

THE KENTUCKY KERNEL

Wednesday, Feb. 4, 1970

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, LEXINGTON

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This special edition on environmental problems was first conceived about two months ago as an attempt to educate people on campus about an impending crisis. The material in this issue is not intended to serve as a comprehensive view of air and water pollution, ecology and overpopulation, but rather as a start in getting people concerned enough about the problems to do something about them.

It should be understood that merely passing legislative reforms in our legislatures is not enough. It is our affluent and overpopulated society as a whole, not just the corporation which reflects that society, that is the basis of the problem. It will require an individual effort on the part of families to limit their reproduction efforts to two children if population is to be controlled. Likewise, it will require an individual effort to at least partially reorder our way of life which contributes so much to the pollution of our land.

There are two groups on campus which are worthy of our attention—Zero Population Growth and the Environmental Awareness Society. Participation in these groups is one way of expressing an individual effort.

No one likes a dooms day crier but that is what we are doing. This is one issue which people cannot reflect on later. To use a trite phrase, by then it may be too late.



Moving Toward A Crisis

Air Pollution

The Question Of Life And Breath Now Faces A World Population

A radio disc jockey used to end his program each day by telling his listening audience, "Keep looking up, you'll see more."

This bit of homespun philosophy is just as true today, but holds a much more serious and urgent connotation.

The "more" that one sees when he looks up into the "deep, delirious, burning blue" are the macabre results of an eon of neglect by man of his environment.

Man must suddenly awaken to the fact—if his smarting, reddened eyes haven't already warned him—that the very air he breathes may soon be incapable of supporting human life.

"Bosh," one might say, "This is another in a long line of figments of an overactive imagination."

An overactive imagination?

When one reads that Tokyo, Japan, the world's most polluted city, now sells gulps of pure oxygen in its corner coffee houses;

When citizens of Chicago, Ill., are warned not to go outside on certain days, especially if they are subject to respiratory or heart disorders;

When 168 persons die in New York City of respiratory and heart-related diseases during a one-day siege of smog;

When a similar situation in London led to 4,000 more deaths than normal during four days of sulphurous fog;

And when pollution over the great smog city of Los Angeles kills pine trees 60 miles away.

Nor is the contaminated air restricted to the larger industrial complexes. Pollution in balmy

Florida has been found to be a major cause in the mysterious crippling of cattle in the state.

Air pollution doesn't single out any one location; it is all encompassing; it is no farther than your own back door.

Local health department officials say that there are several days during any given year when Lexington's pollution rate far exceeds that considered safe by state ambient air quality standards.

Although some 65-70 percent of Lexington's air pollution is caused by automobiles, according to Harry Marsh of the Lexington-Fayette County Health Clinic, UK is listed as one of the city's top polluters.

The University has been the object of much criticism by nearby residents who claim that buildings still using coal for fuel are overloading already foul air.

The presence of a huge laundry smokestack and tobacco plant just outside the university perimeter combine with UK pollution to make the campus air covering among the dirtiest in the city. The close proximity to downtown Lexington does little to help the growing problem.

The depressing point in all of this is that air conditions here, according to Marsh and UK Prof. Orville Skewart, a resident expert, are actually better than in most areas of the country.

"Lexington is lucky in that it is located in a kind of weather trough through which winds from Canada and the Gulf of Mexico constantly blow," Marsh explains. "Polluted air

does not have a chance of stagnating here for very long periods of time."

According to Stewart, who was a member of a smoke abatement committee in Lexington as far back as 1947, air pollution isn't the problem it was 25 years ago.

"Then, coal was a major source of fuel," he said, "and open burning was much more prevalent than it is today."

"The problems today," Stewart went on, "are that good, clean-burning coal is so hard to come by, the fuel is not burned properly and the cost of converting coal furnaces to gas is not financially expedient."

Both Stewart and Marsh agreed that the prevalent use of natural gas was a big factor in lessening air pollution problems in the city. Stewart added that the growing need here, and nationwide, is a stringent regulation controlling automobile pollution.

Stewart said he expected passage of such a measure within three years, due to the ever-growing concern of a breathless citizenry.

"Pollution will have to get better; I really don't think it will get much worse," he stated.

"Air in Lexington, compared to the rest of the state, is in good shape," echoed Marsh, who added, "But that doesn't mean we don't have air pollution, because we do."

