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## THE PROBLEM OF ACTIVITY IN PSYCHOLOGY (1)

It is a commonplace that the application of the Marxist theory of activity to the analysis of the human mind has played a tremendous role in the development of Soviet psychology. It is also a commonplace that the development of Marxist psychology has taken place in an atmosphere of bitter struggle against the paradigms (a term that has today become fashionable) of behaviorism, which attempts to reduce the richness of human life to an elementary stimulus-response schema; Freudianism, which posits instinctually determined unconscious processes as the foundation of all forms of human behavior and regards human life as a continuous struggle with society, which controls those instincts; and cognitivism, which studies mental processes divorced from real human life, in terms of their internal logic, viewed as a system unto itself.

Marxist psychology has developed an approach which affirms that the objective study of the human mind requires an analysis of the real social-historical activity of human beings. Only in this way is it possible to understand the qualitative difference between the human mind and the mind of lower animals, to discover the essence of consciousness, to study the actual interrelations between the conscious mind and the unconscious, and to ascertain the objective laws governing the development of the human mind.

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It would be very naïve, however, to think that psychology could advance merely by labeling mental phenomena with the term activity. On the contrary, use of the category of activity, which has considerable explanatory power, without understanding its essence can produce nothing but confusion and scholasticism. Yet this category is now often used so broadly in psychological studies, so many different interpretations are given it, that there is danger of its being diluted and, ultimately, of again losing all that has been achieved.

"Activity" is used in any number of phrases: "human activity and animal activity," "external activity" and "internal activity," "the activity of sensory activity" and the "activity of the nervous system," the "activity of consciousness," "activity of perception," "mnemonic activity," etc. Even abilities are called "activities." If one tried to classify all the types of activity written about in psychology, one would discover an extremely motley, disjointed, and contradictory picture.

The concept of activity is beginning to engulf all other concepts relating to the mind of man and animals alike. Of course, the unfortunate point here is not that the same term is used to apply to different "things" (although these different "things" should indeed be terminologically distinguished): what is far worse is that taking advantage of the ambiguity of this term, people sometimes use it as the foundation for conceptions in which the meaning of the concept "activity," defined for one group of phenomena, is carried over — sometimes with no change, sometimes with minor modification — to another group of phenomena qualitatively distinct from the first.

### Activity as a Social-Historical Category

Without examining all the meanings given the word activity, let us just mention that, in its broadest sense, it is the equivalent of the expression "an active state," and may, without qualification, be used to describe and analyze numerous phenomena. It is in this broad sense that it is often used in psychology. (2)

If it were only a matter of stressing the active nature of mental phenomena (in contrast to passivity, a notion hardly anyone would any longer hold), one would have to acknowledge that incorporation of the term activity into psychological theory offered little enlightenment. But this is not the case: it is not simply a matter of stressing the active nature of the phenomena psychology studies. The real import of restructuring Soviet psychology on Marxist foundations is that in analyzing and explaining mental phenomena, the theory of activity (or, more accurately, the theory of that class of real things reflected in this category) is used as a social-historical category.

The Marxist theory of activity has evolved as part of the development of the materialist approach to explaining the life of society and to scientific study of the laws of its development. Activity is a category of historical materialism. Indeed, it is in this sense that the category of activity was originally used in Soviet psychology (by B. G. Anan'ev, P. P. Blonsky, L. S. Vygotsky, K. N. Kornilov, A. N. Leont'ev, A. R. Luria, S. L. Rubinshtein, A. A. Smirnov, B. M. Teplov, and others). The principle that mind and activity constitute a unity was also formulated in the process of psychological conceptualization of this idea. According to this principle, the human mind is formed, developed, and becomes manifest in the process of activity. However, later the concept of "activity" became unduly broadened: In some schools it came gradually to be identified with the concept of "activeness," and the principle of the unity of the mind and activity was replaced by the principle of their identity.

If activity is seen as a social-historical category, it must be said (and stressed) that it is studied by many, if not all, social sciences (and also, in part, by the natural and technological sciences). Hence, psychology has no claim to a monopoly; it is but one of the fundamental domains of science that study activity. That psychology itself should progress to the study of activity was inevitable, and depended to a fundamental degree on the achievements of other sciences. The general approaches, schemata, and conceptions developed in psychology

to describe and study activity must be seen in correlation with those developed in other sciences bordering on it. This correlation is necessary principally to explain that specific aspect of the study of activity that constitutes the subject matter of psychological research. Obviously, this task is very difficult, especially if we bear in mind what we have said above about the ambiguity of the term activity itself and its arbitrarily extended use. The resolution of this task, of course, requires special theoretical research. In the present article we shall restrict ourselves merely to a few general considerations about how to approach this problem.

With regard to the psychological study of activity, what is usually meant is the activity of the individual, or individual activity. In any case, most theoretical conceptions and schemata and empirical (including experimental) descriptions relate to this subject. It is only recently, under the influence of, especially, the demands of practice, that joint, group (including collective) activity has become an object of psychological study.

Unfortunately, in psychological studies of individual activity, attempts have sometimes been made to impose directly on it a system of theoretical postulates developed in Marxism to deal with the activity of a collective subject and of society. The inevitable result of this has been replacement of the psychological aspects of an analysis of activity by philosophical, sociological, and economic aspects. As a consequence, strange concepts sometimes arise, which deal, for instance, with an operation that is part of an act of labor performed by an individual as "practice" and the feedback signals (for example, kinesthetic) produced as this movement is being performed as a test of practice; moreover, direct analogies are made between production and elementary acts, etc. However, the direct imposition of the theory of activity, developed originally to apply to a collective subject and society, onto the activity of the individual is not valid, although there may be certain analogies. With regard to practice, what is meant is historical practice of society, in particular, production, not the activity of each individual taken separately, even though that individual

may indeed participate indirectly in the production process.

As a result of the invalid identification of the activity of the individual with the activity of society, the interaction between an individual and other people is completely lost from view in psychological analysis; the individual is often seen as being in a one-to-one relationship with the object of activity. The entire complex process of activity unfolds within the "subject-object" relationship, or, more accurately, the "individual subject-object relationship. Individual activity is seen as a closed system with its own intrinsic driving force, which gives rise to perceptual, mnemonic, and other processes and shapes the consciousness of the individual into a personality. The life of the individual is portrayed as a continuous alternation of activities, governed by its own internal logic and independent of the activities of other people. Society is seen merely as a medium in which the individual lives, and not more; in this social medium, each individual "digs his own tunnel," as it were.

