13 gms of ammonium citrate to normal human subjects raised the blood ammonia from 0.02 to 0.04 mg % to only 0.06 mg % (quoted by Peters and Van Slyke). Furthermore, ammonia is a highly toxic material. Bollman and Mann found that liverless dogs developed signs of ammonia intoxication (e.g. convulsions) when the blood level reached 2.0 mg % (*Amer. J. Physiol.*, 1930, 92, 92).

Our studies based on 30-min exposures indicated no significant deviations from normal in blood and urine nitrogen measurements.

Schmidt and Vallencourt state: "It has been known for some time that inhalation of ammonia lowered the blood pressure, but no quantitative data pertaining to this are available." Sollman (*A manual of pharmacology*, 5th ed. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1936, p. 837) states that the effect of ammonia inhalation is a rise of blood pressure, reflex in origin from stimulation of trigeminal nerve endings. Because of the reflex nature of the blood pressure effect and since our results showed that ammonia retention decreases with time, one would expect the influence of NH_3 on blood pressure to be greatest in the first 30 minutes. We found no consistent change at the concentration used, which agrees with the authors' finding, but it seems very unlikely that a later fall in blood pressure should be attributed to ammonia. Schmidt and Vallencourt are curiously indefinite on their "quantitative" observations of blood pressure. Whether the pressure reported is systolic or diastolic is not stated, and it is impossible to generalize about blood pressure responses from a single experiment on one individual. In view of the steady decrease in pressure shown by the authors for three hrs' exposure, it is curious that further observations were not made, since the decline at 3 hrs was approaching significantly hypotensive levels.

LESLIE SILVERMAN and JAMES L. WHITTENBERGER
Harvard School of Public Health, Boston

On New Nicotinolytic Compounds

In previous papers (C. Heymans and G. R. de Vleeschhouwer. *Arch. int. Pharmacodyn. Thér.*, 1948, 75, 307, 413) it has been demonstrated that the diethyl-amino-ethyl ester of phenyl-cyclopentane carbonic acid (parpanit) is a very active nicotinolytic agent. Intravenous injections of 20–30 mg/kg of parpanit indeed suppress all toxic actions of high doses of nicotine.

The present experiments were undertaken with another new synthetic compound: N-diethyl-amino-ethyl phenothiazine (diparcol). Some general pharmacological properties of this substance were already studied by Bovet, Fournel, and Charpentier (*Thérapie*, 1947, 2, 115) and Gordon (*Nature, Lond.*, 1948, 162, 146).

Our experiments (*Commun. Soc. Biol. Montevideo*, November 25, 1948) were performed on chloralosed dogs. Intravenous injections of 15–30 mg/kg of diparcol protect completely against 100–200 lethal doses of nicotine. No cardiac slowing or irregularities, cardiac fibrillation, changes in blood pressure, bronchospasms, hyperperistalsis, convulsions or muscular fibrillations, salivation, or paralysis of the respiratory center occurs after intravenous injections of 100–200 LD of nicotine in dogs pretreated with diparcol. Thus, this new compound is also a very active nicotinolytic agent.

Parpanit and diparcol are not only powerful nicotinolytic substances but also synapticolytic, parasympatholytic and anticonvulsant agents. These compounds also very actively protect against high doses of acetylcholine, pilocarpine, diisopropyl fluorophosphate (DFP), strychnine, and Metrazol.

These experimental observations may have some important practical applications.

C. HEYMANS and J. J. ESTABLE
University of Ghent, Belgium, and
University of Montevideo, Uruguay

Nazi Persecution of Scientists

In connection with Professor Muller's letter to the Soviet Academy of Sciences (*Science*, October 22, p. 436), I think it would be helpful to call the attention of every American scientist, Army and Navy officer, and congressman, to a few sentences in *Goebbels' diaries* (New York: Doubleday, 1948).

On page 361 Goebbels tells of an occasion on which he, Frick, and Rust were guests of the Fuehrer. He wrote, "Their comments and remarks were so idiotic as to reveal how completely out of the picture they really are. They delivered themselves of stupid phrases . . . ." The important point is that Rust was the Nazi Minister of Education and, as Lochner notes, he had been an inmate of an insane asylum! He was the one chosen to persecute the scientists and university leaders, causing them to flee from Germany for their lives.

This seemed to be a good idea at first, but on May 12, 1943, things were going badly for the Germans in the air and on the sea. The Allies were using new discoveries in physics which were paralyzing the German planes and submarines. And so, on p. 375, one finds Goebbels regretting that Max Planck had been so antagonized. As he said, "It is the fault of Rust and is irremediable . . . . The mediocre talents in the Reich Government are a wall between the Fuehrer and many sectors of public life." In his devotion to his Fuehrer, Goebbels tried to make him out as a would-be patron of science, ignoring the fact that he had appointed a miserable quack as his private physician.

On p. 378, speaking of the critical situation of the submarines in the face of the new detecting devices developed by Allied physicists, Goebbels wrote, "Our technical development both in the realm of submarines and of air war is far inferior to that of the English and the Americans. We are now getting the reward for our poor leadership on the scientific front, which did not show the necessary initiative to stimulate the willingness of scientists to co-operate. You just can't let an absolute nitwit head German science for years and not expect to be punished for such folly."

This paragraph might well be read and re-read now at home and abroad. In times of peace, baiting scientists and great men and putting them in their place is great fun for politicians but Goebbels has told us how disastrously this policy pays off when war comes.

WALTER C. ALVAREZ
Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota