

What History of Philosophy Do We Need, or, Is Soviet Scientific Approach to the History of Philosophy Really Scientific?

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Summary: In the paper, the author analyses the methodology of Soviet historico-philosophical studies and demonstrate that its fundamental characteristics are: identity of logical and historical and of historical and systematic principles, identity of the principle of party-mindedness and that of science-based research, and identity of method and theory. The author argues that the adherence to this logic has deprived Soviet history of philosophy of the criteria of truth, led to internal contradictions and therefore turned it into a pseudoscience. In the final analysis, Soviet history of philosophy had, in fact, axiological foundations and served generally the purpose of developing the Marxist worldview.

Keywords: soviet history of philosophy, science, methodology, system of science, dialectics, materialism

1. Introduction: Philosophy as history of philosophy

The problems of the theory and methodology of the historico-philosophical studies were a permanent concern of Soviet philosophers. The first discussions on these themes can be registered already in the 1920s-30s. One can mention, for example, the debate between Valentin Asmus (1894-1975) and Aleksandr Var'jač (1885-1939), unfolded on the pages of the journal «Under the Banner of Marxism» in 1926-1927¹. In 1931, Bernard Byxovskij published the article *Lenin and some questions of the history of philosophy*², which, according to Zaxar Kamenskij (1915-1999), had «an epoch-making significance for the history of philosophy as a science, for it defined the ways of its further development»³. An important stage of the conceptual development of Marxist

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1. Asmus 1926; Asmus 1927; Var'jač 1927.

2. See Byxovskij 1931.

3. Kamenskij 2002, p. 24.

history of philosophy were the discussions of the 1940s related to the edition of the *History of Philosophy* textbook (1940-1943), the work on which was interrupted after the publishing of the third volume, as well as the discussion on Georgij Aleksandrov's book *History of West European Philosophy* in 1947⁴. Later on, the publication of the monumental *History of Philosophy* in six volumes (1957-1965) became an important stimulus for methodological discussions⁵ and finally, in the 1960s-1970s, the canon of Soviet historico-philosophical studies was formed⁶.

One can understand the reasons for this keen interest in the history of philosophy if one takes into account the role history of philosophy played in the very structure of Marxism-Leninism; indeed, it was an indispensable part of this very philosophy. By itself, this fact does not speak for anything: one can name a lot of situations when the theories of the past have been used in modern philosophical discourses. Discussions on the so called "eternal" philosophical problems – such as the problem of causality, of the foundations of knowledge, of linguistic meaning, or of the structure of experience – could serve as the examples here. The peculiarity of the Soviet approach, however, depended on the fact that history of philosophy performed a *function of foundation* for Marxist philosophy which included dialectical and historical materialism. Marxist philosophy was regarded as a progressive scientific theory, the emergence of which had been prepared by the entire course of development of world philosophy. In this perspective, Marxist-Leninist philosophy appeared to be the legitimate "crown" of the world philosophy. Accordingly, the entire history of philosophy, which had «not only historically, but also logically»⁷ prepared this outcome of the historical development of human thought, was regarded as a kind of «metaphilosophy»⁸.

Already in 1931, Byxovskij substantiated the importance of historico-philosophical studies as following:

We cannot properly understand dialectical materialism, which is an outcome, a result, a conclusion of the whole history of philosophy, without studying a history of philosophy. The elementary dialectical sentence is the recognition of that that it is impossible to understand anything outside of its origin, formation, and the way. Only the understanding of the development of an object guarantees a true comprehension of the product of this development⁹.

4. For a study of this discussion, see Esakov 1993.

5. On the periodization of Soviet history of philosophy, see Van der Zweerde 1997, pp. 59-91.

6. Following books reflect a hard work on this issue: Iovčuk 1957; Čagin 1958; Mamardašvili 1959; Sidorov 1960; Iovčuk 1960; Ojzerman 1962; Bogdanov 1965; Mamardašvili 1965; Kopnin 1967; Banu 1968; Iovčuk 1969; Ojzerman 1969; Petrov 1969; Iovčuk, Suvorov, Bogdanov 1970; Bogdanov 1971; Kamenskij 1972; Ojzerman 1977.

7. Ojzerman 1987, p. 11.

8. *Ibi.*, p. 14.

