

Panagiotis Kondylis

Answers to 28 questions

[Translated by C.F.. Questions 1-10 from the German »Skeptische Wahrheitssuche gegen normative Entscheidung. Interview mit Fragen von Marin Terpstra« ["The sceptical search for truth against the normative decision. Interview with questions by Marin Terpstra"] in Kondylis, P. *Machtfragen. Ausgewählte Beiträge zu Politik und Gesellschaft*, Darmstadt: WBG, 2006, pp. 157-172. (First published as »Nur Intellektuelle behaupten, daß Intellektuelle die Welt besser verstehen als alle anderen« ["Only intellectuals assert that intellectuals understand the world better than all others"] in: "Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie", Berlin 42 (1994) 4, pp. 683-694.

The Greek book, Κονδύλης, Π. *Το αόρατο χρονολόγιο της σκέψης. Απαντήσεις σε 28 ερωτήματα*, Αθήνα: Νεφέλη, 1998 [*The invisible chronology of thought. Answers to 28 questions*], was used as a secondary text for the translation of Questions 1-10, and as the primary and sole text for Questions 11-28.

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All footnotes are by the translator and have nothing to do with Kondylis himself.]

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Questions 1-10 by Marin Terpstra

1.

Q: Mr. Kondylis, you are, first of all, the author of some extensive studies on several important aspects of the occidental history of ideas and of occidental thought. You have written about philosophers and their reflections and were the editor of two anthologies with texts by philosophers. However, you have also written a systematic work which presents your basic philosophical positions (theories or views). In addition, especially in recent years, you have also had a say in political debates. How would you rather describe yourself: as a historian, as a philosopher or as a political thinker? And if you can for instance identify yourself with every one of these three types, how do you then get over or cope with the inevitable fields of tension (or areas of conflict) between these disciplines?

A: How one describes oneself or how one can be described (by others), is of secondary importance and often accidental (incidental). The first thing of interest should be what one says and whether one has anything to say at all. In my scientific activity I am an observer of human affairs (things), an analyst of human behaviour in concrete situations. Now, I do not want to comprehend and present human behaviour from the point of view of "philosophy", of "politics", of "sociology" or of "history", but precisely the other way around: my intention revolves around making obvious the

unity of human behaviour's basic structures and the inner logic of its unfolding in the sectors of philosophical, political, social and historical practice. Humans behave no differently, when they for instance busy themselves with philosophy, than when they are politically or socially active. (What do they actually do?) They namely take a position which agrees with the positions of some people and at the same time turns against other positions; there is of course no reason to set a position in the world (i.e. to adopt or first formulate a position) if one does not hold certain other positions to be false or harmful. From this it is evident why the dream or power claim of (most) philosophers, which thinks that "philosophy" could as a privileged activity sui generis show the rest of the world the road to harmony, is never going to be fulfilled. The structure of philosophical practice (action) catches up with (or outflanks) the ambitions of those acting philosophically (i.e. as philosophers). In spite of assurances of those who strive for a monopoly on interpretation and raise their voice in the name of "philosophy", there has hitherto never been a unified philosophy; already because of that there is no question of the realisation of "philosophy" - and something like that is even less so to be expected, the more philosophical theories appear as normative commands. The same fate must befall political or social theories which let themselves be led by normative perceptions and wishes.

If one, on the contrary, breaks away from normative perceptions and wishes, and ascertains the unity of human behaviour in the above sense, then one can use a uniform conceptuality (terminology) and break open the boundaries between the disciplines (sciences) while looking at the these disciplines, as it were, from the outside. That ought not mean that the same technical terms are to be used irrespective of which particular sector is dealt with on each and every respective occasion. It is also not

allowed to mix everything with everything at will and as one likes; postmodern mash may be easy to digest, however it does not offer solid nourishment. During the description of each and every respective behaviour, in order to speak with Max Weber, the subjectively meant sense (meaning) (i.e. the meaning connected with the said behaviour by the corresponding subject) is sought and explained - and exactly this sense (meaning) is articulated in concepts, above all when it is a matter of action in theoretical form. We are therefore moving here simultaneously at two levels, something which however does not have to be a vicious circle.

Which concepts should now be used at the descriptive meta-level? That is for me a purely technical question of expediency. I think very little of terminological Chinese (i.e. of complicated terms which cannot be understood); however on the other hand, precisely if someone puts several disciplines under the microscope, and works in every discipline's particular sector, he is obliged in relation to them to know all about every sector's specific vocabulary; the logistics of the modern conduct of war cannot be described with the (conceptual) instruments of Hegelian "Logic", despite its universal claim. The central concepts of the descriptive meta-level, which I have explicated in "Power and Decision"¹, are as a rule such that they are more or less common to all "sciences humaines"² and luckily their contact with living language (speech or linguistic) usage has not been lost. Their *descriptive* sense (meaning)

¹ E.g. power, decision, self-preservation, world image, world-theoretical (world theory or world view), values, intellect(-spirit), drives, wanting, action, thought (thinking), understanding, rationality, logic, relations, society, culture, identity, individual, group, friend, foe, struggle, meaning, objectification, norms, social disciplining, reality, Is, Ought, Being, Appearance, ideology, From Here (i.e. This World or Life), From There (i.e. That World or Life), interpretation, symbol, language, polemics, taste, description, etc..

² I.e. social science.

must of course be specially explained, particularly as, because of their prehistory, they are normatively-ethically charged.

A final remark: whoever perceives theories as forms of behaviour, may (i.e. is entitled to) lose sight of the artificial-fictive character of concepts and thought constructs far less than others. One can shrug off this artificial-fictive character of concepts and thought constructs just as little as one can jump over one's own shadow. Only the always vigilant consciousness of this fictiveness creates a remedy for this difficulty or need, that is, the strict distinguishing, and as vivid as possible contradistinction, between the level of representation (or analysis) and the level of real processes. For that, there are of course no prescriptions and no methodological instructions, irrespective of individual quality, i.e. the education, the capacity for empathy (or insight) and the wealth of associations of the researcher, which could be applied and become common property. The yardstick for success remains the end result. And the result is measured for its part in answer to the question: How many and, to what extent important, empirical phenomena, how much living history have I made in this way more understandable? The question may today sound naive to the exceedingly refined ears of (contemporary) epistemologists and methodologists, however I would like to keep my formulations of a question so naive and elementary.

2.

Q: Your more historical main works deal with several major phenomena of thought in its history: the coming into being of dialectics, the phenomenon of the Enlightenment and of conservatism, and the

development of the critique of metaphysics over the centuries. What prompted you to investigate especially these phenomena? Is an interrelation between them discernable?

A: My historical works contain a theory of the European New Times. They constitute on each and every respective occasion analyses of the basic aspects in the history of ideas and the political-social aspects of this astonishing development, which flows into our planetary history of today. In my works (i.e. treatises) on the decline of the bourgeois thought form and life form (i.e. of bourgeois culture) and on planetary politics after the collapse of communism, I went into greater detail in respect of the social-historical references or connections of my previous analyses regarding the history of ideas, and I have indicated the reasons which allow us to conclude that the European New Times as a historical epoch with specific features (or characteristics) is at an end, although our firmly rooted thought (or intellectual) habits do not want to admit this. But that is a chapter in itself, i.e. a separate matter.

For an answer to your question, I want to (still) mention that in these historical works it is not least a matter of providing tangible evidence of the hermeneutic fertility (or fecundity) of my general consideration of human affairs (things). When a way of looking at things succeeds in bringing together and apprehending, in a unified or uniform manner, themes and phenomena seemingly far apart, then obviously it says a lot for this way of looking at things. A methodologically oriented comparison of works like for instance "The Enlightenment", "Conservatism" or "Theory of War" should show clearly to the attentive reader the way the already mentioned breaking open of the boundaries between the disciplines is brought off. At the same time, it is not of course merely and not abstractly a matter of the "correct method", but

rather of the content-related assumptions (or positions) standing behind the method, which only make a fertile method possible. The sometimes frustrating extent and the detail or thoroughness of my historical works is due to my endeavour to make evident the fertility of the methodological approach in the apprehension of entireties. Only when a whole is interpreted gaplessly (i.e. completely) can one be convinced to some degree of the validity and matter-of-factness of the interpretation, whereas normative and content-related bias as a rule accompanies the selective handling of the material (or subject matter). This implies that a refutation of my results can be legitimised only on the basis of an at least just as comprehensive analysis of the material.

A word about my work (i.e. treatise) on the coming into being of Hegelian dialectics which you have mentioned. Originally, an interest in the elucidation of the prehistory of Marxism and the world-theoretical presuppositions of Marxism's philosophy of history was of primary importance here. A positive and negative confrontation with Marxism at the level of theory and with the communistic movement at the level of political praxis has been a central experience in my intellectual(-spiritual) and personal life. Whoever has similar experiences will find the traces of this confrontation without difficulty in my writings.

3.

Q: In your book about the Enlightenment there is in the introduction the sentence: "Thought is essentially polemical". In this sentence, which is related to Carl Schmitt's notion that all political concepts are from their origin polemical concepts, it seems that you presuppose the polemical

character (essence) of all concepts. In the same introduction you complain about the polemical use which others have made of the thought of the Enlighteners (i.e. Enlightenment thinkers). Do I interpret you correctly when I from that conclude that for you thought is in itself neutral or it can still be neutral even if it is also used and abused by non-philosophers³ with polemical intent? Is there, in other words, next to the polemical, also a logical, consistency in itself, which can be abused in given situations? How do both consistencies relate with each other? As "pure" and "applied" thought?

A: I should first note that I have never "complained about" the polemical use of Enlightenment thought on the part of others, but I simply ascertained that polemical use. What could perhaps seem to the reader as a "complaint" is an emphatic indication of the discrepancy between the prosaic doing or acts and the idealised self-understanding of actors. I would, for that matter, be very surprised if thought, which is under the influence of a moral-normative fundamental decision, were not ab ovo⁴ polemical. If we see things that way, then polemics is not the abuse or misuse, but the normal use of thought. The opposite of logical is not polemical, but illogical or logically false (wrong) thought.

Logic is not in the least identical to "reasonableness" or "rationality" in a moral-normative sense, but it consists in the argumentatively correct development of a position in relation to which correctness is measured by

³ The Greek version of the text (p. 16) states "philosophers" rather than "non-philosophers". From Kondylis's point of view of course both "philosophers" and "non-philosophers" would be included where the interviewer states "Nicht-Philosophen", given that the basic thought structures of "philosophers" do not differ at all from those of all other people (see *Macht und Entscheidung (Power and Decision)*). The only other explanation for the use of "Nicht-Philosophen" by the interviewer is if he meant that "philosophers" are non-normative, value-free thinkers, which of course is hardly ever the case as we know from the history of ideas and Kondylis's writings in relation to that history, and even if the interviewer meant "philosophers" to be logically consistent thinkers, that again is by no means something which characterises many, if not most, famous or not so famous "philosophers".

⁴ From the egg, i.e. from the beginning or start.

formal criteria, e.g. the lack of logical leaps (leaps in logic), ambiguous (equivocal) terms etc.. That is why one can examine whether a world-theoretical fundamental decision was theorised logically correctly, however the assessment of its "rationality" is a completely different matter. Moral-normativistic and value-free-descriptive thought can equally be logically developed. Logic can therefore be put exactly at the service of all possible positions because logic does not produce the same possible positions -, in this respect logic and logical thought in general are neutral. The character of thought is not decided by a question of logic, but by a question of norms and of values. It is namely a question as to whether norms and values expressly or tacitly guide the intellectual (thought) effort, or whether the intellectual (thought) effort makes such norms and values, as well as the theoretical behaviour guided by these norms and values, its object.

Although now polemical and logical consistency are not in principle mutually excluded, it often occurs in the history of ideas that polemical consistency pushes aside logical consistency. This happens when someone wants to combat an in itself (i.e. internally) contradictory position and in the process contrasts to every limb of this contradiction a limb of the reverse contradiction; in my works (i.e. treatises) I have analysed in relation to that several important examples in the history of ideas. Descriptive-value-free thought can likewise proceed illogically, however the reason for this cannot in this case lie in the gaining of the upper hand of the polemical component. Concepts are in general polemical because of their normative orientation. Precisely the invocation by all sides of norms and values or of their "true (correct)" interpretation intensifies polemics and the struggle; morals (i.e. ethics) with a social claim (or demand of imposition), not self-contained scepticism, makes

people competitors or⁵ foes. However, concepts, which prima facie seem to imply nothing normative, can also effect the same. It is a matter, with that, of the case when one party (or side) symbolically connects their identity with a concept so that the imposition or the defeat of this concept in the intellectual(-spiritual) spectrum symbolically stands for the imposition or the defeat of the party (or side) concerned.

4.

Q: Since the Renaissance (especially Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza) ideas have developed, which necessarily lead with "logical consistency" to nihilism, that means: to the denial of objective norms and values. Is not, on the other hand, the whole of post-medieval and post-theological thought and not only of the Enlightenment, an attempt to elude this "logical consistency", whereas only a few thinkers (like the aforementioned) dared to swim against the current and preferred the truth to consolation (i.e. being fed with hopes)? And is not, in this respect, your "descriptive decisionism" (rather) the completion of this "logical consistency"?

A: The question can be answered with a simple "yes". Nonetheless, I would like to stress two points. First, a doubt about the objectivity of norms and values was announced not only in the West and not first in the New Times. Indian and Chinese thought already knew such approaches, while in Greek antiquity sophism worked out the same position on the basis of the contrasting between *nomos* (law) and *physis* (nature). Plato's philosophy was essentially a grandiose attempt to face sophistic

⁵ The Greek text (p. 18) has "and" rather than "or".

relativism with ultimate, that is ontological and metaphysical arguments. Every philosophy, which advocates the objectivity (or even the general bindingness) of norms and values cannot help but appropriate the Platonic (i.e. Platonic elements) regardless of in which form and what dosage. These ascertainments - the social predominance of normativism and the age-old guerilla war against it - are of considerable significance if we want to understand, beyond all respective historical accidental occurrences, the character and the function of philosophical thought in its constant (pure or undiluted) anthropological and social interrelations, that is, as a refined articulation of the effort at self-preservation of human societies.

The European New Times had to constantly fight against value relativism and nihilism because the European New Times' rationalistic starting point (or positioning) was conceived in such a way that this starting point's logically consistent follow up (or unfolding) amounted to exactly this nihilism. Against Aristotelian substance ontology (or metaphysics), functional thought (i.e. the concept of function) was summoned, and then the danger of the dissolution of all substances inside variable functions was averted through the drawing (or making) up of new hypostases: "Nature", "Man" and "History" therefore succeeded God and the (transcendent) Spirit. Nevertheless, the concept of function gradually prevailed all along the line during the 20th century against the background of a planetary overturning. (My books on the Enlightenment, the new-times critique of metaphysics and the decline of the bourgeois thought form and life form are devoted to the description of this process).

Secondly, I place particular value on your explanation of nihilism as the "denial of objective norms". Nihilism cannot, therefore, mean a call for

destruction, if from destruction there is not supposed to be a new norm⁶, which would be simply illogical. Besides, the greatest destructions (i.e. devastations or disasters) in history until now were carried out in the name of norms and values, irrespective of whether their each and every respective opponent took them for "false" or even for "nihilistic". The really appealing question is the following: why does thought not keep to the reassuring life-preserving certainties of normativism, but now and then ventures into such dangerous areas? However, the answer to that would lead us too far afield.

5.

Q: The starting point of your investigations is, as you have so often ascertained, the perception of acts of concrete people in concrete situations. These people champion their different points of contention, inter alia, with words and ideas. In your view, philosophical systems or world images are only the systematic elaboration of thoughts, which take root in this concrete historical polemics. My question: Does not your own way of looking at things take root just the same way in such concrete historical circumstances and is it not for this reason also a world image amongst others? In "Power and Decision" you seem to confirm this. Does not the fact that your way of looking at things is descriptive (and not normative like a world image) indicate after all a world image, in which a descriptive procedure or method is rated higher than a normative procedure or method? Do you consider such a rating (i.e. evaluation) scientifically legitimable?

⁶ The Greek text (p. 20) reads more clearly in English: "because then destruction would be acclaimed a new norm".

A: Another question is hiding in your question, which can be formulated as follows: "If world images are relativised through the indication of their historical determination, what can then save your own world image from relativisation?" Now, similar are the familiar arguments against scepticists: from where does the scepticist, who actually according to his own opinion can know nothing certain, want to deduce the certainty of his own position? This argumentation is logically untenable. If one puts it in the form of a classical syllogism, then the major premise and the conclusion stand in contradiction with each other, that is, in the major premise the truth of a position becomes accepted, (whereas) in the conclusion its falsity (is assumed): "Your theory, world images are relative, is true, hence your theory as a world image is relative and false"⁷. No, sceptical positions cannot be refuted in this way. That my theory, like every other theory too, is historically determined does not prove its relativity, but merely (also) constitutes a confirmation of the principle of the historical determination of one's own example. (Conversely in respect of that, a theory, which considers itself undetermined (i.e. absolute and independent of historical determination(s)), not once makes understandable (or is in a position to make clear) the existence of other theories). Not the historical binding (or historical dependence), but the normative binding (or normative dependence) stands in the way of the truth of theories about human affairs (things). Thucydides has not lost the least of his topicality, and on his work an analysis of modern politics can be built - but not on Plato's "Laws".

⁷ An alternative way of putting it would be:
Major premise: That world images are relative, is your theory, which is true.
Minor premise: Your theory is a world image.
Conclusion: Your theory is relative and false.

Every historical situation has two aspects, because in every situation the Human (i.e. the human element) is acted out in its structural entirety⁸, however this happens under the cloak of normative convictions which are relative and transitory. How can it otherwise be explained that certain fundamental patterns (or types) of human behaviour in our well-known history have on the whole remained stable, whereas during the same period of time all respective ruling ideologies and social norms have repeatedly changed? Why does e.g. the political behaviour of Thucydides's contemporaries seem (known and) familiar to us, even though their religion and morals (i.e. ethics) are foreign (or strange) to us?

I do not regard myself as a scepticist in the familiar sense. Knowledge of human affairs (things) is, in my opinion, possible in principle - on condition that there is a consistent breaking away from (moral-)normative thought. The ascertainment of the relativity of norms and values seems only from a moralistic point of view to be an expression of scepticism. For me the same ascertainment constitutes empirically definite and provable knowledge.

And with that I come to your final question. Naturally, such value-free (kinds of) knowledge and descriptive procedure(s) are superior - but they are superior only from the perspective of science as the search for the truth. Descriptive value-free research would become inconsistent only (then) if it wanted to legitimise itself through the assertion that science and value-free truth are the highest value in general and in itself. Only normativistic (moral-normative) positions legitimise themselves through

⁸ Kondylis's own Greek translation (p. 23) puts it slightly differently: "because in every situation the Human, if we see it structurally, unfolds and is acted out in its entirety".

the assumption that the norm propagated by them is⁹ generally valid and binding for everyone. Scientific knowledge - and indeed exactly to the extent it remains scientific - cannot be binding for, or on, anyone because it does not have any normative orientation to offer; it in fact can only be constituted through detachment from the wish for such an orientation, which in the final analysis is a matter of taste, that is, it is not at all dependent on scientific scholarship¹⁰. And apart from that, scientific knowledge constitutes anything but the predominant thought form in society.

6.

Q: Your image of man has a certain similarity with Clausewitz's anthropology, as you described this in your book on the "Theory of War". The foundation of this anthropology is split human nature: On the one hand, man leans towards an undisturbed (or carefree) life and is in this respect a peaceful being; on the other hand, he is ready or even forced to decide on conflict through struggle when others threaten his existence. In your works (i.e. treatises) you mainly stressed the ideational consequences of human reality *engaged in struggle*. Conversely, many philosophers, who try to exorcise the factum (i.e. fact) of power, founded thought on the "irenic (i.e. peace-promoting)" roots of humanity. Does your "one-sidedness" have only a polemical or also a logically legitimable cause? What do you think about the "irenic (i.e. peace-promoting)" cause (or origin) of world images?

⁹ The Greek text (p. 24) is: "their own norms are".

