

LETTERS

Glendale

EDITOR:

I have just finished reading Robert A. Rosenstone's article, "A Look at the Radical Right Today," in the March issue of *E&S*. I vehemently object to the manner of including this article. Although the contents and its slant are repugnant to me, this is not the basis of my objection. I object because the author was in no way identified as to his relationship to Caltech, which would have allowed placing the article in its proper perspective. I believe in freedom of opinion and expression, even use of editorial prerogatives, but do not believe in foisting biased opinions upon a captive audience without identification of the source.

What body of opinion does Mr. Rosenstone represent? Or is this an aliquot of our expanded humanities curriculum, which is helping to broaden Caltech's undergraduates today? After perusing a myriad of Caltech bulletins, reports, and alum-

ni directories, I stumbled on a clue that Mr. Rosenstone might be a visiting assistant professor of history—even maybe a student of Charles DeGaulle. Or am I stooping to his mastered technique of all-inclusive guilt by association?

As a life member of the Caltech alumni who contributed his way into the Golden Beaver Club, I feel that I have some stake in what comes out of C.I.T. I am not a member of the John Birch Society or the radical right, but if I were, I would not accuse everyone to the left of me as being part of the radical left.

GRIFFITH C. BARLOW, M.D. '48

Dr. Barlow's comments give us an opportunity to restate the editorial policy established by this magazine more than 20 years ago: Every article in Engineering and Science has a direct connection with the California Institute of Technology. Either it is written by a staff member, a faculty member, a student, or an alumnus, or it is adapted from a lecture given on campus by a guest

of the Institute, or it is about research being done at Caltech.

*Dr. Barlow's letter also reminds us to take nothing for granted—including the fact that we regularly identify our authors in a column called "In This Issue." On page 4 of the March *E&S*, "In This Issue" identified Robert Rosenstone as assistant professor of history at Caltech. It can now be added that Dr. Rosenstone has a new book, *Protest From the Right*, published this month by Glencoe Press.*

San Marino

EDITOR:

A great piece of art work accompanying "The Kingdom of Good!" (March *E&S*, p. 24). Do you have a new staff artist not listed in your masthead?

MRS. THEODORE COMBS

*Teresa Woodward did not sign her illustration, unfortunately, and *E&S* did not list her in Credits—even more unfortunately.*

BOOKS

Town Origins

by John F. Benton

D. C. Heath and Company

Paperback\$1.95

reviewed by Bettyann Kevles

The sprawling metropolises of contemporary civilization trace back to forces that led men away from fief and farm to create the towns of medieval Europe. Had medieval man been able to peer forward through time to today's urban glut or been aware of the seamy side of life in ancient Rome, perhaps he would have remained on the land. But he was largely oblivious of the past and mercifully unaware of the future. In any case, he had his reasons for becoming a townsman.

What these reasons were is a matter of historical controversy. John F. Benton presents the many sides of this question in his book, *Town Origins*, the newest addition to the distinguished Heath series, "Problems in European Civilization." In his lucid introduction Dr. Benton, who is associate professor of history at Caltech, discusses the major theories of medieval town origins as put forth by eminent historians from Western Europe, America, and the USSR. Then, following the format of the series, he introduces excerpts from some of their writings in which the historians offer opposing solutions to the puzzle of why towns—particularly medieval English towns—began.

These excerpts are followed by an extraordinarily broad and imag-

inative sampling of historical source material. They range from archaeological, numismatical, and etymological evidence to statistical data culled from ancient city gate and bridge toll receipts and the *Domesday Book*, to literary evidence in poetry and prose. Finally, Dr. Benton has prepared a set of maps which, if superimposed upon each other, reveal a vivid tale of change in medieval England. With this information, the reader can vie with the experts and decide for himself which forces were most responsible for the genesis of modern, urban civilization.

Bettyann Kevles is the wife of Caltech's assistant professor of history, Dan Kevles, and herself a high school teacher of European history.