

TRUTHS AND TRUTH. TRUTH AS THE SUPREME
FORM OF THE SUBJECTIVE REFLECTION OF
OBJECTIVE REALITY IN MAN'S CONSCIOUSNESS

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How about the definition of the concept of truth? Can the concept of truth receive a truly logical definition?

In some of his writings Lenin discussed the notion of consciousness in general as a concept equal in broadness and scope to the concept of matter in general and considered it to be undefinable. However, with the comprehensive analysis of consciousness in these and others of his works he demonstrated that, first, consciousness is a property of highly organized matter; second, consciousness is a specific, intricate and qualitatively particular form of reflection in general, taken as a property of all matter, essentially akin to but not identical with sensation; third, in man this form of reflection is not only psychic in general, but is determined by his labour and social being, it is a consciousness of man's labour and social being; fourth, if we go below the sensation of animal and the sensitivity of some plants, consciousness as a property of all matter appears as one of the essential forms of motion in general, which itself is a fundamental essential form of matter in general.

This is how the problem of consciousness in general was formulated and solved by Marx, Engels and Lenin.

However, how about truth, about definition of the concept of truth in general?

An answer to this question is again provided by the analysis of Marx, Engels and Lenin of the concepts of consciousness in general and truth in general, the basic features of which we have already discussed.

In the biological and social evolution consciousness appears as an organ of a more or less active orientation in the environ-

ment and of acting on it. We already know that in men and in animals both orientation and action differ, but right now this does not matter so much. What is more important in this case is the following: although consciousness is always an organ of orientation in the environment and of acting on it, it is not always a logically thinking consciousness, i.e. it is not always a truth-grasping consciousness and not every content of consciousness at any moment is a 'thought' which comes to truth. As a subjective, emotional and volitional consciousness, it does not always coincide with 'truth grasping consciousness'. This means that consciousness as a concept is broader and richer in content and scope than truth.

This, in turn, means that since the concepts of motion, reflection in general and conscious reflection or consciousness are broader concepts than the concept of truth, the latter can in principle be defined scientifically and logically.

It is clear that the complete, scientifically exhaustive answer to the question 'What is truth?' actually remains merely an ideal of philosophy which, together with the particular sciences, has been constantly tackling this problem for millennia without even arriving at a final and exhaustive answer. But this does not mean that all these efforts (agnosticism, scepticism, alogism; etc.) have been fruitless and useless in principle and that there is no longer any reason to search for an answer to this 'damned eternal question'.

On the contrary, we believe that the philosophy of dialectical materialism provides us with the comparatively most correct and comprehensive answer to the question of the essence, forms and significance of truth.

And just because and insofar as dialectical materialism considers philosophy as a content logic and as a most general scientific methodology, which is consciously based on the theory of reflection, the proper setting and solution of the problems of the theory of reflection render it possible in principle to find a scientific answer to the question: 'What is truth?'

It follows that the scientific and philosophical definition of truth must inevitably contain two elements. First, the character of every truth (or, to put it in other words, of all thinking which is true or veracious) as a particular form and, more specifically, as a human conscious subjective form of reflection

in general, taken in turn as one of the basic forms (or modes of manifestation) of the motion of matter in general. Of course, this form should not be construed as provisional and accidental but as a form expressing the very essence of cognitive thinking, i.e. as its essential form.

Second, the particular feature of all cognitive thinking, of every truth as a form of reflection in general consists, epistemologically, not only in its being the human form of reflection in general, but also and above all, in its being a human form of reflection in which we have not only a process of distinction of the image from the object but also a (never completed) process of dialectical coincidence of the image (idea) with the object. And because this is so, epistemology, unlike psychology, seeks to determine chiefly in how far the image does or does not resemble the object, in how far it is an accurate and adequate reflection of the object in consciousness and in how far there is likeness, similarity or coincidence between them.

On the other hand, it follows that there is also another point which is of substantial importance for truth (for the more or less veracious thinking), viz. that truth is not only an already finished product (result) of man's cognitive thinking, but also a process of further development. Truth is always an achievement of man's consciousness-reflection in the sense of a success already attained in the process of man's orientation in the environment and his action on it, through which man in turn also changes himself.

But if thinking were to stop at any attained result and to cease to progress and to reach out for new results, it would cease to have for man the importance of the most powerful weapon for his orientation in the environment and action on it. But since man (the subject of knowledge) and the environment itself (the object of knowledge) continuously change and develop, and since the change (motion) of man and the objects which surround him is endless and eternal, while each individual object and each state of rest of the individual object are only relatively stable (as modern physics teaches us even the atoms are born and disappear as a particular form of 'matter in general', which is eternal in its existence, which in turn means that matter eternally changes and moves), since all this is so, truth as a human form of reflection, of distinction between and coincidence of the object and the image, is always simultaneously a relatively stable,

already attained result of man's thinking, and an eternal and incessant motion or striving onward, an eternal striving forward.

Even this does not exhaust the question, however.

There exists a very old and deeply-entrenched belief that only an individual judgement can be true or not true. According to this view, truth pertains only to individual judgements and, consequently, the answer to the question 'What is truth?' can be arrived at only as a result of the analysis of such a judgement. In other words, the task of logic is to give a scientific analysis of all these individual truths and to provide us, by way of abstraction and generalization, with an answer to the question of what is truth in general.

Is this really the logically and methodologically correct path to arrive at an answer to the question of what is truth?

