# Between Hegel and Haeckel

Monism and Dialectical Materialism in the Soviet Union and East Germany

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**I. Preamble**

The topic of this paper requires a relationship history as a methodical approach and one which happens to be in a twofold sense. On the one hand, the paper focuses on the cultural transfer between East Germany and Russia or the Soviet Union, respectively. In the tradition of a *Histoire croisée,* a bipolar system of resonance is envisioned, in which the GDR is not presented simply as a „socialist exemplary pupil“ of the Soviet Union, but also as a region particularly characterized by secular worldview movements (Weltanschauungsbewegungen) and as the birthplace of scientific monism.[[1]](#footnote-1) On the other hand, the connection between monism and dialectical materialism is to be understood as the history of a relationship, whereby, in this case, the worldview-field can be regarded as leaning towards the work of Pierre Bourdieu.[[2]](#footnote-2) What follows is the examination of a chronic tense relationship, one which could even be called a love-hate relationship, and which, as I wish to show, is not only of interest from the narrow perspective of the history of philosophy.

Speaking of philosophy: the point of departure of this paper is the idea that monism and dialectical materialism are two paradigms of philosophical provenance, which were able to advance to large social movements precisely because they did not present themselves as philosophies. They entered the historical stage of the twentieth century as „scientific worldviews“, at a critical equidistance from philosophy, science, art, and religion. The worldview is therefore the common denominator that allows one to compare monism and dialectical materialism as complementary ways of endowing with meaning (Sinnstiftungsangebote) and to systematically relate them to the axial developments and main signatures of the twentieth century. The questions posed by history of knowledge and history of science, historical religious sociology and the study of secularization, the comparison of dictatorships within political history, and last but not least, modernization theory, practically overlap, when it comes to the hubris surrounding the worldviews of „Soviet style“ societies.

In this paper, this subject matter can of course be elaborated on only in a punctuated manner and through the use of select case studies. First I will attempt to define the term worldview (Weltanschauung), as well as the terms monism and dialectical materialism. In the next step, I will describe the tension between monism and dialectical materialism in the early years of the Soviet Union. By employing several examples, I will then portray the niche existence of monism in the shadow of dialectical materialism in the GDR.

**II. The worldview as fourfold rebellion: Theoretical considerations**

Worldview is a bridge term of great theoretical reach. First, it refers to a category relevant to the political history of the twentieth century, one which describes a specific type of society, namely the so-called Worldview-Dictatorship (Weltanschaaungsdiktatur).[[3]](#footnote-3) Second, with the help of this term, social history summarizes a great amount of anticlerical or secularistic unions and alliances, referred to in brief as „the fourth confession“[[4]](#footnote-4), as worldview movements. Third, the term is of importance for the history of knowledge, as Ludwik Fleck previously recognized: „The peak, the goal of popular knowledge is the worldview.“[[5]](#footnote-5)

The origin of the term „worldview“ lies in philosophical discourse. Within the framework of said discourse, the so-called worldview philosophy entered the scene in the nineteenth century with the claim to being a world-oriented alternative to the school philosophy that had emancipated itself from metaphysics and speculation. What took place was a conflict-laden process of division into two parts, in which the scientification of philosophical systems was followed by a compensational turn to a “Verweltanschaulichung”, which made it its urgent goal to capture the “bankrupt’s estate” of philosophy.[[6]](#footnote-6) At the beginning of the twentieth century, these shifts within the history of ideas did not remain limited to the discourse among philosophical experts or elites, but had an impact on the architecture of knowledge in society in general. Precisely because of the hybrid quality of the worldview as a modern knowledge project, whose goal it was to overcome the separation and to fill the gap between practical and theoretical reason, it is possible to ground it as a central category of modernization theory.

