



National Technical Museum,
Department of the
History of Science and Technology,
Archives of the NTM
and
Society for the History of Sciences and Technology



Science and Technology in the Czech Lands in the Period of World War 2

25th Conference for Teachers of History of Sciences and Technology

(Inter Arma Silent Musae?)

Dear colleagues,

Research department for the history of sciences and technology, Archives of the National Technical Museum in Prague and the Society for the history of sciences and technology organize a Conference “Science and Technology in the Czech Lands in the Period of World War 2”, which will take place October 14 to 15, 2008.

The mutual relation between science and technology on one hand, and the military conflict on a continental or world scale on the other hand, has often been very ambivalent. The war as such always meant – for all the countries involved – both significant restriction of a broad spectrum of social, economic, cultural, and intellectual activities (the process is called militarisation of state/society and its economic system) and clear concentration of state resources and powers for reaching military goals. For this goal, the state with its economy produced and offered (especially in the state of the war economic boom) extraordinary conditions for growth of the corresponding special-purpose fields and branches of human activities.

In this respect, the “militarised” science and technology stood almost at the forefront of such “ruck”. They brought always new inventions, technologies, knowledge and discoveries, which, in the form of new and more sophisticated weaponry, military technique, as well as improved production equipment and technologies, generated predominance over enemies, as well as real possibilities of reaching set military goals. The Nazi occupation heavily oppressed the science and

technology in the Czech Lands. There are often statements on the occupant's efforts for maximum exploitation of the Protectorate's industry, negative consequences of militarisation of the industrial sector and negative impact on the Czech scientific community. On the other hand, sub-studies yielding ambiguity of the previous statements are not isolated cases. Even during the war, scientists continued – in some measure – in their research. In many industrial plants were prepared new technologies or constructions, which, however, were often implemented only after the war had ended.

And that is why there is a Latin dictum *Inter Arma Silent Musae* in the subtitle of the Conference, complemented with relativizing question mark. The number of inventions and revolutionary discoveries, which came into the world during WW2, confirm that the question mark is not improper. One cannot deny, that the period of the so-called Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia has not been much investigated in the contemporary Czech historical science and historiography and, in many aspects, its historical appreciation is missing. The professional scientific community has paid attention to various fields of research in the Czech Lands during the Nazi occupation. Nevertheless, both applied scientific and technical fields remained somehow aside. We believe that we succeed in making a small contribution to understanding this historical period in all outlined aspects. The Conference should be at least a place where the chosen the topics could be presented, defined, assessed, and discussed.

The Conference should touch on the main key branches of the economy in WW2, namely armament industry, civil engineering, heavy and light industries, and – last but not least – trends in R&D.

In the spirit of previous meetings, the Conference will deal also with methodological and didactic questions. Also, we will be happy to offer young scientists to present their views within the scope of their magister/doctorand study programmes.

The 25th Jubilee Conference will be held on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the National Technical Museum, in the newly reconstructed motion-picture theatre. Participation fee is 50 Kč (20 Kč for students and pensioners).

If you are interested, please send the attached application form before June 30, 2008:

Either by e-mail to the contact address dejiny@ntm.cz, or to addresses of the conference organizers milos.horejs@ntm.cz, ivana.lorencova@ntm.cz,

Or by post to: National Technical Museum, Department of the History of Science and Technology, Kostelní 42, 170 78, Prague 7.

Information also at: www.ntm.cz,

Tel.: 220 399 215 or 607 966 346

Length of the contributions should be 20 minutes. Contributions will be published in the form of proceedings. A small refreshment will be provided during the Conference. Participants will cover the travel and other expenses themselves. Further information, regarding preparation of manuscripts, travel and possibilities of accommodation and the detailed programme, will be sent in due time.