

ton, D.C., area I have vivid memories of swimming in the Potomac River and even drinking it; to do so now would be dangerous, perhaps fatal. For the last decade I have been able to observe our smog blanket; each year it seems to persist longer and get larger.

My particular environmental concern has been solid waste. Transporting trash is commonly the third largest item in municipal budgets, ranking only behind schools and public safety. I have been in four hearings at various levels of government trying to solve a tiny part of this problem, and the net result of my activity has been five lawsuits from various groups who prefer business as usual.

I grant that there has been great emotionalism about pollution and that in the course of it some extreme statements have been made. However, one may question how much progress would have been made in slowing down the degradation of the planet as a habitat for man—if in fact any has been made—had there not been an emotional outburst. Possibly it is not good to be either too sanguine or too strident, but if there is a hell it is populated by people who kept silent when they should have spoken out.

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Self-Defense

Bryce Nelson's report (12 Feb., p. 556) on the Hiroshima symposium at the AAAS meeting describes attitudes that puzzle millions. It is puzzling that an M.I.T. political scientist can state that "the arms race has generally gotten worse in the last 25 years" and not relate this to Soviet expansionism and militarism. Rathjens is disturbed that a bomb 200 times as powerful as the Hiroshima one is targeted for a Soviet city the size of Hiroshima. Others of us are disturbed that bombs 2000 times as powerful are targeted for American cities.

The blindness of the symposium is evidenced by Alperovitz's answer to the spectator's question: "Why haven't scientists been more successful in helping control the arms race?" According to Alperovitz, the lack of success is a product of scientists' keeping "their lives compartmentalized between their work and politics." This misrepresentation of scientists who faced the impli-

cations of their work and decided in favor of the defense of their country is repeated by Yale's Lifton, who slanders Edward Teller as a man who "embraced this weapon as a nuclear deity."

What is disregarded by these polemicists is the fact that nuclear weapons exist independently of American politics and scientists. Even the never-stated implication of their attitude—American surrender—would not protect against the use of nuclear weapons. Whereas we might protect ourselves from a Soviet nuclear attack by surrendering to the Soviet Union, we cannot simultaneously surrender to China (to say nothing of countries that may develop nuclear weapons in the future). Therefore, we cannot be assured that we would not be victims in a Russian-Chinese war or even that the Soviets would not decide that such a large and populous country as the United States would be more easily controlled if part were destroyed. Attitudes expressed at the symposium imply that we can trust the Russian and Chinese governments better than our own.

As long as there is a single expansionist or aggressive force, the choice is between surrender and defense. To pretend, as do the Hiroshima symposiasts, that "the arms race" is a product of American politics and scientists is to obscure the choice.

The West has long lost the will and self-belief that are necessary to any expansionist or aggressive power. It is rapidly losing the will necessary for self-defense. Let us really be hard-boiled scientists and stop fooling ourselves. If we choose surrender, let it be a rational product of a recognition of a lack of will to resist and not the product of a self-denunciatory emotionalism or utopian hopes.

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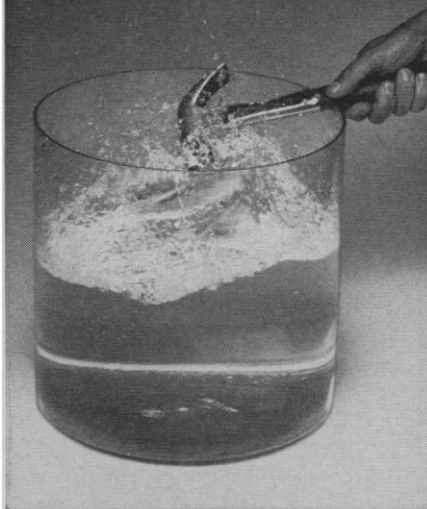
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