It was preceded by the social development dynamic described by a well-known formula of Max Weber's, namely that of the „disenchantment of the world“.[[7]](#footnote-7) Based on this concept, worldview can be characterized in regard to its function as an interdiscoursive space of the “reenchantment of the world”.[[8]](#footnote-8) It appears as a specific modern secular force of endowment with meaning and faith, which was only able to form during the „integralistic modernity“[[9]](#footnote-9) out of the ambivalence of secularization and functional differentiation of Society on the ideal of a cognitively tested and collectively shared popular knowledge. If one were to alternatively consider the concept of worldview using the methodological-theoretical categories of the research traditions within the sociology of knowledge propagated by Alfred Schütz, Peter Berger, and Thomas Luckmann, it is possible to define it as a symbolic universe (symbolische Sinnwelt), which crystalizes in the overlap between subworlds (Sinnbezirke) that are drifting apart, and which creates the possibility for sharing knowledge between them in the form of a popularization of knowledge. Although Berger and Luckmann did not use this term, it could be called a theoretical kind of common knowledge or theoretical everybody knowledge.[[10]](#footnote-10)

In this regard, a fourfold rebellion was significant for shaping the profile of the worldview: first against the „church scholastic“, second against the „scholastic“ natural sciences, third against the „dusty“ school philosophy, or metaphysics, and fourth against the arts that were oriented purely toward fiction and presented no claim to truth. While the antireligious pathos of worldview movements in literature has often been described, the worldview's anti-scientist gesture against the „miserable registrars of nature“ [[11]](#footnote-11) (A. v. Humboldt) have until now often remained overlooked.

The worldview formed itself from a cognitive commitment to the ideal of empirical natural sciences while simultaneously lamenting the fact that science lacked the ability to endow with meaning in a metaphysical way. From this resulted the counter-programming of a quasi-religious outdoing of science as the worldview's main characteristic, which, as Ludwik Fleck correctly registered, expresses itself most noticeably in forms of popular science. This is where the special relevance of this category for the history of knowledge stems from, as the core portion of the worldview contains popular knowledge of nature (Naturanschauung). The worldview presented a fourfold protest, as described above. However, the various worldviews differed from each other in this regard. As we will see later, the antithetical pathos of monism was above all positioned against religion and philosophy, while dialectical materialism regarded religion and „positivist“ science as its main opponents.

**III. Monism vs. Dialectical Materialism**

Both monism and dialectical materialism provide offers for endowing with meaning, offers which, in their self-image and from the perspective of theory of knowledge, are „worldviews“ par excellence. Therefore the rivalry and reciprocal takeovers on the common field of worldviews had to be accordingly intense. Since Baruch Spinoza, monism has been an emotionally loaded and hotly contested predicate. Dialectical materialism also claimed to be the “highest and uniquely consistent form of monism”.[[12]](#footnote-12) By contrast, the leading members of the monistic league regarded themselves as full-fledged materialists.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Monism and dialectical materialism, both worldviews and social movements, have a whole host of similarities[[14]](#footnote-14), although the differences within this framework are substantial. I pick two to point out the specific monistic signature in contrast to dialectical materialism. First of all, I would like to mention a difference that can be found on the epistemological level and which affects the social function of science in the framework of the two worldviews. The identification of Marxism-Leninism with science is well known. But Lenin’s aversion to the claim of natural science, that it was universaly valid, was in opposition to that.[[15]](#footnote-15) This statement is of great importance for the understanding of the socialist System insofar as Marxism-Leninism has always clung to the primacy of philosophy over science – despite its scientific pathos. Quite contrary to this, monism casts itself in an anti-philosophical spirit. Monism called almost pathetically upon pure empiricism and therefore tried to cleanse Marxism from the “dusty” categories of the relict of “old Hegel” in the name of modern natural science.[[16]](#footnote-16) Paradoxically, this metaphysical abstinence led to an alienation from materialism. The call of Aleksander Bogdanov, the leader of Russian Monists, for an “eradication of all idols of thinking” was actually a declaration of war on matter itself, which he brushed off as a metaphysical chimera.[[17]](#footnote-17) Thus the spiritual dimension came back into focus. While a normative and quasi-religious surplus was brought into Marxist-Leninist worldview through philosophy, monism by contrast claimed to generate it out of itself and from nature on a purely natural scientific basis.

