

## MIDTERM PAPER

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Throughout science fiction, the depiction of science and technology can play a critical role in the development of the underlying themes, and arguments of the author. In the novel *Red Star* by Alexander Bogdanov technology is used many times to support Bogdanov's sociological theories and opinions about socialism. Specifically, his depictions of technology develop the importance of global unity for the establishment of a successful communist society. Throughout the novel, Bagdanov depicts the importance of having society be united globally for his depiction of communism to be successful. He then utilizes the depiction of technology throughout the novel to advance this idea, and reinforce the argument for the global unification of society as a prerequisite for a successful communist utopia.

One point when the selflessness of the Martians is exemplified, and is used to demonstrate its necessity for the development of an idealized communist society is on the space ship during the trip to mars. At the beginning of the trip, Menni explains to Leonid how the crew of the space ship work together. When Leonid asks if Menni is the captain he responds by saying

But that doesn't mean that I have the power of a commanding officer. It simply means that I have the most experience flying spaceships and my orders are accepted, the same way that I accept the astronomical calculations which Sterni makes, or as we accept Netti's medical advice because we want to retain our health and strength.

Here Menni explains that there is no hierarchy on the space ship, and that everyone simply trusts the knowledge and experience of the others. If any one person was selfish and did not trust the knowledge of the others, then this social structure lacking a hierarchy would not function. This social structure can only function if everyone considers themselves equals to everyone else, and only defers based upon experience. This structure of society, which has been condensed to be represented by the society of the crew of the ship, is directly what Bagdanov considers an ideal social structure for communism. There are no leaders, and no slaves, everyone is on equal ground, and work only to serve the greater good for the community. This depiction of the technology of the space craft, and the social structure that is used to run it demonstrates the necessity for the martians of the spaceship to be selfless and work as a single union.

A second major point when the use of technology is used to advance Bogdanov's is in the depiction of the workforce on mars. The organization of industry and production on mars is handled by the Institute of Statistics. The Institute of Statistics keeps statistics on the surplus and shortage of products from all of the industries on the planet. The Institute of Statistics and the social structure that it represents is only possible if everyone in society is extremely selfless. Menni explains this process

to Leonid “The tables are meant to affect the distribution of labor”, he then goes on to explain “The Institute then computes the difference between the existing and the desired situation for each vocational area and communicates the result to all places of employment. Equilibrium is soon established by a stream of volunteers”. This entire process which demonstrates the technological advancements for the distribution of labor, is entirely reliant on the martians willingness to work for the greater good, and to act selflessly when the need arises. Bogdanovs depiction of the Institution of Statistics, and the underlying distributed workforce of mars, is entirely reliant on the population of mars volunteering to where the work is needed. The only case where the martians would volunteer for new jobs, is if they are selfless enough, and believe in the global unity of their society, such that they acknowledge and act on the fact that they must work for the greater good of martians, not for their individual goals.

These three depictions of technology in Bogdanovs *Red Star* demonstrate the importance of the selflessness of the society, and the global unity. None of these pieces of technology would function properly if the martians were not inherently selfless or if there were any conflicting parties. That is to say the only way that these technological advancements can function is if the entirety of mars is unified, and is naturally selfless.

The fact that these technological advancements are primarily dependent on the structure of the society in which they exist, then it could be argued that those are the primary limitations for the development of this type of technology. Despite the fact that much of the society on mars has developed into a perfect society, but many of these advancements in the martian technology is primarily based upon the societal unity and selflessness. This would indicate that if this form of societal unity and selflessness can be developed on the Earth, then it could indicate that this form of technology and society could be possible on the earth.