
Science and the Planned State

"Science" is defined as the "organized body of general demonstrable knowledge about the matter of the universe" without regard to its relationship to human welfare. Science becomes technology when these human relationships become its primary concern. The overlapping of science and technology is admitted, but the distinction is held still valid.

The "planned state" is totalitarianism. Under totalitarianism, the work of the scientist becomes mere technology as all research must then necessarily bear an obvious relationship to the needs of mankind. In modern totalitarian governments, it must even bear a supportive relationship to the currently controlling political philosophy.

Mr. Baker's concern is that Soviet science is currently being so highly (and undeservedly) touted. He brings to attention another side of the story:

(1) The absence of a single Soviet contribution from a list of the 27 "most important scientific discoveries made between the two great wars."

(2) The awfully warped attitude of the politically powerful Soviet geneticist, Lysenko.

(3) The production of an "unduly high proportion of bad and suspect science" by Soviet scientists.

He also endeavors to demonstrate that science will deteriorate under any form of planning. There is, he admits, a place for planning and teamwork in science. This place is in the follow-up of a new line of investigation *after* the primary original discovery has been made. "Science can progress rapidly only if scientists are free to expand the bounds of knowledge wherever, at any given moment, they are expandable." The discovery of the vulnerable points *cannot* be planned because there is too great an element of chance involved. Science by nature cannot prosper under totalitarianism because by nature the scientist accepts the authority of no one and needs the liberty to practice this attitude.—*Elton F. Paddock*.

Science and the Planned State, by John R. Baker. 119 pp. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1945. \$1.75.