

## **Social Commitment – Opposition – Enmity**

Ανακοίνωση στο διεθνές συνέδριο Partners, Opponents, but not Enemies. Βάρνα, 14-21 Μαΐου 1989. Διοργάνωση: Bulgarian Philosophical Association, Institute of Philosophical Sciences (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences).

Our first methodological presuppositions in a discussion on the problems concerning opposition and enmity in the realm of philosophy can be synthetically expressed by the notion of the social commitment of philosophical systems. A notion in which the relative autonomy of these mental formations with regard to the social groups the **Being** of which is reflected in them, is taken into account. In my opinion a double determination of every philosophical system's relation towards another, results from these presuppositions: first this is a determination related to specific social structures, to the given socio-historical situation and socio-historical conditions in which a given philosophical system appears and exists and which allow and impose the qualitative characteristics of its relation towards the other philosophical systems. This type of determination I will call "externally-social". Second, this determination is founded on the inner logic of every philosophical system, which is considered a mental formation relatively autonomous with regard to the material reality, and founded on the specific logic of the development of philosophy in general. The inner logic of a given philosophical system and the logic of the development of philosophy in general as well, result precisely from the relative autonomy mentioned already. They are expressed, for instance, by the choice of the philosophical system's thematic direction, by the debates over the definitions of the fundamental and necessary concepts for the philosophical system, by the methods of the argumentations development etc. This type of determination I will call "internally-logical".

As long as the philosophical systems and philosophy in general are considered as phenomena socio-historical in essence and as long as philosophical structure is *isomorphic* with structuring in the spheres of the **Socio-historical** and the **Natural**, the differentiation of the determinants of a given philosophical system's relation towards other philosophical systems into internal determinants and external determinants is up to a point conventional. The limits of

this conventionality, namely the objective basis of this differentiation, can be found in the *differentia specifica* of the logical structures of the philosophical system and in the *differentia specifica* of the logic of the development of philosophy in general. However these characteristics do not cease to be socially determined. In my opinion there is a dialectical interaction between the externally-social and the internally logical determinants of the relation of any given philosophical system towards others.

The methodological presuppositions we are talking about, are onto-gnoseological\* and they appear in the unfolding of two contrary processes, mutually interpenetrating and in unity with each other: the first process concerns the modeling of a social group's ideal, on the grounds of its corresponding needs and interests. At this point we should underline that the relation between the needs and interests of the group and the model of its social ideal is neither direct nor automatic, owing to the relative autonomy, mentioned above. That, which initially cannot be attained in real human life obtains ideal form, i.e. it is converted into an ideal model of the desirable and necessary social condition at which the social group aims, on the basis of the social group's real conditions. In my opinion this ideal model, which could be more specified as expressive model, can reach its highest degree of systematization, when it is converted into a philosophical one. In view of the dialectics of the practical and theoretical relation of man towards the objective reality surrounding him, one can conclude that the social ideal's philosophical expressive model proceeds to change from a mere theory into an instrument for the orientation of human activity, to the extent to which it helps to form the system of values and therefore the practical relation towards the existing reality. A philosophical system adds rational grounding to the **Desirable** and **Necessary** and often traces the way to their attainment and realization. This is precisely the second process: the transformation of a philosophical system from a possible expressive model of people's social ideal into their practical relation towards objective reality. At this point I take into consideration the existence of other possible expressive models of the social ideal, which are different from the philosophical one. There are also differences among them. These are differences concerning the means of expression and modeling, the expressive model's form, the degree of the expressive model's systematization etc. Such expressive models are, for example, the aesthetic or the political expressive model of the social ideal. There are certain relations among all the expressive models of the social ideal and in many ways they relate to the philosophical one. In my opinion the philoso-

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\* In the Marxist sense of this term.

phical expressive model of the social ideal is the most universal one, because it employs the categories which are of the utmost generality, by which reality can be conceived.

The methodological presuppositions developed up to this point as well as the processes described in general, support the conclusion that regarding philosophical controversies as “linguistic games”<sup>1</sup>, reduces them to mere misunderstandings among people instead of socially determined, but relatively autonomous disputes concerning the defining of the essences of Nature and Society, of Being, Consciousness, their mutual relations etc. Thus, the philosophical expressive model of the social ideal and of the world in general, as well as the contradiction among the various expressive models of the world, lose their socio-historical character. In this case this character is replaced by the mere vehicle of the thought. In this way the externally-social determinants of every philosophical system’s relationship towards its rivals remain out of sight. This occurs despite the endeavor to incorporate the “struggle” element in the notion of linguistic games which is afterwards extended to the scientific examination of the relations among people and of the social bond<sup>2</sup>.

Naturally, research on these two briefly described processes, cannot be exhaustive in this schematic and therefore simplified presentation. In fact the interactions among their various aspects as well as the qualitative characteristics of these aspects are far more complicated. Their reality is a lot richer in terms of content. I have described three aspects – the social needs and interests, the philosophical expressive model of the social ideal and the world in general, and, thirdly, the practical relation towards reality. These three are moments in a single process. This has been analyzed into two processes in an abstract-theoretical way. The interactions among these moments are neither direct nor automatic. They are mediated by numerous steps and mixed developments, because of the fact that the process by which man grasps objective reality is not a mirror image of reality. On the other hand the inverse process, namely that of transformation of the human relation towards objective reality from something theoretical only, to something practical, is also complicated. However, this presentation which is abstract-theoretical or I could say “pure”, does not intend to be analytical, but to describe in general terms the contours of a possible point of view for treating opposition on the one hand and the conflict between enemies, on the other hand, in the field of philosophy, and it intends if possible to suggest a concrete-historical approach. These are some of the reasons for this paper to be published.