¹⁰ The clauses beginning "which in..." do not appear in the German, but only in the Greek text (p. 24).

A: One cannot think much of the "irenic (i.e. peace-promoting)" cause (or origin) of world images, if one has seriously dealt with the structural analysis of historically witnessed world images and has in the course of this ascertained two things: that every world image comes into being as a negation or even as the reversal of another world image; b) that no world image manages (i.e. carries out its functions) without a notion of "evil" in whatever form (sin, oppression, alienation etc.), which should be defeated or held down (by "good"). Even world images or utopian blueprints, which depict a state of ideal harmony, contain the representation of an outdated state of conflict and of suffering.

I cannot here go into the reasons which have time and again pushed humans towards the dream of a great and final harmony. It is only to be noted that even this dream has a polemical point in so far as it turns against existing "abuses (or tribulations)" and moreover is not dreamt by everyone in the same way, so that every practical step towards its realisation raises the question of its binding interpretation, which, as is known, is a question of power. As you see, the invocation of the "irenic (i.e. peace-promoting) roots of humanity" does not suffice at all to end conflicts. Your observation is right that in my analyses I (would) give priority to the element of struggle. I do not see that as one-sidedness, but as a methodological necessity. I describe dynamic historical processes, and such processes are driven forward, no matter what, by conflicts and contrasts, which cause incessant changes and changes constantly being newly defined in human relations. However with that, the element of association (or joint action)(, co-operation) and friendship is by no means eliminated. I must point out very emphatically the following: only from a moralistic-normativistic perspective does enmity appear as the mere opposite of friendship, from the perspective of descriptive history and

sociology they are both phenomena which necessarily exist next to each other and determine (condition) each other. Where the intensity of enmity rises, there the intensity of friendship also rises, as well as the other way around. That is easy to explain: whoever combats others and in the process pursues public aims (goals) (e.g. political aims, but also intellectual(-spiritual) aims, which foresee (or aspire to) a change in modes of thought and behaviour), will sooner or later end up in the madhouse if he remains constantly alone (shouting), if he, that is, does not find (political) friends who he can mobilise in respect of these aims (goals); only then (if he has a multitude of friends) will he be taken seriously socially. The declaration of struggle (or war) against a party (side) means ipso facto (eo ipso) the formation of another party (side), that is, a union or alliance of friends. It is an old observation that the sense of community grows considerably in the struggle (or in times of war) against another community. This co-existence and multiple blending of friendship and enmity with each other structurally corresponds with the Janus face of human nature, which, by the way, not only Clausewitz, but other great political thinkers noticed (e.g. Machiavelli and Hobbes). With regard to social co-existence in general this means: a society of people cannot live in a state of permanent war without disintegrating, simultaneously however, it cannot help constantly giving birth to conflict from its womb (bloody or not). Friendship and peace are in respect of the *situation humaine* just as little to be disregarded as enmity and struggle (war). We are not dealing here with a matter of faith, but a banal truth which is to be learnt just from reading the daily newspapers. Whoever cannot admit and digest that, may be a great prophet or, shall we say, a great philosopher (or social theorist) - he is not suitable as an analyst of human affairs (things).

7.

Q: Armin Mohler has called you an "Anti-Fukuyama". In a certain sense that may be so. Nonetheless, there also seems to be a similarity between you and Fukuyama's thought with respect to the significance of intellectuals and their political ideas for the politics of the future. There is nothing more to be thought! In this respect you are no less pessimistic than Fukuyama. However: are you really of the opinion that the eclipsing of the political relevance of ideologies like those of liberalism and communism also makes every further attempt to newly think through conventional political ideas pointless?

A: Apologists of the Western system, who celebrate its victory over communism, perpetuate the present moment and talk about the end of history. The interrelated with that end of ideologies is supposed to occur because one of these ideologies ostensibly prevailed and eliminated the rest of the ideologies; if the victorious ideology is fixed for all time, then future intellectuals will obviously have very little to do. - My diagnosis differs radically from such constructions. According to my opinion, neither is history at an end nor will the apologetic or polemical activity of intellectuals fail to materialise in the future. A historical epoch only came to an end, and with it the three great political-ideological currents which characterised the said epoch have run dry: conservatism, liberalism and socialism. In my political writings¹¹ I explained in detail how the aforementioned ideologies gradually lost their social bearers and

¹¹ See especially *Konservativismus* and *Planetarische Politik nach dem Kalten Krieg*. Of course when Kondylis says "political" writings he also means an overlapping with "sociological" and "historical" writings. Also c.f. *Der Niedergang der bürgerlichen Denk- und Lebensform* and the articles collected in *Das Politische im 20. Jahrhundert*.

references so that their use became arbitrary, in fact interchangeable. The collapse of communism has made our political concepts even more dispensable. Because only now, after the highly dramatic world-historical episode of the Cold War, do the deeper driving forces of future planetary politics come to the surface, which have been accumulating, oftentimes unnoticed, under the stormy political history of the 20th century. A dreadful tension is now coming into being from the worldwide accumulation of mass-democratic expectations with the simultaneous narrowing of the planet as a result of the population explosion and the looming shortage of ecological and other goods. That is why violent antagonisms and conflicts are to be expected, and in the process not even war, but rather a permanent state of unbridled anomie will prove to be the worst danger. It would be possible that the economisation of the political will change into the biologisation of the political if politics had to be reduced to the distribution of goods necessary for life¹².

Whether against this background new ideologies will come into being or whether relics of the old ideologies in a new form of processing (or packaging) will be used, depends on the nature and the intensity of the conflict. I can only imagine with difficulty that there will exist room for ideological work (i.e. activity) if people have to fight over food (nourishment), water or even air; "economic refugees" already today do not have a recognisable ideology. Should nevertheless in more tolerable circumstances new ideologies be formed, then their forms and their contents will be determined by the character of the subjects and the groupings of planetary politics: will they be nations, will they be cultural circles (cultures), will they even be races? Under all circumstances there

¹² The Greek text (p. 29) in English is as follows: "It is not precluded that politics, having already taken on an economic character, will take on a biological character in the future, in the event that politics was forced to be reduced to the distribution of vital goods".

will, at any rate, be intellectuals who will offer to each and every respective "good cause" their ideological services. It is fashionable today to complain of the "deception or seduction of the intellect(-spirit)" and to denounce the "trahison des clercs"¹³ in new variations. But the role of intellectuals has always consisted in producing ideology, in giving key words usable in practice. Why should it be otherwise or become otherwise?

Only intellectuals assert, incidentally, that intellectuals understand the world better than all others.

8.

Q: Helmut König has, in his review of your book on the decline of the bourgeois thought form and life form, noted that in your reconstruction of the developments in this century¹⁴ the "period of fascism" is lacking. Does this have a deeper meaning? What do you think of the formal (i.e. form-related) or polemical similarity between pre-bourgeois and post-bourgeois thought forms and life forms? Is not a striking interrelation apparent between the "sunny side" (postmodernism) and the "dark side" (fascism) of the same anti-bourgeois thought?

A: In the aforementioned work I have concentrated on the ideal-typical reconstruction of the deeper structures of social history and the history of ideas, whereas political history was programmatically left aside. From the perspective of political history, the phenomena, which most distinctly marked the transition from bourgeois liberalism to our contemporary

¹³ The treason of the intellectuals.

¹⁴ The 20th century, of course.

mass democracy, like e.g. the growing atomisation of society (i.e. the breaking up or fragmentation of society into individuals) on the basis of an extremely complex division of labour and of extreme mobility, or the radical "paradigm shift" in all sectors of intellectual(-spiritual) production which took place around 1900 and still keeps the 20th century under its spell, cannot be understood or made clear. On the other hand, political history is not a dispensable or replaceable surface of the overall historical becoming (i.e. of overall historical events), but remains interwoven with that overall historical becoming; only presentation purposes (i.e. technical reasons in respect of presentation) can justify the separation of the political from the social or ideological aspect. On the way the interrelation of these aspects is to be thought of, much, as is known, has been said until now. Here I can only remark that this question is posed differently from historical case to historical case and can also be solved differently in accordance with all the respective knowledge interests and each and every respective qualification of a researcher.¹⁵

According to my impression, the great political movements of the 20th century - i.e. communism, national socialism or fascism, and liberalism reinterpreted (i.e. meta-interpreted) in terms of the egalitarian welfare (social) state - promoted mass-democratic tendencies to a different extent and at a different tempo on each and every respective occasion, with each and every respective different justification or respective aim which has been set, and under all respective different practical (or situational) constraints, that is, they (communism, fascism and the reinterpreted liberalism of the welfare state) have put aside conventional (or

¹⁵ Unfortunately, Kondylis's premature death meant that he never wrote the second and third volumes of his magnum opus *Das Politische und der Mensch (The Political and Man)*. The second volume *Gesellschaft als politisches Kollektiv (Society as political collective)* would have presumably included a fully-referenced explication of the Kondylian analysis of societies in their overall crystallisations, forms of stabilisation and changes, i.e. of social order in its existence and becoming.

traditional) (patriarchal or bourgeois) hierarchies and connected the ideal of formal equality with the notion of material rights. In view of this overall historical effect, the question of political freedom, as it is understood today in the West, was of secondary importance, as much as it may have also been the focal point of ethical considerations and ideological struggles. As you aptly noted, an "interrelation" between the sunny and dark side of anti-bourgeois positionings in the 20th century is "apparent", however it is "striking" only if one has left behind oneself (or freed oneself from) several widespread prejudices.

Why now have certain nations taken this, and other nations that, political path? Here, only a multi-layered analysis of each and every concrete situation can take us further. In any case, no national political history can be derived totally and without mediation from universal-historical driving forces (i.e. the driving forces of world history). But we ought to equally keep in mind that given the degree of density which planetary politics reached in the 20th century, no national political history can pass by universal social trends or outwit or circumvent them.

9.

Q: The politics of the future will perhaps be a pitiless struggle over the distribution of the raw materials and of the riches of the world: a struggle over vital interests. What is new in this struggle is, at most, that it embraces the whole world. If I correctly give an account of your view, mass-democratic terminology will retain in this struggle its relevance for the future, even though on the basis of the emphatically stressed presupposition that this relevance can be determined or realised only through power relations. Do you consider, however, that it is on principle

out of the question that the present-day and future possessors of power (i.e. rulers) will not unconditionally accept their power (i.e. they will be excluded from not wielding their power absolutely), but perhaps will, of their own free will, renounce a part of their power on the basis of Reason legitimising power, in order to, with that, give justice or to do justice to the powerless (i.e. those who do not possess power)? Put differently: do you regard it as in principle (or from the outset) impossible (if yes, why?) that true possessors of power (i.e. rulers) can be guided by moral (i.e. ethical) ideas, which are not exclusively determined by the drive of self-preservation or by striving after the extension (expansion) of power, but also have in themselves convincing rational value?

A: Your question presupposes the usual contradistinction between power and law (rights), self-preservation and Reason. I cannot accept this contradistinction. I have earlier said (and have also expounded many a time in my writings) that even the general (or catholic) invocation of Reason or of law (rights) is not at all in itself sufficient in order to bring about concord (amongst people). The commonality of interests first of all brings about stable concord, even if in the process there is little talk of Reason (and of law (rights)). The only realistic question is therefore: is today, worldwide, such a commonality of interests emerging that concord between people seems more possible than in the past? If that is the case, then the grand - and hackneyed - words in respect of Reason and morals (i.e. ethics) are superfluous. One however will presumably in the foreseeable future continue to talk about them and this will most likely signal an exacerbation of differences of opinion on topical (factual) questions, and an intensification of struggles in respect of distribution. In my work (i.e. treatise) on planetary politics after the Cold War I have expounded the reasons for which the propagation of universal human

rights and their consistent application¹⁶ must lead to a considerable increase of international tensions and reinforce the worldwide trend towards anomie. The great majority (of people) - lead (or guided) today by the media as they were formerly by priests at the pulpit - thinks of course with such self-evidence (naturalness) in terms of the (intellectual) categories of the ruling ideologems (i.e. kinds of sub-ideology) that it does not want to know of similar arguments and prognoses. Certainly, the verbose and tearful humanitarianism, which characterise public discourse in the West, does not mean any practical (tangible) willingness for drastic worldwide redistribution of material affluence.

But let us leave aside the question of subjective honesty and ethical consistency. The very dangerous paradox of the planetary situation consists exactly in that even just solutions and historically unprecedented self-denial would not offer any long-term way out. If one distributes the wealth of 800 billion amongst 6 billion, then everyone will merely become (provisional) brothers in poverty - and conversely: if the Chinese, the Indian and the African would consume as much energy and raw materials per capita as the North American, this could bring about ecological collapse. What can therefore justice under the given circumstances concretely and in practice mean? Worldwide material expectations now orientate themselves towards the model of Western mass democracy, while the material preconditions for these expectations' fulfilment are lacking. That is highly (sensitive) explosive material - and the planetary politics of the future must be moulded precisely from this material.

How can one hope against this background that in our times, of all times, those ideals of Reason and ethics, which in the whole of history until now

¹⁶ The Greek text (p. 34) includes: ", over and above state rule,"

have inevitably fallen by the wayside, will be realised? Certainly Reason, morals (i.e. ethics) and human rights dominate the contemporary vocabulary. But this happens only because these key words constitute the axes of *our* ideology. In other times, God and the divine will were conjured up no less urgently and fervently. But did, because of that, the commandment of love become the guiding principle of human action (acts)?

10.

Q: It has struck me how much your thoughts are similar in some respects to those of Spinoza, above all in respect of the third and fourth book of the *Ethica* and of the *Tractatus Politicus*. Yet in your works (i.e. treatises) a relationship with Spinoza is not particularly expressed. You hardly refer to him. Is that why it is to be assumed that you would spurn a characterisation (qualification) as a "Spinozist"? Can you explain that?

A: I read the "Ethics" for the first time when I was 14 years old, and since then I have not changed (in the slightest) my conviction that Spinoza is one of the noblest and most incorruptible forms in the entire history of philosophy. I arrived at my own perception of man and the world, however, via other paths and detours, which incidentally did not always have to do with books and readings. I re-encountered Spinoza - with the (same) old joy -, when this perception was already definite. Nevertheless, the intellectual(-spiritual) relationship or nearness, which you allude to, is not coincidental. In both my texts on Spinoza's thought (the chapter in the "New-times Critique of Metaphysics" and the introduction to

"Philosophers and Power"¹⁷ are meant), I have tried to explain that Spinoza thought the (inner) tendency of new-times rationalism consistently to its end, although he used a (seemingly) antiquated ontological conceptuality.

Self-preservation and power necessarily become the key concepts of an interpretation of human affairs (things), if one radically puts aside all dualisms and Platonisms, all conventional (traditional) separations between From There (i.e. That World or Life) and From Here (i.e. This World or Life), the ideal and reality, thinking and wanting. Over and above that, the sense of life which goes with this philosophical positioning connects me with Spinoza. If the Christian-idealistic dualisms are overcome, then also the corresponding fears (or phobias) and hopes disappear, the laments and hymns fall silent. With ancient-Stoic cheerfulness one can now behold the Is and the Becoming, feel pity, sympathy or togetherness for, and with, the struggle and the pain of all that is transitory (or of every transitory existence), and while smiling, forgive everyone (i.e. understand everyone with forbearance), who, with or without an invocation of Reason and morals (i.e. ethics), indulges in his striving for power; such are they, the creatures of Nature, they cannot do otherwise.

¹⁷ Kondylis, P. *Die neuzeitliche Metaphysikkritik*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990, and, Kondylis, P. "Einleitung" in Kondylis, P (ed.) *Der Philosoph und die Macht* (Anthologie), Hamburg: Junius, 1992, pp. 9-36.

Questions 11-18 by Spyros Tsaknias¹⁸

11.

Q: The reader of your books and articles lately observes a kind of turn (change) in your thought towards political analysis. To what do you attribute this turn?

A: The invisible chronology of thought does not necessarily coincide with the visible chronological sequence of publications. My first books dealt with, of course, topics which, according to the frequently misleading current classifications, are considered "philosophical" or at any rate "theoretical". However, in dealing with these topics, an exclusive interest in "philosophy" and an absence of political interests did not prompt me, but much more, an examination of problems interwoven from the outset with politics, both in the broad as well as in the narrower sense of the term. *The Coming into Being of Dialectics*¹⁹, in which the most abstract philosophical concepts of post-Kantian German idealism are finely sifted, came about from the persistent investigation into the intellectual(-spiritual) roots and presuppositions of Marxism, which in the process became an investigation into the prehistory of Hegelianism as one of the wombs or matrices of Marxism. In this example it becomes particularly apparent, I think, how political interests are channeled quite naturally into philosophical searches, even in the most technical sense of

¹⁸ First published in Greece in the periodical «Διαβάζω» 384 (April 1998), pp. 122-137.

¹⁹ Kondylis, P. *Die Entstehung der Dialektik. Eine Analyse der geistigen Entwicklung von Hölderlin, Schelling und Hegel bis 1802*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1979.

the term - if, it goes without saying, the need for a deepening (of research) and for investigation becomes strongly felt. Although external stimuli do not have any effect on their own where personal predispositions and proclivities are lacking, I ought to say that (my) engagement with Marxist theory, as long as it did not merely constitute food for the satiation of ideological-eschatological needs, provided a comprehensive intellectual(-spiritual) framework or context in which the co-existence and the complementarity of philosophical and political interests were roughly self-evident.

However, I conjecture that you are implying something more specific, namely the analyses in respect of planetary politics which I published after the end of the Cold War. Before I get there, it behoves me to make a second introductory observation. The older political interests, in relation to which I spoke, had not been exhausted in the close monitoring of current domestic and international politics, but they were expanded into a substantial study of ancient and more modern political theory, whose fruits were brought together in an extended study of Machiavelli and later in my monograph regarding conservative ideology; my work (i.e. treatise) in regard to Montesquieu, which had been planned long before its writing and publication, belongs to the same cycle (of works). The bridge between the study of political theory and the ceaseless monitoring of political-military developments was built by my engagement with the best contemporary studiers (i.e. analysts) of international relations; amongst them, Raymond Aron deserves particular mention, not only for his soberness and his lofty (high) intellectual ethos, but for his broader sociological and philosophical education. Almost inevitably and imperceptibly my increasing familiarisation with the problems of strategy, of geopolitics and of military history took place from this point

in time. My book about the *Theory of War* (first-published in Germany in 1988) does not just constitute a new interpretation of Clausewitz and a redefinition of basic forms of more modern war, but an application of this theoretical harvest to essential strategic matters of the Cold War, as e.g. they were put forward during the formation of the Soviet military dogma then in force.

So the "turn" towards political analysis, as you call it, was never a turn in the sense of the sudden transition from one circle (set) of interests to another, more or less foreign to the former (circle (set) of interests). And moreover, it was carried out, even in the form of publications, already before the end of the Cold War. However, the collapse of communism and the beginning of American hegemony created a situation exceedingly stimulating for thought - at least for thought which touches upon the appropriate pre-education. Every open situation tempts one to make predictions (forecasts), but predictions ought to flow from a serious analysis of the driving forces, of the long-term, at least, factors of development. In turn, again, such analyses are entwined directly or indirectly with more general theoretical matters. I cite two examples. The ruling Western ideology after the Cold War maintains that henceforth the economic element obtains absolute precedence and will blunt the classical forms of conflicts, leading to a unified world. The acceptance or rejection of this naturally presupposes a more general sorting out of the relations between the economy and politics from a broad historical and theoretical perspective. Secondly, the new strategic facts and the transposition from a nuclear balance of terror to conflicts of lower intensity and of a great multiformity (diversity) require the examination of the matter as to how much the conceptuality (terminology) of classical theory of war, as Clausewitz outlined it, is in a position to sufficiently

apprehend the emerging new situation. To these examples I could add others, like the evaluation of the new world-historical epoch from the viewpoint of a certain philosophy of history, or "human rights" in their dual ideological and political function. But beyond the theoretical extensions, which, willingly or not, the anatomy of the planetary conjuncture takes on if it wants to hold water, we are dealing, first of all, with the pinpointing and the hierarchisation of real elements of what is happening in the economy, in diplomacy, in armaments. In my book *Planetary Politics after the Cold War* I undertook a first synthesis of a factual diagnosis and of theoretical extensions. Today, seven years after the writing of the text, I cannot but feel some satisfaction in ascertaining that I do not need to change even one word. This is not devoid of significance, if we ponder how many predictions of other analysts have proved wrong since then. I am not referring merely to all the absurdities and hilarities that were said about the "end of history", but to far more tangible matters. In the discussions of the international relations experts and scholars, the view dominated that e.g. the new world order would crystallise around three poles and the corresponding large (major) spaces, that is, the United States; Europe; and Japan, which at the start of the decade still appeared to us as being at the peak of its productive, exporting and financial heyday. For my part, I stressed that Japan will never become the hegemonic Power in the Far East so long as China has not spoken its piece, that Europe will not constitute in the foreseeable future a political unity (entity) with a united and weighty will, and that American hegemony will take the form of the supply of policing and firefighting services to allies, however this time with essential economic quid pro quos. I also foresaw that the characteristic feature of the new era would not so much be the formation of closed great (or major) spaces as the rise of middle Powers capable of acting regionally, either of their own

will (accord) or either in collaboration with, and as a deputy of, a planetary Power. Turkey, which in 30 years will have a population of 100 million and, based on its rapid industrialisation, will belong amongst the leading military powers of the world, is a typical example of such a middle Power.

