial matter from which all things were created, implies nothing more than a desire to understand the natural connection and the interdependence of phenomena, and thus exclude the religious notions of supernatural beings. Of course,

[1] A. O. Makovelsky, *Pre-Socratics*, p. 152. In citing this proposition of Heraclitus's, Lenin adds a remark that is highly significant from the historico-philosophical point of view: "A very good exposition of the principles of dialectical materialism" (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 349).

the idea of the prime cause and primordial matter is not scientific but, if we remember that what is meant is not the beginning of the world in time but only the general basis (and source) of the diversity of individual things, it becomes clear that this original proposition does not contradict the fundamental materialist contention and contains a profound dialectical insight into the unity of the finite and the infinite, the transient and the eternal, the individual and the general.

In our day philosophy, in so far as it rests on natural science, does not claim to create its own special picture of the universe; it proceeds from the natural scientific picture of the world and explains, interprets and generalises this picture by means of philosophical categories, drawing conclusions that are at any rate not directly implied in the data of natural science and at the same time do not contradict them. We have in mind, of course, materialist philosophy, since idealism, even in its scientifical form, rejects the idea of explaining nature out of nature itself and quite often refuses to admit that it exists apart from human consciousness.

Thus even today, just as at the dawn of civilisation, the first question that the philosophically minded person asks himself is: What is the world in which we live and which we think we more or less know? What is it that we do not know, but that undoubtedly exists—unless, of course, we hold the view that what we do not know does not exist? Is this unknown, this thing that is not yet known but that nevertheless exists, something more or less resembling that which exists and which we know? Or is it so different that the knowledge we have already acquired will not help us at all to comprehend it?

Already in ancient philosophy we find many answers to these and other similar questions. The ancient Greek materialists proceed from a sensorily perceived picture of the world and in this respect differ little from the scientists of modern times, who have at their disposal far more extensive sensory data and thanks to the development of theoretical knowledge have been able to analyse these data critically. The ancient materialists do not consider the sensorily perceived picture of the world to be exhaustive. On the contrary, they set out to discover what is not directly perceivable by the senses but may be discovered on the basis of sensory data by means of ratiocination, by inference. This is how the questions of the first cause, elements, homoeomeries, atoms, the essence of the sensorily perceived world in general, the ideas of the multiplicity of worlds, of the infinity and unity of the Universe, and so on, have arisen. Even those materialists who regard primordial matter or elements as sensorily given reach this conclusion by means of inferences because it does not directly follow from the fact of a definite sensorily given matter that it is primordial, or that it forms an essential component of all that exists. This matter must be singled out from the great diversity of sensorily given phenomena and proof must be furnished of its peculiar role in nature. It is in connection with attempts to classify sensorily perceived phenomena, to establish relations of similarity and dissimilarity, coordination and subordination between them, that the basic category characteristics of objective reality are formed, such as being, becoming, identity and difference, the unity of opposites, the individual and the general, the single and the many, essence and phenomenon, necessity, form and content, or

matter. The philosophical categories are expressed in the words of the natural, everyday language, which gradually accrete meanings extending beyond ordinary everyday usage. Thus the word "being" in the teaching of Parmenides has the meaning of category, since it refers not to everything that exists, but rather to that which fundamentally differs from sensorily perceived reality.

The philosophical doctrines of ancient times, diverging from the original spontaneous materialism, interpret what cannot be sensorily perceived, the general, the essential, as radically opposed to the evidence of the senses, thus preparing the ground for the idealist teaching on the dual nature of existence, mundane and transcendental. To the idea of the unity of the infinite diversity of the phenomena of nature, which in its original form is synonymous with the materialist world view, Plato's idealism counterposes the doctrine of the fundamental opposition between the sensual reality and the reality that cannot be perceived by the senses but is theoretically conceivable. Moreover, the reality perceived by the senses is interpreted as something generated by a higher, transcendental, incorporeal reality. Thus, there arises the idea of the fundamental opposition between the general and the particular, the material and the ideal, the idealist devaluation of sensorily perceived reality as something untrue and unreal although existing. Epistemologically, this propounding of the question is a metaphysical opposition of theoretical knowledge to the empirical, of concepts to sensory data, of words to individual objects. The higher thing, the key factor, in the process of cognition is interpreted ontologically, and in place of the naive mythology that made no claim to explain the world theoreti-

cally there arises a theoretically substantiated, idealist myth-making. This is particularly obvious in the teaching of Plato, who not only reproduces the ancient myths, but also makes wide use of them to explain the idealist conception of the Universe. Thus, already in ancient times we are confronted with an irreconcilable opposition between the two basic philosophical views of nature, of the world as a whole, and of the external world.

One of the great ideas bequeathed by the ancients to the philosophy of subsequent ages is the idea of substance, which is a collective concept embracing, besides the ordinary notion of the necessity of that on which everything "depends", the scientific principle of explaining the world out of itself, the principle of the unity in all the diversity of existence, the idea of the unity of the general, the particular and the individual, and the notion of universal necessity, causality, and so on.

"The logical idea of substance," writes Ernst Cassirer, "is in general paramount to the scientific view of the world; historically it is a divide between investigation and myth.... The attempt to infer the diversity of sensual reality from a single primary substance implies a universal demand which—no matter how imperfect in its first attempts—is a characteristic expression of the new mode of thought and the new posing of questions."[1] While correctly stressing the significance of the problem of substance as forming the central point of the first basic "cosmic" theme of philosophy, Cassirer, like Kant, interprets substance only as a subjective logical concept with the aid of which the seeker after knowledge constructs the

[1] E. Cassirer, *Substanzbegriff und Functionsbegriff*, Berlin, 1910, S. 200.

world out of sensory data. The problem of the world as such, existing outside and independent of human consciousness, a world unencompassable, inexhaustible and spontaneous, although governed by certain laws, is replaced by the problem of the oneness of human knowledge. This belittling of objective reality that is characteristic of idealism commits to oblivion the most important philosophical generalisation of ancient times.

The European Middle Ages, whose dominant idea was the Christian notion of an almighty creator of a finite world, that is to say, a world limited in space and time, was unable to make any essential contribution to the philosophical doctrine of substance, since these religious postulates excluded the original content of the problem that awaited its further development. The scholastic idea of a multiplicity of substances created by God reduced the concept of substance to an empirical conception of qualitatively changeless forms and generic essences. It is therefore no accident that the anti-feudal philosophy of the age of early bourgeois revolutions set up in opposition to the scholastic conception of the contingency of the world the great idea of the substantiality of nature. This idea was essentially proved by Descartes, despite the dualistic nature of his philosophy. "*Descartes* in his *physics*," Marx and Engels observe, "endowed *matter* with self-creative power and conceived *mechanical* motion as the act of its life. He completely separated his *physics* from his *metaphysics*. *Within* his physics *matter* is the only *substance*, the only basis of being and of knowledge."[1] The tendency that emerged in Descartes attained its brilliant culmi-

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Holy Family*, p. 169.

nation in the materialist doctrines of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The scholastic idea of the contingency, the chance nature of the world, inseparably connected as it is with creationism, with the notion of the spatial and temporal finitude of nature, was discredited by the heliocentric world view, which overthrew the conventional picture of the world that appeared to be consistent with everyday experience and also had the sanction of Biblical legend. Henceforth the earth was presented to man not as the centre of a finite Universe but as one of the planets in one of countless solar systems. Copernicus's heliocentric system and the conclusions that were drawn from it by Giordano Bruno and other philosophers revealed to human eyes the physical infinity of the material world and at the same time provided a new yardstick for measuring the processes at work on Earth.[1] This transformation of the question of infinity, which had previously confronted philosophers mainly in connection with the mathematical notions of the natural succession of numbers and infinite divisibility, signified, at least for the materialist (and consequently also for the natural scientific) world view, the merging of the problem

[1] M. A. Dynnik stresses the philosophical significance of the heliocentric doctrine: "The starting point, the inner secret and ultimate goal of Giordano Bruno's world view was the new man—the man of the Renaissance, who saw at the close of the medieval night the glow of the rising sun and turned his gaze upon the boundlessness of the Universe.... Bruno compares truth to the light of the sun. This comparison was particularly meaningful in the age of struggle for the new heliocentric understanding of the world and struggle against the old geocentric system" (M. A. Dynnik, "Man, Sun and Cosmos in Giordano Bruno's Philosophy" in *Problems of Philosophy*, 1966, No. 9).

of substance with the problem of the substantiality of nature, that is to say, a return, admittedly on a new, scientifically enriched basis, to the ancient notions of the infinite Universe which exists eternally and eternally generates an infinite diversity of phenomena.

From the hazy notions of a first cause and abstract, essentially tautological propositions (such as the famous "nothing comes from nothing") the materialist philosophy of the new age in the struggle against theology and idealist doctrines comes ever closer, thanks to the philosophical explanation of the discoveries of natural science, to the scientific propounding of the problem of objective reality. The substance which the naive philosophical consciousness of ancient times had conceived as the absolute prime substance comes to be regarded in the philosophy of the new age no longer as an absolute substance, as primordial matter on which the Universe "rests" or out of which it is created.

Spinoza's concept of nature as substance, as the cause of itself, opens up the splendid vista of the scientific and philosophical cognition of the material unity of the world. But Spinoza's substance lacked motion and activity. Leibnitz endowed substance with force. In fact, he turned it into a force, but idealistically counterposed it to an allegedly passive matter and, not daring to break with the theological interpretation of the Universe, regenerated the idea of pluralism of substances, which in turn involves acknowledgement of predetermined harmony.

Locke's criticism of the concept of substance is aimed against the idealist conception of the transcendental essence of things sensorily perceived. Locke rejects the purely speculative, rationalistic

notion of supersensual substance, because everything real, he maintains, can be registered on the basis of the evidence of the senses, observation and experiment. Locke's successors of the materialist school reduce the concept of substance to the concept of matter and, developing Spinoza's idea, formulate the major proposition on the self-motion of matter (John Toland and the French materialists of the 18th century).

The advocates of idealist sensualism (phenomenalism), on the contrary, discard the category of substance. Berkeley, for instance, dissolves the material world into man's sensations on the one hand, and on the other, seeks the absolute cause and basis of this world of sensations in God. In place of an incomprehensible, undiscoverable supernatural essence objective idealism tries to set up "universal reason", as allegedly inherent in nature and expressing itself ultimately in man, in human history. According to Hegel, substance is the all-embracing dialectical unity of the subject and object, absolute thought forming both nature and man, the unity of opposites, and the universal process of motion, change and development. Therefore, Hegel says, substance must be regarded not only as the beginning but also as the result of the development of reality. This speculative conception is the idealist-dialectical interpretation of the universality and essentiality of the process of development, which is thus regarded as a substantial process. In the *Science of Logic* substance is regarded as one of the basic definitions of essence, which Hegel characterises as a system of interconnected categories. He applies the concept of substance not only to nature but also to society, in which he tries to find substantial differences and their unity. Hegel's aesthetics

treats of "substantial characters", which manifest themselves in tragic situations.

Dialectical and historical materialism, which critically summarises previous philosophy and generalises the scientific proposition on the transformation of the forms of the motion of matter into one another, argues that substance is not any particular absolute essence, the immutable foundation of a diverse and changing reality. Spinoza's concept of reality, Engels points out, expresses the reciprocal action of phenomena. The dialectical-materialist interpretation of this interaction is based on recognition of the universal transmutability of the forms of motion of matter. "We cannot," Engels wrote, "go back further than to knowledge of this reciprocal action, for the very reason that there is nothing behind to know."[1] Substance is, therefore, the unity of matter and motion, universal determinism, which manifests itself in all its aspects in motion, change and development, in the unity of mutually exclusive opposites or, in other words, in the eternal dialectical process of self-motion, self-development immanent in matter, whose various forms are united both genetically and in the process of coexistence. Substance as an absolute substratum, as something distinct from matter and its inherent motion is a metaphysical abstraction which has been entirely invalidated by the philosophy of Marxism and the sciences of nature.[2]

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[1] F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 307.

[2] Nevertheless the idealist doctrines of the 20th century treat the recognition of the material unity of the world as unjustifiably schematic, as an *a priori* unification of reality, speculative monism, and so on. While natural science confirms the materialist theses on the unity of the world, contemporary idealism rejects any such unity and

Substance is the material unity of the world or, in other words, the material unity of the world is substantial, i.e., unlimited in time and space and hence eternal, absolute and all-embracing. "The unity of the world," Engels says, "does not consist in its being, although its being is a precondition of its unity, as it must certainly first be before it can be *one*. Being, indeed, is always an open question beyond the point where our sphere of vision ends. The real unity of the world consists in its materiality, and this is proved not by a few juggled phrases, but by a long and wearisome development of philosophy and natural science."[1] This means that not only materialist philosophy but also the collected data of science and practice prove that the phenomena of nature and society do not have a dual existence (in this world and the next), that there is nothing external to the world, i.e., above it or below it, just as there is nothing within the world which differs fundamentally from the material processes that mankind cognises and transforms. Of course, as Engels

opposes it with pluralism, which leaves hope for the religious consciousness. Thus, William James, describing the problem of the one and the many as central to philosophy, assumes that all conceivable aspects of philosophical monism, though practically justifying themselves within certain limits, cannot be theoretically substantiated. Criticising objective idealism of the rationalist kind, James attributes its views to materialism. "...The universe's oneness (is) a principle sublime in all its blankness" (W. James, *Pragmatism*, London, 1907, p. 165). But James's pluralism, which he sets up against the conception of "monised being", contains nothing positive that can be confirmed by science. It is merely a repudiation of monism, treated as a repudiation of dogma and the granting of freedom to scientific research and—religion. Neo-positivist epistemological pluralism adds nothing to this conception.

[1] F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 58.

points out, "the formation of an exact mental image of the world system in which we live is impossible for us, and will always remain impossible".[1] The problem remains open for advancing knowledge, and thanks to the achievements of the latter it is forever closed to idealist mystification.

This, then, is the first theme of philosophy. Its development leads logically to the formation of philosophy's second fundamental theme—the *problem of the subject*. Protagoras maintained that man is the measure of all things, assuming that no matter how different the perceptions of various individuals may be they all point to the existence of that which is contained in sensory perception. Hence, according to Protagoras, honey is both sweet and bitter: the man with jaundice perceives honey as bitter, which means that he discovers in it a bitterness that the healthy person fails to notice.

Protagoras apparently did not counterpose subject and object, although he regarded sensual consciousness as the criterion of reality. This consciousness had no subjective content, since the consciousness always reflected, or reproduced, the objectively real. However, recognition of man as the measure of things did imply a possibility of subjectivist interpretation of reality. This possibility was later to be realised by various idealist doctrines.

The philosophical cosmology of the ancient Greeks could not be concretely elaborated because of the absence of natural scientific data, and also because there was not as yet a developed epistemological and logical analysis of concepts allowing the problem to be systematically broken down

[1] Ibid., p. 50.

for the purpose of investigating it in all possible directions. The disagreements between the ancient natural philosophers were to a certain extent of a subjective nature, just as their beliefs concerning primordial matter or the basic elements were suppositions rather than knowledge, confirmed by facts. This brings us to the turning point in ancient Greek philosophical thought connected with the activities of the Sophists and, later, of Socrates.

The Sophists repudiated cosmological problems because they were interested only in what had a direct bearing on the life of the individual. Socrates, while disapproving of the Sophists' methods of reasoning and proof, actually continues and deepens this turn away from consideration of the Universe to the examination of man. Socrates declared that philosophy was incapable of solving cosmological problems, and that they should not really concern the lover of wisdom, who should be aware that the main thing in philosophy is for man to know himself. However, this opposition of the task of knowing the external world to the task of self-knowledge turns out on closer inspection to be a further development of the very intellectual need that generated philosophical cosmology. While the natural philosophers sought to create a view of the external world, the world as a whole, independent of mythology, the Sophists and Socrates set about evolving a philosophical view of man that would be independent of mythology.

Regarding Socrates's teaching, Hegel remarks that in it "the subject took upon itself the act of making a decision". This, in fact, is the philosophical expression of the antimythological tendency generated by the development of slave-owning society.

For Socrates the chief philosophical questions are the questions of the nature of human essence (soul and body, life and death, the meaning of life, man's destiny), the nature of knowledge, truth and justice. Admittedly, Socrates is not interested in man as an individual distinct from other individuals, man in his subjective aspect. He regards man's essence not as a corporeal, sensual, individualised essence. Human essence, according to his teaching, is incorporeal and immortal, and man's body is only a transient envelope that imprisons the soul, an envelope that dissolves upon the death of the corporeal individual, thus releasing the imperishable soul. But what is the essence of the soul if it is internally alien to man's corporeal existence? This question receives a thorough answer from Plato: The soul is knowledge of the other world of ideas from which the human soul arrived into this alien world of sensual things. Human souls differ from one another in the amount they know about the transcendental. Plato attaches no significance to any other distinctions because he believes them all to be derived from knowledge. But this knowledge is divorced from the real, sensorily perceived world, whose phenomena at best may help the soul to recall that which it has known all along.

This idealist, intellectualist conception of the subject is consistently argued by Plato not only in his teaching on knowledge and its origins but also in aesthetics and the theory of the emotions. The path of aesthetic knowledge leads from the beautiful in its bodily, transient form to the beautiful soul, and thence to the transcendental idea of the beautiful.

Plato's attempt to reveal the transcendental essence of love as a feeling directed towards the

absolutely beautiful, which is incompatible with affection for anything single or individual, is also organically connected with this conception of the beautiful. The beauty that is worthy of love, Plato says, is to be seen not "... in the likeness of a face or hands or any other part of the bodily frame, or in any form of speech or knowledge, or existing in any individual being as, for example, in a living creature, whether in heaven or on earth or anywhere else; but beauty absolute, separate, simple, and everlasting, which is imparted to the ever growing and perishing beauties of all other beautiful things, without itself suffering diminution, or increase, or any change".[1]

Thus, Greek philosophy, having posed the question of the subject, still does not single out clearly enough human subjectivity, or rather does not oppose the subjective to the objective.[2]

The Greek philosophers' characteristic use of words corresponds to this approach. The bearer of certain qualities, the substratum, the substance, and also the subject of a proposition, are all described as subject. What the Greeks called the subject, therefore, is often what we in modern times call the object. This shows itself in the way the Greeks tackled the problem of man, whose specific attributes they interpreted as the special qualities of a certain object possessing a soul, sense organs, bodily attributes, and so on.

[1] *The Dialogues of Plato*, pp. 542-43.

[2] In our view Democritus's opposition of what exists in opinion to what actually exists should not be interpreted as philosophical subjectivism. Democritus did not deny the objective reality of what is recognised by the general consensus of opinion; he sought to discover its basis, its causes. Indeed, the atomic hypothesis is his explanation of solid and liquid, heavy and light, warm and cold, i.e., precisely those things about which there is a consensus.

Medieval European philosophy adheres to this usage, although it goes beyond the bounds of the ancient Greek understanding of the human personality in that it endows it with free will, which is usually interpreted as license, i.e., a departure from the divinely established order of things. This is a negative characterisation of human subjectivity, which is wholly consistent with the medieval view of man as a creature predisposed to wickedness on account of his bodily, sensual nature.

The new posing of the question of the subject, of the conscious self, arises in the bourgeois philosophy of the 17th century, which reflects the struggle of the bourgeoisie to liberate the individual from the fetters of feudalism. Descartes proclaims human reason the infallible judge in questions of truth and error, for reason is in fact the ability to present things clearly, in a way that excludes all doubt. According to Descartes, error is caused by free will, which is independent of the reason and prefers the desired to the true. This view of the will, which is close to that of John Duns Scotus, helps Descartes to magnify human reason, which is accordingly absolved of responsibility for error. Reason recognises no authorities; it trusts only in itself, its intuition, which reveals axiomatic truths—the basis of all deductive knowledge the ideal of which is mathematics. The first of such absolute axiomatic truths is the thesis "I think, therefore I exist". All else is subject to doubt, at least until its existence has been proved in logic which proceeds from this fundamental intuitive truth.

Descartes glorifies the critically thinking individual as the subject of cognition, the knower, but his notions of the moral nature of man are not devoid of medieval prejudice: he regards reli-

gion as the basis of morality because the will's independence of reason makes it incapable of submitting to its authority. The will needs another authority, and this is to be found in religion, good traditions and the order of things established by the state.

In contrast to this abstract rationalistic conception of man, which sees man's sensuality and emotions as the lowest, almost as animal manifestations of the human essence, the materialist philosophy of the 17th and particularly the 18th century evolved an empirical theory of the subject, proceeding from the sensualist proposition that knowledge and man's whole emotional life originate from sensory perception of the external world. Mechanistic materialism treats man as a natural body subject to the laws of nature. This conception of man's "natural" essence, necessarily conditioned by the surrounding reality, is a humanistic rehabilitation of sensual human life, which was condemned by religion and obviously underestimated by the rationalism of the 17th century.

La Mettrie, unlike Spinoza, rejecting the opposition of the rational and the sensual, argues that sensual life can and should be varied and full-blooded, but at the same time rational and natural. "I neither moralise, nor preach, nor declaim, I simply explain," La Mettrie writes.[1] And in explaining that "man is a machine imperiously guided by unconditional fatalism",[2] La Mettrie is far from bewailing man's miserable fate. On the contrary, he assumes that man, determined by his feelings, can be happy, because his own reason

[1] La Mettrie, *Oeuvres philosophiques,* Amsterdam, 1752, p. 100.
[2] Ibid., p. 25.

also takes part and is an essential factor in this determination. Therefore man is not merely a machine, but "a machine *which itself supplies its own* (emphasis added—*T.O.*) resources; the living image of perpetual motion".[1]

Diderot, who firmly disagrees with La Mettrie on a number of questions and maintains despite his predecessor that "man is not a machine",[2] nevertheless cannot forego mechanistic analogies: "We are instruments endowed with sensation and memory."[3] He, of course, has in mind musical instruments and he compares man to the pianoforte with nature operating its keys.

In the view of the present author historico-philosophical literature has not done enough to show that the central problem of mechanistic materialism is the problem of the human subject, of man as a conscious being. Philosophical mechanicism cannot be treated merely as the mechanistic explanation of nature, which was proposed by natural science. Materialist philosophy develops its methodological principles and applies them directly to man, to society. In Spinoza, the study of nature is merely an introduction to his system, the exposition of its fundamentals, while the system actually pivots on the problem of man and his freedom, to which three quarters of his *Ethics* is devoted. Thomas Hobbes also sees it as his main task to evolve a doctrine of man (the citizen) and society. Locke's essentially epistemological doctrine is primarily a doctrine of human sensuality, in which the philosopher sees not only the

[1] Ibid., p. 14.
[2] Denis Diderot, *Oeuvres philosophiques,* Paris, 1961, p. 175.
[3] Ibid., p. 274.

basis of all human knowledge, but also the source of morality.

Marx and Engels stress that the problems of human life are central to the teaching of French 18th-century materialism. Characterising Helvetius's philosophy, they point out: "Sensuous qualities and self-love, enjoyment and correctly understood personal interests are the bases of all morality. The natural equality of human intelligence, the unity of progress of reason and progress of industry, the natural goodness of man and the omnipotence of education are the main points in his system."[1] It may appear that in Holbach's philosophy, most fully expounded in *The System of Nature,* the problem of man, of social life, occupies a secondary place. It should be remembered, however, that the doctrine of nature forms the content of only the first five chapters of this work. The remaining twelve chapters of the first part, like the whole second half of this work, are devoted to the nature of man and to the criticism of religion as a system of prejudices that deform human nature. As for Holbach's other works, they are all concerned with the analysis of social problems and substantiating the ideals of bourgeois humanism. Nature interests the French materialists as the immediate foundation of human life, as the sensual evidence the study of which refutes the religious picture of the world.

French 18th-century materialism is the ideology of the revolutionary bourgeoisie whose anti-feudal, humanistic attitude determines the range of its philosophical problems. The key issue in the teaching of the French materialists is ultimately

[1] K. Marx, F. Engels, *Werke,* Bd. 4, S. 137.

the question of people's *interests,* in the propounding of which they take a step forward in comparison with the materialists of the 17th century, who treated man as analogous to a natural body experiencing external influences and reacting to them. According to the French materialists, a person has his *own* interests, which it is his duty to realise in his *own* interests.

Summing up the fundamental tenets of French materialism, the founders of Marxism write: "If correctly understood, interest is the principle of all morality, man's private interest must be made to coincide with the interest of humanity. If man is unfree in the material sense, i.e., is free not through the negative power to avoid this or that, but through the positive power to assert his true individuality, crime must not be punished in the individual, but the anti-social source of crime must be destroyed, and each man must be given social scope for the vital manifestation of his being. If man is shaped by his surroundings, his surroundings must be made human."[1] Marx and Engels also point out the connection between Utopian socialism and French materialism.

German classical idealism, in which the problems of bourgeois humanism are modified according to the objective conditions of development of an economically and politically backward Germany, investigates the problem of "the subject" from the standpoint of an abstractly understood epistemological and ethical ideal of humanity. Kant rejects materialist teaching on human nature along with all the conclusions to be drawn from it. Nor is he satisfied with the concept of the subject devised by 17th-century rationalism.

[1] Ibid., p. 176.

Kant's philosophy is a radical reassessment of the cognitive abilities of the human self and at the same time a fundamentally new posing of the question of the fundamentals of morality. In both respects Kant is diametrically opposed not only to the materialists of the 17th and 18th centuries, but also to rationalist idealism. He denies the possibility of intellectual intuition, the knowability of the world independent of consciousness, and the ability of the reason (clearly distinguished from intellect) to resolve the theoretical, or rather philosophical, problems confronting it. Cognition, according to Kant, is confined to the world of phenomena, these latter being formed by the human intellect and the productive force of imagination out of the chaos of the sensations evoked by the unknowable "things in themselves" that awaken our sensuality. Kant criticises the teaching of Descartes and his followers for its invalid claim to knowledge that is beyond experience, such as knowledge of a reality independent of the subject, which he regards as impossible.

