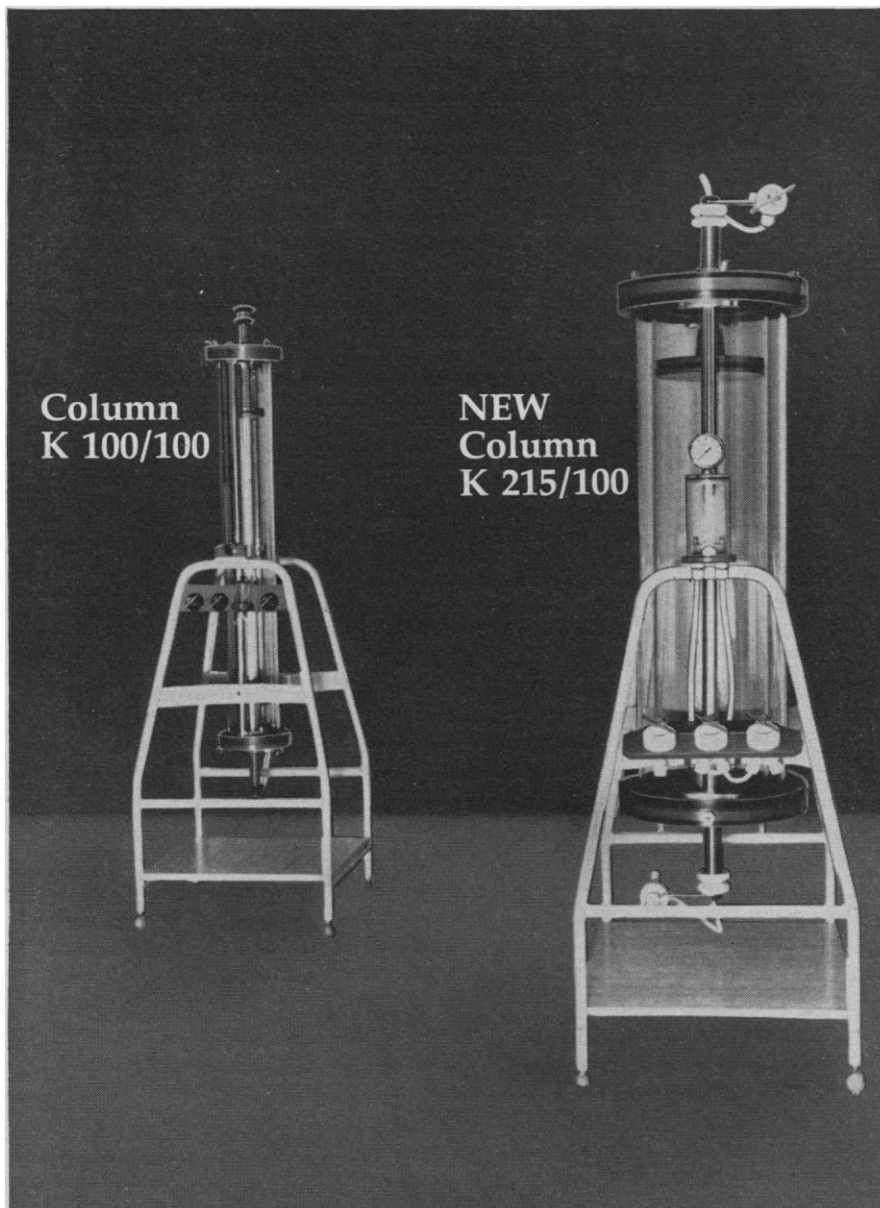


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in dealing with it is "control"; specifically, control at the source. The control principle is not new to us in its social applications. Strenuous efforts are being made, for example, to gain acceptance of birth control as the only rational way of keeping human numbers at a manageable level.

If we are to avoid the chaos in information transfer that Baker warns of, it will be by controlling information *before* its publication. This method—"worth control"—requires a human qualitative judgment of the value of the information. If this step were bypassed in favor of channeling the flood of information into better-designed computers for manipulation in a dozen different ways, the real problem would simply be deferred and eventually our entire system of information transfer would collapse. There is no easy answer. The only method is to apply those unique human skills—the ability to evaluate, to judge, and to select—to the problem of controlling publication and dissemination of information. Anything less will speed us toward the time when, like the Sorcerer's Apprentice, we will be swept away by the flood.

ELMER S. NEWMAN

*Sears Library,
Case Western Reserve University,
Cleveland, Ohio 44106*

Reference

1. J. Ziman, *New Sci.* 46, 212 (1970).

Blunt Words

Never in a scientific journal have I seen a more irresponsible statement than that by Southwick ("Campus unrest: Which tack for President's commission?" 11 Sept., p. 1061): "His [President Nixon's] decision to invade neutral Cambodia triggered campus violence across the country and led to the deaths of students at Kent and Jackson State."

It is extremely difficult to believe that an undergraduate, even at Harvard, could be so naive as to believe that any single act was responsible for the "explosion" that took place. The "explosive charges" had been planted and the fuses lit weeks, months, if not years, earlier. The Lovers-of-Peace were well organized with respect to bringing war to the campuses.

I wish Southwick could have seen the completely unprovoked assault here

peak
performance

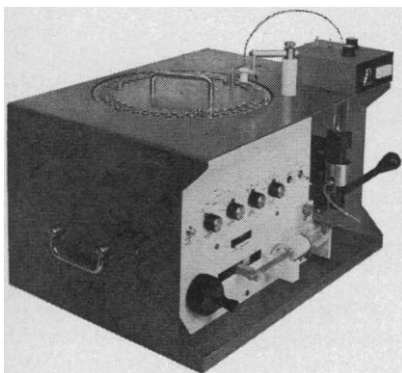
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on the State Highway Patrol, which caused grave injury to some of these policemen. Perhaps he could have been persuaded from his irrational supposition that these acts of anarchy were spontaneous or even triggered by any particular historical events.