The publication of *Planetary Politics after the Cold War* was followed by a series of articles, written mainly for *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, in which I extended (or added to) my basic thoughts and positions in relation to topical matters as well as matters of a more permanent importance. An essential selection of these articles is already under publication in Greek under the title of *From the 20th to the 21st century*²⁰. Furthermore, assessments about the future of war, which constituted a chapter in *Planetary Politics*, were enriched from a more theoretical perspective in a text which was added as a conclusion to the Greek edition of *Theory of War* ("Hot war after the Cold War").

12.

Q: How do you think your turn towards political analysis is connected with your older examinations of problems? And, more generally, how would you chart the course of your thought from its beginnings until today?

A: By answering your first question I already answered where the relation and continuity between my older theoretical examinations of problems, and my recent political analyses, lies. Political theory

²⁰ The German version of the book, whose contents are mostly but not totally the same, is: Kondylis, P. *Das Politische im 20. Jahrhundert*, Heidelberg: Manutius, 2001.

constituted, in some kind of way, the bridge between philosophical or anthropological generalisations and political analyses in the narrower sense. Engagement with the object of political theory early on developed its own dynamic and logic, which came, also early on, into conflict with the general context of the Marxist view. To express myself most schematically: whereas the Marxist view delineated a more or less linear progress(ion) with an ethically charged ending and with the economic element as the direct bearer, the consideration of history from the point of view of the political element showed a recycling of similar mechanisms (not necessarily of events) without an ultimate or other meaning and without a scientifically ascertainable permanent precedence of the economic, the ideological, the racial and national (or ethnological) or of any other factor whatsoever²¹. Breaking away from eschatology, which psychologically was not very difficult for me, had as its logical consequence the refutation of every linear conception of the historical becoming; by the way, this (linear) conception was always formulated with the purpose of the consolidation of some eschatology. However, the primacy of the economy in the Marxist schema tended too towards, as much as this seems paradoxical, the consolidation of eschatology with scientific arguments. Because the necessity of development of the productive forces and the necessity of the adaptation of the relations of production to the productive forces appeared to make the happy end of History inevitable, i.e. classless society, regardless of the will, regardless even of the personal ethics of people. Thus, the negation of eschatology also entailed the negation of the primacy of the economy, at least as

²¹ E.g. gender or sexual orientation, which the translator views as such ludicrous possible pre-eminent factors that Kondylis did not even bother to mention them. Their popularity amongst many "intellectuals" and academics today simply underlines the extent such thought is completely ideological and closely connected to a certain kind of social formation, such as Western mass democracy, which has broken down to a large extent the traditional patriarchal family in a process, inter alia, of social atomisation and an ideology of equality.

Marxism meant it. History now becomes open as to its possible outcomes (not necessarily as to acting mechanisms), because inside of it a fixed hierarchy of factors does not have an effect, in relation to which one factor is always more determinative than some other factor, but the weight and the importance of these factors (now) continually varies in accordance with the conjuncture. This does not at all mean the negation of a science of history and of human affairs (things), that is, it does not at all mean the negation of causality - however, causality which applies in every (separate) case is one thing, and determinism which moves to subject all cases to only one teleologically structured (articulated) chain is quite another (thing). The economy does not cease, naturally, to have its particular weight within the formative factors of social life, however it is subjected to the general logic and the general forms (morphology) of social relations, of relations between human existences which live socially. In speaking of people, of relations between them, of forces which constitute and restrain (constrain) societies, one enters the deep and ultimate level of analysis, namely the level of social ontology. I am attempting to now trace this level in a three-volume work (i.e. treatise), whose first volume will be shortly published in Germany.²²

However, not only did critical confrontation with Marxist theory give me decisive stimuli for my thought, but the critical experiencing and observation of the communistic movement in its international and diachronic dimension (also gave me such decisive stimuli). The crucial point here was the following. Tens of millions of people, most of whom had the most ethical of intentions and most frequently exhibited incomparable self-sacrifice, fought for the establishment of Utopia, however from their collective action results arose which were directly the

²² Kondylis, P. *Das Politische und der Mensch* [The Political and Man], Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999.

opposite of their proclaimed ends (goals), results which recycled precisely those phenomena which Utopia wanted to and ought to have surpassed (overcome): the domination of man by man, the logic of power in its bloodless or bloody unfolding. How should this paradox have been interpreted? How does the heterogony of ends function in History so that, very frequently incidentally, and from the very beginnings of historical activity, the impetus of the impersonal resultant diverges from the impetus of personal resultants taken separately? Why, in other words, should collective action lead us there where no-one of collective action's individual bearers desired (to go)? And even more: how is utopian and more generally ideological thought structured, conceptually and psychologically, so that it survives every practical falsification or, at any rate, is transformed and moves on a new field once the practical dead ends on the previous field become gross (blatant) and unbearable? Which anthropological and cultural factors favour and impose this structuring (construction) and this durability of utopian and ideological thought? It is easy for one to understand what kind of investigations, and how broad these investigations are, which set in motion (the posing of) these questions. The mechanisms of the heterogony of ends are analysed concretely only on the basis of an extensive first-hand knowledge of history and a sociological education capable of evaluating historical material derived in such a manner. The knowledge of history as social history intersects again with knowledge of a history of ideas, which in turn is not made understandable without the monitoring of the history of certain central theoretical problems, whereby we enter the fields of philosophy, theology and or art (the arts) as an extremely sensitive seismograph of world-theoretical shifts (transpositions). On the other hand, the ascertainment of the enduring effect (or influence) of ideological and utopian thought structures leads to a consideration of man

and of culture from the point of view of the question: why is "meaning" and "intellect(-spirit)" produced, why are people inside of society and culture obliged to consider themselves as beings with an "intellect(-spirit)" (or "logic (sense, reason)"), that is, that they necessarily connect their acts with "meaning" and conduct their struggles as between themselves in the name of this "meaning"? What particular turn do human acts and relations take when this meaning is called "value" in the ethical-normative sense of the term? How is value positioning interwoven not only with practical activity but also with the interpretation of the world? In this way, we come back to the history of ideas and of problems, to the anatomy of world theories, however we come back to these at a higher level at which generalised statements on man and on human culture (civilisation) are required, statements which are incorporated as well in the theoretical corpus of social ontology. And at the same time distinctions are required on matters of method, because the ascertainment of the interweaving of Is and Ought in the context of current ideological and utopian thought brings forward (sets) the duty of their differentiation (distinction), i.e. of the necessary differentiation between wishes (desires) and diagnoses in the framework of a sober scientific conception of things (matters, affairs). Undifferentiated and opaque scepticism, which considers knowledge impossible and values relative, is something very different to the ascertainment of the concrete functioning of values within concrete situations and for the purposes of specific (concrete) people; the ascertainment of the thus understood relativity of values is impossible without a sufficient knowledge of human affairs (things).²³

²³ Kondylis of course is referring to key concepts of his value-free or non-normative perception of human action and society, such as striving for self-preservation and the extension of power, human action being impossible without the (pre-)existence of the social relation, the social relation taking place within a friend-foe spectrum, the objectification of power claims through world images and ideologies, etc..

By charting in this way the course of my thought, I want to tell you that it has always moved (set out) from central questions, which existed as, and are always, the axes of my individual investigations. From a retrospective look at such a course, a reader usually expects narratives of a personal and psychological character. I cannot know what role such factors played in the formation of the thought of other thinkers. But generally I do not believe one can pinpoint (locate) them with precision, and as far as it concerns me, I have always tried to remain uninfluenced by external chance encounters (coincidences) and internal fluctuations, while tightly holding in my hand the thread of the logic of things and of empirical evidence (attestations). My breaking away from Marxist eschatology did not give rise inside of me to the aggressive psychology of the apostate, who demonises (his former comrades and current opponents) because he does not want to explain, but to be vindicated (justified). On the contrary, I felt from the outset that my experiences, the theoretical and the practical (experiences), were a fantastic raw material in order to base on them a serious attempt at understanding the social world. I did not substitute, then, the heroin of Marxism with the heroin of liberalism, of ethicism (moralism) or of Christianity, like most (people) did; when I stopped using drugs, I stopped them radically and conclusively. It goes without saying that the long direct and indirect contrasting with Marx's thought and with the best Marxists by no means was the only source and the only spark for my examination of problems. My education was, fortunately, far broader from the very beginning. However, in our limited available space I preferred to present things from this particularly preferential (privileged) and fertile point of view.

13.

Q: It has been observed that when you translate a book from German (into Greek), in which it was first written, you usually add an addendum devoted to Greek affairs. In other words, from a matter with a universal range you move onto the examination of a topic of local interest. Do you find that a perseverance with (fixation on) modern Greek social problems characterises you?

A: And this question of yours brings me back to old searches (investigations) which were first formed within Marxist co-ordinates, in order for them to come out of their framework to the extent that I could see more spherically historical developments and situations. As is known, the communistic movements took pride in (the belief) that they were carving out and following a "scientific" politics, based on the precise and historically founded analysis of social powers and of class correlations in a country; even when they were also merely making their action conform with Moscow's commands, they insisted on that (kind of) theoretical wrapping (of following "scientific" politics), changing the said wrapping of course according to the circumstances. Be that as it may, the conjunction of political deontology and sociological-historical analysis was, even as a rite (ritual), obligatory, and that automatically impelled thought that was favourably disposed to research to the genetic tracing (or detection) of the particular characteristics of modern Greek reality. Here one stumbled a limine on a serious theoretical obstacle, which, however, constituted an additional intellectual lure. I mean the lack of correspondence between the conceptual equipment and the object of research. The conceptuality (and terminology) of modern sociology (together with the Marxist conceptuality) was formed during the 19th and the 20th century as the theoretical crystallisation of developments which

were acted out in West European societies; it was, then, a conceptuality with a concrete historical charging, and outside of its given historical framework could neither be understood, but also not used with success as an analytical tool. At the same time, however, there is no other conceptuality apart from that and - because every analysis presupposes expressly or tacitly a conceptuality - for that reason even sociologists and historians dealing with social formations more or less different to West European social formations are forced to have recourse to this conceptuality's use. Precisely the ignorance of the historical charging of the sociological conceptuality enabled its transfer to our matters of concern (i.e. to issues pertaining to Greece), which was of course most often inspired by a "modernising" intention: the application of the conceptuality of the original (model) to the case of the (still incomplete) copy seemed legitimate, because the equalisation of the latter with the former was regarded not merely desirable, but also historically necessary. Conversely, the approach as regards the specific (distinctive or distinguishing) elements (*differentiae specifica*e) of the modern Greek case presupposed not only detachment from linear representations of historical developments and a sense of historical uniqueness, but also essential knowledge of West European historical-social facts; because only comparative analysis at multiple levels allows the refinement and the readjustment of conceptuality of foreign origin. The study of European history, to which I devoted a large part of my studies in Germany close to extremely significant historians like Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck²⁴, gave me conceptual and typological props (bases) for the, by

²⁴ Kondylis authored two exemplary, highly illuminating articles with about 250 references each for the two great historians' historical dictionary of key concepts, one entitled »Reaktion, Restauration« [Reaction, Restoration] in Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhard Koselleck (eds.) *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta. Volume 5: pp. 179-230, and the other being »Würde« [Dignity] (Chapter I by Victor Pöschl) in the same series, but appearing in 1992, Volume 6: pp. 645-677.

means of contradistinction (or ex contrario), understanding of modern Greek history.

Thus I found certain answers to my old central questions about the social and ideological physiognomy of our country (i.e. Greece). And although I have not hitherto had - and most likely I shall not have either in the future - the time in order to set forth these answers to the extent and with the substantiation which I would desire, nevertheless I seized the opportunity to summarise them in the introduction I wrote for the Greek edition of *The decline of bourgeois culture* [= *The decline of the bourgeois thought form and life form*], in which, in part, notes and (rough) drafts from the time of my student years in Athens were used. The subject matter of the book lent itself here to macroscopic retrospections and typological generalisations which however reached up to the evaluation of significant changes in modern Greek society during recent decades, while affording in this way the basis for certain thoughts on its prospects in the contemporary European and planetary conjuncture. Now, geopolitical, strategic and economic analysis had the first say, in accordance incidentally with the thematic aspect of the works, whose Greek edition granted me the motive (occasion) to formulate in coherent form my views regarding current Greek issues. In the two addenda which were written for *Planetary Politics after the Cold War* and *Theory of War*, I tried to place my diagnoses in broader - planetary, European and regional - frameworks, to show the interrelations with the deeper driving forces of today's world and to carve out a calm third path for the conception of a national strategy beyond the two ideological positions which more or less dominate today in Greece, equally breeding the long-standing (since long ago) beloved to us round-table rhetoric and the claptrap (bombast) embellished with theoretical smearings (smatterings). I mean, on the one

hand, the Hellenocentric (Greek-centred) exaltations and (pseudo-)intellectualistic worship of tradition and adoration of Byzantium, which find (have) a broader resonance²⁵, because a nation which suffers continual humiliations also needs continual psychic hyper-replenishment (overcompensation); and on the other hand, on the other side (of the riverbank), I mean the conviction of the various "Europeanists", "modernisers" and "rationalists" that the "civilised West", transubstantiating into practice its intellectual(-spiritual) inheritance and disseminating it throughout the whole world with the globalisation of the economy and of "human rights", will play a leading part in a humane and peaceful 21st century. Those on the first side propose the exporting of the Greek intellect(-spirit), those on the other side struggle for the importing of a European ethos. Yet neither one or the other seem to have - and in this respect the provincialism remains genuinely Greek - a clear perception of what is the physiognomy of today's planetary world and which long-term forces are begetting it.

Until now I spoke of my engagement with Greek affairs as one speaks of an engagement with a theoretically interesting case on account of its peculiarity. And in truth, since my mind is not at ease if it does not answer its own questions, no matter how much time has elapsed since it first posed them and no matter how many intellectual(-spiritual) wanderings have taken place in the meanwhile since then, the purely theoretical interest was and is an essential motive of this "perseverance (fixation)" of mine, as you correctly called it. Nonetheless, I cannot in the least contemplate doubting towards the outside or concealing from

²⁵ This ideological current, while still present in Greece, seems to have progressively diminished since the 1990s and especially from the turn of the century (after Kondylis's death) in the face of the rise of the other Western "globalist" ideological current Kondylis mentions. It remains to be seen whether the former ideology will again achieve any prominence, in whatever version it might appear. One would think that "its time is over" given the rapid rate of the demographic and cultural de-Hellenisation of Greece, including in the state education system, from circa the commencement of the 21st century.

myself that those existential bonds, which become evident even to the seasoned cosmopolitan when he has sufficient self-knowledge and seriously thinks about the factors which formed him, connect me with Greece. Cosmopolitanism is not at all foreign to me, and I had the opportunity to exercise it in practice much more than most amongst us who preach it theoretically while lambasting "nationalism" of every sort. However, my objectively existing bond with Greece always remained subjectively active in the form of an existential and not only theoretical interest. Since I left Greece at a relatively mature age, leaving behind me many years of conscious life and telling experiences, I did not ever need, "in foreign lands", incongruous embellishments to console me or hollow nostalgias to weigh me down - and indeed as regards things which one lived in the 1950s and 1960s more purely and in an unadulterated manner. Hence, my existential interest in this land is not attached to positive biases; it however constitutes an enduring reason for the focusing of attention with positive and constructive intent, capable of crystallising into concrete proposals and acts.

14.

Q: In reading your works (i.e. treatises), one ascertains that your interest centres on European modernism, that you systematically lay siege to the European culture of the New Times. What is European culture (civilisation) for you and (to) where do you think it is heading?

A: Hegel's famous saying, that the owl, the bird of knowledge and wisdom, flies at dusk, necessarily comes to the mind of anyone who seeks today to survey the European New Times. A total survey is now made

possible precisely because the European New Times have entered their historical twilight and are coming to an end (ending their cycle) while being absorbed by the planetary era or epoch, which the very same European New Times inaugurated with the great geographic discoveries of the 15th and 16th century. Since we have before us a completed phenomenon and a constituted (composed) cycle, we find ourselves in the privileged position for the evaluating of the specific (distinctive or distinguishing) features (*differentiae specificae*) of this era and of this culture (civilisation), whose objectively outstanding significance rests on - beyond every value judgement - the fact that it set free the forces which unified the planet to an extent that was previously inconceivable. Planetary history swallows its generator, European history. This is also one of the resounding examples of the heterogony of ends, in relation to which we spoke above.

In four extensive works (i.e. treatises) of mine (*European Enlightenment, Conservatism, Critique of Metaphysics, Decline of Bourgeois Culture*), I attempted to pinpoint the world-theoretical axes which impart on the European New Times their distinctive unity, and I attempted it in such a way that today's planetary developments become understandable. And in these four works (i.e. treatises), the whole epoch is remoulded from each and every respective different perspective, while the history of ideas, but also social history, is structured as a history of problems, something which allows the analysis to simultaneously move at multiple levels, restoring these levels' unity. Seeing that at the end of the 20th century human domination over Nature does not stop even in view of the manipulation (guidance) of the biological matter of living beings, the impression is plausible that the European New Times first of all mean a radical repositioning of man vis-à-vis his natural environment, a

historisation of this environment in the sense of its progressive interweaving with the historical activity of man. Of course, this general statement does not move outside of the boundaries of vagueness and or commonplaces so long as the particular forms of the aforementioned repositioning are not traced in various fields and so as long as the form-related (morphological) parallelism and the internal interrelation of these fields is not understood. The analysis, while being obliged to work with abstractions and classifications, usually sets up hierarchies between the various fields, in reality however, historical movement took place simultaneously in all of these fields and the propulsive stimuli came, at times from one field, and at other times from another field. The primacy of *vita activa vis-à-vis vita speculativa*, of practical vis-à-vis theoretical life - which, through the new pre-eminence of erstwhile crude labour vis-à-vis erstwhile noble leisure, concretised the repositioning against Nature - branched out both into cosmology as well as into politics, in order to overturn from the bottom up ancient and Christian perceptions; and the overturning happened consciously, with express polemical intent. In cosmology, therefore, the aforementioned primacy meant the superiority (predominance) of motion (kinesis) over motionlessness (stasis), i.e. the replacement of the closed hierarchical world with the open and level universe; and in politics it meant that people are not as a matter of fate tied (bound) to a god-given or natural hierarchical order, but are able to construct a community equally open and level as the new universe. The tool of this construction was initially the modern sovereign state with its general and equal legislation, later it was the grand plan of Utopia. However state, Utopia, the primacy of active life and a technical perspective of things are closely connected. And in politics, just as in social labour, art (skill) excels nature, overturning in respect of this point too, ancient and Christian classifications.

