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Niels Bohr and the Vienna Circle

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Abstract

The 2nd International Congress for the Unity of Science was held in Copenhagen from the 21st June to the 26th June 1936. Among the Danish participants was Jørgen Jørgensen, professor of philosophy at the University of Copenhagen and the leading figure of logical positivism in Denmark, and Niels Bohr, the famous physicist, the father of the atomic theory, and the originator of the Copenhagen Interpretation of quantum mechanics. In fact, the event took place in Bohr's honorary mansion at Carlsberg. Jørgensen was the main organizer of the event in close collaboration with Otto Neurath. The latter had already been in Copenhagen twice, and the second time he had had a chance to meet and discuss with Bohr on epistemological issues. Again in 1936 he and Jørgensen had discussions with Bohr at a time which presented a very important period in Bohr's thinking because the year before he had been confronted with the EPR-paradox. This final confrontation with Einstein gave Bohr a reason to change parts of his arguments. During this period of time Jørgensen seems to have supported Bohr's Copenhagen Interpretation whole-heartedly. The purpose of the present talk is to present both Bohr's and Jørgensen's philosophy in an attempt of showing to what extent Bohr's view, as it sometimes has been claimed, is an example of positivistic philosophy within physics.

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