9. Byxovskij 1931, p. 53. I quote after Baranec 2008, p. 68.

Short History of Philosophy of 1960, edited by Mixail Iovčuk, Teodor Ojzerman and Ivan Ščipanov, brands Marxist philosophy as «the highest form of historical materialism and dialectics» and states in the «Introduction» that

Marxist history of philosophy is not limited to description and exposition of some philosophical doctrines, but gives an overall picture of the progressive development of philosophical knowledge from the lowest to the highest in the struggle between materialism and idealism, dialectics and metaphysics, and reveals the laws of this development¹⁰.

The textbooks on Marxist-Leninist philosophy reflect the fact that, in the Soviet Union, history of philosophy was regarded as being a substantial part of the proper philosophical knowledge. For example, Aleksandr Spirkin's *A Course in Marxist Philosophy* of 1963 and *Foundations of Philosophy* of 1988 both include chapters entitled «History of Philosophy», where the subsection «The Origin and Development of Marxist Philosophy» is integrated into the general history of philosophy as one of its “natural” stages¹¹. The sense of such a methodological constructivism is transparent: it consists not only in the attempt to make Marxism understandable (as Byxovskij believed), but rather it has the goal to derive the importance of Marxism, its leading role in the forming of scientific methodology and collective worldview, from its historical genesis. An indication of the necessary, “objective” origin of Marxism served the cause of strengthening its theoretical position and defending its right of exclusive ideological and methodological dominance. The methodology of Soviet philosophical historiography was aimed to represent Marxist-Leninist philosophy as a «theoretical summing-up [*podytoživanie*] of the history of philosophy»¹². Thus, philosophy did have a history that was relevant for present philosophy as present philosophy's justification and foundation. Historicity, in fact, was considered a dimension of the real being of philosophy.

2. History of philosophy as a science: field of research

History of philosophy and dialectical and historical materialism were united in Soviet philosophy in a single system and, therefore, functioned on the basis of common regularities. First of all, it should be noted that Soviet philosophy in general and Soviet history of philosophy in particular had a claim on scientific character. As far as Soviet Marxism is concerned, one could read, for example: «Dialectical and historical materialism is a scientific philosophical outlook which is based on the achievements of modern science

10. Iovčuk, Ojzerman, Ščipanov 1971, p. 13.

11. Cfr. Spirkin 1963 and 1988.

12. Cfr., for example: «V.I. Lenin [...] put forward as a primary task the theoretical summing-up of history» (Ojzerman 1987, p. 9).

and advanced practice; it is constantly developed and enriched as they progress»¹³. The subject of Marxist scientific philosophy is «the most general laws of motion, development of nature, society and thought»¹⁴. Analogically, history of philosophy was also proclaimed to be a science, and as a science it had its own subject. The field of its problems covered – as it was formulated in *Short History of Philosophy* under the editorship of Iovčuk, Ojzerman and Ščipanov – first,

the history of the emergence and solution of philosophical problems and, first of all, the history of the formation and development of the main philosophical trends – materialism and idealism, their mutual fight, and the history of formation, development and mutual fight of dialectics and metaphysics which is closely related to the former¹⁵.

Second, the authors claim that

since philosophy is a certain, specific form of knowledge of reality, expressed in logical categories, philosophical concepts and ideas, history of philosophy, too, investigates the origin, the emergence and development of the main categories of knowledge¹⁶.

Third, they were convinced that

Marxist history of philosophy pays special attention to the research and study of the emergence and development of dialectic materialism which is the scientific and philosophical system, the method of cognition and revolutionary changing of the world, the philosophical basis of scientific outlook of the working class and other forces fighting for socialism¹⁷.

3. History of philosophy as a science: unity of method and theory

Scientific consideration of the problems assumes, first of all, that one *possess a method*. The methodological approach of Marxist history of philosophy was determined through the so called «basic question of philosophy» as formulated by Engels and Plechanov and concretized by Lenin and asking as to what is primary, thought or being, spirit or matter. This fundamental question of all philosophy allowed Marxist-Leninist theorists not only to develop a universal typology of the philosophical theories, but also to reveal, as they believed, the real specific regularities of the entire historico-philosophical process. As Mixail Jakovlev claims,

The fight of two opposite philosophical trends around the basic question of philosophy and the solution of other problems connected with it is the main content of the history

13. Konstantinov, Bogomolov 1979, p. 7.

14. Konstantinov, Bogomolov 1979, p. 17.

15. Iovčuk, Ojzerman, Ščipanov 1971, p. 6.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

of philosophy, the real process of development of philosophical thought of mankind in all its historical stages. The fight of materialism and idealism, is, on the one hand, an expression of the ideological class struggle in the sphere of outlook, and, on the other hand, it reflects the historical development of scientific and philosophical cognition of reality¹⁸.

