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### Early Psychotronics: German Roots?<sup>15</sup>

Psychotronics appeared in the late 1960s in the Eastern Block in response to new technological developments made in *Czechoslovakia* and the USSR (Sborník, 1973). Several researchers consider psychotronics as eastern analogy to western parapsychology. This is not fully correct, because both psychotronics and parapsychology existed in parallel in former Soviet Union (Kernbach, 2013a). Although both are focused on mental / anomalous phenomena, we see two major differences between them. Firstly, psychotronics is strongly oriented on technical developments, such as generators, sensors, transmission approaches; in many cases a human operator is even not involved in experiments (while parapsychology focuses primarily on operator-related phenomena). Secondly, due to Soviet ideological paradigm, it does not support vitalism. Psychotronics is seeking for explanation of observed phenomena in existence of some physical fields, combination of weak and ultraweak impact factors or in quantum phenomena appearing at the macroscopic level (Kernbach, 2013b).

Parapsychology in the Soviet Union had several periods with their highlights and collapses. Generally, only a few lines of research were supported, and they primarily concern military applications of telepathy and ESP; several scientific teams worked on these topics since the 1920s (May, Rubel & Auerbach, 2014). All other parapsychological topics and discussions were strongly prohibited, in many cases researchers were even repressed. This situation was similar to that in the GDR, as it is reflected in the paper “Politische Ideologie vs. parapsychologische Forschung“ by M. Schneider and A. Anton. However, psychotronics always was in the focus of governmental programs, and it was sustainably funded. The KGB, the Russian Secret Service, visited the first Pavlita’ devices in the 1970s; ministries of Defense, Health, Agriculture, and the KGB explored these effects since the early 1980s (Sokolova, 2002). The high-level national programs started in the middle of the 1980s and lasted until 2003/2005. An estimated 0.5 to 1 billion dollars may have been invested in research and development during those years (Kernbach, 2013a).

Many Russian authors are of the opinion that this development might have been inspired by German’s works during the years 1933 to 1945 (e.g., Vasilchenko, 2008). Generally, this topic

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15 Auf ausdrücklichen Wunsch des Autors drucken wir seinen Kommentar in englischer Sprache ab. (Red.)

is very tough to investigate, because there are almost no historical documents available. The published Russian and Polish archival materials are difficult to verify (e.g., Witkowski, 2003). However, there are several cross-evidences suggesting that early psychotronic research indeed might have been inspired through (or originated from) corresponding work of the Germans.

As is well known, German specialists were forced to move not only to the USA (through the operation “Paperclip”), but also to the USSR (there existed a similar Soviet operation called “Ossoaviachim”) (Rovenskij, Chernushiech & Elsner, 2011). For this overview, two of such forced resettlements in 1945 throughout 1955 are of interest: The first one is related to the institutes in Sinop and Agudzera (close to Suchumi, Soviet Georgia), which was created for Manfred von Ardenne and Gustav Hertz, and directed by them until 1955 (Ardenne, 1982). These institutes were primarily related to the Soviet atomic programs. For technological achievements in this area, von Ardenne received the Soviet Stalin Prize twice in 1947 and 1953, and Hertz got it in 1951. As mentioned by e.g. Heikin (2007), the topics were not only related to atomic research, but also included a number of other issues, e.g. energy conversion, high-frequency technics, applied radiophysics, and others. Employees who worked in Agudzera in the 1950s remembered small research groups, which explored “hypnosis and weak emissions from biological organisms”. We know that Russian specialists who worked in these facilities in the late 1950s were involved in brain-stimulation programs in the 1960s and 1970s (Dumbadse & Bobrov, 1981), and later in psychotronic governmental programs in the 1980s (Bobrov, 2006). It is well-known, that von Ardenne also conducted research related to brain EM-emission in his laboratory in the late 1920s (e.g., Hagen, 2008). Is it possible that works directed in Soviet Georgia by Manfred von Ardenne, Gustav Hertz, Werner Hartmann, Max Steenback (the developer of the first Betatron), and others inspired (or to some extent were used in) early psychotronic research?

Secondly, equipment and specialists from AEG-Röhrenfabrik Oberspree were resettled to Moscow (Fryazino), where they worked in the institute “NII-160”, which later became the well-known institute “NII-Istok” (Rovenskij, Chernushiech & Elsner, 2011). This institute has manufactured multiple high-frequency (HF) and ultra-HF devices from 1965 up to the present, which also are utilized in psychotronic research (Smirnov, 2010). Moreover, HF/UHF psychic effects were “discovered” as early as 1956 (Tigrijan & Schorochov, 1990). We know, however, that the Soviets’ own program on this topic was closed and most of the researchers repressed in 1937. From a different side, it is known that AEG delivered the HF equipment for a number of unconventional projects during 1933 and 1945, for instance for the project “Die Glocke“ as suggested by Farrell (2006) and Witkowski (2003). Here we also see that a line of unconventional technology takes its origin from the operation “Ossoaviachim” and, possibly, from corresponding German activities as well.

German's specialists returned from the USSR in the years 1953 to 1955. They had a choice to move either to the FRG or to the GDR. Many of them, such as von Ardenne, Hertz and Steenback, returned to the GDR. We cannot say how many specialists had contacts with the early Soviet unconventional research, or whether they may have been bound by some nondisclosure agreements, but we cannot observe (from publicly available sources) any evidence of psychotronic developments, either in the FRG or in the GDR after WWII. It must be noted also that extensive parapsychological and psychotronic research was performed, in the 1960s and the 1970s, in neighbouring *Czechoslovakia* (Maire, 2011). However, previous *Czechoslovakian activities in this field* were almost unknown before WWII. Also remember that the *Sudetenland* was a part of the Third Reich – a number of unconventional programs were performed on Sudeten territory (e.g., see Farrell, 2006).

The question remains why the early psychotronic research appeared and was largely performed in the USSR and in *Czechoslovakia*, but not in one or the other of the German countries after WWII? We discovered the interesting fact that a documentary film about von Ardenne was in preparation in the GDR, but was forbidden because of von Ardenne's activities during the 1933-1945 period (Hagen, 2008). Is it possible that WWII, the enforced resettlement of specialists in the USA and the USSR, and the "cleansing process" created a kind of social taboo for any technologies from the NS time, especially for developers of such technologies? For instance, Walther Gerlach strongly opposed the "atom bomb" (Wagner, 1967), although he directed atomic research during the NS time (Deutsches Museum, 2014).

We hope this comment has provided an additional argument for the paper under discussion with regard to both parapsychology (that met with a clear ideological resistance in the GDR) and psychotronics (that had a much more complex history in post-war Europe).

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