

EDITORIALS

Welcome, Environmentalists!

Some years ago we drafted an editorial entitled 'Can the Ecologists Save the World?', which attempted to answer just that question—at least in ultimate prospect. Being sadly dissatisfied with our effort as well as disenchanted with some aspects of the 'popular' movement which had engendered it (which, *inter alia*, did not seem to know where it was going or even what to aim at), we did not seek comments on that editorial or ever use it. Indeed we forgot about it until we came upon it the other day when engaged in the tiresome but recurrently necessary task of throwing away old papers. It did, however, make the useful if evident point that there are two kinds of ecologists in our modern world, namely the suitably qualified devotees of the science of ecology, which deals mainly with the relationships of living organisms with their environment (including one another) and hence is largely a biological science that can now claim to be more than a century old, and what may be called the 'popular ecologists', stemming from an activist movement that started on some American campuses in the 1960s.

The abortive editorial concluded that, for enlightened decision-making and timely action, each of the above two groups clearly needs the other. Thus the scientists need the support of the activists to get done many things which they know should be done, while the activists need the best possible scientific advice and concomitant guidance before venturing forth on their otherwise often futile or even disruptive missions. Indeed it was the conclusion of a later editorial, which we did venture to use (*Environmental Conservation*, Vol. 5, No. 1, page 2, Spring 1978), that 'the sooner they can get together and work in unison, the better will be the chances for Man's and Nature's survival'.

When we referred above to our disenchantment with some aspects of the 'popular ecologists' movement which 'did not seem to know where it was going', we were thinking of our experience in 1969 when, as chairman of the symposium entitled 'Conservation and Environment Concerns' at the XIth International Botanical Congress, in Seattle, Washington, we put it to the several-hundreds-strong gathering of delegates and others that human population-pressures seemed destined to engender by far the greatest problems with which our world has ever been confronted. This prototype resolution, of the actual wording of which we have no record, was approved *nemine contradicente*. Indeed, no one raised a peep in protest or even question. Thereafter we were asked by a group of mildly 'hippy' students from Berkeley, California ('where it all started', I was told), to help them in drafting a resolution to the same general effect, and to visit them later on their campus. These things we did, being duly impressed by the students' sincerity, and feeling that they had some good points although lacking any clear direction. They told us in Berkeley that they had collected two large volumes of signatures in support of our resolution about human population-pressures, including those of many leading participants of the Congress in Seattle, and asked us if we thought, being resident in Switzerland, it would be possible to arrange for their volumes to be housed in the Library of the Office of the United Nations in Geneva. Knowing the Librarian we said we thought it should be possible, as nothing explosive or unduly partisan was involved. But on our return home, when we were about to see whether the students' request could be granted, we received a message from their leader in Berkeley to the effect that they had had some misgivings about those signatures and had burned the lot!

In the latest French presidential election, when the party advocating due concern for the local environment made their point successfully by obtaining a quite substantial proportion (amounting to some millions) of the votes, we noticed that much of the verbiage was of 'environnement' and 'environnementalistes' rather than 'écologie' and 'écologistes', though admittedly one of the candidates, who came to see us together with his wife, still referred constantly to the 'Partie écologique'. And now that our new sister journal, dealing mainly with the higher levels of environmental education, is being called *The Environmentalist*, and we have contributed to its initial issue a guest 'Open Letter' entitled 'Welcome to *The Environmentalist*', and have moreover come to calling ourselves 'environmentalist' rather than 'ecologist', we wonder whether the former is not the better term to employ for those of us who are duly concerned (even if not always academically qualified), leaving for ecologists the science that is becoming more and more exact—and, for many former adherents, obscure—nowadays.

Anyhow, that is our present suggestion for the solution of the problem of Ecologists *versus* 'Ecologists' (or 'neo-ecologists'), with the recommendation that the so-to-be-styled environmentalists, who comprise the main core of the environmental movement, should include the more enlightened and sensible among the neo-ecologists. The spheres of interest and influence of environmentalists could accordingly be termed 'environmentalism', whose great objective should be an eternally sustained and ever-improving global environment of (and for) Man and Nature.

N.P.

Stressing Pollution

Having repeatedly been asked to provide some definition and pointers for the environmental movement in its groping for cohesion, direction, and adequate support, we attempted an editorial on it in our latest issue, before going on to lament the passing of a friend such as even an editor is allowed to mention when he had been a leader in fostering a vital movement. Moreover, in the last several issues of our Journal, we have tried to comply with another chronic request—to stress topics of particular importance or urgency in particular issues without making the latter 'special' ones devoted to individual topics (such as would need a whole costly staff to carry through effectively).

Thus in our last five issues, while striving to offer some leadership from our own thought-processes projected for the hoped-for benefit of the environmental movement, we have stressed (1) the plight of the remaining tropical moist forests and the necessity (and some possible means) of saving them for posterity, (2) environmental education and