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THE OLD AND THE NEW 'ERKENNTNIS'

In this first issue of the new *Erkenntnis*, it seems fitting to recall at least briefly the character and the main achievements of its distinguished namesake and predecessor.

The old *Erkenntnis* came into existence when Hans Reichenbach and Rudolf Carnap assumed the editorship of the *Annalen der Philosophie* and gave the journal its new title and its characteristic orientation; the first issue appeared in 1930. The journal was backed by the Gesellschaft für Empirische Philosophie in Berlin, in which Reichenbach, Walter Dubislav, and Kurt Grelling were the leading figures, and by the Verein Ernst Mach in Vienna, whose philosophical position was strongly influenced by that of the Vienna Circle; a brief account of these groups, and of several kindred schools and trends of scientific and philosophical thinking, was given by Otto Neurath in his 'Historische Anmerkungen' (Vol. 1, pp. 311-314).

As Reichenbach noted in his introduction to the first issue, the editors of *Erkenntnis* were concerned to carry on philosophical inquiry in close consideration of the procedures and results of the various scientific disciplines: analysis of scientific research and its presuppositions was expected to yield insight into the character of all human knowledge, while at the same time, the objectivity and the progressive character of science inspired the conviction that philosophy need not remain an array of conflicting 'systems', but could attain to the status of objective knowledge.

As a student in Berlin and Vienna during those years, I experienced vividly the exhilarating sense, shared by those close to those two philosophical groups, of being jointly engaged in a novel and challenging intellectual enterprise in which philosophical issues were dealt with 'scientifically' and philosophical claims were amenable to support or criticism by logically rigorous arguments.

The 'logical analyses' and 'rational reconstructions' set forth by adherents of this program often made extensive use of the concepts, methods, and symbolic apparatus of contemporary symbolic logic, whose impor-

tance for philosophy was the subject of Carnap's article, 'Die Alte und die Neue Logik', which appeared in the first issue.

As its editors had hoped, *Erkenntnis* did become a hospitable forum for the presentation and critical discussion of many seminal ideas that were to exert a strong influence on problems and procedures of inquiry in epistemology and in the philosophy of logic, mathematics, and the empirical sciences during the subsequent decades.

In *Erkenntnis*, Carnap and Neurath debated the issue of Protokollsätze and began to develop their conceptions of physicalism and the unity of science; and Reichenbach addressed himself to the principle of causality and the question of its testability, and discussed problems concerning the concept of probability. But in accordance with the editorial policy announced in Reichenbach's introductory article, the journal also opened its pages to a wide variety of authors who were not committed to the editors' substantive philosophical views, and within the few years of its existence, it came to include important contributions by philosophers and scientists with quite diverse interests.

Erkenntnis published the proceedings of a conference, held in Königsberg, on the epistemology of the exact sciences, at which Carnap, Heyting, and v. Neumann presented the logicist, intuitionist, and formalist conceptions of mathematics, Neugebauer spoke on pre-Greek mathematics, Reichenbach examined truth and probability in physics, and Heisenberg discussed causality and quantum mechanics. – Schrödinger and Bohr contributed to the journal, as did Tarski, Chwistek, Ajdukiewicz, and other Polish logicians and philosophers.

There were essays on methodological and philosophical problems of cosmology, biology, psychology, and some issues in linguistics; but, apart from an article by Neurath on sociology in physicalism and one by Julius Kraft on 'Das Problem der Geisteswissenschaft', the pages of the old *Erkenntnis* include no studies of philosophical issues in the social sciences or in historiography – although in his editorial introduction, Reichenbach had explicitly invited contributions to the 'Philosophie der Geisteswissenschaften'. Recent decades have witnessed an upsurge of analytic work on issues in the 'philosophy of mind' and in the philosophy of language, of the social sciences, and of historiography: the new *Erkenntnis* would welcome contributions to these fields.

The vigorous life of the old *Erkenntnis* was terminated by the rise of

National Socialism and the outbreak of the Second World War. Along with other scholars, many representatives of an analytically oriented empiricism in Germany, Austria, Poland, and some other countries were scattered abroad; some, like Kurt Grelling, were 'exterminated'. From Volume 7, No. 2 on, *Erkenntnis* was published by van Stockum in Holland: it is surely fitting that its original publishing firm, Felix Meiner, should play an active role again in its revival.

The final issue – Volume 8, Nr. 1 – bore a new title, which had been suggested, no doubt, by Otto Neurath: *The Journal of Unified Science (Erkenntnis)*; and in addition to Carnap and Reichenbach as editors, its cover listed several associate editors: Philipp Frank, Jörgen Jörgensen, Charles W. Morris, Otto Neurath, Louis Rougier, L. Susan Stebbing. It bore the publication date: June 1st, 1939. An article by Heinrich Gomperz which was to have appeared in the subsequent issue of the old *Erkenntnis*, has been included in this first issue of the new.

The changes in the title and the editorial board of that final issue presaged the shift of the center of analytic empiricist philosophizing to England, Australia, the Scandinavian countries, and especially the United States.

Recent decades, however, have brought a revival and marked expansion of a strong and active interest in analytic-critical philosophy in Western Europe, along with continued growth in other countries. It is these developments that have encouraged the idea of reviving *Erkenntnis*. This new successor journal certainly cannot have the purpose of cultivating the specific philosophical ideas, however illuminating and fertile in their time, which were developed by the supporters of the old *Erkenntnis*. Those ideas have since undergone a great deal of further critical scrutiny, and as a result, many of them have been considerably modified or even abandoned. It should be noted, however, that those changes were not brought about by thinkers who simply profess different philosophical ideologies: the serious impetus for reconsideration and change has come from thinkers who are themselves committed to careful analytic investigation and to precise reasoning in support of their ideas, and who hold that sound philosophical inquiry must be informed by adequate knowledge of the scientific disciplines that may be relevant to the subject under investigation.

In the past ten years or so, some of the most provocative and influential

ideas in the philosophy of science have come from analytically informed thinkers like T. S. Kuhn who argue that 'rational reconstructions' in the style of analytic empiricism, which are largely couched in logical terms, cannot provide an adequate account of scientific method and knowledge, and that a proper characterization and understanding of the nature and change of scientific knowledge requires explicit reference to certain historical and sociological aspects of the scientific enterprise.

Wolfgang Stegmüller's contribution to this first issue reflects the openness of the new *Erkenntnis* to such novel approaches; at the same time, it is interesting to note that Stegmüller's new interpretation and reformulation of Kuhn's views makes extensive use of ideas recently developed by J. Sneed, one of a group of investigators who continue to explore the kinds of philosophical insight obtainable by powerful logical techniques.

The new *Erkenntnis* hopes to become a forum for the presentation and discussion of diverse philosophical studies in those fields which were encompassed by its predecessor as well as in adjacent new ones which are coming into existence as a result of continuing inquiry: some such new fields are suggested by the areas of specialization represented on the Board of Editorial Consultants. And like its predecessor, the new *Erkenntnis* will expect of its contributors, not commitment to specific philosophical doctrines, but adherence to high standards of clarity of statement and cogency of reasoning – standards which ensure the possibility of relevant supporting or critical argument, and which provide a basis for progress in the endless quest for philosophical understanding.