In reality, however, any individual activity is inseparably linked with the activity of society, every individual relating to other individuals. Activity is only a factor, a component part, of the joint activity of people in society as they interact. Individual activity simply could not exist apart from social relations and bonds. Even Robinson Crusoe, on his uninhabited island, organized his life in accordance with the norms, rules, principles, etc., that he had learned in his life in society. Though on a one-to-one footing with nature, he, so to speak, affirmed the social essence of man.

Since individual activity is only a component part of the activity of society, then, clearly, an analysis of it should begin not with the abstract relationship of the "individual subject-object," but with study of the functions of this individual activity within the system of social life, i.e., the system of interactions of a particular individual with other people, in the "social context" in which this activity is nested. (3)

But what does "the social context of individual activity" mean? The answer may be approached in a number of ways. Sometimes it is stated that in analyzing individual activity it

is necessary to study the environment in which that activity takes place; here, "environment" means not only the physical surroundings but also the social conditions. However, an approach to an analysis of the social context at the level of the relationship between the "individual and the environment" (even though we may say the environment is "social") is too general: the "social environment" is a very amorphous concept in this case.

The requirement that individual activity be examined in a social context may be met by defining, for example, the place of that activity in a production process (if we are speaking about productive activity) and, accordingly, its relationship with the activities of other people. It may be studied in terms of its relationship to established systems of norms (and standards) or in terms of its dependence on technology, which, of course, is defined by the level of technical and economic development. Or it may be examined in terms of interpersonal relations, the psychological climate, etc.

Each of the above aspects and other possible ones reveal some side of the "social context." The multitude of these aspects gives an idea of the complexity, variety, and diversity of the manifestations and of the systemic structure of the "social context." The aspects enumerated above give only a partial description of that context and reveal only some of its sides. But what is the common foundation of all the possible particular descriptions?

From our point of view, what is most important is study of individual activity within the system of social relations established in a particular society at a particular stage of its historical development.

Of course, the problem of social relations goes beyond the limits of psychology. Psychology studies only one specific aspect of these relations. In its investigations (especially in studies of individual and group activity), psychology bases itself on the Marxist theory of society and social relations. It should be noted that, in some schools of psychology, the activity of the individual is seen as a manifestation of the in-

dividual's free, active nature, dictated by the intrinsic laws of individual development. Of course, the individual's relationships with other people are mentioned, but it is not always taken into account that these relations are determined by the laws of development of society, and evolve historically.

For example, an attempt is made to find "purely psychological" relationships between individuals that remain constant over time or, if they do change, do so in accordance with their own laws, which are independent of the development of society. In the best of cases society is seen as a set of individuals each acting in accordance with his own "potential."

But society, as Karl Marx noted, "does not consist of individuals, but rather is the reflection of the sum of those bonds and relations within which individuals confront one another" [6. P. 214].

An established system of social relations developing in accordance with objective laws forms the "social context" in which the individual lives and acts.

For the individual, society is not simply a social environment. The person is a member of society. Through his activity he becomes a direct part of a system of social relations. The properties of the individual as the subject of activity (including his or her psychological properties) are shaped and developed in the process of the individual's "movement" in this system. Hence, his activity cannot be understood without analyzing the specific way in which he is incorporated into social relations (for more details, see [35]).

Thus, the amorphous concept of the "social context" of the activity of an individual is revealed to be a system of historically developing social relations — economic, civil, political, ideological, etc. — in which he participates directly and of which his individual activity is a function, whether that activity be practical or theoretical, productive or nonproductive, etc.

This brings us to the question of the classification of types of human activity. If activity is regarded abstractly, in terms of the "subject-object" paradigm, the classifications proposed

define activities as transforming, cognitive, communicative, etc.

In psychology, if activity is restricted to this paradigm, the classifications developed distinguish orienting and executive activity, for example. Types of activity are classified in terms of their respective roles in various processes (sensory, intellectual, motor, etc.).

Activity is multidimensional, and any of its dimensions may be used as a basis for classification. Hence, in principle, many different classifications may be developed, each reflecting some specific aspect of activity. Of course, to deal with certain specific questions, the above classifications (and other possible ones) are convenient, and can be useful. Nevertheless, we must observe, classifications on foundations derived from abstract subject-object relations regarded ahistorically do not, and cannot, give us a picture of the process of differentiation of activities. At best they will give us but a snapshot picture, as it were. Yet, at the basis of any real classification of activities, and of the differentiation of activities in the historical process, is the development of the productive forces of society and of its productive (and all other social) relations. This determines the object, the medium, and the content of activities.

The need is emerging to develop a specific kind of "historical tree," a genealogy of activities, which will elucidate the process of their development and the interrelationships among them. The evolutionary tree of the species compiled in biology could serve as an analogy. Of course, this task is not so much one of psychology as of history, economics, and other social sciences. But its resolution is important for psychology, since such a classification will help us to discern more clearly the real problems to which life itself gives rise and to determine ways to resolve them. An understanding of how some type of activity is formed, how it grows out of another type of activity, is also important, so that we may make effective use of the knowledge we already have to study any type of new activity. Study of the developmental links among different types of ac-



tivities is also necessary for an understanding of how, for example, interest, inclinations, abilities, etc., are formed in a young generation. The trends of development of activities must, in general, be taken into account in educative work with youth, and for the psychological designing of new types of activities, for scientific practical research in occupational guidance, occupational training, and the resolution of many other practical questions.

What dictates the development and differentiation of activity?

In addressing this question, Marx noted that the development of types of human activity takes place in unbroken unity with the development of needs. The proliferation and development of needs of human beings are inseparably linked with the proliferation and development of types of activity by means of which these needs are satisfied.

Labor is, of course, the primary and fundamental type of activity. In describing labor, Marx wrote: "The process of labor is a purposeful activity for the creation of use-values, the assimilation of what is given by nature to meet human needs, and the universal condition for interchange between man and nature. . ." [5. P. 195]. People begin with finding something to eat and drink, etc., i.e., with the satisfaction of their needs [2].