Kant's agnosticism, as he himself admits, restricts reason in order to make room for faith. But unlike Descartes, Kant maintains that faith is not the basis of morality, that, on the contrary, religion is founded on moral consciousness. Kant thus seeks to prove the moral foundation of religion as opposed to the religious foundation of morality. According to Kant, a person may be moral without being religious, while he becomes religious because he has an inherently moral consciousness. The moral consciousness is autonomous, that is to say, independent of everything else, including feeling, interest, and religion. It is subordinate only to itself, heeds only its own voice and is determined by its *a priori* form—the categorical imperative, which it obeys because it is truly moral. Man's potential moral capacity exceeds his cognitive abilities. Whereas for Descartes the sole intellectual ideal of humanity is the theoretical reason, clear and definite thinking, capable of knowing all that exists, for Kant the only possible ideal is practical reason (pure moral consciousness), freely obeying the moral law inherent therein. Therefore the supreme goal of philosophy, Kant says, is to help man to assume his proper place in the world, to teach him "what he must be in order to be a man".[1]

Fichte, Kant's immediate successor, seeks to overcome the contradiction between Kantianism and classical rationalism. His philosophy is built around the idea of the substantial subject, the self as substance. Taking Kant's transcendental apperception as his starting point, he goes against Kant in interpreting man's *a priori* consciousness of his own Self as intellectual intuition, which makes it possible to discover in the self-consciousness of the empirical Self and Absolute Self, the mystical expression of the unlimited theoretical and practical power of Man to the fullest possible extent of his historical development. Potential infinity is transformed into actual infinity, which is realised to the extent that human individuals and their purposeful association (society) become aware of their omnipotent Self, in which the will and reason are identical, i.e., the will is reasonable, and reason is not only knowledge but also universal, practical, all-creating activity. The Cartesian infallible reason is realised in Fichte's Absolute Self, which creates all reality that is

[1] *Kants sämtliche Werke*, Theil 11, Abt. 1, Leipzig, 1842, S. 241.

external to the Self (the Non-Self) as the essential condition and material for its creativity. The unknowable Kantian "thing-in-itself" is discarded and mankind, according to Fichte, creates not only the world of phenomena but the whole universe and, hence, itself. The true subject-matter of philosophy thus emerges, according to this view, as the Absolute Self—its point of departure and culmination, thanks to which philosophy is interpreted as the science of the principles of all knowledge and creativity, the science of sciences.

Hegel revises Fichte's subjective idealist doctrine of the Absolute Self from positions of objective, dialectical idealism. Substance, he teaches, must be understood in the same way as the Self. The Absolute Self merges with Spinoza's idealistically interpreted substance, and the substantiality of nature ("Absolute Idea") develops into the substantiality of mankind ("Absolute Spirit").

In all these outstanding speculative idealist doctrines the empirical human self dissolves into its generic essence, into mankind. The "subjective spirit" (anthropology, phenomenology and psychology) is, according to Hegel, only the lowest stage of development of the human essence. A higher stage, it is argued in his *Philosophy of Mind,* is the state, and the supreme and final stage of human development is "Absolute Spirit", art, religion, philosophy (the latter, according to Hegel, includes the philosophically interpreted sciences). German classical idealism strives to reveal the unity of the individual and the social in its historical development, to understand social progress as development of the human personality, but the abstract, idealist conception of personality is inevitably impoverished by the idealist reduction of the personality and human activity to consciousness, self-consciousness and knowledge. The individual is treated as identical to the social, and the difference within this identity is regarded as removable by dialectics. The relations between individuals are only a means of realising the common human goal, that is to say, in themselves, simply as human relations, they are meaningless. The individual's ultimate self-consciousness is lost in the infinite self-consciousness of mankind, which in its turn is treated merely as the self-expression of a rationalised God. The idealist opposition of the spiritual to the material "dialectically" overcomes people's actual relationship to nature, since the natural, including man's "natural" essence, is regarded by Hegel as alienated existence, unworthy of its true essence.

Ludwig Feuerbach had good reason to believe that his philosophical anthropology was the materialist conclusion to be drawn from the history of German classical idealism. He makes a thorough investigation of the evolution of the speculative idealist conception of the spiritual. In his view this evolution inevitably leads to the conclusion that man, and man alone, is the reality of what was originally regarded as God and subsequently as the developing universal reason. Philosophical analysis of the essence of Christianity convinces Feuerbach that religion, which the French materialists believed to be incompatible with "natural" human feelings and common sense, is the alienated existence of man's sensual essence. The source of this contradictory duality of man is not sensuality in itself but the human essence that suffers and cannot find its path to happiness. Man is for Feuerbach the point of departure for understanding all that exists in society, no matter

how deeply it contradicts man's feelings and reason. What is more, Feuerbach maintains that through knowing the essence of man we also get to know nature, because it is in man—nature's supreme creation—that nature perceives and understands itself. By turning philosophy into philosophical anthropology, Feuerbach summarises the efforts of his materialist predecessors to understand the unity of man and nature, and rejects the supernatural and superhuman as products of the alienated human consciousness. But the unity of man and nature lies in social production, whose true significance is revealed only in its historical development. And pre-Marxist materialism, limited by its materialist (and usually metaphysical) examination only of nature, finds no answer to the problem it has posed. The solution is to be found only by proceeding from the positions of historical materialism.

We have briefly outlined two basic philosophical themes and, in so doing, have arrived at the third basic theme of philosophy: the relationship between subject and object. G. V. Plekhanov observes that the opposition between materialism and idealism is closely bound up with their different approaches to the problem of subject and object, self and non-self: "Anyone who starts from the object, if only he has the ability and daring to think consistently, will build up one of the varieties of *materialist world view*. The person whose point of departure is *the subject*, the Self, again if he is not afraid to go through with it, will turn out to be an *idealist* of one shade or another."[1] Needless to say, the subject-object

[1] G. V. Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works* in five volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1957, p. 615 (in Russian).

problem is not only an ontological but also an epistemological problem. As such it draws most of its development from the middle of the 19th century, when philosophy is generally becoming aware of the necessity for an epistemological proof of ontological premises. What philosophy has to say about practice is also an epistemological (in Marxist doctrine, historical-materialist) development of the subject-object problem. From this standpoint philosophy is the movement of cognitive thinking from the object (material reality) to the subject, the Self, understood as derivative; or, vice versa, from the subject, the Self, understood as spiritual, to its opposite, the material.

The classics of pre-Marxist philosophy usually realised the inevitability of this alternative. Schelling, for instance, wrote that there are two possible paths for a philosophy that systematically develops its propositions: "*Either one takes the objective as primary and asks how anything subjective that agrees with it comes to be here.*"[1] "*But it is possible,*" Schelling wrote further, "*also to take the subjective as primary, and then the task is to find out whence comes anything objective that agrees with it.*"[2] Though clearly aware of the radical opposition between these two approaches, Schelling tried to marry them, and on the basis of idealism at that. In his natural philosophy he starts from the object, understood as the absolute identity of the subjective and objective (unconscious state of the world spirit) and comes to the subject—the human intellect. In his *System of Transcendental Idealism* Schelling chooses the

[1] F. W. J. Schelling, *System des Transzendentalen Idealismus*, Hamburg, 1957, S. 7.
[2] Ibid., S. 9.

opposite, but also idealist, approach; taking the human Self, subjectivity, as his point of departure, he tries to explain the genesis of the objective in human knowledge.

Hegel, having rejected Schelling's idea of the primary absolute identity of subject and object, argued that the identity of thinking and being that he postulated as his point of departure always, by virtue of its dialectical nature, comprises the difference between the subjective and objective. Absolute thought, forming the universal essence of all that exists, is thus thought about thought; it is therefore both subject and object in equal degree. Thus, Hegel, like Schelling, ruled out any other alternative; either the subject or the object must be taken as the point of departure. They interpreted reality as the subject-object. But Hegel, like any other idealist, took the subjective, the spiritual, as his point of departure.

We have dwelt on these classical examples to show that the philosophical theme is constantly modified in the course of the development of philosophical knowledge. As far as the object is concerned, some philosophers regard being as absolute reality, as something that exists without any relation to the subject; others, on the contrary, regard the object as something carved out of being by the consciousness, and therefore differing from being in itself, and only existing for the subject; and yet others oppose the fundamental distinction between object and subject, regarding this very distinction as derivative, secondary, subjective, and so on. Subjective idealism counterposes to the idea of the object's independence of the subject, the Knower, the idea of their correlation. In the doctrine of Richard Avenarius this conception of coordination on principle is designed

to perfect Berkeleianism, which regards the subject as spiritual essence independent of the object (matter). Avenarius, on the contrary, maintains that the subject is impossible without the object, but that neither does the object (objective reality) exist without relation to the Self. This amendment to Berkeley's idealism does not affect his basic proposition because objective reality (interpreted as merely a possible object of cognition) is regarded as conditioned by the subject.

Thus, the themes of philosophy also comprise a definite understanding, interpretation of their content; these themes and "subthemes" constantly vary owing to the realisation of the possibilities that are implied in this unity of philosophical theme and its interpretation. In the final analysis these variations are conditioned by the development of philosophical knowledge itself and the struggle of the basic trends in philosophy.

Heinrich Rickert distinguished two basic methods in philosophy—objectivism and subjectivism. Objectivising philosophy proceeds from the concept that the world exists independently of man, and regards everything subjective, including the mental, as part of the world and subject to its laws. According to Rickert, of course, the objectivising philosophy that allegedly ignores the problem of the Self is chiefly materialism. However, as a subjective idealist, Rickert also classes as objectivising philosophy pantheism, which he calls panpsychism. (Actually this is objective idealism, which strikes Rickert as naive from the standpoint of neo-Kantian "scientific idealism".) Rickert believes that objectivism, while fully justified in natural science, has nothing to offer in philosophy, whose chief content should be axiological problems. "Only subjectivism," he

maintains, "actually gives us a unified concept of the world, a concept that explains to us our relationship to the world, whereas objectivism only aggravates the universal problem, endlessly deepening the gulf between life and science."[1] It is not hard to see that the neo-Kantian opposition of objectivism to subjectivism stems from the idea that the object and the subject are logical constructions of cognitive thinking that give shape through their *a priori* forms to the sole reality accessible to man—the chaotic flow of sensations. Cognition brings order to this flow of human sensations, builds them into a world, that is to say, according to neo-Kantian doctrine, into a definite construction, because the world does not exist as anything else but the object of the specialised sciences. For this reason subjectivism or subjective idealist interpretation of the sensorily perceptible reality, is characterised as a mode of philosophy that completely discards the illusions of naive realism. In fact, certain illusions are merely replaced by others.

Marxist philosophy proceeds from acknowledgement of the dialectical unity of subject and object. This unity takes many forms. The subjective—man, consciousness, self-consciousness, cognition—is the product of the development of the material world. The subjective comprises an objective content inasmuch as it reflects objective reality. The existence of the subjective is an objective fact, independent of man's consciousness. Consequently, even the opposition between the subjective and the objective is relative. "There is a difference between the subjective and the objective," Lenin writes, "*but it, too, has its limits.*"[1]

[1] H. Rickert, "Vom Begriff der Philosophie". In *Logos*, Band I, Tübingen, 1910/11, S. 7.

The philosophy of Marxism differentiates between qualitatively different forms of the objective and interprets the multiplicity of the subjective-objective relationships accordingly. The objective is above all a reality independent of the subject, and the fact that for the subject it exists only in so far as the subject exists, is not, of course, a condition of its own existence. The object as an epistemological category presupposes the singling out of certain fragments of reality in the process of cognition. Since this singling out is performed by the cognising subject, the Knower, the object emerges as the content of the process of cognition. But it continues to exist in the objective world independently of the will and consciousness of man. Here there is none of the "coordination on principle" of which Avenarius spoke: there is correlation only between the subject and the apparent object of cognition. Even abstract objects are idealised reflections of objective reality and are, therefore, objective in their basic content.

The objective exists also in the subject, and not simply in the sense that man—his biological, anthropological and social characteristics—is an objective reality, like any product of the development of matter. The objective also exists in the theory of knowledge: objective truth, the laws of the sensory and logical reflection of the external world.

But man does not only reflect the external world. He also transforms it and thus creates something that did not previously exist in the world—"second nature", that is to say, society.

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 98.

What man has created in nature is an objective reality, subordinate to the laws of nature. Here, however, there is "dual subordination", since man constructs machines, buildings, makes new substances and, consequently, directs objective processes the essence of which is independent of his consciousness and will. The instruments of labour, Marx said, "are natural material converted into organs for the domination of the human will over nature or organs for the execution of this will in nature".[1] The productive forces of society are the spontaneous forces of nature converted by social labour into human forces, that is to say, the forces of the subject of the socio-historical process. Man in changing nature creates new objects. "Nature," Marx wrote, "does not build machines, locomotives, railways, electric telegraphs, self-acting mules, etc. All these are products of human activity."[2]

The objective in the socio-historical process is the result of objectification of the activity of succeeding generations of people. Its objectivity is specific: the social conditions determining the development of society (productive forces and production relations) are created by people in the course of human history. This is a new ontological relationship between subject and object which does not exist in nature: here the subjective and objective form a unity of opposites that are transformed into each other. Hence the philosophy of Marxism fundamentally enriches this third, basic philosophical theme as well.

Thus, while not considering it possible to recognise a single subject of inquiry, one and

[1] K. Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1968, S. 594.
[2] Ibid.

united for all the philosophical doctrines that have ever existed, we are able nevertheless to single out the subject-matter of philosophy, which changes historically within the limits determined by the specific nature of philosophical knowledge. Not one of the basic philosophical themes can be discarded or completely isolated from the others. But some philosophical doctrines deal mainly with the problems of the object, objective reality and existence, while others, on the contrary, reduce the subject-matter of philosophy to investigation of the subject, the subjective, and yet others, to the subject-object relationship. In the philosophy of Marxism all the basic philosophical themes are regarded as equally significant and organically linked with one another.

3. THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

The philosophy of Marxism differs fundamentally from all preceding and currently existing philosophical doctrines. The revolution in philosophy achieved by Marxism signifies at the same time a qualitative change in the subject-matter of philosophy. Philosophy's traditional themes are not cast aside but enriched and developed in every way on the basis of the dialectical materialist understanding of nature, society and cognition.

Dialectical and historical materialism proceeds from a fundamentally new assessment of the philosophical significance of the advances of the natural sciences and social practice that is quite alien to all preceding philosophy. The philosophical substantiation of the communist transformation of social relations, direct, open and militant partisanship—all this strongly distinguishes the

subject-matter, the problems and aims of dialectical and historical materialism from the philosophical doctrines of the past, whose basic features are retained in modern bourgeois philosophy.

The creation of a divide between philosophy and the specialised sciences investigating nature and society was a highly progressive historical process, in the course of which the pre-conditions were created for building up a scientific philosophy and scientific understanding of its subject-matter. Marxism summarised this process of division, which made it possible to reveal the weakness of all the philosophical doctrines which sought to explain the concrete, definite phenomena of nature and society on the basis of general conceptions of the nature of things. Incidentally, science as well as philosophy was confronted with the task of overcoming the former approach, that is, it had to become aware that the answer to general questions presupposes the solution of specific questions as an essential prerequisite. Lenin wrote: "...as long as people did not know how to set about studying the facts, they always invented *a priori* general theories, which were always sterile. The metaphysician-chemist, still unable to make a factual investigation of chemical processes, concocts a theory about chemical affinity as a force. The metaphysician-biologist talks about the nature of life and the vital force. The metaphysician-psychologist argues about the nature of the soul. Here it is the method itself that is absurd. You cannot argue about the soul without having explained psychical processes in particular: here progress must consist precisely in abandoning general theories and philosophical discourses about the nature of the soul, and in being able to put the study of the facts about

particular psychical processes on a scientific footing."[1]

Of course, this is not to say that there is no meaning in such questions as: "What is matter? What is nature? What is man? What is the soul?" They remain unsolved until specialised research into specific forms of the motion of matter, the history of mankind, of psychical processes have provided a scientific foundation for the concrete, substantiated statement of such general philosophical questions. Philosophy did not pose these questions in vain. By posing them it stimulated specialised research, the results of which could not, however, be given scientific-philosophical generalisation from idealist and metaphysical positions.

Marx and Engels criticised the previous sociology for trying to answer the questions: *What is society in general? What is progress in general?* without studying the concrete, historically transient types of society and progress. Marx made an all-round study of capitalist society and laid the foundations of a special scientific inquiry into other social formations. This made it possible to solve general sociological questions as well. Study of the parts should not be metaphysically counterposed to study of the whole. We have already referred to P. V. Kopnin's remark that any specialised science investigates the world as a whole, not only in the one definite aspect determined by its subject-matter. This particular investigation of the whole prepares the ground for a scientific-philosophical understanding of the material unity of the world. In this connection T. Pavlov writes: "Philosophy is and should be the science of the whole, but even then it is not

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 144.

merely a science of the whole in general, merely about the whole; it is a science of the whole taken in the dialectically indissoluble connection of its parts, aspects or qualities, i.e., of the whole and of the parts, of matter in general and of its basic qualities, aspects and forms of existence."[1] This is not to say that scientific philosophy studies everything; it would be more correct to say that it studies that which is *inherent in everything*. The general, the universal is in dialectical unity with the particular and the individual. The universal as the concrete in theoretical cognition is the unity of various definitions. Thus scientific philosophy studies the basic, special forms of the universal.

The development of the specialised sciences that study specific forms of the motion of matter and the special laws inherent in each of them reveals to man a world of diverse laws that are relatively independent of one another. But to stop at stating this fact, that is, to admit that certain special laws "reign supreme" in each qualitatively limited sphere of phenomena would be to adopt the positions of philosophical pluralism, which is constantly refuted by the specialised sciences, whose total achievements indicate the interconnection and mutual transformation, the dialectical unity of all forms of the existence of matter. It is for this reason that the significance of the question of the most general laws of all that exists is progressively increasing thanks to the discovery of the special laws of each qualitatively distinct sphere of the phenomena of nature or society.

The first basic definition of the subject-matter

[1] T. Pavlov, "Dialectical and Materialist Philosophy and Specialised Sciences" in *Selected Philosophical Works* in four volumes, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 189 (in Russian).

of Marxist philosophy lies in recognition of the existence of most general laws of the development of nature, society and cognition. This definition certainly needs to be elucidated and made more concrete, and this is bound to entail a certain degree of limitation. Natural science also studies certain universal laws of existence, the law of gravity, for example, the laws of the transformation and conservation of energy, and so on. But whereas every specialised science investigates the universal in a special form of its existence, it also, in so doing, discovers certain special, general laws. A law is a form of universality, and this universality, at any rate in terms of quantity, cannot always be limited. The mechanistic materialists of the 18th century were wrong not in recognising the laws of mechanics as universal, but in reducing the qualitative diversity of the laws of matter to mechanical laws, whereas the universality of laws and their qualitative limitation are in no way mutually exclusive.

How, then, are we to understand the most general dialectical laws of motion, change and development studied by Marxism? If these are qualitatively limited laws, they must relate only to a certain class of phenomena and, consequently, are no different from the laws discovered by physics, chemistry and other specialised sciences. Does this not rule out any recognition of absolutely universal laws determining the course of processes in all spheres of reality, any recognition of the real, empirically established action of physical, chemical, biological and other laws? Here we are confronted with extremely important and complex philosophical questions and we are far from claiming to have arrived at their complete solution. The most general dialectical laws constitute the

essence, the general nature of the specific laws studied by the specialised sciences. Every law of nature or society is a definite form of dialectical relationship of phenomena. The laws of dialectics are the most general form of this relationship. Investigation of the nature of laws, cognition of the objective unity of all laws reveals to us the laws of dialectics, which do not constitute a special class of laws opposed to the laws of physics, chemistry and the other specialised sciences, because all laws are dialectical. Otherwise the philosophical concept of certain universal laws governing everything would be vague and unrelated to the real qualitative diversity of phenomena, like Heraclitus's "logos", which, so to speak, stands above all things and dominates them.

In *Capital* Marx investigates the specific economic laws of capitalist production and, in so doing, investigates a historically determined form of the dialectical process modifying the universal dialectical laws, which nowhere exist in any pure form. Engels's *Dialectics of Nature* expounds the laws of dialectics, the universal dialectical processes which natural scientists consciously or unconsciously reveal when discovering the specific laws of individual forms of the motion of matter. This is why we believe that it would be a concession to the idealist conception of dialectics to single out a special sphere of activity as the domain of universal dialectical laws.

Thus, the subject-matter of the philosophy of Marxism is the universal objective dialectical process. Engels distinguished the *objective* dialectic and its reflection in historically developing cognition from the *subjective* dialectic. Dialectics, as the authors of the six-volume *History of Philosophy* published in the Soviet Union

emphasise, is "the process of self-motion, of self-development, of the unity and the struggle of internal contradictions, which is inherent in matter and whose necessary creation is the non-material, that is to say, the consciousness, the reflection of the material world".[1]

The delimitation of the objective dialectic, whose qualitatively diverse forms are revealed in nature and society, from the subjective dialectic of the process of cognition is carried out within the framework of the fully integrated subject-matter of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. This unity of qualitatively different dialectical processes constitutes the objective basis of the Marxist-Leninist principle of the unity of dialectics, logic and the theory of knowledge. From this standpoint dialectical materialism and materialist dialectics are synonymous, because Marxism has welded materialism and dialectics into a single whole in accordance with the objective unity of the material and the dialectical. Marxist dialectics is materialist dialectics, Marxist materialism is dialectical materialism. The essence of dialectical laws, like all concrete identity, implies essential distinctions: the dialectics of nature differs from the dialectics of social life; the dialectics of the process of cognition is different again, not only in form but in content. In other words, dialectical laws are many and various, and knowledge of the general, basic features of dialectics is, of course, insufficient to provide an understanding of the specific nature of the dialectical process in various spheres of objective reality. This is, in our view, what determines the inner articulation and structure of the subject of Marxist philosophy.

[1] *History of Philosophy*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1959, p. 231 (in Russian).

Historical materialism investigates special universal dialectical laws of development inherent only in society. It must be stressed that historical materialism—philosophical science applied to society—occupies a special place in Marxist philosophy. Marxist philosophy took shape historically as the substantiation, the proof, of the communist world view, which combines the materialist understanding of nature with the materialist understanding of social life and attaches primary importance to the fact that man transforms nature and, in so doing, his own, human nature. Spinoza's *natura naturata,* which in his philosophical system was the totality of things (modi) generated by the original, substantial *natura naturans,* has in Marxist philosophy become the "second nature" created by man, a qualitatively new reality in which the natural and the social are united.

Study of the formation of Marxist philosophy convincingly shows that the creation of the materialist conception of history, the philosophical elaboration of the doctrine of man and the role of labour in his anthropological development, of objective human activity and the unity of spiritual and material production, constitute vital elements in the historical process of the formation of dialectical and historical materialism. This truth is sometimes interpreted in the sense that dialectical materialism was created after historical materialism. This seems to be an oversimplified view, although it indicates certain fundamental peculiarities of the formation of the philosophy of Marxism. Dialectical and historical materialism is a unified philosophical doctrine, and the investigation of the dialectics of social development to which Marx and Engels devoted most of their writings also implies investigation of the most

general forms of the universal dialectical process. On the other hand, study of the dialectics of social life entailed a necessary scientific restriction of the qualitatively determinate action of the laws of nature, which is also manifest in the life of society but does not determine its specific character. This restriction could not have been made by pre-Marxist materialism, because it had not overcome the naturalistic understanding of history, which on closer examination proves to be sociological empiricism with idealist overtones, despite all its implacable opposition to the theological interpretation of the historical process.

In recent years Soviet philosophers have done a great deal of research in order to elucidate the place in Marxist philosophy occupied by the problem of man, of creative activity, of the personal and the social. This has undoubtedly helped to provide a more concrete and diversified understanding of the subject-matter of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and to prevent its unwarranted one-sided "ontologisation".

Cognition is the necessary, spiritual form of the social process, which is conditioned by the objective laws of social development. But the specific nature of cognition as progress from ignorance to knowledge, and from one knowledge to another, more profound knowledge, presupposes the existence of a special kind of dialectical laws of cognitive reflection, logical thinking, etc. It need not be proved that the significance of this aspect of the subject-matter of Marxist philosophy is constantly increasing thanks to the intensive development and differentiation of scientific knowledge, the elaboration of new methods of research, of cybernetics, and the development of new, extremely important logical disciplines,

which, strictly speaking, are no longer a part of philosophy.

The question of the subject-matter of Marxist-Leninist philosophy is of fundamental importance. The Marxist scholars who try to reduce the diverse content of the subject-matter of Marxist-Leninist philosophy to investigation of only the process of cognition are profoundly mistaken. But equally mistaken are those who restrict the subject-matter of philosophy to the universal laws of development, thus ignoring the general sociological laws of the cognitive process, their specific character.

Marxist-Leninist philosophy today is a system of philosophical disciplines, each of which in the framework of the subject-matter common to the whole Marxist philosophy has its own target of research. Practical research has shown the wisdom of delimiting dialectical materialism, on the one hand, and historical materialism, on the other, as the two basic parts of the whole philosophy of Marxism. Specialised research in the field of the theory of knowledge, the philosophical problems of natural science, and also dialectical logic, shows that this range of questions also breaks down into specialised philosophical disciplines. Ethics and aesthetics may in the not far distant future become independent disciplines, although at present they are part of Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

Thus, the subject-matter of philosophy in general and the subject-matter of scientific, Marxist-Leninist philosophy in particular, cannot be simply stated or reduced to a single definition because the development of philosophy naturally transforms the subject-matter of philosophical inquiry into a system of targets, a system of historically developing philosophical disciplines that are constantly being enriched with new content.

