There are at least two different statements that figure under the common name of the law of excluded middle: ontological and semantical, or — in another terminology — logical and metalogical. In its ontological (or logical) version, the law is taken to claim that of two contradictory states of affairs one always holds; in its semantical (or metalogical) version, it states that of two contradictory sentences one is always true. Whatever its formulation, the law is being charged with some philosophical import, which makes it nonneutral with regard to certain fundamental philosophical controversies. Characteristic of some philosophical standpoints, the law is claimed to be incompatible with some others. The best known philosophic aspect of the law of excluded middle concerns its role in the controversy between classical and intuitionistic (or constructivistic) standpoint in the philosophy of mathematics. Constituting an intrinsic element of the classical conception, it is rejected by all intuitionistic (and constructivistic) trends. But it is not this — widely discussed — problem that I want to concentrate upon in the present paper. The paper will be devoted to the role which the law of excluded middle plays in another philosophical dispute: in the fundamental philosophical controversy between realism and idealism — in particular, so-called objective (logical, or transcendental) idealism. This problem is one of the main subjects of Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz’s philosophical writings. He has devoted to it much effort and concern over a considerable period of time. His article “A Semantical Version of the Problem of Transcendental Idealism,” 1937, is, in its entirety, directly concerned with that issue. And he returns to the problem in some of his afterwar publications; in particular, in his paper “Epistemology and Semiotics,” 1948, and in a polemical essay “A Reply to Prof. A.
Schaff's Article Concerning my Philosophical Views," 1953. All these papers present an argumentation which aims at showing that the law of excluded middle is intrinsically connected with the realistic standpoint. The law is claimed to be incompatible with the idealistic doctrine. And its very rejection is interpreted as embracing the idealistic position.

It is Ajdukiewicz's argumentation that I shall take as a starting point in the present paper. Let me then sketch briefly the main line of the argumentation, drawing therein chiefly on the article of 1937. The conception of transcendental idealism which constitutes the object of Ajdukiewicz's analysis is termed by him a Neo-Kantian one. Its characteristic slogan is taken to claim that "the real world is nothing but a correlate of the transcendental subject" (or — in somewhat different terminology — of "the consciousness in general.") The highly enigmatic notion of "transcendental subject" has been given different meanings by different representatives of that doctrine. The one which Ajdukiewicz refers to has been propounded, among others, by Rickert. According to it, the "transcendental subject" may, roughly, be identified with a system of judgements: judgements dictated by so-called transcendental norms. These are conceived as certain rules (or criteria) of acceptance of statements, which have absolute validity, that is to say, whose verdict is final and irrevocable. The set of statements distinguished by those rules is said to constitute the "transcendental subject." Under this interpretation of that notion, the doctrine of transcendental idealism amounts to the claim that reality is nothing but a correlate of statements dictated by transcendental norms. This is what may be called an ontological version of the thesis of transcendental idealism. This version is assumed to have an equivalent epistemological counterpart. In its epistemological version, the thesis is said to claim that a statement is

1. The first two of the articles mentioned are available in English; their translations are included in: Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz: The Scientific World-Perspective and Other Essays, 1931-1963. Edited and with an Introduction by Jerzy Giedymin. D. Reidel, Dordrecht 1978. The third article is so far available only in Polish; see, e.g., Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz: Jezyk i poznanie (vol. 2). PWN, Warszawa 1965. All quotations from Ajdukiewicz's writings given in the text (if not otherwise marked) are taken from his first paper on transcendental idealism (1937).