In order to grasp more easily and more correctly the answer which dialectical materialism gives to this question, we shall recall that similar methodological moves have also been made in psychology, biology, sociology and linguistics; these sciences, following precisely the above-mentioned path, have long been unsuccessfully trying to provide an answer to the questions: what is consciousness (from the point of view of psychology and of the special sciences), what is life, what is society, what is language, etc. Since psychology, biology and sociology have repeatedly been mentioned and since the case of linguistics is of particular interest to us, owing to the very close link between language and thinking (going so far that even today many fail to draw a neat demarcation line between judgement and sentence), we shall now dwell briefly on it.

Anyone familiar with the history of linguistics knows that, until recently, linguists proceeded exclusively from the scientific analysis and definition of individual sentences in their attempts to answer the question of what is language in general. However, all these attempts invariably remained unsuccessful. It is an incontrovertible fact that an individual sentence and especially an individual word are, strictly speaking, only our own scientific abstractions, which have only a conventional and relatively independent meaning, while actually they exist and can be properly and scientifically understood and defined only when they are taken as organic components of the language, which is considered as a historically developing whole.

Words exist as something individual and independent only in dictionaries. In living speech, however, they always exist in relation to other words and as parts of sentences, and they have an intricate, many-sided, flexible and shaded meaning at any given moment, i.e. under different conditions, at different epochs and moments and with different (collective and individual) subjects.

Bearing in them certain traces even of the manual and primitive imitative-figurative speech, words, as oral symbols denoting and mutually transmitting thoughts and other mental content, always have a concrete and specific meaning in certain times and under certain conditions. But since the objective and subjective conditions and tasks of language continuously change, occasionally undergoing profound transformations and sometimes only acquiring partial shades, words (and sentences) also change in structure, function and meaning and acquire most varied nuances, often getting a meaning which is the very opposite of their traditional meaning; such is, for example, the case of the word 'subject' in mediaeval scholasticism and in our times.

Of course, modern scientific linguistics does not consider that an individual word and an individual sentence should not be specially studied. However, we cannot correctly and exhaustively grasp and define the essence, form and meaning of an individual word and sentence if we detach them not conventionally and relatively but absolutely from the living language, taken as a dialectically developing live and extremely intricate entity of various words, sentences, phrases, etc.

We have something similar in logic, too, in the case of individual concepts, judgements, deductions, scientific systems, methods, etc. They all have only a conventional and relatively independent existence and meaning; strictly speaking, however, they all exist and acquire their full meaning only in and through the connections among all of them, taken as individual elements (or moments), as individual particular manifestations of the process of reflection (which is one in its diversity) in the human consciousness of the process of evolution of reality (also one in its diversity).

We already know that every logical concept, taken as something unconditional and absolutely separate and independent, loses its dialectical nature, loses - if we may put it that way - its 'soul'.

Lenin particularly insisted on this aspect of the matter. Time and again he stressed that if a concept (and the same thing is also true of every knowledge as a result of human thinking) is taken as absolutely static, finished and quite separate from all the other concepts, it turns into a fixed, dead, sterile abstraction, it turns subjective and loses its character of a truth. Concepts give us an objectively true (although always in a subjective human form) knowledge of things only when we take them in their motion, in their incessant relationship, hence also when we have in mind their basis or origin which, as we know, is human practice. Lenin indicated as a classical example the evolution of the concepts of structure of matter and of such properties of matter as mass (Newtonian), inertia, impenetrability, etc. Until recently these concepts were considered as established once and for all and as no longer subject to change or evolution. However, modern theoretical, logical and experimental thought has demonstrated, for example, that bodies moving at a speed approaching the speed of light only have an electromagnetic mass; that the impenetrability of bodies loses its meaning in the case of microcosmic bodies with their intricate and very swift motions; that the electron and the nucleus of the atom are not the 'last bricks' of the universe, but that they, too, may be subject to further analysis, and so on and so forth. On the other hand, as we have already seen and as we shall see further on, even concepts (truths), such as the one that a triangle's three angles are equal to two right angles, have undergone a revolution in modern non-Euclidean geometry; Newton's law of gravitation proved to be only a particular case of Einstein's law and lost its cognitive significance in the case of bodies moving at great speeds; the tridimensionality of material things, though one of their fundamental properties, does not exhaust the question of the measurability of matter, taken not only as dimensional, but also as given in time (fourth dimension) and as qualitatively (and not only quantitatively) changing, developing, etc.

All this is sufficient to make us realize that even concepts and judgements which express such properties of the bodies as mass, inertia and impenetrability, lose their real scientific and cognitive importance when taken as absolutely isolated, by themselves, static, immutable and finished once and for all.

As a matter of fact, all concepts and judgements, including

those of the type of ' $2 + 2 = 4$ ', attain their full and all-sided meaning as particular forms of truth-grasping logical thinking only in and through the living and all-sided dialectical relations in their capacity as elements, moments and forms of man's logical thinking, which is one in its diversity and is continuously and dialectically developing, but of course, always on the basis of practice, taken both as a starting point and a final goal, as a criterion and determinant of all human knowledge.

Only when and insofar as individual truths are treated as elements, moments or particular cases of the one truth which is a process of reflection in man's consciousness of the process of dialectically developing reality, only then do individual truths acquire the character and significance of truth in general.