In Capital Marx uncovered the dialectic of production and consumption. He revealed the social nature of human needs. The needs of society (and the process of consumption) are not merely the simple sum of individual needs (and processes of individual consumption): they also include needs dictated by the development of production in all other spheres of the life of society. But the needs, for example, of production are naturally not the needs of machinery and the materials used for production. They are the needs of people, entering into definite productive relations. To understand how any social (or individual) need has arisen, it is necessary to study the process of development of the productive forces of society and of social relations: economic, civil, political, etc., i.e., the entire aggregate of social life. It is important to stress, when it is said

that some activity is generated by a need, that it is primarily the needs of society, not those of the separate individual, that are meant.

In analyzing production and consumption historically, Marx and Engels demonstrated the characteristic features of needs and the means of satisfying them under conditions of a natural and a commodity economy: in primitive, communal, slave-owning, feudal, and capitalist societies. Their analysis has tremendous interest for psychology (especially historical psychology).

Marx and Lenin, in developing the subject of needs and consumption, regarded this problem in the context of the class structure of society. According to Lenin, the definition of class includes such factors as the means for acquiring and the size of that share of social wealth that should serve to satisfy the needs of the class and of the individuals belonging to that class [9. P. 15].

In abstract paradigms of activity, which view activity only in terms of the "subject-object," relationship, the class aspect of needs disappears, just as does the process of consumption. It is stated only that a need finds its object in activity. But understanding precisely how a need "finds" itself in an object of activity is possible only through examining the place of the individual (if, for example, one is speaking of individual activity) in the system of social relations.

There is no need to demonstrate that the share of the social product obtained by a particular person and the means by which he is able to satisfy his needs have a profound influence on his motivation. The hierarchy of human motives, which is frequently discussed in psychology, is formed under specific social conditions. Which motives in this hierarchy predominate and which are subordinate is by no means determined by a person's spontaneous development, as some would like to believe, but by that person's "movement" in a system of social relations.

The affirmation that social relations play a determining role in the formation and development of man as a subject of activity does not mean that the individual must be regarded as a

passive reflection of these relations. On the contrary, this assertion implies the active involvement of the individual. Social relations do not exist independently of the actions of human beings (independently of interactions among people). As Lenin observed, social relations are formed out of the actions of particular individuals [8. P. 345]. In uncovering a person's movement in a system of social relations, we at the same time discover the level and direction of his active involvement.

Thus, activity is a social-historical category. The psychological study of activity presupposes an understanding of how a system of historically constituted social relations is manifested in a particular activity. In analyzing activity, we must regard it within a system of social relations, in connection with the processes of production, exchange, and consumption, in relation to the ownership of the means of production, the civil and political structure, the development of culture, ideology, and science, etc., i.e., in the context of all of social life; but this means that psychology must collaborate with other social sciences in working on the problem of activity. If psychology does not draw on the broad context developed by these other sciences, it will be impossible for it to penetrate into the mechanisms of motivation and goal formation; it will also be difficult to find an approach to many other problems in psychological investigations of activity.

### Psychological Aspects of the Study of Individual Activity

The types and forms of activity in a given society are determined by the level of development of its productive forces and its system of social relations (above all, their base, production relations). But these activities are not the functioning of some abstract "socium": they are performed by particular living people, individuals and members of that society.

As we have already pointed out, psychology is interested primarily in the activities of individuals, or in individual activity. (4)

As follows from the above, activity at the level of individual

existence (as well as at other levels) is a form of existence of social relations; but the specifics of this form are determined by the place occupied by the particular individual in the system of social relations. Whether he has the ability to choose an activity in accordance with his own calling or whether this activity is imposed upon him (i.e., he is forced to perform this activity), whether he has access to means of development, and to what degree, will depend, in the final analysis, on the type of social relations in the particular society. Moreover, this will also determine in what social relations he will participate, whether he will be limited just to productive activity or be able also to participate in activity in the areas of culture, politics, ideology, etc. But whatever the case, in performing any form of activity, the individual realizes a specific social function in it.

Any activity an individual undertakes is determined not by the need of the individual himself, but by social needs — or, perhaps more accurately, by a social need transformed into an individual need. The very laws of development of the individual can be understood only in the context of the laws of development of society.

What in individual activity is of interest to psychology?

In studying individual (and joint) activity, it is logical first to define its object and the means by which and conditions in which it takes place. But when the individual undertakes to carry out some activity, the object, the means, and the conditions usually are already given, and are not the subject of psychological investigation.

Often mental phenomena occurring and developing in the process of an individual's activity are regarded as its products, but this interpretation is no more than a metaphor. The real product of any activity, including individual activity, is an object, material or ideal (even though it may be mediated through the activity of other individuals), that is transformed in the course of that activity's being carried out. It is important to stress that, in evaluating the product of activity, the most important aspect of its social significance (the social need the

activity satisfies). This is most evident when we examine productive activity, the product of which is a use-value, i.e., an object (or part of an object) that satisfies some social need. Marx wrote: "The product of the labor process is a use-value, a natural substance adapted to human needs through a change in its form" [6. P. 195]. This is more difficult to show for certain other kinds of activity, but analysis of the product of activity is also not directly the task of psychology.

What, then, does psychology study in individual activity? Not its object, its means, its conditions, or its product. Then what? Briefly stated, the object of psychological analysis is the individual as the subject of activity. The object, the means, the conditions, and the product of activity interest psychology only insofar as they enable psychologists to understand the characteristics of the subject of activity. But the subject of activity (including individual activity) is studied by other sciences in addition to psychology. What, then, is of interest to psychology?

