

STANOVLENIE SOVETSKOI SISTEMY ORGANIZATSII NAUKI (1917–1922). By *M. S. Bastrakova*. Moscow: "Nauka," 1973. 294 pp. 1.45 rubles.

Dr. Bastrakova's book deals with the evolution of Soviet science policy during the years 1917–22. During this period, a fundamental attempt was made to develop and coordinate the scientific forces of the country, something which had not been done under the old regime. Although an effort in this direction, in the form of the creation of a Commission for the Study of the Natural Productive Forces of Russia (KEPS), had been made during the years 1915–17, this organization, acting under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences, had not developed into a national scientific research coordinating center (p. 47).

It remained for the young Soviet government to develop a coordinated approach to the direction of scientific research, and the spearpoint of this attempt was Narkompros (the Commissariat of Public Education), headed by the erudite A. V. Lunacharskii. Under its auspices, the government created a Scientific Section to carry out the first survey of scientific organizations and manpower available to the Bolshevik regime. Of the 308 scientific organizations surveyed by Narkompros in the fall of 1918, more than half belonged to the category of circles and societies, with the largest research organizations (observatories, university laboratories, and the Academy of Sciences) comprising not more than one-fifth of this total (pp. 138–39). This disproportion reflected the rather weak development of large-scale research institutes in prerevolutionary Russia.

Furthermore, the Scientific Section of Narkompros, which included the Academy of Sciences, the central observatories, and university research laboratories, was oriented toward theoretical research and, therefore, was incapable of aiding in the solution of scientific-technical problems facing individual economic commissariats. Consequently, from the fall of 1918 to the end of 1920, the economic commissariats began to form their own scientific research organizations (pp. 162–63).

These organizations operated independently of the Scientific Section, but on August 8, 1918, the Council of People's Commissars decided to create a Scientific-Technical Section (NTO), under the auspices of the Supreme Council of the National Economy (Vesenkha), to better control the research centers of individual economic commissariats. The task of this body was to centralize scientific-technical research matters and to create a special system of applied general industrial research and development (p. 163). The NTO of Vesenkha would eventually emerge as a general governmental coordinator of applied research and development throughout the Soviet republic, with its director personally appointed by the Council of People's Commissars (pp. 167–68). Furthermore, to assist the Scientific-Technical Section of Vesenkha, a Science Commission—composed of some two hundred scientists and specialists—was established at the end of 1918 to act as a General Staff of the NTO (pp. 170–71).

In time, the Council of People's Commissars recognized the need to have at its disposal a scientific consultative organ to aid in the drawing up of general science policy. As a result, on June 20, 1922, a Special Temporary Committee for Science was created (pp. 259–60). This Special Temporary Committee of the Council of People's Commissars was the embryonic form of all those general scientific government organs, which successively replaced each other in the course of the further evolution of the Soviet state (from the Scientific Committee of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR created in the second half of the

1920s to the present-day State Committee on Science and Technology which operates under the auspices of the Council of Ministers of the USSR).

In conclusion, it must be noted that Soviet science policy was born during the years of the USSR's most acute economic crisis. Hence, there was a tendency to favor applied research and development over fundamental research. The imprint of economic necessity was to be reflected in early Soviet science policy, and was to be the key to all later attempts to rationalize the scientific-technical research structure. During Stalin's time, the applied research orientation could even be justified ideologically by arguing that in stressing practical applications, science was truly serving the people. The admission of the technical sciences to membership in the Academy of Sciences in the 1920s and 1930s further reflected this practical orientation. After Stalin's death, however, a reversal of this trend began, as the necessity of supporting fundamental scientific research became apparent in the age of the scientific-technical revolution.

Bastrakova's book contributes greatly to our understanding of the evolution of Soviet science policy. An informative preface provides important bibliographical references to published and archival sources which bear on the formation of Soviet science policy.

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LE STATUT DU CHERCHEUR EN U.R.S.S. By *J. Gueit*. Centre d'étude des pays socialistes et Groupe "Politique et Organisation de la Recherche." Paris: Service de Recherches Juridiques Comparatives, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1974. iii, 88 pp. Tables. Paper.

POLITIQUE SCIENTIFIQUE ET ORGANISATION DE LA SCIENCE EN URSS. By *Jean Gueit*. Paris: Service de Recherches Juridiques Comparatives, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1975. 59 pp. Tables. Paper.

Both of these volumes, based on selected Soviet publications, are descriptive studies of the position of research and researchers in the USSR. *Le statut de chercheur en U.R.S.S.* emphasizes the researcher in Soviet society: his role, recruitment, education, remuneration, training institutions, and research establishments. *Politique scientifique et organisation de la science en URSS* consists primarily of numerous organizational charts, diagrams, and statistical tables, accompanied by brief introductory explanations. In addition, the author considers broader aspects of research in the Soviet Union. The charts presented indicate: the role of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Council of Ministers in the formation of national scientific policy; the relationship of government planning and coordination to research, science, technology, and education; the structure and organization of Soviet research; and current liaisons between research and industry.

The two volumes should be particularly useful to the nonspecialist interested in Soviet research policy and institutions. Although they are of some value to Sovietologists, their significance is limited by the basically descriptive approach employed. Much of the information presented is already known to the specialist, or is readily available in Soviet publications. The importance of both volumes would have been enhanced considerably had extensive, in-depth, critical analyses been included.

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