Can one consider this conclusion which seems at first sight convincing, as really scientific, i.e. as describing the development of philosophical thought adequately? Or do we deal with a case when the method not only does not allow systematizing the facts accurately, but compels to invent a special theory in order to bring facts into conformity with the accepted assumptions?

The question of the mutual dependence of method and theory was discussed in Marxist philosophy in connection with the question of its scientific character. One of the results registered in Soviet textbooks on philosophy consisted in the statement that «materialistic dialectics was not only a method, but also a theory, namely a theory of development»¹⁹ and that «Marxist philosophy in general represented the unity of theory and method»²⁰.

In the light of the present analysis, it becomes clear that, as Soviet Marxism identified method with theory, its method could not be properly used to prove statements anymore. The method did not serve anymore to verify or falsify the theory, but, on the contrary, to constitute, or to support it. Due to this identity, which was presented as scientific approach, it has become impossible to distinguish between reality and its construction. Theoretical constructions were accepted for reality itself.

4. History of philosophy as a science: unity of the logical and the historical

Another characteristic feature of the Soviet Marxist understanding of the scientific character of philosophy was that no distinction was made between the logical and historical aspects of the examined phenomena²¹. In this regard, the following judgement may be considered as typical:

Historical and logical studies are closely connected among themselves. The historical method without the logical is blind, and the logical method without studying of a real history is pointless. On the basis of the unity of the historical and the logical it is possible to make both the development of object and its present structure the subject of theoretical analysis depending on specific research goals²².

I like to emphasize that such a reinterpretation of Kant's theory of cognition, including the view that sensibility and understanding are the two

18. Jakovlev 1969, p. 378.

19. Konstantinov, Bogomolov 1979, p. 36.

20. *Ibi*, p. 185.

21. Cfr. with Thomas J. Blakeley (1964) who also points to this fact.

22. Konstantinov, Bogomolov 1979, p. 165.

basic cognitive capacities, completely contradict his theory both in letter and in spirit. While Kant considered that these two capacities were irreducible to each other and equally necessary for knowledge, Soviet Marxist understanding of the scientific description of the world was based on the identification of empirics (real-life-facts) and logic. Due to this reduction, the Soviet methodological approach appeared as a peculiar kind of “logical empiricism”. The general laws of materialist dialectics such as the law of transition of quantitative changes into qualitative and back, the law of the unity and conflict of opposites and the law of the negation of the negation, as well as the specific laws of historical materialism such as the dependence of the ideological superstructure on the economic, were regarded as the basic *logical* laws of the *real* historical process²³. Thus, they were constitutive for the reality. Therefore these laws determined also the structure of the historico-philosophical narrative.

An important consequence of this approach was that, due to it, it was not the theory to be deduced from the empirical data, but rather the data to be adjusted to the theory. The application of the principle of the unity of logical and empirical to the history of philosophy not only prepared the conclusion about the inevitable existence of two “great” camps in philosophy – materialism and idealism –, but, through the illustrative dichotomous classification of all philosophical theories, it created an illusion of a self-evidence of the basic philosophical question, that is, of legitimacy of its quest. The historical and the logical dimensions have determined each other reciprocally rather than to control and to prove each other.

The identification of theory and method and that of logical principles and historical (re)constructions formed the specificity of the scientific character of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, history of philosophy included. However, this identification actually deprived philosophy as a scientific discipline of the inner-scientific criteria for verification of the theory. There remains only the extra-scientific criterion which, according to Soviet theorists, «finally, lies in the activity which is a basis of knowledge, i.e. in the socio-historical praxis»²⁴. Given that Soviet Marxism recognized class struggle as the main content of social praxis, it also considered the historico-philosophical process as a «struggle of philosophical trends» and a «fight of ideas»²⁵ which had a class character. From the practical point of view, the relation between materialism and idealism turned finely into the «radical, worldview-based, ideological»²⁶ problem connected with the political struggle for power. It is obvious that the proposed practical criterion of truth consists in the projection of the socio-political relations on the sphere of philosophy. Therefore it offers only one

23. This view is represented by textbooks on Marxist dialectics and on the history of philosophy. Cfr. Iovčuk, Ojzerman, Ščipanov 1971; Konstantinov, Bogomolov 1979, etc.