In other words, only insofar as every individual truth bears deeply in itself 'the nature of the one truth' about the world and the individual things and processes in it, this individual truth - though a separate one, conventional and relative - gets its realization and meaning as a truth in general. And since the whole, in turn, does not and cannot exist as a whole outside and irrespective of its parts, the individual truths regain their whole significance as truth which we have been used to accept for millennia; but these truths themselves, as well as their meaning, have acquired a new elucidation, a new and deeper meaning for us precisely in connection with what we have just said about truth as a result and process which is one in its diversity.

Truth is one only because in actual fact it consists of countless individual, relatively independent truths. The latter are a multitude, they are most varied truths only because they bear in them the 'nature' of the one truth. The one is one only because and insofar as there exist the many, and the many is such only because and insofar as there exists the one, and through the one. For example, every unit as a unit can be divided into five parts, but in turn every natural number, say five, can as such, i.e. as five, be understood and used only because it contains five units in its unity.

Thus, the different individual truths and the one truth are the most brilliant model of the one, divided into opposite parts 'struggling' among themselves - a 'struggle' which under certain conditions and in a certain sense, as we have already seen, often ends in interpenetration and in the identification of these op-

posites in order thereafter to start a new process of division and opposition and so on *ad infinitum*.

It is so because truth, as a subjective image of objective reality, would not be truth if, among other things, it did not reflect the infinite in the finite (in the subject and in the object).

Truth taken as a process is infinite like the process of evolution of the objective world which is reflected in it. At the same time it is always a specific result (the end of a process of thinking), because otherwise it would merely be a pure and empty abstraction; just as the infinite objective world would be a pure and empty abstraction without the infinite multitude of concrete finite things and phenomena, through which alone it can manifest its unity and its infinite diversity.

And, just as rest and the comparatively lasting state of individual things (inanimate objects, organisms, social systems, etc.) are something relative, while only matter in general, in its infinite and concrete diversity and motion, is eternal, every already established result (knowledge) of a comparatively lasting character is also something relative, while only the reflection-process, taken in its infinite concrete development and diversity, is eternal.

If we want now to 'condense', to sum up, to express all that has been said so far in a single logical definition, we shall get the following most general definition of truth or, in other words, we shall arrive at the following definition of the concept of 'truth in general':

Truth is the supreme form of the subjective reflection of objective reality in human consciousness.

When in this particular case we use the term 'reflection', instead of the term 'image' which has a twofold meaning in our language: a result already attained and a continuing process of reflection; when instead of the terms 'thing', 'object', we use the terms 'reality' which in itself is always the unity of an infinite multitude of objects or things and of processes; when, in full conformity with the classics of dialectical materialism we define truth as a subjective reflection of objective reality and in so doing underline the epistemological and not the psychological side of the process of knowledge and its results; when, finally, we define truth in general as the supreme (human) form of reflection in general and in this way emphasize the deepest epistemological

essence of each individual and concrete truth; when we do all this we fulfil - in a most general, most condensed and most abstract and, at the same time, in a most concrete form - all the above requirements, which logic sets for the definition of truth.

This definition of truth undoubtedly has, as every general definition, its shortcomings. Engels spoke of these shortcomings in connection with his general definition of life as a form of existence of proteins. Like every similar definition, however, this definition, as a logical generalized deduction of the all-sided analysis of truth-grasping human thinking, at the same time has the merit that, in its turn, it can serve as an orienting methodological idea for the further extended scientific characterization of truth in general, i.e. for the discovery of its origin, laws, connections with the other manifestations of human consciousness.

Defining truth not simply as a reflection in general, but as a supreme form of the subjective human reflection of objective reality, we thereby emphasize or imply also such aspects or properties of truth as, for example, the fact that truth in general, taken 'in its full volume', is one in its diversity of individual truths; that as a process of higher reflection it is a profoundly dialectical process not only of distinction (splitting) of the image-idea from the object-thing, and an eternal process of bringing closer and to coincidence (but not to metaphysical identification) of the image-idea with the objective reality reflected in it; that truth as the supreme form of the reflection of reality in man's consciousness is not a passive and contemplative reflection but an active and creative conscious reflection of reality, one in its diversity and its dialectical evolution, in the individual and collective human consciousness, also one in its diversity and dialectically developing; that the supreme reflection of objective reality, of which man as a subject also forms an organic component part, comprises self-knowledge in the process of knowledge; that art, taken as an artistic form of truth, stands higher than religion, in which objective reality is extremely distorted, and higher than all idealistically mystified types of human thinking, etc.

If the reader has more carefully followed the whole preceding exposition of the theory of reflection, he will inevitably realize that the very description, definition of truth as the supreme form of reflection already provides for or implies all these and other

similar and more accurate scientific statements about truth in general. At the same time, this definition, though a short, a general one, reveals vast possibilities for a more detailed scientific characterization of truth, for further additions to and clarifications of everything that has been said in this book, and for the arrival at new generalized deductions which, in turn, can serve as guidelines in the attempts to further elaborate the logic of dialectical materialism.

Thus, the theory of reflection can really play the role which was assigned to it by Lenin - to be the foundation of the entire materialist epistemology (logic, dialectics).

The best proof that this is really so can be furnished by an attempt to make an extensive scientific characterization of truth in general.

