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SOME QUESTIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM OF FORESIGHT IN THE TEACHING OF WESTERN THINKERS

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Abstract

The article presents the results of the analysis of scientific concepts on the problem of foresight in the teachings of Western thinkers. It is shown that the issues of scientific foresight and its research have been of concern to people since ancient times, since the first attempts, which can be found in the Ancient East, as the practice of calculating astronomical and natural phenomena, etc. It is proved that the development of issues of scientific foresight and forecasting was due to both objective and subjective reasons, namely the formation of the need for scientifically based ideas about the future of objects of various nature, on the one hand, and the solution of problems related to the development of social processes. In these historical conditions, the idea that foreseeing the future is possible only through the comprehensive and in-depth use of scientific achievements is widely spread, it helps a person to learn the laws of nature hidden from our sight. Knowledge of the laws of nature, "can discover and produce something that has never happened before, which neither the course of natural phenomena, nor artificial experiments, nor the very case, which would never have presented itself to human thinking, would never have brought to fruition. It is shown that the role of science, according to Western scientists, if it relies on the inductive method, can make many new discoveries, anticipate the course of development of future events, learn the laws of nature hidden from our view, as well as express thoughts about the development of social processes.

Keywords: *science, private sciences, foresight, society, method, scientific knowledge, induction, deduction, discoveries, nature, experience, causal phenomena, religion, social progress, politics, knowledge, cognition, law, regularity*

Introduction

Thinkers from Western European countries also made a significant contribution to the development of the problem of foresight. As is known, at the early stages of the development of human society, scientific knowledge of people was very limited, therefore, the philosophers of antiquity and the Middle

Ages, predicting the onset of future events, relied mainly on practical experience and empirical knowledge.

The great merit in substantiating this idea belongs to the founder of English materialism of the XVII century F. Bacon (1561–1626). As a proponent of experimenting natural science, F. Bacon pinned many hopes on science. He wrote: "One should generally hope that there are still many very useful things hidden in the depths of nature that have no kinship or correspondence with what has already been invented and are entirely located beyond the imagination. It has not yet been discovered, but no doubt in the course and cycle of many centuries it will appear as the previous one appeared. However, in the way we are talking about now, all this can be imagined and anticipated quickly, immediately, immediately." The path in question here means the inductive method developed by F. Bacon.

F. Bacon deeply believed that with the help of science, we can significantly expand our knowledge of the laws of nature and put them at the service of man. This is evidenced by his work "New Atlantis". In it, F. Bacon tells that a group of travelers after a shipwreck accidentally found themselves in a little-known city, conditionally named by him "New Atlantis". The residents of the city provided the travelers with a warm welcome, necessary medical care and nursed them for several days. After the travelers recovered their health and became stronger, the father of Solomon's house introduced them to the life, customs and orders of the city. From a conversation with him, travelers will learn that all branches of knowledge are developed there, thanks to which people live well, beautifully and amicably. "The goal of our society," says F. Bacon, through the mouth of the father of the house of Solomon, is the knowledge of the causes and hidden forces of all things and the expansion of man's power over nature, until everything becomes possible for him."

"We have mechanics at home," says the interlocutor, "where machines and devices for all types of movement are manufactured. This way we get faster movement than, for example, the flight of a musket ball or anything else you know, and we also learn to get movement with greater ease and with less energy expenditure... We produce artillery pieces and all kinds of military vehicles, new varieties of gunpowder, Greek fire burning in water and unquenchable, as well as fireworks of all kinds for entertainment and other purposes. We also imitate the flight of birds and know several principles of flight. We have vessels and boats for swimming underwater and those that withstand storms; there are swimming belts and other devices that help to stay on the water. There are various complex mechanisms, clocks and others, as well as devices based on perpetual motion. We imitate the movements of living creatures, making models of people, animals, birds, fish and snakes for this purpose. In addition, we know other types of movement that are amazing in their uniformity and accuracy.

Thus, in the work "New Atlantis" F. Bacon makes a brilliant guess about the wonderful future of science, about the inexhaustible possibilities of human genius to penetrate the secrets of nature with its help, about a new social system where every person is provided with full prosperity, a healthy, happy and joyful life.

