

# DEMOCRATIC SCIENCE

DEMOCRATIC SCIENCE (Part Two)  
by Joseph M.J. Sanlei

Alexis de Tocqueville, the French political scientist who journeyed to America in 1830 to gain an understanding of Democracy in America (the title of his subsequent work), wrote of the democratic interest in science that "permanent inequality of conditions leads men to confine themselves to the arrogant and sterile research of abstract truths, whilst the social condition and the institutions of democracy prepare them to seek the immediate and useful practical results of the sciences." Science shares in common with art the need for a free society in which to have expression. Like art, the science of a democratic society must serve the needs of humanity, elevating individuals from their present conditions to higher plateaus of self realization and liberation from physical

and spiritual want.

Albert Einstein wrote in 1934, that "the scientist is possessed by the sense of universal causation. The future, to him, is every whit as necessary and determined as the past. There is nothing divine about morality; it is a purely human affair. His religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection. This feeling is the guiding principle of his life and work, in so far as he succeeds in keeping himself from the shackles of selfish desire. It is beyond question closely akin to that which has possessed the religious geniuses

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of all ages."

If Einstein is correct in his assessment of scientific faith, only those men and women of science who act with the best interests of the human race, of which they are a part, as the prime source of their labor may be justifiably honored by the rest of us in the non-scientific community (this however is equally true with regard to any and all honor paid to political, social-scientific and business persons). The vision of the scientific community regarding the future progress of humankind must always be understood in a truly democratic sense (by both scientist and non-scientist alike) within the realm of the total social and political as well as technological setting. All of the worlds people are entitled, by virtue of their common humanity alone, to share in the benefits of the technological breakthroughs now occurring within the industrialized world. However, because of political realities beyond the realm of the sciences, as well as military dangers which in part have been facilitated by the sciences, the universal progress of our race is being severely hampered. Joao Fida Costa (quoted 1st week more extensively) the UNCSTD Secretary-General, has said that "the major impediments to development are mainly political and social rather than scientific and techno-

logical..it is necessary to state that the solution of global problems depends not on scientists alone, but on the political will of governments and countries... Science and technology are but tools to achieve certain objectives of socio-economic development".

If science and technology are truly tools of socio-economic development, as Mr. da Costa contends, then in democratic society the entire polity must be involved, and to be so must be informed, in the scientific process.

The grave socio-political dilemmas of our age cannot be solved by scientific technocrats alone; in fact, in order that science itself be harnessed for the public good, the people apart from the military-industrial complex (in who's employ are, among others, a great many scientists), must act as a guiding force in technological development.

In the words of Pope John XXIII (from his world famous encyclical Pacem In Terris 1963) "we desire to call attention to the fact that scientific competence, technical capacity and professional experience, although necessary, are not of themselves sufficient to elevate the relationships of society to an order that is genuinely human; that is to an order whose foundation is truth, whose measure and objective is justice, whose driving force is love, and whose method of attainment is freedom".

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