IDEOLOGY AS A PARTICULAR TYPE OF REFLECTION OF SOCIAL BEING IN MAN'S SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS. IDEOLOGY AND SCIENCE

Napoleon is believed to have been the first who used the word 'ideology' in order to emphasize his not particularly high opinion of the writings and propaganda statements of a number of bourgeois and petty bourgeois opposition figures. An 'ideologist' according to him, was a man who had no idea of military affairs of politics and was not a real scholar.

Later, in *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels, speaking of the ideology of the German bourgeoisie of their time, repeatedly stressed that in ideology as in a distorting mirror things are reflected in a twisted, distorted form, that they even appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, (the illusions of the German 'real socialists', 'commodity fetichism', etc.).

However, in Marx and Engels we encounter a number of statements to the effect that philosophy and all the other sciences are components of the concept of 'ideology', i.e. they take the concept of 'ideology' already in a new sense. Science proves to be a specific type of ideological activity, i.e. a particular case of ideology.

This is a classical example not of a vulgar, absurd and formal logical contradiction, but of a real dialectical evolution (mobility, flexibility, etc.) of concepts and of terms which express them. Ideology itself in the form of the ideology of the proletariat has grown into a general scientific world outlook, into a whole system of scientific views on natural and social being.

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All knowledge and therefore every ideology, insofar as ideology is, above all, knowledge, should be examined not only from its subjective psychological side, but also from its objective logical side.

This means that every negation or underestimation either of psychology or of logic is inadmissible and dangerous in every respect and leads to the impossibility properly to raise and solve the question of the essence, role and significance of social ideology.

The importance of the psychological element in ideology is also apparent from the fact that very often the followers of an ideology cannot and do not want to renounce it even in cases when it is ostensibly untrue, anti-scientific, subjective, fantastic and reactionary.

The role of the subjective psychological elements in ideology (emotional tone, habit, inertia, personal, class and national interests, personal or class attitude towards scientific thinking) very often prove decisive in the sense that the proponent of a given ideology is prone to deny logic any significance and openly to champion religion or mythology rather than to retreat from his ideological 'positions'.

But this medal, like every medal, has its reverse side. What we have in mind is that when psychology is not in contradiction to but in harmony with logic, and thereby with the objective course of history, it produces results which 'pure' impassive logic cannot attain. In other words, when the zeal of enthusiasm, the influence of the class or personal interest, the *élan* of the progressive and non-Utopian dream and the supreme joy at the unfolding of all (personal, class, national) critical and creative forces are added to profound logical conviction, objective scientific knowledge and objective truth, then and only then can ideology become not only, not simply the ideology of millions of people but also the ideology of the social and historical forces marching onwards along the path of human progress.

In those cases ideology does not lose its subjective character and significance either, but they are not the expression of the interests of individual reactionary classes which want to impose themselves on the majority in order to turn back the wheel of history, but of the interests of the people themselves, interests which coincide with the objective historical progressive course of events. That is why the ideas of people's well-being, people's independence, democracy, etc., acquire only in such cases their real, i.e. objective and progressive significance.

Otherwise ideology is either a reactionary force, trying to

turn developments back to the Middle Ages and barbarity, or Utopian romanticism which usually merges with open reaction. Ideology is a true and progressive reflection of reality only when and insofar as it is the ideology of those classes and forces which are not interested in falsifying reality and in concealing their real intentions and plans. In such cases ideology is a form which attributes a particular dynamics, a particular force to the immediate aspirations of the people and prevents the revolutionary struggle from degenerating into narrow-minded practiciness, into dabbling in politics without any prospects and into meek acceptance of the main causes of all the negative phenomena in life.

Merely by appealing to ideology itself or by adopting a false ideology one does not go much beyond reaction and romantic utopianism. However, no struggle for immediate economic and political interests can be successful without an ideology or, rather, without a correct ideology (even though restricted by the circumstances).

As is known, in *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels particularly emphasized that every ideological reflection might be compared to the reflection of things in a *camera obscura* or with the inversion of objects on the retina, in which they appear upside down.

This is quite correct. However, from what was said in *The German Ideology* about the 'end of all ideology', which will come about after the abolition of the conditions which have led to the subjective-fetishist character of ideology, the inexact inference has often been drawn that every ideology is a distorted reflection of reality and that, therefore, every ideology must disappear in the near or more distant future.

Actually, Marx and Engels had in mind the disappearance of fetishist ideology and demonstrated this by their brilliant analysis of 'German' ideology at the time. As to the ideology, to the 'production', propagation and defence of which Marx and Engels dedicated their whole life, they never denied that it contained and would always contain subjective elements. But, as we have already said, these subjective elements are essentially such that, far from contradicting, they are in complete harmony with the objective course of history and, therefore, with the scientific and logical elements of that ideology. For that very reason that ideology will not disappear but, on the contrary, will fully

triumph and become the only dominant ideology of the new human society, freed from antagonistic contradictions. Failure to grasp this is tantamount to failing to understand the ideology of Marx and Engels and dialectical materialism as a whole.

At the same time, however, the complete triumph of ideology will mean a leap or a transition from the old state to the new state, which will reveal the more general and deeper meaning (referring not only to fetishist ideology) in the words of Marx and Engels about the disappearance of every ideology. It is no accident that we called the above inference only inexact, but not erroneous. The following considerations lead us to this conclusion:

Not every ideology is scientific. Religious ideologies, for example, do not lose their character and significance as ideologies because of the fact that they are not science-based. Even when these ideologies do contain some scientific elements or aspects, as a rule they are characterized by a subjective fantastic and reactionary content. And vice versa, a science-based ideology as a rule is characterized by its objective and progressive content. It follows that the scientific, i.e. the objectively true and progressive ideology is no longer an ideology in the habitual and traditional meaning of this term.