Activity, as A. N. Leont'ev rightly noted [30, 31], is a real relationship between subject and object in which the mind is a necessary component. In performing any activity, the individual must perceive, remember, think, and be attentive; in the course of activity, emotions arise in him; and qualities of the will, attitudes, and relationships are shaped and become manifest. An activity in the course of which a human being does not perceive, think, or experience — such an activity simply cannot exist. If there are no motives in the individual inducing him to some activity, if he has no goals, if he does not perceive the objects (or their models) with which, or by means of which, he acts, if he does not remember what he is to do and how he is to do it, then activity does not take place, even though the object, the means, and all the necessary conditions for it may be present. In brief, the entire system of processes, states, and properties commonly referred to as mental are shaped, developed, and become manifest in activity. (5)

Engels wrote:

There is no way to avoid the fact that everything that

induces a human being to undertake activity must pass through his head; a human being even eats and drinks as a result of the fact that in his head are reflected (my emphasis — B.L.) the sensations of hunger and thirst, and he ceases eating and drinking as a result of the fact that a sensation of satiety is relected in his head. The effects of the external world on a human being are imprinted in his head, reflected in it in the form of feelings, thoughts, motives, manifestations of will — in a word, in the form of "ideal drives." [4. P. 290]

Psychology singles out in activity the aspect that is related to study of the different forms, types, and levels of subjective reflection of objective reality by an acting human being.

It studies the laws of the formation and development of these forms, types, and levels as an "internal condition" (in the sense in which S. L. Rubinshtein used this word), as one of the most important characteristics of the subject of activity and, at this level, as a necessary "component" of activity. Activity regarded apart from its subject (for example, when it is described algorithmically) has, of course, no psychological characteristics; only the subject of activity has such characteristics.

As an example we may present A. Maslow's concept [52], which is currently so fashionable. It states (and in this respect we can agree) that needs, which constitute a kind of pyramid or hierarchy in the course of an individual's development, are the basis of motives. But Maslow's interpretation of the reasons for the development of motives, and the various hierarchical levels he distinguishes, are very doubtful. According to Maslow, at the base of the pyramid are physiological needs (hunger, thirst, sex, etc.), many of which are subject to the principle of homeostasis. The next level is the need for safety, which, in contrast to the "biologizers," Maslow sees as a need for order and stability rather than a manifestation of the instinct of self-preservation. The third level is affiliation: the need to belong to some group of people, the need for social

contact, etc. The fourth level is a need for esteem. Finally, there is the need for self-actualization, self-expression, the need to demonstrate one's abilities, the need for creativity.

As we see, Maslow's pyramid combines biogenic and socio-genic needs (we have no objections to such a combination). The characteristics of these different levels are very amorphous, however, because Maslow takes the needs of an abstract individual, apart from their context in a system of social relations, and views individual needs independently of the needs of society (divorced from the context of social needs). The process is portrayed as follows: if a person has satisfied a need on one level, a need on the next level appears, and when it has been satisfied, a need on an even higher level arises, etc. But in what social conditions are these needs satisfied, and what are the reasons for this transition from one level to another?

These questions are beyond Maslow's understanding. He makes only the very general comment that society can either inhibit or accelerate the transition of individual needs from one level to another, i.e., he sees society only as a medium in which the individual develops. He has never overcome the contradiction, so widespread in Western psychology, between the individual and society.

Psychology is interested primarily in the role and place of the system of processes of mental reflection in the activity of the individual (or group of people), whatever the kind of activity, whether labor activity or some other type. On the other hand, psychology views activity as a determinant of the system of mental processes, states, and properties of the subject. It also studies the influence of this system on the effectiveness and quality of activity.

In a psychological analysis of activity, the concepts of motive and goal are extremely important. Unmotivated or purposeless activity simply cannot exist. A motive and a goal constitute a kind of vector of activity, which determines both its direction and the amount of effort developed by the subject in performing the activity. This vector acts as a system-forming factor that

organizes the entire system of mental processes and states, formed and developed in the course of activity.

With regard to the motives of human activity (and of man's behavior in general), reference is mainly to the subjectively experienced motives for activity. For the subject, a motive seems to be some direct driving force, a direct cause of his behavior.

In rationalistic, basically idealistic, concepts, the sources of a motive are seen to lie in thought, and motives to be derived from consciousness. Engels's observation is relevant here: "People have become accustomed to explaining their actions in terms of their thought, instead of explaining them on the basis of their needs (which, of course, are reflected in their heads, where they become an object of consciousness). . ." [3. P. 493].

In contemporary psychology there are dozens of concepts of motivation, and most of them try to derive motives from the spontaneous development of the individual regarded from a naturalistic viewpoint.

But, as we have observed, society is not simply a medium for the individual: the individual is a member of society, he is part of a system of existing social relations. Hence, in an analysis of needs as the foundation of motives, we must begin not with the abstract individual, but with the way that individual is incorporated into a system of social relations, and how this system is reflected in his (individual) head. To uncover the motivational sphere of an individual (its composition, structure, and dynamics), his ties and relations with other people must be taken into account.

Generally speaking, a motive is the reflection of a need that acts as an objective force, an objective law, and functions as an objective necessity. People's needs dictate their behavior with the same compelling force as the force of gravity does the motion of physical bodies. The systems of social relations formed in a given society objectively determine and define the development, structure, and dynamics of motives of different groups of people and the motivational sphere of each individual.



In studying the motives of individual behavior, it is incorrect to regard them only as the reflection of individual needs. Indeed, even these needs are formed and developed in the context of the development of social needs. They cannot be understood without a historical perspective on the development of the needs of society. Thus, it is especially important to point out that a person's motives reflect more than just his individual needs: they also reflect the needs of society. Of course, this statement is too general. More concretely, at the empirical level of psychological analysis, it is the groups of people to which a specific, concrete individual belongs that are of interest (for example, the family, the work team, the sports team, the school class, etc.). Incorporation into any new community or collective gives rise to new motives and, in some way or other, transforms the already formed motives of the individual.

The transition from one level of motivation to another is determined not by the laws of spontaneous development, as Maslow thought, but by the development of an individual's ties and relations with other people. For example, whether the "need for self-actualization" arises in a specific individual will be determined not by whether he has satisfied his need for affiliation and his need for esteem, but by how his interrelationships with other people have developed (in particular, in those communities of which he has become a part in the process of his development in society).

The source of this conflict of motives, as it is called, of which many have written in psychology, cannot be discovered without analyzing those communities of people of which a particular person is a part and the way in which he is a part of them. The disparate needs of those communities to which the particular person belongs are at the root of this conflict of motives.

The needs of the communities to which a particular person belongs intersect in the individual and in his motivational sphere. An extremely complicated picture of a dynamic system of motives is created; this determines their interrelationship, i.e., the coordination or the contradiction of motives, etc.