How does this happen concretely? This brings me to the second important difference between the two worldviews. It can be found in the ontological arena and affects the question of substance and the relation of the material world and consciousness. Dialectical materialism defines this relation as ambivalent as in the case of science and philosophy. Although it declares a primacy of matter for the consciousness of the so-called body-soul-problem, nonetheless a dialectical re-enchantment of the human psyche proceeds because of an alienation from mechanical materialism. Consciousness “is the highest product of matter (that means the physical), it is a function of the very complicated part of matter, that is defined as the brain of a person.”[[18]](#footnote-18) This illustrious part of matter is separated from the other substance by the dialectical evolutionary leap. Its product constitutes not matter, but rather a complicated ability to produce “ideal forms”.[[19]](#footnote-19) But this also means the material world and consciousness are again dissociable.

This is exactly where monism takes up its criticism of dialectical materialism. Ernst Mach and Auguste Forel represented the so-called neutral monism. In that framework, the differentiation between *res cogitans* and *res extensa* could be abolished. This had been a secondary polarization of the human cognition’s stream constituted by “neutral perception complexes”. Wilhelm Ostwald however tried to resolve the soul-body dualism through the “disappearance of matter” and therefore brought the two categories back to the concept of energy. Aleksander Bogdanov, of whom more will be said later, regarded blood as a monistic universality.The attributes of substance, according to Ernst Haeckel’s interpretation, also included “psychom” in addition to energy and matter.[[20]](#footnote-20) A notion of a world soul could be derived from this, a spiritually ennobled materialism, in which even atoms and molecules could perceive “desire” and “aversion”, “love” and “hate”.[[21]](#footnote-21) The postulate of the world’s soul returned the monistic promise that even norms and values were able to naturally generate themselves. “God constructionism” was therefore the monistic magic word for the Russian Marxist entourage of Bogdanov and Gorky. The goal of the German monistic league was to forge a “bond between religion and science”.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Even this short introduction already shows how far apart the worldviews and the political implications of monism and dialectical materialism were. At the same time, both are indispensable in the history of the socialist workers culture. An examination of this constellation of tensions between the two worldviews gives us a key to better understanding Soviet style ideocratic states (Worldview-Dictatorships).

**IV. Monism and Dialectical Materialism in the Soviet Union/Russia**

Let me begin the portrayal of Russian monism in its relation to dialectical materialism with a historical photo, taken almost exactly 100 years ago, and one which shows perhaps one of the most important turning points in the history of monism. An historically momentous chess match took place on the Italian island of Capri in April 1908. The player on the left is none other than Vladimir Ulyanov (Lenin). After the failure of the first Russian revolution, Lenin lived in exile in Geneva and was on an extraordinarily important mission when he visited Capri.

His opponent is the previously mentioned Alexander Bogdanov, who was a bizarre figure in the Bolshevist Party. He studied medicine and philosophy and wrote futuristic novels. He also became a member of the central committee of the Bolshevist Party in 1905 and was Lenin’s rival concerning theoretical questions about Marxism[[23]](#footnote-23). On Capri in 1908 Bogdanov put together an elite group of social-democratic figures with the aim of forming a theoretical nerve center for the socialist workers movement. A colorful beach society gathered around this comfortable party school with a seaview. A party faction thus emerged that dared to deviate from Lenin’s political course. One prominent figure among these “deviants” can be seen in the background of the photo and appears to be resigned. This is the world famous poet of the proletariat, Maxim Gorky[[24]](#footnote-24). But what was the issue underlying this schism within the party? If it were possible to listen in on the conversation in this photo, one would hear concepts and names such as “matter” and “substance”, “introspection” and “introjection”, “economy of thought” and “psycho-physiological parallelism”, “Hegel” and “Haeckel”. Within this succession of concepts, the core elements of the monistic paradigm can be identified. To be even more precise, the dispute between Lenin and Bogdanov turns on the issue of monism. Although Gorky attempts to reconcile them they cannot come to an agreement. Here on the chessboard two irreconcilable opponents clash: natural-scientific monism versus dialectic materialism.

