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predicts that the future may bring about certain constraints upon human rights and current individual freedoms neither means that one endorses or likes such possible eventualities. As soon say that George Orwell advocated the state of human society he foresaw as possible in 1984. If Steinberger is really interested in my views, he will find them discussed at much greater length in numerous earlier writings of mine, especially in *Science and Liberal Education* and *Science and Ethical Values*. I reiterate that "the right that must become paramount is not the right to procreate, but rather the right of every child to be born with a sound physical and mental constitution, based on a sound genotype." And again, "Just as every child must have the right to full educational opportunity and a sound nutrition, so every child has the inalienable right to a sound heritage." Perhaps that can be achieved on a voluntary basis, through educational understanding, genetic diagnosis, and wise counseling. That, of course, would be preferable. But if such means prove insufficient for the task, social compulsion may indeed be the only alternative, whether we like it or not. Human societies in the past have practiced harsher measures, directed against the unfortunate child or infant. Better that restriction be directed at the stages of conception or embryonic implantation, or even at the fetus, in cases of indubitable physical or mental incapacitation. The difficulty will always be to achieve certainty in diagnosis and to harmonize enlightened voluntary action with social compulsion. Much social inventiveness and ethical analysis must be directed at these matters, and I am far from claiming authority in such.

BENTLEY GLASS

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AAAS Council: Moving Toward Elitism?

As a member of the AAAS Council, I noted Strasser's and Slifkin's concern with the election of the AAAS president (Letters, 19 Feb.). Whatever the Council is, it is not a presidium. Neither is it the "elite" group described by *Time* magazine. In the election of officers the Council acts with little more knowledge than the total membership would have. Routine biographical data really does not give a basis for intelligent choice.

In the same issue (p. 709), there is a summary of the 1970 Council meeting. A point is made that the meeting lasted only 3 hours and 35 minutes and this was attributed to "general economies of time" as a result of doing some business by mail. Far more significant, in my opinion, was the arbitrary and authoritarian manner in which this particular Council meeting was run. There was an obvious attempt to hold discussion to a minimum, probably for fear of disruption. . . .

Few people attend the AAAS Council meeting or accept election to office with other than the best of motives. The basic problem lies in the fact that the AAAS is not fundamentally a professional organization. There are no professional qualifications for membership. Yet in modern times it has tried to take a very professional role as a spokesman for all organized science, thus creating a great division between the Council and the Board of Directors. When a large, unwieldy body with an ill-defined membership and an extremely limited mandate meets briefly once a year, it cannot be expected to have much significance.

In 1969 the Board of Directors announced and the Council endorsed a goal of increasing the membership by an order of magnitude or more by 1980. In 1970 the Council rejected a nominee for president who was a member of the Board and who had been active in developing this goal! Also in 1970 the Council on its own initiative advised the Special Committee on Governance that "it is a sense of the Council that any changes in governance should insure that control of activities of the AAAS will be in the hands of bona fide scientists or societies of scientists." This says that we want the control to be in the hands of a specialized group within the organization without that group paying the financial price of that control; that is, high dues. The 10-year membership goal, if accomplished, will merely exacerbate our problems. The program goals for the AAAS require such a membership base unless the membership costs are to increase greatly. The control is to remain in the hands of a restricted (elite?) group, the bona fide scientists. Apparently we—or at least the majority of the Council voting—wish the larger membership group to support with its dues decisions and programs in whose development and approval it has no real part.

To worry merely about the undemocratic means involved in the selection

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of the president of the AAAS is the tip of the iceberg. I have no proposal to change the situation, only a conviction that these various pronouncements call for an elite controlling group financially dependent on a large membership. Rieser and his Special Committee on Governance will need the wisdom of a collection of Solomons if they are to resolve satisfactorily the contradictions in our present situation.

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"Friends" of the Ecology Movement

I cannot ignore Esther Landau's letter (19 Feb.) criticizing the review by Haefele and Kneese of James Ridgeway's *The Politics of Ecology*. Those who remember when Senator Joe McCarthy was considered by many to be above criticism must be appalled at McCarthyism in the ecology movement. For example, when two reviewers in *Science* say that a certain book on ecology is inaccurate, misleading, and in general a pretty poor job, it draws a vituperative letter right along the line of the McCarthy supporters: "Anything said against Communism (today, read 'pollution') is good. Anything said against an anti-Communist statement is bad, and whoever says it must have ulterior motives." Landau proceeds to question the motives of your reviewers, although their true position with respect to ecological problems seems perfectly clear in their review. And she employs that favorite McCarthy ploy: guilt by association.

The ecology movement can protect itself against its enemies, but may Heaven protect it from such "friends."

GEORGE ELWERS

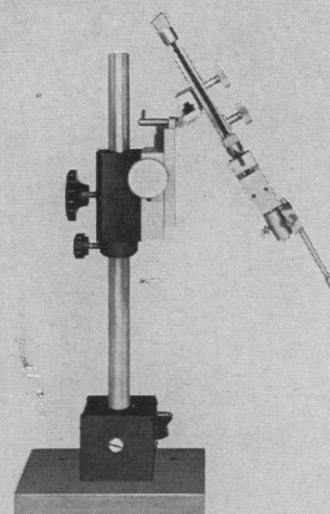
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Polywater: Homely and Universal

The reports on the spectrum of polywater by Davis, Rousseau, and Board (15 Jan., p. 167) and Rousseau (15 Jan., p. 170) suggest that polywater is, in the words of Edison, "1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration."

R. D. MURPHY

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