

ICOHTEC NEWSLETTER

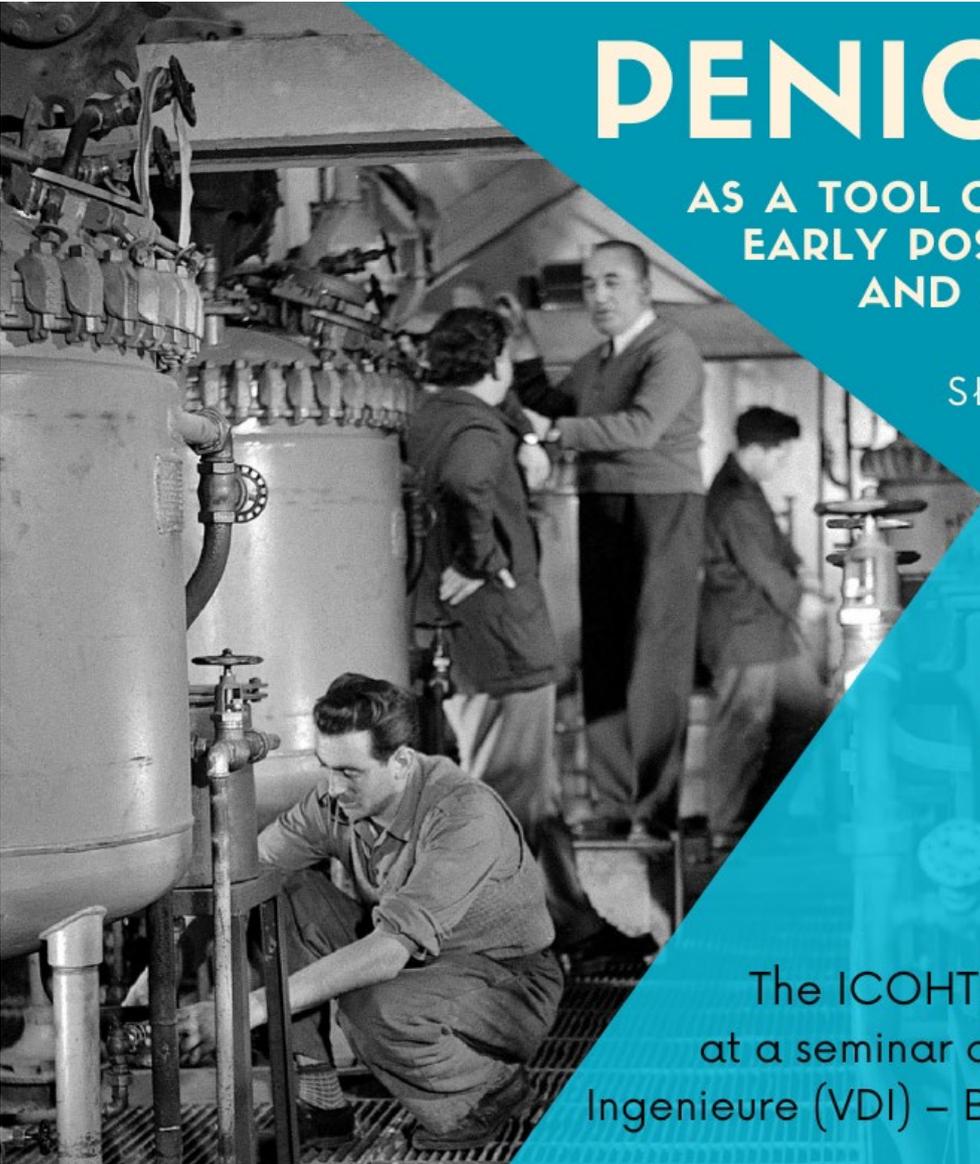
Nº197 March 2023

www.icohtec.org



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If you have something to announce, please mail to newsletter@icohtec.org.



PENICILLIN

AS A TOOL OF POWER IN THE
EARLY POST-WAR CENTRAL
AND EASTERN EUROPE

SŁAWOMIR ŁOTYSZ

16
March / Thursday
17:30
CET

The ICOHTEC ZOOM lecture
at a seminar of Verein Deutscher
Ingenieure (VDI) – Berlin-Brandenburg

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1 Icohtec News

1.1 Icohtec Online Lecture on March 16, 17.30 (CET): Penicillin as a Tool of Power

Icohtec's past President and webmaster **Prof. Dr. Sławomir Łotysz** from Polish Academy of Sciences will give an online lecture on Thursday, 16 March 2023, 17:30 (CET) on the topic "Penicillin as a Tool of Power in the Early Post-War Central and Eastern Europe".