"All of our problems are soluable," said Marsh, "but it will take a much greater awareness on the part of the public."

These statements by local experts are reassuring enough from the standpoint of Lexington but certainly they can not be extended across the rest of the nation and the world.

If conditions are fairly well under control locally, they are reaching the crisis stage virtually everywhere else.

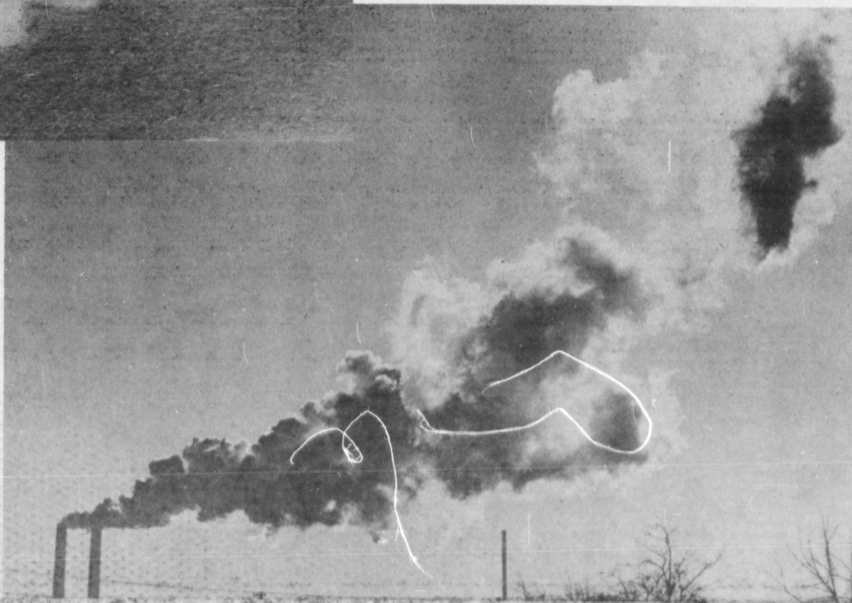
As Stewart and Marsh advise, awareness is the answer, awareness the likes of which we have never demonstrated.

Perhaps, as one observer sees it, a nationwide air pollution conflict could go a long way toward unifying a nation long severed over racial and economic problems.

One thing is sure, air pollution knows no bias, a point which should move its cure a little higher up the ladder of priorities.



Smog-producers such as wastes from automobiles and factories are polluting air so badly in some cities that the simple act of breathing becomes a chore. In Tokyo, oxygen is being sold in coffee houses.



Water Pollution

Oceanographer Predicts The End Of Sea Fishing Expansion By 1980

"The affluent are the greatest producers of effluent," a local health official joked. He didn't smile.

America is the most affluent nation in the world, and the effluent of its occupants is the primary reason why water pollution exists in this country today.

Daily, Americans dispose of millions of tons of what we have long referred to as "garbage." The eventual and most natural receptacles for all of this collected crud are rivers, lakes and streams, which serve to decompose the material into a more useable form.

The only problem with long accepted practice is that modern technology is now producing materials which streams are unable to wash away. Thus, the nation's water supply is fast collecting a backlog of dangerous toxicants, which have and will continue to have fatal effects on thousands of Americans. That is, unless something is done.

Ecologists warn us that halting water pollution is something we can ill afford to hem and haw about. Some see the end of our drinkable water supply not by the end of the next century, but within the decade, if we do not take strong measures.

Already effects are evident. Lake Erie is practically void of all organic matter after absorbing wastes of huge industrial plants for years.

Seals are dying off the coast of Alaska as a result of man-made oil spills polluting the very ocean itself—a tragedy which may eventually destroy the native Eskimos.

As in the case of air pollution, one doesn't have to travel to isolated spots throughout the world to find water pollution. He merely has to look over his shoulder.

The Ohio River, which receives factory and

human waste from both Cincinnati and Louisville, is listed as one of 10 most polluted rivers in the country.

In Lexington itself, which has only a few small streams to pollute, West Hickman Creek is virtually gone from siltation and partially treated sewage and South Elkhorn Creek is almost sterile, says UK zoologist Robert A. Kuehne.

Adding to the catastrophe is the fact that these streams have long since lost their picturesque beauty, as well as their life forms.