24. Konstantinov, Bogomolov 1979, p. 153.

25. Jakovlev 1969, p. 280.

26. *Ibid.*

possible way of the description of history of philosophy, namely the political-sociological. To prove by means of this practical criterion whether the description corresponds to the real state of affairs is not actually possible.

5. History of philosophy as a science: the principle of party-mindedness and the scientific character

By replacing the intra-scientific criteria of truth with practical ones, Soviet Marxism included the history of philosophy into the sphere of the ideological struggle and endowed it with ideological functions. The result of this is that the principle of party-mindedness – which consisted, above all, in Lenin's thesis about the fight of materialism against idealism, in the demand «to carry out consistently the materialistic line in philosophy, and in resolute criticism of idealism»²⁷ – had the prevalence in Soviet philosophy.

It is evident that there is a contradiction between the principle of party mindedness and the requirement of scientificity in philosophy. This contradiction was solved by Soviet philosophers through the following syllogism:

The Communist party mindedness represents the interests and aspirations of the most progressive class in a history – the proletariat. The interests of a revolutionary class demand for the deepest and most objective analysis of social reality. [...] Hence, the Communist party mindedness is the highest expression of the scientific character, because it builds a necessary condition of objective analysis of reality²⁸.

Konstantinov and his colleagues argue in the same line:

The party mindedness indeed does not coincide with the scientific character if philosophy expresses and protects the position and interests of those classes which are leaving the historical arena; in this case, philosophy moves away from the facts of life and from its scientific assessment. On the contrary, philosophy is objective and scientific if it, truly reflecting life, expresses the situation, the interests of the advanced classes of society and obliges a person to strive for the truth. Therefore, party mindedness can be different²⁹.

Thus, in Soviet Marxism, the idea of party mindedness in philosophy appears as an expression of its scientific character.

5.1. How could party-mindedness be a scientific principle: first hypothesis

The Soviet philosophy's commitment to the principle of party mindedness has often been interpreted as an illegal replacing of academic, scientific

27. Ojzerman 1987, p. 7.

28. Jakovlev 1969, p. 280.

29. Konstantinov, Bogomolov 1979, p. 24.

philosophizing with a politically and ideologically engaged one. However, such an interpretation is actually a simplification of the real situation. In fact, the socio-political analysis of philosophy leading to the identification of political and scientific discourses in Soviet Marxism results from the materialistic understanding of history. As Teodor Ojzerman writes in the «Introduction» to the book *Problems of Marxist-Leninist Methodology of the History of Philosophy* (1987), «empirical research does not get by without theoretical prerequisites»³⁰. He opposes Marxist-Leninist approach to relativism and methodological empiricism and emphasizes that the materialistic understanding of history – that is the belief that ideological phenomena depend on the economic life of society as well as the belief in the historical necessity of class struggle – serves as «the methodological imperative of the militant materialistic historicism»³¹.

Indeed, the thesis, according to which the mode of production of material life determines the social, political, cultural and ideological development of society, constitutes the quintessence of the materialistic understanding of history. For example, according to Jakovlev,

Philosophy belongs to the sphere of spiritual life of society and is one of the main forms of social consciousness, therefore, in its historical development, it is determined by the economic relations in society and the class struggle following from these relations. [...] the real roots of all ideas should be looked for and found in the economic structure of society³².

The claim about the economic and social determination of spiritual processes, «proved by Marx and Engels»³³, constitutes one of the most important criteria for the scientific character of the Marxist approach, which should guarantee the objectivity of the historical reconstruction and exclude relativism and subjectivity.

