

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.

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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-

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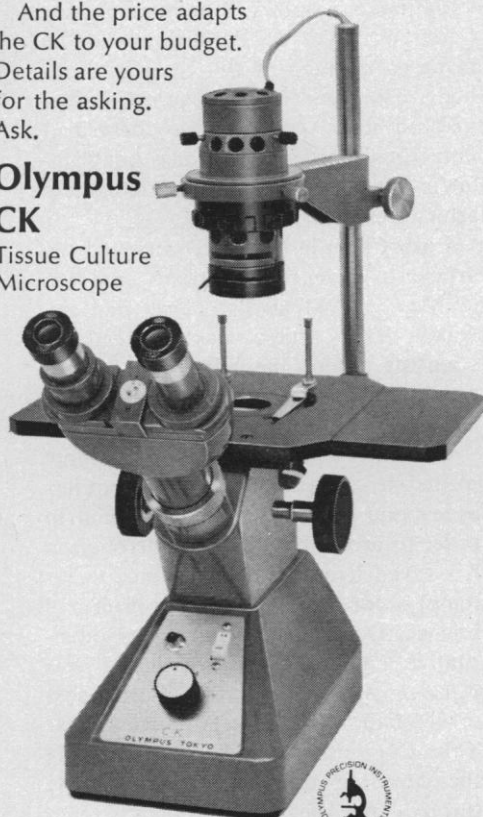
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stroyed by NLF rocket fire from a completely defoliated area that the team had visited.

Chamlin concludes that "given a choice between the life of a tree, and the life of an American soldier, we must choose in favor of the life of an American soldier." His point is irrelevant as our article attempted to describe some of the ecological effects of war in Vietnam and was not an assessment of the military value of defoliation. However, U.S. policy is not in accord with Chamlin's conclusion. French rubber plantations have always been off limits to defoliation attacks, which led U.S. military commanders to complain bitterly to us that, during the battle on the Dau Tieng (Michelin) plantations, French rubber trees were apparently worth more than American soldiers.

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International Association of Microbiological Societies

The tenth International Congress of Microbiology was held in Mexico City from 9 to 15 August 1970. At this meeting the International Association of Microbiological Societies (IAMS) adopted new statutes and bylaws to define and govern its operations.

At present, the American Society for Microbiology is the only representative of the United States within IAMS. However, under the new statutes, any national scientific or technological society that is principally concerned with microbiology, and whose members have been trained at the university level, is welcome to join the IAMS, subject to the payment of basic annual dues of \$100. For the establishment of eligibility, microbiology is defined as the study of bacteria, viruses, yeasts, and microfungi.

The IAMS will be financed by an annual contribution from each member nation. The amount of the contribution, to be decided by the executive board of IAMS, will vary from year to year, depending on the association's budgetary requirements and the number of microbiologists in the member societies of each nation. Thus, the total annual contribution from member nations may exceed the total of the basic annual fees assessed against member societies of each country.

Officers of societies that are con-

sidered eligible for membership in IAMS may write to Donald E. Shay, Secretary, American Society for Microbiology, Department of Microbiology, Schools of Dentistry and Pharmacy, University of Maryland, 666 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201. The American Society for Microbiology would like to negotiate with all eligible and interested societies in the United States for the formation of a national committee, in order that the United States may be represented in the IAMS.

ASGER F. LANGLYKKE

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After the Storm

Since when has patriotic service to the United States become a crime of such magnitude as to disqualify a man, otherwise highly qualified, from nomination as president of an association ostensibly devoted to "the advancement of science" ("AAAS presidency: Controversy flares over Seaborg candidacy," 11 Dec., p. 1177). The concept of "conflict of interest with the public" could apply to practically every university professor. Those who are not on some public payroll are subsidized through government grants to their students and by the tax exemption allowed their institutions. Many work on government contracts. . . .

The furor over the nomination of Seaborg was raised by a group of members who are highly emotional, who espouse dissent for the sake of dissension, and who condemn the intelligence, morals, and ethics of anyone who dissents from their dissension. . . . Perhaps the AAAS should stick to its knitting as a scientific society and not try to run the country through demonstrations and partisan politics.

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Suppression of news during the AAAS election has not only damaged *Science*, the magazine, but science, the enterprise. Suppression of news is just as much interference in the election process as publishing news. The question is: Whose interests are more important, the "establishment" of science or the general public of science (as represented by *Science* readers)? This is