As Marx observed, "The real intellectual richness of the individual depends wholly on the richness of his actual relations" [1. P. 36]. Though it is a reflection of a need (individual or social) mediated by a system of social relations, a motive is not simply a copy of that system. Similar needs may be realized in different motives, and, conversely, different needs may underlie similar motives.

The forms in which needs are reflected are extremely varied. For example, a social need may be reflected in an individual's head as a desire, a sense of duty, an interest, a stimulus, etc.

The question of how social needs are reflected in an individual's sphere is extremely important for pedagogical practice (for more details, see [35]).

Though a motive may be an internal inducement to activity, it does not wholly determine the concrete characteristics of that activity. The same motive may be realized in different activities. It is wrong to say that a need (even one reflected in the head of an individual, i.e., one that has become a motive) can be satisfied in one, and only one, way. There is no rigid one-to-one correspondence between a need and the way it is satisfied.

The way an activity stemming from any motive will be structured is determined by the goal. It is important to stress that different goals may be formed (and indeed are formed) in connection with one and the same motive. One might speak of a "field of goals" linked to some particular motive. A motive is "polyvalent." Whereas a motive only stimulates activity, a goal "construes" a concrete activity, determining its characteristics and dynamics.

A motive is related to the need impelling an individual to activity, whereas a goal is related to the object toward which the activity is directed.

By goal we mean an idea in a person's mind, the subject of a future result of an activity, which precedes the carrying out of that activity and determines the nature and modes of actions. In other words, a goal is a phenomenon of anticipatory reflection.

Once a goal is formed, it is realized in current activity. The psychological complexity of activity depends on how remote a goal is from its object, i.e., on the "distance" between a present object and a proposed result, and also on the means (and the level to which they have been mastered) at the individual's disposal. In very simple cases, the achievement of a goal requires that a comparatively small number of acts be carried out; but usually activity is carried out as a system of successive acts each of which resolves a particular problem and may be regarded as a "step" toward the goal. As a higher, permanently stable regulator of activity (otherwise activity would be broken off), a goal is transformed with each such step, at each stage appearing as a concrete task. An analysis of the mechanisms sustaining a goal and of its continuous transformations as activity is carried out is one of the most important problems of psychological research.

In discussing the formation and achievement of a goal, it is important to point out that it is not imported into individual activity from without (at least in developed forms of activity), but is formed by the individual himself. (6) Yet a goal is not the product of that individual's spontaneous development, divorced from social circumstances. The process of goal formation in individual activity is, in the final analysis, determined by the level of development of society. This process necessarily includes (although the individual may not even be conscious of this, and indeed usually is not conscious of it), the accumulated experience of mankind assimilated by the individual in the process of learning and education (in the broad sense).

Goal formation is, of course, subject to the influence of social requirements, norms, laws, etc., but is not equivalent to them. Marx stressed specifically: "Only when external goals lose the appearance of being only an external natural necessity and become goals the individual himself poses does 'real freedom' occur" [7. Pp. 109-110].

To understand what goals are formed in a particular individual and how, it is necessary to study the history of the

development of that individual in society, i.e., the history of his development as a personality. Goal formation is profoundly personal. (7)

It should be pointed out that in a psychological analysis of activity, motive and goal are often not differentiated, and sometimes are simply considered identical. Yet the "spectrum" of their interrelationships is very broad: from more or less complete correspondence to considerable discrepancy and even contradiction. In real life an object that can satisfy some individual need usually does not coincide with the product of that individual's activity. This is due to the social character of individual activity, and is determined primarily by the division of labor. Marx noted that the product of the labor of a particular worker is a use-value not for the worker himself, but for others, i.e., it is the object of need of other people. Conversely, the products of the labor of other people will go to satisfy the needs of that particular worker. Thus, the goal of his activity (for example, the production of some use-value) is not determined directly by his individual motive (and the individual need behind that motive). The relationship between motive and goal is mediated by social relations, above all, by the system of production, exchange, and consumption and their interrelationships in the particular society. In terms of individual activity, in order to find out how goals and motives are related we must, of course, first examine the position of the particular individual performing the particular activity in this system.

The questions discussed above refer mainly to the personal aspect of the study of the subject of activity. In studying the formation and development of motives and goals, we find ourselves inevitably dealing with the psychological characteristics of personality. (8)

The personal aspect (and level) in the study of the subject of activity is, however, the most important, though not the only, aspect in the psychological analysis of activity.

Another aspect and another level of study are analyses of the dynamics of sensorimotor, perceptual, mnemonic, intellectual, and other mental processes (especially their interrelations)

and mental states in an individual's activity in the real world.

Soviet psychology has a wealth of data demonstrating the characteristic features of the course of mental processes under conditions of man's activity (and its various types) in the real world. There is no need to present these data since they are, of course, well known. Let us point out just one aspect of them. The vector "motive-goal," which is a higher regulator of activity, organizes the mental processes that go to make up that activity in a specific way. This vector serves as a determinant of selectivity of perception, level of concentration of attention, short-term retrieval of information from memory, and how that information is transformed in thought. Ultimately, it also determines the dynamics of mental states (which, to be sure, have been studied inadequately — indeed, much less than the dynamics of mental processes).

But the problem of the correlation between the "motive-goal" vector and mental processes has another aspect, which, unfortunately, has not been studied in psychology at all. Specifically, motive and goal are not something independent of (or over) mental processes. They are formed in the process of perception, imagination, and thought; mnemonic processes play a key role in their formation.

As experimental studies have shown, any mental process has an element of anticipation, i.e., an element going beyond current events; this element reflects not only the state of the object at a particular moment in time but also the direction of or tendency toward change (see [36]).

This element is central to goal formation: its material effects are, as it were, the material of which a goal is constructed. Another factor that plays an especially major role in the formation of a goal is discursive thought, which has the most (in comparison with other processes, i.e., sensorimotor, perceptual, etc.) prognostic potential and in which anticipation extends the farthest and the deepest. (9)

A study of goal formation at the level of analysis of mental processes poses the question of what form a goal assumes in the mind of the subject. It may take the form of a perceptual

image, a picture in the imagination, or a "logical construct." The form a goal will assume depends on the specific conditions under which the subject must act. Of course, it would be incorrect to state that sensorimotor, perceptual, mnemonic, and intellectual processes each in themselves determine the form of a goal. When we say that a goal appears as a perceptual image, this by no means implies that it is related only to perception: naturally, its formation would be impossible without the participation of thought, imagination, and memory. All levels of mental reflection participate in some way or other in the formation of a goal. At this level as well, a goal is an integral systemic structure, a specific form of anticipatory reflection.

