

TECHNOLOGY & CULTURE, winter 1961

*1952
Loss of apt. without
Army or
Contract*

His. of Tech As a Science & as a Branch of Learning - A. Zverikina, 1949-60
Asst. Ed. in Chief of Great Soviet Encyclo.

Zverikina begins with concept of technology but CONCEPT NOT IN HEBELIAN SENSE but purely etymological sense as meaning art & craftsmanship.

handicraft prod. developed techniques, procedures, methods

Machinery = MEANS of labor --all of which he calls LAWS OF NATURE as "obj." basis of technology WHERE MARK SAYS IT IS OBJ. WHEN coop. prod. becomes its very basis of being.

"Another" aspect--social basis of dev. --WHICH MARK DOES NOT DIVIDE. "Natural science only indicates possible solutions of technical problems, but by itself it can neither guide technology nor determine the scope or pace of its dev. It is exclusive. ECO. LAWS OF A GIVEN SOCIAL SYSTEM. which guide direction

Then says that "contrary to dev. of eco. basis" technology does not dev. thru leaps of a new qual. Unlike social=eco. pheno. dev. of tech. is directly bound with natural science....

Wkg. masses help to bring about constant changes from their ranks. "The his. of technology as a subj. for study should broaden the students' outlook, reveal the laws of technical dev. & show the triumph of human thought in its fight against the forces of nature."

THE HIS. OF TECHNOLOGY IN SOVI. RUSSIA & MARXIST DOCTRINE - DAVID JORAESKY

His. of technology (1) central imp. to gen. phil. (2) to theory of his. by which they depend pol. program. (3) used for ideol. educ. of specialists (4) humanizing technical specialists

During '20s only occasional wk. on subj. Commission on His. of Knowledge at Academy

With 5 Yr. Plan 11/29CC CP decreed a course "Marxist his. of tech. --Zverikina was chief member of that special commission still centered at Academy of Sciences where His. of Knowledge transformed into full-fledged Institute of the His. of Science & Tech. headed 1st by Sukharin in 1937. Institute died with him/ (later, Bol. No. 22/1948)

(rd Russians reduced his. to "periodization") of his. & science indefiniteness on crucial points. MARXIAN THEORY IS FAMOUS FOR ITS PROVOCATIVE CHALLENGES TO HISTORIANS

HIS. RESEARCH HAS TENDENCY TO BE COMPILATION OF FACTUAL MATERIAL WITH LITTLE REGARD TO THEORETICAL PROBLEMS RAISED BY MARXISM

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*theory
So that an
production
may be
the
first*

*Tamsey
refer
to
5/16/61*

*NOT done with
a
change*

In "The History of Technology in Soviet Russia and Marxist Doctrine", Dr. David Joravsky speaks about Marxism and Russian Communism as if they were one and the same thing. He seems to fear that the Russians aren't creative enough about Marxist theory because they are "predominately reverential and uncritical toward it."

Yet, he himself ~~also~~ contrasts what Professor Zvorikine has written in "The History of Technology as a Science and as a Branch of Learning: A Soviet View" to what Engels has written about economic necessity.

Dr. Joravsky writes: "Thus technology is a, or even the, crucial element of the economic conditions that determine the whole of social development; yet the development of technology is itself determined by 'the economic laws of a given social system'."

This way of putting theory on its head is characteristic of completely the Russian theoreticians who have revised Marxism. What Professor Zvorikine has done in his Analysis of Technology is what Professors Ostrovityanov and Leontiev did to the Marrian Law of Value -- denuded of its class content and therefore make it applicable to an allegedly classless socialist society, as Russia is supposed to be. The wholesale revision/began in the midst of World War II, when the ~~Marxist theoreticians~~ Value Theory was revised ** was continued by Zhdanov after World War II on the question of dialectical philosophy. It was then followed by a ^{re} division in the analysis of technology. ~~Marx~~

~~Marx~~ It is best to state Marx' theory on technology in Marx' own words: "Technology discloses man's mode of dealing with Nature, the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations and of the mental conceptions that flow from them. Every history of religion even that fails to take account of the materials basis, is uncritical...."

The weak points in the abstract materialism of natural science (are that it) excludes history and its process."

