

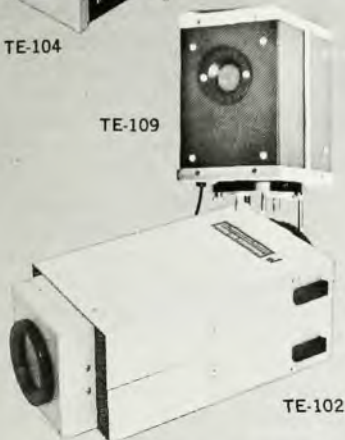
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content of the letter he is supposedly analyzing, and instead spouts ecstatic clichés uncritically about an "increasing political consciousness" (Consciousness III, no doubt), and fanatically equates criticism of extremism with "dehumanization of society," ending with a self-parodying call for "something more sane and constructive." Dear me!

Recalling the remark of one of Stephen Potter's characters, "You can't argue with a fog. Or a marshmallow," I won't even try to break into Shambroom's recitation of slogans. Instead, let me follow up Gary W. Stupian's excellent letter (January, page 9) by issuing a call for careful study of the manifest breakdown of reason, in the name of progress, observable in some of our most prestigious universities, and of the stampede of many scientists toward this position, despite its suicidal implications.

Such a study, I hope, would provide the insights necessary to reverse the ideological death-wish (so identified by James Burnham and by Malcolm Muggeridge) that has been sweeping our nation lately. It is high time, I submit, to reject firmly the simplistic dogma equating "social concern" with ultraliberal/crazy-left politics, and to look at the hard realities lurking behind the euphoric slogans one hears among the self-styled advanced thinkers before it is too late.

TĀLIVALDIS I. SMITS

*The Catholic University of America
Washington, D. C.*

Peking University

May I point out that Peking University is not "formerly called Yen-ching University," as cited in the caption under Chen Ning Yang's picture on page 61 in the November 1971 issue.

Peking University is a national institution, whereas Yen-ching University was a missionary school, which has been closed since 1949. Its campus has since been taken over by the National Peking University, which is the reason for the confusion.

S. J. Hu

*Ampex Corp.
Redwood City, Calif.*

The Cavendish today

I very much enjoyed reading Samuel Devons's article "Rutherford and the Cavendish" (December, page 38), which arrived just as I was editing the report of my Sabbatical stay at the Cavendish this past year. His description of life at the Cavendish in the 1930's would still be quite accurate today, although it may change now with the retirement of Nevill Mott as the Cavendish Profes-

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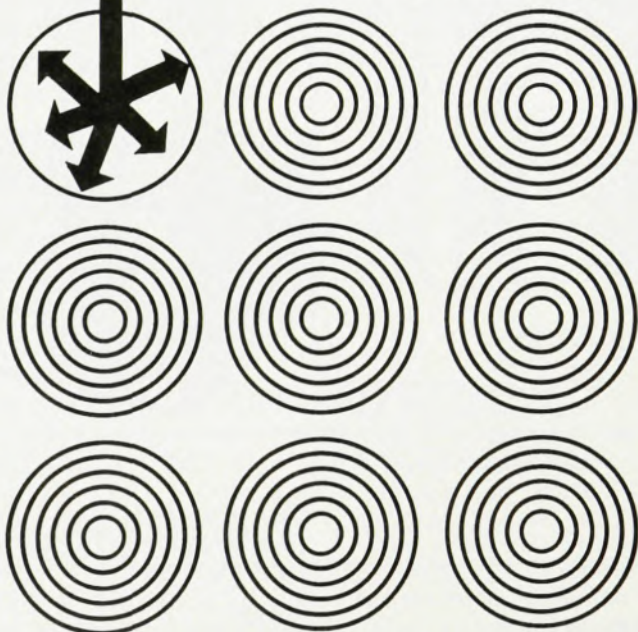
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letters

sor and the relocation of the laboratory to a new site this coming year. Mott's successor, Brian Pippard, sometimes lectures in a turtle-neck sweater and is president of one of the most modern Colleges of the University, Clare Hall, founded in 1966.

The six o'clock closing time is still a hallowed tradition. However, nobody is forced to leave at that time; one just can't get back into the lab after six, without a key.

In addition to Rutherford and at least two other Nobelists who received their prizes in Chemistry (Francis Aston and Max Perutz), all of the 14 British Nobelists in physics have also been associated with the Cavendish. Even though there are now other great-name laboratories in the world, the luster of the Cavendish shines on.

There is one common error about the origins of the name of the laboratory that may well be propagated through the statement on the bottom of page 41 unless a correction is made. Although "Henry Cavendish, the famous, eccentric 18th-century scientist" was a member of the same family, it was Lord William Cavendish, 7th Duke of Devonshire, for whom the laboratory is said, in official University publications, to be named. The original building and its first equipment were donated by the 7th Duke. As Chancellor of the University, he formally opened this building on 18 July 1874. It is his portrait that hangs in the entrance hall of the Austin wing of the Laboratory today.

ELMER L. OFFENBACHER
Temple University
Philadelphia, Pa.

Handicapped colleagues

Ralph Guertin's letter (September, page 13) brought to light a long-ignored group of people. I, like Guertin, have been totally deaf since the age of seven and also have been able to obtain a degree in physics.

As Guertin stated, the educational facilities for the deaf are appalling. The creation of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, N.Y., is a small step to redeem this situation. However, it will be a long time before this college starts to turn out well educated and technically trained deaf men and women. The education situation at the lower levels is and perhaps will remain second rate unless society also decides to stop ignoring this invisible handicap.

Yet the worst problem is with the prejudices among some of America's most "forward thinking" companies.

The ratio of deaf to hearing professional people is so small that it cannot be measured. For example, I am the only deaf scientist in all of Xerox's R & D facilities. Until this prejudice is removed the deaf will have a very difficult time obtaining a professional position no matter how well educated they are.

R. S. MENCHEL
Xerox Corporation
Rochester, N. Y.

Guertin's plea for the handicapped has support in the numbers of celebrated scientists who were so afflicted, disregarding the Galileos and Lamarcks who became blind when near death. Guillaume Amontons (1663-1705), who improved the gas thermometer and devised a hygrometer, was deaf. The 18th-century geometer and teacher of optics Nicholas Saunderson was blind. The well known Leonhard Euler (1707-83) lost one eye in 1735 and sight in the other in 1766, but nonetheless continued to produce many papers in physics and mathematics. The Swiss naturalist Charles Bonnet (1720-93), the first to use the term "evolution" and to observe parthenogenesis in aphids, became partially blind in 1750. The Swedish discoverer of the element tantalum, Anders Ekeberg (1767-1813) became blind in one eye in 1801 when a flask near him exploded; he was also partly deaf as a result of a childhood illness.

In our time, William W. Campbell (1862-1938), the director of the Lick Observatory between 1901 and 1930 and for a time the president of the University of California, was blind at the height of his career. The Nobel prize-winning chemist James B. Sumner (1887-1955), the first to isolate an enzyme, had only one arm. He was left-handed and his left arm was amputated.

MORRIS GORAN
Roosevelt University
Chicago, Illinois

Corrections

January, page 101—Staff-written report on Washington appointments failed to note that among previous science advisers to the President, Jerome Wiesner was an engineer.

page 120—Editorial implied that all previous chairmen of the AEC have been prominent scientists. This is true only for Glenn Seaborg, who served most recently as chairman for the period 1961-71. □

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