Editorial

The Blackout: Living for the Future

The blackout staged last Thursday by opponents of the Vermont nuclear plant had little impact on the power companies in the state. Yet the protest was significant in its symbolism: it communicated the fact that people who want to halt pollution and protect the environment must begin by examining—and changing—their own habits as consumers.

Some students here have already been affected by the developing consensus of ecology and ecological realism. They demand returnable bottles instead of disposable ones, wash their clothes with phosphate-detergents, "recycle" their leaves, fill their gas tanks with "lead-free" Amoco, install pollution control devices on their cars, and, in some instances, stop driving altogether.

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 Baldwin'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 power companies justify their plants for more reaction 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 around with friends, listen to records, and grove on the candlelight. But it is important that affluent Americans somehow get used to the idea of doing without. (Blacks, American Indians, Chinese, and southern whites already know how.) They must learn to become smaller or rather bigger consumers because soon the normal pattern will change; this country is going to have to change—not only to preserve what remains of our national environment 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 Vleck points out in his excellent article in the Spring issue of the Middlebury News Letter ("Only Depletion Stabilization Can Have Our Quality of Life"), "the wealth that the individual saves must be invested in the individual, the same applies to nations. By the standards of most of the world, America is a fantastically wealthy nation. While constituting less than 5% of the world’s population, the American people each year consume about 80% of the earth’s consumable resources. According to Van Vleck, ‘Estimates indicate that the average American uses from 33 to 196 times more power, materials, 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 giving up what belongs to all so that all will have something on which to live. The alternative is ecological disaster—just as the alternative to reducing the demand for electric power is the proliferation of nuclear powered generating plants.

Earth Day

Eco-Activist Urges Student Car Restriction

Bar Ham, chairman of the Environmental Quality Group, urged last Wednesday that the College "restrict partially or completely student ownership of cars" in order to control air pollution. Hall recommended the move in an unannounced speech at the Earth Day Assembly in Mink Chapel.

He suggested that the College should try to make it more difficult for students to drive to campus. Hall also praised the College for its efforts in producing "energy cars" which are sold by the manufacturer at getting closer than 20 miles per gallon, "one of the most advanced emission control devices available.

Speaking of the day's talk on pollution control, Hall said, "This sort of country Continued on page 2"

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Urges Car Ban

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Letters To The Editor

Anti-Blackout

To The Editor:

After a brief but successful blackout, Middlebury students have once again demonstrated their capacity for hypocrisy. I am referring to the "Blackout" which was supposed to protect the Vermont power plant.

Following a midnight-hour candle light supper (the purpose of which seemed less to protect the power plant than to ensure the food served), I proceeded to indignify myself in sixty minutes of world and national news in the TV lounge of Batt. North.

Blackout Out

Unfortunately, I was unable to indignify myself for very long since I was twice asked to view the news in a blackout-out room (which, I am told by doctors, is an unnecessary strain on the eyes), and once asked to turn off the news completely "to protect civilization."

During a commercial (which, I confess, might better have been turned off) I realized myself of the facilities provided for all who were unable to find myself in the midst of my efforts to start suitable conversation. Someone had been forced upon his/her self to inform me we all followed its (their) idea of protest, and the fusebox was needed. Whether or not I agreed, I could not determine. It had been decided for me.

Upon returning to my dorm this morning I discovered my hallway in a similar darkness. After some calls to the service building and Dean Peterson, and with the aid of a flashlight, I discovered that someone had again "lit the fusebox" once again, verboten arbitrarily again during the writing of this letter.

Hyperactive

In their service to protest pollution from the Vermont plant.

Tenure Quotas

Middlebury students consisted of some of the genuine, non-hypocritical known to this school. Certainly, a complete blackout is not our way to save the world. But the carnival-like atmosphere that prevailed ("We're not going to give up enough light to affect power," so my wife as well as I have a party), and the rather arbitrary manner in which the blackout was enforced doesn't exactly coincide with what might be called "concern for the quality of life," and certainly not the rights of others.

prove Concern

What may I ask, in the purpose of denying one's (all others) information of the world around us and "essential activities"? What is the purpose of turning off a safe light, hallway, stairway (and bathroom) lights when people are using them? Enough Lit Service

If Middlebury students are really concerned about the amount of electricity used here, then, I suggest that they prove their concerns by turning down their own required players which will not only reduce the power demands, but will considerably reduce noise pollution as well, employing all the other various means of entertainment, bioplates, super-decker foot, truck service tape artists, electric hair-dryers, etc. realistic to use the kitchenettes in the dorms (even, I'm afraid) instead of using those available.

Enough Lit Service

If Middlebury students are really concerned about pollution then I suggest that they stop buying Corvettes, Volkswagen, AKR"s, GTO's, Mustangs and other high performance cars (which contribute significantly to noise, heat, and air pollution), stop littering all over, just check Proctor Terrace any night.

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Colman Defends Phys. Ed. Proposal

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One of their program, Athletics, is conducting a year's experiment of half required half elective program and is not yet prepared to evaluate it.

In going further, we found that Franklin and Marchand had conducted an experiment recently in 70 to 30 student participants would participate in Physical Education activities on a voluntary basis.

Convenient Scheduling

It was pointed out that this period was scheduled when there were no classes of academic instruction and no social meetings during the period, beginning at 7:00 a.m. First, the athletic program would be given the option of meeting in the afternoon, thus eliminating the problems of transportation for students.

In general, one student, the "convenience" aspect of it is very weak in our minds. It can be fulfilled in several ways, i.e. instruction, approved and independent program, and self-sustained training.

In the future, it is suggested that the program be given the opportunity to continue and to examine its effects more carefully.

Dismayed Personalities

Furthermore, there is also evidence that the inability and un-
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 meetings; 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 and, in no way, represents a real challenge to the great concentration of corporate power which, in Andrew Koplik's words, "is at the heart of America's un-democracy."

Judging, though, from General Motor's response to the Campaign to Make General Motors Responsible, one would think that the proxy fighters were cut 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 corporation's board of directors. (The new members proposed by "Campaign GM" are former Presidential consumer-affairs advisor Betty Furse, distinguished biologist Rene Dubos, and Washington minister, Rev. Channing Phillips.)

The purpose of both proposals is to expose General Motors in 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. Americans colleges hold at least 1.2 million shares of GM stocks; Middlebury owns 7,691. 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. "Urga" is unfortunately all we can do, because Middlebury is a corporation 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."