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of class exploitation. He denied categorically that there was any fight against machines ~~like~~ "as such" or that machines were a specific instrument in a specific historic period under specific class relations, and it is those which had to be overcome to develop fully the productive forces, the greatest of which is man himself: "The root of mankind is man". In Russia, however, ever since the Five-Year Plan and the full development of what ~~Marx~~ ^{Marx} had predicted as the ultimate of private capitalism — state capitalism — they are using technology exactly as in any capitalist country. Indeed, no private capitalist ever dreamed more fantastic dreams of factories run automatically with no need for ~~the~~ ^{the} "intractable hand of man" than do the Russians, especially since 1950 and automation. Here is one example by Professor ~~Zvonimir~~ ^{B. V. Brukov} like ~~Zvonimir~~ ^{like} an academician ~~like~~ Professor Zvorikine. (Vestnik Istorijskoj Kultury, 1959 No. 4).....

"Revision or Reaffirmation of Marxism? A Rejoinder" By Raya Dunayevskaya
Reprinted from American Economic Review Volume XXXV, No. 4, Sept, 1945.

"Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union" from the Russian journal
Pod "Znamenem Marxizma" (Reprinted from American Economic Review
Volume XXXIV, No. 3, September, 1944.

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"A New Revision of Marxian Economics" By Raya Dunayevskaya, Reprinted from American Economic Review Volume XXXIV, No. 3, September, 1944.

"Laws are a description of economic behavior. The "laws" the article mentions are statements of fact." ~~The objective necessity of a socialist society over a capitalist one is not a law of nature but a law of social development.~~

"Objective necessity," it must be remarked, does not arise from the economic laws; the economic laws arise from objective necessity; it may, of course, manifest itself differently in the Soviet Union, but the manifestations the present authors cite are precisely the ones that emanate from capitalist society." "Hence when the authors propose that the structure of Capital be not followed in the future, it is not because past Soviet textbooks, patterned on it, violated the "historic principle." It is because of their need to divest the commodity of what Engels called "its particular distinctness" and to turn it into a classless, "general historic" phenomenon applicable to practically all societies."

False conclusion is precisely not only a step back

"A meaningless shuffle of terms" A.E.R. "The Russians, however, are not muddleheads. They have deliberately accepted the validity of the law of value for the Soviet Union because in the economic categories used by Marx in "Capital" they have found the theoretical reflection of economic reality. Since, however, Marx's entire analysis of the law of value is based upon its specifically capitalistic content, the Soviet economists were constrained either to revise the concept that the law of value is dominant only in a capitalist society. It is not surprising that they chose to revise Marx instead of the Soviet Constitution."

Zvorikine divides technology into two easily-separable aspects, (1) laws of nature, or natural science, and (2) social basis, or class relations. They are not, however, separable.

What allegedly separates technology in "antagonistic society" to use Zvorikine euphemism for class societies from those in socialist ones is that one develops through "leaps" and the other assumes "a new quality" gradually. All this is said as if that was always and forever the "Marxist" analysis, but nothing could be further from the truth. It is the same procedure they used in the Value Dispute, when it got theorized into classroom texts.

Natural science distinct or derived apart from social basis. On the contrary, they are inseparable. Religion, superstition, etc.

He then creates a new category after showing that "objective laws" underlying development of technology by stating that the subjective factor is equally significant, and here he uses even more questionable terms, such as "correctly satisfying the needs of production". *(my emphasis)* Finally he brings in the fact of the "working masses", not in their opposition to technology, but only as they help through "advance from their ranks the inventors, engineers, and scientists who effect the great changes".

The basic questions raised by Marxism deal with none of the things dealt with by the Russians. Quite the contrary. That is why — because they too are interested in exploitation — that "historical research" has tended to be the compilation of factual material with little regard to the theoretical problems raised by Marxism".

The same thing is true in the question of so-called pure science especially as it relates to Einstein's Theory of Relativity. (See especially W. J. Wetter's "Dialectical Materialism".) I would like, if I may, to say one ~~more~~ word also on the entire series that technology and culture have had on Singer's monumental work and that is missing from it is the worker's view of technology as he experiences it in the factory itself. In that respect, I would like to recommend...