

DEMOCRATIC SCIENCE

ON THE UNIVERSITY RIGHT

Part 3

DEMOCRATIC SCIENCE (part three) by Joseph M.J. Sanlei

Dr. Paul Snyder of Temple University writes of science and scientists in his book, Toward One Science, from many different perspectives. One (in my opinion) of the most revealing statements from that work is as follows: "Science as we recognize in Western civilization today is a highly organized group activity. There is an identifiable scientific community that now crosses national and linguistic lines and that performs its specialized behavior on behalf of the entire community. Scientists did not evolve separately from the rest of humanity, of course, anymore than teachers, dancers, cooks, farmers, whores, or handy men did.."

During the Middle Ages of European civilization, churchmen were regarded by the common folk as the wisest of the human race - the Enlightenment ended forever the exclusive claims of churchmen upon the human mind and soul. Once liberated by Reason, humankind idolized it and again required a new

liberation. Science, stemming from Reason, with its promise of a new golden age for the race brought forth by technology (the practical application of science) would soon become the object of human adoration. As I said in the first of this three part series of articles, in 1945, science too, met its inevitable fate and fell from its pedestal over the skies of Imperial Japan.

J. Bronowski (The Ascent of Man), the great scientist and thinker in his work, Science and Human Values, (who has seen firsthand the ruins of Nagasaki, which event caused him to question the basic tendencies of his scientific faith) writes: "The sense of wonder in nature, of freedom within her boundaries, and of unity with her in knowledge is shared by the painter, the poet and the mountaineer.

Their values, I have no doubt, express concepts as profound as those of science, and can serve as well to make a society as they did in Florence, and in Elizabethan London,

and among the famous doctors of Edinburgh. Every cast of mind has its creative activity, which explores the likenesses appropriate to it and derives the values by which it must live.--- The exploration is no less truthful and strenuous than that of the scientist-- the great artist works as devotedly to uncover the implications of his vision as does the great scientist.--- What is true of poetry, is true of all human values. The values by which we are to survive are not just values for just and unjust conduct, but are those deeper illuminations in whose light justice and injustice, good and evil, means and ends are seen in fearful sharpness of outline."

As was explored throughout this series, the scientist does indeed rightly maintain a unique position within our complex society. The fruits of scientific labour, be they ripe or rotten, may be consumed by members of the race who, in their desperate hunger, cannot distinguish the difference until after the meal. Just as the political demagogues of our history have often been confused with the men and women who in the political world maintain true greatness, so also have the masses at times been duped at times by scientific charlatans whose promises sound much the same as the political demagogues for "peace", "prosperity", "greater security" etc.

Science and those who dedicate their lives to its demanding work, must never be scapegoated for all the dangers which now threaten our civilization and humanity. We all share in the responsibility (democratically-so to speak) of

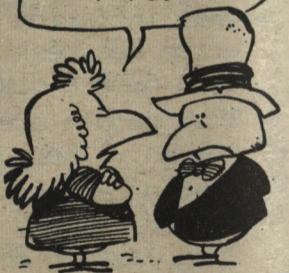
keeping ourselves alive as well as our civilization intact. The great scientist and political freedom fighter Andrei Sakharov, who in his younger days was the chief developer of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, and now is the first among dissidents

in the Soviet Tyranny, must be to scientist and non-scientist alike "a voice crying in the wilderness", whose prophesy is one and the same with the late prophet Rev. Martin Luther King: "We must all learn to live together as brothers (and one would preserve sisters as well) or we shall all perish together as fools".

Who among us can make the ultimate determination of "correctness" in world-view between the scientist, the artist, and the theologian philosopher. Perhaps somewhere among the countless disciplines of thought which attain the attention of humanity, there lies the truth. More likely than that is that each discipline contains within its structure but a chip of the greater mosaic which is the truth. Science, which evolved as did all else, must in increasing dialogue with an informed public, serve the democratic end by its contributions (along with poetry, history, art etc.) of its special mosaic chip.

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