However, (historical) development was not at all as uniform (unified) and linear as this schema could imply. Because the New Times had from the outset other sides, which were indeed very deeply contradictory. Against the ancient-Christian perception of the ontological inferiority of the perceptible (sensate) world vis-à-vis the sphere of the transcendental intellect(-spirit), the New Times ontologically revalued material Nature, attaching to it the features which in the opposing perception the intellect(-spirit) possessed: logic and rationally understood structuring, namely determinism. Man could behave like God opposite deterministic Nature (and in this sense anthropology displaces theology from the summit of theoretical interests), i.e. Man could, thanks to knowledge of Nature's laws, manipulate Nature as a technician, a technician inspired by the primacy of active life. On the other hand, this same Man, as a natural being, was subjected to natural determinism and could not be excluded from Nature without putting in danger the whole ontological revaluation of Nature, which the New Times urgently needed both world-theoretically and in practice-technically. From a Man totally subjected to natural determinism, one cannot however expect free will and ethical praxis (acts) *stricto sensu*. The New Times develop diverse argumentative stratagems in order to overcome the contradiction between causal and normative consideration, which bedevils the New Times even from the 16th century and is exacerbated precisely during the era of the Enlightenment, with the result of the appearance of extreme nihilistic trends. The crisis in values intensifies exactly to the extent that, based on the aforementioned world-theoretical shifts (transpositions), domination over Nature is expanded.

In the transition from the liberalism of the 19th century to the mass democracy of the 20th century, western societies evade this tug of war as

follows: mass democracy relies on mass production and mass consumption, that is, domination over Nature has reached a point that an unprecedented in human history overcoming of the shortage of goods is ensured (safeguarded). This overcoming blunts the problem of distribution in its old elemental sense and correspondingly permits a most significant slackening in the sector of values, where indeed pluralism constitutes a stance which directly assists the consumerist appetite of the masses and corresponds, at the ideational level, with the diversity of supply at the material level; consumption becomes a value and values become consumer goods. However, such an ending of the European New Times does not at all mean the finding of a conclusive equilibrium. As mass democracy becomes a planetary social formation, uprooting traditional hierarchies in the extra-Western realm as well, and converting billions of people into impatient consumers, the problem of distribution is broadened and sharpened (exacerbated), and indeed in circumstances of a serious demographic and ecological encumbrance (on the planet). The planetary expansion of mass democracy means of course further expansion of the pantheon or rather the pandemonium of values, but at the same time the struggles over distribution impose a recourse to symbolic weapons, that is, the limitation of value pluralism. World pluralism is only guaranteed by world felicity (pluralism *is* the ideology of satiated felicity: the hungry do not respect the values of those who are satiated), but this (world felicity), to an extreme (a sufficient) degree, is impossible. The 21st century will be a century of clashes between planetary Titans and Giants.

Thus, whether European values will be absorbed by world pluralism or whether a new shortage of goods will negate pluralism, the European New Times belongs to the past. The liberal and European epoch was one

thing, and the mass-democratic and planetary era is something else. Some believe that the planetary dissemination of Western technology (technique) will bring about the imposition of Western values and life stances (attitudes to life). However, modern technology (technique) is world-theoretically colourless and, when it will have become a self-evident common denominator as the plough once was, we shall see it - we already see it - combined with the most different world-theoretical and value positionings. Others again believe that the initial humanitarian plan of the European New Times is still uncompleted and can be completed today on a planetary scale cleansed of the mistakes or the arrogance (superciliousness) of the (colonial) past. They remind me of the educated idolaters of the 3rd and 4th centuries A.D., who believed that, by ridding paganism of its childhood illnesses and naiveties, they would render it a viable ideological basis for a radically different world.

15.

Q: Your starting point was your philological studies (study of the humanities) in Greece. Later you wrote a text with the title (and topic) Marx and ancient Greece. What is your relationship with ancient Greek culture (civilisation)? Or, to put it differently, how do you today see ancient Greece and its culture (civilisation)?

A: I consider my indulgence in (familiarisation with) classical letters as one of the great lucky things (events) and irreplaceable props of my intellectual(-spiritual) constitution. This indulgence started in my early teenage years, taking almost the form of a mania, and lasts, with various intensities and breaks since then, until today. In jest I confess to my

friends that, since reading pleases me so much, I should never have made writing my profession, and I (nostalgically) recollect with envy Lord Henry in the *Portrait of Dorian Gray*, who said that he liked reading so much that he did not have an appetite to write books himself. Now, whenever I imagine of extricating myself from all the trials of writing and I would devote my time to the pleasure of reading, the first thing that comes to mind is classical letters, Greek and Latin, in all its breadth (expanse). If the reader knows this classical literature himself, then it is superfluous to explain to him the reason why; if again he does not know it, then it is pointless. Nonetheless, I wish to answer your question, even if without going into too much detail, by highlighting (throwing into sharp relief) some points of particular personal significance.

First of all, familiarisation with the ancient Greek and Latin language, as syntactic and grammatical constructs and as correspondingly regulated expressive possibilities, meant for me a great and disciplined initiation into the phenomenon "language" in general, and indeed from an extremely privileged point of access. Languages, in relation to which the - regardless of whether fertile or infertile - nebulae (cloudiness, muddiness) of modern subjectivism do not obfuscate the contours of the words and the phrases, resemble cyclopean walls built with dry stone, with the (lap or scarf) joints (points at which two surfaces are joined) being manifest and the props being tangible, with the correspondences between the signifier and the signified being crude, in respect of the carving of discourse (speech) and of the chiseling of thought. Lucidity and simplicity are not here requirements which are propounded from outside, but the corollary and criterion of inner depth. I have cherished (loved) many, more modern, writers, who stylistically stand at the antipodes of that ideal. However, when I myself have to write, I cannot

but follow my stylistic proclivities, to find the suitable conduits through which to channel my own thought. And precisely the structuring of my thought brings me close to the perspicuous and as far as possible plain style, all the more because I believe, particularly when it is a matter of theoretical texts, that intellectual(-spiritual) honesty prohibits the coating (covering) of the imperfections in thought with fioriture (adornments) and verbal acrobatics. More specifically, the language, in which I first write my books, offers exceptional advantages to the knower (connoisseur) of the classical languages: German maintains far more than other languages the syntactic structures and the verbal modes of Ancient Greek and Latin. In particular, the almost unlimited possibilities of the intertwining of main and subordinate clauses within long periods allows the precise articulation of multi-level reflections, in relation to which the fabric (twining) and texture of the relations between the various dimensions of the meaning are thrown (put forth) into sharp relief in the syntactic fabric (twining). In no other language of all those I know could, for instance, the Thucydidean style be conveyed so well. To my German readers, who ask me how I can write effortlessly in a foreign language, and indeed with claims to a personal style, I reply that this is due in large part to my experience with the classical languages. Everyone who commands them easily knows what I mean.

Apart from the language, but not unrelated to it, a thought or an epoch of the history of the intellect(-spirit) is classical when it formulates with irreplaceable conceptuality (terminology) perpetually recurring problems, that is, problems against which every deeper contemplation, with internal necessity, comes up - in short, ultimate problems. How is it, however, possible for whatever was conceived and expressed in a specific time and place to have diachronic classical value? Just as in the human situation

more generally there are certain magnitudes being recycled continuously, despite their each and every respective different social-historical dressing (investiture), so too, human thought moves around certain fundamental magnitudes, whose basic combinations are numerically limited, hence, the ultimate choices (options) are also limited. In ancient Greece something quite amazing happened: in a relatively short period of time, and from within the internal necessities of the motion of cogitation (thought, contemplation), these ultimate choices (options) were discovered and summarised. Whoever, e.g. carefully studies, including in all its aspects, the contradistinction between sophism and Plato will ascertain that here was summed up, in a manner literally unexcelled, whatever thereafter basically bedevils, while begetting parallelly diverse intermediate solutions, Western thought and not only that: the dilemma "metaphysics or nihilism", in relation to which the ethical dimension of the examination of problems is consciously attached to the epistemological and cosmological dimension. Neither did this change, nor could it also have changed, because here the stable magnitudes, about which we spoke above, are in command (control). But did not Thucydides render visible, in a conceptually sufficient manner, certain constants of political behaviour and of international relations, so that he constitutes today (outside of Greece, it goes without saying) a compulsory reading for all those who comprehensively (substantially) deal with such matters? Here I perhaps must forestall (anticipate) a misunderstanding. What is classical is not exhausted in what is ancient Greek, as the lovers of antiquity (or the "Ancients") of the old humanistic school wanted to believe. Modern philosophy, sociology, historiography and literature also have their classics, with the meaning (sense) we gave above to the term. Spending time (An association) with the ancient classics not only cannot constitute any kind of obstacle to familiarisation

with modern authors, but has the opposite result: it addicts the intellect(-spirit) to a disliking of all the respective vogues and it teaches how one constitutes one's education (training) on firm and lasting foundations. Many (people), having dedicated themselves roughly existentially to an intellectual(-spiritual) fashion, lose their orientation once that passes, and by running behind it all their life, ceaselessly narrow their horizon(s). I warmly recommend to younger people, who are interested in seriously systematising their intellectual(-spiritual) interests, to do it from the starting point of the ancient and modern classics, (while always) ceaselessly returning to them. In this way they will both save time, by directly entering into the heart of problems, as well as avoiding that intellectual(-spiritual) debasement which anyone suffers who, while ignoring broader interrelations and long prehistories, stares, gaping, at each and every respective shooting star going from one side to the other.

To the extent I better understood the mechanisms of ideological and utopian thought, another feature of classical antiquity brought classical antiquity closer to me: the absence of eschatology and of linear perceptions of the historical becoming, which, as is known, have a Judeo-Christian origin and were secularised both by socialistic Marxism as well as by capitalistic liberalism. In order to avoid hysteria in the face of full and irrevocable death, the hysteria of eschatology was legitimised world-theoretically. Whoever learns to live without express and tacit eschatologies and without ethicisms (moralisms) as these eschatologies' substitutes, should also learn to die, totally and irrevocably, with serenity and cheerfulness (of the soul). If one can take (be taught) this highest (supreme) course (lesson) somewhere, it is from classical antiquity, which ignored the straight line with the auspicious endpoint in order to

fix itself on the observing (viewing) and the living (experiencing) of the eternal cycle.

16.

Q: From your works (i.e. treatises) which I know, I would characterise you as a historian of ideas and a studier (student) of human behaviour. My question is if a philosopher hides behind the historian and, in the case where (event) the answer is affirmative, what is the core of your philosophy?

A: If I could be permitted, first of all, to add to "historian of ideas", social historian too. Not because I fear missing out on some title, but because the history of ideas seems to me to be without a foundation (dangling in the wind) - and moreover frequently incomprehensible as to its content and turns (changes) - without a historically and sociologically vivid conception of concrete subjective bearers in their concrete objective situations; what I mean by that I showed in works (i.e. treatises) like *Conservatism* and the *Decline of Bourgeois Culture*. But, as I mentioned in answering your previous question, neither the historically and sociologically founded history of ideas is complete, if it does not enter into the history of theoretical problems, if it, that is, does not trace, now from the inside, the formation of ideas under the pressure of their inner logic on each and every respective occasion. The heterogony of ends does not exist only inside of history in general, but also in the history of ideas. Rarely is a thinker, when he formulates a reflection (thought, idea, mental (intellectual) construct), in a position to apprehend all its logical consequences, which are gradually disclosed, since the reflection is used

by other subjects inside of other situations. The examination of the inner logic of ideas, of consistency (coherence, cohesion) and of their ultimate presuppositions, brings us to the realm of theory and of theoretical generalisations. So for anyone who is in position to survey things (matters) simultaneously at many levels, there is neither a chasm nor a contradiction between the history of ideas and theory. Now, if and why theory must be called "philosophy" or not, I do not know anything about that and I am not interested in finding out anything about it. Appellations (What we call things) are indifferent to me on account of the vagueness and their multiple meanings (polysemy), which are due to the fact that many sides simultaneously pursue a monopoly on "genuine" philosophy etc. for themselves. My concern is not participation in such disputes, which have remained fruitless for the last twenty-five centuries, but indulgence in (familiarisation with) diverse individual sectors with the purpose of the formulation of social-ontological (socio-ontological), sociological and historical generalisations which admit of empirical verification or falsification. Let me remind you that the philosophy of the New Times did not create on its own its examination of problems, but it took it from outside (of itself), while directly or indirectly following, more adequately or less adequately, the rapid developments in the sciences, initially mainly in physical(natural)-mathematical, and then in social-anthropological sciences. The epistemologically oriented philosophy of the subject in the 17th and 18th century was constituted as an endeavour at answering the questions the then mathematical physics (distinction between primary and secondary qualities, causality, substance) posed. The social and anthropological sciences, which started to be founded in the 18th century and matured (gained momentum, "reached manhood") in the 19th century, forced philosophy to turn more and more to the examination of problems of intersubjective relations,

while at the same time fatally wounded (pierced) its age-old vital myth: the myth of the autonomy of the intellect(-spirit). I do not see how someone can proceed today to notable generalisations without a broad empirical training, without any long-standing experience in respect of the social sciences. The detachment of professional philosophers from such education and experience most frequently renders them, as is known, picturesque phenomena (which cannot be taken seriously).

Now, there are different levels of generalisation, and if, by calling me a "philosopher" you mean that certain of my analyses move at the broader possible generalising level, then I ought to accept the appellation - only in accordance with convention, of course. This broader level, when we are talking about human affairs (things), is the level of social ontology, which is co-composed, as I see it, first, of a theory regarding the spectrum and the mechanism of the social relations between people, secondly, of a theory about those particular (political) relations which constitute and restrain (constrain) society as a supra-personal totality and, finally, of an anthropology and a philosophy of culture as the characteristic nature of man²⁶. Obviously, fixed entities, which somehow exist behind historical and social phenomena, guiding them and subjecting them to any form of determinism whatsoever, do not constitute the object of social ontology; on the contrary, those factors or forces which hold the life of socially living humans in continuous motion constitute the object of social ontology, and precisely because of that they make relative and transitory

²⁶ The three ontic aspects of the level of social ontology Kondylis mentions here correspond to the main subject matters of each of the three volumes of his planned magnum opus of which only the first volume was (almost) completed: Kondylis, P. *Das Politische und der Mensch. Grundzüge der Sozialontologie*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999 [The Political and Man. Basic (Essential, Fundamental) characteristics (features) of social ontology]. Band I Soziale Beziehung, Verstehen, Rationalität (Volume I Social relation, Understanding, Rationality); Band II Gesellschaft als politisches Kollektiv (Volume II Society as political collective); Band III Identität, Macht, Kultur (Volume III Identity, Power, Culture). It is a matter of great sorrow for all of Kondylis's admirers that he was not able to write and publish the second and third volumes.

only the predominance of every individual "determinism" and every individual causality. In other words, social ontology does not provide a supreme factual or normative criterion for the observation of human society and history, but provides that fundamental analysis from which it (the observation of humans society and history) stems (arises), because the finding of such a criterion is impossible. Social ontology delineates fields and frameworks, in which all the elements which co-compose its object move, but it cannot determine in advance in which direction and in which manner they will move. Precisely this imparts upon social ontology more generality than the social sciences, which seek typologies and causalities. Let me explain this with an example, even if it is somewhat crude. Social ontology ascertains that man can, as a friend, sacrifice himself for other humans or, as a foe, can kill them, and the task of social ontology is to make understood such a plasticity which allows movement between radically opposite poles. The task of sociology is to find under which circumstances and which typical forms it is more likely that one or rather the other occurs, e.g. when one more likely ought to expect peace between humans and when war is more probable, whereas the task of history is to search for the causes to which a or b concrete peace and a or b concrete war is owed.

I cannot here enter into the complicated epistemological problems of the founding of the those various cognitive branches; I am doing that in the first volume of the work I am writing now²⁷. Nevertheless, I hope that the de facto necessitated (imposed) interweaving of the theoretical generalisations with sociological and historical analysis - as well as the texture of these generalisations, has roughly become understood. I do not want to talk in terms of paradoxes by putting forward the position that the

²⁷ The first volume of *The Political and Man*.

better theoretical generalisation is that which on the basis of its own presuppositions refers us to empirical research and to the analysis of concrete cases as the ultimate judges. On the other hand, the inner logic of the understanding of concrete cases, in its automatic and irrepressible advance (movement forward), requires the incorporation of these concrete cases in continually broader interrelations until we reach the level of all levels, that is, what - for want of a better term - we call "human affairs (things)". As I implied, social ontology not only ought to co-operate most closely with the social sciences, but also be itself multi-dimensional. The consideration of human affairs is, sure enough, a multi-dimensional and multi-prismatic matter. If, therefore, I succumbed to the dogmatic temptation and the magic of epigrams, in attempting to directly reply to your question and to summarise in one sentence (phrase) the "core of my philosophy", then I would necessarily use terms capable of embracing this multi-dimensionality and multi-prismaticity (i.e. these multiple prismatic characteristics); however, such terms would be polysemous (i.e. have many meanings) in their generality. If an absolutely dense and at the same time absolutely clear synopsis were possible, I assure you that I would not have published a few thousand - not verbose, I want to believe - pages. My thought, like every thought, has a quintessence, however the interested reader must distil it from inside of the whole of my work; otherwise any formula whatsoever not only will not be understood, but will also certainly be misunderstood. I want, despite all that, to tell you something, which seems substantial to me, starting from the formulation of your question. The philosopher who is hiding behind the historian says - and this is his final word (on the matter): think historically, the answers to historical problems are not found in constructed theory, but on the contrary, the answers to theoretical problems are found in history. Those who choose theory over

history do it not because they move in higher spheres, as they themselves often think, but out of intellectual(-spiritual) indolence; because any theory whatsoever is infinitely more simple than any historical situation whatsoever.

17.

Q: Apart from your huge authorial (body of) work, your also enormous translating and publishing activity is known - publishing not in the business sense, but in the sense of manager (director, editor(-in-chief)) of special series of philosophy, sociology, anthropology, ideas in general. What significance do you grant to these activities?

A: I spoke earlier of my existential ties to Greece and of an existential interest capable of crystallising into acts (praxis). I do not mean the acts of an amateur and a busybody nor those which are entered into with a somehow or other understood self-interest, but acts which constitute an offer on the basis of what one is in a position to do in sectors one knows. I had come to the conclusion from very early on that the intellectual(-spiritual) life and more generally education in Greece suffers from basic deficiencies in its infrastructure and that its deep provincialism is not bound to be ever overcome without serious work as regards infrastructure. Of course, this work would have essential social prospects (of success) only if its natural cradles flourished, and these especially are the universities. That is not happening, and I do not believe that it will happen in the future. However this does not constitute a reason that one should not do, from one's own position, whatever one can. Only he who does not want to really deal with the task at hand, prepares endlessly for

that task (Whoever does not want to knead, sifts endlessly). In this way, even though the load of the rest of my work functioned approximately prohibitively, I undertook, with the support of selfless and dignified publishers, the management (directorship) and supervision of two such undertakings (ventures). The first, the "Philosophical and Political Library" (editions "Gnose" («Γνώση»)) had already begun in 1983 and will be brought to completion soon when it will have eked out (supplemented, published) sixty volumes. For fifteen years four volumes per year were published without fail. Top authors were presented as well as top works of philosophy, of sociology and of political theory. Because the programme had the ambition to stress the idea of the unity of philosophical and social-political thought, in an era in which the traditional systematic separations ended up becoming problematic and infertile, in which the historicity of philosophical problems became so widely conscious as well as the philosophical significance of going deeper into the historical activity of people. I made every effort to have classical works translated (into Greek), which were unpublished then in Greece, and the harvest was not small: we now have in Greek Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Locke's *Second Treatise* and Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*. Parallely, weight was given to the chronicling (itemisation, listing) of modern Greek theoretical production, and again with significant results: two volumes chronicled modern Greek philosophy under Turkish (Ottoman) rule (1453-1821), another two (volumes), modern Greek philosophy's continuation (continuity) under the free Greek state (1828-1922), while five volumes embraced the socialistic thought in our country from 1875 until 1974. To second undertaking, under the general title "Modern European Culture (Civilisation)" (editions "Nefele" («Νεφέλη»)), commenced in 1997 and will be completed in 2000, when twelve volumes will have appeared (been published). Here the aim is the

synthetic presentation of Western culture (civilisation) from the Renaissance until our days. The technical revolution, the changes in ethics (customs) and in mentalities (mindsets), in forms of social and economic organisation, the relations of Western culture (civilisation) with the rest of the cultures (civilisations, world), art and literature constitute the basic aspects (sides) of this panorama. There is no need for me to explain precisely why today the enormous cognitive and bibliographical gap which exists in Greece in relation to such topics (subjects) gapes as even something more dismal (gloomy) than beforehand. And here my confidence is not great, however one must do one's duty irrespective of one's dispositions (moods) and one's forecasts (predictions). Allow me to add that during the selection of all those titles I never used as a criterion my agreement or disagreement, sympathy or antipathy for the writers; in most cases works categorically contrary to my own views on the matter in hand were selected; writers were even published whom I personally consider rather light²⁸, provided that they were at the centre of general interest and substantially influenced international discussions. That is how I perceive polyphony (i.e. a plurality of views) and that is how I try to overcome my own subjectivity. At any rate, it does not seem subjective or merely smug (self-complacent) if I say that I regard these seventy-two volumes, which in terms of translation and publication are at unusually high levels for Greece, as a worthwhile (significant) contribution to the education of this land. If the professors in Greek universities, instead of paraphrasing books and publishing them in their names, every one of them, translated two significant works in their branch (field, area), our bibliography would already have another face. However, they themselves know very well why they paraphrase instead of translate: and even good paraphrasing is easier than a good translation.