Lenin returned from Capri even more annoyed than before and immediately began working on a polemic. Later canonized, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* was specifically aimed at criticizing Bogdanov. Two years prior to this, Bogdanov had published a three-volume treatise entitled *Empiriomonism*. His aim was to use the epistemological positions of Ernst Mach, Richard Avenarius and Wilhelm Ostwald and on that basis to revise and correct the Marxist natural dialectic.[[25]](#footnote-25) In general, Bogdanov’s attempt was to separate the wheat of historical materialism from the chaff of dialectic Materialism. He believed the dialectic was a metaphysical atavism of Hegelian provenance and should be replaced by a monistic worldview based on the knowledge produced by modern physics, chemistry and biology.

This monistic evocation of science regularly sent Lenin into fits of rage. In a letter to Gorky, the future leader of the world proletariat admitted the following: “I don’t pay any more attention to newspapers as I am consumed by philosophizing. One day I read an article by an Empiriocritisist and I swear like a street whore; the next day I read another one and swear like a son of a bitch.”[[26]](#footnote-26) This quotation also gives you sense of the tone of the language used through the whole of *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. Of course Lenin did not aim it only against Bogdanov, but he addressed it as well to a large part of the Russian social democracy, in which the monistic program was increasingly gaining power.[[27]](#footnote-27)

For our perspective on the history of relations, is important to note that this was a pan-European phenomenon. Especially in Germany, the monistic paradigm advanced to become a center of a social reformist and revolutionary worldview movement of every stripe.[[28]](#footnote-28) Right now I will only give one example of the popular-science Urania movement. Its founder, the astronomer Max Wilhelm Meyer cannot be seen in the photo, but he also lived on Capri and worked closely with Gorky.[[29]](#footnote-29) Surely it was no coincidence that Bogdanov’s *Empiriomonism* was published between 1904 and 1906 – at that time the monistic league in Rome and Jena was proclaimed and founded by Ernst Haeckel.

But back to Bogdanov’s political works. Despite his dispute with Lenin, he enjoyed a high standing among the so-called “old Bolsheviks”. For this reason, he was permitted to continue propagating his monistic visions for a period of time after the October Revolution as the leader for the so-called proletarian cult (Proletkult). While doing so, he found himself increasingly placed under pressure as a “deviant” and “revisionist” until 1925 when Stalin, in order to “dispose” of the reputable but unwanted party comrade, promised to make his dream come true. In 1926, the world's first “Institute for blood transfusions” was created in Moscow, and Bogdanov became its founding director. However, he only held this position for two years, as he died in 1928 as a result of self-experiment. The existing literature on Bogdanov has not paid proper tribute to the fact that the philosophical doctor became a victim of his own monistic Program.

In addition to being a theoretician, Bogdanov was also a hands-on functionary inspired by chiliastic dreams. He believed that the social revolution could be transcended by a natural revolution in one’s own body and that aging and even death could be defeated by scientific means. The aim of his research was “immortality” and belonged totally and completely to the monistic paradigm. Obviously inspired by religious motives of blood as the ultimate substance of the soul[[30]](#footnote-30) as well as ideas about neohumoralpathology (Karl von Rokitansky) and neolamarcistic eugenics, Bogdanov believed that in blood, as a „universal tissue“[[31]](#footnote-31) analog to Ostwaldian energy, physical and spiritual qualities of a subject could find and transfer their monistic amalgamations and embodiment. His reform program of „physiological collectivism“ stemmed from this train of thought. The metaphysicists' „doubling of the world“, based on the dualism of subject and object, was to be removed through a medical bleeding of society. Bogdanov envisioned reciprocal blood transfusions on the scale of the whole society, in which the old and the young, as blood exchange partners, mixed the experiences harbored in the sediment of their blood substance with each other. Seen from an epistemological perspective, this was to be a monistic synthesis of humoralpathology and positive eugenics, in which an optimal mix of body fluids (“humors”) of the society was to increase the society's value by turning it in to a psychophysiological unit.