Chapter Seven
PHILOSOPHY AS THE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE HISTORICAL EPOCH

1. ROLE OF THE PERSONALITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The empirically obvious diversity of philosophical theories (including the contemporaneous) is naturally associated even by those with a superficial knowledge of the history of philosophy with the notion of the great philosophers who created them. In itself this notion is an acknowledgement of historical fact. Heraclitus and Democritus, Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Hegel, like many other founders of philosophical doctrines, were indeed great philosophers, and it would be absurd to deny the tremendous part they played in advancing philosophical (and not only philosophical) culture. But if we confine ourselves merely to acknowledgement of the fact, that is to say, accept it as self-evident and requiring no explanation, if we turn this empirical fact into a methodological principle for our inquiry into the development of philosophy, we shall unwittingly fall in with the subjective idealist historico-philosophical conception according to which the outstanding philosopher is not the immediate but the ultimate cause of the philosophical system he creates. In

which case his philosophy loses its objective social content. Suppose we are asked why it was that at a given time in a given country such and such a philosophy appeared. Because, we reply, the philosopher who created it was born there at that time. But this, of course, is no answer. Hume could have been born a philosopher only in the England of the early 18th century, and this means that the philosophical ideas whose development subsequently came to be called Humism, emerged even before Hume appeared on the scene.

Plato and Aristotle, who were the first to take an interest in the history of philosophy, evolved no theoretical conception of the historico-philosophical process. They simply expounded and criticised the views of their predecessors as the errors committed by philosophers on the path towards truth or away from it. Neither of them associated the theories under consideration with certain historical conditions, and they likewise considered their own doctrines to be entirely the result of their personal intellectual efforts. When pointing out that some of their predecessors took a different approach to a particular question, Plato and Aristotle saw in this only the individuality of the philosopher. Admittedly, Plato in his doctrine of chosen souls having been initially linked with the absolute, with the very subject of philosophical inquiry, laid the foundation for the mystical interpretation of the philosophical genius. But only in modern times has this conception of the divine inspiration of outstanding philosophers (and artists) been treated in a subjectivist way, that is to say, by reducing philosophical doctrine to a purely individual vision of the essence of things. The founders of bourgeois philosophy, however, were opposed to the subjectivist interpretation of philosophical creativity. Francis Bacon wrote: "I myself certainly am wont to consider this Work rather as the offspring of Time, than of Intellect."[1] And elsewhere he similarly affirmed: "For rightly is truth called the daughter of time, not of authority."[2]

An even more determined stand was taken by Descartes, who maintained that "the ability to judge correctly and distinguish truth from falsehood, which strictly speaking is what we call common sense or reason, is by nature equal in all men".[3] What, then, distinguishes the outstanding thinker from other people? Descartes replies that it is knowledge of the correct method, thus assuming that everyone is capable of mastering it.

The revolutionary age of the establishment of capitalist society evoked in the most progressive representatives of the new class an awareness of the historical necessity of their ideological aspirations. As bourgeois society developed, this awareness was lost by the majority of its ideologists.

The theoreticians of romanticism (some of whom defended the old ways of feudalism, while others were petty-bourgeois critics of capitalism) created the theory of heroes and the crowd, which became their philosophical credo. Schelling in Germany and Carlyle in Britain endowed this theory with philosophical and historical meaning. In his *Lectures on Aesthetics* Hegel fulminated sarcastically against the romantic conception of art as the manifestation of the "divine genius" to which everyone and everything else are but "trivial creatures". Condemning aesthetic aristocratism and the attempt to apply it in philosophy,

[1] F. Bacon, *Novum Organum*, Oxford, 1855, p. 1.
[2] Ibid., p. 108.
[3] *Les pages immortelles de Descartes*, p. 54.

Hegel wrote: "Anyone who takes this stand of divine genius looks down with scorn upon all other people, whom he declares limited and dull. . . ." Hegel stressed that the arrogant subjectivism of the romantics is in no way higher than the common everyday things that it ruthlessly mocks: "If the 'I' takes this standpoint, everything appears to it paltry and worthless, everything but its own subjectivity, which in consequence becomes a hollow and worthless *vanity*."[1]

Hegel saw in art (and even more in philosophy) something besides the self-expression of outstanding individuality. He understood an outstanding individuality as the individualised expression of the "people's spirit"—the concrete-historical form of existence of the "absolute spirit", that is to say, idealistically interpreted mankind. Whereas for the romantics "divine genius" appeared to be an asocial phenomenon, Hegel saw it as an embodiment of socio-historical necessity. In other words, far from contrasting it to the development of society, he viewed it as the rational solution to the riddle of genius. Far from belittling the role of outstanding historical figures, Hegel actually elevated them by seeking the "absolute" source of their greatness. For this reason he called them "the confidants of the world spirit", stressing that the great men are "those that have understood the essence of the matter best of all and from whom everyone else has subsequently gained their understanding and approved it or, at least, reconciled

[1] G. W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 12, S. 102-03. Hegel also ridicules the romantic contempt for the ultimate in his *Logic*: "Anyone who has no patience with the ultimate will not attain to any reality, but will remain in the sphere of the abstract and be utterly consumed in himself" (Ibid., Bd. 8, S. 220).

themselves to it".[1] Hegel, however, was very far from underestimating the significance of human subjectivity; he proceeded from recognition of the dialectical unity of the subjective and the objective, rejecting only the subjectivity that is divorced from reality, the arrogance of subjectivity which forgets that the measure of its wealth is its penetration into objective reality. In this sense Hegel declared that the richest reality would be the most concrete and most subjective. Lenin stressed the significance of this Hegelian understanding of concrete subjectivity embodying the wealth of the objective reality it assimilates. This conception of subjectivity, of course, has nothing in common with the subjective, anti-historical interpretation of the originality of the philosophical (or any other) genius.

In Hegel's view the great man is great because his personal ideas coincide with historical necessity, of which he becomes aware at a time when other people either cannot see it or are actually fighting against it: "The great people in history are those whose personal aims contain the substantial element that constitutes the world spirit. It is they who should be called *heroes*, inasmuch as they have acquired their aims and vocation not merely from the calm and orderly course of things hallowed by the existing system, but from a source whose content had remained hidden and had not developed to the point of personal existence, from the inner spirit which is still below ground and knocking to be allowed into the outer world, as though pecking its way out of a shell, because this spirit is a different nucleus, and not the nucleus contained in this

[1] Ibid., Bd. 11, S. 60.

envelope. Thus it appears that heroes create out of themselves, and that their actions have brought about a state of affairs and relationships in the world that are solely their work and *their* creation."[1]

In our view this understanding of the role of great historical figures, which Hegel, unlike the romantics, applied to all spheres of human activity, not only excels the romantic conception in realism, but also points the way for concrete historical investigation of the actual content of social development, which finds its personified expression in the activities of the outstanding historical personality. As for the romantic conception of genius, it implies from the very start a failure to understand the meaningfulness of social life, which struck the romantics as the dull and desolate prose of a monotonous everyday existence.

One can, of course, understand and to a certain extent justify the petty-bourgeois romantic protest against capitalist reality. But this does not warrant a theoretical conception compounded of idealisation of the patriarchal social system, failure to understand the objective necessity of social progress and its inevitable contradictions, and futile attempts to escape these contradictions in the sphere of a subjectivity that turns its back on realities.

In contrast to Hegel, Schopenhauer, who largely anticipated contemporary irrational idealism, tries to develop the romantic conception of genius. Schopenhauer, it is true, does not speak of "divine genius" and tries to furnish a physiological explanation of the phenomenon of genius. In the main, however, that is, in examining the relationship between genius and social conditions, Schopenhauer takes the romantic conception of alienation to its logical conclusion. He writes: "In order to have original, unusual and perhaps even immortal thoughts, it is enough to be completely estranged from the world and things for a few moments, so that the most ordinary objects and events appear quite new and unknown, because this is how their true essence is revealed."[1] A genius, according to Schopenhauer, differs from ordinary people in that for most of his conscious, creative life he experiences "estrangement in a world that is alien and unsuited to him",[2] with the result that all other people strike him as trivial, paltry and unbearable. The greatness of genius is relative because it is measured by the worthlessness of its entourage. So the genius cannot help being arrogant, modesty being the lot of the mediocre. The genius is, in principle, incomprehensible to his contemporaries because he belongs to the future.

A physiological interpretation of genius (and an extremely naive one, incidentally) serves Schopenhauer as theoretical proof of his thesis on the inimicality of genius to society and the time in which he lives. According to Schopenhauer, the genius is a physiological anomaly. In ordinary and even talented people the intellect serves the will and practically oriented, impersonal aspirations. The genius, on the other hand, is the "intellect that has altered its destination",[3] that is to say, that has to a great extent freed itself of the will. The cognitive power of the genius, according to

[1] G. W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 11, S. 60.

[1] Schopenhauer, *On Genius*, St. Petersburg, 1899, p. 45 (in Russian).
[2] Ibid., p. 48.
[3] Ibid., p. 16.

Schopenhauer, is independent of accumulated human experience and knowledge. "The man of learning is someone who has devoted much time to study: the genius is someone from whom mankind will learn something that he has learned from no one else."[1]

These statements of Schopenhauer's imply a whole programme of subjectivist, irrationalist interpretation of art, the history of philosophy, and the philosophy of history, a programme that has been realised by contemporary existentialism and the doctrines related to it.[2]

The classic exponents of idealist philosophy regarded philosophy as an intellectual quest of the absolute. The conceptions of philosophical genius that they evolved presumed the comparative assessment of philosophical doctrines, the critical analysis of ideas, and the elucidation of their connection with preceding ideas, separation of the true from the false, and so on. The crisis of idealism which began in the second half of the 19th century marked a distinct break with this positive trend, which was superseded by attempts to prove the eternal significance of the pluralism of philosophical systems, the interpretation of philosophical doctrines as fundamentally

[1] Schopenhauer, op. cit., p. 45.

[2] It should be noted, however, that in their polemic with irrationalism the neo-positivists apply Schopenhauer's conception after their own fashion. While assenting to his basic thesis on the purely individual nature of creative and, particularly, philosophical activity, they infer that great philosophical doctrines are devoid of any objective cognitive significance. Louis Rougier, for example, writes: "We can grant the great philosophical systems only a sentimental and subjective value. As Schopenhauer admitted they are but an expression of temperament when confronted with the Universe" (L. Rougier, *La Metaphysique et le Langage,* Paris, 1960, p. 247).

incommensurate with one another and expressing not a definite step towards objective truth but a unique vision of the world.

The representatives of the Baden school of neo-Kantianism, having debarred from history regularity, repetition, determinism, continuity, and anything possessing any general essence, interpreted philosophical systems formalistically as the free constructions of genius, the specific expressions of the *a priori* ability to achieve theoretical synthesis, measured by the degree of the thinker's independence of the philosophical legacy and historical conditions. "The History of philosophy," wrote Wilhelm Windelband, "confirms that history is the realm of individualities, of unique and isolated units. . . ."[1]

Ortega-y-Gasset, who discovered and continued the irrational tendency in the neo-Kantian interpretation of the outstanding historical personality, regards philosophical doctrines as intellectual revelations of the spiritual situation of the outstanding thinker who is bound to break with existing views and create his own vision of the world. The outstanding thinker studies the cultural legacy and the social environment only in order to set off his own ideas against them, because philosophy "is nothing but the tradition of rejection of tradition".[2] Philosophy is thus interpreted as a mode of existence of the free human subjectivity, which is in constant opposition to the "inhuman" objectivity of science.

Existentialism treats philosophy (unlike science) as a "human" and personal attitude to the world,

[1] W. Windelband, *Geschichte der Philosophie,* Freiburg, 1890, S. 11.

[2] *Les grands courants de la pensée mondiale contemporaine. Panorames nationaux,* Vol. I, Paris, 1964, p. 164.

which may be acquired only to the extent that the individual frees himself from the power of impersonal social relations and thus acquires genuine existence. The great philosophers, declares Karl Jaspers, live both in time and simultaneously above it. The greatness of the philosophical genius lies not in the fact that he adequately expresses his epoch and makes an outstanding contribution to the cognition of reality, but in the fact that in passing through a historical epoch he comes into contact with that which is eternally transcendental. Thanks to this phenomenal independence of his time and the knowledge accumulated by humanity, the great philosopher reveals anew, through his own existence, the essence of philosophy and the initial reality, which in philosophy above all acquires the individual, imperfect form that is the only possible one for anthropologically limited man. "The great man," Jaspers writes, "is a reflection, an endlessly significant reflection of being as a whole. He is its mirror or its substitute. Without losing himself on the surface, he stands within the all-embracing that leads him on. His appearance in the world is simultaneously a penetration through the world."[1] All these grand words may sound highly significant, but a moment's consideration reveals their completely unoriginal source—the Christian faith, which Jaspers liberates from its dogmatic form in order to "deepen" its meaning.

The "philosophy of the history of philosophy", which has acquired significant influence in recent years, has much in common with existentialism. The key to this idealist trend of contemporary

[1] K. Jaspers, *Die grossen Philosophen,* München, 1959, S. 29.

bourgeois thought is the idea of the unconditional autonomy of philosophical creativity, that is to say, its fundamental independence of objective historical conditions, social practice and scientific knowledge. This conception, which Martial Gueroult, its main advocate, calls radical idealism, stems from the notion that every outstanding philosophical doctrine is "a world confined in itself, a universe of thought dependent on itself, in short, a *system.* Every system is, in fact, a proof of itself, perfect in itself and within the limits that it has marked out for itself *a priori,* that is, according to the norm established by fundamental thinking. This self-sufficiency is an attribute of its absoluteness, and it implies a claim to all-embracing and exceptional significance."[1] In Hegel's day people were still asking themselves whether a philosophy was true or false. The contemporary "philosophy of the history of philosophy" resolutely dissociates itself from any such naive statement of the question. Reviewing the historico-philosophical process with all its hopes and disappointments, it claims to solve only one question: what was the philosopher trying to say? And since he was an original philosopher he must have said something that no one else had said before him. Therefore the principle of the historico-philosophical inquiry must be the "principle of singularisation", that is to say, an interpretation of philosophical doctrines that takes uniqueness as the basic criterion of their significance. The question of the truth of certain philosophical propositions is not worth discussing, because "philosophical doctrines are no longer either true

[1] *Etudes sur l'histoire de la philosophie, en hommage à Martial Gueroult,* Paris, 1964, p. 131.

or false, they are different".[1] To what this maxim leads is shown by Augusto del Noce's study of Descartes.

Seeking to reveal the originality of the great thinker, del Noce isolates him from the ideological trends and from the tendencies of development of science in the 16th and the first half of the 17th century. He is not interested in the close connection Cartesian philosophy has with mathematics and the heliocentric picture of the world, despite the fact that the philosopher's discoveries point straight in that direction. Acknowledging that some rationalist themes emerged even before Descartes, del Noce denies any fundamental difference between the Cartesian rationalist world view and the previous slowly emerging rationalist trend. Cartesian rationalism is in effect cast aside as something that does not express the philosopher's real originality. Along with rationalism the significance of the *cogito*—the central point in the Cartesian revolution in philosophy—is also played down. What then is left that may be considered great in the teaching of Descartes? "Descartes," del Noce replies to this question, "begins modern philosophy inasmuch as his position among the theoreticians of the new science is *unique* and his philosophy may be regarded as a 'metaphysical accident' in the history of mechanistic physics."[2]

So, according to del Noce, it is not Descartes's rationalism but his mechanicism that constitutes his main and unique contribution to philosophy. In the days of Descartes, we are told, there was a

[1] P. Ricoeur, *Histoire et vérité*, Paris, 1955, p. 63.

[2] Augusto del Noce, *Problèmes de la periodisation historique. Le début de la "philosophie moderne". Le philosophie de l'histoire de la philosophie*, Rome, Paris, 1956, p. 147.

general tendency to agnosticism and empiricism. This assertion is an obvious exaggeration, but even if we accept it, it should be stressed that Cartesian rationalism was opposed to these tendencies.

Del Noce says that Hobbes, Gassendi, Roberval, Pascal and Mersenne launched polemics against Cartesian mechanicism. But the first three of these philosophers were themselves mechanists, which shows that, despite del Noce's claim, Cartesian mechanicism, like his rationalism, was only the supreme, systematically and creatively applied expression of the historical trends in the science and philosophy of his time. There is no basis for juxtaposing mechanicism and rationalism in the teaching of Descartes. On the contrary, they are merged into one, as though confirming Leonardo da Vinci's well-known remark that mechanics is a paradise for the mathematical science. It is no accident that the great mathematician Descartes was also the great founder of the rationalist and mechanistic line in philosophy, whose significance in the fight against the theological interpretation of nature was enormous.

Unlike del Noce, Descartes was well aware that his teaching was organically linked not only with the great discoveries of mathematics and natural science of his day, but also with the trends of capitalist development. Not by chance did he proclaim that it is the chief task of philosophy (which he did not separate from other sciences but regarded as the first among them) to seek truth for the purpose of mastering the forces of nature. Nor was it accidental that Descartes left feudal France for the Netherlands, where a bourgeois revolution had occurred.

The example of del Noce illustrates clearly enough what kind of subjectivist, anti-historical

interpretation of philosophy is produced by the idealist doctrine of the uniqueness of philosophical genius. The real originality of the brilliant philosopher, mathematician or natural scientist is reduced to a meaningless subjectivity, the source of which is proclaimed to be an amazing ability to *isolate* oneself from one's day and age. Del Noce writes that "philosophical analysis leads us to a Descartes, who stands *in isolation* (my italics—*T.O.*) with regard to the men of the new science. . . ."[1] This profoundly erroneous conclusion follows directly from the metaphysical opposition of the individual to the social, the absurdity of which becomes all the more apparent in the case of a truly great thinker. In point of fact, however, it is the great thinker in contrast to the ignoramus who is most receptive (*critically* so, of course) to the social content and intellectual attainments of his age.

The advocates of the "singularisation" of philosophy counterpose philosophical creativity to cognition of reality, which is allegedly the domain of the specialised science. They obliterate the qualitative distinction between philosophical studies and works of art.[2] Investigation of the content of philosophical doctrines is virtually replaced by

[1] Augusto del Noce, op cit., p. 153.

[2] As A. G. Yegorov has pointed out, the artistic reflection of reality is qualitatively different from its reflection in the form of concepts. "The specific nature of the artistic image as compared to scientific concepts lies in the fact that the artistic image retains even at the stage of generalisation (typification) its specific sensual expression, revealing the general in the form of the individual character, and the concrete event. . . ." (A. G. Yegorov, *Art and Social Life*, Moscow, 1959, p. 42 [in Russian].) It is not hard to understand that the aesthetic interpretation of philosophical doctrines is an extreme expression of philosophical subjectivism.

their formalistic interpretation. The main thing in philosophical doctrines from this standpoint would appear to be not so much their content as the originality of their mode of expression, and particularly that of the philosopher's own personality. Whereas in science more and more emphasis is being laid upon teamwork in research, continuity, mutual assistance, the division of labour and specialisation—none of which has prevented the emergence of great theories—philosophy is, from the standpoint of historico-philosophical subjectivism, doomed forever to remain a kind of intellectual hackwork that turns its back on modern methods of scientific research.

Contemporary bourgeois philosophy, particularly the irrational school, is in a state of permanent conflict with positive knowledge and the practical activity on which this knowledge is based. This conflict requires some apology, and the "philosophy of the history of philosophy" supplies it by arguing that philosophical propositions possess only *human* content, whereas science is interested only in objects and, in so far as it considers man at all, treats man, too, as an object. This breach between philosophy and science is clearly an expression of the profound crisis that contemporary bourgeois ideology is experiencing.

Historico-philosophical subjectivism is inevitably anti-historical. The historical approach to philosophy is treated by the advocates of this school as almost sacrilegious.

The fundamental defect in the individualistic-irrationalist characterisation of the philosopher (and philosophy) is not that it stresses the individuality or greatness of the genius whose works are of epochal significance, but that it makes a mystery of his originality and independence,

opposing these real qualities of genius to the socio-historical process, to the preceding achievements of culture and advances in knowledge. So the outstanding thinker's intellectual independence is interpreted metaphysically, that is to say, it is contrasted to his equally obvious dependence on the historical conditions and achievements of the age, which are acknowledged only as a springboard for the leap into the unknown.

Historical determinism is rejected on the basis of an oversimplified interpretation of determinism as the total conditioning of the individual by *external* circumstances. But the individual, who is totally determined by external factors, ceases to be a subject, i.e., he becomes merely the consequence of circumstances beyond his control, which rule out all freedom and creativity. But the determination of behaviour and creative activity, if understood dialectically, does not for a moment rule out individuality, originality or freedom of choice because the individual actually creates circumstances as well as being determined by them. The very influence of circumstances on human activity should not be understood as the exclusion of a wide range of possibilities and ways of realising them, because these possibilities exist in the circumstances themselves and are brought to light by the influence which man exerts upon them.

The same applies to the interwoven activities of human beings the product of which is society. Here it is even more obvious that the activity of a single individual cannot be treated merely as the consequence of the determining influence upon him of another person or mass of people. Dialectical interaction rules out one-sided determination of human activity, and the latter, as

the main force determining man, is a unity of objective and subjective determination, that is to say, self-determination, the boundaries of which vary in different circumstances and depend to a great extent on the level—social and individual—of development of the personality. The existentialists are wrong in seeing determinism as a mechanistic one-sided conception and insisting that the principle of determinism cannot be applied to the subject-object relationship. Existentialism consequently ignores the dialectical character of actual determination, which manifests itself to the full precisely in the subject-object relationship. Both sides of this relationship influence one another and the character of the mutual relationship between them is determined both by the subject and the object. The most essential thing about this relationship is the fact that the subject itself, within certain limits, creates the conditions, the circumstances, the factors which determine its activity.

The "philosophy of the history of philosophy" completely ignores the dialectics of the subjective and the objective, of the individual and the social, of freedom and necessity. It cannot see how the objective enriches the subjective, the social the individual, and necessity freedom. So the possibility of creative activity is allowed only if the subject achieves optimal internal independence of the external conditions of his activity. The subject must overcome the "pressure of reality", rise above it and cut it out of the game. Hence the actual historical conditions in which the outstanding philosopher works are regarded as having no positive meaning or impulse that could inspire him: philosophy can be motivated only by their denial. This one-sided approach to the

analysis of the actual conditions shaping the great philosophical doctrines is the result of the subjectivist interpretation of the entirely obvious fact of human subjectivity.

Revealing the epistemological roots of idealism, Lenin spoke of one-sidedness, rigidity, subjectivism and subjective blindness. Of course, this narrowness, which is formally present in any theoretical thinking, since it is abstract by its very nature, also characterises the personality of the idealist philosopher. The idealist worship of philosophical individuality reflects and at the same time obscures certain specific features of the development of idealist philosophy, particularly that variety of it which tries to put objective reality and its scientific reflection out of the picture altogether. But these features of idealist philosophy, which are wrongly attributed to philosophy in general, are rooted not merely in the philosopher's individuality, but in the social conditions, interests and needs of certain classes and social groups, which, owing to their historical narrowness, cannot find adequate scientific expression.

The individuality of the philosopher, as a social personality theoretically evolving a certain system of views, is brought about by development—social as well as individual. This is not to say, of course, that individuality is something of secondary importance. Man differs from a tree, a rock and other things in that his individuality belongs to his essence.

The very fact that the individual philosopher expresses a certain social need to a far greater extent than anyone else testifies to his originality, that is, his ability to express more than what has a bearing on his own individual existence. Francis

Bacon's battle against the schoolmen, against the worship of long-established authority and authority in general, his conviction that the sciences have only one system and that system has always been and remains democracy, his remark that an author may not be both worshipped and excelled, interpret and substantiate the needs of the age of emergent capitalism and characterise his creative originality in the most direct way. The fact that Bacon convincingly expressed, and philosophically *developed* (this must be stressed because a great philosopher cannot be considered merely the *mouthpiece* of his time) ideas that many of his contemporaries were only vaguely aware of, points directly to the *social content* of his creative individuality. To draw any other conclusion, that is, to attribute Bacon's ideas simply to his individuality, instead of regarding this individuality as a social phenomenon of the age, would be to act like those pseudo-rationalist scholastics who, as the philosopher himself aptly put it, are like spiders that draw the mental thread of their reasoning out of themselves. It must have required exceptional individuality to be able to oppose the prejudices not only of everyday consciousness but of the dominant ideology and learning of those days.

The great historical personality is to a large extent represented by his historical achievements. The great thing about him is that to which he devotes his exceptional abilities, energy and zeal. Freud's biggest mistake, which even his most devoted followers have been compelled to deprecate, was his attempt to deduce from the subconscious psychological complexes that he believed to be inherent in the human personality the content of its creativity, including its social content. The

failure of this attempt has obviously not been understood by the advocates of the subjective interpretation of the history of philosophy, who have tried to explain Freud's one-sidedness as "psychological depth", as the psycho-analytical interpretation of the subconscious, and so on. But the fundamental methodological failure of the Freudian interpretation of poetry, philosophy and sociology lay not simply in its one-sidedness, but in its denial of the specific nature of the social, in its idealist, irrationalist reduction of the social to the individual, and the individual to the subconscious, to the impersonal. Neo-Freudianism, which supplements Freud's doctrine with a psychological analysis of the cultural environment, has not overcome this weak spot in Freudianism, nor the metaphysical opposition of the individual to the social, since it interprets the social mainly as a factor that deforms the human personality.

