

# Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History

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First published in 1948, *Mechanization Takes Command* is an examination of mechanization and its effects on everyday life. A monumental figure in the field of architectural history, Siegfried Giedion traces the evolution and resulting philosophical implications of such disparate innovations as the slaughterhouse, the Yale lock, the assembly line, tractors, ovens, and "comfort" as defined by advancements in furniture design. A groundbreaking text when originally published, Giedion's pioneering work remains an important contribution to architecture, philosophy, and technology studies.

Siegfried Giedion (1888-1968) taught at the Federal Institute of Technology and was Mellon Lecturer at the Washington National Gallery and the Charles Elliot Norton Lecturer at Harvard University. His other works include *Space, Time, and Architecture* and *The Eternal Present*.

"It is a provocative, enlightening, sometimes frightening story." -Thomas Sugrue, *New York Times*

"Many people have wondered what mechanization is doing to man; nobody yet has investigated, documented, and illustrated the question to the extent of this enormous and fascinating book." -*Time*

"Giedion reveled in the splendor of such humble things, the stuff of ordinary life. He studied them lovingly and sought to convey to his readers a sense of their inner beauty, mystery, and wonder." -*Technology and Culture*

#### Other Books

*The Shock of the Old*, From the books of H.G. Wells to the press releases of NASA, we are awash in clichéd claims about high technology's ability to change the course of history. Now, in *The Shock of the Old*, David Edgerton offers a startling new and fresh way of thinking about the history of technology, radically revising our ideas about the interaction of technology and society in the past and in the present. He challenges us to view the history of technology in terms of what everyday people have actually used-and continue to use-rather than just sophisticated inventions. Indeed, many highly touted technologies, from the V-2 rocket to the Concorde jet, have been costly failures, while many mundane discoveries, like corrugated iron, become hugely important around the world. Edgerton reassesses the significance of such acclaimed inventions as the Pill and information technology, and underscores the continued importance of unheralded technology, debunking many notions about the implications of the "information age." A provocative history, *The Shock of the Old* provides an entirely new way of looking historically at the relationship between invention and innovation.

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