5.2. How could party-mindedness be a scientific principle: second hypothesis

The ideological processes' dependence on social and economic relations reflects, however, only one side of dialectical and historical materialism, namely the ontological one. In Soviet Marxism, ontology is closely connected with gnoseology, which forms the other side of dialectical and historical materialism. The fundamental importance of this connection is manifested in the view describing history of philosophy as a history of the scientific and philosophical cognition of the world. The postulated interdependence of ontological and gnoseological approaches forms a canon of the Soviet theory of history of philosophy. As Jakovlev states:

30. Ojzerman 1987, p. 10.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Jakovlev 1969, p. 277.

33. *Ibid.*

The [main] characteristic of Lenin's methodology of history of philosophy is the organic combination of the principle of social analysis of the philosophical theories with the consistent Marxist historicism, as well as with the unconditional recognition of the progress of the scientific and philosophical knowledge in the history of philosophy³⁴.

Thereby it has been assumed that the historical development of philosophy as a form of scientific knowledge of the world «expresses in a generalized form the laws of the world cognition which reflect the objective laws of the natural and social being»³⁵. To such regularities belong the assumption about the progressive, cumulative development of human knowledge and about the gradual moving forward of knowledge towards reaching the absolute truth.

In *Short History of Philosophy* it is stated that

The inner logic of the development of philosophical thought consists in the fact that this process goes mainly from the simple to the complex, from the lower to the higher. This process of "increase" of philosophical learning is not rectilinear, but zigzag-like. In its course, digressions from the correct cognition of reality in the trend of idealism, mysticism and religion occur quite often. But as a whole, this process is progressive and leads finally to the knowledge of objective truth³⁶.

The assumption about the «sustainable development of knowledge» in philosophy has remained a regulative principle in later Soviet works on history of philosophy³⁷. According to this methodological principle, the analysis of the philosophical theories of the past consists first of all in the identification and separation of the moments of objective truth in them, then in the creation of a complete and continuous historical picture of the progress of scientific knowledge. Finally, it has to give a panorama of «the historical ascension to the objective truth along the struggle of the opposing ideological trends – materialism and idealism»³⁸.

The ontological-gnoseological principle became a basis for the periodization of the history of philosophy. According to this principle, its stages are defined as follows:

1) philosophy in slave-holding society; 2) philosophy in feudal society; 3) philosophy in the period of transition from feudalism to capitalism; 4) philosophy in the era of consolidation of capitalism until the origin of Marxism; 5) philosophy in the era of pre-monopolistic capitalism, the origin and development of the revolutionary movement of proletariat; 6) philosophy in the period of imperialism and the proletarian revolution; 7) philosophy in the time of transition from capitalism to socialism, the struggle of two opposite systems – socialism and capitalism, and the triumph of communism³⁹.

34. Jakovlev 1969, p. 384.

35. Iovčuk, Ojzerman, Ščipanov 1971, p. 17.

36. *Ibid.*

37. See, for example, Ojzerman 1987, p. 6.

38. Jakovlev 1969, p. 382.

39. Iovčuk, Ojzerman, Ščipanov 1971, p. 18.

The continuity of the historico-philosophical process is guaranteed as far as each new system does not simply negate the previous one, but rather includes it in itself, in a “sublational” or “overcomed” form, by preserving its “positive” content.

This “genetic” idea was central to Soviet theory of the history of philosophy. It was formed by the way of adaptation of Hegel’s conception of the dialectical development and historical ascension to the truth by stages. Respectively, the historical systems of philosophy were described as «relative truths of philosophical knowledge» that contained the «grains of the absolute truth»⁴⁰. The most vivid example of this approach is the view of dialectical materialism as the product of the lawful progress of philosophy, which is reflected in the doctrine of the three sources and three component parts of dialectical materialism developed by Vladimir Lenin in the 1920’s. In *Short History of Philosophy* one reads:

The establishment of scientific ideology of working class and its philosophical basis – dialectical and historical materialism – was prepared by all previous development of scientific thought. [...] The theoretical sources of Marxism are: 1) classical German philosophy, in particular Hegel’s idealistic dialectics and Feuerbach’s anthropological materialism; 2) classical English political economy, and first of all, Smith’s and Ricardo’s doctrines; 3) critical and utopian socialism of the beginning of the XIX century, first of all, Saint-Simon’s and Fourier’s doctrines⁴¹.