Perhaps the only local body of water which remains virtually unspoiled is Elkhorn Creek, which receives only periodic pollution from nearby Bluegrass Army Depot.

Such groups as the Fayette County Health Board, the League of Women Voters and the Sierra Club have begun concerted campaigns to combat the problem locally. The question which then arises: Are they in time?

Unlike polluted air, polluted water is extremely difficult, and sometimes impossible, to reclaim once it is contaminated. Local authorities agree that the situation is not hopeless but that the answer must be quick and expensive.

Harry Marsh of the Lexington-Fayette County Health Clinic thinks that the consolidation of the area's sewage disposal systems is in order.

Over 18 different sewage treatment plants

now serve the city. These are both publicly and privately owned. This, plus the unorganized use of both sewers and septic tanks on the part of residents, has resulted in constant drainage problems and polluted water.

Marsh claims that a consolidation of treatment plants under public control and a city-wide changeover to sewer systems would go a long way toward solving local water pollution problems.

Dr. Kuehne goes one step further by stating that Lexingtonians—and Americans in general—are going to have to undergo a complete change in values.

"We must stop thinking in terms of waste and disposal and start recycling what once was waste material into a reuseable form," he said.

"We must come to the realization that some of the products of modern technology have not been for our good, and begin a program of control," Kuehne concludes.

How, one might ask, can a world covered almost entirely by water ever run short of drinking water and seafood?

This, Dr. Kuehne explains, comes from the mistaken assumption that the oceans are chock full of living organisms. In reality, says the UK professor, virtually all sea life is concentrated on the coastlines, which are fast becoming as polluted as the rivers, lakes and streams.

Ocean conditions are so critical now that Dr. John H. Ryther, head of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, predicts that the marine fishing industry can not expect to expand after 1980.

It is no wonder then that scientists are telling us to act now not next year or even next week. Regulations and control legislation are coming but far behind the pollution rate.

The vacation is over; now the work begins.

Drinking Water

Bucolic Kentucky is the sight of many of the nation's worst water pollution problems. The camera of journalist John Fetterman catches this typically-grotesque sight at the headwaters of the Kentucky River on the Letcher-Perry County line.



Strip Mining



The photograph at the top of page four is a slag dump in Perry County. Slag is the refuse of a coal mining operation and burns continuously for a number of years. The picture at the bottom of the page was taken near a Western Kentucky coal field. It is a former woods area that was destroyed by acid seepage. The photo at the right is a reclaimed area in Perry County. Although nothing has been done to the land save grading, force seeding and scattering straw over the area, the Bethlehem Coal Co. rates it as a "show piece."

Photos By
John Fetterman
and Dave Herman

Who Is Really Uprooting This Country?

By JOSEPHINE W. JOHNSON

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The wild cherry leaves are waxy green and bronze in this spring morning. The rain is falling over the buckeye pyramids, over the lime-green flowers and the dark-green leaves. The woods are flooded with flowers. The fern-cut leaves of dutchman-breeches and squirrel corn, the white hearts of their flowers, shake in the rain.

When the sun comes out it is as though a veil of silver ice sheathed every living thing. A green-white ice where the slow rain stayed on every leaf and shoot it touched. And as far as the eye can see white glittering spiderwebs are flung on the hillside, and long strands, pearl-hung, wave from the beech twigs, invisibly anchored somewhere far out in space.

These are only a few hours out of a spring woods that will unfold, flower, change with every day. The buds of buckeye have that waxy rose of petalled sap, and then a burst of green leaves and the rose petals falling. The great oaks and maples and beeches will begin to leaf, begin their giant breathing, the soundless respiration and purifying to which our own lives are tied.

This is indeed a beautiful country, one thinks. A land to be loyal to. One's soul expands. But down beyond this valley, beyond the circle of hills that ring this wild greenness, plans are being made to destroy it. Anarchic, sweeping, enormous and expensive plans. Who is making these plans?

A half mile away in the early spring morning, the great orange school buses begin to roll, gathering up the children, weighted down with

books, carrying them to their new and beautiful buildings on old pasture lands. Among the thousands of things these children will hear are words about a Man Without a Country: "Breathes there a man with soul so dead who never to himself has said, this is my own, my native land?"

Polluters of Spring

From these words should flow love, patriotism, and law into the veins of the growing child. But, busily behind the edifice, under cover of the mighty music of the organ sound, a vast throng of people are working night and day, destroying all they still call their native land.

