The Chicago compromise

Politics, it is said, is the art of compromise. The definition has relevance to political ecology, too. Thus it is appropriate that the Chicago Seven trial—a political venture balked at by Ramsey Clark but eagerly embarked upon by John Mitchell—ended with a political verdict.

Kay Richards, a 28-year-old computer operator who served on the jury, is now boastfully spluttering out all the wretched details in a series of articles in the Minneapolis Tribune.

MISS RICHARDS tells us, "I believed very deeply that it was our duty to reach some sort of verdict, whatever it was." It is hard to detect where her naive ends and her ghost writer's cleverness begins, but one thing is clear: the jury's verdict that five of the Chicago Seven have crossed state lines with intent to riot represented the last of many aberrations of justice that the trial spawned.

As the jury deliberated in their plush hotel rooms, they treated the fate of the men on trial as nothing more than a controversial piece of legislation that might, they realised, have to be amended and equipped with factional "riders" before a vote could be cast.

It was not, as Miss Richards believes, the jury's duty to reach "some sort of verdict." It was their duty to assess the evidence, debate the case, and, after Socratic discussion, decide—individually—whether the men were guilty or innocent. It was, in fact, their duty to reach a stalemate—to become a hung jury—if they could not agree.

INSTEAD, MISS RICHARDS informs us that she shuffled back and forth to hotel rooms—one occupied by the four jurors who wanted total acquittal and one occupied by the others, who favored total conviction—arbitrating, and, eventually, drawing up an amendment that, like the best of compromises, was satisfactory to neither faction.

This compromise has been called an "American result" by Vice President Agnew. Chief prosecutor Thomas Foran said, "the verdict proved the very thing that has been under attack in this case; it proved the judicial system works."

Bill of rights

High school administrators may find themselves in a more precarious position than their university counterparts if they continue to ignore the discontent of increasingly radicalized students.

Possible sources of conflict between the community-controlled institutions and their politically aware students are apparent in a national high school bill of rights, ratified last Sunday by a statewide high school rights conference.

The bill says that a high school student be granted the freedom to organize politically in their schools, to control their own publications and the right of due process, in other words, the rights granted by the U.S. constitution.

If high schools are to educate a new kind of student, dissatisfied with outmoded curriculum and teaching methods, and capable of political action, they must begin to redefine their role in a society with possibly conflicting value systems.

Conserving the world eco-system

Evilie Gorham.

Editor's note: In yesterday's article Prof. Gorham discussed our future environmental threats, concerned with conserving the world's bio-system through biological balances.

Our school and university training generally leads us to believe that domination of the ecological scene is the driving force, and that biology is the soft option. Most of our present environmental problems stem from the fact that the reverse is true, as that technology based on physics and chemistry is upsetting biological balances which are far more subtle, delicate and important than the mysteries of the internal combustion engine, the nuclear power plant, or the industrial synthesis of organic compounds. The modern engineer or chemist is, in truth, a sorcerer's apprentice, busy setting in motion chains of causation whose consequences he can neither foresee nor control. For an example we need go no further than the history of the automobile. A few decades ago it was foreseen that our urban populations would be at risk from automotive smog or our climate from the exhausts of super sonic jets, but alone the social problems brought on by the increase in mobility which has been the legacy of the automobile.

Of course all this is not to say that we must reverse or bring to a stop all technological development. However, it may become necessary to reverse or slow down certain kinds of technological development in the interests of all mankind and the awareness of all mankind and the awareness of all mankind is a matter of biological laboratory and monetary needs of an IEP (International Biological Programme) are set at least as great as those of military (Chemical and Biological Warfare), Star Wars, World Trade, etc., etc.,--the human and social significance is beyond question for greater. A change in the order of priorities may be called for now. As I have already said, the need is for an acceleration of conservation efforts. The time is now, and the battle is to be won in the university, where the challenge is best understood and where minds—some of them at least—may yet be changed.

What is needed to put in perspective the simplistic and reductionistic viewpoint of engineering and science is a broader technological point of view: that the web of life cannot be understood successfully by taking it to bits or by dealing with parts of it in isolation from one another, but only by viewing it—however imperfectly—as a whole, where its properties are far more than the sum of the properties of its parts.

This holistic attitude toward nature does not imply that "taking to bits" is not a legitimate part of science, or indeed of ecology, but only that consistent effort should also be devoted to putting the bits back together so that their interconnections may be perceived and manipulated in ways tending to conserve rather than to destroy the world ecosystem. To foster the holistic attitude is to recognize that our introductory courses in the natural sciences undergo radical reconsideration. This is particularly true of introductory biology, which needs to be restructured around ecology as the central theme so that students, most of whom are not aiming at a professional career in biology, will have a true appreciation of their place in—and not apart from or above—their natural environment. In this century of rapid transport and ever more rapid communication, that environment has become nothing less than the whole world ecosystem.

Recently a good deal of restructuring is going on at the University of Minnesota. For instance, Biology 1 (General Biology) now begins, as taught, with several lectures on ecology. This year a section on the biology of man is being included to deal more fully with problems of population growth, food supply, environmental deterioration, etc. This winter Professor Douglas Priest and I are teaching three and other problems in a new Evening School course without prerequisites, Biology 57 (Stress and the Future of Man). If students are interested, we hope to offer it in the future as a regular daytime course in the College of Home Science. The Department of Ecology and Behavioral Science has recently developed three courses for students who are not biology majors: Ecology 10 (The Final Crisis) on open-circuit TV (KETCA, channel St. Elmo's Fire) and Sociology 51 (Ecology and Man). The second of these courses is now required for chemistry engineers. In addition, Roger Pierson James Smith will offer a new course, Ecology 127 (Human Population, Environment and Resources) in spring quarter. Lastly, the Department of Genetics and Cell Biology is planning a course which requires no prerequisites for nonprofessionals, GBC 69 (Human Genetics and Social Behavior). A beginning has been made. However, much remains to be done if our commitment to relevance for non-professionals as well as professional students is to be met. To this end, science continues on the aims and methods of our introductory curriculum.

Editor's note: Prof. Gorham is head of the Botany department.

The verdict proves nothing of the sort. It does, however, prove that not even our sacred judicial system is sheltered from the in- creasing politicization of the American way of life.