

tect unwilling fathers, whose situation has been generally disregarded, and so prevent the birth of any child who is not really wanted by both parents at the time he is born. Such a system on a national scale would introduce no class or ethnic discrimination. The problems involved are not technical, but educational, administrative, and political. My conjecture is that the young generation would accept this solution once they understood that vasectomy does not interfere with normal intercourse.

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Shortage of Caviar

Before we condemn the polluted Caspian Sea for the lack of caviar (Editorial, 10 Apr., p. 199), let us take a lesson from our Columbia River or British Columbia's Fraser River. Both formerly bore good runs of the white and the green sturgeon. Indeed, in 1897, the press described a sturgeon having been landed at Mission which weighed 1800 pounds. There were no oil spills, no industrial waste on the Fraser then. Nor were these hateful things on the Columbia. A sturgeon has been described as a "very slow growing fish" (1) and these are unusually vulnerable to overfishing. Perhaps the heady price of caviar has had as much to do with the disappearing Caspian sturgeon as have man's wastes.

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Reference

1. W. A. Clemens and G. V. Wilby, "Fishes of the Pacific Coast of Canada," Bull. 68 (Fisheries Research Board of Canada, Ottawa, 1946).

Which Products Contain Arsenic?

In "Arsenic in detergents: Possible danger and pollution hazard" (17 Apr., p. 389) Angino *et al.* call attention to the problem posed by the possible contamination of water supplies from arsenic contained in detergent products. Tables 1 and 2 indicate that there is considerable variation from one product to the next. Enzyme presoak F, for example, contains only 7 parts per million arsenic compared to 59 parts per

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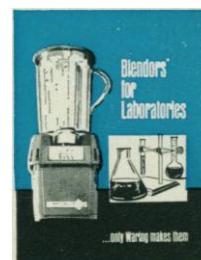
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million arsenic for enzyme presoak H (Table 1). Why are the products not identified by name so that the reader can purchase the lower arsenic product? Does the identification of products by code letter rather than brand name preserve scientific objectivity? Or does it conceal the identity of the guilty party?

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We have not identified the products by name on advice of legal counsel, although several leading brands were tested. According to a survey in the *Wall Street Journal* (9 Oct. 1969), these represented about 35 percent of the market. There are variations in samples obtained from different parts of the country. Whether this represents different sources of raw materials, or some other problems, we cannot say. For some products, values both higher and lower than we gave have been reported to us. Products of all the major soap and detergent manufacturers have been found to contain arsenic in some degree or another. Since we are not a regulatory agency, we have called the data to the attention of appropriate state and federal agencies.

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Dissent without Disruption:

Futility of Militancy

Yesterday at an informal meeting a majority of the members of the department of pediatrics at the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco voted to stop all teaching and research. Instead, the energies of the department are to be devoted to anti-Nixon and antiwar activities. A similar resolution was later passed by the academic senate of the medical center, also meeting "informally." Patient care, it was stated, would not be interfered with.

I feel that these people, many of whom obviously feel very strongly about the issues at stake, have every right to express their opinions. As free citizens they can petition, campaign, march, strike, or do anything they want so long as they do not interfere with the rights of others. But what have they done? They have taken over a place of learning for use as their own political machine. They have taken a public in-

stitution away from the people. Taxpayer money is now being used to support their partisan cause. . . . My training has been stopped, and if I remain, I will be associated with a political cause which I do not espouse. . . . How can they now depend on academic freedom when they have betrayed a public trust? Where am I to be educated? Where will actions like this lead us? A republic cannot long survive without respect for its institutions or adherence to agreed upon processes of dissent.

I believe that the ends never justify the means, no matter how urgent the issues may seem. Their protest is a destructive one. They attack the university and our form of government just as surely as those who burn libraries and shatter windows.

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Roderick Cameron, executive director of the Environmental Defense Fund, recently stated: "Being militant about environmental degradation does not indicate one's politics. It only indicates one's desire to survive" (1). I question the strategy of emphasizing militance. The answer to Cameron's statement can be: "Pointedly proclaiming one's militance on any issue does not only indicate one's zeal for that cause. It also indicates one's failure to grasp the elementary techniques of molding public opinion and enlisting majority support."

Considering my strong convictions as a conservationist, my reaction to some of the Earth Day programs was cool. Television news coverage of militant students at the University of Minnesota showed that they would not listen to answers of officials of General Electric. They seemed interested only in charging the company with gross pollution and making nonnegotiable demands for its immediate cessation. A rational, gentlemanly discussion of the problem might easily have won support for the students, but those students permitted no dialogue. They were far more anxious to vent their spleens on those whom they had indicted and judged than on enlisting their support and cooperation. I found myself sympathetic with an officer of General Electric who quietly answered a shouting student, "I'm sure there is nothing I can say to change your mind." Clearly, there was nothing anyone could say. The students in that group had made up their minds, and they didn't want to

be confused by any more facts—even if (as seemed quite evident) the facts that they had were minimal. The confrontation probably accomplished nothing except to win the great majority of the television audience over to the side of General Electric. By contrast, the organizers of the Earth Day program in Philadelphia accepted the cooperation and financial support of industry and local government and thus had one of the most successful programs in the country.

The first major objective in our program to save the environment must be to persuade a majority of the citizens of America to support our cause. We are not going to accomplish this with public confrontations in which we give off more heat than light. That sort of thing just brings a backlash of remarks like one made at a seminar on pesticides at the Cornell campus: "The less they know the louder they shout."

I hope everyone active in environmental defense will understand that too much militancy not only antagonizes uncommitted, uninformed citizens—it also may "turn off" some of the best informed and most influential speakers and writers on this problem—men who were concerned and working on it long before it was adopted as an issue by campus activists. The program needs the support of these men to counter the criticism that environmental activists use more invective than evidence. It will succeed to the degree that it proceeds with rationality and consideration for all facts and all problems, including the problems of industry in converting to reduce its effluents and the problems that would result to national and local economy if industries were shut down until conversion is completed.

In the interests of keeping this from turning into a highly emotional and divisive issue, which would certainly bring about its defeat, let us all put less emphasis on militancy and more on real study and thorough understanding of the issues. We who are over 30 would hate to see the cause that we have promoted for years develop into attitudes and activities that we cannot support.

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Reference

1. R. Cameron in "Environmental Action," newsletter of Environmental Action, 2000 P St., NW, Washington, D.C. (9 April 1970), p. 5.