This means that the victory of a scientific ideology will really be 'the end of all ideology', taken as an aggregate of scientific and anti-scientific components, elements, aspects. In this sense the words of Marx and Engels about the 'end of all ideology' contain a profound truth.

The historical development of ideologies inevitably leads to the conclusion that ideology, considered as social consciousness, which contains anti-scientific elements along with scientific ones, will finally have to disappear and be replaced by an ideology which does not contain any anti-scientific elements.

This is a profoundly dialectical process in which, at a given stage of its development, the viable real 'part' or 'component' (i.e. the scientific thought) of a given real 'whole' (of ideology in the traditional meaning of this word) detaches itself from the 'whole' which withers away as such, i.e. as an ideology in the traditional meaning of the term, and is replaced by the new 'whole', i.e. by a qualitatively new (scientific) social consciousness.

And although scientific thought preserves many features characteristic of ideology in general, it is nonetheless something qualitatively new, so that the word 'science' acquires a different content, which is not identical with that of the traditional concept of ideology.

Just as ideological consciousness is both a continuation and a qualitative modification of social consciousness, which has not yet been shaped ideologically, i.e. implies a dialectical 'sublating' of the second into the first, so scientific consciousness or science is both a continuation and a qualitative modification, i.e. a dialectical 'sublating' of ideological into scientific consciousness, of ideology into science.

Social consciousness or social mind embraces all the manifestations of social spiritual life without exception. Ideology is social consciousness which, in the first place, just like every consciousness is subjective reflection of the objective – in this case, of the social being, and in the second place, unlike social consciousness or social mind in general, ideology is social consciousness systematized in a particular form and degree.

The differences between the ideologies of the socio-economic formations, classes, estates, nations, etc., have always been and are much more substantial, more obvious and more decisive than the differences between the mind or consciousness of these formations and classes.

Thus, for instance, the differences between the social consciousness of the slave-holding, feudal and capitalist socio-economic formations, or between the different classes in a given social formation, are much more ideological than psychological in character. The difference in the mentality of the slave and the slave-holder, though substantial, is not as deep as the difference between their ideologies. The same can be said of the psychology and ideology of the feudal lord and the serf, or the capitalist and the proletariat.

In other words, the general psychological laws (of sensation, perception, emotion, will, memory, fantasy and thinking) in the life of men in the different social formations and classes differ incomparably less than the more specific ideological laws operating in the social consciousness of the same formations.

Or, to put it in another way, the differences in the economy and the superstructures determining the differences between the

social consciousness, produce a stronger and more decisive impact on the ideology of given social formations or social classes than on their psychology. For this very reason the spiritual struggle between the different societies and classes is rather a struggle between their ideologies than between their psychologies.

This means that although the concepts of social psychology, social consciousness, and of social ideology or socio-ideological consciousness, by and large coincide, they should not be identified.

In this connection we must say that social consciousness in general as well as ideology in particular can be the subject of psychology, sociology and philosophy (or logic) alike.

The psychology of social consciousness in general and of ideology in particular studies their socio-mental structure and structural laws. Of course, not in the sense that it studies their 'particles' as in the case of the atom which consists of electrons and a nucleus, but in the sense that it studies the different mental aspects, elements or expressions (intellectual, emotional, volitional) of social consciousness.

To deny the specific complexity of social (and of every) consciousness, to turn it into something quite simple and irresolvable, to identify the different human minds on the pretext that, since there is something common in men's experiences, their minds are likewise the same – to maintain all this (as do, say, Rehmke's followers) would mean not only to deny psychology as a particular science but also to deny the real existence of individual minds.

The existence of individual minds is an incontrovertible fact which cannot be denied by means of any 'analysis' whatsoever. The common feelings, moods, thoughts, ideals and, therefore, the partial coincidence of the different minds cannot refute the fact that in every individual and real mind the general exists in an organic connection with the particular and the individual, and that individual real mind consists precisely in their unity on the basis of the concrete (material, physiological and social) conditions.

On the other hand, social consciousness cannot be and is not a kind of 'people's spirit' ('substance' or 'organism'), existing 'outside of', 'above' or 'along with' the separate individual minds. There is no specific independent collective 'soul', just as

there are no specific independent collective eyes, ears, brain. But just as the eyes, the ears and the brain are the product not only of biological but also of social development, the individual minds are social products, social organs; therefore, in their functions, owing to their very essence, they have not only a personal, but also a social character.

It is not the 'people's spirit', but the aggregate of social individual subjects which feel, suffer, aspire and think. But precisely because they think (and act) as social beings, the result is thoughts, wishes, moods, aims, etc., which are social and not personal in character and which, as such, often enter into contradictions and conflict with the 'personal minds' of the individual members of a given social collective (class, estate, nation, etc.).

Therein lies the possibility of collective psychology and ethics.

Therein also lies the possibility of sociology, i. e. of the study of social consciousness in general and of social ideological consciousness in particular.

The sociological surveys of social psychology and ideology have the task of discovering their social structure and structural laws taken as 'social superstructures' which are particularly complex and superior.

Although sociology coincides with collective psychology to a certain extent, it is therefore not identical with it and has its own sociological problems, means and methods.