The difference between the individual and social consciousness is an empirically obvious fact, which can, however, be correctly understood only by means of scientific investigation of the following dialectical unity: the individual consciousness is social in character, and the social consciousness exists in the minds of human individuals and, like all that is social, is a product of the interaction of these individuals. The advocates of the historico-philosophical varieties of the theory of the hero and the crowd usually agree that the consciousness of the ordinary "average" individual has a social or, as Western sociologists now put it, a "mass" character, but they maintain that the consciousness of the outstanding personality differs from that of the "impersonal masses" precisely because it is radically opposed to the social consciousness. The essential characteristic of the

social consciousness, however, is not its mass character or its impersonality, but the manifold wealth of its spiritual content which is to be found in science, philosophy, art and so on. The confusion of the social consciousness with everyday consciousness, which indeed has a mass but by no means an impersonal character is a glaring mistake on the part of today's exponents of "élitist" theory, a mistake that inevitably leads to the sterile opposition of the great historical personality to the cultural heritage and the age that he expresses and enriches by his activity.

Historico-philosophical subjectivism despite its own direct intentions detracts from the significance of the brilliant philosophers because it excludes from their creative individuality the accumulated historical experience and intellectual attainments of their predecessors and contemporaries. The idealist "elevation" of the great thinker to a position above his time is based on a completely indiscriminate notion of the historical epoch, failure to perceive its inherent internal contradictions, the class struggle, and the law-governed tendencies of social development. This idealist conception, which today flies the flag of non-conformism (with the outstanding thinker supposedly as its spokesman), is quite unexpectedly transformed into traditional philosophical conformism, which makes a show of its fictitious uncommittedness.

Jean-Paul Sartre, while admitting that historical materialism is "the only acceptable interpretation of history",[1] nevertheless reproaches Marxists for

[1] J.-P. Sartre, *Critique de la raison dialectique*, Paris, 1960, p. 24.

not explaining why one particular individual and not another became an outstanding historical personality. "Valéry is an intellectual petit-bourgeois, there is no doubt about that. But not every intellectual petit-bourgeois is a Valéry. The heuristic deficiency of contemporary Marxism is contained in those two phrases. Marxism lacks the series of intermediate links that are needed to grasp the process that produces a personality and its product in a given class and a given society at a given moment in history. By qualifying Valéry as a petit-bourgeois and his work as idealist, Marxism fails to discover in either of them anything but what it has put there. Because of this deficiency Marxism ends up by discarding the particular, which it defines as merely the effect of chance."[1]

It seems to me that Sartre completely misapprehends the subject and tasks of the materialist interpretation of history and the limits of theoretical sociology in general. Historical materialism studies the most general laws of development of social formations, the totality of social relations, that is to say, society as a historically defined social organism, the relationship of social consciousness to social being, of the economic basis to the superstructure and so on. Such investigation fully explains the appearance of outstanding figures on the historical scene, but it does not, of course, set out to explain why a particular individual becomes a great poet, philosopher, scientist or anything else. This is a specialised task and to deal with it one must apply the principles of historical materialism to a special historical,

[1] J.-P. Sartre, op cit., p. 44.

biographical and psychological study which, if sufficient historical data are available, will solve that particular problem.

Contrary to Sartre's assertions, historical materialism does not need to be supplemented in a way that would turn it into a theoretical investigation of the biographies of separate individuals. When Marx studies the causes of Louis Bonaparte's counter-revolutionary *coup d'état,* he applies historical materialism in analysing the particular circumstances that gave rise to the coup and scientifically explains why Louis Bonaparte in consequence of his social position, personal qualities, historical tradition and the specific features of the class struggle in France between 1848 and 1851 emerged as the leading historical figure in these events. Sartre himself refers to Marx's *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* as a brilliant example of the materialist investigation of the fate of certain historical personages, but his own proposal that historical materialism should be supplemented with Freudian psychoanalysis, empirical bourgeois sociology and the like does not make sense because this very work, like other works of Marx and Engels, provides ample evidence that historical materialism supplies not only a global characterisation of the socio-historical process, but also, when applied as a method in specialised historical, biographical and socio-psychological research, furnishes a genuinely scientific explanation of particular and unique social phenomena.

Nor does the scientific history of philosophy seek to explain precisely why a given individual, for example, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, the son of a German peasant, became a great philosopher. It studies his doctrine as a definite stage in the

development of philosophical knowledge, as a social phenomenon. This, of course, does not preclude the possibility and necessity of special biographical research, a special biographical study of Fichte, which would presumably give us a better understanding of his views and some of the peculiarities of his doctrine and the form in which it is delivered, although this could not in principle make any essential difference to the scientific understanding of his teaching.

Thus, only historical materialism, Marxist-Leninist historico-philosophical science, correctly propounds and solves the problem of the historical personality, which is obscured by idealism, and the problem of the great philosophers, one of the aspects of this more general problem.

2. EPOCHS IN PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC EPOCHS

In the previous section of this chapter we showed the insolvency of the subjectivist interpretation of the historico-philosophical process. It should be noted that some bourgeois philosophers and historians of philosophy also object to this interpretation, since they realise that to present philosophy as the intellectual self-expression of an outstanding individuality robs it of much of its social meaning and significance. As modern times have clearly demonstrated, philosophy is an active participant in the ideological and political struggle. The researches of bourgeois sociologists confirm this fact and it is not surprising that many researchers who are far from accepting the materialist view of history recognise to a greater or lesser degree the need to study philosophy in the

context of the actual historical process.[1] But this "contextual" or "cultural-historical" approach to the history of philosophy is usually one of the variants of the well-known (and utterly bankrupt) "theory of factors". Realising that the study of philosophy in isolation from other cultural phenomena does not work and trying to trace the interaction between them, bourgeois scholars nevertheless continue to ignore the socio-economic content of social development. They talk of the "intellectual climate" and the "historical situation" giving rise to certain philosophical views, thus interpreting historical conditions as states of mind, spiritual needs, a sense of dissatisfaction, and so on. But to treat philosophy as part of the practical life of society, as part of the socio-economic process, to investigate the connection between philosophical ideas and the development of social production and its social consequences, the prevailing social relations and the class struggle—all this appears to the bourgeois scholar to be a vulgarisation of the scientific understanding of philosophy, because in the alienated, idealist form of philosophising with which he is

[1] The neo-Thomist Johannes Hirschberger, for instance, writes that "every exponent of the science of the spirit is a child of his time, cannot step beyond its boundaries and will, therefore, always proceed from it, in his initial philosophical positions and notions of value, although he may never be fully aware of the fact" (J. Hirschberger, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, Bd. I, S. 2). Hirschberger, of course, does not take this historical approach to Thomas Aquinas, who appears to him to be a supernatural philosopher, the creator of an "eternal philosophy" endowed with truth and significance that are above history. But Hirschberger readily applies the historical method when studying philosophers outside the Thomist fold, whose doctrines are treated as having been conditioned by history and therefore limited.

chiefly concerned he fails to see any real social content. "To understand an age or a nation, we must understand its philosophy, and to understand its philosophy we must ourselves in some degree become philosophers. There is here a reciprocal causation: the circumstances of men's lives do much to determine their philosophy, but, conversely, their philosophy does much to determine their circumstances."[1]

Russell prefers to judge a historical epoch by its consciousness, which in his opinion partly determines the epoch and is partly determined by it. But what is there in a historical epoch that is determined by philosophy? What is there in philosophy that is determined by the historical epoch? The concept of reciprocal causation that Russell suggests fails to answer these questions for the simple reason that the interacting sides are themselves to a considerable extent the products of interaction. Consequently, what we have to do is to study the basis of this interaction, which cannot be reduced to the circumstances *directly* influencing philosophy.

The weakness of this descriptive approach to the development of philosophy lies not in the zeal with which it emphasises the influence of philosophy on social life. Philosophy is a form of man's spiritual life and as such undoubtedly has an effect on social being. But the contemporary bourgeois scholar lacks the scientific concept of social being that Marxism has evolved, and consequently fails to understand that philosophy's influence on social life is conditioned by what it has to say about society, by its social content. Hegel's definition of philosophy as the age comprehended in thought, as the consciousness of the age, is far more profound than Russell's "realistic" conception, because it rules out in principle any ambivalent idea of partial determination.

[1] B. Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, p. 11.

Because Hegel is an idealist he refuses to see in philosophy any particular reflection of the historically determined social reality. But as a historian of philosophy, who attaches primary importance to facts, he constantly tries to discover the unity between philosophical doctrines and historical conditions, although from the standpoint of absolute idealism philosophy is the substantial content of the historical age, that is to say, it ranks first in importance, if not in time. This contradictory combination of historicism and idealism, or the idealist interpretation of the historical process, its reduction to an immanently developing logico-ontological concept, was inevitable in the system of Hegelian panlogism, which takes as its point of departure the identity of being and thinking.

Even so, Hegel's dialectics constantly compelled him to reckon with the historical facts and to consider philosophical systems not simply as the result of the self-motion of pure absolute thought, but as the necessary intellectual expression of radical changes in social life. These changes, incidentally, are attributed to changes in the spirit of the time, or the "spirit of the peoples". It is from these positions that Hegel considered, for example, the Sophists, Socrates, and the philosophy of Enlightenment.

Regarding the historical sources of stoicism and Epicureanism, and Roman scepticism, Hegel notes that, despite their differences, all these doctrines express one and the same tendency—the striving "to make the spirit in itself indifferent to every-

thing presented in reality".[1] But where does this tendency come from? Is it rooted in the self-development of philosophy or in changes in the structure of society? Hegel, as we know, is inclined to accept the latter conclusion. He points to the decline of the Roman Empire, comparing it to the decay of the living body: "The state organism had disintegrated into the atoms of private individuals. Roman life had come to such a pass that, on the one hand, there was fate and the abstract universality of supreme power, and, on the other, individual abstraction, the personality, which implies that the individual in himself amounts to something not because of his vitality, not because of his fulfilled individuality, but as an abstract individual."[2] Some people gave themselves up entirely to sensual pleasures, others by violence, insidiousness and cunning sought to obtain wealth and sinecures, and still others withdrew from practical activity to the sphere of philosophical speculation. But even they, for all the loftiness of their intellectual aspirations, still expressed the same social phenomenon—the break-up of this particular society, because "thought which, as pure thought, became the subject of its own inquiries, reconciled itself to itself and became completely abstract. . ."[3]

Here, as in many other parts of his lectures on the history of philosophy, Hegel not only passes judgement on the philosophy of classical individualism, which saw its chief goal not in mental knowledge of reality but in the attainment of ataraxia; he also points out the insolvency of the

[1] G. W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 11, S. 408.
[2] Ibid., S. 407-08.
[3] Ibid., S. 409.

kind of speculative thought which makes thought itself the subject-matter of thought. But such in a sense was Hegel's own philosophy, with the one, admittedly important, difference that he transformed thought, the logical process, into absolute being and, by following up this purely speculative identity, perceived the laws of development immanent in both thinking and being.

Hegel asserts: "The particular form of philosophy is, therefore, contemporaneous with a particular form of peoples among whom it emerges, with their state system and form of government, with their morality, with their social life, with their abilities, habits and conveniences of life, with their aspirations and works in the sphere of art and science, with their religions, with their military destinies and external relations, with the collapse of states in which this particular principle has manifested its power, and with the rise and activity of new states in which a higher principle is born and develops."[1] It is highly significant that Hegel speaks of the *contemporaneity* of the existence of a certain philosophy with such definite peculiarities of a given historical epoch. He seems to have been aware that the specific content of the historical epoch to which a given philosophy belongs cannot be inferred from the latter. But to an even greater extent was he convinced that philosophy, being substantial by nature, could not be determined by any "civil society", which appeared to him to be the alienated sphere of the "Absolute Spirit", whose creative activity is again speculative thought. Contemporaneous existence is a kind of historical parallelism, the basis of which Hegel seeks in the "spirit of the time", the

[1] Ibid., Bd. 17, S. 84.

"spirit of the peoples", and ultimately in the "Absolute Spirit", whose highest expression is once again philosophy. The development of philosophy is an immanent process of the self-cognition of the "Absolute Spirit" and Hegel, as Marx aptly remarked, was inconsistent in that, while regarding his philosophy as the ultimate perfection of absolute self-cognition, he did not regard himself as the subject of this process, that is to say, the "Absolute Spirit" itself.[1]

Hegel is equally inconsistent in his estimation of the role of philosophy in the development of society. Assuming that thought, particularly in its philosophical (authentic) form, is all-powerful, Hegel nevertheless treats philosophy as a peculiar epiphenomenon of the contemporaneous historical epoch, since this epoch is a definite stage of alienation of the "Absolute Spirit", and only to the extent that it overcomes this alienation can it find its adequate expression in philosophy. But in this case philosophy, naturally, cannot be one of the spiritual potentialities that form the epoch, since it always appears later. "When philosophy," Hegel says, "begins to trace its grey paint upon the grey, this shows that a certain form of life has grown old and with its grey upon grey philosophy cannot rejuvenate it but only understand it; the owl of Minerva does not take wing until the twilight."[2] This conclusion, which follows inevitably from Hegel's whole system, is quite often disproved by his own historico-philosophical researches, which show philosophy blazing the trail to a new social structure and taking a direct part in its development. But Hegel does not formulate the conclusions he draws from concrete historico-philosophical research as theoretical principles. This was also because, as a bourgeois thinker of the early 19th century, Hegel placed his whole faith on the spontaneous development of society, which was drawing Germany into the capitalist process of production regardless of and even, as it seemed to Hegel, despite the conscious attempts at social reform, most of which struck him as subjectivist interference in a process, objectively reasonable (whatever its appearance), of social development that was realising the substantial aim of world history.

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Holy Family*, p. 115.
[2] G. W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 7, S. 36-37.

Feuerbach's criticism of Hegel's philosophy already implies an awareness of the fact that the speculative idealist understanding of the development of philosophy as the self-generation and self-motion of pure thought inevitably comes into conflict with the historical view that philosophy specifically expresses the real demands of its time. Rejecting Hegel's panlogism, Feuerbach insists that philosophy is rooted not in thought but in feeling, and that the philosopher as an actual human being thinks only because he feels and experiences along with other people like himself, people of a definite historical epoch.

The narrowness of Feuerbach's anthropological materialism precluded any possibility of understanding human essence as a historically determined totality of social relations. Nevertheless Feuerbach, bourgeois democrat that he was, fully realised that the changes occurring in philosophy reflect the demands of the time, and that these demands, particularly in periods of crisis, are profoundly contradictory. He noted that "some see the need to retain the old and drive out the new, while for others the need is to realise the new.

Only the desire to realise the new adequately expresses the real demands of social progress". As for attempts to retain the old, they appear to Feuerbach, who regards history from the standpoint of abstract humanism, merely artificial and strained, although he cannot fail to see that these attempts are made by certain, quite definite classes of society. Admittedly, at the time of the 1848 revolution Feuerbach tries to obtain a more concrete idea of the origins of the opposing social forces. "Where," he asks, "does a new epoch begin in history? Wherever the oppressed mass or majority advances its entirely legitimate egoism against the exclusive egoism of a nation or caste, wherever classes of people or whole nations, having vanquished the overweening arrogance of the patrician minority, emerge from the wretched condition of the proletariat into the light of historical renown. So, too, the egoism of the presently oppressed majority of humanity must and will assert its right and launch a new epoch of history."[1]

These seeds of the materialist understanding of history remain undeveloped in Feuerbach's teaching. He regarded his philosophy as the ideological expression of the "egoism" of the oppressed majority of humanity among whom he, incidentally, as an ideologist of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, also included the bourgeoisie, since it was fighting the ruling feudal forces. Bourgeois-democratic illusions, the idealist explanation of history, and the inspiration of the anti-feudal struggle against religion, which he imagined to be almost the chief enemy of freedom—all this

[1] Ludwig Feuerbach, *Sämtliche Werke,* Bd. 9, Leipzig, 1851, S. 398.

made it impossible for Feuerbach to understand the unity of philosophy with the historically concrete, socio-economic, political content of the epoch, the class struggle and the development of the capitalist formation, the contradictions of which he was beginning to comprehend.

The doctrine of the development of the productive forces as transformation of external nature and human nature itself, the analysis of the antagonistic contradictions of social progress in class society, the theory of socio-economic formations, the class struggle and social revolutions, the investigation of production relations, of the political, legal, and ideological superstructure, the scientific understanding of the necessary connection between material and spiritual production and of the specific laws of the social process in general—such is the true theoretical foundation of the scientific conception of the social role of philosophy. Thus, only historical materialism does away with the naive notion of the autogenesis of philosophical knowledge, includes the development of philosophy in the law-governed process of development of society and shows that "the philosophers", as Engels said, "were by no means impelled, as they thought they were, solely by the force of pure reason. On the contrary, what really pushed them forward most was the powerful and ever more rapidly onrushing progress of natural science and industry."[1]

Not a single philosophy can be understood purely out of itself, purely on the basis of what the philosopher himself writes. Historico-philosophical inquiry must first of all understand philos-

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels. *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. III, pp. 347-48.

ophy as epochal consciousness, the consciousness of the age, disclose its social ethos, its specific problems which in the course of subsequent social development break away from the historical conditions that generated them and become an element of the philosophical tradition and the property of new philosophical doctrines. These problems thus acquire a new interpretation independent of the epoch that gave birth to them. Philosophy (like art and the cultural heritage in general) retains a certain significance and influence beyond the bounds of the epoch that engendered it and this creates the idealistic illusion of its being independent of the historical epoch. But this illusion is dispelled as soon as we begin to analyse the social content, the cognitive significance of philosophy, and also the historical continuity of epochs in the progressive development of society.

The theories of natural law propounded by Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke and Rousseau, the rule of reason proclaimed by the Enlighteners, the idea of enlightened self-interest, Kant's "good will", the doctrine of freedom as the essence of man, the philosophico-anthropological conception of the unity of the human race, the materialist systems of nature, the concept of the self-motion of matter, deism and atheism, mechanicism, rationalism, the sensualist doctrine of cognition and affects, the idea of the law-governed nature of everything that exists, the doctrine of the universality of development, the idea of social progress—all these diverse philosophical problems of the new age can be correctly understood only as the epochal expression of the tremendously accelerated progress of the productive forces, science and culture, which came about with the

emergence and development of the capitalist mode of production.

Even while his own views were still taking shape, Marx said: "... philosophers do not grow out of the soil like mushrooms, they are the product of their time and of their people, whose most subtle, precious and invisible sap circulates in philosophical ideas. The same spirit that builds railways by the hands of the workers builds philosophical systems in the brain of the philosophers. Philosophy does not stand outside the world any more than man's brain is outside of him because it is not in his stomach...."[1] Marx emphasised the unity of philosophy with the whole ensemble of social relations. The social division of labour, as a result of which some build railways, others create philosophical systems, while others discover the laws of nature, and so on, should not be allowed to overshadow the dialectical unity of the socio-historical process, which acquires its fullest expression in the philosophical doctrines of the progressive classes. For this reason Marx also said that philosophy "is the spiritual quintessence of its time", that "it is the living soul of culture".[2]

The great philosophies are epochal events in world history. And not only because they are epochs in mankind's intellectual development. Each of them is a powerful spiritual force contributing to the emergence and development of the new epoch. These doctrines reveal, explain

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *On Religion*, 1962, pp. 30-31.

[2] Ibid. These statements of Marx date from the middle of 1842, i.e., from the time when he had not yet created the theory of scientific communism. Nevertheless, in our view, they give a profoundly true characterisation of the epochal significance of outstanding philosophical doctrines.

and substantiate the needs of the historical epoch, its struggle with the forces of past and present that are opposing it, its intellectual, moral and social ideal. The law-governed connection between the various historical epochs, forming the necessary stages of development of humanity, is reproduced on the spiritual plane by the development of philosophy. The gains of each historical epoch in the sphere of material and spiritual production and socio-political progress are inherited by subsequent historical epochs not only thanks to the continuity of economic development but also through the spiritual development of society, in which philosophy plays a tremendous part.

The historically transient social problems of every epoch imply intransient aspirations. And a great philosophical doctrine, inasmuch as it expresses these aspirations, advances beyond the boundaries of its time and becomes part of mankind's spiritual heritage. In the history of philosophy, in which for every new generation all the stages of the previous philosophical development are presented simultaneously, we have the only intellectual plane in which the thinkers of various epochs meet as though they were contemporaries. We can put questions to our predecessors and, although we have to answer these questions ourselves, the philosophical doctrines of the past help us to solve contemporary problems. The understanding of philosophy as epochal consciousness, which is "removed", i. e., negated, but at the same time preserved in a new form by subsequent development, was enunciated in idealistically obscure terms by Hegel. In the teaching of Marx and Engels it acquired a scientific, materialist substantiation thanks to the concrete historical investigation of the development of the different

historical types of society (socio-economic formations), the laws of social progress and spiritual continuity, the class nature of social relations in the capitalist and other antagonistic formations preceding it, and also thanks to investigation of the struggle of the philosophical trends, a struggle that precludes any possibility of the harmonious continuity of philosophical ideas of which Hegel wrote.

The Marxist-Leninist conception of philosophy as epochal consciousness, while tracing the origin and social content of the outstanding philosophies, makes no attempt to limit the significance and influence of these philosophies to the framework of one particular epoch. It is, consequently, radically opposed to the idealist-relativist interpretation of the historicity of philosophy, which was extravagantly expressed in Oswald Spengler's philosophy of culture. "Every philosophy," Spengler wrote, "is the expression of its own and only its own time.... The difference is not between perishable and imperishable doctrines but between doctrines which live their day and doctrines which never live at all. The immortality of thoughts is an illusion—the essential is, what kind of man comes to expression in them. The greater the man, the truer the philosophy, with the inward truth that in a great work of art transcends all proof of its several elements or even of their compatibility with one another."[1] In this proposition, which is a very thorough mixture of correct and incorrect ideas, historicism is converted into its opposite, because every epoch is interpreted as a unique complex of cultural phenomena and is

[1] O. Spengler, *The Decline of the West,* Vol. 1, N.Y., p. 41.

thus separated from the preceding and subsequent development of society.

To substantiate his irrationalist mythology of culture, Spengler relies mainly on the subjective idealist argument. Nature is only a cultural-historical image, the unity of man's immediate perceptions of a certain epoch. History is an equally subjective, but—unlike nature—a "poetic" construction, which realises the desire to bring the "living being of the world" into a certain harmony with human life. No wonder, then, that philosophical doctrines lose their specific nature, because they are regarded as works of art. The social content of philosophy is interpreted in the spirit of the irrationalist approach to life, from positions that deny the existence of objective truth not only in philosophy, but in mathematics and the natural science as well. Every epoch, according to Spengler, creates its own mathematics, its own natural science, which have no cognitive value beyond the bounds of their own epoch, because they are not cognition of objective reality but historically transient forms of spiritual life. Everything that happens in history is for once only, unrepeatable, because of the irreversibility of "time". The quotation marks drive home the point that for Spengler even time is not an objective reality. It is surely obvious that given such an interpretation of the historical epoch and its culture the assertion that philosophy is the expression of its own time (and, as he stresses, "*only* its own time,") amounts to a complete denial of the cognitive significance of philosophy. This conception, which lays claim to a historical vision of the phenomena of culture and reality, denies philosophy's *development* and in no way explains the empirically established fact of the significance

of scientific and philosophical knowledge (and also works of art) of the past for the present.

Thus the theories that attribute the significance of eternal truth to philosophical systems are as invalid as those that deny any element of perennial significance in the great philosophical doctrines of the past. Philosophical doctrines (like any knowledge in general) retain their significance only to the extent that they are confirmed, adjusted, developed and enriched by new propositions, and this of course depends not simply on the zeal of their proponents, but primarily on how well they express new historical needs, how they reflect objective reality and assist in its further cognition and transformation. Thus the definition of philosophy as the consciousness of the epoch may be interpreted both dialectically and metaphysically. Spengler's interpretation of the epochal consciousness is not only idealist but metaphysical.

In his letters of 1880-1890 Engels wrote against the vulgarisation of the materialist conception of history as practised by the notorious "economic materialism". Lenin and Plekhanov were severely critical of V. Shulyatikov, who in a book that appeared in 1908, *The Justification of Capitalism in West European Philosophy,* interpreted the philosophies of modern times as a disguised representation of the development of the capitalist economy. Shulyatikov wrote, for example: "Every single one of the philosophical terms and formulae with which it (philosophy—*T.O.*) operates . . . serve to indicate social classes, groups, subgroups and their interrelationships." The philosophical doctrine of antithesis of the spiritual and the material expresses, in Shulyatikov's view, nothing but the opposition between the organising "upper strata" and the operative "lower

strata". Spinoza's doctrine was described by Shulyatikov as the "song of triumphant capital, absorbing everything and centralising everything". Citing these and other statements of Shulyatikov's, Lenin wrote: "The entire book is an example of extreme vulgarisation of materialism.... A caricature of materialism in history."[1]

If we ignore Shulyatikov's pretentious claims and seek out the theoretical roots of his conceptions, we discover an obvious failure to understand the basic proposition of materialism that the social consciousness is conditioned by *social* being. Agreeing with this proposition but misinterpreting it, Shulyatikov maintains that philosophy expresses *only* the economic structure of society and has nothing to do with *cognition* of nature and society. This emasculation of the objective content of philosophy led to an idealist error in the spirit of Spengler. But the content of philosophy (like any other form of knowledge in general) is to a great extent determined by the subject of its inquiry, whose modification only indirectly reflects socio-economic advances.[2]

Theoretical natural science, whose subject of inquiry is independent not only of social consciousness but also of social being, nevertheless also reflects the socio-economic processes because science expresses certain social needs and is stimulated by the development of production and the technical means of research for which it provides the basis. The vigorous advance of

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 38, p. 502.