The power of science, F. noted. Bacon, it consists in the fact that it helps a person to learn the laws of nature hidden from our sight. Those who know the laws of nature "can discover and produce something that has never happened before, which neither the course of natural phenomena, nor artificial experiments, nor the very case, which would never have presented itself to human thinking, would never have brought to fruition. Therefore, the discovery of forms (meaning laws – K.T.) is followed by true contemplation and free action."

F. Bacon warns that scientific predictions cannot be equated with prophecies that cannot be scientifically explained. "However," says F. Bacon, – advising to despise them, I only want to say that they do not deserve faith; but their appearance and spread should not be neglected; for they cause a lot of harm, and there are many laws by which they are severely punished. And there are three reasons for their spread. Firstly, people tend to notice only those predictions that come true; the same happens with their dreams. Secondly, vague traditions or guesses are sometimes clothed in the form of prophecies, because a person tends to foresee the future and, consequently, turn conclusions into predictions...

This provision is one of the important conditions for the separation of prediction and foresight, where the latter, in turn, is based on strictly established laws and theories. Using the rules of reasoning, science discovers a number of such truths that are not the result of a direct reflection of reality. Thus, Bacon recognizes experience as the first stage of knowledge, and reason as the second stage.

Research methods

In the study, we used such methods as a comparative, historical and cultural, systematic approach, comparative analysis, generalization of scientific knowledge, etc.

Discussion

Another English philosopher of the XVII century, T. Hobbes (1588–1679), developing the doctrine of scientific foresight, wrote: "Foreseeing the future is nothing more than the expectation of things like those that we have already encountered in our practice." This expectation of the onset of appropriate results presupposes, as its basis, knowledge of the causal relationships of things, "what inevitably causes and determines each action consists in the sum of all currently existing things that contribute to the production of this action; if one of these things is currently missing, then the action cannot be performed." And further, T. Hobbes concludes: "Foresight is knowledge, and knowledge depends on the existence of known things." The degree of accuracy of foresight, according to T. Hobbes, depends entirely on the experience of the one who predicts.

"Sometimes," writes T. Hobbes, "a person wants to know the consequences of an action, and then he imagines a similar action in the past and its results, assuming that the same action leads to the same consequences. For example, someone who foresees what will follow a crime remembers what consequences of such a crime he has observed before, while his train of thought is as follows: crime, government officials, prison, courts, the gallows. This kind of thought is called foresight, prudence or foresight, and sometimes wisdom, although such a guess, due to the difficulty of observing all the circumstances, can be very deceptive.

But one thing is certain: the richer a person's experience, the more prudent he is and less likely to be deceived in his expectations. Only the present has existence in nature, the past has existence only in memory, and the future has no existence. The future is only a fiction of the mind, applying the consequences of past actions to the actions of the present, which is done with the greatest, but not absolute certainty, by the one who has the most experience." A further step in the development of the doctrine of scientific foresight was made by the French enlighteners of the XV century, Paul Henri Holbach (1723––1789), Jean Antoine Condorcet (1743––1794) and other thinkers.

Holbach's views on the issue of scientific foresight are highly controversial. On the one hand, he, being a supporter of the fatalistic understanding of necessity, believed that man, as a part of nature, should unconditionally obey the laws of nature and stop looking to the future. "Come back, unfaithful child, return to nature," Holbach wrote, "it will comfort you; it will banish from your heart the fears that depress you, the worries that torment you, the raptures that excite you and the hatred that separates you from the people you should love. Returning to nature, to humanity, to yourself, scatter flowers along the path of your life; stop looking into the future" (underlined by us – K.T.).

Conclusion

As can be seen from the above, the views of Western European thinkers of the XVII––XVIII centuries on the problems of foresight represent a significant step forward compared to previous philosophers, both in depth and breadth of the issues raised. In particular, they tried to bring a solid scientific base under their doctrine of the future; they emphasized in every possible way the role of science in the development of society, tried to spread the doctrine of scientific foresight to the analysis of phenomena of social life. Thus, summarizing the above, with the intensive development of private sciences, the foresight of the future in the teachings of the English philosophers F. Bacon, T. Hobbes is possible only through the comprehensive and in-depth use of the achievements of the sciences. The French thinkers P. Holbach and J. Condorcet attempt

to apply the doctrine of scientific foresight to the analysis of social phenomena. This problem is most fully considered by the German philosopher I. Kant and Hegel.

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