What preliminary results can be drawn? *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* was seen in the Soviet Union as the philosophical magnum opus of Lenin. In this way the criticism of Bogdanov’s monism became a ritual of Bolshevik partiality - at least among the ranks of ideological purists. This defensive attitude shows that monism was indeed a significant phenomenon, even if it only represented an boundary marker or a rival and revisionist threat on the outskirts of the socialist world. From this discovery, two research questions emerge. First, it is important to precisely illuminate this border area at different levels. The focus here lies in understanding the historical semantics and political career of the concept of monism in its conflicting relations with materialism. Second, in considering the power of the monistic paradigm to fascinate the socialist workers movement, the question arises concerning monism living on as episteme and social practice under the conditions of real socialism.

**V. The Niche Existence of Monism in the GDR**

Monism as social practice had a relatively narrow foundation in Russia and the Soviet Union. Furthermore, its expansion in social democratic systems was constrained early on by leninistic criticism. As a result, one can find at most epistemological traces of monism in the Soviet Union starting in the 1930s, such as in the form of Mitschurian biology, of which more will be said later. This situation differed from that in Germany, where worldview movements characterized by monism were far more prevalent.

This assumes placing a particular focus on the endogenous German process of transmitting tradition and on patterns of persistence. This applies most especially to the GDR. To quote Haeckel, “the bond between religion and science” comes into its own in all various niches and areas of life in the GDR. A prototypical example is Walter Ulbricht. Ulbricht’s origins were a freethinker labor milieu in Leipzig. Thus, it is not surprisingly that the young Ulbricht’s favorite literature included Haeckel’s “Welträtsel” as well as monistic nature poetry.[[32]](#footnote-32) To get an impression of this scientistic initiation of the future 1st secretary of the SED, one can look at the small book he got at his confirmation in the freethinker youth initiation ceremony. This book served contemporaries as a source for recitations and of songs to be sung in a choir. It is a manifest of excessive natural religious scientism. The “true devotion” in front of the “high altar of Nature” and the “flower-gospel” challenged the “false devotion” in church. Even the biological cell theory flourishes in poems.[[33]](#footnote-33)

The freethinker background was entirely typical for the party elite in the early days of the GDR. The monistic signature is to be found practically undisguised in speeches and official addresses of the Secretary of State for Higher Education of the GDR, Wilhelm Girnus, to present a further example. In response to his impressions of the Soviet Sputnik flights of 1957, he wrote: „But what else are political and social revoluions other than the lighting up of such novae in the historical firmament of mankind? What else are they other than eruptions with prehistoric force of human energies, pushed and balled together? Can we behave differently toward them, if we make claims about the scientific nature of our thinking, than toward the great eruptions of energy in space?“[[34]](#footnote-34)

To discuss the monistic aftermath in the GDR would go beyond the scope of this talk. Nevertheless we can try to introduce this field of study as a broad research program.[[35]](#footnote-35) And that is what I want to do in this last part of my lecture. The traces of the monistic worldview will be looked at as an “invisible religion” from dimensions similar to the guide of the sociology of religion: knowledge, institutionalization, ritual and action orientation.