Who are these people? Who are the destroyers? Breathes there a man. . . . Try and breathe. Who pollutes the air? Who fouls the rivers? Who cuts down the trees, builds houses on the stripped hillsides? Who poisons the sheep, shoots the deer, oils the beaches, dams the rivers, dries up the swamps, concretes the countryside? Who bulldozes homes, builds missile sites, pours poison wastes underground, poison gas overground, slabs over mountain tops, rocks the earth with explosions, scars the earth with strip mines?

Law-Abiding Destroyers

Who is doing this? Who is responsible for this anarchy and ruin? Is it the revolutionaries, the black militants, the draft refusers? Is it the college students, the pacifists, the hippies? Who is taking our country away from us before our eyes?

It is the well-dressed, law-abiding, patriotic and upright citizens who are taking our country away from us. In the name of saving us, protecting us, and civilizing us, statesmen and gen-

erals, scientists and engineers, businessmen and Congressmen, are making us into a people without a country, dead souls and exiles. And we are paying them to do it.

In the name of saving and protecting us, the Pentagon has become the symbol of the greatest power on earth today. There it sits, a terrible mass of concrete. Its power generates into every single life. It is in the air we breathe, the water we drink. Because of its insatiable demands we are drained and polluted. Nothing in the world is like this concrete monster. It is like the great god Moloch into which the children were thrown as sacrifice. It is our greatest unnatural disaster.

We are dying of preconceptions, outworn rules, decaying flags, venomous religions, and sentimentalities. We need a new world. We've wrenched up all the old roots. The old men have no roots. They don't know it. They just go on talking and flailing away and falling down on the young with their tons of dead weight and their power. For the power is still there in their life-in-death. But the roots are dead, and the land is poisoned for miles around.

After the first silent spring will come a short and suffocating summer, then asphalt autumn, and in the end, winter. Cold, clean, orderly, concrete winter. Winter forever. And then we will have nothing to fear anymore, nothing to be protected from, nothing to be protected for, nothing at all, in fact, that we or anyone else will want to call our own.

• • •

Josephine W. Johnson, Pulitzer prize novelist and author of "The Inland Island," lives in Cincinnati.



Ecology

After Centuries Of Recklessly Upsetting Nature's Balance, Man Must Now Save His Environment To Save Himself

Ecology is a term which has suddenly crept into our vocabularies and is rapidly becoming an everyday word. It is defined by Webster as "the totality or pattern of relations between organisms and their environment."

What this implies is that all forms of life are interdependent and that the life cycle is just that, a cycle.

Basically there are four major classifications of matter which interact in the cycle of life. One includes such nonliving materials as water, chemical elements, simple chemical compounds and sunlight—the primary source of energy, without which there would be no life.

A second classification contains the forms of plantlife which convert the materials of that first classification into carbohydrates which are needed to sustain life both by themselves and other forms of life.

In the third classification are the higher forms of animal life which feed on plantlife and on each other. The final classification encompasses such forms of plant and animal life as bacteria and insects which feed off the dead bodies of the higher organisms, and in so doing free chemical compounds for reuse as the cycle continues.

Where does man fit into this ecological

cycle? Well, until just recently, man didn't envision himself as being a part of the cycle at all, and this is the primary reason for the ecological crisis he has created.

Man has always considered himself the master of his own destiny, far above all other forms of life and not affected by such things as ecology or ecosystems. He could shape his environment as he saw fit, and everything else merely existed to make life more convenient for him.

For hundreds and thousands of years man has adapted his environment to serve his wants and needs, and in so doing has tampered with the balance which nature tries to maintain between all living, nonliving and dead matter.

With the industrial and technological advances he has made over the last 100 years, man has greatly increased his assault on nature to the point where he now is capable of causing irreversible damage to all other forms of life, and, indirectly, to himself as well. He does so daily.

The damage is not all being done by rich corporation owners who hire thousands of their fellow men to fill the skies over the nation's cities with black, poisonous smoke, or to dump millions of gallons of chemicals into our rivers, or to strip our coalfields to get out the easily

accessible coal and leave behind a wasteland which is incapable of supporting life.

