

Totalitarian Science and Technology (Control of Nature)

Paul R Josephson



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This book considers how physicists, biologists, and engineers have fared in totalitarian regimes. Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin relied on scientists and engineers to build the infrastructure of their states. The military power of their regimes was largely based on the discovery of physicists and biologists. They sought to use biology to transform nature, including their citizens, with murderous effect in Nazi Germany. They expected scientists to devote themselves entirely to the goals of the state, and were intolerant of deviation from state-sponsored programs and ideology. As a result, physicists, biologists, and engineers suffered from the consequences of ideological interference in their work. Many lost their jobs; others were arrested and disappeared in prisons. In physics, this meant rejection of the theory of relativity, in biology in the USSR, the rejection of modern-day genetics.

In this revised edition, Josephson has also analyzed the uses of science and technology in such authoritarian regimes as North Korea, the People's Republic of China, and Cuba. He argues that politics plays an important role in shaping research and development in all countries, but nowhere with greater risk to citizens and the environment than in closed political systems.

Students of European, Chinese, and Russian history, history of science and technology, and environmental history will find provocative and informative discussions in this book.



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