Of even greater importance is the study of mental processes (their interrelationships and mutual transitions) in the investigation of the structures and dynamics of individual activity, namely, the forecasting of the course of the events related to the motives and goals of activity, formation of conceptual models and operational images, decision making, the transformation of a goal into a system of tasks, processing of incoming information, planning of activity, evaluation of the results, and correction of acts. (See [14, 22] for more detailed treatment of the structure and dynamics of activity.)

What we have said above brings us to the most complex and most essential question for psychology, the question of the correlation between activity and the mind.

One point of view widespread in Soviet psychology states that the mind is activity, internal activity, which is a derivative of external activity (above all, practical activity with objects). This internal mental activity has the same structure as external activity. It is said, for example, that mental processes are formed in accordance with the same principles as those governing the construction of a labor act; a mental act is thus a specific model of the material act. In this view, the principal mechanism of formation of mental phenomena (mental acts) is claimed to be internalization (a concept originally introduced into psychology by Janet, but later substantially modified).

Summing up all that has been said based on this view, we get the following simplified scheme: First, the individual carries out some act with an object (thing). (10) This act is external (for example, manipulation of something); then it is internalized, "introjected," as it were, into the subject, and becomes internal, i.e., a genuinely mental act. The act is compacted, reduced, and modified. Sometimes it is stated that perceptual, mnemonic, intellectual, and other mental activities (and acts) are just such internal, internalized acts.

We should first point out that the concepts "external" and "internal" are relative and ambiguous. "External" to what? "Internal to what?"

Often "internal processes (or acts)" are regarded as processes taking place within the subject and inaccessible to direct outside observation, whereas "external" processes are accessible to such observation. Thus, the external is the objectively observable, and the internal is subjective, not objectively observable.

Of course, we can describe some external (observed from without) picture of some activity of human beings (walking, picking up something, putting something down, etc.). But behind this external act an internal act is always concealed. In these acts of walking, picking up, putting down, etc., the motives and goals a person poses for himself, the tasks he must resolve, are manifested in one way or other. A human being will not perform such acts if he does not perceive, remember, imagine, or think. Any activity, any act (if it is real action, not a reaction), has an internal aspect.

On the other hand, any activity we could call internal is manifested in some way or other externally, in the real acts and deeds of a person, however remote in time this act or deed is from the original intention. There is no "purely external" activity, just as there is no "purely internal" activity. Any real, ongoing activity has externals and internals (external and internal levels or sides), and these are inseparable from one another. The distinction between external and internal activities is an artificial one. Any external act is mediated

by processes taking place within the subject, and an internal process is, in one way or another, manifested externally. The task of psychology does not consist of first discriminating between them and then finding how they are connected, but in studying "the external aspect" of activity, in discovering the "internal aspect" of activity by studying its "external aspect"; put more precisely, the task of psychology is to understand the actual role of the mental in activity.

The structure of activity, any activity, is the same: it has both external and internal aspects. But the external and internal aspects of activity are combined in different ways, which are specific to different types of activity. The most important task for psychology in studying activity is to develop a theory that will elucidate these external and internal aspects as part of a unified structure and to study the specific modes of integration of mental processes that are proper to different types of human activity. But if the structure of any activity has external and internal aspects, some doubt is cast on the plausibility of the notion that internalization is the basic mechanism of formation of internal (for example, intellectual) acts. It would seem that this notion embraces only a particular case or specific aspect of the development of the mechanism of mental regulation of activity.

A child's learning to count is often given as an example of internalization. Schematically, the process is described as follows: initially the child counts sticks (or buttons, or beads, etc.), rearranging them in some external, practical way; then this act is internalized (we omit here a description of the stages of internalization), is "introjected," as it were, within, and the child begins to count mentally; thus, an external act is transformed into an internal (mental) act.

But strictly speaking, when a child rearranges sticks, this is an act of rearranging sticks, not counting; no act of counting can emerge from an act of rearranging sticks in itself. If this act of moving sticks from one place to another has any relation to operating with magnitudes, it is at best at the level of breaking down a whole (a pile) into its parts. But this is



not counting. For a child really to learn the act of counting, this act must be introduced into the operation of rearranging sticks from without (i.e., by a teacher, parent, or anyone who can count), i.e., as one act is carried out, a different, new act must be performed. This is indeed a new act, not simply the internalization of an act whose performance may have led to it.

As this new act is formed, the child learns the principles and rules of operating with signs and sign systems that have been created in the historical evolution of mankind and that represent social practice as it has been "molded" over the course of time. Thus, the basis of this new act is different from that of an act involving manipulation of objects (things).

An external act (in the example given above, the moving of sticks from one place to another) serves only as an auxiliary means of learning the intellectual act of counting, but it is not its basis. The external act is not introjected within; on the contrary, a new act is incorporated into the external act from without (via another person). More precisely, in the basis of one activity (which itself has an external and an internal aspect), another activity is formed (the external and internal aspects of which are correlated in an entirely different way). But once a child has learned this new act, the auxiliary means (support) becomes unnecessary. A person who has learned the principles and rules of counting (and the corresponding sign systems) can count any magnitude. Once he has learned the rules and principles of counting by "tens," he can also work with magnitudes that he never encounters in his individual experience, but that have been formed historically in social practice and in theoretical generalizations.

Is there any basis for regarding the mind as a special kind of activity, as internalized "external" activity? Or, put differently, is there any basis for extending the schemata developed in the study of different types of historically constituted activities to mental phenomena (e.g., to mental processes)? Does such an extension open up any new paths for the analysis of the correlation between the mind and activity? Unfortunately, no clear criteria enabling us to differentiate various types of

human activity have yet been defined. It is quite clear, however, that the concept of "mental activity" is not of the same order, for example, as "productive activity," "political activity," "scientific activity," etc. Nonetheless, the mind and the mental have something to do with, and are included in, each of these.