Collective psychology and sociology mutually help and complement each other but they do not coincide.

While sociology, always strictly taking into account the psychic (spiritual) character of ideology, studies it chiefly from the point of view of its significance for the development of society, collective psychology, on the contrary, always strictly bearing in mind the social character of ideology, studies it chiefly from the point of view of its significance for the development of man's spiritual life.

The collective psychology of social thinking as well as its sociology are not and cannot be the philosophy of social thinking (of social consciousness and social ideology). The philosophical study of social thinking is possible and necessary side by side with its psychological and sociological study.

Precisely historical materialism, insofar as it also studies

social psychology and ideology, is a philosophical (and not special) study of society, social consciousness and ideology.

Always bearing in mind the general achievements and tasks of the study of social consciousness and ideology by psychology and sociology in their capacity as special sciences, historical materialism does not raise and solve the problem of their mental or social structure and structural laws, but the problem of their character, functions and importance in their capacity as more or less true reflections of the objective social being.

Although psychological as well as sociological analysis explain the origin, forms, etc., of social consciousness and ideology, they do not and cannot set themselves and solve (with their means and methods as special sciences) the general logical problem of the objective cognitive significance of ideologies, i.e. of their truth. This can be done and is done precisely by historical materialism, i.e. by the materialistic dialectics and logic, applied in this case to the problems of social consciousness and ideology.

This, however, is not always properly understood, even by some dialectical materialists. And for this very reason now the psychologistic, now the formal logical view have often dominated both in psychology and sociology, as in the philosophy of social consciousness and of ideology (in the doctrine of historical materialism).

After all we have said so far about psychologism and formal logic, it is hardly necessary to demonstrate that if, in this case, too, the former inevitably leads to subjectivism, relativism and, in the final count, to outright mysticism, the latter with its abstract, empty and scholastic categories and definitions of ideological phenomena likewise leads, in the final account, to mystic and idealistic theories which bring grist to the mill of present-day reactionary ideological currents.

FROM CHAPTER FOUR

DEGREES AND TYPES OF CONSCIOUSNESS.
BASIC FORMS OF SCIENTIFIC THINKING.
SCIENCE AND TRUTH

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Just as things and phenomena are interconnected in reality (the object of scientific knowledge), concepts, as their reflections, are by their very nature interconnected and cannot either arise or further evolve without this interconnection.

Taken again in such a connection, i.e. taken as a unity of concepts (categories, laws), they constitute the scientific systems of the special sciences, i.e. they constitute science insofar as it is always a specific system of concepts (categories, laws, etc.) referring to specific things or objects.

On the other hand, the concepts and systems themselves - depending on whether they have to explore the structure and structural laws governing things (the world as an integral whole or its individual spheres, parts, aspects, elements) or to discover the laws of the relation between being and consciousness and the laws of the reflection of being (of the world as a whole or of its individual spheres, parts, aspects and elements) in consciousness - they either belong to the special sciences or are philosophical-epistemological, i.e. constitute in their totality human consciousness in the form of the special sciences and philosophy.

We already know why and to what extent scientific philosophy, taken as dialectical logic (or epistemology) plays the role of a most general knowledge functioning as a world-view and what are, more particularly, its relations with the special sciences. Here it is more important to mark and stress the idea that philosophy, as logic and world-view, like every scientific system of concepts, categories and laws, which by their very nature have a most general character, i.e. represent most general inferences or most intricate 'knots', is a product of man's universal scientific and cognitive activity.

If we take the simple judgement (consisting only of two

notions) and then the complex (extended) judgement and the various types of inductive-analytical and deductive-synthetic inferences to arrive at the methods of the sciences and, finally, to the most general scientific and philosophical method of knowledge, we shall arrive at the second aspect (or component) of the one scientific knowledge which is never merely a finished product (an already tied 'knots' or a system of 'knots'), but is always and, above all, motion, a process, quest, striving for new knowledge, etc.

Science in general, i.e. every science, science as such, is not only a system of concepts (categories and laws). It is also a method of knowledge. It is always not only knowledge already acquired but a process of knowledge, a thirst for knowledge, knowledge stemming from practice, considering practice as its supreme goal and checked, improved and developed by means of practice.

And just as an individual concept is always a more stable, more finished product of knowledge than an individual judgement (although it is relatively more conservative and more static by its very nature), a scientific system is always more finished and more stable than a scientific method (although relatively more conservative and less versatile by its very nature).

When this relative immobility and conservatism (due to theoretical and socio-practical reasons) turns with certain authors into absolute immobility and conservatism, then an antagonistic contradiction arises between the system and the method, the outcome of which is always the same: the side which is reactionary in essence and tries to check or turn back scientific progress perishes.

If the constructed edifice of a given science is called 'system', then its method will be the process which consists not only in the construction and maintenance of that edifice in good shape, but also (whenever and insofar as necessary) in its repairing, in putting the final touches to it and occasionally in reconstructing it all the way by partially using old materials. And if, as a figure of speech, we call the system the 'body' of science, then we must call the method the 'soul' of science.

In the case of the scientific method as well as of the scientific system (psycho-physiological, social-class, individual) the nature of the subject determines the subjective side of the system's con-

tent and form, without denying in principle nor destroying its objective significance, which is determined not by man or mankind, but by the very object of scientific knowledge.

It follows that the system as well as the method necessarily differ, depending on the socio-economic formations, epochs, classes, estates, individuals. Both are always profoundly conditioned by history and bear in themselves the nature of the reflected material entity.