I will focus on knowledge. A broad field of discourses comes into view, which also has an explicit reference to monism as well as an implicit monistic pattern of interpretation and thought. The theoretical discourse concerning the “worldview permeating the science” (“weltanschauliche Durchdringung der Wissenschaft”) belongs to the explicit domain. Joseph Stalin nourished an important impulse for such debates in the GDR with a theory of language in 1950. Stalin’s criticism of “vulgar-Marxist” linguistics was nothing other than a recirculation of Lenin’s anti-monistic campaign.[[36]](#footnote-36) We find monism in a more implicit form e.g. in the framework of the debate concerning Lysenko biology in the GDR.[[37]](#footnote-37) The science historiography of the GDR refers to this with the concept of “Sovietization”, although this is a crucial reduction. In the immediate postwar period Viktor Stern (1885-1958) belonged not coincidentally to the “apostle” of Soviet biology. He was one of the founders of the “International Proletariat Freethinkers” in 1925. The veteran of the labor movement published a monistic ethics in 1911 that the previous speaker has mentioned already. This work was grounded on Lamarck’s principles. He called on a religion shaped around nature science in the newspaper of the German Monism league *Das monistische Jahrhundert* in 1914.[[38]](#footnote-38) This coincidence between monism and Lysenkoism has its historical reasons. Paul Kammerer was a regular contributor to this journal. He was a famous proponent of the so-called Neolamarckism. He made his concept of heredity into a hallmark of monism through his article *Monist and Dualist Genetics*.[[39]](#footnote-39) This should be enough to highlight monist characterized discourse in the GDR.

Now I want to move on to the other three dimensions. To give an example of the institutionalization of the specific monistic program of the GDR, I want to mention primarily the Society to disseminate scientific knowledge URANIA. Characteristically the founding of this popular-scientific institution occurred in the same year as the reintroduction of the youth initiation ceremony “Jugendweihe” – in 1954. This represented a further move to the ritual dimension of the monistic worldview. The youth initiation ceremony in the GDR has its roots in the tradition of the freethinker’s substitute for confirmation. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the obligatory present for Jugendweihe was the book *Universe, Earth, Mankind* written for the most part by Walter Hollitscher (1911-1986) – a biologist und philosopher. He belonged to the Vienna circle since the late 1920s. This neo-positivistic current of thought relied on the Empirio-criticism of Ernst Mach. The committees for the Jugendweihe were a special field of activity in the GDR. They were occupied by former social-democratic freethinkers.[[40]](#footnote-40) To give just one further example of the daily practical orientation, see the famous “10 commandments of the socialist morals” that were introduced by Ulbricht in 1965. They are borrowed directly from the legacy of the monistic league.

**VI. Conclusion**

By way of conclusion, we may say that the popular Concept of a “totality” of a soviet-type-society should not let us forget that there were “fine distinctions” and the existence of a worldview market – maybe even a “black market” within these societies. In this sense, we can trace and analyze the niche existence of monism in the shadow of dialectical materialism. This analysis is particularly helpful, if we try to answer the question of the stability and destabilization of the socialist states. The monistic niche existence was both a shelter for the “undogmatic” or even “better” Marxism with the character of stabilizing the system and at the same time the unceasing source of dissent. On a higher level of anlysis, the category of worldview allows us to better understand the architecture of knowledge of Soviet style societies and to place them in the decisive signatures of modernity. From this perspective, actors and institutions of the so-called “worldview permeation of science” do not appear solely as marginal phenomena, but as essential pillars of legitimation at the core of these societies.