²⁸ E.g. Wittgenstein, Arendt, Foucault, Derrida, Leo Strauss, Lyotard, a.o..

As far as it concerns me, I have translated more than twenty volumes, from four foreign languages²⁹, and I moreover rendered into modern Greek the Xenophonian *Hiero*. The fact that I contributed to the publication of classical works particularly satisfies me, in respect of a two-volume selection from Machiavelli, my collaboration in the translation of Montesquieu and the translation of works by Marx; yet are not Schiller and Lichtenberg, Chamfort and Rivarol or Pavese equally classical, albeit in other areas³⁰? In talking about such in particular translations of mine, my heart beats more intensely, as I call back to mind (recreate) an already long history of a very much beloved chapter of my intellectual(-spiritual) life: I mean my relationship with the Greek language. It is the only, at least European, language which has behind it an uninterrupted history of roughly three thousand years and at the same time it has gone through diverse transformations (meta-developments, further developments) and mutations. However the previous forms did not vanish into thin air, but still live in different ways inside it, as sediments and strata (layers) which make diachrony synchrony. Homeros (Homer) and classical Attic, the Koine³¹ and learned (scholarly, literary, lettered) Byzantine, the ecclesiastical language and the language of the demotic (folk) song and of the Cretan epe (epics), archaising and simple katharevousa³², the current urban (modern Greek language) and idiomatic

²⁹ German, French, Italian and English.

³⁰ Kondylis has also translated works by, inter alia, Burnham, Cassirer, Plamenatz and Schmitt into Greek.

³¹ Referring to the Greek and also lingua franca of the Hellenistic world, which is often periodised from the time of Alexander the Great until the establishment of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire.

³² A learned or literary form of modern Greek which came to the fore of Greek intellectual(-spiritual) life particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries until the 1970s, which had various manifestations as Kondylis rightly indicates, and which was often a point of reference in the cultural and political clashes of the times as opposed to the various demotic forms of modern Greek, which was spoken more generally by "the common people". The translator is particularly fond of both "versions" of the modern Greek language but laments, as a matter of taste and of course not as a scientific concern, the passing of katharevousa as another concession to the de-Hellenisation of modern Greeks, which in the 21st century is being accompanied, in the translator's view, by demographic (extremely low indigenous birthrates, mass emigration of young indigenous Greeks and relatively high levels of illegal settlement by foreigners in Greece), as well as cultural (promotion of internationalist or imperialist US/Western

remnants - all of them even today constitute sources from which one can draw (derive) linguistic elegance (good taste, artistry), but also expressive need. To the uniqueness of this language is due, I believe, the otherwise paradoxical fact that modern Greece, which has not offered anything to theoretical thought or to technical culture, has given and gives high poetry; the dynamics of this unrepeatable language on its own begets - washes up, I'd even say - the poetry. From the beginning I felt the Greek language as a unity and I read it insatiably as a unity, in the monuments of all its epochs. Having betrayed the Greek language, in some kind of way, since I myself write in a foreign language, I could, however, from within the necessary distance understand, and indeed love it, more. That is perhaps somewhat discernible in my translations - and in these I include the translations of my own books from German, in relation to which it never occurred to me to assign to someone else. Justice would necessitate that I memorialise (mention) here the European literatures, which have also kept me company from way back. But that is a separate, also large and also beloved, chapter.

18.

Q: And a final question: Mr. Kondylis, are you left-wing or right-wing?

based ideology over patriotic or indigenous ethnic ideology in state schools, state institutions, mass media etc.), (auto-)genocide, or at least incipient forms of genocide. Whereas e.g. the Hebrews through "fortress Israel" and relative geopolitical strengths are doing everything in their power to survive as a race, religion and nation (irrespective of these concepts' "deconstructability"), the Hellenes or Greeks seem to be doing everything in their power to ensure their own demographic and cultural genocide in Greece as occurred in Ionia, southern Italy, the Pontian lands, Thrace, the islands of Imbros and Tenedos, (northern) Cyprus, etc.. commencing in particular from the 12th century A.D., with the main benefactors being the hordes of (initially nomadic) Turkish or Turkic invaders, and in the case of southern Italy, forms of the Italian language and Catholicism. The rise and fall of Hellenism, spanning over more than 3000 years, is an outstanding historical example of "whatever is born must die", no matter what the various historical geopolitical and cultural achievements have been.

A: When I dissect the ideological illusions of the "right-wingers", most of them consider me "left-wing"; when I put to the test the corresponding delusions of "left-wingers", most of them characterise me as a "right-winger". My own positioning remains, of course, also immutable in both cases. Because in both cases I use the same analytical tools, and in both cases my intention is not to offer polemical arguments to one side against the other side, but to see things from a broader and superior perspective - and such a perspective, as is known, is useless to all those who fight for their side (party), fighting simultaneously (selfishly or unselfishly, that is not of interest here) for themselves, that is, for the identity which permits them to orientate themselves and survive socially. Precisely the interweaving of political ideology with all the respective needs of a personal identity imparts to the disputes between the bearers of various ideologies an acuteness (sharpness) irreconcilable with a differentiated consideration of the other; because to the extent one is somehow right about something, the other ceases to be somehow right, that is, his right to existence as a carrier of this ideology is reduced. Hence, psychic economy necessitates quick classifications and synoptic judgements, even if the most murky motives and the most deplorable (basest, vilest) intentions are ascribed to the other.

One of the crucial discoveries in my intellectual(-spiritual) life, which I made - fortunately not too late - when I still felt myself also to be a militant, was that the person opposite you, that person you consider your opponent or foe, that person who is perhaps your persecutor, can equally have a clear conscious and equally pure motives as you too, (and) be animated by the same unwavering conviction of the rightness (justice) of his position. Things are not as they are presented in Brecht's didactic-propagandistic works, which exercised so much charm (cast such a spell)

precisely because they separate with a knife black from white. Here the foe, namely the "evil" person, is not only objectively evil, but he himself knows it as well, and indeed he takes pleasure in it; it goes without saying, vis-à-vis such a subject it is superfluous to have any intellectual or psychic scruples whatsoever. I can say, without some kind of pride, that since I understood, until its ultimate consequences, the distinction between ethical character (nature) and political-ideological preferences, I never felt any antipathy because someone disagreed with me on political matters, nor did I sympathise with someone else only, and only because he happened to agree with me. Only a lack of humour is personally unbearable for me - and humour does not mean the ability to laugh at (against) others, but the ability to laugh with others at (against) yourself, the ability at relativising yourself. Nevertheless, even a complete lack of humour also seems to be understandable and forgivable, if we consider how deep the need is for one to have an identity and how relentless (inexorable) the logic is of this identity's safeguarding (protection). Under these circumstances, ideological fallacy or delusion constitutes the natural state of affairs, and it is of secondary importance, indeed often accidental, if the fallacy or delusion has "right-wing" or "left-wing" signs (i.e. symbolism). Everyone has equal rights to a delusion, since not everyone has the same ability or the same courage in respect of (attaining) knowledge. Sometimes I worry after the fact because in some discussion I insisted on the defence (advocacy) of "unpleasant" diagnoses or views more than what the psychic durability or perspectivity of my interlocutor allowed. It would of course be very difficult to explain to him (or her) that in this insistence obstinacy does not drive me and a disposition to "change" him (or her), but rather my impersonal love of consistency and the fullness (completeness) of an argumentation. Be that as it may, most people consider it roughly unnatural for others to advocate opposite

perceptions (views). Conversely, I am surprised if someone agrees with me.

I was not partial, I believe, in my analysis of "right-wing" and "left-wing" ideological fallacies or delusions. I did not limit myself to the anatomy of communistic eschatology, but I proceeded to a thorough (close) examination of the ideologems (i.e. kinds of sub-ideology) of classical and modern conservatism (in my monograph *Conservatism*), while in my political-strategic analyses after the termination of the Cold War, the critique of economistic and universalistic "neoliberalism" has a central position. More generally, I formulated, by giving reasons, the conviction that the trisection of the political spectrum into "conservatism", "liberalism" and "social democracy (socialism)" constituted a distinctive (specific) co-corollary of the European New Times and it loses its significance to the extent that the European New Times are dissolved in the mass-democratic planetary era. Because the problem of distribution is not put (posed) any more between constituted social classes in the framework of separate nations and still abundant natural resources, but is put after the absorption of classical social classes by the mass-democratic melting pot and in the framework of a planet where the demographic and the ecological encumbrance is gradually rendered insufferable. The naked biological magnitudes slowly, slowly take the place of (substitute for) the traditional political magnitudes, with their each and every respective packaging. No "right-wing" and no "left-wing" wisdom will help if eight or ten billion people frantically (maniacally) endeavour to consume as many raw materials, as much energy and as many goods as North Americans and Europeans. Politics becomes biological as it is simply converted into the distribution of goods (also ecological goods) on a most narrow planet. As we see, the necessary breaking away from the political

ideologies of the European New Times will not mean the end of struggles between people, but will simply mean struggles without such ideologies - in the worst case it will mean a return to naked existential confrontations which do not need ideological embellishments and ideological wrappings at all. The substitution of our well-known political ideologies with biological criteria and magnitudes would not constitute, in this worst case scenario, a welcome freeing of human history from the surplus load of primeval (primordial) illusions, but the reverse: it would signal a situation so weighed down that it could not (cannot) additionally lift even the light (little, minimal) weight of an ideological soap bubble.

Questions 19-28 by Spyros Koutroulis³³

19.

Q: In your work you deal with a variety of topics determinative of Western culture (civilisation): Marxism, the European and (modern) Greek Enlightenment, descriptive and normative theory, the decline of bourgeois culture and now the theory of war. Could you present to the readers of *New Sociology* the major milestones (stations) of your thought, in combination with the significant intellectual(-spiritual) currents which influenced their formation?

A: One's attempt to write one's intellectual(-spiritual) autobiography in an exhaustive and absolutely valid manner seems to me to be condemned to failure from the beginning; this applies, by the way, not only to autobiographies, but also to biographies. He who writes his autobiography describes his intellectual(-spiritual) path (course) inside of the dominant and frequently inflexible viewpoint of an already fixed perception in respect of the world and human affairs (things). Moreover, he has the psychologically understandable, at any rate, smug (self-complacent) tendency to stress the logical coherence and the inner necessity of this path, by underestimating, pushing aside or most frequently not becoming (being) conscious of even the coincidences (concurrences) which determined it (this path), the judgements and the uncertainties which marked it; much less, of course, is he himself in a

³³ First published in Greece in the journal «Νέα Κοινωνιολογία» 25 (Spring 1998), pp. 17-36.

position to trace the elemental forces of his existence, which pushed his thought probably towards this, rather than the other direction. Under these circumstances, an attempt at an intellectual(-spiritual) autobiography, since one desires - as one ought - to assist in the understanding of a work and not to round out in a favourable light and embellish towards the outside the face (person) of a creator, would have to avoid psychologisms and personal reminiscences in order to focus on the delineation of theoretical problems, on the review (re-examination) of the stages and the more general logical or factual presuppositions of their (the said theoretical problems') investigation (examination).

Your question nonetheless refers to a deeper and broader level than that of the individual theoretical problems: if I understand correctly, you are asking me from where the threads, which connect the diverse problems which my books examine, come. First of all, I must say that between the general theoretical positioning of an author and the multilateralism of his examination of problems there is no necessary or unambiguous (monosemous) relationship. Multilateralism, when it is not due to superficiality and is not exhausted in cursory exercises (improvisations), is a difficult-to-explain personal need, a difficult-to-explain personal talent, through which a mind can combine, in a higher unity, things which for someone else are unrelated (as between them). But this constitutes only one, the subjective side of the matter (thing), which explains why two people, even if they share in general terms a way of looking at things, can differ most significantly as to the extent of their interests. The other side (of the matter) rests on the conscious effort to channel the, in any event, existing multiplicity of interests into the attempt at the building of an, as far as possible, multilateral (many-sided) theory, i.e. a theory in which the guiding principles branch out into diverse sectors and tangibly

prove in this way their interpretive strength and versatility. If this attempt or undertaking succeeds, then theoretical analysis simultaneously moves at the levels of social ontology, anthropology, sociology, social history and the history of ideas, but also (at the levels) of politics and strategy in the broader or the narrower sense of the terms. The fusion of strict conceptual processing (elaboration) and profound historical analysis, with a first-hand knowledge of real facts (data), constitutes for me not merely a methodological ideal, but an elementary prerequisite of a positioning which wants to be taken seriously, which has, namely the ambition and the possibility of offering its studier (student) an essential knowledge of the world in which he lives. The production of ahistorical and unhistorical theory is basically an easy matter, and that is why so many, famous and unknown or little-known theorists, indulge in it, wanting to believe that the substitution of an arbitrary concept with another arbitrary concept, or a new combination of concepts, is an important contribution to thought. All of that constitutes symptoms of a permanent intellectual(-spiritual) adolescence. The intellect(-spirit) reaches its maturity when it is in a position to give a concrete analysis of a concrete situation. Only the clueless (ignorant) will call that narrowness and empiricism. Because precisely the concrete analysis of concrete situations shows the true texture and usefulness of conceptual and methodological tools.

Here I cannot but reflect upon the deep and permanent impression the example of Marx made upon me. In the work of this great thinker it becomes clear in a formidable manner that philosophy, anthropology, economy, history, politics etc. constitute as of their essence not only one and the same thing, but at the same time a unified (uniform) knowledge, at whose centre one is inevitably led, regardless of the point in the periphery from which one starts. Marx was a great theorist only, and only

because he was, and only for as long as he was, a great historian. To the extent he stops being a historian and becomes an eschatologist of history and a theologian, a chasm is opened in his thought which often does not leave intact the individual analyses. The close examination (scrutiny) of the inner contradictions of Marx's thought meant for me, next to (near) other stimuli, the spark for the systematic approach to central matters around which, as theoretical axes, a series of examinations of problems and findings was developed. First, the pointing out of the multiple interweavings between scientific analysis and ethically inspired eschatology brought to the fore the question of the structure and of the transformations of the age-old osmosis of Is with Ought, through which people all along try to convert, by definition, their wishes (desires) into realities; the scientific duty of the differentiation (distinction) of Is and Ought calls for, conversely, its theoretical founding in the search for the presuppositions of value neutrality. Secondly, Marx's great discovery, which is summarised in the concept (notion) "ideology", automatically raised, as Karl Mannheim saw, the issue of the application of this concept (of ideology) to Marxism itself, and with that, it put forward the problem of scepticism with an unprecedented intensity after the contradistinction between sophism and Platonism; for my part, I thus goaded myself into the search of a theoretically viable solution able to combine the validity of scientific knowledge with the ascertainment of the relativity of ethical (moral) values. Thirdly, the dogmatic primacy of the economic factor in the construct of historical materialism contradicted (came into conflict with) the (witnessed in the historical analysis of various situations and eras) activity and independence (autonomy) of the political factor. Still further: the linear advancement (evolution) of economic progress was opposed to the noteworthy structural stability of the political game, irrespective of the changes (shifts, alterations) in the institutional

framework. The investigation into (examination of) the political factor in this way came to act jointly (co-operate) with the going deeper into certain constants, unfolding in the field of social ontology and of anthropology.

From this perspective, the reader will not find it hard to understand why in the formation of my thought several great political thinkers played a not insignificant role (part). Both as to his intellectual(-spiritual) weight as well as chronologically, first amongst them was Thucydides, whose study accompanies me from my early teenage years until today. A second milestone in the same direction was the study of Machiavelli, to whom my first extensive publication is devoted, as well as my indulgence in the work of contemporary analysts of international relations, commencing with Raymond Aron. Of course, such readings would not have yielded as much as they yielded if they were not framed by a long and extended engagement with European social and political-military history. On the other hand, the conceptual tools, which the epistemologically adequate (sufficient) apprehension (conception) of the relation between Is and Ought or of the methodological bases of social science demanded, were sharpened in the critical contradistinction in respect of Kant and Max Weber; in particular, Weber seems to me above all to be a lofty (high) example of intellectual(-spiritual) ethos, grounded in (founded on) a passion for the truth, even when its price is psychologically high (heavy), because it means the detachment from every hope fed by illusions. Finally, the study of the mechanism of ideologies, as I started it by commencing with Marx, led me to a new coming face-to-face with (facing of) the history of European ideas, both in the field of philosophy and of metaphysics, as well as in that (field) of literary and artistic forms.

Although I cannot say more here on this topic, I have the feeling I said very little. No schematisation of intellectual(-spiritual) influences and debts can give a clear perception regarding the concrete movement and fertility of a thought, if we of course assume that this thought is something more than (above) the sewing together and repetition of book sources. Such a thing is perhaps sufficient for a student to write his doctoral dissertation or for a professor to inflate (increase) his list of publications, however a substantial contribution to the knowledge of human affairs (things) requires a total (complete) existential commitment (enlistment, call to arms), the vigilant observation of concrete situations of living people, and an unstoppable distillation (filtering, refinement) of observations with relentless (unbending) reflection (thought), which does not retreat before (in the face of) any bias and does not fear clashing with anyone and anything. One could call this stance an ethic (ethical) (it is certainly a form of internal asceticism), however it does not have any relation with ethics as a norm (rule) of social behaviour; on the contrary, it can conflict head on with such a norm.

20.

Q: In your work *Power and Decision* (Greek edition: *Stigme* (Στιγμή), 1991) you present the descriptive theory of the decision and normative theory. In the context of these, what meaning does the conflict (clash) between rationalism and irrationalism and the distinction between Is and Ought have (take)?

