Assembly of Protein and Nucleoprotein Particles from Extracted Tobacco Rattle Virus Protein and RNA: J. S. Semancik and D. A. Reynolds

Aminoacyl Transfer Ribonucleic Acid Synthetases from Cell-Free Extract of Plasmodium berghei: J. Ilan and J. Ilan

Circadian Rhythm of Optic Nerve Impulses Recorded in Darkness from Isolated Eye of Aplysia: J. W. Jacklet

Interaction of Plant Hormones: R. E. Drury

Fissioning in Planarians: Control by the Brain: J. B. Best, A. B. Goodman, A. Pigon

Glucagon-Sensitive Adenylyl Cyclase in Plasma Membrane of Hepatic Parenchymal Cells: S. L. Pohl, L. Birnbauzer, M. Rodbell

Cytogenetic Effects of Cyclamates on Human Cells in vitro: D. Stone et al.


Glycine in the Spinal Cord of Cats with Local Tetanus Rigidity: T. Semba and M. Kano

Translocation in Perennials Monocotyledons: W. Heyser, W. Esrich, R. F. Evert

Lysergic Acid Diethylamide: Effects on the Developing Mouse Lens: J. K. Hanaway

DDT Residues Absorbed from Organic Detritus by Fiddler Crabs: W. E. Odum, G. M. Woodwell, C. F. Wurster

Encephalitogenic Protein: Structure: R. F. Kiibler et al.


Preferential Synthesis of Ferritin and Albumin by Different Populations of Liver Polysomes: S. J. Hicks, J. W. Drysdale, H. N. Munro

Alcohol Dehydrogenase in Maize; Genetic Bases for Multiple Isozymes: D. Schwartz

Auditory Sequence: Confusion of Patterns Other Than Speech or Music: R. M. Warren et al.


MEETINGS Coastal Engineering: M. M. Nichols

COVER Waterspouts off the Bahamas provide a striking example of the interaction between sea and air. The Barbados Oceanographic and Meteorological Experiment (BOMEX), which began 1 May and will continue through July, will focus on air-sea interaction phenomena and is one of the most ambitious weather experiments ever undertaken (see Science, 28 March, page 1435). [Stephen Gwin, Island Heights, New Jersey]
Public Challenge of Government Action

The current public debate about the ABM has served to dramatize a growing gap in the American political process. Increasingly, decisions must be made on issues that involve considerable scientific or technological complexity, as a result of which the agencies of government or their contractors in effect have a near-monopoly on the relevant information. The old problem of "who represents the public" in government decision-making now takes on a new and more serious dimension.

Many have been concerned for some time about this, and in recent years there have been useful developments: new techniques for providing independent advice for the Congress; the growth of citizens' groups in specific subject areas, able to make independent analyses; even the establishment of the President's Science Advisory Committee in the White House as a means of challenging agency positions on complex technological questions. As useful as these steps have been, they do not meet the problem for today and for the future.

The exciting and encouraging characteristic of the current ABM debate is that, for the first time since World War II, there is a major public challenge of a complex technological project, and a refusal to accept the usual assurances that secret data and intelligence would justify the project. In this debate the nation is fortunate in that many individuals who have had, or still have, a direct role in the subject have been willing to speak out publicly. But these individuals cannot be expected to be familiar with all issues as they arise, or to continue to be in a position to spend the professional and political capital required by direct public involvement. In any case, for most issues the occasional participation of individuals alone is not enough, for extensive continuous analysis is usually required, and a more obviously disinterested base necessary.

It seems clear that what is needed in our political process are new independent mechanisms charged with the task of developing information and analyses of important areas of public interest that have major scientific and technological content. In effect, the nation must consciously develop the capability to challenge government actions from a base independent of the government and of its policies.

In principle, the university is the primary locus in our society for critical examination of social issues from a base of strong analytical capability characterized by a striving for unbiased scholarship. But, are American universities now sufficiently independent? Can means for support for such policy criticism be found that will protect the universities in necessarily sensitive areas? Is it in fact wise for universities to take on major new functions that will be exceedingly difficult to perform, that may threaten traditional functions, and that will require new capabilities and organization while bringing about increased involvement in public confrontations on politically sensitive issues?

The answers to these questions are not clear, but it is essential that they be explored. If the universities remain aloof, are there other candidates capable of meeting a challenge of this magnitude? In any case, if the concern behind the March 4th events means anything at all, it represents a growing demand that the universities in fact find ways to perform this task of public policy analysis and criticism.

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