rapidily accumulating new overlaping sciences, such as biochemistry, astrophysics and on and on. The sciences range from physics and chemistry, the most general and widespread of all, to their vast offsprings: astronomy, geology, biology and sociology, down to the multiplicity of the specialized branches of these major sciences and not overlooking subatomic physics and microscopic biology.

The social sciences are just as subject to materialist analyses as are all other sciences. What distinguishes the scientists who are Marxists is their special concern in examining the unfolding processes of sociology, particularly history and economics.

HOW SURE CAN WE BE OF OUR KNOWLEDGE?

It has often been said that a grain of sand represents our accumulated knowledge in contrast to the vast unknowns symbolized by the total of the grains of sand on our planet. The more we learn, the more we realize how little we really know. It can be reasonably assumed that man has acquired more information during the last 150 years than he had in his previous millions of years on earth. This was spurred on by the revolutionary, technological strides of the market economy with its driving need for rapid expansion of its productive capacities, communications, transportation, etc.

It is worthy of note that information, as such, is not a synonym for knowledge. "Information" might be considered as facts in a vacuum (unrelated data) and "knowledge" as *understanding* the processes that correlate the facts (related data). Information serves as the raw materials for knowledge much as the parts of a jig saw puzzle are but the raw materials for the assembled picture.

In testing the accuracy of our knowledge, it is necessary to see if it really explains the conclusions we have reached. There are generally *accepted* explanations and there are generally *established* explanations. For centuries piled on centuries, the *accepted* explanations of the origins of the earth and life were of a religious nature, such as the story of Genesis. And, on the surface, such explanations still seem to be accepted. However, even with all the gaps in our knowledge, modern geology has *established* the stellar origins of the earth and modern biology has *established* that organic life evolved from inorganic origins, i.e., inorganic matter developed into material organisms, capable of growth and reproduction.

That popularly accepted explanations are not, necessarily, valid tests of accuracy can be seen in the dramatic instances of the long-drawn struggles that had taken place before the *established* findings of the heliocentric theory of the solar system and the Darwinian theory of biological evolution finally became generally accepted. The significant thing to note is that, despite persistent adherence to outworn *accepted* concepts, they are defended on the basis of *established* scientific viewpoints. This can be very clearly seen in the geology and biology courses in church-sponsored universities and in the arguments of the "God is dead" theologians. They cling to the outworn superstitions, their *accepted* notions, with a rash of rationalizations based on *established* knowledge. To quote Engels: They are shame-faced materialists.

There are three steps in making sure of our knowledge.

The first step is that it be an explanation, whether valid or not. For example, the God theory is an explanation of natural phenomena. In fact, at one time, it was a satisfactory one. The idea of supernatural spirits fulfilled the requirements of early man, who had no means of understanding the "mysterious" forces of nature, over which he had little control.

The second step is that the explanation must harmonize with what we now know, i.e., with what has been established. In other words, it must have the property of being able to be tested by present knowledge or future developments which it may also enhance and encourage.

Finally, and most important of all, the explanation must constantly be reexamined to discover whether they have been confirmed and corroborated by unfolding events and further evidence. If they are repudiated by such reexaminations, they are no longer valid. This is the acid test of our knowledge.

One of the highlights of the past 100 years is the establishment of the validity of the physical-material character of existence. Invariably, when we get meaningful answers they always prove to be materialistic. No longer is this a moot question! Herein lies the latent strength of socialist knowledge; it harmonizes with the scientific analysis of the real world.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

Two definitions of truth come to mind. 1. The obvious one of the dictionaries, "ideas that conform to reality," which is satisfactory enough. 2. A preferable one is a *correct* generalization. A homely illustration: All horses are four-footed animals. It can easily be demonstrated that it is an incorrect generalization to allege that all four-footed animals are horses.

The assumption that there are eternal verities (absolute, final truths) is an incorrect generalization just because there is no rest in nature. Everything in existence is in a constant process of change and motion. Philosophers argue that the statement, "truth is relative," is itself an absolute truth — because it is always true. Their exercise in mental gymnastics ignores that truth is, of necessity, ever-changing and transitory just because it is dependent on the circumstances and relationships with which they are confronted.

It was a truth to describe the earth in its earliest stages as a hot gaseous mass. It is not a truth to describe the earth in such terms today. It is a correct generalization (truth) to define capitalism as a class society based upon the social relations of capital and wage labor with production of commodities for sale on the market with a view to profit. Consequently, the workings of capitalism generates wars, poverty, crime, etc. It is an incorrect generalization that modern wars are the product of human instincts, that poverty will always exist, or that crimes result from the larceny in men's hearts.

The truth of the Marxian science of capitalist economics is borne out in the corroboration of the Law of Value by the very developments of capitalism. The truth of the validity of the socialist analysis of social evolution is verified by the confirmation of the Materialist Conception of History by unfolding events(d).

THE UNKNOWABLES

Once the physical-material processes resulting in man's thinking apparatus had become established, it spelled the death knell of the so-called spiritual distinction between man and other animals. This discovery was a powerful weapon in the last battlefield between superstitious religion and materialist science. No longer can it be validly contended that God is responsible for man being capable of reasoning.

Suffice it for the nonce, to merely indicate what we know of the human brain, the highest organ of the nervous system (and we are far from knowing very much about the involved details of this amazingly complex organ.) In common with his fellow creatures in the animal kingdom, man has sense perceptions and a nervous system that links up his mental processes and the outside world. But, in man, his brain had acquired the special properties of forming abstract conceptions and other brain characteristics, referred to as his mind. His brain contains billions of possible crossconnections

(d) For specific articles on both these subjects contact Editorial Committee.