Penicillin has been developed jointly by the British and American scientists during the Second World War. The first antibiotic immediately gained notoriety as a "wonder drug" due to its remarkable antibacterial potency. It has been used as a political weapon in both transnational and domestic settings since its inception.

Since penicillin was especially useful in military medicine, the UK and the USA, who held the technology for producing penicillin, attempted to keep their invention a secret from hostile nations – Germany and Japan during the Second World War, and the Soviet Union and its satellites during the Cold War. However, before the latter fully broke out, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration gave each of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Belarus, and Ukraine a complete penicillin plant, allowing the transfer of this closely-guarded secret to take place behind the Iron Curtain. In this analysis, I will highlight the major aspects of this initiative and concentrate on its political significance.

Penicillin's initially limited availability made it a convenient tool of power that was used against civilian populations by various officials to control civilian populations at home. This was the case with American occupation forces in Germany restricting German citizens' access to penicillin due to political considerations, as well as communist governments in Poland and Yugoslavia, which provided their officials with higher quality foreign antibiotics while forcing everyone else to use domestic antibiotics of lower quality.

The paper is based on the book *Welfare Factory. Penicillin behind the Iron Curtain, 1945-1954* (in Polish: *Fabryka z darów. Penicylina za żelazną kurtyną 1945-1954*. Warsaw: Aspra JR, 2020). The book's Table of Contents can be found here <http://lotysz.webd.pl/welfare-factory/> and a review published in Open Access in *HoST – Journal of History of Science and Technology* is available here <https://doi.org/10.2478/host-2022->

[0009](#) The research was funded by the National Science Centre, Poland, under grant number 2014/13/B/HS3/04951.

Please register (without fees) on the homepage of VDI: <https://www.vdi.de/veranstaltungen/detail/penicillin-as-a-tool-of-power-in-the-early-post-war-central-and-eastern-europe>

1.2 ICOHTEC 50th Conference in Estonia, August 14-18, 2023.

The Call for Submissions to the Icohtec 50th Conference was closed on March 1, 2023. The organizing committee received nearly 130 proposal and is currently working for making the decisions. The local organizing committee and the Icohtec officials are expecting great international interaction and looking forward to seeing old and new colleagues in Estonia.

The conference will be organized by [Tallinn University of Technology](#) and [the University of Tartu](#), August 14-18, 2023 with the theme “Interdependencies. From Local microstories to global perspectives on the history of technology”.

More information will be updated on the conference page, please follow [this link](#).



View of Tallinn from St. Olaf's church, by Diego Delso, [CC-BY-SA](#). *Wikimedia commons*.

Destination Estonia

Estonia is located in the Gulf of Finland by the Baltic Sea. In addition to international flights to Tallinn, it can also be reached by buses from Central Europe and ferries from Finland and Sweden. More information about Estonia, and more specifically on Tallinn and Tartu, as a travelling destinations can be found in the following sites:

Visit Estonia central site, Estonia as a traveling destination: <https://www.visitestonia.com/en>

Visit Tallinn: <https://www.visittallinn.ee/eng/visitor> Visit Tartu: <https://visittartu.com/>

1.3 Kranzberg Lecture by Mikael Hård at the Icohtec 50th Symposium, 2023

[The Kranzberg Lecture](#) at the next Icohtec Symposium in Estonia will be given by Professor Mikael Hård (Darmstadt, Germany) on the title: **“Between Globalization Narratives and Microhistories of Technology”**.

Cash crops often play a paradigmatic role in the history of globalization and dependency. The global standardization of products, the global diffusion of manufacturing methods, and the global spread of capitalist economies—including the infamous slave trade—are standard narratives.

In his Kranzerg Lecture, Mikael Hård unravels the limitations of such story lines in the history of technology. Telling the history of sugar cultivation, refining, and consumption in Northern India, Hård emphasizes the appropriateness of age-old crop varieties and production methods, the persistence of entrenched socio-economic relations, and the peculiarities of regional cultural factors. Despite attempts by British and Indian elites to introduce capital-intensive machinery and sugarcanes from other parts of the world, established methods mostly prevailed. The Indian sugar market remained largely independent from global developments.

