

Philosophy of Science

VOL. II

January, 1944

NO. I

EDITORIAL

PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE AFTER TEN YEARS

“Philosophy of Science” has come to its tenth anniversary at a moment when a historic turn is about to be made by mankind. In one shape or another we expect a new society. May we not expect also a new science and a new philosophy of science?

The Editor feels that one good new turn deserves another, and wishes to propose on this festive occasion that we all make an effort to align ourselves with the changes that are occurring. He feels that the turn, which will be for the better, will be for an emphasis on dynamism, wholism and reconciliation of opposites, which must follow on the heels of the defeat of reaction, disunity and of the hopelessly contradictory. With the relegation of Fascism to the null class, all good symbols should now be able to work in peace, in amity and in ever increasing integration.

“Philosophy of Science” is also in a sense a survivor of a crisis intensified by the conditions of storm and stress of the times. It started publication in 1934 when German Fascism was already in the saddle and was beginning its systematic abuse of science and philosophy. Many of us had hoped to carry on in its pages a fight against the rising tide of obscurantism and its not too unfriendly appeasers. We were fortunate in the adherence of distinguished refugees to our circle. We scarcely minded the almost complete boycott of the journal set up by the Fascists. It was a compliment, accentuated by an actual effort to place some of their propaganda in our issues by contributions from visitors who managed to breathe softly now and then, “Hitler is really not so bad, after all.” Domestic Fascism, too, leered at us. Poisonpen communications spotted us as a danger to Aryan supremacy (racism), the Lady of Lourdes (miracle-mongering) and the legions of crankism (outdoing God). *Philosophy of Science* was red-baited!

We proceeded to conduct our business on the broadest possible base. We claimed no infallibility and expected honest error on both sides of the editorial table. Hence, we have no doubt published many papers of minor importance along with some of prime importance and of lasting value. They were all necessary in the tide of investigation. This policy would not have been followed if all critics of our published papers had agreed as to what was good and what was bad. Thus, the special axe-grinders had a hard time chopping away at *Philosophy of Science* and the issue of survival of the fittest contributions was left to be

decided by the future. In a journal of free inquiry there was no alternative to follow.

The worries concerning the quality of our papers as "contributions" were intensified by a positive discomfort concerning the lack of lucidity and artistry of the writing. The ideal in those respects is practically unattainable, yet we expected much more than we received. It must be admitted that our record on the whole has been highly unsatisfactory. Numerous papers in *Philosophy of Science* have been unnecessarily difficult, confusing and involved, even when the authors had a substantial thought. The Editor frequently has been forced to say to prospective contributors, "I do not know whether you are right or wrong. I can't understand what you are saying." Too many of the papers that got in are just barely intelligible. We strongly urge our contributors to make a real effort to make their essays direct, simple, clear, and to avoid the top-heavy trade jargon of certain schools of philosophy which survive immediate annihilation by sound fact and theory by throwing up the barriers of a "secret language". It is almost impossible to edit a paper full of such weasel words and expressions. The paper should not be written that way in the first place.

It is sincerely hoped that the papers of 1944 and the years to follow will be as important as truth is important, as clear and simple as great theory is clear and simple, and as attractive as great art is attractive. We are also going to revive our "New Budget of Paradoxes" in order to present the lighter side of philosophizing about science, which, of course, need not be absent in the "serious" articles.

We are also going to increase the space devoted to opinion and discussion. Hence there will be more reviews, summaries, letters to the Editor, and "Timely Topics". We should like to run some debates on outstanding issues, perhaps in the same issue or neighboring issues. We should like to have numerous contributions in the nature of "Notes" or "Suggestions for Study". And, at the other end of the spectrum of contributions, we should like to have some very technical papers, so written as to tell at the same time a simple tale to the layman. This can be done by the device of having a simple expository text interlarded with paragraphs in smaller print giving the technical details and demonstrations.

We hope, too, to have some space for a supplement which might be exclusively technical. The proper items for such a supplement would be on subjects for which technical publications do not yet exist, e.g. new hybrid sciences or synthetic discussions involving a group of sciences converging on a single topic.

The Editor does not tire of repeating that in order for us to fall in step with the hard won victories of the day, we must make *Philosophy of Science* itself a model of democracy, an integrating, dynamic influence for establishing a universal *amity of the sciences*. Then, and only then, can we expect the emergence of a supreme *science of amity* in a warless world.