It is this combination of ontology and gnoseology into a single two-sided process and their subordination to the common law of progressive historical development that puts the history of philosophy before a double task. On the one hand, it has to «find the scientific truth in class ideology». On the other hand, it has to «uncover class ideology in the scientific knowledge advancement towards the truth»⁴². In this way, it is possible to explain both the continuous confusion or even fusion of ideological and academic discourses in Soviet philosophical historiography and the argument that the principle of party-mindedness in philosophy does not contradict its scientific character. According to the Soviet theorists, applying the principle of party-mindedness into the philosophical research does not compromise its scientific character, given that it is the advanced class and, therefore, the objective bearer of progressive knowledge, who carries out the research.

5.3. How could party-mindedness be a scientific principle: third hypothesis

In spite of these explanations, the proposed Marxist approach still raises doubts as to its scientific character. Along with the problems I have tried to outline above, another problematic point is that the consequent

40. Jakovlev 1969, p. 385.

41. Iovčuk, Ojzerman, Ščipanov 1971, p. 407.

42. Byxovskij 1931, p. 61. This passage is literally reprinted in Jakovlev 1969, p. 382.

implementation of the principle of party-mindedness contradicts the Marxist principle of historicism.

It is indeed stated that «the scientific history of philosophy divides the history of philosophy into two eras: 1) the history of philosophy until the beginning of Marxism and 2) the history of philosophy after the beginning of Marxism»⁴³. Here, Marxism marks a sort of “end” of the history of philosophy.

Also in the book *Lenin as a Philosopher* we read:

Thus, a lawful development of philosophical thought carried out during the overcoming contradictions of scientific-philosophical knowledge by means of dialectical negation. Marxist philosophy is represented here as a result of previous development of scientific-philosophical knowledge and, at the same time, as the greatest achievement – the beginning of a new historical stage in development of philosophy⁴⁴.

One more opinion concerning this issue, which perfectly matches the official view and expresses it, is represented by Mixail Jakovlev: «[...] after the emergence of dialectical and historical materialism, further progress of philosophical knowledge is only possible within Marxist philosophy»⁴⁵.

All other streams of philosophical thought, such as positivism, hermeneutics, existentialism, neo-Thomism and structuralism were branded as «bourgeois conceptions», constantly exposed to severe criticism and rejected as false positions. Dialectical and historical materialism usurped the right of possession of the «absolute» truth.

If one tries to formulate the content of this truth, one can express it to some extent as follows: Soviet Marxism is right by virtue of its method, whereas the only correct method is Marxist method. In this case, as well as in other cases discussed above, the claim of Soviet Marxism for scientific character is based on the identifying concepts and, thereby, on tautology. There is no space for the development of the method itself.

The anti-historicism of the Soviet conception of history of philosophy is also connected to the fact that it accepted teleology, that is, the assumption that history is a finite process directed towards more perfect social forms and absolute knowledge. Denying the «vulgar sociology» which treats the historical process as a linear development, Soviet methodology of historiography offers a “deep dialectic approach” for its understanding. The latter includes Lenin’s theory of “circles” describing the movement of philosophical thought from the lowest stage to the highest, «when the given stage reached as a result of this development builds a starting point for a new “circle”»⁴⁶, and the theory of “zigzags”⁴⁷. Soviet philosophers believed that the

43. Iovčuk, Ojzerman, Ščipanov 1971, p. 18.

44. Jakovlev 1969, p. 387.

45. *Ibid.*

46. Jakovlev 1969, p. 387.

47. Iovčuk, Ojzerman, Ščipanov 1971, p. 17.

lawful development of the philosophical thought on the way to the objective truth could only take place by means of overcoming the contradictions that appear in the process of the dialectical negation and substitution of one philosophical conception or theoretical system by another which is more progressive. This connection of truth with progressivity may be seen as another factor which allows for considering the principle of party-mindedness as a scientific principle.

6. History of philosophy as a science: system and development

The recognition of a «deep dialectics of the historical development of the absolute truth in the historico-philosophical process through the sum of relative truths»⁴⁸ imposes a methodological ban on working out complete systems. Nevertheless, Soviet Marxism was such a system and it openly recognized it: «Marxist philosophy, essentially rejecting the idea of a forever completed philosophical system, is at the same time a dialectical-materialistic system»⁴⁹.

The resolution of this contradiction, as well as the resolution of the contradiction between the principle of party-mindedness, on the one hand, and the requirement for philosophy of being scientific, on the other, was reached by means of applying the argument that dialectical-materialistic system was an exception to the rule. As “party-mindedness can be different” – scientific and non-scientific, depending on whether it expresses views of progressive social groups or of groups which are alien to progress–, so, similarly, systems can be different – completed and uncompleted.