Together with other case studies from the Global South, the Indian microhistory is meant to illustrate the continuing need for the discipline to write histories from below. Our understanding of local processes and independent developments is not advanced enough for us to start crafting analyses of global interdependencies.

1.4 Reminder: Turriano ICOHTEC Prize 2023 - Call for Submissions

DL for submissions: **31 April 2023**.

[The Turriano ICOHTEC Prize](#) is an Early Career Prize for Books on the history of technology, sponsored by the [Juanelo Turriano Foundation](#) and consists of 2,500 Euro. The prize-winning book will be presented and discussed at a special session of the next ICOHTEC symposium.

ICOHTEC, the International Committee for the History of Technology, is interested in the history of technology, focusing on technological development as well as its relationship to science, society, economy, culture and the environment. The history of technology covers all periods of human history and all populated areas. There is no limitation as to theoretical or methodological approaches.

Eligible for the prize are original book-length works in any of the official ICOHTEC languages (English, French, German, Russian or Spanish) in the history of technology: published or unpublished Ph.D. dissertations or other monographs written by scholars in the early stages of their career. Articles and edited anthologies are not eligible. If the work is a Ph.D. thesis, it should have been accepted by your university in 2021 or 2022; if it is a published work, the year of publication should be 2021 or 2022.

For the ICOHTEC Prize 2023, please send an electronic copy (PDF or Word) of the work you wish to be considered for the prize to each of the four Prize Committee members. (Note: Hard copies are only accepted for published works not available electronically.) Your submission must be emailed no later than 31 April 2023. Please also include an abstract of no more than a half-page in length. If your book is in Spanish or Russian, please also supply a summary in English, French or German of about 4,500 words. In that case, the prize committee will find additional members, who are familiar with the language in which your book is written.

The submission should be accompanied by a CV (indicating also the date of birth) and, if applicable, a list of publications. Applicants are free to add references or reviews of the work submitted.

Any materials sent to the prize committee will not be returned.

Send a complete application by email to each of the following Prize

Committee members:

- Dr. Darina Martykánová (Chairperson), Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. darina.martykanova@uam.es
- Dr. Irina Gouzevitch, École Normale Supérieure. irina.gouzevitch@ens.fr
- Dr. Klaus Staubermann, ICOM Germany. k.b.staubermann@gmail.com
- Dr. Matti La Mela, Uppsala University. Matti.lamela@abm.uu.se
- Dr. Jacopo Pessina, Department of Civilisations and Forms of Knowledge. japessina@tiscali.it

1.5 Icohtec Membership

As a friendly reminder, please pay your annual fees to our account at: Commerzbank Bochum, “ICOHTEC” at Commerzbank Bochum (Husemannplatz 3-4, D-44787 Bochum, Germany): IBAN: DE44 4304 0036 0390 2590 00; BIC: COBADEFFXXX. Thank you for your support!

Please send in the form on the last page of the Newsletter about your payment and renewed membership to the Treasurer Viktor Pál, [viktor.paal\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:viktor.paal(at)gmail.com) and Stefan Poser, President of ICOHTEC, [stefan.poser\(at\)kit.edu](mailto:stefan.poser(at)kit.edu), in order to update our list of members.

2 Conferences

2.1 CFP reminder: SHOT Annual Meeting Long Beach, 25-29 October 2023

DL for traditional session proposals on **April 1, 2023**.

For the 2023 [Annual Meeting, the Society for the History of Technology \(SHOT\)](#) will convene at the historic meeting place of land, sea, wetlands, and built worlds that is Long Beach, California. Shaped by histories of dispossession, extraction, and pollution, as well as by innovation, connection, and resistance, the multicultural city of Long Beach offers an ideal site to explore technological pasts, presents, and futures from local, regional, and thematic perspectives.

The Society invites participants to explore any theme related to histories of technology around the world. As it aims to foster more diverse and inclusive communities, the Society has decided not to propose a specific conference theme but rather invites submissions of panels and papers that explore anew what has traditionally been centered or overlooked in discussions about the relationship between technology and power. This includes any disciplinary approach to technological pasts, presents, and futures.