1. About this Concept Cf. Werner, Michael, Bénédicte Zimmermann: Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung. Der Ansatz der Histoire croisée und die Herausforderung des Transnationalen. In: Geschichte und Gesellschaft 28 (2002), pp. 607-636. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Bourdieu, Pierre, Genesis and structure of the religious field. In: Comparative Social Research (1991) 13, pp. 1-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. Fritze, Lothar, Verführung und Anpassung. Zur Logik der Weltanschauungsdiktatur, Berlin 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. Todd H. Weir, The Fourth Confession: Atheism, Monism and Politics in the Freigeistig Movement in Berlin 1859-1924, Diss. MS. Columbia University 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Fleck, Ludwik, Entstehung und Entwicklung einer wissenschaftlichen Tatsache. Einführung in die Lehre vom Denkstil und Denkkollektiv, Frankfurt am M. 1994, pp. 149f. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. Meier, Helmut G., „Weltanschauung“. Studien zu einer Geschichte und Theorie des Begriffs. Diss. Wilhelms-Universität Münster 1967, pp. 228, 254, 277. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Cf. Weber, Max, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, in: Hg. von Johannes Winkelmann, Tübingen 1956, Bd. 1., pp. 308. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Cf. Berman, Morris, Wiederverzauberung der Welt. Am Ende des Newtonschen Zeitalters, Ithaca u.a. 1983. (Original 1981: The reenchantment of the world). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Cf. Plaggenborg, Stefan, Experiment Moderne. Der sowjetische Weg. Frankfurt am Main, New York 2006, pp. 334. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Cf. Berger, Peter, L.; Luckmann, Thomas, The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge, New York 1966, pp. 25, 46, 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Cf. Alexander von Humboldt an Friedrich Schiller, 6. August 1794, in: Humboldt, Alexander von: Studienausgabe. 7 Bde. Bd. 1, Schriften zur Geographie der Pflanzen. Hg. und kommentiert von Hanno Beck, Darmstadt 1989, pp. 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. „Monismus“ in: L. F. Il’ičev u.a. (Hg.), Filosofskij ėnciklopedičeskij slovar’. Moskva 1983, pp. 386. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. In this respect, a semasiological analysis gives us only a first impression of the object of investigation. Therefore an onomasiological approach would seem to be more productive. The semasiological method of the historical semantic is a focus from verbalism on to objects. Here the Monism presents itself as a historical variable of self-attribution and attribution by others. The onomasiologic approach on the other hand focuses on a culture historical occurrence, even if it operates under different names. See in our case already many different ones: Empirio-criticism, Empirio-symbolism, Empirio-monism, mechanism, neo-positivism, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. In both cases it is a scientistic worldview on the level of cross-society of knowledge. The „scientificness“ as a formative and normative power belongs to its central strategies of legitimation. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. About the spokesmen of Monism as Wilhelm Ostwald it was said: You can’t trust any professor that does valuable work in special fields like Chemistry, History or Physics as soon as he speaks about philosophy. Lenin, Vladimir, Materializm und Empiriokriticizm, in: Vladimir Lenin, Polnoe sobranie sočinenij, 1958ff, 5. Auflage, Bd. 18, Moskva 1961, pp. 363f. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The special popularity of the monism in nature-science/technically educated milieu was combined with the strategy of legitimization through physics, chemistry and biology. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Cf. Bogdanov, Aleksander, Vera i nauka, Moskva 1910, pp. 215f. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Lenin, ibid., pp. 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Cf. Klaus, Georg; Buhr, Manfred (Hg.), Philosophisches Wörterbuch, Leipzig 1964, pp. 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Cf. elaborately about Haeckel: Breidbach, Olaf, Monismus um 1900 - Wissenschaftspraxis oder Weltanschauung? In: Stapfia 56, Ausstellungskatalog „Welträtsel und Lebenswunder“, Landesmuseum Linz 1998, pp. 289-316. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Cf. Haeckel, Ernst, Der Monismus als Band zwischen Religion und Wissenschaft. Glaubensbekenntnis eines Naturforschers, presented on October 9, 1892 in Altenburg. Leipzig 1919, pp. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Haeckel, Ernst, ebd., pp. 7. Cf. about this aspect in detail: Breidbach, Olaf; Hoßfeld, Uwe, Gott-Natur (Theophysis)? Glaube und Biologie im Werk von Ernst Haeckel. In: Breidbach, Olaf (Hg.): Wissenschaftskultur um 1900. Bd. 4, Stuttgart 2008, pp. 9-34. