

LETTERS

Airline Fuel Conservation

I should like to commend Luther J. Carter for his report "Airlines: Half-empty planes keep profits low, waste fuel" (News and Comment, 24 May, p. 881). Both private and commercial aviation have set impressive energy conservation goals, and Carter's report comprehensively portrays their accomplishments. The airlines have cooperated with all of the energy steps which we, and the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB), have requested. As Carter notes, "Barring an early return to the wasteful practices of the past, the fuel consumed by the total U.S. scheduled airline industry (domestic and international) this year could be about 1 billion gallons less than the 10.3 billion gallons used in 1972." He attributes to the CAB the view that load factors (the percentage of seats occupied) of 60 to 65 percent are reasonable. I agree; in fact, I would like to see the airlines strive voluntarily to reach 70 percent. Such passenger loads, which would save great quantities of fuel, could be attained with full consideration for the safety and comfort of passengers, employees, and the general public.

JOHN C. SAWHILL

Federal Energy Office,
Washington, D.C. 20461

Perspective

I am one of the many students of Robert A. Good who was astonished and outraged as I read in the press the excessive and vitriolic charges leveled against him recently over the incident of William T. Summerlin, a man who has been found guilty of falsifying scientific data (see News and Comment, 10 May, p. 644; 14 June, p. 1154). As one who has benefited in every aspect of professional and social life from associations with Dr. Good, it is difficult to read these widely circulated reports and remain silent.

In these articles, the encouragement, guidance and opportunity Dr. Good gave to us is labeled "pressure"; his generosity, understanding, and closeness with us is termed "capitalizing"; his discovery and open reexamination in a scientifically proper way of perplexing previously announced results is, in the jargon of the day, termed "cover-up."

In this sweeping way, the achievements, dedication, style, and forcefulness of one of the great men of our times have been compromised. One who does not know him might not realize the enormously effective, honorable, and creative way in which he operates, with open honesty and a puritan humane ethic at the very foundation of his philosophy.

Dr. Good's character and idealism pervade every aspect of his academic life and scientific leadership. His immense achievements as a scientist, teacher, and leader have been recited in the numerous awards which he has received. Not always emphasized is the enormous portion of himself which he gives to one society after another, one cause after another, and one developing scientist after another. His achievements, at a time when many scientists retire from creative activity, continue to accelerate and he now is in his most productive interval. The continuing respect and affection directed toward Dr. Good by virtually every one of the more than 75 individuals who have trained with him has been evident to all.

I sincerely hope that this incident can be quickly put in proper perspective, in order to ensure that his effectiveness in making discoveries, preparing teachers and investigators, and leading immunobiology into a new era is not compromised, even for a brief interval.

HENRY GEWURZ

Department of Immunology,
Rush Medical College,
Chicago, Illinois 60612

Quark Etymology

"Particle physics: Is the electron really a hadron at heart?" (Research News, 17 May, p. 782) could have been written by James Joyce, for the report is as unintelligible to a non-physicist as *Finnegans Wake* (no apostrophe!) might be to a nonlinguistic physicist.

On my haut aurity, Jay-Jay did Murray Gell-Mann in when Gee . . . Um . . . pict "Three quarks for Muster Mark! (no question Mark?). "Quark" is German for curd or trash. Is that what Gell-Mann thought his particle was made of?

In the Prologue in Heaven of *Faust*, Goethe has Mephisto contemptuously

liken man to a long-legged grasshopper who buries his curious nose in every heap of dung (polite translation). In the original it is: "In jeden Quark begraebt er seine Nase."

"Three quarks for Muster Mark!" is the first line in the song of the sea-gulls mocking gulled King Mark, who hasn't got much of a bark with what his bride will be doing with tall-in-the-saddle Tristan. The entire song (1) is a sly joke on Muster Mark and maybe on physicists as well.

NICHOLAS G. DEMY

Somerset Hospital,
Somerville, New Jersey 08876

References

1. J. Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (Compass, New York, 1959), p. 383.

Science for the People

Ralph W. Dexter's letter (24 May, p. 849) on the Science for the People movement is somewhat perceptive although highly misleading. It is true that there may be an apparent "lack of unity within the activist group." There is no lack of certainty, however, that capitalist society does not provide a base for the development of a just and fulfilled life for most people, and that substantial and radical changes are needed. Our disunity arises only because it is not apparent how to bring about these changes. It is important to recognize that our own meetings are open to viewing and participation by all, unlike the secretive councils of "the establishment," and that out of our often tumultuous struggles comes growth and an increased sense of sisterhood and brotherhood.

The complaint that we are only "against" and not "for" anything is untrue at best. We are for a humane and rational application of technical knowledge to the solution of problems useful to all people. We are constantly working to effect a recognition that science is not politically neutral. We are for the elimination of the abominable conditions that make racism, sexism, militarism, and exploitation integral parts of our society. That Science for the People as a whole lacks a defined program reflects a conscious effort to have small groups of people create their own activities and not look to central (meaning dogmatic and authoritarian) leadership.

Dexter claims that we are driven by