As SHOT continues to explore the future of annual meetings for a society with a widely international membership and commitment to accessibility, the conference will include hybrid participation options for both panelists and audiences. The proposal submission form includes the option to designate proposals as hybrid sessions, which might include pre-recorded presentations or a combination of both in-person and virtual presentations as supported by available facilities.

For more information, visit the conference [website: https://www.historyoftechnology.org/annual-meeting/2023-shot-annual-meeting-october-2023-long-beach-california/](https://www.historyoftechnology.org/annual-meeting/2023-shot-annual-meeting-october-2023-long-beach-california/)

2.2 CFP reminder: The 8th International Congress on Construction History (8ICCH) June 24-28, 2024

DL for abstract submissions: **April 30, 2023**.

[The 8th International Congress on Construction History \(8ICCH\)](#) will be held June 24-28, 2024, at ETH Zurich, Switzerland.

The 8ICCH will bring together researchers from different disciplines and continents to exchange recent advances, results and insights in the vast and expanding field of Construction History. Special topics will be discussed in dedicated Thematic Sessions organized and chaired by leading international experts, while the whole scope and diversity of Construction History will be reflected in the Open Sessions.

For more information, [visit the conference website](#).

3 Awards and scholarships

3.1 APE research grants for archival studies

Next DL: **30th June 2023**.

[Archives Portal Europe](#) supports archival research for historical research projects with grants up to 500 EUR to assist scholars (with a special focus on early career researcher, but not exclusively) with research in archives that are APE content providers, that is, listed in the Directory of Archives Portal Europe:

<https://www.archivesportaleurope.net/find-an-institution/>

The awardees will also enjoy in-kind support in their research from APE and its network, for up to 20 hours in total during the solar year of the grant, with support on archival research, drafting of an academic paper, and/or other kind of help needed by the awardees for their research.

The grant assists with travel, accommodation expenses, and working hours incurred in the undertaking of research into any aspect of history, with preference for:

- Comparative research (e.g., women lives in rural villages in the 16th century in Sweden, Malta, and Portugal)
- International research (e.g., the correspondence of the nobility across Europe during the Napoleonic wars)
- Research where archival collections from archives in different countries is used and compared (e.g., the revolutions of 1848 as narrated in archival collections from Hungary, Denmark, and France)

- Research where archival collections are used to show new points of view (e.g., the unification of Italy and Germany analysed through Spanish archives)

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

There are two deadlines for this grant: 15th March 2023 and 30th June 2023.

Each successful application will award 500 EUR.

In order to apply:

- Fill in the application form [at this link: https://forms.gle/41d9J57dM4csVxAi6](https://forms.gle/41d9J57dM4csVxAi6)
- Send a copy of your academic CV (in English), completed with publication list, at info@archivesportaleurope.net

OUTPUT

Upon being awarded the prize, the recipients of the grant will be immediately reimbursed for their archival trip(s) upon completing it/them, as long as they take place no later than July 2023 (for the March deadline) or November 2023 (for the June deadline).

The remaining amount of the grant will be paid upon submission of the required outputs on part of the grant recipient:

1. A draft copy of an academic paper (or book chapter) based on the archival research conducted, to be submitted within 6 months from the completion of the archival trip(s)
2. A short blog post (800/1000 words) describing the research projects and the documents analysed for it, including preliminary results, to be submitted within 2 months from the completion of the archival trip(s)

Please note that Archives Portal Europe should be mentioned on all drafts and working copies of the papers, as well as in the acknowledgment section of any journal submission undertaken by the grant recipients or their colleagues.

Please note that grants recipients will be asked to act as volunteers for Archives Portal Europe (APEF ambassadors) for the period in which they are working on the research proposal, with a light

commitment. Tasks will include help in communication, help in research, and other activities decided together with the awardee. You can read more about [the ambassadors scheme here](#):

https://www.archivesportaleurope.net/uploads/images/2023/02/APEF_AMBASSADORS_CALL.pdf