There remains among some persons incapable of evaluating evidence a most weird belief: That persons attend a "Peaceful Demonstration" armed with an assortment of deadly weapons.

DUNCAN McCONNELL
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Southwick's article offers perhaps as clear a statement of the aims of student activists as has yet appeared. One of their spokesmen is quoted as saying: "We don't want more communication. . . . What we want is for him [the President] to give in."

As a comment on this position, it is helpful to review briefly the history of participation in major political decisions in the United States. After the Revolution, such participation was extended to all propertied white males. Gradually it spread to all white males regardless of property, and after the Civil War, de jure at least, to all males regardless of color. In this century it was broadened to include all adults regardless of sex, and recently much (though not enough) has been done to destroy local de facto exclusion of racial and linguistic minorities.

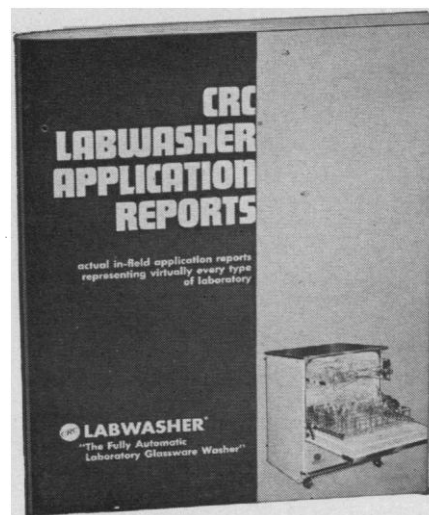
According to Southwick, the student activists would sharply reverse this trend. He says: "The reduction of campus violence depends not on reports but on action. Such action can only be taken by those in power . . ." In other words, the government of the United States is to obey the orders of student activists, regardless of the wishes of the rest of the population, on pain of violence and disruption.

What this amounts to is that the author, in stating so plainly the aims of student activism, has provided a piece of information crucial to all citizens who are in favor of democratic processes.

FREDERICK E. ROMBERG
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Austin, Texas 78703

An excellent example of what now passes for logic at our universities is Southwick's statement: "To curb campus disorder . . . [Nixon] has been told . . . end the war in Vietnam . . ." The government of the United States is

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SCIENCE, VOL. 170

just like the administration of a university: give in when radicals threaten violence. Unfortunately, the President does not enjoy the luxury of confronting only one genus of extremists. Should he avert violence by white racists by sending all the blacks to Africa? Should he execute all liberal professors to placate superpatriots? Think about it!

NORMAN H. SLEEP

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Food Studies and Null Hypotheses

Recently the nutritive value of a number of commercial products has been called into question by studies, the wisdom of which should be questioned. One would predict a priori that a diet of 100 percent "enriched" bread, or breakfast cereal, principally sources of carbohydrate, could hardly be expected to provide all daily requirements for man or rat. . . . (The average consumer believes that the function of bread is to keep the peanut butter off his fingers, and that snap, crackle, and pop may be the greatest reward from cereal.)

Yogurt, for all its usable protein, would not be predicted to be a complete diet, and therefore the experimental result of hypergalactosis is not a likely dietary problem. Diets containing extremely high contents of glutamate, saccharine, or even sodium chloride, should be expected to have deleterious effects. These experimental designs raise a serious question regarding the responsibility of the scientist.

These studies, by their nature, are doomed to public interpretation. The very design lends implicit suggestion that somehow new findings now indicate grave danger or gross inadequacy of foods never before expected to be a dietary panacea, that the researcher apparently expected a loaf of bread, a flask of wine, and thou to nourish more than the soul. It is imperative that "public" research be designed to be meaningful to the public, and that the investigator keep clearly in mind which is the null hypothesis and which is the alternate hypothesis.

ROBERT E. HENSHAW

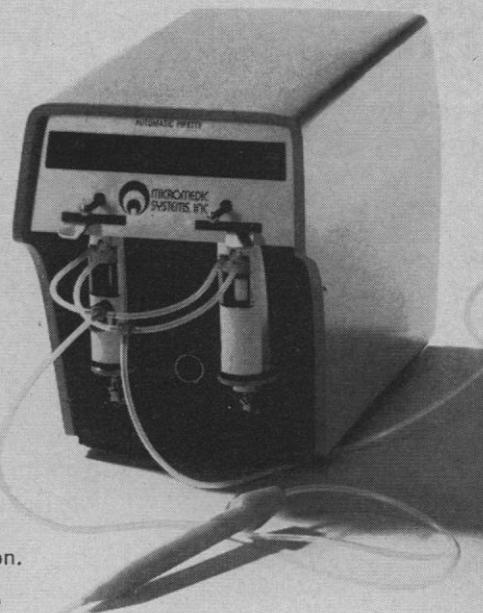
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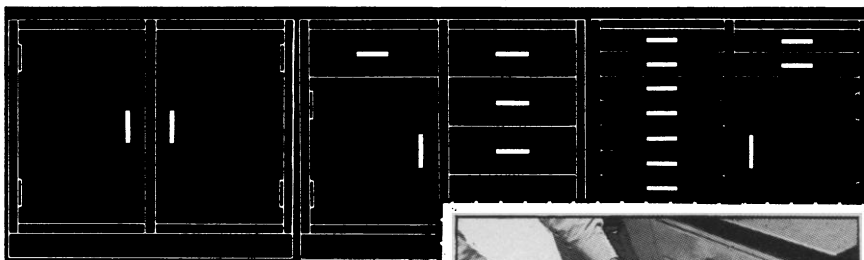
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