

**I. P. Pavlov, “The Science Institute in memory of 27 February 1917,” *Free Association for the Development and Dissemination of the Positive Sciences* (1917), 25-28.**

Several years ago I received a small article from an American astronomer (prominent and very talented, as I subsequently learned), where, having turned from celestial to terrestrial phenomena, he studied the question, what relation does the scientific productivity of each of the modern civilized states have to the population as a whole (particularly in the domain of positive knowledge)? Here is what he found. The top places, for the most part, were occupied by states belonging to the German empire. It fell Russia's lot to land in last place, indeed quite far behind the next on the list. Compared to Saxony, for example, our productivity turned out to be—bitter to say—sixty times smaller. I don't know how you will relate to this, but it made an extraordinary impression on me: it deeply offended me, and seriously frightened me. Is it really the case that we are so pitifully incapable compared with the Germans?!... And how can we be lagging in the inescapable competition of nations: in military, economic, and every other competition, our state and national individuality are lagging!... Who does not know and see now that science—this systematized and verified knowledge of the world around us and of ourselves—constitutes the primary force in human life. If the daily achievements, apparent to all, of the natural sciences and the technology reliant on them have not convinced anyone, then perhaps a truth has not been generally acknowledged, that one of the most important sources of the extreme power of the Germans is science. Let them now, our brutal enemies [sic: page transition does not scan grammatically], for this should not keep us from recognizing that it was the Germans who had the brilliant idea, now being realized, of imbuing and cementing all life with the devices and results of science. And there is no disputing that the scientificity of German life has penetrated everywhere and in no small measure has made it possible, in a battle with an opponent that outnumbers it several times in population, in a battle lasting almost three years, for Germany to keep its overwhelming advantage. One can understand and envy the justifiable pride of the man who recently proclaimed in one of their newspapers, “we Germans can conclude the peace without either annexations or indemnities; it is enough for us to know that we would be able to do battle with almost the entire world, that we, in short, are a great power.” And it is true. We can be the most convinced opponents of the war, we can dream feverishly about a period of humanity—and it may well not be far away, if we are victorious—when international relations will be based only on reason and justice, but one cannot deny that the war was and, especially now, is the most rigorous and unbiased test of nations and states, a test of their power. This test is proceeding unpleasantly for us and of course among other things it is a consequence of our scientific backwardness.

Russia is now experiencing an anxious period of liberation, a period of free hands: make of yourself what you want and can make. But now it is a matter of great urgency for all of us to be imbued with an unceasing sense that after the completely rotten structure of the old state order collapsed so easily, a task has fallen upon all of us, one which is overwhelming in its grandiosity and even frightening, to lay the proper, faultless foundations of the new structure of a just, fortunate, and strong Russia.

To each his own. People of science [“men of science” in the gendered English of the time] should be completely absorbed in the situation and interests of science in the new construction of

Russian life. Who does not know that its past is lamentable? The autocratic government, constantly guarding the outdated principle of autocracy, long feared all forms of enlightenment and interfered with it in every way. Recall the phrase of Pobedonostsev, so classic in its cynicism, uttered to a Russian publisher who came from the people and requested wide distribution among the people of a little book explaining the text of Church Slavonic books: "comprehension is precisely what we don't need, we only need deferential fear." People of the old regime also had no use for all levels of educational institutions. Amid these difficulties, thanks only to various accidental favorable circumstances, new Gymnasiums were opened as well as higher educational institutions. In this manner the mass of educated people was forcibly constrained, and consequently the contingent from which scientific workers might emerge. Along with this the means of scientific activity always remained meager, never becoming an object of government concern. Many times leading practitioners of science were casually made victims of the harsh regime, deprived of the opportunity to continue their work. Even scientific congresses were delayed and canceled for political reasons.

We cannot but nourish the hope that in a democratic Russia, with a democratic government everything will change radically in relation to science.

Enlightenment will flow in a broad wave to the vast Russian national masses [*narodnaia massa*], and thanks to the destruction of estate partitions any outstanding mind from the masses, instead of ancestral manual labor, will be given the opportunity to apply himself in a higher sphere of human activity. Russian science will get an enormous new source of powers, and *only then* will we be able to calculate *precisely*: what is the productivity of the Russian people in the domain of science. All kinds of educational institutions should be multiplied on an extraordinary scale, including higher ones. But for the thoroughgoing successes of science all of this is not enough. As the global experience of recent times demonstrates, one still needs hierarchy [*instantiia*] of *institutions*. This would mean research institutes with enormous resources specializing in the natural sciences. And Russia with its boundless natural wealth has great need of them. In many civilized countries today heated competition has begun in this regard. America gives an example in the form of its enlightened billionaires. Not millions, but tens of millions are donated for the management of science. Millions were drawn to the aid of scientific research in Germany in the period just before the war. There are encouraging manifestations of this kind in Russia as well, coming from the old center of Russian history, Moscow. In the last few years a psychological institute has appeared, the Ledentsov society, the society of the scientific institute in memory of February 19. Our Petrograd has lagged lamentably in this regard. The only instance in the past few decades is the institute of experimental medicine, which arose at the initiative of Prince Oldenburgskii [and was led by Pavlov].

In a period of great national exhilaration Petrograd has the obligation to assuage its sin before Russian science and to erect a monument in the form of a scientific institute worthy of the revolution. Let the two capitals of Russia always be connected by two dates in Russian history: let February 19 and February 27 be associated with the top sites where Russian scientific genius will manifest itself.