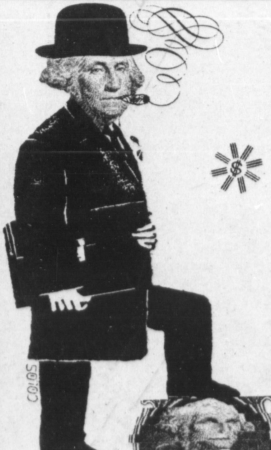
No, we all do our part. We drive around in our cars, filling the air with exhaust fumes, we use chemicals like DDT whose toxins spread to all forms of life, and we dump our garbage wherever we feel it won't be in our way. But, most importantly, we make demands.

We demand the output of an endless stream of materials and equipment from our technology, things designed to make our lives easier, more satisfying and more interesting. But the greater our technology grows filling these demands, the greater grows our assault on our environment and the more we move toward extinguishing life altogether.


Man is just beginning to realize this, that he is killing all matter involved in the ecological cycle, including himself.

Finally he is giving some thought to ending his assault on his environment and to working toward the restoration of the ecological balance he has upset.

He may be able to rectify the crisis he has created, but he must act quickly. He will have to adopt an entirely new set of values, values almost completely in opposition to the ones he has always known.



Sierra Club




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Why don't YOU participate in an Active Student Group that is aware of the Environmental Questions of Today?

For information contact these Sierra Club leaders at the University:

<p>FACULTY MEMBERS</p> <p>Dr. Jean Jaros Political Science Department U.K. Ext. 3840 Home: 278-4926</p> <p>Dr. Wayne Davis Zoology Department U.K. Ext. 2795 Home: 277-4330</p> <p>Dr. Robert Kuehne Zoology Department U.K. Ext. 2795 Home: 277-2363</p>	<p>STUDENT LEADERS</p> <p>Gerald Thornton Environmental Awareness Society 1816 Courtland Drive Phone 299-8379</p> <p>Roger Westman Air Pollution Representative 417 Pyke Road U.K. Ext. 211</p>
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Or Write Mrs. Robert A. Fay, Membership Chr.
1204 W. Main, Shelbyville, Ky. 40065

Harry M. Caudill, in the white jacket, and some members of the University's Environmental Awareness Group on a visit to strip mined land in Perry County. The coal company completed reclamation efforts on this field four years ago and is not required to do anything else to the land.

Photo by Dave Herman

Overpopulation

Affluence, Overpopulation Create Environmental Problems

The preceding pages of this special issue have all dealt with the effects of uncontrolled population growth. Yes, air and water pollution and the destruction of our country's natural resources can all be traced to the harsh demands of an affluent and overpopulated society.

Make no mistake about it. The people of the United States are consuming their resources faster than they can be replaced. Although people are starting to realize that the territorial United States is not a bottomless pit of wealth, constant demand for more goods forces the stripping, digging and polluting to go on. This is what overpopulation is all about.

Our cities are so overcrowded that local governments cannot keep pace with the population growth. Schools are crowded. The population densities in our large cities are fantastic. Harlem, for instance, has a population density of 4000 people per square block. People create garbage and New York garbage trucks now must travel 30 miles from the city before reaching a disposal area.

But overpopulation is not just a problem in the New Yorks and Chicagos of our country. Lexington has grown at such a fantastic rate since 1950 that the sewage treatment plant here now treats three times more sewage than it was designed to handle.

Overpopulation is already a problem and it is quickly reaching crisis level. The population of the U.S. is expected to increase by 100 million people within the next 30 years. By the year 2000, people won't be talking about garbage collection or overcrowding, they will be talking about survival. This is certainty unless some measure of control is employed.

The question, of course, is just how much control is needed or, more realistically, how much control will people stand for. Most experts agree that family planning

is not an answer to the problem since people simply want too many children—three or four on the average. For the population growth to be halted no mother should give birth to more than two children.