That means that Marxist philosophy is characterized by the principle unity of its sentences and, further, that it is in movement, in development, on the way to new discoveries. It constantly realizes, comprehends its unresolved tasks and, criticizing its ideological opponents, is also engaged in self-criticism as it recognizes its limitation within the framework of achieved knowledge, not only philosophical, but also general scientific. As well as any system of scientific knowledge, Marxist philosophy estimates its scientific statements only as an approximate reflection of reality, as the unity of relative and absolute truth, whereby the latter is understood dialectically, i.e. as relative within its limits⁵⁰.

I like to emphasise that this typical passage is about the theoretical system whose statements are relative and constantly revised. Hence, one deals here with a system which permanently destroys itself. Such a system cannot be the ultimate basis for scientific discussions, since its statements have always only temporal significance. It is obvious that the attempt made by the Soviet

48. Jakovlev 1969, p. 387.

49. Konstantinov, Bogomolov 1979, p. 38.

50. *Ibid.*

theorists to combine the principle of development with the principle of systematisation, does not achieve its goal, since it undermines the very system of dialectical materialism. After all, if one assumes that dialectical materialism has the historical character, it must also assume that it can only temporarily serve as the objective system of knowledge. However, in this case, it loses the right to be called “the highest stage of development” of philosophical knowledge and to be a tribunal for the entire history of philosophy.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of the fundamental principles of scientific methodology of Soviet history of philosophy – the identification of method and theory, the identification of logical and historical principles, the identification of party-mindedness and scientific character of philosophy, and the identification of historical and systematic principles – shows that they actually turned this discipline into a pseudo-science, since they deprived it of the true criteria of knowledge and led to the emergence of internal contradictions in it. If there are no criteria for distinguishing between a fact and its interpretation, then, in principle, anything is possible. In effect, these identifications made the epistemological and logical levels indistinguishable from the ontological, and the scientific from the ideological one. As a result, in the Soviet Union, the methodology of history of philosophy actually served – *nolens volens* – as academically legitimized mechanism of political totalization. What is more, the outcome of historico-philosophical research was always already anticipated: for if dialectical and historical materialism appears to be the highest lawful product of the historical development of philosophy, historians of philosophy cannot do anything else but to «investigate specific, concrete historical forms of struggle between materialism and idealism at various stages of ideological development»⁵¹ and to fight against bourgeois philosophy from the positions of Marxism-Leninism⁵². The real logic of historico-philosophical research was, in effect, determined by social praxis, and, first of all, by Lenin’s principle of the «unity of philosophy and politics»⁵³.

51. Jakovlev 1969, p. 379.

52. Jakovlev writes further: «In our time, the history of philosophy cannot be regarded an academic science, which is far from ideological and political problems; it is increasingly becoming an arena of contemporary ideological struggle» (*ibi*, p. 398).

53. Cfr. the following passage: «It is impossible to get free from politics, from living in its atmosphere. Now, everything has been involved in a whirl of political struggle. To carry out the Marxist-Leninist principle of the unity of philosophy and politics coherently and untiringly – means to overcome decisively and thoroughly the separation of philosophy from practice and politics, on the one hand, and the vulgarizing attempts to dissolve philosophy in the current politics, on the other hand» (Konstantinov, Bogomolov 1979, p. 23).

The methodology of Soviet historico-philosophical studies was, in fact, an axiology, since 1) it was based not on knowledge, but on beliefs (such as belief in social determinism, or belief in gnoseological teleology), which either were accepted without proof or “justified” by reference to Marx and Engels who might already prove them; 2) it was aimed at the persuasion; 3) its argumentation was guided by value judgments according to the dualistic principle of party mindedness; 4) dialectical materialism was designed as a metatheory, to which the (re)construction of historical life and the historical processes had to correspond. Thus, the struggle in the field of history of philosophy was actually not a scientific struggle for objective truth, but the political struggle for further consolidation of the Marxist-Leninist outlook⁵⁴.

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54. I like to note that former Soviet philosophers still represent the position that philosophy is a “special type of worldview”. Cfr. Ojzerman 1999, p. 11.

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