

Letters

Pollution and Privilege

This is a protest against the review (18 Dec., p. 1291) of the new book by James Ridgeway, *The Politics of Ecology*. The only word for it is "snide." No wonder the young people are disgruntled with the AAAS and believe the "scientific establishment" is more interested in hanging onto its privileged position than in finding out the truth.

Ridgeway's book is a very important contribution to the struggle against pollution. It names the names of industries that are poisoning our streams, and names the politicians who are helping them do it. It describes the mechanisms by which laws can appear to be reducing pollution while not actually reducing it or while even covering up for increasing pollution. Ridgeway names the places where these industries dumped their wastes and tells how the local, state, or federal officials either did not try very hard or were unable despite their best efforts to stop them. This is what Haefele and Kneese call muckraking. I call it responsible journalism. The reviewers go on to praise Luther Carter for his writing in *Science*. If I were Luther Carter, I would ask myself what I had been doing wrong to earn their praise.

The reviewers give their address as Resources for the Future, Inc. This organization with the very noble-sounding title is funded by the Ford Foundation, which means industry at second hand. This may explain the reviewers' great concern with "incentive." Usually, for incentive one should substitute "profits." One wonders whether these "resources for the future" are to guarantee the continuing profits of industrialists, or whether they are to be conserved for the benefit of the whole people, under their direct control.

I believe Ridgeway has made a genuine contribution to our country with *The Politics of Ecology*. I believe the subject is important enough so that *Science* could devote a whole issue to it, and give it much more careful criti-

cism than it has received. The young radicals and dissenters at the convention in Chicago were trying to show the AAAS that it must not continue to operate in the same old way. It must not identify itself with the Atomic Energy Commission, which keeps on adding to the radioactivity of our environment and assuring the public that it's perfectly all right. It must make more places for women on its boards. It must not identify itself with profit-seekers, whether industrial polluters or drug manufacturers. It must give the young who are striving for a better world a greater voice in its councils and some share of power over its policy.

ESTHER LANDAU

140 South Bartram Avenue,
Atlantic City, New Jersey 08401

Final Word on Defoliation Effects

Several recent letters have criticized the reports on defoliation in Vietnam and Cambodia by G. H. Orians, A. H. Westing, and me. Komer (6 Nov.) denies that there was any deliberate U.S. policy to drive people from the countryside into the cities. Whether deliberate or not, the result of U.S. policy has been, as the Stanford Biology Study Group pointed out in 1970, to transform "a basically rural agrarian society into an urban nightmare which is economically dependent on the continued presence of the U.S." Komer implies that Vietnam's ecological balance and society have not been endangered by U.S. policies. However, the AAAS Herbicide Assessment Commission that visited South Vietnam last summer concluded (*Science*, 8 Jan., p. 43) that an estimated 6.5 billion board feet of lumber and other forest products have been destroyed at an estimated loss exceeding \$500 million, enough rice and other crops to feed 600,000 persons for a year were ruined in the 9 years of spraying, and soil nutrients lost after spray-

ing will not be restored for at least 20 years. Komer must also know that in 1959 South Vietnam exported 240,000 tons of rice; whereas in 1968, 850,000 tons had to be imported, mostly from the United States.

Sachs (4 Dec.) commented on our report which described effects of U.S. defoliation attacks on eastern Cambodia. He repeats U.S. government claims that the area we visited was long occupied by North Vietnamese and he refers to one other report on herbicide damage in Cambodia as being "without such propagandistic overtones." He fails to point out that this investigation was carried out by a team of experts including Charles E. Minarik, of the Fort Detrick Army Biological Warfare Laboratory, at the request of the Sihanouk government. This official U.S. team spent several days in the so-called "Cambodian sanctuary of the North Vietnamese Army" flying low in helicopters, driving, and walking in the area President Nixon and Sachs alleged to be completely under NVA control. Sachs suggests that Westing and I should have consulted "other authorities" about what was going on in the "sanctuaries" at Chup and Mimot. In reply, I can state that we talked at length with the president of the International Control Commission for Cambodia, V. V. Paranjpe, and he made no mention of any areas of Cambodia being under Vietnamese Communist military control. He described numerous border violations of Cambodia by U.S. and South Vietnamese armed forces.

Last, Chamlin (11 Dec.) attacked the article in *Science* by Orians and me (1 May, p. 544) as "not even bad science!" That article was refereed by scientists whom the editor of *Science* considers competent, and he should address his complaints to them.

Chamlin also quotes an anecdote recited by me during a news conference upon my return from Vietnam in order to prove the point that defoliation has saved lives. Using anecdotes to attempt proof of a hypothesis is itself bad science. Does Chamlin have any quantitative data to show whether I was right or wrong about the effectiveness of defoliation in saving American lives? This Commission took approximately the same trip that Orians and I made through the heavily defoliated mangroves of the Rung Sat Special Zone. One week after their trip the boat and crew which had taken them were de-