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<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, part I, paragraph 402, in: Ludwig Wittgenstein *Selected Works*, Sofia: Nauka i Iskustvo 1988.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-François Lyotard: *La condition postmoderne. Rapport sur le savoir*, Athens: Gnessi 1988.

The different variations of every philosophical system's relationship towards its rivals, can be represented by a straight line. The distance between any two points on this line correspond to the degree of contradiction between a pair of philosophies. At this point let us remember that contradiction is always present in the relations between different philosophical systems. From this point of view opposition and enmity are two forms of contradiction among the various philosophical expressive models of the social ideal and of the world in general. The hitherto always present contradictions in philosophy are based upon the existence of society as a heterogeneous totality and therefore upon the existence of a contradiction always present among the various needs and interests of the different groups in society, given the presuppositions about the social commitment of the philosophical systems as well as their relative autonomy and the above described processes. However, this is only one side of the phenomenon under discussion. The other side is the homogeneity and therefore the existence of a certain *consensus* among the various expressive models current of a given time, but this is not the topic of this paper.

According to the approach suggested above, whether a contradiction between philosophies takes the form of mere opposition or of conflict between enemies depends on both externally-social and internally-logical determinants. These two types of determinants are both necessary for the contradiction between a pair of philosophies to take the form of mere opposition or that of the conflict between enemies: **but** these two types of determinants play different roles in determining this. These different roles are also important for our understanding of the mechanisms by which the two forms of contradiction can convert into each other. Grasping the significance of these different roles depends upon the possibility of a theoretical basis for considering the practical conversion of the conflict as between enemies into mere opposition and vice versa.

The functioning of some given internally-logical determinants is possible on the basis of the presence of the appropriate externally-social determinants. Let us take for example the appearance and then the domination of the Stalinist version of Marxism in which dogmatism is a necessary internally-logical determinant of the relation of conflict as between enemies towards other philosophical systems. This domination is possible thanks to the fact of the domination of certain social structures and externally-social determinants in general, which not only allow but also impose such a relation. The domination of such externally-social determinants in turn, is possible because of a certain correlation of forces among the various so-

cial groups, which allows it<sup>3</sup>. From this point of view the externally-social determinants as concrete socio-historical conditions for a given philosophical system's relation towards others, are proved to be the basic source of the essential form of the contradiction and therefore of the appearance and functioning of the internally-logical determinants of this relation. The internally-logical determinants in turn, are what decide the appearance and the existence of some given qualitative characteristics of the same relation. All this occurs during the process of the philosophical expressive modeling of the social ideal and of the world in general as well as during the process of the turning this ideal into practical action. On the other hand, the appearance of different particular internally-logical determinants would not be possible if the inner logic of the given philosophical system did not imply them. Otherwise distortions or falsifications of the given philosophical system are inevitable. The history of the Marxist philosophy, during the period mentioned above, is indicative of patterns of such distortions and falsifications.

One can conclude that the form taken by the contradiction in the realm of philosophy is not free from certain social functions. Such a conclusion is based upon the schematically represented process of the philosophical expressive modeling of the social ideal and that of turning into practical action, as well as upon the historical experience of the evolution of Marxist philosophy. The social meaning of the relation of a given philosophical system towards the others and also the subjection of the internally-logical determinants of this relation to the externally-social determinants both come in sight, when we consider the social functions of the qualitative characteristics of the same relation.

Answering the questions about how mere opposition and conflict as between enemies in philosophy are possible and what their determinants are, is not simple. Neither is the acceptance of any theoretical position about mere opposition and conflict as between enemies in philosophy. I think such a position should be free from psychologism and from the problems which regarding contradiction in philosophy as a linguistic game implies. It should be also free from any ethical or instrumental value judgments, applied to mere opposition and to conflict as between enemies. Thus, conflict as between enemies as well as the internal factors which reproduce it, are unacceptable in view of the connection between it and dogmatism, which precludes correspondence between the philosophical systems of those caught in that

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<sup>3</sup> On the domination of certain social structures based upon a corresponding correlation among the various social groups, during this period of the soviet history, see for example: L. Trotsky: *The Betrayed Revolution*, Athens: Allagi 1984; C. Castoriades: *La société bureaucratique*, Athens: Ipsilon 1985; D. Arsitch: *Social and Economic Roots of Stalinism (Drustveno-ekonomski koreni staljinizma)*, Athens: Okeanis 1975.

trap and objective reality. However, this is insufficient according to the methodological presuppositions suggested. The existence of certain social structures and externally-social determinants in general, is required, so that the practical exclusion or rejection of the conflict-as-between-enemies attitude is not only allowed, but up to a point imposed as well. Actually, this is also valid for the practical exclusion or rejection of the contrary attitude of mere opposition. From this point of view and in this sense there is no reason why it should sound odd that the following conclusion has some possible hortatory implications: the practical exclusion or rejection of conflict as between enemies is something impossible to secure just within the limits of any theoretical discussion among philosophers. This is not only an internal philosophical question. A practical acceptance of the attitude of mere opposition and a practical rejection or exclusion of conflict as between enemies, as well as the reverse, remain theoretical problems only, in the absence of the necessary externally-social determinants. In such a case certain possibilities of converting the choice between mere opposition and conflict as between enemies into a linguistic game are revealed.

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