[2] In our view, a systematic elaboration of the Marxist-Leninist sociology of cognition and, as a special department of it, the sociology of philosophy, is required to overcome the one-sided, oversimplified view of the relationship of philosophy to the material life of society.

natural science in the 17th and 18th centuries reflected the transition from the feudal to the capitalist mode of production. The very need for scientific research arises not merely out of the existence of nature but out of social historical development. And yet the link between society and the natural sciences gives no grounds for ignoring the specific nature of the phenomena they study. Scientific analysis always makes it possible to separate what, for example, in the teaching of Galileo reflects natural processes, and what reflects the anti-feudal social movement. The concept of epochal consciousness is applicable, of course, not only to outstanding philosophical doctrines but also to natural science, art, and so on. The definition of philosophy as the epochal consciousness does not claim to indicate its specific attribute, it seeks to reveal its historical content, its significance, as conditioned by major socio-economic advances and the achievements of scientific knowledge.

The Marxist-Leninist periodisation of the history of philosophy according to the succession of the socio-economic formations and the basic stages in their development provides the sociological foundation for the scientific understanding of philosophy as epochal consciousness: ancient, feudal, bourgeois, and so on.

Engels characterised the French Enlightenment of the 18th century as a philosophical revolution in France, as the ideological preparation for 1789.[1]

[1] Vivid historical confirmation of Engels's proposition is provided by Joseph de Maistre's *Considérations sur la France.* De Maistre was a zealous defender of feudal absolutism, who maintained that the Great French Revolution was brought about by the "outright conflict of Christianity and Philosophy". Since "in pre-revolutionary

Engels called German classical philosophy the philosophical revolution in Germany. These are classical characterisations of philosophy as epochal consciousness. Lenin's definition of the revolutionary-democratic essence of the teaching of the outstanding Russian materialists of 1840-1860 has the same profound significance. This definition, as we know, is connected with the fundamental division of the basic stages of the liberation movement in Russia.

The more significant a philosophical doctrine becomes, the more profoundly does it reflect the history of a given people, and the more powerfully does it express the basic interests of social progress, sum up historical experience, the development of philosophical thought and other forms of social consciousness. A mere historical notation indicating the epoch that engendered a given philosophy cannot reveal its full meaning, first, because philosophy is not just a specific expression of the historical epoch, but also one of the powerful spiritual forces that contribute to its formation and development. Second, because philosophy does not merely reflect the epoch; it also expresses the constantly operative, basic tendencies of its development, that is to say, the historical processes that take place over very long periods.

The historical epoch cannot be reduced to the history of one people, or one state, because it is

France all the philosophers of any importance were enemies of the old regime and its religious ideology, de Maistre regards philosophy as the dire enemy of "order" and explains that philosophy is an "essentially disorganising force", just because it is not based on religion (J. de Maistre, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Vol. I, Lyon-Paris, 1924, p. 56).

an essential stage in world history. It is a different matter that every stage in world history achieves its culmination in the history of certain peoples and countries, where the new epochal consciousness is formed. Marxist doctrine arose in Germany, but it summed up world historical experience and the advances of social thought in the most progressive countries of Europe. Leninism—the Marxism of the modern age—was born in Russia, it summed up the new experience of the world historical development and for this reason acquired international significance.

Thus, the investigation of philosophy as the epochal consciousness presupposes all-round analysis of the social development and the specific nature of its philosophical reflection in the various historical epochs. In this respect the Marxist historians of philosophy are confronted with a formidable task, which cannot be performed without completely overcoming oversimplified sociologising or empirical description of the historical conditions of the existence and development of philosophy, without special research into the cognitive significance, content and meaning of philosophical doctrines, a significance which as a rule goes beyond the bounds of the historically defined epoch that engendered them. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the sociological analysis of philosophical doctrines reveals their social content and significance and cannot, therefore, answer the question, why, for example, the rationalists recognised the existence of *a priori* knowledge, and the sensualists maintained that all knowledge was ultimately rooted in sensory perceptions. To answer such questions there must be special epistemological analysis of philosophical doctrine, study of the history of science

and philosophy which fully takes into account the results of socio-economic research and also the relative independence of philosophy.

3. IDEOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS OF PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy, as the self-consciousness of a historically determined epoch, is ideology. The analysis of the relationship between philosophy and ideology presents certain difficulties, because ideology has not yet been sufficiently studied in Marxist literature, despite the fact that the scientific understanding of ideology and particularly the development of the concept of *scientific ideology* are of paramount importance in the contemporary ideological and political struggle.

The majority of Marxist scholars agree that philosophy is a specific form of ideology. Acknowledgement of this fact, however, is not enough to produce a solution to the problems that it raises. Is the concept of ideology (including scientific ideology) broad enough to cover the whole content of philosophical doctrines, which, as we have seen, cannot be reduced to reflection of only the *social* reality? Since there is a definite difference between social consciousness and science, does not ideology characterise only the social consciousness? Does the concept of the philosophical, and particularly the scientific-philosophical world view coincide with the concept of ideology? What does the concept of "scientific ideology" mean? Is it identical to the concept of the science of society? How does the scientific ideology differ from the non-scientific? Does this distinction apply only to its form or to its content as well? What constitutes the specific nature of

philosophy as ideology? Is the content and significance of philosophy limited to its ideological function?

It need hardly be said that these questions, which have been keenly debated in Soviet and foreign Marxist literature in recent years, require a more thorough investigation than can be accomplished in the present monograph. Therefore we shall confine ourselves to a brief examination of the main features of the problem, in order to make the concept of philosophy more concrete.

A number of Marxist studies of the question stress that the founders of Marxism used the term "ideology" in the negative sense that it had historically acquired in their time. There can be no doubt, however, that Marx and Engels did not confine themselves to this interpretation of ideology, as illusory consciousness and the speculative idealist mystification of objective reality. In fact, they built up a scientific interpretation of ideology.

The concept of ideology as alienated social consciousness, which we find in the works of Marx and Engels, implies a positive as well as a negative meaning and this positive meaning was thoroughly developed by Lenin, who substantiated the concept of "scientific ideology" and included it in the system of the materialist conception of history.[1]

[1] This is, of course, not the only instance when Lenin, basing himself on the propositions of Marx and Engels and enriching them with new historical experience, formulates new concepts which, as he himself often stresses, were essentially outlined by the founders of Marxism. Such, for example, are the concepts of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, which Lenin contributed to Marxist theory. Regarding the latter concept, Lenin cites the experience of the German revolution of 1848,

"We set out," Marx and Engels wrote, "from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence."[1] Thus, the methodological requirement formulated by the founders of Marxism runs as follows. When investigating social reality one must proceed not from ideology, not from consciousness in general, but from the actual living, historical process, analysis of which should explain also its reflection, including the ideological form of that reflection. This methodological principle, organically linked with the historico-materialist solution to the basic philosophical problem, is a categorical imperative of Marxist sociology: to *return* from conceptions, from ideas about things to the things themselves, so that through scientific analysis we may know their actual relationships, discover the mechanism of their false reflection in people's consciousness, and *replace* these distorted images

which was generalised by Marx and Engels. "There is no doubt," Lenin wrote, "that by learning from the experience of Germany as elucidated by Marx, we can arrive at no other slogan for a decisive victory of the revolution than: a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 136.) Lenin constantly stressed that fidelity to the spirit of Marxism lies not in the dogmatic interpretation of its propositions but in their creative development.

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, pp. 37-38.

of reality with a system of scientific concepts. This approach to the problem differed significantly from the notions of ideology as illusory consciousness devoid of objective content that were widespread in the time of Marx and Engels. By analysing not only the form but also the *real content* of ideology, the founders of Marxism proved the necessity for a positive appraisal of this social phenomenon. And this, undoubtedly, provides a highly important theoretical foundation for the scientific understanding of ideology.

Criticising Young Hegelianism as a variety of the "German ideology", Marx and Engels were not content to prove the scientific invalidity of its speculative-idealist constructions; they at the same time revealed its social content, of which the Young Hegelians themselves had not been aware: "German philosophy is a consequence of German petty-bourgeois relations."[1] Marx and Engels reveal what is behind the alienated ideological form of the reflection of social reality—the social programme of a certain class.[2] They ex-

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 492.

[2] Thus, for example, in criticising the Young Hegelian conception of self-consciousness, Marx and Engels show that it is speculative idealist expression of the demand for the civil equality of all members of society advanced by the French bourgeoisie. "Self-consciousness is a person's consciousness of himself in the sphere of pure thought. Equality is a person's becoming aware of himself in practice, i.e., his becoming aware of other people as his equals, and his attitude to them as such. Equality is the French expression for denoting the unity of the human essence, for denoting man's generic consciousness and generic conduct, the practical identity of man with man, that is to say, for denoting the social or human attitude of man to man." (K. Marx and F. Engels, *Works*, Vol. 2, p. 42, in Russian.) The difference between the Young Hegelian conception of equality and the French conception reflects, according to Marx and Engels, the weakness of the German bourgeoisie.

plain that the illusoriness of the ideological beliefs of this class springs not from the imagination of its spokesmen, but from its actual position. Only the form of ideology is illusory, whereas its content is the socio-historical process conditioning the position, interests and conduct of the given class and also the illusoriness of its ideological beliefs. At a certain stage of its development the bourgeoisie cannot avoid conceiving its interests as universal and reasonable, as belonging to the whole of mankind. And since in its struggle against feudalism it did indeed express the essential demands of social development and thus the interests of the great majority of society, its ideological illusions were substantial and historically justified. It is no accident, therefore, that bourgeois-democratic reforms were regarded by the bourgeois ideologist as the ultimate emancipation of the human personality.

In Marx's economic studies we find a brilliant scientific analysis of the ideological illusions of the classical English political economists, who regarded private property as the immediate economic precondition for all production, who identified the commodity with the product of labour in general, who absolutised the capitalist mode of production, and so on. Exposing these illusions, Marx nevertheless constantly emphasises

Thus, the very form of expression of the interests of the German bourgeoisie is by no means without significance, since it expresses the difference between the French bourgeoisie, which had already defeated feudalism, and the German that had not. Marx and Engels were consequently very far from discarding ideology as false consciousness which obscures the essence of things; they juxtaposed ideology and social reality and inferred its inherent content (and form) from the contradictions of that reality.

the *scientific* character of classical English political economy and contrasts it to the theories of the vulgar economists, who substituted their deliberate apology for real research into the economic relations of capitalism. Marx drew a fundamental distinction between the historically progressive ideology of the bourgeoisie and bourgeois apologetics, which reflected the transformation of the bourgeoisie into a conservative social force. Moreover, he explained that even vulgar political economy is by no means devoid of content, since it reflects objective reality—the appearance of capitalist production relations—but in an uncritical, unscientific form. In *Capital* Marx thoroughly investigates the origins of this appearance, thus showing that even this should be the subject of scientific inquiry. The inquiry, however, can be carried out only from positions of proletarian partisanship, because the proletariat is the necessary negation of the capitalist social system engendered by capitalism itself.

The scientific analysis of religion is an extremely important element of Marxist teaching. Although religion expresses the interests of the exploiting classes, it is also a type of social consciousness inherent in both the exploiters and the exploited. Religion reflects not the special position of this or that class, but the antagonistic character of social relationships, the domination of the spontaneous forces of social development over all people. This, in the words of Marx, is both the sigh of the oppressed creature and the heart of a heartless world.[1] Religion is modified in the process of social development, but in all

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *Works*, Vol. I, p. 415 (in Russian).

antagonistic societies it fulfils basically one and the same function. The fact that both the exploiters and the exploited profess, as a rule, the same religion is certainly no testimony to its above-class or above-party character. The exploiting classes find in religion a justification for their own position and a specific means of psychological enslavement of the working people. The exploited masses, since they have not yet found the road to social emancipation, profess religion because it strikes them as the apparent form of realisation of their actual needs.

The religious ideology on the one hand consolidates social inequality, exploitation and oppression, while on the other it provides an inadequate form of protest against that which it sanctifies, as can be seen from the history of heresy, from the religious attire of the early bourgeois revolutions, and so on.

Ideology, as can be seen from the example of religion, is by no means always a system of *theoretical* views. The same is true of the spontaneously formed everyday political consciousness of the masses, which should not be excluded from ideology, inasmuch as it is the *mass* consciousness, and not something that belongs only to the theoreticians of ideology. Marx drew a distinction between spontaneously formed and theoretically elaborated ideological beliefs. Vulgar political economy, as Marx pointed out, is based theoretically on the ideas of the everyday bourgeois consciousness.

Characterising the petty-bourgeois ideologists, Marx emphasised: "Just as little must one imagine that the democratic representatives are indeed all shopkeepers or enthusiastic champions of shopkeepers. According to their education and their individual position they may be as far apart as heaven from earth. What makes them representatives of the petty bourgeoisie is the fact that in their minds they do not get beyond the limits which the latter do not get beyond in life, that they are consequently driven, theoretically, to the same problems and solutions to which material interest and social position drive the latter practically."[1] Naturally this does not imply that every ideology may in the final analysis be reduced to the notions of the everyday class consciousness. English classical political economy, the ideology of the bourgeois Enlightenment, and other historically progressive bourgeois doctrines, limited though they were from the class standpoint, were undoubtedly in contradiction to the everyday bourgeois notions of their time. And inasmuch as they contained elements of a scientific understanding of reality, they were more progressive than the social practice of the bourgeoisie. The advance reflection of social reality, the anticipation of its tendencies, the urge to look ahead, the theoretical elaboration of new social criteria, ideals and historical tasks constitute the characteristic feature of historically progressive ideologies.

Trade-unionism and reformism are spontaneously formed ideologies of the working class at the stage of its development when it is still not aware of the irreconcilable antithesis of interests between labour and capital. In their theoretical form these ideologies substantiate the everyday, spontaneously formed consciousness of the proletarian masses fighting for their immediate economic interests. Marxism as the scientific ideology

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. I, p. 424.

of the working class is built up by means of revolutionary critical generalisation of the experience of proletarian liberation movement, by research into the laws of capitalist development, and by the theoretical summing up and working over of the achievements of previous social thought—philosophical, economic and socio-political. The Marxist analysis of social consciousness and self-consciousness indicates the need to draw a fundamental distinction between ideology, that adequately expresses the basic interests of a given class, and ideology that reflects the influence exercised upon it by other, hostile classes.

Characterising the difference between the Communist Party and other working-class parties that existed in the mid-19th century, Marx and Engels emphasised: "The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole."[1]

The founders of Marxism do not call their system of *scientific* communist views the ideology of the proletariat, although they point out that it expresses the *basic* interests of the proletariat of *all* countries. By not calling their doctrine an ideology, Marx and Engels actually counterpose the scientific ideology of the proletariat to the

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. I, p. 120.

bourgeois consciousness and, in doing so, break away from the unscientific ideologists who at that time dominated the working-class movement. So the assertions of the critics of Marxism that Marx and Engels rejected all ideology on principle are utterly unfounded. On the same grounds one might, for instance, assert that they rejected all philosophy; but the fact is that Marxism is the negation of philosophy in the old sense of the term. Here we have an analogy that indicates the concrete dialectical nature of negation. This is the negation of negation, that is to say, the creation of a fundamentally new, scientific ideology.

The fact that in Marx and Engels there is no such expression as "scientific ideology", that they counterpose, for example, the "German ideology" and ideology in general to the social science they themselves created, will deceive only those who are ignorant of the complex and contradictory process of development of a new scientific theory that is fundamentally different from all preceding theories, or who seek to counterpose Marx to Lenin on the grounds that Lenin, in developing the doctrine of the founders of Marxism, formulated the concept of scientific ideology that was already implicit in that doctrine.

Marxism-Leninism understands ideology not as the passive reflection of social reality, but as the substantiation of a definite social programme founded on investigation of the position and interests of a given class, its relationship to other classes, the peculiarities of social development and its motive forces. In this sense every ideology is a guide to social action, that is to say, to a system of regulative ideas, notions, ideals and imperatives expressing the positions, demands and

aspirations of a definite class, social group or the whole of society.

Revolutionary ideology argues the necessity for radical social change in the basic direction of social development; in so far as such change is actually needed, a revolutionary ideology, no matter how illusory its form of expression, contains elements of scientific understanding of social reality. A conservative or reactionary ideology, on the contrary, gives grounds for the desire of certain classes to preserve social relations that are historically obsolete, and since such a desire contradicts the whole course of social development, such an ideology is hostile to the scientific understanding of social life. Consequently, social theory does not become ideology because it gives a distorted reflection of reality, but because it reflects, and appraises the given social reality and the whole socio-historical process from definite social positions.[1]

[1] The bourgeois ideologists of today, in view of circumstances which they feel they can no longer ignore, are compelled to distinguish between revolutionary and non-revolutionary ideologies (the latter, however, being considered neither conservative nor reactionary). Non-revolutionary ideologies are usually qualified as those that sanction the *status quo* and are supported by the majority of "ruling groups". The revolutionary ideologies, on the contrary, oppose the *status quo,* reject the values and norms prevailing in the given society, and are aimed at bringing about a radical transformation of the existing order, in view of which the American sociologist Talcott Parsons calls them Utopias (*Das Fischers Lexicon Soziologie,* Frankfurt a/M, 1964, S. 182). Parsons obviously does not realise that the desire to preserve and eternalise the *status quo,* whether it be capitalist or any other stage of development, is utopian. He makes no distinction between progressive and reactionary Utopias and ignores the fact that socialism has ceased to be a Utopia and become a science and quite definite historical social reality. The

So even the possibility of scientific ideology coincides historically with the ability of the given class actually to express and realise the historical necessity conditioned by the previous development of society. F. V. Konstantinov makes the point: "Only the class that is basically interested in objective truth, whose position and interests coincide with the objective course of history and the laws of development of society, only this class and its theoretical representatives are capable of carrying out fearless, objective, stop-at-nothing

contemporary bourgeois form of ideology (which is itself, of course, "respectable" and "deideologised") thus expresses fairly openly its implacable hostility to any revolutionary social change. The sociology free of "value judgements" which Max Weber attempted to evolve is one of the variations of the traditional bourgeois conception of "uncommitted" social science, which is basically impossible in class society. Another variation of the bourgeois ideological distortion of social science is the "sociology of knowledge" advocated by Mannheim and his followers. This theory states that social science cannot on principle be an objective reflection of social reality, because its preconditions, the values and judgement criteria that it applies, are bound to be subjective. But the fact that the subject of cognition, the knower, is called the subject does not necessarily mean that all cognition is subjective. The principle of materialist epistemology is fully applicable to the ideological reflection of reality. Subjectivism in ideology is conditioned not simply by the attitude of ideologists representing a certain class but by what that class actually stands for. Whereas the bourgeoisie as a class is not interested in studying the mechanism of the production of surplus value, the proletariat, on the contrary, is interested in objective scientific research into capitalist production. The appearance of capitalist relations obscures the actual enslavement of the proletarian's "free" (hired) labour, and the working class, which is fighting capitalism, is naturally interested in breaking through this appearance to the truth. Thus, the possibility and necessity of scientific ideology are implicit in the objective position and subjective interest of the working class.

research. For this reason the scientific ideology of this class does not and cannot contradict scientific sociology."[1]

Of course, the possibility of creating a scientific ideology can be realised only in certain historical conditions and by means of all-round investigation of the life of society. The slave-owners, the feudals and the capitalists, all in their time expressed the interests of social development, the historical necessity of which they were the instruments. But they never created a scientific ideology. The progressive bourgeoisie through its most outstanding ideologists created economic, historical and legal science, and philosophical materialism. But to none of these scientific theories is the term "scientific ideology" applicable. A scientific ideology presupposes cognition of its own historical, class content, origin, significance, and relationship to other ideologies, classes and epochs. It is, consequently, free of idealist illusions and pretensions to eternal significance beyond history. In this sense it may be said that scientific ideology is the highest achievement of scientific inquiry into the socio-historical process, because it also comprises scientific understanding of its specific ideological form. Such is scientific socialist ideology.

Marx and Engels created scientific philosophy, and the scientific world view which is broader in content than philosophy. Marxist-Leninist science and the scientific socialist ideology form a dialectical unity, which does not, however, eliminate the difference that exists between them.[2] This distinction will no doubt become more obvious when classless communist society is established throughout the world and the problems of the class struggle, the socialist revolution, the dictatorship of the working class, the state, and so on, are consigned to the historical past. But the Marxist-Leninist scientific world view will undoubtedly retain all its significance; it will develop on the basis of the new historical experience and achievements of the sciences of nature and society, as the scientific theory of social creativity and the methodology of scientific research. The unity of science and ideology that is inherent in Marxism becomes more understandable in the light of this historical perspective.

Marxism-Leninism is a science and at the same time a scientific ideology. The significance of Marxism-Leninism as the ideology of the working class is historically confined within the framework of the epoch of transition from capitalism to communism; its significance as a science that is constantly developing and enriching itself with new propositions is naturally not confined within the limits of any epoch.

The significance of any ideology, including the scientific ideology, is conditioned by the historical

[1] F. V. Konstantinov, "The Great October Revolution and Marxist Sociology" in *October Revolution and Scientific Progress*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1967 (in Russian).

[2] Characterising bourgeois social science and ideology, A. M. Rumyantsev points out: "The drawing of a distinction between science and ideology is an essential condition of a correct scientific, critical attitude to any research into social problems, including economic problems" (A. M. Rumyantsev, "October and Economic Science" in *October Revolution and Scientific Progress*, Vol. II). Whereas in bourgeois studies it is essential to distinguish the scientific from the ideological, in Marxist-Leninist studies it is a matter of distinguishing between the scientific and the scientific-ideological; the latter may be defined as the scientific expression of the interests, needs and position of a certain class, based on scientific research into social relations.

limits of its possible social application. In this sense any ideology is historically transient. The significance of a science is determined exclusively by the boundaries of the objective truth it contains and the possibilities of its further development. In this sense science, as such, has everlasting significance as the only adequate expression of "living, fertile, genuine, powerful, omnipotent, objective, absolute human knowledge".[1]

Every ideology, having fulfilled its historical mission, yields place to a new ideology, equipped to advocate new social demands, interests and tasks. Marxism-Leninism as the scientific world view, as the theoretical basis of the scientific ideology of the working class, will undoubtedly become the theoretical basis of the scientific ideology of communism when it is victorious on a world scale, since communism will naturally need a new, scientifically grounded system of social orientation and scientific logistics for the people's social creativity.

The distinction between science and scientific ideology within the framework of their dialectical unity that was first achieved in Marxism gives no grounds for opposing them to each other. There is a power of knowledge in the scientific socialist ideology. It provides a scientific methodological orientation towards the understanding of past history, the present age and mankind's historical prospects. The methodological significance of the Marxist-Leninist ideological approach to the phenomena of social life is summed up in the concept of scientific Communist-Party spirit.

Needless to say, there are not and cannot be in Marxist-Leninist teaching two components—scientific and scientific-ideological—that contradict each other. All Marxism as a science is the scientific ideology of the working class, the ideology of the communist transformation of society, and its inherent historical clarity of content retains its actual significance throughout the epoch of the building and establishing of communist society. Thus it is a matter only of delimiting the two functional meanings of Marxist-Leninist science, of defining the specific nature of scientific ideology.

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 38, p. 363.

Thus, the essence of the Marxist-Leninist approach to the question cannot be expressed either by opposing science, the scientific world view, to the scientific socialist ideology, or by erasing the differences between them. The unity of cognition and the scientific ideological understanding of the world does not remove the difference between the two. Marxism-Leninism has put an end to the alienated ideological form of cognising the world, and it did so by creating Marxist-Leninist science, which is at the same time the ideology of the working class. It is from this standpoint that we must set about solving the question of the ideological function of philosophy.

The philosophical doctrines of Heraclitus, Democritus, Plato, Aristotle and other thinkers of the ancient world were undoubtedly ideological in character. It is not particularly difficult to see the social limitations in Heraclitus and his interpretation of dialectics as eternal flux, in his conception of the struggle of contraries as everlasting war, and so on. The ideological content of Aristotle's teaching on the nature of the state is even more easily perceived. And yet it would be a repetition of Shulyatikov's mistakes (see above, pp. 381-82) to say that Heraclitus's dialectics, the atomic theory of

Democritus, the teachings of Plato or Aristotle boil down to ideological interpretation of social or natural reality from the positions of the slave-owning class. Understanding the ideological function of the cognitive process has nothing to do with the pragmatic, un-Marxist attitude of equating the process of cognition with *service* in the interests of progressive or reactionary classes. This is not just because the subject-matter of cognition, and particularly philosophy, includes natural as well as social reality. The main thing to remember is that the ideological function of cognition, of knowledge, is an inseparable part (but only a part) of the all-embracing cognitive process that is unrestricted both in content and significance. Cognition expresses the needs of social production, both material and spiritual; it makes up the many-sided world of man's spiritual life, which, like all human life, cannot be simply a means, but is the goal.

The relationship that takes shape historically between the ideologies of various classes, particularly opposing classes, is a relationship of struggle: ideological compromises (between the bourgeois and the feudal ideologies, for instance) are only passing phases in the process of the assertion or degradation of this or that ideology.

We do, of course, find in the history of the ideologies of the exploiting classes a historical continuity born of the antagonistic production relations that are common to the slave-owning, feudal and capitalist societies. But this does not explain why the doctrines of Heraclitus, Democritus, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, the Stoics, the Sceptics and others outlived their age and were revived, re-interpreted, and developed by the philosophers of feudal and capitalist times.

