

EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The conservation movement has begun to grow political roots. The newly politicized perspective has been marked by the development of ecology – also known as ‘green’ – political parties who have sought constituent support and run candidates for elective positions.

Statistics have shown that many of the people who join a non-political ecology group have no specific political affiliations and come under the category of “idealists”. Their reason, in the first instance, for becoming active in such a group is to try to bring their influence to bear on a specific environmental issue. Later, these same people become increasingly politically conscious as a result of the frustrations experienced in trying to reach their goals, eventually assuming that their aims can only be achieved within the framework of an environmental political party. With the decision to form such a party come the political problems which affect not only the ecology party but the established parties themselves.

The new political party soon becomes a collecting ground for all those discontented with the environmental policies of the established parties, thus robbing those parties of their much-needed critical voices. On the other hand, an ecology party, if it wishes to gain and retain political power, must concern itself with issues other than that of conservation alone. It must develop a broad ideological base, a platform made of non-ecological elements, to remain viable. Experience with single-issue parties has shown that their existence is limited, their appeal too narrow to garner any political influence. An ecology party must not merely take decisions – it must also achieve a majority for implementing them, and this can only be done on the basis of political compromise, sometimes to the detriment of conservation.

For this reason, we have seen in recent months that although ecology parties have gained many supporters and have had success at the polls, most of these supporters, when faced with a long-term political choice, have given their support to one of the other established political parties. Consequently, ecologists’ demands have been perhaps compromised. On the other hand, established parties have no longer been able to take ill-considered, unsound positions without accommodating the ecologists’ demands. We view this development as a victory for democracy, and no small success for conservation.

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The date of the next issue, which is planned for early Summer, will depend on how quickly we can prepare for publication the huge amount of literature arising out of the Sixth Governing Council of UNEP, to be held in Nairobi, from 9 to 27 May, 1978. □

Environmental Policy and Law, 4 (1978)

(Re: Book Note: Competence of the European Communities for Environmental Policy. EPL 3:2, p. 87.)

Dear Editor,

We much appreciate your journal, and find it most useful and interesting in our work as an institution of European integration making environmental Law.

However I must take exception to the unwarranted conclusions of your book review “Competence of the European Communities for Environmental Policy” in the July 1977 number. It is not at all evident to us “that the Treaty of Rome is not sufficient and has to be amended in order to be able to deal with environmental problems of European dimensions”! I enclose a list of 27 texts adopted by the Council of Ministers on the basis of this insufficient Treaty over the past four years and it should be noted that they are all legally binding.* Another 30 texts currently await adoption by the Council.

I also include, and would be grateful if you would publish in its entirety, the reply given by the Commission to a recent written question by the honourable Parliamentarian Jahn, which explains exactly the situation as it is in fact and in Law.

M. Carpentier
Director General CEC – Environment and Consumer Protection Service

Ed. note: The written question by Mr. Jahn (which we had already intended to bring in this issue), and the reply given by the Commission is printed in its entirety on page 56.

**The Editor regrets that due to lack of space it is impossible to print this list.*

(Re: The Rights of Animal and Plant Life. EPL 3:2, p. 85)

Dear Sir,

I would like to congratulate Professor van Heijnsbergen on his article on “The Rights of Animal and Plant Life” and on his proposal that the Declaration stating these rights be adopted by an international body, preferably the United

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