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Cf. elaborately about the political and historical background of this controversy: Maja Soboleva, Bogdanov und der philosophische Diskurs in Russland zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts. Zur Geschichte des russischen Positivismus, Hildesheim 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Later on Gorky would regret his political escapade and would have to apologize to Lenin. But at the moment the power struggle within the party was still not definitive. It even seemed as if Bogdanov’s faction was ahead in terms of being accepted by the party base. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Bogdanov, Aleksandr, Empiriomonizm. Stat’i po filosofii. 3. Bde., Moskva, St. Petersburg 1904-06. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Cf. Lenin, Vladimir, Polnoe sobranie sočinenij, 1958ff, 5. Auflage, Bd. 47, Moskva 1964, pp. 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Bogdanov's opus was only one of many philosophical drafts in Russia that were written by members of the social-democratic intellectual elite. Cf. e.g.: Pavel Juškevič, Materiakizm i kritičeskij realizm. St. Petersburg 1908; Jakov Berman, Dialektika v svete sovremennoj teorii poznanija. Moskva 1908. The situation was even more precarious because of the fact that the moderate Menshevik faction of the Russian social democrats argued for the orthodox version of Marxist dialectical materialism and tried to have the Bolshevists seen as monistic dreamers. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. It is important to mention here the proletarian freethinker in Germany, the very massmovement of the Haeckel-admirer in the beginning of the 20th century that lost their Christian belief. Cf. Todd H. Weir: The Fourth Confession: Atheism, Monism and Politics in the Freigeistig Movement in Berlin 1859-1924, Diss. MS. Columbia University 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Mayers literary collaboration with Gorky is well known. Their book was about an earthquake in Messina in December 1908. Regarding the popularization of science in Germany in general and in the context of the Urania-movement in particular cf: Daum, Andreas W., Wissenschaftspopularisierung im 19. Jahrhundert. Bürgerliche Kultur, naturwissenschaftliche Bildung und die deutsche Öffentlichkeit 1848-1914, München 1998, pp. 178-183, 501. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Cf. 3. Mose 17:13, 14, Jerusalemer Bibel. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Cf. Bogdanov, Aleksander, Bor’ba za žiznesposobnost’. Moskva 1927, pp. 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Cf. Becher, Johannes R., Walter Ulbricht. Ein deutscher Arbeitersohn, Berlin 1967, pp. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Cf. Perlen der Ethik in poetischer Fassung. Hg. Von Johannes Kippenberger, Leipzig 1907. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Cf. Girnus, Wilhelm, Die Befreiungsstunde des Prometheischen Geistes, Supplement Nr. 1 zu „Das Hochschulwesen“, Berlin 1957, pp. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Cf. in detail: Polianski, Igor. J., Das Rätsel DDR und die „Welträtsel“. Wissenschaftlich-atheistische Aufklärung als propagandistisches Konzept der SED. In: Deutschland Archiv, (2) 2007, pp. 73-82. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Cf. Polianski, Igor J., Die „gehemmte“ Stadt. Psychologie als Körper- und Gedächtnispolitik in der Berliner Systemkonkurrenz nach 1945. In: Michael Lemke (Hg.), Konfrontation und Wettbewerb. Wissenschaft, Technik und Kultur im geteilten Berliner Alltag (1948-1973), Berlin 2008, pp. 17-39. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Cf. Polianski, Igor J., Das Lied vom Anderswerden. Die politische Semantik der Vererbung in der DDR und Sowjetunion zwischen Kommunismus, Monismus und Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung. Erscheint 2009 in: OSTEUROPA (Themenheft hg. von Klaus Gestwa, Stefan Rohdewald). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Cf. Stern, Viktor (Ed..): Monistische Ethik. Gesetze der Physik und Ethik, abgeleitet aus den Grundprinzipien der Deszendenztheorie (Maximilian L. Stern). Leipzig 1911; V[iktor] Stern: Kann der Monismus die Religion ersetzen? In: Das monistische Jahrhundert 50 (1914), pp. 1401-1411. Especially on the Internationl Proletariat Freethinker see: Weir 2005, a.a.O., pp. 605ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Cf. Kammerer, Paul, Monistische und dualistische Vererbungslehre. In: Das monistische Jahrhundert 7 (1912), pp. 225-235. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Cf. Groschopp, Horst, Atheismus und Realsozialismus in der DDR. In: Säkulare Geschichtspolitik. Hg. im Auftrag der Humanistischen Akademie. Humanismus Aktuell (20) 2007, pp. 67-83, pp. 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)