Foreword

The authors of this issue are mainly represented by the speakers of the International Congress "L.S. Vygotsky and A.R. Luria: Cultural-Historical Psychology and Issues of Digitalization in Social Practices", which was held in November 2022 at Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University. It was co-organized by the Moscow State University of Psychology and Pedagogy. The theme of the congress is also defined by the theme of the issue. But the content of the issue is not presented by the texts of the reports of the participants — the relevant materials are published separately. We approached a number of speakers with a proposal to write articles within the framework of the Congress theme and we are glad that they responded to our proposal. This issue can be regarded as a kind of "congress meeting after the Congress".

The theme of this issue is "Studies of the modern infosphere from the perspective of cultural-historical psychology. Why is it formulated this way? Why do we speak not about the usual "computerization", "informatization", "digitalization", "digitalization", "virtualization" in the sphere of social practices, but exactly about the infosphere in which culture, society and man, who create what they live and develop, are not simply represented but live and develop? This is not just because everything that can be said about them in general terms has already been said. These are all special, private, applied, "instrumental" aspects of a much more serious and fundamental problem for the family of human sciences.

The introduction of the term "infosphere" is commonly associated with the name of the American economist, sociologist and poet Kenneth Boulding. He spoke of six spheres — sociosphere, infosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere. Of course, he is not original here. The classical "sphere" geoplanetary construction of Leroy-Teillard de Chardin-Vernadsky is easily recognized. The presence of the noosphere, within which the other "spheres" are transformed, makes the Earth a planet of people, where nature becomes part of culture, and not vice versa (V.I. Vernadsky). The temptation to consider the infosphere as a component of the noosphere, the sphere of the mind, is great. But in practice we observe the divergence of "thinking" and "information", noted by cybernetics in the 1950s and 1960s and well known to psychologists. Another matter is that this divergence is not absolute, but concrete-historical. And the key to its analysis should be sought not in the field of IT, but in the field of philosophy, psychology, all "human knowledge" (F.T. Mikhailov). For the simple reason that it is thinking that gives meaning to information, even if it has managed to become generally meaningful, since its functionality and effectiveness has been confirmed more than once and everywhere. It is sufficient that "it works". Unthinkable things "work" in the 21st century! Unthinkable and inconceivable. Meaning is ripened and formed leisurely, through a chain of difficult reconsiderations, which do not lead directly to a "re-cognition" of human achievement. The more grandiose the "sum of technologies" (Stanislav Lem), the more difficult it is to comprehend and therefore sooner or later becomes uncontrollable, unmanageable, confronting and even threatening human freedom. Of course, through this, man and humanity "figure things out" with themselves and with themselves alone. "The revolt of the machines" under the name "robots" first, a century ago, artistically described in the play R.U.R. (1921), whose author, Karel Čapek, coined the word "robot", is the inner conflict of humanity and man.

Nowadays it is common to talk about "challenges", such as "digitalization challenges". But who throws them to us, who "summons" us, whom do we "call for help"? Apart from the problem of man's self-relation in culture, the problem of man's subjectivity, there is no other problem here. Cultural-historical psychology accepts this challenge because it devoted itself entirely to the study of this problem long before the emergence of IT. By the way, IT, which it regards as a special cultural toolkit for "mastering activity" (Y.V. Gromyko), and in activity — oneself, can also be discussed from its position not only in terms of general intentions. It has almost forty years of concrete research history behind it. (See the works of M. Cole's teams in the U.S.A. and V.V. Rubtsov in in the U.S.S.R. published as early as the 1980s, which have influenced the development of this theme in pschology and set the tone for corresponding innovations in education).

It was this logic that guided the discussion at the Congress, and which is also followed by the authors of this issue.

In conclusion, we would like to thank Tatiana Eduardovna Sizikova, Candidate of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor of Correctional Pedagogy and Psychology at the Institute of Childhood, Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University. She has done a truly Herculean job as the organizer of an interdisciplinary scientific forum unprecedented in its scale, composition of speakers, and scope of the participating countries. She also played a leading role in the preparation of this issue of the journal.

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