

Pogrebyssky, J. B.

[The very interesting...]

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

J. B. Pogrebyssky

The very interesting and pithy lecture of Professor Suchodolski gives occasion to many reflections and remarks. Having no objection against the general purpose of the lecture, I wish to express my opinion about one of its sections: *Science as a Matter of Scientists and as That of the Human Work*.

At first — about the role of personality in the history of science. It is obvious that the approach to this question ought to be a historical one. The significance of the personality factor gets changed considerably from epoch to epoch in all fields of the human activities, and besides not always in the same direction. But I cannot now develop this point at greater length. I will only point out that the ideas in the spirit of Carlyle, bringing the history of science to the history of activities of its most prominent representatives, which in their overt form — as it appears — have no more followers now, may come out in a disguised, so to say, in a depersonalized form.

We mean thereby the exposition of the history of science as the history of its greatest achievements. It is worth saying so, since such an exposition occurs frequently enough. And this is no coincidence: this is the line of least resistance. Irrespective of to what degree the greatest achievements of science are collective or individual, irrespective of how much — with such an exposition — the activities of particular scientists do advance to the forefront, we have to do, in a more or less depersonalized form, with the approach to the history of science as the history of "heroes" or "heroic deeds".

I shall give only one example of how badly gets distorted, with that, the historical perspective. As far as the mathematics of the first decades of the XIXth century is concerned, the following theories are to be ranked among its greatest achievements: the theory of analytical functions, the non-euclidean geometry, the theory of groups (I deliberately omit the names). Meanwhile, the last two theories up to the middle of the century did not attract any attention, and to the first of them was devoted only a small part of mathematical works of that time.

Thus, in order to imagine the state of science in one or another period (else one cannot analyse the course of its development nor elicit the factors determining it), it is necessary not only to define its general character but also to show its base, its foundations, its potentialities. Valuable data of that kind may be obtained when statistically processing the published works from the viewpoint of subjects and trends, when studying the activities of second-rate and third-rate scientists, when analysing the instructional and popular-scientific literature, when using the data concerning the scientific institutions and educational establish-

ments (the last centuries, of course, being here kept in view). Without that, the characteristic of the state of science will inevitably turn out incomplete.

N. I. Rodnyi

In the report of Professor Suchodolski, there have been touched a number of interesting problems, in particular the problem concerning the fundamental trends of the history of science. Let me say some words about the negative side of this problem: what works on the history of science are anti-scientific and should be therefore flatly denied. To that sort of "works" may be — we think — attributed the following ones:

1) works of poor quality, that is works evidencing the author's misunderstanding of the research subject, his ignorance of its different aspects — which often takes place as a result of an isolated examination of the subject, as a result of tearing it away from those phenomena and processes whose part it is and with which it is linked closely and inseparably;

2) works in which the mobilization of the historical and scientific material is of tendentious character and is made use of for the purpose of arguing a preconceived point of view;

3) those works, finally, whose historico-scientific conception does not represent a logical generalization of the real movement of human cognition, but has been brought in from without, has been dictated by the motives alien to science, by the considerations of racial, nationalistic and another character.

Certainly, the works in the domain of the history of science cannot be brought to only one trend, but they represent a complex of various trends; among them, however, we are to choose a trend which ought to be the dominating, the generalizing one. It is just that trend to which belong the works concerned with the logical generalization of the history of science, i.e. with disclosing the logic of the development of science, the laws of its evolution. It is precisely this trend that focuses the diverse investigations in the field of the history of science, making use of them in order to disclose the logic of formation, development and change of ideas, their relation to the history of ideas under the sign of which the development of mankind is going on at the various stages of its history, their link with the research methods, with the concrete structure of the tasks of science, with the influences exerted by practice upon, science, etc. The sense of those investigations consists in that their most important result is the reflection of science.