What does this 'soul' of science, and more particularly this 'soul' of Marxism-Leninism consist of? What is a scientific method?

Most authors, including some materialists, define the scientific method as an aggregate of means and ways by means of which one arrives at the truth, or in other words, one obtains scientific knowledge.

This definition contains a part of the truth, to be sure, yet it is too general and formal and, as a result, every idealist and metaphysician would subscribe to it. How should one define the scientific method from a dialectical materialistic viewpoint?

In order correctly to solve this question, let us first of all note that all the means, ways and rules of scientific knowledge are conditioned, first, by the objectively real laws of law-governed processes of things and, second, by the subjective human possibilities, needs, abilities and tendencies which the living subject of knowledge cannot fail to include in his cognitive activity in a certain form and to a certain degree. Thus, these ways, rules, etc., are neither arbitrarily invented by the subject of knowledge, nor are they a passive, contemplative reflection of objectively real law-governed processes. And insofar as the objectively real laws of things are more or less truly and fully reflected in the human ideas, the method of knowledge, to use the words of Engels, proves to be an analogue of the objective real natural and social law-governed processes. However, 'analogous' does not and cannot mean 'metaphysically and absolutely identical' with reflection. Otherwise our ideas would not be ideas but the objective real laws of things themselves. Although and because our consciousness reflects the objective real laws of things, it also possesses its own immanent laws or law-governed processes which exist even when man has not heard such words as 'idea', 'logic', 'dialectics,' 'method', etc. These laws or law-governed

processes, inherent to man's thinking and known to us as a subjective reflection of the objective law-governed processes, can be used by us no longer spontaneously and unconsciously, but quite consciously and in a planned way in order to give a correct scientific explanation of objective real reality and to change it. In this case we are justified in speaking of what we call the scientific method of knowledge of the world and of its transformation in this or that direction.

Thus, we can speak of a scientific method in the exact and strict sense of this term only when, first, we have an objective reality with its objectively real laws; second, when the objective real laws are reflected in man's consciousness which is always a lively and active consciousness and not only a contemplative one, endeavouring to explain things; third, when the inner law inherent to consciousness, by force of which the objective real laws turn into human ideas, has been 'mastered' by us to such an extent that we can consciously use it in a planned way in order to arrive at the scientific truth about objective reality and its laws and to change reality itself with its aid.

The scientific method is therefore an internal law-governed process of the motion of man's thinking, taken as a subjective reflection of the objective world or, to put it in other words, as an objective law 'transplanted' into human consciousness and 'interpreted' by it, consciously used in a planned way as a means of explaining and transforming the world.

We shall re-emphasize that while the 'immobility' of the scientific system never is and should never be absolute immobility, the method also never is and should never be an empty mobility, motion 'in general', without something which moves, i.e. without a system and concepts which should be formed and developed by means of the method.

Both the method and the judgement, being by their very essence a motion of thought, never cease to be, in a certain sense and to a certain degree, an already achieved cognitive result as well.

For this reason there are and there can be no naked, pure methods and judgements. Every method and every judgement presuppose a specific scientific system or concept. There are and there can be no method and judgement without a specific significance for a given scientific system or given scientific con-

cepts. For this reason the method is not and cannot be a naked, pure and empty form of thinking but is always a form of human thinking which has a certain content and significance and which always is concretely and historically determined.

This also applies to the scientific system and the concept which, though tending more to become conservative than the judgement and the method, are not and cannot be deprived of motion. Precisely for this reason and only as such can they represent the content aspect of the method. If the opposite should happen (as in the case of Hegel), i. e. if a contradiction appears between the absolutely static, frozen system and the method, containing viable and rational elements, there can be only one issue: the unity of system and method is upset and either the former or the latter prevails (in Hegel's case the reactionary system prevailed).

Hegel's case clearly shows that the solution of this contradiction is also a profound socio-historical and individually determined process and that there cannot be a purely theoretical answer to the question as to who, when and how will prevail, as in the final analysis practice will have to interfere. 'In practice man must prove the truth, that is, the reality and power, the this-sidedness (*Diessseitigkeit*) of his thinking.'*

We can now supplement and further clarify the definition of truth, formulated in the first section of this Chapter: only because, when and insofar as an individual concept and judgement are organic parts of a scientific system and a scientific method, only for this reason, then and that much they turn into a truly scientific truth about the object and bear deeply in themselves, though as separate truths, the nature of 'truth as a whole'.

This means that the complete truth about a given sphere, part or aspect of reality is nothing but the very science (special and philosophical), the subject-matter of which are things and phenomena in that particular sphere.

The truth about social events consists in scientific sociology itself, taken not only as a system of an infinite multitude of individual sociological concepts, categories and laws, but also as a multitude of judgements, inferences, methods, hypotheses, statistical samples, etc. Every one of these sociological truths is a

* K.Marx, Theses on Feuerbach, Second Thesis

truth only in and through its belonging to the whole scientific sociological truth, to the entire scientific sociology, to the whole science of sociology, taken both as a system and as a method.

Science is science only because and insofar as it is a unity of a system (concepts, categories and laws) and a method of knowledge of a given object or aspect of reality.

Science is a dialectical unity of: 1) a system of concepts, categories, laws, etc.; 2) a method of knowledge, and 3) relations with practice as starting point, supreme goal and criterion of knowledge.