Beyond the bounds of the socio-economic formation that engendered them they can no longer, of course, perform the ideological functions they previously possessed. The assimilation and use of these teachings by the ideologists of the new classes become possible only as a result of a process of ideological treatment, that modifies their original content. But it should be borne in mind that not only the ideologists of the feudal system but also the representatives of the anti-feudal opposition developed the ideas of Plato, Aristotle and other thinkers of ancient times. Campanella, one of the first advocates of Utopian communism, was a neo-Platonist. Neo-Platonism had a considerable influence on the pantheist, anti-feudal world view of Giordano Bruno. In contrast to the schoolmen, who followed Thomas Aquinas, the Aristotelians of Padua represented the anti-feudal social movement. Early bourgeois scepticism, which revived the traditions of the ancient world, expressed qualitatively new ideological tendencies that were alien to the Greek scepticism of Pyrrho.

The transition from the slave-owning to the feudal society, and the revived interest in ancient philosophy evoked by the development of feudalism, historically revealed a continuity in the development of philosophical knowledge that was relatively independent of the ideological function which this transition performed. This relative independence must not be exaggerated, of course: the philosophy of feudal society (at any rate, the dominant philosophy) drew mainly on the idealist doctrines of the ancient world, and the very mode of this assimilation was determined by the prevailing religious ideology.

There are various degrees in the relative independence of philosophical knowledge, which presumably explains the existence of different and even opposed philosophical doctrines within the framework of one and the same ideology at a given stage in history. German classical philosophy is basically united in respect of ideology. But how fundamental is the difference between Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and Feuerbach!

The ideology of every class is characterised by its basic, historically developing content. The ideologically united bourgeois philosophy (only its unity makes the term "bourgeois" applicable) is at the same time characterised by an absence of conceptual unity: conflict between materialism and idealism, between rationalism and empiricism, between dialectics and metaphysics, conflict within the idealist camp, polemics between various trends in materialist philosophy, and so on. Concrete analysis of these philosophical disagreements clearly reveals the various trends that exist within the framework of bourgeois ideology. But it would be scarcely correct to regard the differences of opinion between the sensualists and the rationalists as ideological differences, although they are to a certain extent connected with the latter. The ideological function of philosophy is not what distinguishes philosophy from other forms of social consciousness; it is what it has in common with them. Marx called Locke a thinker who represented "the new bourgeoisie in every way—he took the side of the manufacturers against the working classes and the paupers, the merchants against the old-fashioned usurers, the financial aristocracy against governments that were in debt; he even demonstrated in a separate work that the bourgeois way of thinking is the

normal way of thinking...".[1] This summing up of Locke's ideological position enlightens us as to his economic, political and pedagogical views, his attitude to religion, his retreats from consistent materialism, and so on. But it cannot, of course, provide the basis for an explanation of the specific peculiarities of Locke's sensualism, his doctrine of simple and complex ideas, of primary and secondary qualities, etc. To understand these particular features of Locke's philosophy, one must study the empirical natural science of his day. Philosophy's dependence on the level of development of the science of its day is not directly connected with its ideological function. It would be an oversimplification, for example, to assert that rationalist epistemology is an ideology.

The dialectical unity of philosophy and ideology means that they cannot be metaphysically identified with one another. It thus helps us to understand the relative independence of philosophical knowledge beyond the bounds of its ideological application. From this point of view we are able to see the relationship of historical continuity between philosophical doctrines that differ radically in ideological content. Marxist philosophy, as the ideology of the working class, naturally has nothing in common with bourgeois ideology, and anyone who sees in Marxist philosophy nothing but ideology cannot, of course, understand its relationship to the preceding bourgeois philosophy.

Marxism arises, acquires form and substance, and develops in implacable conflict with bourgeois ideology. And yet Marxism, as Lenin emphasises, is the *direct and immediate* continuation of the

[1] K. Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1971, p. 77.

most outstanding philosophical, sociological and economic doctrines created by the ideologists of the progressive bourgeoisie. This is a contradiction of actual historical reality, in which philosophical knowledge always performs an ideological function, while at the same time remaining knowledge that does not depend on this or any other function. The attitude of Marx and Engels to bourgeois doctrines was expressed primarily in criticism of class narrowness of these doctrines in selecting and developing what was of value in them, and in solving the questions posed by their bourgeois predecessors. It would have been impossible to create dialectical and historical materialism if the positive knowledge contained in pre-Marxist philosophy, despite its ideological form, which was alien to the working people, had not been liberated.

Natural science, as well as philosophy and sociology, also has a certain degree of ideological function, inasmuch as its discoveries overthrow the religious and other ideological prejudices of the ruling classes. It disposes of racialist gibberish, the neo-Malthusian apology for capitalism and imperialist war, etc. This goes to show that in certain conditions even non-ideology may have an ideological function. There is no such thing as bourgeois (or proletarian, for that matter) physics, chemistry or the like, but there are various philosophical interpretations of scientific discoveries which have ideological significance. Because of this the opposition between various ideological approaches comes out even in the non-ideological, natural-scientific field of knowledge.

Needless to say, scientists draw philosophical conclusions from scientific discoveries, that is to say, on the basis of scientific data they repudiate

some philosophical beliefs and find arguments for others. In this sense scientists take part in the ideological struggle in so far as they assess social as well as the specialist significance of scientific discoveries, the prospects of science and its role in solving social problems. Today, when natural science to an ever greater degree determines the peculiarities and growth rate of material production, the natural scientists, like the philosophers, sociologists and economists, are compelled to face up to the practical application of scientific discoveries, the social consequences of scientific and technical progress, which are predicated on the social system, the policy of the ruling classes, and so on. We thus find scientists taking up certain ideological positions outside their own particular field of research. For instance, many prominent scientists are actively campaigning for peace, against the military use of atomic energy, chemistry and bacteriology.

The ideological struggle between capitalism and socialism embraces all fields of knowledge and activity, but primarily, of course, it is a struggle between the communist, the dialectical-materialist, atheist world view, and the bourgeois world view, which is idealist, metaphysical and religious. This indicates the vital role of philosophy in the contemporary ideological struggle of the opposing social systems which, as we have seen above, is becoming increasingly a struggle of mutually exclusive world views. The present-day bourgeois, predominantly anti-intellectual philosophy disparages cognition and the pursuit of knowledge and seeks to prove that science and scientific and technical progress only appear to liberate man from the power of the elemental forces of nature, while in reality alienating him

from himself and nature and making him the slave of his own inventions. The social pessimism preached by numerous contemporary bourgeois philosophers proclaims the thesis of the fatal disharmony of human life which, they maintain, cannot be attuned by any remoulding of society. This pessimism cultivates fear of the future and ridicules the idea of a rational reordering of social life as a secular version of the Biblical legend of paradise.

Marxist philosophy is a life-asserting world view, which gives grounds for *historical* optimism, because in the present *epoch* it has become not only possible but also most assuredly necessary to abolish the antagonistic production relations of capitalism. The idea of social progress and all-round development of the human personality, proclaimed by the bourgeois Enlightenment, and today condemned by the majority of bourgeois thinkers as complacency and a dangerous delusion, has gained in Marxist teaching a fundamental substantiation and development. The scientific understanding of social progress evolved by Marxism is one of the most important propositions of the scientific socialist ideology. The Marxist-Leninist philosophy scientifically expresses the working people's basic interests, the interests of social progress, takes an active part in the communist transformation of social relations and is, therefore, a powerful ideological force.

Chapter Eight
ON THE NATURE OF PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE

1. INEVITABILITY OF SCIENTIFIC DEBATE

Science, because its purpose is discovery of the unknown, is organically involved in combating error, as well as the prejudices and illusions of everyday consciousness. Anyone can adopt a pose of unshakeable impartiality, wave aside all polemics and spend his time spouting platitudes; but it is quite impossible for him or anyone else, in any field of knowledge, to say something new without the spur of passion and partiality.

Polemics, of course, can never be the aim of scientific inquiry and one can understand the scientist who disapproves of them on the ground that they obstruct calm and thorough research. But polemics or no, there is bound to be controversy. And the scientist who insists that scientific propositions should be systematically developed rather than polemically expounded in no way eliminates the inner polemical nature of his inquiry. His statements, assuming them to be original, question the statements of other scientists; his discoveries contradict certain established views or conflict with everyday notions that have

no basis in scientific fact. The theory of relativity, no matter how it is expounded, is bound to be at odds with the belief in the unlimited universality of the laws of classical mechanics. Thus, the inner polemic of science is only reasserted with all the more force by the absence of its outward form. Much though we may desire it, we can never avoid the essential controversy, though we may discard some of the trimmings that prevent us from treating the subject systematically. It may well be asked, then, whether polemics (in the widest sense of the term), which are always to be found in the history of any science, are not the necessary form of development of scientific knowledge.

Lenin's teaching on the epistemological roots of idealism may also be regarded as an inquiry into the epistemological sources of all (i.e., not only idealist) error and, what is more, an inseparable part of scientific epistemology which reveals the path from ignorance to knowledge, and from one level of knowledge to another that is more profound. The epistemology, the theory of knowledge, of dialectical materialism differs qualitatively from the psychological study of cognition, which considers the individual's capacity to know within certain inevitable limits, restrictions, etc. Marxist epistemology studies the development of knowledge, whose subject, whose creator, is not any one individual but all mankind. For this reason it examines not psychological but epistemological sources of error, error that arises out of the very nature of knowledge and its development.

In arguing the principle of the unlimited knowability of the world, scientific epistemology gives a dialectical interpretation of the law-governed

"finitude" of all knowledge. This "finitude" of knowledge is overcome by its development, but always within historically determined limits. This means that the ability of cognition to produce absolute truths does not do away with the relativity of knowledge at any stage of its development. The reflection of reality—in concepts, notions and sensations—is at the same time their distortion, which is "removed" at a subsequent stage by the development of knowledge, not, of course, in absolute terms but in the relative sense. "We cannot," Lenin wrote, "imagine, express, measure, depict movement, without interrupting continuity, without simplifying, coarsening, dismembering, strangling that which is living. The representation of movement by means of thought always makes coarse, kills,—and not only by means of thought, but also by sense-perception, and not only of movement, but every concept.

"And in that lies the *essence* of dialectics.

"And precisely *this essence* is expressed by the formula: the unity, identity of opposites."[1] Agnosticism and intuitionism elevate this one-sidedness, this subjectivity—which are real elements in the cognitive process—to the status of absolutes, endowing them with a fateful omnipotence. But the history of science gives no grounds for such an "oversimplified" judgement, which, incidentally, is also a positive element in the process of cognition.

This process, as Lenin emphasises, is essentially contradictory. It is this that makes cognition possible, but it necessarily entails the possibility of error. From the subjective standpoint, that is to

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, pp. 259-60.

say, from the standpoint of the individual knower, error is something accidental. But if we comprehend the history of cognition and try to extract the statistical regularity of errors, it becomes obvious that they are inevitable. This means that the dialectical opposition between truth and error unfolds within the sphere of the scientific reflection of the world, and not on its fringe.[1] "In every science," says Engels, "incorrect notions are, in the last resort, apart from errors of observation, incorrect notions of correct facts. The latter remain even when the former are shown to be false."[2] It follows then that error, if it arises in the process of cognition, also has a certain significance. Where truth is abstractly, metaphysically counterposed to error, truth itself is interpreted abstractly and metaphysically, that is to say, comes near to error. And vice versa, concrete analysis of error enables us to detect its moments of objective truth.

This dialectical principle of the relative opposition between truth and error has nothing to do with the unprincipled demand for toleration of error. Truth is irreconcilably opposed to error or compromise with error, and the realisation of this fact is a noble stimulus in any scientific polemic. But dialectically understood truth is self-

[1] Louis de Broglie writes, "People who are not engaged in scientific work quite often imagine that the sciences provide us with absolute certainties; such people believe that scientists base their conclusions on incontrovertible facts and irrefutable arguments and consequently stride ahead without any possibility of error or retrogression. However, the state of science in the present, like the history of science in the past, proves to us that the situation is quite different." (Louis de Broglie, *Sur les sentiers de la science*, Paris, 1960, p. 351.)

[2] F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 215.

critical and implies an awareness of its own incompleteness, limitedness and need for development.

The relativists' blurring of the opposition between truth and error is profoundly anti-dialectical. The dialectical-materialist recognition of the objectivity of truth rules out the subjectivity inherent in relativism. However, objective truth is not objective reality, but only its approximately true reflection. The limits of the objectivity of truth are revealed by research, practice, and the theoretical analysis of practice. This means that the true is separated from the untrue, that is to say, the opposition between truth and error is firmly fixed within the framework of a certain field of research.

Engels says, "Truth and error, like all thought-concepts which move in polar opposites, have absolute validity only in an extremely limited field... and if we attempt to apply it (such a concept—*T.O.*) as absolutely valid outside that field we really find ourselves altogether beaten: both poles of the antithesis become transformed into their opposites, truth becomes error and error truth."[1] Developing this and other propositions of Engels, Lenin stressed that the limits of every absolute truth are relative, in view of which its opposition to relative truth is also relative. This scientific understanding of the epistemological nature of truth reveals the source of any genuine scientific dispute, which is essential not only in cases where truth is opposed by mistaken views, but also where the disputants agree as to the relative truth of the propositions under discussion, but regard truths not as permanently stamped coins meant

[1] F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 111.

only for use but as the process of development of knowledge, which provides the ground for wide-ranging scientific discussion between people of like mind.

Nor can the relativity of the opposition between truth and error be removed by practice which, although it is a criterion of truth, is also a process, that is, something historically limited, which overcomes its limitations but only to a certain extent, and not once and for all. It is understandable, then, why Lenin came out against the absolutising of practice (as of truth), because such "practice", applied to the theory of knowledge, is bound to lead to subjectivism of the pragmatic variety or to dogmatism: "the criterion of practice can never, in the nature of things, either confirm or refute any human idea *completely*. This criterion too is sufficiently 'indefinite' not to allow human knowledge to become 'absolute', but at the same time it is sufficiently definite to wage a ruthless fight on all varieties of idealism and agnosticism."[1]

So the oversimplified understanding of the dialectical opposition between truth and error, theory and practice, may lead, on the one hand, to underestimation of objective truth and the epistemological significance of practice, and on the other, to metaphysical perpetuation of the limited significance of any given truth and given, historically concrete practice. Lenin constantly warned against the danger from both directions, and stressed the creative character of scientific cognition, with which the objective necessity for scientific dispute is organically connected as a specific form of the development of cognition.

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, pp. 142-43.

The stating of a fact and its most scrupulous and minute description does not by any means produce an absolute truth, because the fact is only a case which has to be investigated from the standpoint of its determining conditions, relationships, and so on. The truth of a fact is bound to have certain preconditions which, if ignored, make it impossible to draw a line between appearance and essence. Appearance, as we know, is no less a fact than essence. Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius. This statement may be an absolute truth if we take into consideration all the conditions in which the given process occurs; but many of these conditions (the small amount of heavy water in ordinary water, for instance) were until recently unknown, while others may well be unknown to this day. Of course, the fact remains that water boils at 100°C., but the aforesaid circumstances make it dependent on other facts. We may state that, depending on an indefinite number of circumstances (internal and external), water may boil at various temperatures. It is obvious, however, that the boiling point of water must be fixed within certain limits, because this process cannot, after all, take place under any conditions.

The empirical statement implies a concealed interpretation or at least the possibility of such an interpretation. We know, for instance, that pure metals produced under laboratory or industrial conditions possess properties markedly different from those that they possess in their "impure" form. But pure metals do not exist in nature, although it is their inherent properties that most fully express the specific nature of the given element. Thus, the mere citing of facts, the appeal to the obvious confirmed by experience, does not always put an end to the argument.

As we know, the properties of some substances are in a certain non-apparent dependence on others. Einstein proved that the trajectory of a moving body does not exist by itself (or "in itself"), that is, without relation to the system in which the body is moving. Can we not draw epistemological conclusions from this that would be applicable also to other properties and peculiarities of phenomena, inasmuch as they condition one another?

The properties and qualities that appear to be directly inherent in a certain object are in reality (like the object itself, incidentally) the result of the interaction that occurs in the process of development, the investigation of which presupposes knowledge of the separate interacting parties, knowledge of the fact that these parties are what they are because of the interaction and not independently of it, and finally knowledge of the process of interaction itself as a dynamic whole, which is partly a precondition and partly a result of the process under investigation. The complexity of this objectively occurring process conceals all kinds of possibilities of error that are "realised" in the process of cognition, despite the fact that its immediate goal and final result is the truth and only the truth. Engels writes in the *Dialectics of Nature,* "The reciprocal action excludes any absolute primary or absolute secondary; but it is just as much a double-sided process which from its very nature can be regarded from two different standpoints; to be understood in its totality it must even be investigated from both standpoints one after the other, before the total results can be arrived at. If, however, we adhere one-sidedly to a single standpoint as the absolute one in contrast to the other, or if we arbitrarily jump from one to the other according to the momentary needs of our argument, we shall remain entangled in the one-sidedness of metaphysical thinking; the inter-connection escapes us and we become involved in one contradiction after another."[1]

In the process of cognition we have constantly to single out separate phenomena and subject them to more or less isolated examination without which we cannot discover what definite qualities and quantities they possess. The ancient philosophers were not as a rule aware of this epistemological necessity. They were content to acknowledge the universal connection and reciprocal conditionality of phenomena, and this dialectical (but naively dialectical and therefore unscientific) approach inevitably led to the identifying of qualitatively different things and processes, that is to say, to error. However, in the cognitive act of singling out the separate, and examining this separate thing in isolation from everything else, although it eliminates the errors of the ancient dialecticians, there lurks the danger of another kind of error, the metaphysical error which, as we know, the sciences (and philosophy as well) were unable to avoid for many centuries. Such errors were overcome in the past and are overcome in the present only by the dialectical inclusion of the separately investigated phenomenon in the system of relationships that have made it what it is, that is to say, the given, particular object constituting an element in a certain system.

Thus, the cognitive process must comprise opposite but equally necessary logical operations, each of which is inevitably one-sided. One approach to

[1] F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature,* pp. 224-25.

the phenomena under investigation prevails at one stage of cognition, and at another stage, the other approach. This objective structure of the cognitive process, its inevitable contradictoriness, naturally gives rise not only to errors, but also to polemics between scientists, who are everywhere found to be defending correct but limited, one-sided views.

Natural science outgrows the limits of predominantly empirical one-sided investigation, observation and description and thus becomes a theory based on scientific abstractions on an ever higher level and of ever increasing complexity. This leads more and more often to clashes between opposing scientific views that seek to embrace constantly expanding fields of research. Directly observed facts, individual experiments and so on are no longer sufficient to solve the questions raised in such theoretical discussions. Wilhelm Wundt in his day noted this tendency for controversial questions to multiply in the course of the development of theoretical natural science. Wundt took the view that physicists, physiologists and sociologists had embarked on the thorny path of speculative thought that was being abandoned by the philosophers. He wrote that the philosophers had become extremely reticent and cautious in their attitude to metaphysical speculation, whereas the physicists, physiologists and sociologists were engaged in speculation for all they were worth. Wundt seems to have been extremely one-sided and rather sceptical in his appraisal of the broad theoretical generalisations which ushered in a new stage in the development of the science of nature; obviously he was not convinced that on this path natural science was approaching a more profound knowledge of reality. However, the speculative enthusiasm that Wundt attributed to theoretical natural science is very far removed from metaphysical speculation; rather it is the development of the dialectical mode of thought in a form peculiar to each particular science. This tendency was noted by Niels Bohr, who pointed out two kinds of truths in natural science: "One kind of truth is made up of such simple and clear statements that their opposites are obviously untrue. The other kind, the so-called 'profound truths', consists, on the contrary, of such assertions that their opposites also contain profound truths."[1] The corpuscular and wave theories of light are often cited as an example of such mutually exclusive but mutually complementary truths. Physicists as well as philosophers have appraised such truths not as unique, but as the expression of the objective relationship inherent in natural processes and their cognition on a sufficiently high theoretical level: the unity of opposites.[2]

About a hundred years ago most natural scientists were convinced that scientific advance

[1] N. Bohr, *Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge*, Moscow, 1961, p. 93 (in Russian).

[2] It is worth noting N. N. Semyonov's remark that the scientist, in revealing the objective contradictions of nature, develops the *logic of thinking*: "At such moments the theoretical physicist begins to work as a pure logician, as a transformer of logic. He works in the sphere of such contradictory concepts as interruptedness and uninterruptedness, interconnection and becoming, time and space, probability and necessity; for specific natural scientific purposes he is obliged to modify and develop, to reassess initial logical categories.... Here the developed and comprehended logic of historico-philosophical thought is no luxury, no supplement to a scientific education, but a matter of prime and urgent necessity" (N. N. Semyonov, "Marxist-Leninist Philosophy and Problems of Natural Science" in *Kommunist*, 1968, No. 10.)

would gradually put an end to controversy resulting from errors, because these would be overcome by the progress of the sciences towards more and more exhaustive knowledge of their subject of investigation. These scientists could not conceive that developing science would open up new fields of reality with which the existing theories and concepts would not be in accord (or at least not fully in accord).[1] "Human thought," Lenin said, "goes endlessly deeper from appearance to essence, from essence of the first order, as it were, to essence of the second order, and so on *without end.*"[2] This truth is today becoming the profound conviction of all scientists thanks to the fact that modern natural science has testified *ad oculos* that the sciences, while never exhausting their subject, constantly expand the theoretical basis of scientific discussions, which are becoming a more and more necessary and fruitful form of development of scientific knowledge. Max Planck confirmed this tendency when he wrote, "As it has been for time immemorial in religion and the arts, so it is now in science. There is scarcely a single fundamental proposition that is not questioned by someone, or a piece of nonsense in which someone does not believe. . . ."[1] This statement should not be taken as an expression of philosophical scepticism; it merely registers a fact that has not only epistemological but class roots, because in the intellectual atmosphere of bourgeois society, infected with idealist and religious prejudice, scientific polemics are constantly being conducted on unscientific lines.

To sum up, then, scientific progress, contrary to the oversimplified notions that were held in the last century, far from removing the ground for controversy, has enormously stimulated the development of scientific debate, because the range of controversial theoretical questions and debatable solutions has perceptibly widened. The great source of scientific debate is to be found not in error but in the dialectical movement of the process of cognition, which reflects the dialectical contradictions of objective reality. Characterising the spirit of committed, militant polemics inherent in Marxism, Lenin pointed out, " 'Marx's system' is of a 'polemical nature', not because it is 'tendentious', but because it provides an exact picture, in theory, of all the contradictions that are present in reality. For this reason, incidentally, all attempts to master 'Marx's system' without mastering its 'polemical nature' are and will continue to be unsuccessful: the 'polemical nature' of the system is nothing more than a true reflection of the 'polemical nature' of capitalism itself."[2] What Lenin says in this case about a given

[1] Max Planck, characterising this tendency in late 19th-century physics, recalled that his teacher Philipp von Jolly regarded physics "as a highly developed, almost fully mature science which had now, since the discovery of the law of the conservation of energy, achieved its crown, so to speak, and would soon acquire final and perfect form. Of course, there might remain a few odd corners where something had to be checked or added, a tiny blemish or speck of dust to be removed, but the system as a whole was established firmly enough and theoretical physics was obviously approaching the stage of perfection that geometry, say, had acquired one hundred years previously" (F. Herneck, *Albert Einstein,* Berlin, 1963, S. 56). Von Jolly was not the only person to have such thoughts; it was almost the general opinion.

[2] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 38, p. 253.

[1] M. Planck, *Positivismus und reale Aussenwelt,* Leipzig, 1931, S. 1.

[2] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 4, p. 85.

socio-economic reality is in a certain sense applicable to any objective dialectical process, allowing for the peculiar features inherent in antagonistic capitalist relations, because, as Lenin said, "with Marx the dialectics of bourgeois society is only a particular case of dialectics".[1]

But does not the proliferation of scientific controversies and, hence, differences of opinion in science, show that the field of consensus is constantly diminishing? Any such conclusion would be extremely premature because, thanks to scientific discoveries, thanks to the fruitfulness of scientific debate and the improvement of methods of research, the field of consensus is, in fact, constantly widening.

It would be a mistake not to see that the advances of the sciences and their changed conditions of development have wrought a qualitative change in the nature of scientific debate. The opponents of Copernicus and Galileo cited the Bible or the immediate evidence of the senses. Non-Euclidean geometry was "overthrown" by the arguments of everyday common sense that appeared wholly tenable in Euclid. The theory of relativity was confronted by the traditional propositions of classical mechanics, which had been confirmed by experiment, a fact that Einstein himself never sought to disprove. Today such crude polemics have been to a great extent discredited. Scientific argument has become more rigorous, substantiated and self-critical. It is based on more exact analysis and definition of concepts, and takes into consideration the relativity and concreteness of truth. The mathematical penetration of the natural sciences has imposed an even stricter

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 361.

form on their propositions and sets forth new demands to those who advance ideas that seek to restrict or overthrow established scientific propositions. Present-day laboratory techniques, experiment and observation have extended the horizons of observed phenomena and created new, far more favourable conditions for the objective recording and description of facts, the testing of hypotheses and the theoretical interpretation of observed phenomena. But this development of intellectual techniques of observation has not dried up the well-springs of scientific debate. On the contrary, the debate has acquired a form more befitting its real substance.

2. IDEOLOGICAL SOURCES OF PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE

We have seen that controversy is not peculiar to philosophy. But what is it that distinguishes philosophical debate from the challenging of opinions in the specialised sciences?

At first sight the opposition between materialism and idealism appears to be wholly determined by the diametrically opposite solutions they offer to the basic philosophical question. But if we remember that materialism and idealism are not simply two mutually exclusive points of view, but the two fundamental world views, and that the struggle between them makes up the vital content of the development of philosophy, we see that this explanation of the fundamental polarisation of philosophy is obviously inadequate.

