

jects believed the booms to be a needless and uncivilized outrage, if they had no place of refuge, and if the booming were to continue for the rest of their lives? And what about the musician making a valuable recording, or the surgeon performing a delicate operation?

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References

1. K. S. Pearsons and K. D. Kryter, *NASA (Nat. Aeron. Space Admin.) Rep. No. CR-187* (1965).
2. "Sonic Boom Experiments at Edwards Air Force Base by National Sonic Boom Evaluation Office," *Interim Rep. No. ETU-6065* (28 July 1967).

... What happens when an SST going at 1800 miles per hour passes a Concorde going at 1200 miles per hour in the opposite direction? Which cancels out: the superbooms or the superplanes?

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The Right to Breathe Pure Air

In a recent appearance I made on television to discuss the social and psychological effects of smoking, I mentioned that whenever a student came into my office with a lighted cigarette I asked him to put it out. A colleague asked me why. I responded that I found the odor of smoke distasteful and that I did not care to have the air in my office polluted. He said that I was interfering with student rights, and that in an office provided for by taxpayers, I had no cause to inject my personal biases. Our conversation became heated, but he did cause me to do some thinking.

Is smoking by students or anyone else a right? May they smoke on any public property except where smoking is expressly forbidden for reasons of fire safety? From a philosophical point of view, one person's rights end where another individual's rights begin. If students have a right to smoke, certainly I have a right to breathe pure air in my office. Since I have to spend the most hours at my desk, my right to pure air would surely outweigh anyone's questionable right to smoke at my place of public employment. When I have been breathing smoke-filled air, I acquire a headache, my eyes smart,

I cough, and my mental efficiency performance must decline. Thus a student smoking in my office would deprive other students of their right to expect a maximum performance from me.

Assuming that my office is a "public facility" and at the disposal and use of taxpayers, I wonder why the university issues me a key so that I am responsible for what takes place in it. Are all tax-supported facilities "public"? Could my colleague exercise his "right" to smoke in President Johnson's office at the White House? And I don't think that an executive of a private company necessarily has a greater right to privacy than a similarly situated individual at a state-supported institution. All necessary expenses of doing business at the private company are tax-deductible. This means that the rest of the public must then pay more taxes. For that reason, the public has a vested interest in the private sector of the economy as well as in the public part.

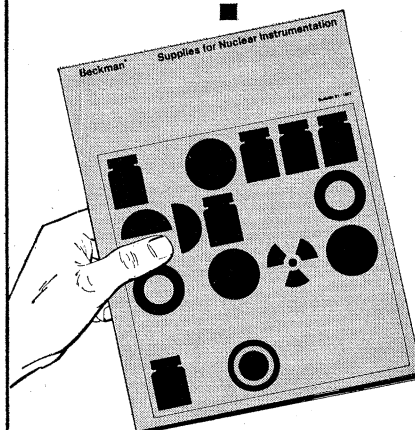
My own view is that the right to inhale pure air predominates over the right to pollute it. Every trip I take by air is marred by the smoke-filled air in the cabin of the plane. Couldn't the airlines, while passing out free cigarettes, also set up smoking compartments? Even an outdoor event, such as a football or baseball game, doesn't assure the spectator a supply of unpolluted oxygen. Aside from the ever-present industrial and domestic pollutants, a pall of tobacco smoke hangs over most of our occupied stadiums. Sometimes visibility is seriously impaired.

Columbia University recently announced its interest in a new cigarette filter. Aside from the obvious point that all filters are virtually useless in preventing the consumption of such substances as carbon monoxide, aldehydes and phenols, many of us non-smokers are wondering if the filter developers aren't barking up the wrong tree. What we really need is a filter to protect us from the smoker. With all our research into the causes of air pollution, haven't we overlooked smoking as one of the prime causes? We might make a start by restricting smoking to private homes and to public smoking lounges, but such a proposal is not within the bounds of reason at this time.

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