A: When one has to answer such questions in short (quickly), one feels that one ought to traverse in one hour an ocean by swimming. Since that

is impossible, I shall be restricted to engraving a dotted (broken) line on a map, with the hope that whoever has theoretical interests will find the time and the contemplative (reflective) patience to really travel (cover) the distance, by going back to other analyses of mine. If I (may) start with the concepts of rationalism and irrationalism, which, incidentally, are most frequently charged (loaded) with ethical-normative preferences, and are thus most directly attached to the examination of problems with regard to Is and Ought. To express myself with dogmatic succinctness (as if in the form of an epigram), I consider impossible a science beyond rationalism and I consider impossible a perception as regards Ought, that is, the founding of values, within scientific rationalism. That means, inter alia, that the rationalism of scientific knowledge and the rationalism of values are two different things; it also meant that, while scientific knowledge cannot be anything but rational, the founding and defence of values is possible both with rational as well as with irrational means (e.g. the invocation of the "moral feeling (ethical sense)", of "compassion" etc.). Scientific rationalism does not of course have any relation with an intellectualistic articulation of concepts in relation to which the exclusive criterion of truth is logical coherence. This logical coherence is a self-evident demand of scientific thought, however it has scientific value only if it "saves the phenomena", i.e. if it crystallises generalisations of empirical observations. It is here a matter of indifference if the generalisations are formulated with the empirical observations as the starting point, or if they are expressed (uttered) hypothetically in order to be verified (proved) empirically after the fact; in reality, both these two modi procedendi are inseparable in scientific practice. As much as this practice varies, it will always move somewhere between the two poles of theoretical generalisation and of empirical ascertainment; the fact that theory imbues (permeates) the apprehension (conception) of experience

does not at all mean that theory can be rescued (saved, salvaged) vis-à-vis all empirical attestations (evidence), whatever form it (the theory in question) may take; by the way, all theories recognise that in actual fact, even also the most abstract (of theories), because all theories invoke some, definitely interpreted, facet of experience. The history of the sciences shows, nevertheless, how fluid these matters (things) are and how quickly the dominant (prevailing) methodological perceptions are transformed (changed) on each and every respective occasion. Precisely this proves, as I believe, that no methodology, as flawlessly (impeccably) as it is (may be) formulated on paper, cannot take (on) the role of a blind man's guide dog and lead any handler (operator) of the said methodology to the solution of any problems whatsoever. Because the possible combinations of theoretical generalisation and empirical observation are a large number, no prescription can adequately substitute for (take the place of) individual education (training) and the individual talents (gifts) of each and every respective researcher. Even if everyone accepted in abstracto the same method, the eyes of the hare would remain different to the eyes of the owl (every individual researcher would view things with different eyes). The so-called "methodological debates" relate more to the formation of ideological sides (parties) within the stratum of scientists and less to substantial progress in knowledge.³⁴

The problem of rationalism and irrationalism is put forward differently when we move on to the level of world-theoretical decisions and ethical-normative preferences. Here the dispute between "rationalists" and "irrationalists" is in reality concerned not with the mutual control (i.e. checking or verifying) of theory and experience, but the prevailing

³⁴ C.f. Kondylis, P. "Wissenschaft, Macht und Entscheidung" ("Science, Power and Decision") and Kondylis, P. *Macht und Entscheidung (Power and Decision)* in relation to all of the content of the answer to the current question.

(predominance) of these or those concrete (and, silently or not, presupposed) positions. The "rationalists" connect by definition their beloved ethical-normative positions with the "correct (right) use of Reason", in order to thereafter draw the conclusion that whoever militates against these positions does so only, and only because he is unable to think logically. However, between form and content, i.e. between argumentation in accordance with the current logical rules (rules of logic) and positionings vis-à-vis matters of content, there is no necessary relation; the same form of logical argumentation can, as to content, lead to entirely different conclusions when the premises differ. Under the controllable (checkable or verifiable) form of the logical rules (the rules of logic), rationalism is purely formal; when rationalism seeks to identify itself with ethical-normative contents, then it dodges the realm of such control (checking or verifying) and is articulated as a world-theoretical decision in a dual sense: as a decision in favour of "rationalism" and against "irrationalism", and as a decision in favour of these contents and against other contents. When the "rationalists" consider that the decision in favour of "rationalism" is itself eo ipso rational, they do something which we all self-evidently reject in our daily life: they recognise in someone, namely in "Reason", the right to be the judge when he himself (or it itself) is being judged. We are dealing of course with a classical power claim, behind which, as is known, the interrelated claims of all the respective representatives of "Reason" are hidden. But the "irrationalists" too find themselves before (facing) insurmountable difficulties. They accept that the source of ultimate world-theoretical and ethical-normative positions is found ultra rationem, but they are not in a position to eliminate, with consistency, Reason, at least in the form of the use of arguments with as far as possible coherent logical structuring. Whoever cannot argue coherently and formally correctly is condemned to the social

nought (to be a social zero), not only because he cannot campaign (take the field) against "rationalism", but is not even taken into consideration. Just as the "rationalists" are unable to see the rationalism on the other side (of the river), so too the "irrationalists" err when they think that "rationalism" desiccates, with its abstractions, the existential prerequisites (preconditions) of thought. Neither of the two sides (parties) is in a position either to realise all that each side itself promises, or even to verify in full the fears of the other side. The decision in favour of "rationalism" remains an existential decision, and the defence of "irrationalism" occurs with rational means. That is why such confrontations cannot be taken at face value. The essential questions for a sober analysis are as follows: *what* is characterised on each and every respective occasion as rational or irrational? *What* and from *whom* is something accepted or rejected as rational or irrational? With *whose* truth claim and power claim is that which is characterised as rational or irrational connected?

As the differentiation (distinction) between scientific and ethical-normative rationalism already implies (entails), I do not at all attach the position that ethical (moral) values are relative (i.e. the products of concrete subjects in concrete situations) to some form of cognitive relativism and scepticism. On this crucial point, my positioning is opposed to the whole of philosophical tradition until now, i.e. to its two basic, albeit counterbalancing (converse), directions. Scepticism always connected, both in its ancient (sophism, Pyrrhonism) as well as its modern versions, the impossibility of knowledge of things with the relativity and variability of good and evil, whereas Platonism and the ideocratic tendencies more generally did precisely the reverse: the steadfastness or firmness of metaphysical knowledge supported the

certainty of for ever (in perpetuity) invariable (immutable, unchangeable) good and evil. Hence, scepticism was always inverted Platonism and Platonism was inverted scepticism. From my point of view, knowledge of human affairs (things) is possible, at least to an in practice sufficient degree - and precisely this knowledge allows us (to make) the ascertainment that values are relative in the sense I referred to above. There is no logically necessary interrelation between epistemological scepticism and ethical relativism. The statement: "I cannot know things, consequently objective values do not exist" is logically flawed. From the position "I cannot know things" simply emerges (ensues) that "I cannot know if values are objective". Therefore, I ought to know things in order to be certain that values are not objective and (not) invariable. Of course, when we say that knowledge of human affairs (things) is possible, we ought to dissociate (separate) different levels and to explain at which level and to what extent on each and every respective occasion such knowledge is possible: are we talking about the level of social ontology, that of sociology, or that of history? I cannot enter into this most crucial matter, which I am treating precisely now in an extensive work (i.e. treatise) of mine³⁵. But whoever is familiar with texts of various cultures (civilisations) and epochs, should ponder from which points of view and for what reasons things which were said thousands of years ago, or in totally different circumstances, can still be understandable to us today with such immediacy. This permanent human and social substratum, which constitutes the object of social ontology, makes up the basis and the guarantee of the knowledge of human affairs (things).

Obviously, in order for me to understand people who believed or believe in different values to me, I have to derive (draw) my criteria from this

³⁵ *Das Politische und der Mensch (The Political and Man)*.

deeper knowledge, i.e. I have to proceed to a stratum deeper than every value and take (hold), in this sense, a stance of value neutrality. All those who say that such a thing is impossible are simply unable to cognitively penetrate all the way down to this deeper stratum - and furthermore are unwilling (to do so): because under the pretext of the denial of the possibility of value neutrality they simply try to impose a knowledge imbued with their own values, i.e. with their own power claims. This is inevitable and most useful in social conflict (strife), but from a cognitive point of view it means the abolition of any notion (concept, sense) of science, even of the most elementary. Because no science is possible if there is no possibility of separating, to a significant degree, one's wishes (desires) from reality. If we do not want or cannot distinguish (differentiate) our wishes (desires) (read: our values) from what happens in the world, then either science has no reason to exist or it would be sufficient for someone to express his wishes (desires) in order to be automatically considered a scientist. I do not in the least ignore how difficult and incomplete the effort (attempt) is at overcoming personal wishes (desires) for the sake of scientific knowledge. But whoever calls for the elimination of value neutrality because it is difficult to achieve, falls into (commits) the same paralogism as if he sought the abolition of courts of law because human justice was and will always be imperfect. Naturally, knowledge of human affairs (things) itself shows that there are organic and insurmountable reasons for which value-neutral scientific knowledge will remain a socially marginal phenomenon. Between such knowledge and life, which is formed as a struggle over (of) values, there is an unbridgeable contrariety (opposition).

The reason is, most briefly, the following: people like to think (and socially reinforce their position when they also make others believe) that

their values, i.e. the Ought which they preach, is not subjective, hence a relative and transitory creation, but comes from inside of the nature of things, consequently it possesses objective bindedness; the practical consequence is obvious: whoever correctly reads the Is has the right to guide (the) others in the name of the Ought. The interweaving of Is and Ought (as we find it in the idea of God, in the concept (notion) of Nature or of Man) always served goals (ends) of imposition and power³⁶. As is self-evident, the distinction between Is and Ought can only be made by anyone who does not pursue (strive after) such goals - and it is a distinction (which is) purely cognitive. It does not mean, that is, that the various perceptions regarding Ought do not spring from the empirical Is of social reality. Because the ascertainment of the formation of these perceptions in certain circumstances, and, the drawing (derivation) of an ethical Ought from the ontologically given ethical (moral) character of an Is, are two different things. Both the Is as well as the Ought have dual meanings, which ought not be confused. Is can mean the given empirical world without value (axiological) determinations or a value-charged (an axiologically charged) ultimate ontological basis (prop, footing) of the empirical world; and Ought can mean a command independent of the ethical character (nature) of its content or a value-charged (an axiologically charged) norm (rule) which can indeed also conflict (clash) with simple ruling commands (the classical conflict between (clash of) law and ethics, Creon and Antigone). The two meanings of Is can come into conflict between themselves precisely in the same way too. The value-charged (axiologically charged) Ought is not deduced (derived) from any empirical Is whatsoever, but only from an Is (which is) also value-charged (axiologically charged). Ethical-normative thought moves

³⁶ The same applies to all ideological constructs from communistic classless society to a multicultural human rights borderless "global village" or pluralistic postmodernism and feminist "liberation" from patriarchy etc..

at that level (regardless of whether it is theological and calls the Is, God, or atheistic and calls the Is, Reason etc.³⁷). Conversely, the scientific distinction between Is and Ought means that there cannot be any empirically given Is from which a value-charged (an axiologically charged) Ought can be derived (drawn).

21.

Q: Carl Schmitt in the *Concept of the Political* presented the conflict "foe-friend" as determinative of the concept of the political. The existential character of the decision takes on a substantial role in his political theory. In your work *Power and Decision* we read (Greek edition, p. 213; p.155 of C.F's English translation; p. 119 German edition (1984)): "ultimate reality consists of existences, individuals or groups, which struggle for their self-preservation and, together with that of necessity also for the extension of their power, that is why they meet as friends or foes and change friends or foes according to the needs of the struggle for their self-preservation and the extension of their power". Are we confronted here with the epistemological extension of the concept "foe-friend"? How do you correlate your work with the work of C. Schmitt?

A: The excerpt from my work *Power and Decision*, which you cited, refers, as, by the way, it is expressly said, to the entire extent of social reality, here we are thus dealing with a statement of social ontology and not with an attempt at the definition of the political element. It would be

³⁷ In today's Western mass democracies at a more popular, rather than "philosophical" level, one could say "equality" or "human rights" or "anti-racism" or "anti-sexism" or "anti-homophobia" or "anti-islamophobia" etc. rather than "Reason".

an essential logical and factual error for someone to think that a statement of social ontology can arise as a mere broadening of a definition of politics on the basis of the relation between friend and foe. Precisely the opposite occurs: because the relation friend-foe is a magnitude of social ontology it cannot be of use, in the distinctive (distinguishing) sense, as a criterion for the definition of the political element. I do not undertake, therefore, an epistemologically impermissible broadening (expansion) of a political criterion in the direction of social ontology, but on the contrary, C. Schmitt undertook (attempted) an epistemologically impermissible narrowing (constriction) of a parameter of social ontology in order to draw (get, find (from an external source, i.e. from social ontology as a whole)), in that way, the definition of the political element. It seems to me relatively easy to understand why C. Schmitt errs. The field of social ontology, i.e. social reality in its entirety, consists in social relations, however these relations are not all public and political, but also private and as such politically indifferent. As we all know, friendship and enmity exist, in always different gradations, both in the public-political as well as in the private-apolitical realm; the relation of friendship and enmity characterises the social relation in its entirety and not only the political relation. The political relation is a social relation, however not all social relations are political. With his logical leap (By doing (committing) a leap in logic), C. Schmitt essentially equates the political (relation) with the social relation, i.e. he takes a relation with a catholic (i.e. universal) social range and uses it in order to define a field narrower than the total field of society. However, the specific (distinctive or distinguishing) difference (*differentia specifica*) of the broader genus (species) cannot logically coincide with the specific (distinctive or distinguishing) difference of the narrower genus (species); a horse indeed has the property (quality) of being a four-legged animal, if however we

define it exclusively on the basis of this property (quality) (that it has) then it does not differ in anything from a dog. The same also applies as to the definition of politics: within politics relations between friends and foes exist, however these (relations) also exist outside of it (politics), therefore the specific (distinctive or distinguishing) feature of politics must be sought elsewhere.

Now, the existence of friends and foes *also* inside of politics is an ascertainment entirely independent of our ethical (moral) preferences and wishes (blessings). It is namely empirically very well-known that, at all the levels, the political subjects are of like mind with some subjects and fight against other subjects, possibly (potentially) with bloody means. Also, it is obvious that the formulation of "friendship-enmity" does not speak only of enmity, as many (people) interpret it (while) distorting it, but equally considers friendship too as a term of the exercising of politics. On the basis of these indisputable facts (data), when I confute C. Schmitt's definition regarding politics, I also confute at the same time the positions of those who reject his definition not because he is logically mistaken (incidentally, no-one amongst them has perceived the logical error), but because they want to believe that the element of enmity and the perpetual *possibility* of the transformation (meta-development, further development) of this element into fatal conflict can be effaced (eliminated) both from political (relations) as well as from the rest of (all) social relations. This naive belief can be countered, on the basis of the previous observations, with the following: a) if we reject the definition of politics on the basis of the *dual* criterion of friendship and enmity, then the elimination of enmity from this definition must logically also entail the elimination of friendship; b) the existence of enmity (or friendship) in politics and the definition of politics on the basis of friendship and enmity

are two entirely different things. For this reason, all those who think that by rejecting C. Schmitt's definition they will "humanise" politics, are also deluding themselves.

As I have already implied, one does not need to be an adherent (follower) of Schmitt in order to know that in politics there are foes and friends. It is a matter of experience as old as the world, experience impressed (imprinted) since ancient times (years) on (in) all kinds of proverbial, philosophical or legal sayings; let me remind my readers only of the stereotypical (cliched) expression during the forging of alliances in ancient Greece: «τόν αὐτὸν ἐχθρὸν καὶ φίλον νομίζειν» ("to think of oneself as both foe and friend"). Personally, I did not need to learn anything from C. Schmitt which I did not already know from the study of the history of the past and the present or from political thinkers like Thucydides, Machiavelli or Max Weber. I, for that matter, read C. Schmitt much later than them, and although, like every reader with good taste (elegant reader), I appreciate immensely his marvellous style, I saw very quickly that gaps and errors are hiding under his flashy formulations. I explained why his definition as regards politics is mistaken (as far as I know, I am the first to criticise Schmitt from this point of view), however the way in which Schmitt defines another central concept of his, the concept of the decision, finds me equally opposed (to Schmitt). The careful reader of my book *Power and Decision* knows that there, an intense and thorough criticism is conducted of whatever I call the "militant theory of the decision", in relation to which I contradistinguish the "descriptive theory of the decision". The former (militant theory of the decision) connects Schmitt with the existential philosophy of the interwar period and obliges him to share its logical and factual imperfections and misunderstandings. Existentialism, despite its polemics

against liberal-Kantian ethicism (moralism), itself looked at the decision in essence ethically(morally)-normatively, i.e. it proclaimed the decision a(n) "authentic (genuine)" expression of "authentic (genuine)" existence, in contrast to the automatisms which govern the life of the "inauthentic" anonymous mass or of the alienated person. However, no theory about the decision can be theoretically adequate (sufficient), if it does not distinguish (differentiate) between the decision in the sense of the, from the beginning, constitution of a world theory (world view) and an identity, and, the decision in the sense of the choice between already formed alternatives on the basis of an already shaped world theory (world view) and identity. If we see things in that way, then we ascertain that *every* subject decides, since no subject can be oriented in the world without a world-theoretical positioning and without an identity. The decision thus becomes perceived as a descriptive concept, namely it is ascertained merely that every subject inevitably decides in any event, and not as a normative-militant concept, that is, a "correct (right)" decision as a "correct (right)" choice between alternatives is not indicated to the subject. The mistake of the militant theory of the decision, which Schmitt professes with existentialist theologians and philosophers, is that, by equating (identifying) the decision with the "authentic (genuine)" decision, he separates the social and political subjects into those which take decisions and those who refuse to take decisions. However, in this way the rationalistic biases (prejudices), against which existentialism campaigned, are simply perpetuated, because the statements of various subjects in respect of themselves are taken at face value and it is regarded that whoever is declared *theoretically* in favour of the great decision realises it more or better than whomever is declared *theoretically* against it (the said great decision), by wanting to present one's own positioning not as the corollary of existential, hence probably arbitrary decisions, but

as a command of supra-personal and objective principles (Reason, History, God, Nature etc.)³⁸. Yet whether someone will be in favour or against the decision at the philosophical, theological or political level does not mean anything as to what he himself does, but depends on the concrete conjuncture on the (battle)front of ideas, that is, on what his opponents support. The liberals defended, against the "decision", the ostensibly self-producing in perpetuity determinism of the "(state under the) rule of law", in the framework of their polemics against the arbitrariness(es) of the monarch or, later, against the eruptions (outbreaks) of revolutionary will (volition); and liberalism's foes in turn summoned the "decision" and the "(state of) exception" against the self-understanding of liberalism.

In various works (i.e. treatises) of mine (e.g. in my book about conservatism and especially in a specific (special) text which was published in Greek as the afterword (epilogue) to the translation of *Political Theology*³⁹), I showed the deficiencies of Schmitt's views (perceptions) and in a series of other problems: in respect of the problem of sovereignty (rule, domination) and the state of exception (exceptional state), in respect of the problem of the cognitive boundaries of legal science or in respect of the problem of political romanticism. There is no need for all that to be repeated here. I wish to point out more generally that, just as the concepts of the friend and of the foe are by no means Schmitt's creations, so too the concept of the decision was neither invented (coined) nor established by him. As is known, in contemporary philosophy Kirkegaard introduced it (the concept of the decision), and it was connected with diverse contents, e.g. all those who embraced it were not in the least all friends of national socialism, as various ignorami think,

³⁸ C.f. footnotes 36, 37 above.

³⁹ By Carl Schmitt, first published in German in 1922.

but many were its consistent foes (e.g. Jaspers, Barth). Only very superficial readers can discover essential common points between Schmitt's work and my own analyses, namely readers, whose dependent reflexes react to certain catchwords, while their mind works at the slowest (most sluggish) pace (tempo) (with the slowest rhythms). Having followed, from very close by, the discussions over Schmitt in Germany, I gained the impression that something paradoxical happened: he was overrated as a thinker precisely because his foes, in stressing his relatively short collaboration with the national socialists and reducing - erroneously - the entirety of his work to this collaboration, transformed him into a roughly daemonic personality. In this way they brought about the opposite of what they pursued (aimed at doing), that is, they turned general attention on him and they made him a roughly classical writer. Allow me to remain more sober: neither do I overrate Schmitt, nor do I consider him insignificant, I am not, in order to express myself in his language, either his friend or (also) his foe.

22.

Q: C. Schmitt supports that "all the ripe concepts of the contemporary study of politics (of contemporary political science) are secularised theological concepts". Taking this fact for granted, can political theory be transferred as it is (unchanged) to other cultures (civilisations) with different theological traditions?

