



How Soviet Shackles Its Scientists

• By Hugh E. Wells

These scientists, of course, were very, very guilty. They had lagged too long in the fields of pure reason, ordinarily the green pastures of the scientists. In fact, to quote *Pravda*, the Communist Party organ, they actually had supported the Mendelian Theory as inherited characteristics. This theory, developed by an Austrian priest, George Mendel, who worked with plants, suggests that plant and perhaps animal life takes its characteristics from the past generations. Mendel even worked out a law which says that heredity characteristics appear in a definite mathematical ratio.

Pravda also pointed out that these off-the-beam Soviet scientists were pushing a "bourgeois fraud, invented to bolster ancestor worship and class snobbery and thus strive to keep alive a dying capitalist society." This kind of ponderable might have bewildered Mendel, who perhaps didn't realize that he was fostering ancestor worship and class snobbery. Like other scientists, Mendel was seeking the truth.

BUT the Soviet scientists quickly fell in line. If they hadn't they soon would have stopped being scientists—at least, live scientists. In his letter of apology, which followed the recantations of three other Soviet scientists—Zhdanov, Alkhutyan, and Polkovnikov—Professor Zhdanov pointed out that formerly the Communist Party had permitted both pro-Lysenko and anti-Lysenko views. But now, as the Party had approved Professor Lysenko's position, "I, as a party member, do not

consider it possible for me to retain the views that have been recognized as erroneous by the Central Committee of our party."

So from now on all vegetables, plants, and flowers in the Soviet Union will grow straight along the Party Line.

Professor T. D. Lyenko, vice chairman of the Supreme Soviet Academic and holder of the Order of Lenin, is far ahead of any other scientist in the world in the field of genetics. He is, in fact, the only scientist who ever grew

bourgeois scientists might suggest. One report says that Lysenko's tomatoes were right on the vine. In any case, some scientist managed to stick one in his pocket and give it further examination. The tomato was made of wax.

But Dr. Lyenko is no joke to Soviet scientists. One leading Russian scientist, who happened to dispute his views, Professor Nikolai Vavilov, died in a concentration camp six years ago under circumstances that never were explained. Obviously other scientists, unwilling to share the fate of Vavilov, agree with Lyenko.

The whole controversy is based on the fact that the Soviet favors environment rather than heredity as a shaper of plants and animals.

The politicians like to feel that men can be changed in a generation or two, and all their scientists must fall in line. Thus, a whole century or more of scientific discovery was of necessity tossed out the window.

LITERATURE and music in Russia are just as strictly guarded, so that they won't veer toward the horrible examples offered by the western world. Dmitri Shostakovich has just crawled out of the hole he was pushed into last February, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party accused him of having bourgeois musical tendencies, whatever they are.

Shostakovich apologized at the time, promised to correct his errors. Apparently he did just that, for the government newspaper *Izvestia* recently announced a new film for which he furnished the music. Shostakovich apparently is able to distinguish between bourgeois and proletarian music; those with less knowledge probably stick to whistling the Internationale to be safe.

THE name of Professor Lysenko, less known outside Russia than those of his opponents, Vavilov and Zhdanov, has been connected with the so-called virtualization of grain and other plants. This technique, based on earlier work of American biologists, is intended to adapt plants to given climates through co-ordination of the effects of light, temperature and moisture. Criticisms have been made of Lysenko on the ground that he has drawn too broad conclusions from insufficient experimental material.

But these criticisms come from outside Russia. Inside the Soviet, Lysenko, like Hamlet Dumpty and his words, makes science mean what he wants it to, neither more nor less.

What It Takes to Make a Good Teacher

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are flocking into other better paying professions, and teachers' colleges are lean on enrollments. They indicate what may be dreamed of and, under drastically altered conditions, even attained. Not that many persons ever could qualify for all the ten rules and the later big-four rules of Dr. Butts. Even after they have been dead a century, great men can't even approach in halcyon memory such high standards. But it's something to shoot at.

"In the last fifty years," Dr. Butts says, "we have grown to expect more from our teachers. Fifty years ago, a person who had a high school training could teach in elementary schools. Some did not even finish high school."

Now, in some states, we're requiring a master's degree for beginning teachers.

Plastic Tomato Lysenkoism, 1948



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