For example, to regard perceptual, mnemonic, intellectual, and other mental processes as special types of activity, we must first demonstrate that each of them has a specific motive, a specific goal, a specific object, and a specific medium. Indeed, do perception or thoughts have their own motives, different from a motive that induces a person to undertake, for example, observational or investigational activity? Such a motive would be hard to detect. Perception and thought are not independent types of activity, but aspects of real human activity, components of it. They are part of the activity of an observer and an investigator (or any other activity) and are the factors ensuring that the conditions, object, and medium of this activity will be reflected therein, the motives and goals will be formed, the problems will be delimited, tasks will be resolved, etc.

The activity of an observer cannot be reduced to perception, although perception plays a special role in this activity; in the same way, the activity of an investigator cannot be reduced to thinking. The task of psychology is to analyze the specific structure of the mental processes that characterize a specific activity, not to reduce one to the other.

Essentially, the terms perceptual activity and mnemonic activity have the same basis as that in terms of which mental processes are described. (11)

As Sechenov [43] pointed out, the role of mental processes also consists in the fact that they are processes reflecting reality and thus ensure the regulation of activity, and that that activity is adequate to the conditions under which it takes place. In other words, the main functions of the mind in activity are cognitive and regulatory.

In studying activity, psychology elucidates (in any case,

should elucidate) how reality is subjectively reflected in the process of such activity and what mechanism underlies mental regulation of that activity. Its task also consists in studying the influence of activity on the development of the mental functions, processes, states, and properties of human beings.

### Joint Activity as a Problem of General Psychology

From what we have said in the preceding sections of this paper, it follows that the development of a general psychological theory of activity cannot be developed on the basis of study of "individual activity" alone. Such psychological studies should also include joint activity.

Unfortunately, joint activity has hardly been studied at all in psychology, as we have more than once pointed out [32-34]. It has only recently become an object of research in social psychology. Yet its study is important for the development not only of social psychology but also of other areas of psychology, and for a general psychological theory.

The concept "joint activity" is very broad. Strictly speaking, any individual activity is a component of joint activity. Of course, in a scientific analysis, individual activity may be abstracted from the general context and regarded in isolation. But this done, the picture must remain incomplete. When we attempt to describe individual activity in its "own internal logic," i.e., to regard it as a "closed system," we inevitably find "breaks," "flaws," "discontinuities," "undefined areas," etc.

The starting point, therefore, of an analysis of individual activity consists of determining its place, its role, in joint activity and, accordingly, the function of the particular individual in the group. (12) Only if this condition is met can we understand the characteristic features of the individual's motives, and of goal formation, and ascertain the structure of his activity (including the characteristic features of the interrelationships and dynamics of mental processes).

Joint activity constitutes a vast range of problems that have

as yet been very little explored. In this part of our paper we shall touch on only a few of these questions, bearing on joint activity of small (contact) groups, since, in our view, these groups are especially important for the development of a general psychological theory of activity. In joint activity, as in individual activity, the mind fulfills cognitive and regulatory functions. But as soon as we try to analyze joint activity, we encounter the manifestation of yet another function of the mind, namely, the communicative function.

An essential component of joint activity is communication among people, during the course of which knowledge, abilities, skills, motives, goals, plans, etc., are exchanged and the subject (aggregate subject) of this activity is shaped. Without an analysis of communication, the structure and dynamics of activity cannot be ascertained. (13) Communication, as it were, pervades joint activity, playing an organizing role. (For a more detailed treatment of the role of communication in activity, see [40].)

In the context of joint activity, the goal formed by each individual as a member of the group is inseparably bound up with the general goal. No studies have yet been made in psychology of how a general goal is formed, how individual goals are related to it, and in what way these individual goals are mutually transformed. We can only say, in but very general terms, that the process of goal formation in joint activity depends substantially on the social conditions under which it takes place. In a genuine group, the goal (a mental picture of a future product) is formed as a result of the creative activity of all its participants, although the contribution of each of them may be different. Consequently, a goal is something general yet, at the same time, something "specific" to each. The process of goal formation evidently takes place differently in other groups.

In any case, the process of formation of a general goal cannot be understood without analyzing the relationships formed in the particular group (interpersonal relationships) and the communication among its participants. Moreover, interpersonal

relations undergo various changes in the process of formation of general goals.

The correlation between goals and motives in joint activity is even more complex than in individual activity. The individuals brought together in joint activity may have a common goal, but their motives may be, and usually are, different. A multiplicity of variants is possible: from a situation in which the motives of the participants of joint activity coincide, to a situation in which they are antagonistic.

The "interlacing" of individual motives in joint activity sometimes creates a very complex picture, giving rise to a multitude of different effects, for example, the change in individual motives and goals under conditions of joint activity, the enrichment of the motivational sphere of each of its participants, or the disintegration of joint activity as a result of a conflict of motives (however, even when individual motives conflict, a general goal may be preserved). Moreover, interpersonal relations become manifest in the way goals and motives of people brought together by activity are interrelated.

Under conditions of joint activity, the motive of an individual participating in it is correlated in some way or other with the motives of the other participants and, consequently, is able to change these motives. Under these conditions, new aspects in the dynamics of individual motives are brought out. The complexity of the interlacing of motives in joint activity causes perhaps the greatest difficulties in the management of such activity.

The longer-term the general goals guiding joint activity, the greater will be the possibility of integrating individual motives and transforming a small group into a true collective. This has been brilliantly demonstrated in both the theory and the practice of A. S. Makarenko. The general goal determines the specific features of the tasks of each of the participants in the joint activity and, consequently, of those concrete acts each of them has to perform. Each individual act of each participant thus becomes a part of the joint activity, and can be understood only in terms of its own logic. If an act is examined by itself

in isolation, the process of transformation of a goal into a task (which we have mentioned above) cannot be understood at all.

As is known, joint (as well as individual) activity presupposes planning, which is realized in the process of communication. The specification of tasks (it is of no importance whether this is done by the group or by one of its participants) creates the basis for a general plan of joint activity. This plan includes not only a specification and assignment of tasks and their corresponding acts but also their coordination. As joint activity is carried out, the general plan fulfills primarily a coordinating role. In addition to the general plan (and on its basis) each member of the group forms his own individual plan, however simple it may be. Each individual plan not only is constructed as a plan of the individual's own actions but also takes into consideration the proposed acts of the other participants in the joint activity, their collaboration, or their counteractions (for example, I must perform act B after another participant performs act A; act C will depend on how I perform act B, etc.).

