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Artykuł umieszczony jest w kolekcji cyfrowej Bazhum, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych tworzonej przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego.

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.



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.

In the Institute of History of Science and Technology of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, works have been started in the given direction, and we hope to inform you of the first results at one of the next forums devoted to the history of science and technology.

E. N. Hiebert

Professor Suchodolski's remarks concerning the need for extending the range and perspective of the history of science and technology demand our genuine support. We can broaden our goals so as to include the study of the interaction between the sciences and the humanities; but this must be accomplished without any dilution of the historical analysis itself. The well of available knowledge is deep. Indeed it is bottomless.

In my own area of special interest — the physical sciences since 1800 — we need to realize that in any traditional sense of writing history, the history of science and technology for this period simply cannot be written. The difficulty is predominantly not one of finding the materials but of making wise selections from among the chaos of potentially relevant documents. Wherever we begin we begin arbitrarily. Whatever we do in our historical analysis we do it with a great deal of arbitrariness. Broad may be the goals. Else we search for that pure objective history (a figment of the imagination) which is excruciatingly dry and dull. If our analysis is to be a meaningful one, whatever phase of human activity it may envelop, it must necessarily be a specific one.

The specificity of a focus, although admitted arbitrarily, provides the point of departure to work outwards while mastering whatever documents and tools one needs along the way. The alternate approach is to embrace a broad and general problem and then cut away the fatty deposits in order to expose the vital nerves. That can easily develop into a hopeless task. For to examine everything that is relevant to a problem is beyond the reach of human powers. Even to discuss what is important is impossible.

So I suggest that it is the narrowly focused problem which can be undertaken with efficiency and rewards — at least as the point of departure. But then, of course, the wisdom which enters into making the choice of the focus for the analysis is itself predetermined by the breadth of vision and perspective which Professor Suchodolski has clarified for us so well under the large umbrella which includes both the sciences and the humanities.