Historically speaking, idealism grew out of the religious view of the world, and it has maintained a direct or indirect connection with it throughout the centuries. The history of materialism, on

the contrary, is connected with anti-clerical, anti-religious, atheist ideological movements. Would it not be more correct to assume that the opposite solutions to the basic philosophical question represent the theoretical substantiation of a philosophical position that in the final analysis is based not on theoretical assumptions alone? The bourgeoisie, when it was a revolutionary class, readily preached materialist philosophy, which it firmly repudiated when it became the ruling, conservative class. The moralistic criticism of materialism, so characteristic of established bourgeois society, the constant condemnation of materialism not only by idealist philosophers, who to a certain extent analyse its theoretical content, but also by the daily bourgeois press that is not really concerned with philosophical problems as such—all this constitutes a fact that illuminates, if not the nature of the theoretical differences between the main philosophical trends, at least the social implications of this ideological battle.

It is far from the author's intention to reduce the opposition between materialism and idealism to the contradictions between the exploiter and exploited classes, because for many centuries materialism and idealism existed in the framework of one ideology, that of the slave-owners or that of the bourgeoisie, for instance. But this only goes to show that they perform different social functions at different stages in the development of one and the same class, or express contradictions between the social groups that form that class. And if idealism sometimes emerges as the ideology of the progressive (and even revolutionary) classes, even this indicates the objective dependence of the historically determined forms of

idealism on social and economic factors, demands and interests.

It would be equally unscientific to regard the struggle between rationalism and irrationalism as only a theoretical argument. The intimate connection between the socio-political ideas of the bourgeoisie in the 17th and 18th centuries and the rationalist faith in reason, in the possibility and necessity of remoulding social life on the principle of reason, is particularly obvious against the background of present-day irrationalist criticism of the "rationalist Utopias", which lumps Marxism with any other theory that treats social progress as based on universal laws. Today's irrationalist idealism cannot be understood if it is regarded simply as the antithesis of the rationalism of the 17th and 18th centuries, that is to say, outside the context of the social cataclysms of contemporary bourgeois society, whose ideologists have to renounce progressive philosophical traditions simply because they themselves are the implacable opponents of the heir to these traditions—Marxism.

Most bourgeois philosophers and historians of philosophy in the second half of the 19th century directly or indirectly acknowledge that philosophical doctrines and controversies are intimately connected with circumstances independent of philosophy. Some of them regard these circumstances as deforming the immanent development of philosophical thought, while others, on the contrary, assume that the struggle of philosophical ideas is inspired by the social process. The social process, however, is usually only vaguely understood and its interpretation amounts to no more than acknowledging some irrational connection between philosophy and the philosopher's "position in life". Thus, even if it is conceded that the

sources of philosophical controversy are to be found not in thought but in life, life itself is interpreted only psychologically, as the sum total of emotional experiences independent of and determining the consciousness. Irrationalist mystification concerning the "position in life" and "historicity" of the philosopher turns out in practice to be irreconcilably hostile to the materialist and historical explanation of the essence and origin of philosophical dispute.

Social psychology can undoubtedly help us to sort out philosophical arguments, but it does not take us beyond the bounds of the social consciousness, one of the forms of which is philosophy. The belief that philosophy exists not independently of other forms of consciousness but in conjunction with them is extremely relevant when it comes to tracing the various subjects of philosophical controversy, but it is obviously not sufficient to reveal its source and historically determined purpose and character. To discover this, we must turn from the examination of the social consciousness to the analysis of social being. The bourgeois philosophers, however, prefer a different path. In their efforts to discover the "mainspring" of philosophical debate they focus their attention on the philosophising individual, on his temperament, psychological make-up, and so on. The subjectivist-irrationalist explanation of the "vitality" of the philosophical controversy is particularly characteristic of William James, for example, who maintained that philosophy is "our individual way of just seeing and feeling the total push and pressure of the cosmos".[1] Philosophical differences of opinion are reduced to differences of creative individuality, and philosophical controversy is thus stripped of its social and historical content. The great philosopher is the person whose temperament is most strikingly expressed.

[1] W. James, *Pragmatism*, p. 4.

James maintained that the content of philosophical doctrines was determined by the "hard" or "soft" nature of the philosopher. Attributes of the hard human type were empiricism, materialism, pluralism, pessimism, determinism, scepticism, etc., while to the soft were attributed rationalism, idealism, indeterminism, and so on. This subjectivist classification of the contenders in philosophical debate sets philosophy in opposition to the sciences and to the practical affairs of society, since the cognitive side of philosophy and philosophical discussion is completely ignored.

The bourgeois philosopher's approach to the social and ideological analysis of the contradictions between philosophical doctrines amounts to a virtual denial of what he himself professes. Bourgeois philosophers frequently assert that the essence of philosophical debate is freedom of expression, freedom to make statements that are independent of politics, ideology and even science. We should, however, remember Hegel's profound remark on this subject: "When the subject of freedom is under discussion, one should always ascertain if it is not private interest that is being discussed."[1] Bourgeois philosophy fulfils a quite definite ideological function even when it proclaims its freedom from ideology and religion. It does the same, when it "freely" accepts bourgeois ideological dogmas and religious beliefs, that is to say, presents them as theoretical conclusions from abstract philosophical propositions.

[1] G. W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 11, S. 539.

The domination of reactionary social forces in the conditions of developed capitalist society inevitably tends to make discussion between bourgeois philosophers unscientific and unproductive. We can understand Jean Piaget when he says that philosophical discussions are "a kind of dialogue between the deaf".[1] But why should this be so? Because of the nature of philosophy? This is what the neo-positivists and the advocates of the philosophy of linguistic analysis contend. But both schools ignore the ideological atmosphere of philosophical debate in bourgeois society, and unless this is taken into consideration it is impossible to explain such things as the "Thomist Renaissance" in some of the capitalist countries, for instance. The zeal of the neo-Thomists in "coordinating" Aristotle's hylomorphism with the latest scientific discoveries provides cogent proof of the decisive influence of the political and religious ideology of bourgeois society on the development of philosophy and philosophical debate.

Philosophical debate in bourgeois society is inevitably preconditioned by the existence of a great variety of philosophical trends and schools. Some bourgeois philosophers are reduced to despair by this fact, and bemoan the existing anarchy of philosophical systems. Others, on the contrary, see this pluralism of philosophical doctrines as the realisation of the principle of philosophical autonomy, the independence of philosophical thought from external, i.e., political, scientific and ideological, factors. In fact, however, this splitting up of bourgeois philosophy into various trends quite logically expresses the essence of the capitalist system, in which competing philosophical doctrines

[1] J. Piaget, *Sagesse et illusions de la philosophie*, p. 28.

influence people's consciousness in all kinds of ways. All these competing doctrines, however, perform basically one and the same ideological function, as Lenin pointed out in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* when he stressed the predominantly idealist character of the contending philosophical doctrines and their unity in opposing materialism.

The bourgeois philosophers of today quite often suggest that the disputing sides would stand a better chance of achieving understanding and overcoming their differences if they could agree on the meaning of certain terms and rules of discussion appropriate to their common humanist aim. This idea is, of course, Utopian in a world made up of opposing classes and social systems.

In earlier chapters I stressed the specific complexity of philosophical problems, whose solution leaves open the possibility of their further development as new scientific data and historical experience are accumulated. But this, of course, does not explain the revival of historically obsolete views, long since disproved conceptions, etc. The clashes caused by such views and conceptions cannot be correctly understood without analysing the ideological sources of the differences in opinion inherent in a society whose antagonistic class structure makes ideological unity impossible in principle. The same ideological themes (philosophers may not always be conscious of them, of course) are strikingly manifest in the modern controversy over alienation, in the various interpretations of the problem of man, in analysis of the man-society relationship, in interpretations of the essence of humanism, and so on.

When examining the ideological sources of philosophical controversy we should remember, of

course, that ideology changes, and that its development, like the diversity of historical forms of its existence, acquires specific expression in philosophy. This is confirmed by analysis of the philosophical propositions characterising attitudes to certain obvious and unchallenged facts.

In philosophy, to a far greater extent than in natural science, one has constantly to draw a distinction between knowledge (in the sense in which Leibnitz spoke of truths of fact) and beliefs, which, of course, may be based on knowledge (scientific beliefs), although knowledge does not fully account for them. Magellan believed in the existence of a strait connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The hypothesis was confirmed by his voyage. In theoretical natural science there are many beliefs by which scientists are guided. These beliefs are eventually confirmed or, on the contrary, disproved by scientific discoveries and experiment. In the latter case the scientist usually abandons such views. But it is a different matter in philosophy, where beliefs in general cannot be directly proved or disproved by experiment.[1] What is more, philosophy, because it discusses questions of human life, ethics and aesthetics, naturally cannot have recourse to scientific methods of testing its propositions and such methods could have only a very limited application.

[1] Ernst Mach and Wilhelm Ostwald, who were not only scientists but also philosophers, denied the objective existence of atoms because the physical and chemical processes studied by physicists and chemists in their day could be explained without assuming the atomic structure of matter. Their denial of the existence of atoms, however, sprang not so much from their scientific as from their philosophical views. Mach reduced everything to sensations (atoms cannot be perceived by the senses), while Ostwald believed in energy, to which he gave precedence over both the physical and the psychical. Experimental proof of the atomic structure of matter compelled both scientists to acknowledge the reality of the atom, but neither of them gave up their philosophical views.

Inasmuch as beliefs express people's attitudes to certain facts, their appraisal of these facts, they cannot be regarded as descriptions of facts. Such beliefs may stand diametrically opposed to each other and the contest between them will be not so much a matter of truth and error as of the appraisal of human behaviour as correct or incorrect, reasonable or unreasonable, moral or immoral. Even such an appraisal of contrasting philosophical beliefs, however, is quite often impossible, particularly if these beliefs reflect different historical situations and are, therefore, not mutually exclusive, although they cannot be brought into harmony.

As an example of such a clash of opinion we may cite the much discussed philosophical question of man's attitude to his own mortality. Montaigne, continuing the traditions of Greek Epicureanism and stoicism, argued that man is able to enjoy life only in so far as he constantly meditates on death and thus overcomes the fear of it.

Montaigne agrees with Cicero's dictum that to philosophise is to prepare oneself for death. "Let us strip it of its mystery," says Montaigne, "let us behold it and grow accustomed to it by thinking of it more often than anything else. Let us be forever recalling it in our imagination, in all its aspects. . . . We cannot be sure where death awaits us; so let us await it everywhere. To think on death is to think on freedom. He who has learned how to die has unlearned slavery. Readiness to

die liberates us from all servitude and bondage."[1]

Clearly, these reflections of a philosopher of the sceptical school sharply diverge from medieval religious teaching with its cultivation of the fear of death and inevitable retribution in the hereafter for disobedience in the ephemeral present. Montaigne was the forerunner of the rationalist teaching that life should be lived according to reason. But the classical exponent of rationalist ethics was Spinoza who, like Montaigne, continued the traditions of Epicureanism and stoicism, but differed radically from him in his understanding of the reasonable attitude to death. "The free man," he says, "thinks of nothing so little as of death, and his wisdom lies in thinking not of death but of life."[2]

Comparing these contrasting beliefs, we find it difficult to say which of these thinkers is more correct. Both of them are right in a sense and, at bottom, both are expressing the progressive humanist beliefs of their time in different ways. Niels Bohr's remark, which I cited earlier, on complex truths consisting of diametrically opposed statements, is fully applicable here. When considering a philosophical dispute one must, therefore, separate the struggle between truth and error from differences in opinion that express a circumstantially justified difference of attitude towards facts, the existence of which is not in question. Thus, diversity of beliefs within a given philosophical theme merely expresses the diversity of actually existing human attitudes towards generally acknowledged facts.

Some bourgeois philosophers tend to identify

[1] M. de Montaigne, *Essais*, Tome I, Paris, 1962, pp. 87-88.

[2] *Oeuvres de Spinoza*, Tome III, p. 242.

belief with religious faith and deny any essential difference between "faith" in the existence of the external, objective world and religious faith. This mixing of incompatible concepts is supported by various arguments. Some speak of all belief as irrational, while others acknowledge that beliefs arise from experience, but interpret experience subjectively, that is to say, simply as the totality of individual emotions. On this path we encounter such objectively unfounded concepts as, for example, "religious experience" and obvious fideist attempts to prove the reality of the supernatural on the basis of the individual's "intimate experience".

Needless to say, the person who never asks himself philosophical questions acknowledges the existence of the external world without giving any preliminary thought to the matter. It may be said that he is convinced of its existence or even that he believes in its reality as something independent of the consciousness, but the safest way of putting it is that he trusts the evidence of his senses. The human individual exists practically in a world of things and people that is independent of his consciousness. The existence of material reality independent of consciousness is constantly affirmed by daily experience and practical activity, whether the individual realises it or not. It need not be proved that belief in the existence of objective reality differs fundamentally from belief in the supernatural, which is directly maintained by a certain kind of subjectivism that has its historical origin in the domination of man by the spontaneous forces of social development. That is how matters stand not only with religious faith but also with numerous bourgeois and petty-bourgeois prejudices.

The most varied beliefs and faiths have existed in philosophy for thousands of years. Some of them are analogous to the beliefs held by natural scientists today, that is to say, they are based on more or less firmly established facts; others, on the contrary, are not in accord with the facts and may even directly contradict them. But even the latter type of belief reflects certain facts, certain social needs, interests, loyalty to historically obsolete social relationships, traditions, etc. Conflicting philosophical beliefs must, therefore, have deep historical and ideological roots, which are expressed in a vast variety of speculative theories, since, depending on tradition and conditions, one and the same ideological function or historical trend is formulated in different ways by the various contending philosophical doctrines. The neo-Thomist principle of the "harmony" of science and religion and the completely opposite principle of philosophers inspired by protestantism, who insist that science and religion are divided by a bottomless chasm, represent, as I have shown above, only various ways of achieving one and the same goal—apology for religion. But recognition of the radical opposition between science and religion may serve not only the fideist purpose of reducing to a minimum the cognitive significance of science; it may also serve the materialist atheistic repudiation of religion. This is why the ideological conflict acquires in philosophy a specific form of theoretical discussion of the question in which everyone taking part in the argument recognises the authority of logic and seeks to prove his point instead of merely declaring his beliefs. Even the exponents of alogism are compelled to reckon with this imperative since they try to prove the epistemological weakness of logical thinking by means of logical argument.

Thus, philosophical debate, which is fed by the ideological struggle, at the same time expresses the relative independence of philosophy as a specific form of cognition of reality. The chain of logical inferences that finally make up a system of philosophical beliefs is largely determined by the initial logical assumptions, which cannot be regarded merely as the statement of individual facts, because the universality of philosophical propositions makes them proportionately less amenable to confirmation by individual facts.[1]

[1] Hence the belief typical of most speculative idealist systems that philosophical propositions which follow logically from certain fundamental assumptions are in principle independent of the interests, emotions, subjectivity of the thinker, just as they are independent of the numerous factual data, which at best can serve to illustrate these propositions, but can neither confirm nor refute them. This idealist illusion, based on the oversimplified interpretation of the factual foundation of philosophical conclusions, loses sight of the uniqueness of the fundamental facts from which the philosopher proceeds before he begins to deduce them from the theoretical assumptions he has accepted. If there were no such thing as nature, no idealist would be able to deduce it from the spiritual essence whose existence is his initial assumption. Therefore, speculative idealist thinking does proceed from facts, but tries to present them as the result of something whose existence it can only assume. Philosophical speculation's illusory independence of the facts which it tries to deduce is wholly analogous to the independence displayed by the imagination in conjuring with things that actually exist. But no imagination is capable of creating even one of these things; the image of the fairy-tale dragon with seven heads, belching fire from all its many fanged jaws, is a mosaic put together by the imagination, but we do not find a single element in this mosaic that is actually invented, that is to say, created out of nothing. Similarly in speculative idealist (and also religious) doctrines the natural is elevated to the status of the supernatural, the transcendental, and so on.

3. THEORETICAL ROOTS OF PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE

As we have seen in the previous chapter, philosophy's ideological function does not comprise its whole content, just as it does not express the difference between philosophy and other forms of social consciousness. Hence the need to examine the theoretical roots of philosophical debate. Such debate is inevitable because of the existence of conflicting philosophical trends, systems and conceptions. But this divergence of philosophical doctrines is a product of the development of a society divided into antagonistic classes and cannot be regarded as a specific, everlasting peculiarity of the philosophical form of cognition. Viewed from this standpoint, the struggle between materialism and idealism is not, of course, an *eternal* law of philosophical development. So to define the epistemological nature of philosophical debate there is no need to consider its extreme forms, that is to say, the struggle between the main trends in philosophy. Philosophical debate may take place within the framework of one and the same school, between its different adherents. Theoretically it would be quite appropriate to abstract the question not only from the conflict between schools but also from the contradictions within these schools in order to narrow down our examination of the epistemological roots of philosophical controversy to its most elementary and consequently inevitable form, a form independent of any basic social contrasts. Only this approach if, of course, it is workable, will show to what extent polemics is related to the essence of philosophy itself and constitutes an inherent mode of its existence. Thus, we return to our examination of the specific form of philosophical knowledge.

The special nature of philosophical problems, as we have seen, shows itself primarily in the infinite range of philosophical categories, these being qualitatively different from concepts, which the philosopher consciously creates by generalising empirical data. This special feature of philosophical categories, which Kant interpreted as evidence of their *a priori* nature, shows that the subject of philosophical inquiry is the specific optimum (nature, society, man, cognition, morality, etc.). It is the study of such unlimited, infinitely rich and varied complexes of phenomena that makes it necessary to apply philosophical categories as a special kind of concept whose definition is not based, directly at any rate, on the generalisation of the empirical data available to the scientist.[1] This is what gives rise to such

[1] The concept of category is sometimes used extremely loosely, i.e., is interpreted simply as the most general concept in the framework of a given field of knowledge. Thus we sometimes speak of the categories of classical mechanics as mass, density, impenetrability, speed, pressure, work, etc. But in this case, is not the dividing line between category and general concept eroded? General categories, since they indicate universally observable facts, evoke no doubts as to the reality of the content with which they are associated. Philosophical categories such as substance, essence, necessity, and chance, for example, are quite a different matter. Epistemologically, from the standpoint of the theory of knowledge, there may obviously be doubt as to the physical reality of the content attributed to them, just as there may be a possibility of mutually exclusive definitions or interpretations of these categories. What is more, philosophical categories, unlike general concepts employed in other sciences, are usually correlated with other philosophical categories, and this relationship usually contains an element of negation in the dialectical sense: necessity—chance, necessity—pos-

questions as: Is there any other necessity besides logical necessity? Is there unity in all that exists? Does the category of possibility relate to anything that really exists, or does it express only the relationship of the human consciousness to some processes? We have taken only a few philosophical questions to illustrate our point, questions which arise in connection with the definition and application of philosophical categories, many of which were known in ancient times, that is, were used by philosophers in the days when they obviously could not have given a scientific analysis of their content or provided sound reasons for their application.

The study of specific forms of universality, which presumes a notion of the world as a whole or a conception of what in the world constitutes a special kind of wholeness, naturally gives rise to questions regarding the objective reality of what the categories denote. The old argument between the nominalists and realists is still going on in a modified form in present-day philosophy, inasmuch as the problem of the general, the particular and the unique is constantly regenerated both by the development of science and by that of social life, in which every individual considers the unique, the particular and the universal not so much a logical as a human problem.

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sibility, freedom—necessity, essence—phenomenon, essence—appearance, possibility—reality, being—non-being, etc. Thus, the nature of philosophical categories, the content which they express, contains the epistemological basis for philosophical debate. Attempts to create new categories by imparting a special meaning to the already current categories or concepts ("being" in its neo-Thomist interpretation, "existence" in existentialist philosophy) strengthen the tendencies that engender philosophical debate.

The dispute regarding universals is only one of the aspects of the problem that arises when we consider any specific optimum. Other aspects of this problem are related to the knowability of this optimal but specific universality, the premises for such knowledge being formulated in different ways by the advocates of empiricism, of *a priori* reasoning, of conventionalism, by the metaphysicists, who believe it possible to go beyond the bounds of all conceivable experience, by the advocates of phenomenalism, philosophical scepticism, and so on. Thus, philosophical debate has not only epistemological roots, like any other scientific discipline, but also its own special epistemological sources. This is also obvious in cases when philosophy has to deal with questions that extend into the field of other, specialised sciences, the questions of infinity, for example.

A specialised science, thanks to the restriction of its field of inquiry, a restriction incompatible with the philosophical form of cognition, may investigate this or any other problem in accordance with its specialised goal. Philosophy by its very nature cannot confine itself to such a rewarding and "modest" task. However, it is just because infinity is infinity that it can be known only through the finite, which, though not infinite, implies the infinite and is consequently in a certain respect infinite itself.

By knowing the finite we know the infinite, but always in a limited, finite form. "Infinity *is* a contradiction," Engels wrote, "and is full of contradictions. From the outset it is a contradiction that an infinity is composed of nothing but finites, and yet this is the case. The limitedness of the material world leads no less to contradictions than its unlimitedness, and every attempt to get over

these contradictions leads, as we have seen, to new and worse contradictions. It is just *because* infinity is a contradiction that it is an infinite process, unrolling endlessly in time and in space. The removal of the contradiction would be the end of infinity."[1] But does not what Engels has to say about infinity apply in some measure (hard to say what) to any philosophical problem, to the subject of philosophy in general?

The contradiction of infinity constitutes the objective source of the contradictions inherent in the specific form of cognition which takes the multiformity of the infinite or infinite multiformity as its subject of inquiry. Kant, who was well aware of this, associated the analysis of the problem of infinity with the antinomies of pure reason, i.e., what he considered to be the insoluble contradictions into which philosophy, considered as "pure reason", was bound to fall. Lenin in his notes on Hegel's *Science of Logic* stressed the narrowness of Kant's standpoint, particularly in the sense that Kant had unjustifiably limited the sphere of antinomy: "Kant has *four* 'antinomies'. In fact *every* concept, every category is similarly antinomous."[2] Dialectical materialism, in contrast to Kant's agnosticism, does not recognise any antinomies as insoluble in principle. Contradictions are resolved both in objective reality itself (in the process of development and the struggle of opposites) and in theoretical cognition, which dialectically reflects this process. But the theoretical resolution of contradictions presupposes a certain level of knowledge of the given process, which is not, of course, always available. Consequently, both the objective dialectics of reality and the subjective dialectics of the process of cognition contain the epistemological source of philosophical debate.

[1] F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, pp. 66-67.
[2] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 116.

The epistemological sources of philosophical debate, inasmuch as they are inseparable from the nature of any cognition (therefore, not only the philosophical), are intransient in character. But it would be wrong to confine ourselves to drawing a distinction between the transient and intransient sources of philosophical debate. Obviously, the epistemological possibilities of such controversy, implied in the very nature of philosophical abstractions, are substantially modified by historical conditions and the development of philosophy itself.

For thousands of years philosophy was unable to find itself, that is to say, unable to define its subject-matter and become a specific, philosophical science. It acquired a real possibility of self-determination when the numerous specialised sciences had shared out among themselves nature and also many spheres of human life. Thanks to the segregation that has taken place between philosophy and the specialised sciences, philosophy's status in the system of scientific knowledge has changed. Although the speculative idealist doctrines still strive, independently of the specialised sciences, to establish the basic tenets of all scientific knowledge, they have been unable to ignore their discoveries and the methods by which they were achieved. While still claiming the position of the science of sciences, which draws its principles from pure reason, idealist natural philosophy (this is particularly obvious in the case of Schelling) is, in fact, inspired by the outstanding discoveries of natural science and despite the phi-

losopher's own subjective belief is in some way dependent on them.

Hegel, who declared that the philosophy of nature should not be based on natural science, because the "mode of exposition employed in physics does not satisfy the demands of the concept",[1] which develops out of itself the definitions of external nature, at the same time opposed the arbitrary constructions of natural philosophy, of which, as we know, there were a good many in his own philosophical system. "The philosophical mode of exposition," he wrote, "is not a matter of whim, a capricious desire to walk on one's head for a change after walking for so long on one's feet. . . ."[2] What Hegel considered to be arbitrary natural philosophical constructions were theoretical propositions that did not agree with the philosophical principles of his system. And yet if we analyse from the standpoint of these not quite consistent statements of Hegel's his own natural philosophical errors, it turns out that some of them (the majority, in fact) spring from his speculative idealist system, while the others—surprising though it may seem—arise from the limited natural scientific notions of his time, which had been uncritically accepted by this profound critic of empiricism.[3]

[1] G. W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 9, S. 44.

[2] Ibid.

[3] This has been pointed out in Soviet historico-philosophical studies, particularly in the third volume of the *History of Philosophy*, published in 1943: "Reading his *Philosophy of Nature*, one sees how often he was led astray by bad empiricists. Thus, when defending the conversion of water into air and vice versa and allowing the formation of rain out of dry air, he relied on the empirical observation of Lichtenberg and others. When he maintained that water does not decompose into oxygen and hydrogen, but that the latter can be formed only through electrification, Hegel was relying on the observations of the Munich physicist Richter, and so on."

Philosophy's change of status in the system of scientific knowledge offers, on the one hand, the possibility of doing away with arbitrary speculation and taking a firm stand on the data of the specialised sciences, but, on the other hand, philosophy runs the risk of absorbing the errors that the specialised sciences themselves are unable to avoid. The mechanistic narrowness of the materialism of the 17th and 18th centuries undoubtedly resulted from the achievements of classical mechanics and its own limitations, which are manifest, for instance, in Newton's understanding of space and time, Laplas's conception of determinism, etc. And because philosophy does not simply borrow from the specialised sciences individual general propositions, but interprets them on the wider plane of the world view, this too leaves room for errors that natural science avoids because it does not engage in the philosophical interpretation of these propositions. The same mechanistic materialism in its teaching on nature and society inevitably goes farther than classical mechanics, which virtually stops at the investigation of mechanical processes.

