The Blackout: Living for the Future

The blackout staged last Thursday by opponents of the Yankee nuclear plant will have little impact on the power companies in the state. Yet the protest was quite significant in its ramifications. If anything, the blackout revealed the fact that people who want to halt pollution and preserve the environment must begin by examining—and changing—their own habits as consumers.

Some students here have already been affected by the developing consciousness of ecological and environmental issues. They carry reusable bottles instead of disposable ones, wash their clothes with phosphate-free detergents, "recycle" their leaves, fill their cars with "leaded-free" ammonia, install pollution control devices on their cars, and, in some instances, drive along together.

There are, of course, definite limits to what a few conscientious individuals can accomplish. The habits of millions of Americans remain unchanged; the majority, as at Middlebury, cling to their material possessions. (See Kenan Biddle's letter on page 18.)

The organizers of the blackout realize, though, that the only way to limit construction of nuclear plants, with their tremendous capacity for pollution and destruction, is to limit the demand for the additional power they are designed to provide. The public must understand that the plants not only produce more power on the grounds that public power needs are rapidly increasing. People who want fewer atom power plants will have to get along with less electric power.

The blackout, then, was an experiment in living on a reduced scale. For many students, no doubt, the whole thing was more of a lark than a protest—an opportunity to sit with friends, listen to records, and groove on the candlelight. But it is important that affluent Americans somehow get used to the idea of doing without. (Black people, American Indians, poor people, and lower-class whites already know how.) They must learn to become smaller rather than bigger consumers because soon the pattern of consumption is this country is going to have to change—not only to preserve what remains of our national resources, but also to allow a more equitable distribution of resources throughout the world and to prevent the depletion of all the world's resources.

As Dr. Van Vlcek points out in his excellent article to the spring issue of the Middlebury News Letter ("Only Population Stabilization Can Save Our Quality of Life"), "The wealth of the individual is in the resources he uses." The same applies to nations. By the standards of most of the world, America is a fantastically wealthy nation. While constituting less than 7% of the world's population, the American people use up of the earth's consumables resources. According to Van Vlcek, "Estimates indicate that the average American uses 7 to 10 times more power, mineral, water, and natural resources than the average person in India"—and our rate of consumption is increasing! When countries like India begin to use those raw materials at increased rates to produce finished products for themselves, our own individual output will have to be sharply curtailed.

Most Americans probably do not welcome the prospect of sharing what they have with the rest of the world (living on less so others may live on more), or preserving what belongs to all so that all will have something on which to live. The alternative is ecological disaster—just as the alternative is reducing the demand for electric power is the proliferation of nuclear-powered plants.
Letters To The Editor

Anti-Blackout

To the Editor:

After a less than successful Thanksgiving Blackout, Middlebury students once again demonstrated their capacity for hypocrisy. I am referring to the “emergency” which was supposed to protect the Vermont power plant.

Following a midnight elbow in the candlestick lamp (the purpose of which seemed less to protect the power plant than to serve the food served us) I proceeded to install my own in my minute of the world and nation news in the TV lounge of Basin North.

Blackout Out

Unfortunately, I was unable to install myself for very long, since I was twice asked to view the news in a black-out room (which I was told by doctors was an unnecessary strain on the eyes), and once asked to turn off the news completely “to protect evolution.”

During a commercial (which, I confess, might better have been turned off) I availed myself of the facilities provided me by all means only to find myself, in the middle of my efforts, staring into complete darkness. Someone had turned it upon me—oh, I shall improve this—right on me! Then I fell to improve the power plant, and the fuse box was ceased. Whatever event agreed, without the form to, it had been decided for me.

Upon returning to my dorm room, I discovered my hallway in a sunny darkness. After some calls to the service building and Dean Peterson, and with the help of a flashlight, it was discovered that, somehow or other, “the fuse box” had been again, mister arbitrarily, “fixed.”

Hysteria

In their sincerest protest to pollution from the Vermont plant.

Teunus Qnatas

Star Salad

To the Editor:

While the Choir was in Hartford recently, a few community members discovered the recipe for a star-shaped salad which dispensed all greens into a star bowl. The accompaniment to this salad was the following:

I am not suggesting that everyone drive VW’s or drink hot alfalfa. But certainly a little less talk and a lot more action is necessary to use a little green. People who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones.

Until Middlebury students are ready to prove their concern with real action, I would appreciate it immensely if they would respect my rights as a thinking individual, and have the necessities in mind. I have to study so I can do something about pollution.

Thank you.

Kwee Haldridge

Thursday night, April 19th.

Candle (power) light

Necedly knows no law and is in the game with an extravagance.

Colman Defends Phys. Ed. Proposal

Continued from page 8

One of the programs of the physical education department is conducting a year’s experiment with a half-required half-elective program. The required portion is compulsory for all freshmen and sophomores and the elective portion can be selected from a variety of courses including those for general health, weight loss, and various athletic activities.

Convenient Scheduling

It can be pointed out that this approach to the program would have the advantage of flexibility and variety. It is important to note that the program is designed to be open to all students and not only to those who are interested in athletics.

Disordered Personalities

Furthermore, there is evidence that the inability and un
The Campus

Helping to Make G. M. Responsible

Recently the anti-war movement and various consumer and environmental action groups have begun to concentrate on a new target: corporations which profit from defense contracts, produce defective consumer goods, or contribute to the pollution of the environment.

The focus of their activities has been the annual stockholders' meeting: their weapons, stock proxies. Reform-minded Churches, colleges and individuals who hold shares are asked to pool their proxy votes in an effort to force discussion of the company's policies — and hopefully change them — at the annual meeting. The approach has no guarantee of success and is hardly very radical (though one of its big promoters is "radical" agitator and community organizer Saul Alinsky.) It calls for working within the system. In no way, represents a real challenge to the giant concentration of corporate power which, in Andrew Kopplin's words, "is at the heart of America's undemocracy."

Judging, though, from General Motors' response to the Campaign to Make General Motors Responsible, one would think that the proxy fighters were out to nationalize the auto industry. "Campaign GM" is a group, sponsored by Ralph Nader, which is currently collecting proxy votes for two proposals that will be considered at GM's May 22 annual meeting. (The company initially tried to exclude the measures from the official proxy statement it sends to all shareholders; the Securities and Exchange Commission ruled that this was illegal.)

One of the proposals would create a public committee — with access to the corporation's records — to investigate and report on GM's past and present efforts to produce cars with minimum pollution and maximum safety. The other would add three representatives of the public to the company's board of directors. (The new members proposed by "Campaign GM" are former Presidential consumer-affairs advisor Betty Pur- ness, distinguished biologist Ron Dukes, and Washington minister, Rev. Channing Phillips.)

The purpose of both proposals is to expose General Motors to greater public scrutiny and insist that it take into account the many social consequences of its decisions. In this effort, "Campaign GM" supporters have been active on a number of campuses in an attempt to win university support. American colleges hold at least 1.2 million shares of GM stock; Middlebury owns 7,000. The college community here, if it is truly committed to environmental action, should back the campaign and urge the trustees to vote Middlebury's proxies in favor of the reform proposals. "Upro" is unfortunately all we can do, because Middlebury is a corporation who and the trustees are the corporation. Hopefully, the board will not adopt the position taken several years ago by Harvard President Nathan Pusey, who haughtily told his students: "We don't use our money for social purposes."