A: The structural correspondences between theological and political concepts was not some enterprising discovery by Schmitt. Besides, Schmitt himself expressly and analytically referred to

counterrevolutionary theorists of the 18th and 19th centuries, especially to Bonald and Donoso Cortés, who had most adequately pointed out the parallelisms of the conceptual structure, but also the political osmoses, between absolutism (autocracy) and theism, liberalism and deism, democracy and pantheism or atheism. The Marxist analysis of social ideologies came to somewhat similar findings, showing in various historical examples that societies depict (represent) the world of the gods in proportion to the hierarchisation of social relations or, at any rate, in such a manner that the perception of the From There (i.e. That World or Life) ontologically and ethically legitimises whatever occurs in the From Here (i.e. This World or Life). Now, Schmitt and his counterrevolutionary inspirers give precedence to the theological level, i.e. they draw (derive) political decisions from theological decisions (whereas Marxist analysis (methodologically) proceeds conversely), because they (Schmitt and his counterrevolutionary inspirers) are interested more generally to hold the prestige of theology high, in order to use it against bourgeois-liberal rationalism. As is known, not only during the 19th, but also during the 20th century, bourgeois liberalism or its mass-democratic transformation (meta-development, further development) were struck (attacked) both from the "left" as well as the "right", and one part of its "right-wing" foes dragged up its ideological weapons from the pre-bourgeois past, merging nevertheless the theological motifs with aesthetical motives and thus modernising them, whereas another part resorted to a renewal of paganistic mythologems (national socialism, fascism). Since Schmitt accepts, for those reasons, the primacy of theology, he wrongly considers the secularised ideological schemata as mere derivatives or as pale reflections of that (theology). However the chronological precedence of theology does not at all prove its structural conceptual precedence. Rather, the structural

correspondence of theological and secularised or secular (worldly) concepts is due to the common subordination of both of them to superior and more general thought-structures inherent in anthropological and cultural constants; the distinction between From There (i.e. That World or Life) and From Here (i.e. This World or Life) is given, as a conceptual structure already in the belief in the meaning of life, irrespective of its theological or non-theological rationalisations. Nonetheless, an investigation into such a problem, whose formulation alone also surpasses C. Schmitt's horizon, would lead us very far.⁴⁰

I come to the second limb of your question. The possibility of transferring a political theory to cultures (civilisations) with different theological traditions depends on the nature (character) of each and every respective theological tradition, the nature of the place and the nature of the (historical) period (in time). When we speak of the effect (influence) and the dissemination of ideas, we ought not remain attached to mechanistic schemata, in accordance with which an idea cannot be successfully unfolded (developed) in other areas apart from its (the idea's) cradle. Ideas are very malleable tools and weapons, they exist and act (operate, take effect) only while being interpreted and while being reinterpreted (i.e. meta-interpreted). Conjunctions of very different theological and political traditions are not at all excluded therefore - just as they are also by no means always possible. In order for one to exclude them, one would have to conceive (understand) political theology as unilaterally as C. Schmitt or classical Marxism. Of course, it is difficult to imagine how idolatrous political theology would be grafted onto (inoculated with) the Christian Middle Ages or onto (with) modern liberal Europe. On the other hand, modern world social reality, where the melting pot of mass

⁴⁰ See *Power and Decision*.

democracy has leveled every other hierarchy apart from that of wealth, is projected (shown) in an equally level world image, where the secular (worldly) correspondences of the horizontal and vertical social mobility dominate, that is, the continuous geneses and breakdowns (abolitions) of more diverse combinations; that is why today theories regarding "chaos" are so popular - and so self-evident. I can very well (with admiration) imagine that, under the pressure of mass-democratic conditions at the world level, peoples with very different theological traditions may (can) converge with such a world image, (which is) favoured by contemporary science and technology (technique), since indeed the theological element in the traditional and specific (distinctive or distinguishing) sense of the term has weakened or, at any rate, been essentially transformed. Since, however, the globalism (universality, worldism) of mass democracy will not at all bring about (entail) the world (global) harmony of ideas and interests, the particular theological traditions will most likely survive in cultural constructs as ideological weapons in the great struggle over the distribution of the planet's resources, a struggle which will mark (define) the 21st century. These constructs will not "reflect" some social hierarchy, as once the heavenly hierarchy "reflected" the earthly hierarchy, however they will undertake vital functions in the friendly or inimical confrontation of collective subjects. This becomes easily perceived if we ponder e.g. that the survivals or the recasts of Byzantine theology in today's modern Greek realm fulfil both towards the inside and towards the outside essentially different (diverse) functions than one thousand years ago.

The matter has still one more side, which I cannot analyse here, but I ought to broach. I mean the theological presuppositions of economic activity, which are mediated (brokered) by (with) the formation of a

certain ethic as motive of economic subjects. That, as is known, was Max Weber's great topic. I always had lively doubts as far as the causal relation is concerned, which Weber wanted to see between theology and economy. If this relation existed, it existed in certain cradles of capitalism's coming into being (genesis), certainly not in all and certainly not always in a strict form. However, capitalism's coming into being is one thing, and capitalism's adoption and spreading is another thing. The latter can be accomplished on the basis of diverse theological traditions, if the social-economic and political pressures are sufficiently strong. Then, theological traditions are reinterpreted (i.e. meta-interpreted) or enriched or made fluid.

23.

Q: What meaning does the universal declaration of human rights have? Does it constitute a useful ethical imperative (project) or an ideologically charged way of legitimation which in many cases did not bind the states which signed it?

A: The declarations of human rights from the end of the 18th century until today mark a major historical change (incision), which is initially carried out (accomplished) in the sphere of Western civilisation (culture). Anthropology takes the place of (substitutes for) theology, the kingdom of God ends and the kingdom of Man begins as creator of the historical universe. As Man takes the place of (substitutes for) God, he necessarily takes on certain of His (God's) features, i.e. he (Man) is considered an absolute value in himself (self-value, value in his own right), a sacred person and inviolable, a bearer of inalienable (unalienable) rights. If,

however, Man succeeded God, the distance between ideology and reality has not been reduced at all. The omnipotence of God by no means ensured (secured) the catholic (universal) validity (force) of "love one another", and the universality of "human rights" does not in the least influence (affect), equally and in the same sense (i.e. in the sense of what human rights purports to be), the life of all people. Because as the concrete content and the concrete applications of "love one another" was bindingly determined (defined) by concrete sovereign (ruling, dominant) subjects, so too "human rights" have their sovereign and binding interpreters. The United States, through their fleet and their airforce, bindingly define "human rights" in Bosnia, however the Bosnians cannot bindingly define "human rights", e.g. to impose the abolition of the death penalty in the United States. The United States reserve for themselves the very human right of confronting Saudi Arabia and Iran differently, even though the "human rights" situation in these two countries minimally diverges. In short: the political exploitation of "human rights", namely their use as a means of pressure and intervention is inevitable already because of the fact that such "rights" can only be imposed by the more powerful on the weaker, yet in the reverse case, no institutional arrangement is possible or functional. "Human rights" are thus converted into a political tool in a planetary situation, whose density of course makes the use of universalistic ideologems (i.e. kinds of sub-ideology) indispensable, in which (planetary situation), however, the binding interpretation of these ideologems (or ideologies) always lies (rests) with (is always up to) the dispositions and interests of the more powerful nations. "Human rights" are subject to the ambivalent (vacillating, amphoteric) logic of this situation and reflect the contradictions and the tensions which mark in a dramatic way today's global society. That is why the struggle over their interpretation will necessarily be converted

into a struggle between humans about what every human on each and every respective occasion considers his own inviolable right. This struggle regarding interpretation has started a while ago between "North" and "South", or, "West" and "East", and is exacerbated to the extent that the billions of the "South" or the "East" do not interpret "human rights" formally, but materially, demanding a substantial redistribution of world (global) wealth without being interested in the ethics (morals) of the satiated.

I put the expression "human rights" in quotation marks because today such rights exist on paper, in the head of philosophers or on the lips of propagandists, however not in reality. There are "states under the rule of law", yet there are no "human rights", if we understand the term literally. Only a right which all humans enjoy only, and only because they are *humans*, i.e. without the mediation (intercession) of governing authorities and collective subjects (e.g. nations and states), which, from a conceptual and physical point of view, are narrower than humanity as a whole, may be regarded as a *human* right. Moreover, a genuine human right will (would) have to apply and be enjoyed everywhere where humans exist, i.e. everywhere where someone wants to settle. So in the final analysis, there are no human rights without unlimited freedom of movement and of settlement and without automatic legal equalisation of all individuals with all individuals thanks to the universal validity of a uniform (united) legislation. For as long as e.g. an Albanian does not have exactly the same rights as an Italian and Greek in Italy and Greece, we can talk *stricto sensu* about political and civil, but not human, rights. The situation in today's world is clear: it is not permitted for all people, in (respect of) their sole property (quality, attribute) as humans, to possess all the rights (whether these are called political and civil, or are called human),

regardless of where they are born or where they find themselves. Only a world state, with respect to which all individuals would find themselves in a direct and equal relationship, that is, they would directly obtain all their rights from this state as the representative of the whole of humanity, could grant human rights which would actually deserve this name. Only he who represents the whole of humanity can also regard every person in (respect of) his (this person's) sole property (quality, attribute) as human, independent of racial and national (ethnic) predicates, and grant him human rights. The non-existence of such rights is confirmed, incidentally, on a daily basis by the political, legal and policing practice of the West itself, which, in circumventing (by-passing) the painful logical consequences of its own propaganda, exercises "human rights" always with the reservation of (national, European etc.) sovereign rights⁴¹. Every sovereign authority has the right to arrest people from other countries only, and only because they come into, or sojourn in, its territory without permission, but does not have e.g. the right to beat (flog, cane) them, because the same authority declares the human right of bodily integrity - as if the arrest in itself does not constitute eo ipso the abrogation (lifting, removal) of the right of a human to dispose (do with) his body as he pleases! With this prescription, the West thinks that «δύναται δυσὶν κυρίοις δουλεύειν» ("it is able to serve two masters" (see *The Gospel according to Matthew*. 6:24)), however it does that by paying the price of the clandestine (furtive) importation of the principles and of the practice of the "(state under the) rule of law" into the domain (realm) of human rights. Illegal immigrants are expelled, of course, in accordance with the

⁴¹ While this still basically applies in 2014, there is no doubt that many elites and "ordinary" citizens of Western countries are actively allowing, promoting and or supporting an increase in the numbers of foreigners settling in Western countries as compared to 1998 when Kondylis wrote the answers to the questions of the three interviews. What kinds of reactions and results such "humane" or "irrational" behaviour will lead to, remains to be seen. The translator ventures to say that the prognosis is not "good".

(variable (changeable)) regulations (ordinances) of the "(state under the) rule of law", not however because they are not humans, but because they are not French, Greeks, Germans etc.. In this crucial case, what proves to be decisive is the criterion of nationality and not the established (institutionalised) rhetoric of "human rights". One can, nonetheless, foresee that even this rhetoric will retreat to the extent the West ascertains that its sermons will load it with burdens which it will not be able to lift (burden it with unbearable loads).⁴²

24.

Q: How will Greek (of Greece) and Cypriot Hellenism have to effectively champion its existence? Do you consider the creation of a Balkan commonwealth useful and feasible (attainable), as well as the substitution of the centralised state with the culture (civilisation) of communities?

A: I consider infeasible (unattainable) both the creation of a Balkan commonwealth as well as the substitution of the centralised state with the culture (civilisation) of communities. The establishment of a Balkan commonwealth would demand, as its precondition and starting point, a state of equilibrium (balance) between mature and settled Balkan states, which moreover would share the feeling (sense) that with their joining

⁴² See previous footnote. Also, quantity is a key aspect in respect of the question of the influx of foreigners into Western countries. There are already signs that the influx of tens or hundreds of thousands on a yearly basis is causing some resistance. One can imagine that if numbers escalate to many hundreds of thousands or millions on a yearly basis, then reactions against such an influx will become more forceful (c.f. Kondylis, P. »Europa an der Schwelle des 21. Jahrhunderts«, p. 133, in *Das Politische im 20. Jahrhundert*, Heidelberg: Manutius, 2001 («Η Ευρώπη στο κατώφλι του 21ου αιώνα: μία κοσμοϊστορική και γεωπολιτική θεώρηση», p. 123, in *Από τον 20ο στον 21ο αιώνα*, Athens: Θεμέλιο, 1998; "Europe on the threshold of the 21st century").

(coming together) they would form a factor to be reckoned with in international developments, so that every one of them would prefer to turn to the other Balkan states rather than seek the alliance or the protection of an extra-Balkan centre. In the foreseeable future none of these preconditions will be of assistance. On the contrary, a redrawing (reworking, reformation) (an altering) of the map of the Balkans, which perhaps will be accompanied by bloody conflicts (clashes), must more likely be expected. Serbia finds itself in a process of contraction (shrinkage), from which not only will Croatia and possibly Hungary will benefit, but also the separatist tendencies in Montenegro. However, the Albanian populations especially will benefit, which today number approximately 6,000,000 in mainly Albania (approx. 3,400,000), in Kosovo and Sandzak (approx. 2,000,000) and in the state of Skopje⁴³ (approx. 500,000). In 20-30 years these populations will reach or surpass 10,000,000 - and this will not be the only force which most likely will lead to the constitution of a Greater Albania; two other intensely anti-Serbian Powers, namely Italy and Turkey, have their reasons to favour this constitution (state of being constituted, formation). A Greater Albania, in alliance with the Muslims of Bosnia, would overturn today's correlations of forces (balance of power) in the Balkans, both in itself, as well as because it would reinforce the influence of other states which require bridgeheads in the region. And only the prospect (perspective) I am outlining (sketching out, delineating) here shows how far the Balkans is from a federation. But also neither hegemony of a Balkan state over the rest of the Balkan states seems probable (here I am not including Turkey amongst the Balkan states). Thus, the Balkan states will probably

⁴³ Outside of Greece, commonly referred to as "Macedonia", notwithstanding that it has next to nothing to do with historical Hellenic Macedonia apart from the Orthodox Christianity the mostly Slav population of the region adopted many, many centuries after Alexander.

continue, every one on its own behalf, to search for extra-Balkan props (supports).

I cannot even imagine what under today's circumstances a reconstitution of the "culture (civilisation) of communities" could mean, since with that we do not simply mean the actually existing need for decentralisation of certain powers (authorities) in the framework of a contemporary political organisation, whether this is either a nation-state or potentially takes another form. Contemporary societies are differentiated and complicated in the sense that they are based on a many-branched division of labour, however the impression of the autonomy of local centres, which is created in this way, is deceitful. The key (or weak, i.e. liable to being damaged) centres - e.g. of energy and telecommunications - are rather few in number and dependence on them is, in essence, absolute.

Wherever "communities" flourished, that always occurred in the framework of a more or less powerful political organisation. If in Europe the so-called "regions (districts, peripheries)" ever flourish, that will occur only if there is a powerful centralised European authority (power), which will undertake the basic duties of today's nation-state and, by putting it (the nation-state) aside, will allow, in the framework of a very spacious state, wide space for the development of individual regions (districts, peripheries). The existence of communities in Byzantium and under Turkish (Ottoman) rule also presupposed the presence of an imperial guarantor power (authority), and indeed this existence of communities fulfilled through (the) delegation (assignment) (of tasks) by the imperial guarantor power, concrete and vital functions. We should not forget that the Turkish central authority (power) tolerated, but also reinforced, community institutions, in order for them to be of use primarily as tax-collecting mechanisms. The nostalgic idealisation of

such institutions would be a great error, much more (all the more reason) because, apart from their function towards the outside, their internal structure was far removed from today's perceptions regarding equitable and jointly responsible co-management (or co-administration) of all matters on the part of all residents. Patriarchal relations, on the contrary, predominated - and in many cases the communities were bastions of the worst (kinds of) exploitation of peasants and the poor by village elders and or of toadyism by local village elders to (more central) Ottoman authorities (kotchabasidism, κοτζαμπασιδισμός). I understand the psychic needs of those who create historical idylls and mythologies in their attempt to find ideological props in an era when Hellenism is being tested. But it is not my job to satisfy these needs.

If Hellenism wants to survive as a discrete (distinct) identity, the first thing it would have to do would be to produce as much as it eats. I do not at all mean some economic "autarky" in the old sense, but the extrication from the policy and the practice of parasitic consumption. A viable collective subject ought to export at least as much as it imports in a more open world. Otherwise, a fall (decline (down)) to the lower rungs of the international division of labour, (extreme) indebtedness and political-military dependence are inevitable. During recent decades, Hellenism has quickly proceeded in this direction. Its (This direction's) turnaround demands a courageous (bold) productive effort, advanced technical know-how (expertise) and radical institutional cleaning-up (reform, purging), as well as an education system of an entirely different level. Here, the fact that the usual contrasting of modernising tendencies to the cultivation of the national tradition is simplistic and misleading, must be

underlined⁴⁴. Only the fruition of the modernising effort permits successful emulation in respect of other nations, and in this way grants that self-assurance which allows an unproblematic (unconcerning) engagement with national tradition and renders aping (i.e. thoughtless and inept imitation)⁴⁵ psychologically superfluous. Conversely, the inability of a nation to compete with other nations in whatever - for good or ill - is regarded as the central field of social activity sets in motion a dual hyper-replenishing (overcompensating) mechanism: aping as an attempt to substitute with pretences (veneers, pretexts) whatever you do not possess as essence, and the worship (adoration) of tradition as a counterbalance to aping. From this point of view, bankrupt avant-garde Hellenocentrism and cosmopolitan aping constitute symmetrical and interrelated magnitudes, as much as they also apparently (ostensibly) represent two worlds which are hostile to one another.

25.

Q: In your work *The Coming into Being of Dialectics* (Leviathan (Λεβιάθαν), volume 15, 1994, p. 75) you refer to the presence of a radical critique of capitalistic society in conservative thinkers, and to the influence of Carlyle on the young Engels. In the Greek factual context, is the tracing of traditions, at times Dionysian and at other times Orthodox,

⁴⁴ Readers not familiar with Greek history and society should note that a nation with few, if any significant achievements in the modern world, has a tendency to look backwards - and Greece does have a rich history, even though its present and future are poor and grim.

⁴⁵ Presumably Kondylis primarily means here the aping of the life stances and values of the West (or of the "Franks", i.e. the West of 1204, of the Renaissance, of the French and Industrial Revolutions), which for all practical purposes today means the aping of USA-led mass democracy - as hedonistic mass consumption and the associated kitsch, but without an adequate basis existing in Greece for solid wealth creation.

which put insurmountable obstacles in the way of the consolidation of capitalism, possible?

A: In my book about conservatism in Modern Europe, I analytically showed that the central themes (topics) which the socialistic critique of capitalism later used, were initially formed in the ideological realm of the counterrevolution, i.e. of conservative reaction against the principles of 1789 and also against the capitalistic economy and its animating spirit, the social type of the bourgeois. The social bearer of this first conscious anti-capitalistic critique was the patriarchal large (big) landholder (landowner), the older or younger aristocrat who saw his social existence being eroded (corroded, undermined) and crumbling because of the irrepressible advance (march) of mercantile (commercial, mercantilist, trade-monetary) relations, of the Industrial Revolution, but also of individualistic-liberal ideas. To these the said social bearer of the first conscious anti-capitalistic critique pitted, as was plausible, an idealised image of pre-capitalistic reality where people supposedly lived united by the ties of blood, of tradition and of mutual faith and protection, off the land and in nature, while safeguarding their existential essence from the fragmentation (smashing into pieces) which the advanced division of labour, and at the same time the continuous hunt for material profit in a society split (cut) up into competing individuals, imposed. Conservatism as anti-capitalistic ideology took in Western and Central Europe its classical form, precisely because in the same space and at the same time its opponent, namely bourgeois-capitalistic liberalism, developed, while also taking its classical form. Here we had social classes with more or less clear contours and more or less uniform (united) ideologies. The Greek case is essentially different. As I mentioned earlier in replying to your previous question, I maintain my reservations vis-à-vis Max Weber's

views regarding the causal relations between religion and the mode (way) of economising (engaging in economic activity), and that is why I cannot talk about traditions which put "insurmountable obstacles in the way of the consolidation of capitalism"; perhaps things were the reverse, perhaps, i.e., these traditions were strong, precisely because capitalism, for objective reasons, remained in a state of sub-development (hypoformation, underdevelopment, incomplete moulding, hypoplasia). In any case, conservative anti-capitalism took in Greece forms very different than those in Europe. Just as a constituted and entrepreneurial (enterprising) bourgeoisie was lacking as a self-existent (self-contained, independent) producer of capitalistic-liberal ideology, with the result that this capitalistic-liberal ideology was imported mainly from abroad, so too there was no landed aristocracy as ideological representative of a conservative anti-capitalism. The cultural level of the Greek village elder (kotzabasis, κοτζαμπάσης) and large (big) landowner (tsiflikas, τσιφλικάς) was very low, his social world was that of the Balkan clan (kinship group) and his moral (ethical) code corresponded with that clan. Hence, conservative anti-capitalism (in Greece) initially constituted, and for a long period of time, the transformation (meta-development, further development) and readjustment of coenobitic ideals of Byzantine monasticism, interrelated with ecstatic and other-worldly positionings. Later, these age-old and always vital indigenous currents were enriched by, and fused with, the Slavophiles' ideologems (i.e. kinds of sub-ideology), which began to be formed in Russia already during the 18th century, as a reaction to the reform(ative) politics of certain Tsars, in order to be expressed in the first half of the 19th century with noteworthy (remarkable) coherence (consistency) (e.g. in the works of Kireyevsky). Here the materialism and rationalism of the West is contrasted to the naturalness and to the humanity, to the undamaged soul of the Orthodox

East; European capitalistic culture (civilisation) is considered a diabolical force and a fateful (fatal) misstep of history. It would be very interesting for one to follow the diffusion and the variations of similar ideas in the framework of modern Greek ideology in the 19th and 20th century. Unfortunately, investigation into such modern Greek ideology is still in its infancy, that is, not only a systematic accumulation of material is lacking, but also the conceptual tools of researchers are in large part most crass (of the coarsest (grossest) sort).