For more information please contact us at info@archivesportaleurope.net

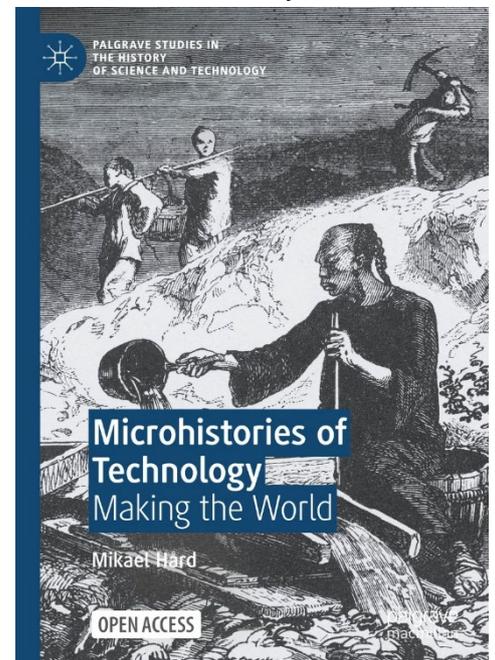
4 Recent publications

4.1 Open access book: Mikael Hård, *Microstories of Technology*

Mikael Hård: *Microhistories of Technology. Making the World*. Palgrave Studies in the History of Science and Technology

- This book is **open access**, which means that you have free and unlimited access
- Discusses how people around the world challenged the production techniques and products brought by **globalization**
- Invites readers to view the **history of technology** and material culture through the lens of diversity
- Offers examples of **colonized peoples** resisting the tools of their subjugation

The digital version of the book is available [for open access download](#).



In this open access book, Mikael Hård tells a story of how people around the world challenged the production techniques and products brought by globalization. Retaining their autonomy and freedom, creative individuals selectively adopted or rejected modern gadgets, tools, and machines. In standard historical narratives, globalization is portrayed as an unstoppable force that flattens all obstacles in its path. Modern technology is also seen as inexorable: in the nineteenth century, steamships, telegraph lines, and Gatling guns are said to have paved the way for colonialism and other forms of dominating people and societies. Later, shipping containers and computer networks purportedly pulled the planet

deeper into a maelstrom of capitalism. Hård discusses instances that push back against these narratives. For example, in Soviet times, inhabitants of Samarkand, Uzbekistan, preferred to remain in—and expand—their own mud-brick houses rather than move into prefabricated, concrete residential buildings. Similarly, nineteenth-century Sumatran carpenters ignored the saws brought to them by missionaries—and chose to chop down trees with their arch-bladed adzes. And people in colonial India successfully competed with capitalist-run Caribbean sugar plantations, continuing to produce their own muscovado and sell it to local consumers. This book invites readers to view the history of technology and material culture through the lens of diversity. Based on research funded by the European Research Council and conducted in the Global South, *Microhistories of Technology: Making the World* shows that the spread of modern technologies did not erase artisanal production methods and traditional tools.

Form for annual membership renewals / registration of new members



Annual membership includes subscription to ICOHTEC's refereed annual journal ICON, access to all back issues of ICON in electronic form via the ICOHTEC website, a monthly Newsletter, and special registration rates at the annual ICOHTEC symposium.

I wish to renew my membership/ to become a new member in ICOHTEC. (Tick below the appropriate description/rate):

- An individual. Rate: (40€ or 40 \$ or equivalent) per year*
- A student. Rate: (40 € or 40 \$ or equivalent for two years)*
- An institution. Rate: (75 € or 100 \$ or equivalent) per year*
- A library. Rate: (Europe: 36 €,Oversees 39 € or 52 \$) per year*

Tick the years of membership to be paid: **2022** **2023** **2024** **2025**

I submit the total amount: _____
Your first name and surname: _____
Email: _____
Postal address: _____
Country: _____

Tick the method of your payment:

Through international money transfer: Make international money transfer to:
"ICOHTEC" at Commerzbank Bochum (Husemannplatz 3-4, D-44787 Bochum, Germany):
IBAN:DE44 4304003603902590 00; BIC: COBADEFFXXX

Through a cheque. Send the check with the appropriate sum made out to "ICOHTEC" and send to:
Stefan Poser, Karlsruher Institut für Technologie (KIT), Department für Geschichte, Neuer Zirkel 3, D-76131 Karlsruhe,
GERMANY

After filling the form, please send by email to Viktor Pál, ICOHTEC Treasurer at [viktor.paal\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:viktor.paal(at)gmail.com) and to Stefan Poser, President of ICOHTEC at [stefan.poser\(at\)kit.edu](mailto:stefan.poser(at)kit.edu)

