

Science[®] News

A Science Service Publication
Vol. 106/November 30, 1974/No. 22
Incorporating Science News Letter

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COVER: Stone images from graves and village sites (c. 1000, Tennessee) represent early Americans' religious and artistic attitudes, evidence that the very earliest human societies transcended the merely bestial, the thesis of René Dubos's latest book. See p. 346. (Photographer: David Vick)

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New York, N.Y. 10036
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231 West Center Street
Marion, Ohio 43302

Subscription rate: 1 yr., \$10; 2 yrs., \$18; 3 yrs., \$25. (Add \$2 a year for Canada and Mexico, \$3 for all other countries.) Change of address: Four to six weeks' notice is required. Please state exactly how magazine is to be addressed. Include zip code.

Printed in U.S.A. Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C. Established as Science News Letter® in mimeograph form March 13, 1922. Title registered as trademark U.S. and Canadian Patent Offices.

Published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc., 1719 N St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. (202-785-2255). Cable SCIENSERV.

November 30, 1974

To the Editor

Left-handers' learning difficulties

In my work as school psychologist I, too, like Dr. Blau (SN: 10/5/74, pp. 220-222), noticed particular academic difficulties of left-handed children.

In my view, part of these difficulties is due to the fact that the left-handed pupil is not taught the proper positioning of the sheet of paper on which the child is going to write (or copy). In about 90 percent of my observations of left-handed youngsters, the position of the paper is in the expected and normal place for *right-handed* children.

This position in the left-handed is detrimental to the child's academic progress in several ways:

In the process of writing the left hand "travels" over the just-finished written work. This will often result in smudging and, generally, affect the neatness of the assignment.

Of much greater importance is the fact that the left hand *covers* the finished portion of the work and the student is unable to check at a glance what he or she wrote a minute or so ago. This factor hinders significantly the process of learning, because it acts like a curtain, and does not permit the child to check back the parts already written (unless one keeps lifting the left hand for "reviewing" the preceding material). This may block, in part, the associative aspects of learning and writing since, proverbially, one written—and visually checked-back—word or sentence will readily lead to the next one.

Zellig Bach, Ed.D.
School Psychologist,
Cedar Grove Public Schools,
Cedar Grove, N.J.

Making our global disasters

"Earthquakes and earth's rotation" (SN: 10/12/74, p. 233) with seismologist Don L. Anderson's proposal that the amount of solar radiation reaching the earth is one of the instrumental causes of global seismic activity presents us with a more urgent question about atmospheric conditions.

Fluorocarbons and the ozone levels in the atmosphere alter the amount of solar radiation reaching the earth's surface. If Anderson's proposal is pushed to its conclusions not only is man making it harder for himself to breathe, we may be issuing the means for our own global disasters.

I suggest a member of your staff take the challenge to present the readership with alternatives on the practical level on the use of aerosols, smoking, energy

waste, etc., on a comprehensive level. Direction on legislative action could help us to make our voices more effective in dealing with these problems.

Thank you for the opportunity to act from the knowledge presented in SCIENCE NEWS. I think we need a little more direction.

Vince J. Rosato
Los Angeles, Calif.

The U.N. and famine

When South Korea was invaded in 1950, the United Nations took all-out action to halt the aggression.

In 1974, South Asia and West Africa are invaded by famine. Why does the U.N. not take all-out action to halt the famine?

The role of the world organization should be enhanced to include more adequate action against natural disasters as well as man-made catastrophes.

As the League of Nations was destroyed by its failure to act against fascism, so the UN could be discredited by failure to act effectively against famine.

In 1966, Dwight D. Eisenhower said "We are confronted by a moral crisis." That is more true now than it was then.

It behooves us to meet the challenge.

Kenneth J. Epstein
Chicago, Ill.

Famine and population

Re: the article on high oil prices (SN: 10/5/74, p. 213): As a matter of common sense, it should be apparent that any country which has to import either basic foodstuffs or energy supplies is overpopulated. The conditions in poor countries are tragic, but when will man learn that so long as he breeds like an animal, he must expect to live like an animal.

M. F. Thorne
Pacific Palisades, Calif.

Absurd times

Phaseolamin ("skinny powder," SN: 11/2/74, p. 286) must be the contemporary version of the old Roman finger-down-the-throat method of making room for more food at the orgy. The same issue (p. 278) cites Philip Handler as suggesting a policy of triage in view of the hopeless food situation in South Asia. Another absurd (in the Samuel Beckett sense) situation reported on your pages is the occasional story about the development of a fertility pill!

David C. Locke
Brooklyn, N.Y.

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