Eastern Orthodox coenobitic anti-capitalism was oriented, for obvious reasons, much more towards the supra-national and transnational idea of religious faith than towards the idea of the nation (ethnos) and of race. This is one of its basic differences in regard to another form of conservative anti-capitalism, where however conservatism, through nationalism, switches (transitions) to radicalism. In authors like e.g. Ion Dragoumis (Ἴων Δραγούμης)⁴⁶ we can follow this transition, and at the same time see how the nation (ethnos), as a now living and worldly (mundane) tradition, as a community of supra-individual destinies, is called upon to overbalance the rifts (cracks) and the wounds (traumata) which the inhuman reality of bourgeois-capitalistic rule (domination) opens in the social body. To the extent that here - in imitation of European models from Herder and thereafter - the self-sown national (ethnic) community is idealised, we can talk of Romantic anti-capitalism, by contradistinguishing it from coenobitic-religious anti-capitalism. The monarchy is affirmed as (the) symbol of national (ethnic) unity and at the same time as counterweight to unmixed (pure) capitalistic forces, whose, for that matter, ulterior constitutional ideal was always a republic (republican democracy); the alliance of monarch and people, as the

⁴⁶ 1878-1920.

schema of Romantic anti-capitalism foresees (anticipates) it, ought to turn precisely against these (unmixed capitalistic) forces. However, cases like that of Ion Dragoumis show something else too: that the distinction between "supporters and speakers of katharevousa (katharevousians)" and "supporters and speakers of demotic modern Greek (demoticists)"⁴⁷ does not in the least lend itself as a criterion for the distinct classification of social and ideological currents. The language question (i.e. the said ideological clashes between supporters of katharevousa and demotic modern Greek) did not only de-orientate the intellectual(-spiritual) life of the country in its entirety, but also imposed the use of distorting lenses in the analysis of ideologies.

Elsewhere (see the introduction to the Greek edition of my work *Decline of Bourgeois Culture*), I tried to show that modern Greek ideology is found for the most, and in its more original, part, in the constellation of Hellenocentrism. When an ideological construct is so broad, when many people simultaneously invoke an ideological principle, the polysemy (i.e. multiple meanings) and variance of its contents constitutes the necessary aftereffect. In this way, beyond the national(ethnic)-Romantic anti-capitalism, also other anti-capitalistic currents, some of which found themselves on the fringes of facism, were accommodated (housed) in Hellenocentrism. It would be, I repeat, something to be wished (desirable) if younger researchers, equipped with refined conceptuality, with the diligence (industry) and with the imagination which the recomposition of scattered (dispersed) and often indistinguishable traces demands, applied themselves to these traces' systematic comparative investigation.

⁴⁷ C.f. footnote 32 above.

26.

Q: In the postwar world, guerrilla warfare, from Vietnam to Cyprus, Kurdistan, Chechnya and Mexico was catholically (universally) recognised as the most facile reaction of the weak. Passing (Moving on) from Clausewitz to Lenin and to Mao, can we compose a theory of guerrilla warfare, or rather is it preferable that such a distinct theory constitutes part of the more general theory of war?

A: Guerrilla warfare is a certain form of war, which puts forward (poses) particular problems (questions) of strategy and tactics. Conversely, the general theory of war develops a conceptuality (terminology), which, if it is comprehensive and elastic enough, will have to embrace every kind of strategy, even strategies which are contrary as between themselves too. Thus, the general theory of war and that particular strategy which is called "guerrilla warfare", move at different logical levels. Clausewitz's achievement is immortal, precisely because it consists in a general theory regarding war capable of conceptually comprehending all the kinds of war, from primitive guerrilla warfare to extremely technicised (technologically advanced) contemporary war. Various superficial readers of Clausewitz, who equate (identify) him with outmoded (obsolete) forms of strategy and on that basis proclaim his work outdated, do not understand this. For their part, the theoreticians of guerrilla warfare in our century neither offered, nor were they even obliged to offer, a general theory regarding war. If they in part drew from Clausewitz, the reason is, obviously, that every form of war is attached to war in general and in itself, it (every form of war) belongs to war in

general as the species belongs to the genus, that is, it shares all the features except for the specific (distinctive or distinguishing) differences (*differentiae specifae*).

There is no doubt that for about half a century (that is, from the commencement of the guerrilla war in China until the withdrawal of Americans from Vietnam), guerrilla warfare stamped the planetary becoming by substantially contributing to the collapse of colonial empires and the creation of centres (which were) competitive towards the West. However, from this fact we should not have drawn the conclusion that guerrilla warfare has universal value and can deflect (subdue) every resistance, but rather that as a phenomenon with (of) a large extent (expanse, scope) it belongs to a certain era and is connected with certain conditions (circumstances). Guerrilla warfare was crowned with success mainly in the struggle of colonial or semi-colonial peoples against a foreign master, who racially and culturally remained a foreign (an alien) body inside native (indigenous) society. In the very few cases when guerrilla warfare, as civil war, brought to power a certain movement or party, this happened because the irregular army was already strong enough to be substantially transformed into a regular army, a disciplined and hierarchically organised army. Whatever appeared as guerrilla warfare, in reality was, at least in the final phase (stage), a struggle between armies, which the stronger army won. This means that wherever the regular army did not present - for more general social and political reasons - symptoms of disorganisation and disintegration, there the guerrilla army did not ever have serious chances of emerging as victor from the conflict. Apart from that, external forces, each and every respective "interested third party", and the material or other assistance which it provided to one or the other indigenous (native) side (party),

played an essential role in the outcome of a civil war. Without the military material (materiel) which the Soviet Union channeled profusely to Vietnam during the 1970s, it is doubtful whether the guerrilla war would have had the same outcome, despite the indubitable heroism of the communistic fighters.

The forecast (prediction) that classical, mass guerrilla warfare will not play in the future a decisive (determinative) role and will likely fade away (vanish) as a phenomenon is reinforced by two additional facts: the proliferation and the refinement of the weapons which can be used against guerrilla groups on the part of a flexible regular army and, furthermore, the drastic change in demographic and environmental conditions. The first of these two facts today grants additional weight to the old ascertainment that wherever the regular army does not collapse, the guerrilla groups (bodies) do not have any chances (possibilities) of victory. The second (fact) does not weigh any less on the scales. The drastic depletion of the forests (deforestation), the opening of the countryside to transportation and especially the rapid concentration of populations in cities deprive the classical guerrilla of the environment where, according to Mao's phrase, he could move like the fish in water. In classical guerrilla warfare, whoever prevailed in the countryside had the possibility of suffocatingly besieging the cities; today domination in sections of the countryside does not mean a lot, like e.g. the experience in Peru shows. This overturning (reversal) of the scenery does not entail, of course, that the unorthodox forms of war have ended and that from now on "the law and order" of those ruling (the dominant Powers (sovereigns)) will be imposed unproblematically (without any concerns). It entails, however, that the theatre of unorthodox forms of war will not so much be the countryside, as the cities, and that a new form of

terrorism, conducted by probably small and flexible groups, will take (go in) the place of classical guerrilla warfare. I name this terrorism "new", because it will not be exhausted in murderous attempts against persons (individuals) as occurred in prerevolutionary Russia and as occurred again in Germany and in Italy mainly during the 1970s. Perhaps such terroristic acts were spectacular, nonetheless they were and are incapable of seriously having an effect on the functioning of society. Today there exist entirely different possibilities, the texture itself of highly technicised (technologically developed) society, which at first glance is infinitely complicated, bifurcated (forked, branched) and fragmented, offers these possibilities, while in reality its functioning depends on relatively few energy and information centres. That is why this highly technicised society as a whole is so vulnerable as no past society (ever) was. If terroristic acts (actions) focus (concentrate), with sufficient technical know-how (expertise) and consistency (coherence), on the crucial hubs, then it is certain that they can bring a contemporary (modern) society to its knees. Thus, on the basis of the changes to objective facts on a world scale, I come to the conclusion that the era of guerrilla warfare belongs to the past and that we have entered the era of terrorism, which in certain cases can be fused with forms of urban guerrilla warfare (guerrilla warfare of the cities). It goes without saying that, just like classical guerrilla warfare, so too terrorism will have *political* prospects only if its peak coincides with a deep and protracted (prolonged) social crisis.

27.

Q: In talking about the crisis in bourgeois culture and the decline of the West, how do you evaluate the views of Fukuyama and Huntington? Do you believe that Spengler was right?

A: Ancient historians relate that after the destruction of Carthage, Scipio Africanus the Younger shed tears when he saw the end of his enemies because he remembered the Homeric verse «Ἔσσεται ἡμαρ ὅτ' ἄν ποτ' ὀλώλη Ἴλιος ἱρὴ» ("The day will come when holy Troy will be destroyed"), and he contemplated that the same fate can befall upon Rome too. Much smaller intellects(-spirits) and much smaller souls do exactly the opposite. Once their own political and ideological side (party, faction) strikes a decisive victory, they rush to announce the end of History, so that nothing can ever take back (negate, undo, retract) this victory. Or they do something equivalent in practice: they paint (draw) a historical future thus, as it ought to be formed, (as) if the way in which the victor likes to understand himself and his activity actually coincided with the objectively given course of History. What is toothsome (appealing, attractive, interesting) is that the supporters of the temporarily victorious capitalistic liberalism start from roughly the same philosophy of history as the Marxists once did: they talk as if history is travelling (on), albeit also with temporary deviations, a linear trajectory, at whose terminus (end) a united and peaceful world is, of necessity, found. Moreover, just like the Marxists, they believe that the economic factors, i.e. the development of the productive forces and the interweaving of economies constitute the driving (motive) forces of historical progress, which will substitute war with trade. In various texts of mine I have analysed the common presuppositions of Marxist and liberal utopia from

the point of view of the history of ideas⁴⁸. Just like the Marxists have lived (experienced, gone through) the shipwreck of their utopia, so too liberals will soon find themselves before (amongst) the ruins of their own (utopia), which the terrifying (horrifying) struggles over distribution of the 21st century will bring crushing down (take (knock) down)⁴⁹.

Whoever contends (asserts) that History has ended might as well be certain that History awaits them around the (next) corner. And the large number of (very many) intellectuals, who rushed to convert from fellow travellers or propagandists of Sovietism to fellow travellers and criers (touts) of Americanism, troubled themselves unjustifiably (made an unjustifiable effort).

If Fukuyama gave, even (also) in shallow form, the annointment (unction) of the philosophy of history to universalistic Americanism, Huntington offered more practical services and perspectives (prospects) to American imperialistic ambitions. If History does not end, but continues as a clash of civilisations (cultures), and if the European and American West have, by definition, common destinies in this clash, then it is patently clear (obvious) the United States, as the most powerful nation of the West, has to permanently lead the protection of the West against the Muslim and Confucian masses. Of course, present-day Europe (I use the term conventionally, because in reality there is no such political entity), from a political-military point of view roughly constitutes an American protectorate and will remain such a protectorate for the foreseeable future. Huntington's thought has, from this point of view, a real footing (basis, prop), but its more general historical and sociological founding is

⁴⁸ E.g. Kondylis, P. "Die kommunistische und die liberale Utopie" in Kondylis, P. *Das Politische im 20. Jahrhundert*, Heidelberg: Manutius, 2001, pp. 13-43, and, Kondylis, P. "Utopie und geschichtliches Handeln" in Beismann, V. and Klein, M. J. (eds): *Politische Lageanalyse. Festschrift für Hans-Joachim Arndt zum 70. Geburtstag*, Bruchsal: San Casciano, 1993, pp. 163-175.

⁴⁹ In 2014 it is already patently obvious that much of the world is (still) not interested in, or is simply ignoring, "liberal democracy".

stale (ineffective, hackneyed). If Europe and the United States proceed (march) together during the 21st century, the reason will not be the cultural commonality, but the unity of interests, as geopolitics, strategy and the economy determines them on each and every respective occasion. Never in history have cultural factors been determinative (decisive) in the search for alliances, even (also) if alliances between the culturally related are usually appropriately (opportunistically, expediently) rationalised (explained or justified) after the fact, so that lofty (high) motives can be accorded (attributed) to them. But it is fatuous (silly) for someone to imagine that Japan will choose between the United States and China in respect of the criterion of cultural relatedness (affinity), whereupon it would most probably become a province of an all-powerful future China, and not on the basis of strategic criteria, which would give it room for greater independence under more tolerant American cover (protection). It is also fatuous for one to believe that Arab emirs will prefer the domination (rule, sovereignty) of the Islamists to the alliance with the "infidel" Americans, or that a Russia totally disenchanted with the West and unable to react otherwise, could not, (despite being) hindered by cultural differences, fall into the embrace (lap) of China, shaping with her a potent Eurasian bloc. Besides, it is not possible for all civilisations to continuously fight all civilisations. The correlation of forces (balance of power) imposes combinations and alliances - but what cultural criteria could hold sway (prevail) in the formation of (entering into) alliances between civilisations? What cultural logic necessitates Muslims to approach the Chinese more and turn against the West? Huntington bypasses these elementary questions, nor does he seek the light(s) (guidance) of historical experiences. Because, as we said, his intention is less theoretical and more strategic - strategic from the American perspective, of course (it goes without saying).

I do not think that today's political-military weakness of Europe and its subsequent dependence on the United States is enough so as to justify Spengler's positions. In order for a theory to be verified it is not enough that it correctly ascertains certain facts, but it ought to correctly explain these facts too; theory is explanation, not mere ascertainment of real data (facts). Spengler did not only assert that civilisations (cultures) develop and decline (decay), but this takes place for certain reasons, that it follows certain form-related (morphological, formal) regularities or determinisms, which indeed allow forecasts (predictions). Such assertions do not stand up to concrete historical analyses, and what is being called for is precisely these (concrete historical analyses); the commonplace, that whatever is born will one day die, is unquestionable, however it does not suffice in the founding of a theory of history, and it appears to me that all the things that Spengler said beyond this commonplace are untenable as a theory of history, even though they contain many enlightening individual observations. The historical fortune and present-day situation in Europe cannot therefore be described by means of the deductive method, with a starting point of a predetermined schema and with a (connecting) thread of exclusively endogenous procedures. On the contrary, it appears to me that the European New Times have come to the end of their cycle since Europe lost global sovereignty (domination), which it possessed from the age (epoch, era) of discoveries. In other words: as the beginning of the New Times roughly coincided with the beginning of the world (global) sovereignty of Europe, so too the New Times' end coincided with the end of this sovereignty. The New Times was not just a European phenomenon, but had Eurocentric content, both world-theoretically as well as economically-politically. The outflanking of the European dimension by the planetary dimension, and of bourgeois liberalism by mass democracy (as the first genuinely planetary social formation) was

accompanied by the decomposition of the specific (distinctive or distinguishing) content, the specific (distinctive or distinguishing) bio-theory and bio-practice of the European New Times. After 1945 the whole of Europe found itself under dual occupation, American and Soviet. And the process of Europe's unification, as incomplete as it is or will remain, was not inaugurated because supposedly the European peoples, taught by a bloody past, decided to fraternise (become brothers), but it was precisely the consequence of the world-historical relegation (demotion) of Europe. As long as Europe ruled the world with its colonial empires, European rivalries were intense because the sovereign (ruler) in Europe would be the sovereign (ruler) of the world. The loss of world (global) sovereignty annihilated the world-historical meaning of intra-European rivalries and hence their intensity fell precipitously (dramatically), and indeed under American hegemony. Yet the matter in hand does not only have a political side. Another significant question is how much (to what extent) and in what form will elements of the European civilisation (culture) of the New Times survive, or whether contemporary technology (technique) can proceed (go) together with other, very different cultural stances. The answer to such questions is not simple. But also only their formulation shows that the historical course and influence of civilisations (cultures) can be much more complicated than any philosophy or theory of history whatsoever. All the more so when on a densely populated (occupied) planet, the separate greenhouses, in which past civilisations (cultures) developed at a relatively slow pace (at relatively slow tempi), have vanished.

28.

Q: Do you consider that the total decline of the Greek state in our times (days) is fateful or does it have even the slightest possibilities of reversal too?

A: Obviously, you have kept the most difficult question for the end. In history there are no determinisms in whose knowledge one could foresee (predict) exactly what will happen in the future. There are not even any linear and unavoidable (inevitable) developments, even (also) if some seem so in retrospect (after the fact). Analysis ought, in this way, to focus (concentrate) on the texture of all the respective driving (motive) forces, on the deeper propensities, from which it is anticipated the - in themselves unforeseeable (unpredictable) - individual facts will emanate. There is no doubt that since decades ago Hellenism finds itself in a process of geopolitical contraction (shrinkage) and we know from now with certainty that at least one component of this contraction will roughly be prolonged (extended) linearly: the demographic (component). This cannot but have certain consequences after one or two generations, when the Albanian populations will numerically surpass that of the Greek population, while Turkey will number ten times the residents of Greece. What extent and form the consequences of the demography will take, will depend of course in part on a series of non-demographic factors. In replying to your sixth question, I mentioned synoptically what I consider as the minimal prerequisite (precondition) for the survival of Hellenism. Here I must add that the negative demographic developments essentially make economic recovery (rectification) very difficult (stand in the way (impede) economic recovery). But beyond that, even also an - in my sense (perception) unlikely - internal reformation (rehabilitation) of the

country, in agreement both with the demands of today's world as well as with the country's cultural peculiarity, would not constitute, because of the magnitude and the (lack of) potential of the country, a sufficient guarantee for its integrity and survival, if the international environment were absolutely unfavourable. We do not know what future European unification has, and what face it will present (form it will take), just as we also do not know if Greece would be for a united Europe an integral section (part) or a negotiable province. We do not know if Russia will be able to relatively quickly indeed play the role of a great Power, putting, in this way, Turkey under pressure and relieving Greece. We do not know, finally, which will be the outcome of the major regional hegemonic undertaking which multitudinous Turkey is already inaugurating with its rapid industrialisation and its unremitting armaments. If we linearly elongate (extend) the tendencies which have the upper hand (excel) today, then of course the future does not appear rosy (looms negatively), all the more so because strategic and geopolitical thought in Greece, that is, the consciousness of real problems, is embryonic. I do not believe at any rate that the fortune of the Greek nation-state will be judged simultaneously with the fortune of all other nation-states in the world, i.e. the general maintenance (preservation) of the nation-state does not guarantee the maintenance (preservation) of the Greek nation-state, just as the dissolution of the Greek nation-state would not necessarily occur in the framework of the dissolution of all nation-states. I am not a "nationalist", and I would not at all worry if with the acquiescence of everyone (all states), national boundaries and national armies were abolished (in general). However, the abolition of a nation-state together with all other nation-states, and, a nation-state's dissolution or mutilation (amputation) because a neighbouring state is stronger and more aggressive, are two very different things.