If any one of these three elements of science is missing, it ceases to be real science and either becomes a formal quasi-science (with a purely formal criterion), or turns into a purely subjective and imaginary construction, which is not verifiable and which has no significance as an instrument of orientation in the world and influence upon it, i.e. it ceases to be science and becomes a pseudo-science.

Even mathematical physics, even the most abstract contemporary mathematics are no exception to this general rule, although their connection with practice is rather intricate and distant and not as direct and clear as is the case of most of the other sciences.

On the other hand, since the world is one in its infinite diversity, every individual science as a scientific truth (one in its diversity) about its specific subject-matter is included with logical necessity in the scientific knowledge (one in its diversity) of the one reality. And only because, when and insofar as this inclusion is a fact, an individual science (whether a special science or a philosophical one) is fully entitled to be considered as a science, it becomes real scientific knowledge about its subject-matter as well as an organic or component part of the universal scientific knowledge of reality, one in its infinite diversity, i.e. of the complete human truth (and there is no non-human truth).

Thus, if truth is to be truth, it must inevitably be given in the form of a scientific concept and judgement, of a scientific system and method, of a scientific explanation and practical modification of the world and of its individual parts. Truth is not the complete truth about the world and its parts and aspects unless it is given in the form of scientific thought or science which is one in its infinite diversity.

In a nutshell, truth, taken in its full scope and significance = man's scientific thought = science, taken in its full scope and significance.

This means that the 'supreme' form of knowledge — reflection is precisely the scientific (and not the quasi-scientific or pseudo-scientific) form of thinking, taken as a subjective reflection of objective reality in man's consciousness.

This does not refute the already given definition of truth, but reaffirms it and specifies it in such a way that certain things, which otherwise may and actually do give birth to various misunderstandings, can become clearer to us only when we proceed from this specified definition of truth.

Thus, for example, it now becomes clear why and in what respect art is superior to religion and to any purely subjective and mystic or metaphysical thinking. The answer is a very simple one: although it vests truth in an artistic form, art, if it wants to be genuine art, must and does offer us truth, i.e. truth about the objective (social and natural) reality (natural reality being refracted through social reality). Moreover, it must not offer us a limited, crippled and disfigured truth, but truth in its full scope, i.e. the innermost, most viable, most socio-historically and individually and creatively determined truth, and therefore the most effective truth of a given society at a given time. Whenever and insofar as art fails to do this, it either turns into a purely formalistic, empty and ineffective art, i.e. into pseudo-art, or it degenerates into religion, into a mystical, metaphysical and magical world outlook.

Only when and insofar as art gives us the truth about objective reality, the artistic form is meaningful, vivid, effective, significant and progressive. As to the artistic form of truth in general, that is a question which belongs to aesthetics.

Since in the next chapter we shall have an opportunity to acquaint ourselves, in most general lines, with the answer provided by the aesthetics of dialectical materialism to the question 'what is art', we shall no longer dwell on this problem. At this juncture we shall draw a general deduction from all that has been said in this Chapter.

The basic forms of man's scientific knowledge (or thinking, taken both as a product and as a process) are: man's sensuous perception (not sensation in general, not animal sensation but

humanized sensation), man's conceptual thinking, concept and judgement (including inference), the system and method of the special sciences (including hypotheses, experiments, statistics, etc.) and, finally, the most general philosophical system and the most general philosophical and logical method (incl. the all-round practical check-up and the impressive socio-revolutionary experience).

All these forms of scientific knowledge taken in their diversity and in their superior dialectical unity, are what we have already called 'the supreme form' of man's thinking, i.e. a unity of forms or a form of man's thinking, i.e. a unity of forms or a form of man's scientific thinking, one in its diversity; only when this thinking is given precisely in this essential form, is it 'truth in its full scope'.

This is the dialectical materialistic definition of truth, further clarified and specified.

Truth as such is a dialectical unity of the objective and the subjective, the abstract and the concrete, the absolute and the relative. It is a socio-historical and individual creative effort and in a class society it is determined by class and party positions.

ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE CHARACTER OF TRUTH

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Absolute truth has often been conceived only as an ideal, which is infinitely distant from us, although we always strive towards it and get closer to it.

This conception has nothing in common with the dialectical materialistic conception of Engels and Lenin about absolute truth.

Dialectical materialism does not consider absolute truth as a truth which has encompassed, reflected and fully exhausted the entire world reality, taken in all its diversity and infiniteness in space and time. Dialectical materialism does not call this simply absolute, but 'absolute truth of the last instance'. This is the 'absolute truth' of the metaphysicians-idealists, but not that of the dialectical materialists.

How does materialistic dialectics solve this problem?

In the first place, insofar as in the content of the cognitive image there are always elements or aspects which do not depend either on man or on mankind and insofar as knowledge is a process of coincidence between the idea and the object itself such as it exists by itself, only that much truth – in its objectivity – is always the absolute truth about things. In this sense Engels and Lenin connected the question of absolute truth with the question of objective truth.

Lenin strongly criticized Bogdanov for having failed to bear in mind precisely this aspect of the problem. Bogdanov confused absolute truth with 'truth of the last instance', and in so doing abandoned all possibility of arriving at the absolute truth and sank into the quagmire of relativism. 'To be a materialist,' Lenin wrote, 'means to accept objective truth, i. e. the truth which does not depend upon mankind; it means to accept absolute