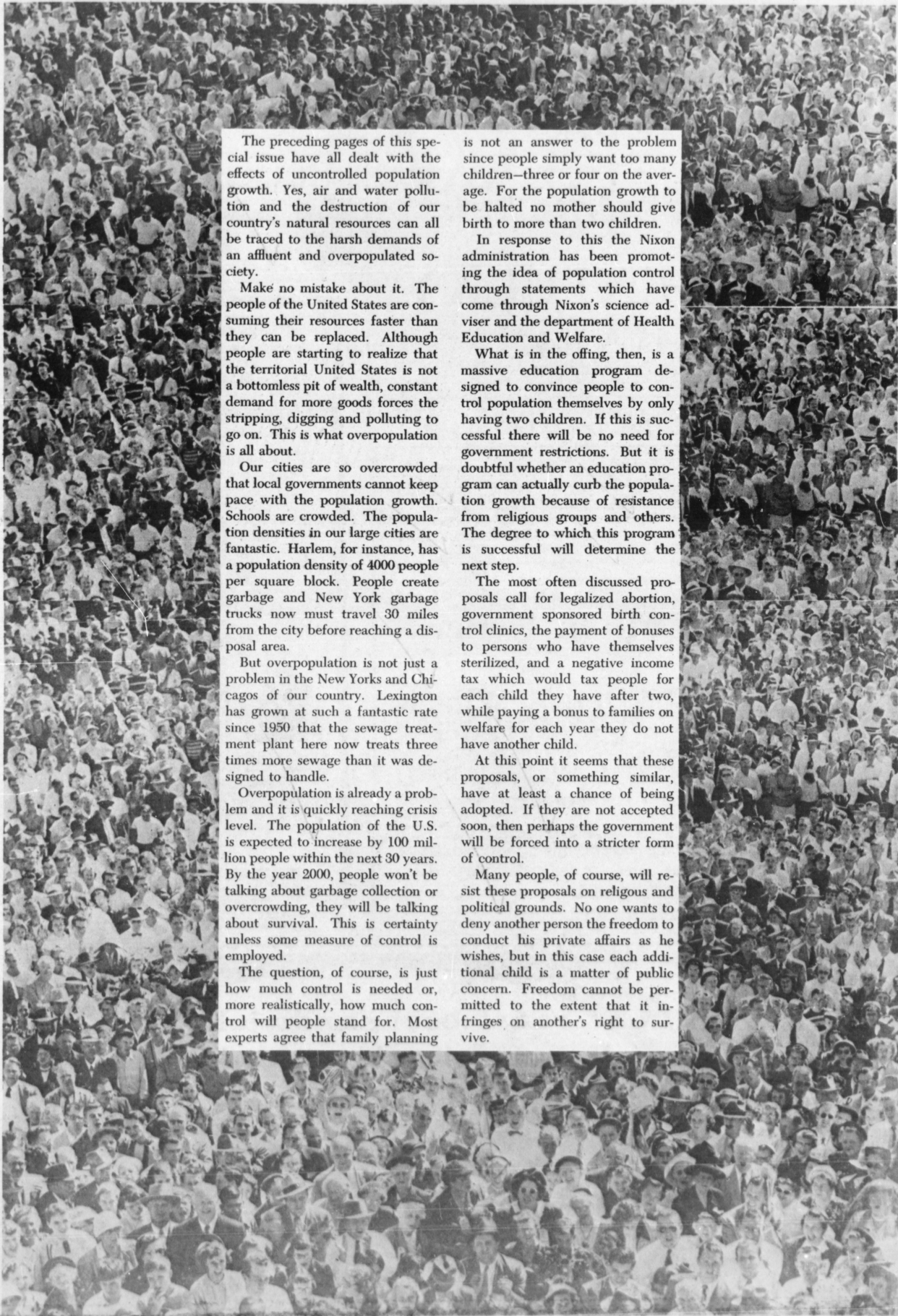
In response to this the Nixon administration has been promoting the idea of population control through statements which have come through Nixon's science adviser and the department of Health Education and Welfare.

What is in the offing, then, is a massive education program designed to convince people to control population themselves by only having two children. If this is successful there will be no need for government restrictions. But it is doubtful whether an education program can actually curb the population growth because of resistance from religious groups and others. The degree to which this program is successful will determine the next step.

The most often discussed proposals call for legalized abortion, government sponsored birth control clinics, the payment of bonuses to persons who have themselves sterilized, and a negative income tax which would tax people for each child they have after two, while paying a bonus to families on welfare for each year they do not have another child.

At this point it seems that these proposals, or something similar, have at least a chance of being adopted. If they are not accepted soon, then perhaps the government will be forced into a stricter form of control.

Many people, of course, will resist these proposals on religious and political grounds. No one wants to deny another person the freedom to conduct his private affairs as he wishes, but in this case each additional child is a matter of public concern. Freedom cannot be permitted to the extent that it infringes on another's right to survive.



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