

# Kedrov, Bonifati M.

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## [The history of science...]

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Artykuł umieszczony jest w kolekcji cyfrowej Bazhum, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych tworzonej przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego.

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie ze środków specjalnych MNiSW dzięki Wydziałowi Historycznemu Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.



*B. M. Kedrov*

The history of science is not to be regarded as a history of errors and delusions nor as a constant disclosing of the fact that our whole previous knowledge has been, as it were, an entire delusion. Professor Ronchi's lecture does evidence of something else: our knowledge is becoming more and more complete and exact, and we are getting free from our previous delusions. The lecturer is right in saying that dogmatism is the adversary of historicism, including the historicism in science.

In the U.S.S.R., a great conference on historical science and its teaching was held not long ago. Our Institute raised there problems regarding nature study and technology. We moved that the following courses might be introduced into the institutions of higher learning: I — general history of science and technology; II — special history of mathematics, physics, chemistry, particular departments of technology, agricultural sciences, medicine, and so on; III — methods and techniques of historical research (archivistry, management of source materials, processing of documents, and so forth); IV — methodology and logic of historical inquiries and generalizations.

Those courses ought to be introduced, we think, according to the type of a given educational establishment and the specialization of the students trained, and — what is more — in excess of the plans and programmes in force. Our proposal is embraced in the following syllabus where the above-enumerated subjects have been marked by means of Roman numerals. By special institutions of higher learning we mean the physical-mathematical, chemical, technological, agricultural, medical and other natural-technological establishments:

Who is being trained	In what sort of institutions?		
	special	historical	philosophic
Specialist in the history of science or technology	I, II, III, IV	I, IV	I, III
All the others	II	I	I

For the historians, the additional course III is not needed as it forms a part of their general training; for the philosophers — correspondingly — the special course IV is superfluous; for both of them the course II cannot be envisaged as they have no specialized training. For those who do not propose to become historians of science and technology the items III and IV are unnecessary.

The realizing of that plan necessitates the creation of teaching materials concerning all those four groups of subjects. Our Institute of the History of Science and Technology is now proceeding to fulfil that task.

### *J. R. Ravetz*

I regret that I must disagree with Professor Ronchi, perhaps I am still (relatively) young and optimistic. In England and America the situation for history of science is very favourable. This may be because the transition from "Little Science" to "Big Science" has been very rapid, and the scientists want help in understanding their situation. The young students I meet do not believe that they are learning absolute truths, rather, their attitude is even more dangerous — to them all their science is techniques and "conventions".

In England we now find that there are more University jobs than competent people to fill them (unfortunately we can each take only one lectureship); only ten years ago several excellent scholars (including Mason, Lilley and Cardwell) were unable to find positions as historians of science.

It seems then, that we can build a healthy discipline if we can find promising students to train. On this point I must again disagree with Professor Ronchi. There is no doubt that a specialist historian must be competent to understand the technical material he studies. Also, he must have the sense of how research proceeds. But it is not necessary to be fully conversant with current progress in the analogous field. Indeed, it is useful to be forced to train oneself in the technicalities of a science in a past period, for then one may gain a better appreciation of the characteristic methods and problems of the particular science.

### *W. Jewsiewicki*

Among many interesting problems talked over by the lecturer there are those concerning the teaching of the history of science and technology and the training of the research and didactic cadres. The problems