Thus, the segregation of philosophy from the specialised sciences, while creating a firm basis for the development of scientific philosophical theory, does not rule out errors conditioned by philosophy's change of status in the system of scientific knowledge. Although these errors are rooted in the specific nature of philosophical knowledge, in the universal character of philosophical generalisations, they are by no means

insuperable. Materialist dialectics, employed as the method of philosophical generalisation of the discoveries of the specialised sciences, makes it possible to avoid absolutising these discoveries by revealing their true philosophical significance.

Engels's philosophical generalisation of the discoveries of natural science in the mid-19th century and Lenin's analysis of the crisis in physics at the turn of the century are classical examples of scientific development of philosophical concepts on the basis of the achievements of natural science. One must, of course, have a profound knowledge of the natural sciences and be able to apply materialist dialectics creatively in order to produce a philosophical generalisation of their achievements. The mistakes made by some Marxist philosophers in their philosophical appraisal of the discoveries of biology, physics and other sciences bear out this view.

The outstanding exponents of pre-Marxist philosophy did not as a rule appreciate the positive significance of philosophical debate. Nearly all of them contrasted philosophical study to polemics, which they regarded as an utterly fruitless occupation.

Although he himself carried on a polemic against the natural scientific understanding of causality, Hume maintained that all polemics are fruitless. This paradoxical attitude can scarcely be attributed to Hume's scepticism. More likely it was nurtured by what he knew of the medieval disputes of the schoolmen, who parried one another's arguments with quotations from the Scriptures, Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle. Observing that there were no questions that could not become the subject of dispute and be contested by opposing sides, Hume drew the conclusion that, the

nature of polemics being what it is, eloquence, not reason, was bound to emerge victorious. "The victory is not gained by the men at arms, who manage the pike and the sword; but by the trumpeters, drummers and musicians of the army."[1]

Hume evidently assumed that he himself was not polemicising with anyone but merely disposing of worthless arguments while expounding a view that coincided with experience and common sense. Naturally, this belief was an illusion, which had its source, however, in the difference (characteristic of all scientific activity as well as philosophy) between the process of research, which is critical and essentially polemical, and the setting forth of results, which need not necessarily be polemical, at any rate in form. This distinction, which often builds up into a contradiction, was justified by Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Inveighing against "uncritical" dogmatism and contrasting it to "critical philosophy", he nevertheless maintained that its expositions must of necessity be to a certain extent dogmatic in character.

Like Hume, Kant disapproved of polemics, believing that at best the contestants would defend equally unprovable theories. Some, for instance, would maintain there is no God, others that He exists. But since theoretical reason is not capable of deciding questions that go beyond the limits of possible experience, "there is no such thing as real polemics in the sphere of pure reason. Both sides mill the air and fight their own shadows, because they have gone beyond the bounds of nature,

[1] D. Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, Vol. I, London, 1874, p. 306.

where there is nothing for their dogmatic devices to grasp and hold on to."[1] But while condemning the polemical application of pure reason to questions that can be solved only by "practical reason", that is to say, by the *a priori* moral consciousness, Kant tirelessly polemicises with his predecessors, the creators of the rationalist metaphysical systems of the 17th century, the materialist sensualists, the scepticism of Hume, and so on. Even when Kant does not actually name his opponents, in arguing his conception of space and time, the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgements, the specific nature of categorial synthesis, etc., he constantly crosses swords with various philosophical doctrines which have arrived at different conclusions.

This failure to appreciate the positive role of polemics in the development of philosophy seems to have been due to the fact that even the most outstanding exponents of pre-Marxist philosophy made no distinction between historically transient causes and the epistemological, intransient sources of philosophical controversy. They all saw the fact of philosophical controversy as the Achilles's heel of philosophy, and each of them (unlike the

[1] *Immanuel Kants sämtliche Werke* in sechs Bänden, Bd. 3, S. 573. It should be noted, however, that Kant was convinced of the inevitability of dispute between philosophy, on the one hand, and theology and jurisprudence, on the other, since the latter were based not on the "legislation of reason", but on government instructions (Kant naturally had in mind the feudal authorities, which, he implies, were incapable of being guided by the principles of pure reason). Hence in the *Dispute of the Faculties*, that is, in his essay elucidating the relationship of the philosophical faculty to the faculties of theology and law, Kant wrote, "The dispute can have no end and the philosophical faculty must always be prepared to face it." (Ibid., Band I, S. 579.)

sceptics) hoped to put an end to the dispute by creating a philosophical system that would be universally accepted, like Euclid's geometry. The ideal of mathematical knowledge, as a form of knowledge allegedly ruling out all disagreement, was the ideal not only of the rationalists. It must also have been shared by the empirical philosophers, although they were not aware of it. It was on the assumption that there must be some kind of knowledge immune to controversy that they sought out the causes of error.

In his teaching on idols Bacon poses the question of the anthropological causes of error, which in his view are inseparable from human nature. Knowledge of these causes, he believed, would in some measure help us to avoid the snares of misapprehension. He never gave up hope that with the help of scientifically elaborated empiricism he would put an end not only to the phrase-spinning of the schoolmen, but to all serious disagreement in general, because practical successes ("inventions") would always help to distinguish truth from error. Philosophical debate struck him as the futile occupation of learned ignoramuses and such indeed were the philosophical debates that Bacon rebelled against. A zealous advocate of "natural philosophy", which he imagined was constantly scorned because people preferred castles in the air to something of real use, Bacon was of course far from realising that empiricism, if it kept strictly to its own rules of inductive reasoning, suffered from its own illusions and some extremely wild notions connected with them.

The rationalism of the 17th century was free of the illusions of philosophical and natural scientific empiricism. But it was subject to other illusions, which arose out of its one-sided inter-

pretation of mathematics and abstract notion of reason and the logical process in general. Rationalism tried to find a special kind of intellectual sphere the very nature of which would be incompatible with error. But there is no such sphere of unconditional truth and any human ability is liable to err. Nor is practical activity free of error, including experimental work and scientific research in general. This does not mean, of course, that error is something that cannot be overcome. In principle any error can be overcome, but the ability to err is inseparable from the ability to know, and as such it cannot be got rid of.

The advance of knowledge undoubtedly tends to eradicate systemic error (of idealism or religion, for example), but even this is possible only in certain historical conditions which do not depend on cognition and consciousness. But even if the advance of knowledge were able to overcome any error, it still would not eliminate its epistemological source. And expansion of the sphere of cognition also entails a widening of the sphere of possible error regarding things that have not yet been investigated.

The rationalists took as their absolute criterion of truth such clarity as would leave no room for doubt. But what is the criterion of such clarity? They did not even pose this question. The fetish of intellectual intuition and its allegedly inherent infallibility engendered the belief that one could always end a philosophical dispute once and for all if, following the example of mathematics, one proceeded from self-evident truths and developed the inferences from them according to strict logic. The attempt to apply the mathematical method in philosophy led the rationalists to identify empirical grounds with logical grounds, and causality with logical necessity. In other words, the rationalist interpretation of mathematical method gave rise to a kind of mistake that is basically impossible in mathematics, where logical inference is not in itself regarded as description of objective reality and becomes such only in so far as it is empirically interpreted.[1]

Thomas Hobbes, who like the rationalists saw the way of finally overcoming philosophical error and dispute in the formulation of precise and strict definitions, asserted, as had Bacon before him, that one of the chief sources of all error is the polysemy of words and verbal expressions. "Wherefore, as men owe all their true ratiocination to the right understanding of speech; so also they owe their errors to the misunderstanding of the same."[2] There are words that mean nothing, although they may appear to signify things that really exist. Words and their combinations possess certain qualities that are always being taken

[1] Modern mathematics shows that the mathematical axioms that the rationalists took as self-evident absolute truths are nothing of the kind. "Clearly the correspondence between axioms and the objects of reality," P. S. Novikov points out, "must always be approximate. If, for instance, we ask the question, 'Does real physical space correspond to the axioms of Euclid's geometry?' we must first give physical definitions of the geometrical terms used in these axioms, such as 'point', 'straight line', 'plane', and so on. In other words, we must indicate the physical circumstances to which these terms correspond. The axioms will then become physical statements which can be tested experimentally. After such testing we shall be able to guarantee the truth of our assertions as far as the precision of our measuring instruments permits." (P. S. Novikov, *Elements of Mathematical Logic*, Moscow, 1959, p. 13 [in Russian].)

[2] *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, Vol. 1, London, 1839, p. 36.

as the qualities of things themselves. It is this, according to Hobbes, that creates the problem of universals. And finally, even things possess certain qualities that are sometimes attributed to words and verbal expressions. Having discussed the various forms of incorrect usage, Hobbes draws a conclusion which makes him in a sense the forerunner of the present-day philosophy of linguistic analysis: "To conclude, the light of human minds is perspicuous words, but by exact definitions first snuffed, and purged from ambiguity; *reason* is the *pace;* increase of *science,* the *way,* and the benefit of mankind, the *end.* And, on the contrary, metaphors, and senseless and ambiguous words, are like *ignes fatui;* and reasoning upon them is wandering among innumerable absurdities; and their end, contention and sedition, or contempt."[1]

Hobbes's analysis of the causes of error develops both the rationalist and the empirical criticism of scholastic quibbling over words. This is its historical significance, a significance that outlives the age in which it was written. The speculative idealist systems of later times, different though they are from the doctrines of the schoolmen, also created concepts concerning things that had no existence in reality or attributed to these things (and the world in general) qualities possessed only by the human mind. But the weak spot in Hobbes's conception is his nominalist interpretation of concepts, which is historically connected with the empiricism of the new age. The reform of usage that he proposes is obviously Utopian, since scientific concepts are not merely collective nouns

[1] *The English Works of Thomas Malmesbury,* Vol. 3, pp. 36-37.

without any real meaning. They reflect the objectively existing general and universal, the actual unity within diversity; essence, law, necessity, and so on. Consequently, even the difficulties that we encounter in quest of knowledge lie not only in words, notions, concepts and ideas of things, but in the things themselves, in their real diversity, contradictoriness and changeability. The fact that the knower may err should not be allowed to overshadow the objective foundations of error.

Whereas the great pre-Marxist philosophers tried to put an end to philosophical controversy by establishing certain fundamental and unconditional truths and evolving a scientific method of inquiry, the bourgeois philosophy of the late 19th century and the 20th century, realising that the metaphysical pretensions of their predecessors to absolute knowledge were illusory, at the same time rejected even the historically tested path towards objective truth that the positive sciences are following. The philosophical analysis of the achievements of natural science made by positivism was based on an agnostic, subjectivist interpretation of the fact of knowledge.

Denial of the rationalist conception of knowledge above experience was transformed into a subjectivist revision of the concept of truth. This was particularly striking in pragmatism, which proclaimed its goal as the final overcoming of philosophical controversy. "The pragmatic method," wrote William James, "is primarily a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable."[1] The essence of this method, as we know, may be reduced to the dictum

[1] W. James, *Pragmatism,* p. 45.

that "truth is *one species of good*"[1], in view of which any idea is true that helps the individual to coordinate his new experience with his store of old beliefs and thus makes it easier for him to attain his chosen goal, by "linking things satisfactorily, working securely, *simplifying, saving labour*".[2]

Whereas the opponents of orthodox scholastics advanced the principle of the duality of truth, that is, the independence of knowledge from religious faith, James declared all ideas to be true if they could "get us along, so to speak", satisfy our needs. Even the argument concerning utility, since it was made the criterion of truth, was declared meaningless because only the individual could make up his own mind about what was good for him.

James, admittedly, tried to give the principle of utility, which he believed would overcome the scholastic conception of truth in itself, an intersubjective meaning, and argued that some ideas actually "work" for everybody. These were primarily religious notions, after which came ideas that had a minimal effect in changing habitual and established beliefs. In short, the pragmatic conception of truth was extremely conservative both in its scientific and socio-political aspects. This epistemological conservatism was proclaimed the sole means of abolishing all fundamental disagreement in philosophy. The real purpose of it all was to establish a definite religious and politically coloured form of idealism as a universal philosophical convention.

In Russia the claim to end all philosophical dispute was made by N. Lossky, who wrote that only

[1] W. James, op. cit., p. 75.
[2] Ibid., p. 58.

intuitionism, radically renovating opposed philosophical trends and liberating them from their exclusive claims, could hope to bring about their complete reconciliation. "It is a fact," Lossky wrote, "that intuitionism, by removing the premise that makes the old trends one-sided, while not exactly solving important controversial issues in favour of one or another of the opposing sides, goes even deeper and actually removes the very ground for dispute, showing that it comes from misunderstanding, and that the disputing parties in their one-sidedness were partly right and partly wrong."[1]

Lenin, noting the characteristic tendency in modern bourgeois philosophy to "elevate" itself above the opposition between materialism and idealism, science and religion, characterised this tendency as a modernised form of the struggle of idealism against materialism. Revealing the profound social roots of this reactionary philosophical movement masquerading under the flag of philosophical neutrality, Lenin proved that the struggle between materialism and idealism, between science and religion, could not become obsolete while the idealist and religious interpretation of the world continued to exist.

But idealism and religion are not eternal. The materialist understanding of history has laid bare the social and economic roots of these alienated forms of social consciousness and proved their historically transient nature. But does this mean that at a certain stage in socio-historical development philosophical controversy will come to an end? Of course, not. The history of philosophy

[1] N. Lossky, *Substantiation of Intuitionism*, St. Petersburg, 1908, pp. 337-38 (in Russian).

shows that the forms and character of philosophical (and scientific) controversy change historically, a fact that is conditioned both by socio-economic causes and by the development of knowledge.

The abstract study of the nature of philosophical controversy is profoundly anti-historical, because it ignores the ideological function of philosophy, the change of its status in the system of scientific knowledge, the development of philosophy and of philosophical argumentation. We have only to compare the philosophical disputes of various historical epochs (ancient times, the Middle Ages, the New Age, the present day) to see that even in conditions of antagonistic class society the theoretical substantiation of philosophical propositions is steadily developing and that views which are not even indirectly confirmed by the specialised sciences, practice or historical experience, are gradually overcome. Of course, in antagonistic class society this tendency usually assumes a hidden form, but it can be revealed by scientific analysis of even the most reactionary philosophical doctrines. What is it, for instance, that makes most of today's idealist philosophers assert that their philosophy does not contradict natural science? Evidently the fact that even idealists are today obliged to reckon with the rules of theoretical discussion that have been evolved by modern science.

Edmund Husserl, whose philosophy is obviously aimed against what he regards as "naive" natural science, had to admit that the creation of "rigorous science" is the ideal of philosophical inquiry. "It may be," he wrote, "that in the whole life of modern times there is no idea more powerful, more irrestrainable, more all-conquering

than the idea of science. Nothing will halt its victorious march."[1]

Lenin showed how idealism may change its form in ways unsuspected by the layman. Idealism, he said, is "disowning" idealism. Today there is scarcely a single influential idealist doctrine that has not come out "against" idealism. The history of the "realist" doctrines of the 20th century (neo-realism, critical realism, N. Hartmann's "new ontology", etc.) are particularly indicative in this respect. Scientific analysis of this notable historical symptom shows that what is called idealism in contemporary bourgeois philosophy is mainly the rationalist type of idealism or openly subjective idealist philosophising. But why in that case does present-day idealism "disown" all idealism? Why is this change in the form of idealism presented as its final defeat? The point is that idealism has been discredited by modern natural science and socio-historical experience. But it continues to exist not only as a result of its theoretical errors, but because the socio-economic base and corresponding ideological atmosphere that feeds it still exist.

Today there are real historical prospects of a fundamental change in the character of philosophical debate which in a world that has put an

[1] E. Husserl, "Philosophy as an Exact Science", in *Logos*, 1911, Book I, p. 8 (in Russian). This statement of Husserl's cannot be accepted, of course, without allowing for the fact that he is constantly at war with natural science, which in his belief "can never, anywhere provide the foundation for philosophy" (Ibid., p. 11). But we would stress something else. The discoveries of the natural sciences and mathematics substantiate the concept of scientific knowledge and the criteria of scientificality with which even idealist philosophy is forced to reckon, no matter how opposed it may be to these sciences.

end to the domination of the spontaneous forces of social development over man becomes scientific philosophical discussion, whose real basis is the creative development of the dialectical-materialist world view. In this form philosophical debate is no longer an ideological struggle, because its necessary foundation will be the ideological unity of all mankind, consciously creating its own history on the basis of communistically transformed social relations. Such controversy is analogous to the scientific discussion necessitated by the development of science. I say analogous because the subject-matter of scientific philosophy and its method of inquiry rule out the possibility of the exact and often complete solution that is the peculiar advantage of the specialised sciences.

In becoming scientific, philosophy rejects on principle what can only be regarded in our day as the simple-minded claim to be a system of absolute truths for all time. But scientific philosophy rejects equally strongly the relativist conception that no truth is an absolute truth in the final instance. Such an assertion is just as dogmatic as its opposite, since it attributes to itself the same absolute truth that it so vehemently denies. The creative, dialectical-materialist character of Marxist philosophy, its organic unity with scientific knowledge and social practice, opens up boundless prospects for fruitful scientific discussion between people of like mind. Its major goals are to develop philosophical knowledge, to elaborate the methodological problems of science, the theoretical foundation of men's conscious, free practical activity, and to enrich their spiritual life, which is, of course, not merely a means but the goal of humanity, when it has forever abolished social inequality and its manifold consequences.

CONCLUSION

The reader who has followed the general argument of this book attentively will have noticed, of course, that its central idea is that the pluralism of philosophical doctrines is historically transient. The empirically observable multiplicity of incompatible philosophies has always been the point of departure for the sceptical denial of philosophy's ability to arrive at any objective truth. This, too, is the basis of the modern positivist denial of the scientific philosophical world view.

The 20th-century philosopher, says Hans Reichenbach, should have the courage to acknowledge the obvious fact that "philosophy has been unable to develop a common doctrine that could be taught to students with the general consent of all those who teach philosophy. Those among us who have taught one of the sciences will know what it means to teach on a common ground. The sciences have developed a general body of knowledge, carried by universal recognition, and he who teaches a science does so with the proud feeling of introducing his students into a realm of well-

established truth. Why must the philosopher renounce the teaching of established truth?"[1]

Reichenbach's point would be understandable if he were attacking the idealist speculations so characteristic of bourgeois philosophy from the positions of science. But he is speaking of philosophy in general. Any philosophy, in his view, ignores the truths that science has firmly established. Without making any distinction between materialism and idealism, without distinguishing the present-day form of materialism from previous materialist doctrines, Reichenbach asserts that philosophers, unlike scientists, merely state their own or other people's opinions. "Imagine a scientist who were to teach electronics in the form of a report on views of different physicists, never telling his students what *are* the laws governing electrons. The idea appears ridiculous."[2] So philosophy is either irresponsible argument about matters concerning which there are firmly established truths, or else it is meaningless pontification about something that cannot bet the subject of knowledge. This is the standpoint from which Reichenbach appraises the historico-philosophical process and its characteristic divergence of philosophical doctrines, which he sees as immanently inherent in philosophy: "If philosophers have produced a great many contradicting systems, all except one must be wrong; and it is even probable that all are wrong. The history of philosophy should therefore include a history of the errors of philosophers; in uncovering the sources of error historical research will contribute to truth."[3]

[1] H. Reichenbach, *Modern Philosophy of Science*, London, 1959, p. 136.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

It goes without saying that historico-philosophical science is impossible without criticism of philosophical errors, the overcoming of which will help to establish the truth. But it is not this truism that Reichenbach has in mind. His idea is that the only knowledge we may gain from historico-philosophical science is knowledge of the mistakes that philosophers have constantly made. In other words, the only truth we can derive from the history of philosophy is that error is error. When we have seen plenty of errors and recognised them as such, we shall know an equivalent amount of truth. Here we have the opinion of a noted neopositivist, one of the founders of the subjective agnostic "philosophy of science", which is proclaimed scientific mainly because it claims to have divorced itself from all previous philosophical ideas, although in fact it revives the conception of Hume.

Reichenbach's statements are essentially no different from those of his predecessors—the positivists of the 19th century. John Lewis was writing very much the same kind of thing at the beginning of the century. Philosophers not only made mistakes, but repeated the mistakes of their predecessors of which they were already aware, and even their new point of departure could not save them from philosophical misadventure. Such was the sad fate of philosophy, according to Lewis, who evidently failed to see that the fatalism he had rejected as a speculative religious notion should not be applied either to the historico-philosophical process.

H. G. Wells was neither a philosopher nor a historian of philosophy, but the question that interests us appeared so clear to him that he declared without more ado: "The student of philoso-

phy doing 'greats' or whatever pompous name is given to this stale resurrection pie, is introduced to a jumble of incompatible ideas, a mixture of bits from different jig-saw puzzles; incoherence as wisdom."[1] The judgement appears somewhat hasty, but various other fragments from his book *You Can't Be Too Careful* suggest that besides his traditional English empiricism this outstanding humanist writer had uncritically accepted the neo-positivist doctrine, which struck him as a simple final solution to unnecessarily confused and complicated philosophical problems.

In the late fifties Jean-François Revel brought out a book called *What Are Philosophers for?* Its pretentious opinions seem to aim expressly at destroying philosophy. Here is one taken almost at random: "The greatest piece of hypocrisy of the people who make philosophy their profession today is to pretend that philosophy exists."[2] Such exaggerated views scarcely need refuting. Essentially they have already been dealt with in this book and we recall them here only to stress once more in conclusion the utmost importance of the problem of a scientific philosophy, a problem that Marxism has solved because it has evolved such a philosophy and is creatively developing it.

In recent years some philosophers who consider themselves Marxists (an opinion not shared by us) have proposed that there should be various philosophies of Marxism. At the recent XIV International Philosophical Congress P. Vranitsky devoted his speech to this subject. In his published

[1] H. G. Wells, *You Can't Be Too Careful,* London, 1942, p. 266.

[2] J.-F. Revel, *Pourquoi des philosophes?,* Paris, 1957, p. 149.

paper on *The Need for Different Versions in Marxist Philosophy* he maintains that the diversity and multiformity of mankind's historical practical experience finds its expression in philosophical theory. This goes without saying. But it is incomprehensible why one should conclude from this statement that there is a need for different, i.e., presumably contradictory, versions of the philosophy of Marxism. Vranitsky writes: "In the present, too, historical situations change radically, resulting in important shifts in the posing of historical problems and tasks. If philosophy (in this case Marxist philosophy) cannot react like a sensitive barometer to these shifts, it becomes historically insignificant."[1] This, too, is beyond dispute. But why does it follow from this fact, which is well worth remembering, that alongside dialectical and historical materialism there should exist other Marxist (or rather, quasi-Marxist) philosophies? To this question Vranitsky's theses give absolutely no answer.

It is quite clear (not only from the theses, but from other works of Vranitsky's) that the theoretical premise for the idea that different versions of Marxist philosophy are needed lies in the belief that Marxism (like all philosophy in general) cannot and should not be scientific. Thus, the historically transient opposition of philosophy to the specialised sciences is exalted as an eternal law of the development of philosophical thinking. The specific nature of philosophy is absolutised, despite the fact (which I hope I have proved) that there is not a single peculiarity of the philosophical form of cognition that is not to some extent

[1] *Akten des XIV. Internationalen Kongresses für Philosophie,* Bd. I, Wien, 1968, S. 139-40.

inherent in scientific thought in general. There cannot be different (scientific) versions of the scientific philosophical world view, just as there cannot be different versions of any scientific theory, if, of course, the word "version" refers to the result of the inquiry and not merely to the form in which it is stated. Our opponents cannot agree with this. But what in that case should Marxism be? Art? No, they reply, it must be simply philosophy and nothing else. But in the present age the only adequate form of theoretical truth is science and scientific research. The implication, then, is that philosophy should not seek objective truth, that is to say, truth which is independent of the investigator's own consciousness? But in that case philosophy is not theoretical knowledge. It can be nothing but consciousness, consciousness without knowledge.

We see that the existentialists and other exponents of contemporary idealist philosophy are far more consistent than P. Vranitsky, because they do not try to present their unscientific conception of the pluralism of philosophical doctrines as the theoretical premise for the creative development of Marxism.

The need for the creative development of Marxist philosophy is absolutely obvious. But it is equally obvious that this development cannot take place along the well-worn paths of contemporary idealist philosophy.

Contemporary bourgeois sociologists, seeking to discredit the Marxist teaching on the inevitability of the communist transformation of social relations, argue that no such thing as objective historical necessity exists in general. Contemporary bourgeois philosophers fight dialectical and historical materialism with the thesis that there can

be no such thing as philosophical science. While political revisionism tries to blurr the difference between the socialist and capitalist systems, philosophical revisionism argues the notion that there is no valid distinction between Marxist and bourgeois philosophy; even the term "bourgeois philosophy" is quite often ruled out of order. Such is the logic of ideological struggle. In the Central Committee's report to the 24th Congress of the CPSU, Leonid Brezhnev said: "The struggle between the forces of capitalism and socialism on the world scene and the attempts of revisionists of all hues to emasculate the revolutionary teaching and distort the practice of socialist and communist construction require that we continue to pay undivided attention to the problems and creative development of theory."[1]

Historico-philosophical science by theoretical research into the facts reconstructs the complex and contradictory process of the formation of scientific philosophical knowledge, to the attainment of which the most outstanding thinkers of the past devoted unremitting intellectual effort. This reconstruction of the actual road travelled by philosophy is an essential condition for its further development.

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[1] *24th Congress of the CPSU*, Moscow, 1971, p. 123.

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