In the course of joint activity, the acts of its individual participants are regulated by the reflection not only of the object toward which that activity is directed but also of acts performed by other participants and the changes and transformations in the objects they produce. Thus, it is not just objects and tasks that guide an individual's acts. The individual "fits" his act to the acts of others. This raises the dynamic level of activity. In particular, a manifestation of such a "fit" may be seen, for example, in the synchronization of individual acts, i.e., the formation of a general pace (and rhythm) of joint activity. Experimental research is necessary to determine the mechanism of synchronization and the factors that influence it.

The role of anticipation, noted in an earlier part of this paper, in the regulation of an act shows up especially clearly under conditions of joint activity, since without it an individual's acts cannot be fitted or adjusted to the acts of other

people. The individual must anticipate a tendency to change both in the object with which he is acting and in the objects with which others are acting.

Finally, an evaluation of the results of individual acts is subject to the requirements determined by the "joint nature" of the activity being performed. In psychology the role of feedback signals carrying information about the results of an accomplished act in the evaluation and correction of that act has been studied in considerable detail. These studies, however, have dealt mainly with individual acts considered in isolation. As soon as we examine these acts in the context of joint activity, we immediately discover two very important factors: first, evaluation is done on the basis of the criteria (and norms) adopted in a group and, second, a feedback signal bears information not only about changes in the object but also about the evaluation of the results of an act (and of the act itself) on the part of others. Thus, a feedback signal is enriched by additional information, which, indeed, is often very important for the individual. These factors are (or may be), of course, present in an individual act taken in isolation, but then they are present in concealed form.

The content of joint activity (especially if it is truly group activity) is, in psychological terms, much richer than individual activity. Each participant in this activity contributes his own unique experience to it, an experience no other possesses except himself. In the process of joint activity, a general fund of information that may be used by all is created. Unique and extremely economical means for the exchange of information (people who have worked well with each other have an implicit understanding of each other) and techniques for carrying out and coordinating acts are created. On the whole, the level of regulation of acts rises; and the possibilities of problem-solving potential increase.

We have noted here only some of the questions arising in a study of joint activity and of individual activity in the context of joint activity. Further studies will doubtless uncover new questions.

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In the system of Marxist categories on which psychology draws in developing a general theory (and special theories as well), an extremely important role belongs to the category of activity. As a social-historical category, it enables us to ascertain the social factors determining the human mind.

But the explanatory potential of this category can be effectively exploited only within a system of other categories, such as social relations, communication, personality, consciousness, etc.

Using such a system, we have attempted to determine the foundations and determinants of the motivational sphere of the individual personality as a subject of activity, of goal formation, and of the dynamics and structure of activity, both individual and joint.

We have also examined the question of the fundamental functions of the mind in activity. The mind (above all, its higher level, consciousness) is the subjective reflection of objective reality, and as such performs a cognitive and regulatory function in human activity, as has been demonstrated in analyzing individual activity. But this is not its only function. The mind also fulfills a communicative function, which shows up especially clearly in people's joint activity. The levels at which these various functions are manifest may vary, depending on the particular conditions.

We should say that the further development of the psychological aspects of the problem of activity requires special study of these functions and their interrelationships (including their mutual transitions) in different types of human activity. In other words, the psychological study of activity should include an analysis of these functions, their levels, their dynamics, and their manifestations, according to the activity of which they constitute the psychological components.

#### Notes

- 1) This article continues the discussion of the problem of



activity in psychology (see Psikhologicheski Zhurnal: K. A. Abul'khanova-Slavskaya, [The category of activity in Soviet psychology ], 1980, 1 [4], 11–28 [translation published in Soviet Psychology, XX (4)]; G. V. Sukhodolskii, [A conceptual system for a psychological theory of activity], 1981, 2 [3], 12–24).

2) Sometimes it is thought that the use of the term activity in itself protects psychology from reductionism and other deviations in developing its problems. We might point out that the terms activity and action are readily found in the works of behaviorists, Freudians, and cognitivists as well. As is known, in idealistic concepts of psychology, activity, viewed as a manifestation of man's active nature, is immanent to consciousness, and is a basic category. Mechanistic, physicalist, biologizing, and other concepts also use the term activity.

3) This, of course, does not mean that it is never permissible to abstract from the social context. Such abstraction is possible, but only to deal with special problems.

4) Psychology, naturally, is not limited to this, and cannot be limited to it, if only for the reason that individual activity does not exist by itself, but is intertwined with the activity of society. Nevertheless, the psychological problems arising in the study of the activity of human groups at different levels, of varying compass, and formed on different bases, determined by the objective laws of the development of society, will be different. The classification of psychological problems bearing on activities of both individuals and different groups of people constitutes a special scientific problem which we cannot go into here.

5) We should point out that the systemic character of the mind is revealed most completely in the real activity of the subject. In a laboratory experiment we can study any mental process (state or property) in isolation (i.e., relative isolation, of course). But only in activity is it possible to discover the mind as a system. It should be borne in mind here that this system is composed differently in different activities, and its dynamics will also be different.

6) A demand may be made on an individual from without,

but a goal cannot be imposed from without.

7) We stress this because this process is often regarded only at the level of investigation of thought.

8) The problem of aptitude also belongs to the personal aspect of the study of the subject of activity.

9) Not by accident, attempts to discover the mechanism of goal formation have been undertaken mainly in the psychology of thought, although, as we have noted above, this problem is mainly a problem of the psychology of the individual personality.

10) Of course, the object of activity may be not only a thing, but also relationships among things and, moreover, relationships between people and their activities. But here we shall be dealing with a relatively simple level of individual activity.

11) In an analysis of mental processes, the term activity can be used, but not with significance ascribed to it when it is meant as a social-historical category.

12) The importance of the study of joint activity of an adult and a child in the development of object-oriented acts in early childhood has been correctly pointed out by D. B. El'konin [50].

13) Of course, communication is a part (at least implicitly) of individual activity as well: the communicative function of the mind is realized in it, but it is most completely revealed in joint activity.

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