

appear in numerous papers by others. Her knowledge of German was also made freely available; in particular she collaborated in the translation of *Equidensitometry*, by Lau and Krug. She took a full part in the social activities of the Cavendish, whether of the assistant or the academic staff, and she had a warm-hearted sympathy for the personal (often the family) problems of successive generations of research students. Perhaps she will be most remembered for the annual party, to which all ranks were invited, in the garden in Long Road which was her chief leisure interest.

Correspondence

Science and Government

SIR,—A group of the Nobel Prize winners published in *Nature* (October 4, 1969) an appeal to the scientific community concerning measures which ought to be taken by scientists against those countries the governments of which interfere with international scientific communications by preventing their scientists from travelling freely and from enjoying other civil rights which are essential to scientific communication.

Certainly, manifestations of solidarity with the scientists afflicted by persecution are touching, and those who are emotionally induced may even see in this a certain kind of consolation. However, a good scientist is guided by reason rather than by emotions, and efficient help means more for him than touching sympathy. There are doubts about the effectiveness of the measures suggested by the Nobel Prize winners who signed the appeal. A government which would encroach by brutal restrictions on civil rights, and whose scientists would be prevented from participating in conferences in their fields of interest held abroad, or who would be persecuted in some other manner, would only be too glad if scientists from other countries were to boycott conferences held at home. The ones to suffer from these measures would be the persecuted scientists themselves. In short the retaliatory measures suggested would only have one positive though questionable effect—they would appease the consciences of the scientists who are incapable of inventing a more ingenious way of helping their persecuted colleagues.

An example of the absurd consequences of such well intended actions can be seen in the communication published in "Miscellaneous Intelligence" (*Nature*, January 10, 1970). It appeals to the colleagues who have been invited by the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry to attend symposia to be held in Prague and Marienbad to think twice about doing so, on the grounds that I am politically persecuted in my country and that I would not be allowed to reciprocate their visit because of the ban imposed on my travelling abroad.

What has really happened represents a rather mild persecution compared with what happens in other authoritarian systems. Because of differences of opinion, I have only been dismissed from the post of the Director of the Institute and from some other functions, which is a measure stipulated by offended bosses all over the world. As far as my travelling is concerned, I daresay that so far I have much less been afflicted by the restrictions than other colleagues in this country. And even if both my friends and myself were to become victims of whatever evil terror there may arise, non-participation in the conferences organized in this country would not help us but only those who wish to put restrictions on our work and communications with the other countries.

Yours faithfully,

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Attitudes to Conservation

SIR,—I am sure that I am not alone among your readers in being dismayed by your optimism in envisaging the problems of conservation, and especially in the way in which you have taken sides, your derisive attitude to opponents, your disregard of interests unable to exercise political pressure and your acceptance of short-term expediency.

In your one-sidedness, you are unfair to opponents, as shown in the use of emotive words such as "hawks" and "doves", "doomsdaymen" and "jeremiahs"; and in misrepresenting your opponents as counselling "despair". You suggest (*Nature*, December 27, 1969) that the conservation lobby is threatening us with science fiction horrors ("unisexual morons", etc). Surely it is for theologians and not for scientists to accuse their opponents of heresies? And surely it is an impropriety to stigmatize the statements of responsible persons with whom you disagree as "misguided" and "reprehensible"?

In this series of leading articles, one is inclined to see a consistent campaign, honourably intended, to protect the advance of technology. But your view appears to be directed along a narrow perspective, without awareness of such important areas as ecology and ethology. Surely no biologist could have written (*Nature*, November 15, 1969) "human beings . . . may be more like ants and bees than laboratory rats". Your concern for man, mainly that he should continue to be fed, is for man, and not at all for the world which is his home. Let us assume that your optimism is justified, and that food production can keep pace with population growth for an indefinite period. Is not the future that would be upon us in another hundred years even more horrible than that of those unisexual morons? Your faith that no acceleration of the rate of change will be beyond the power of self-correction or the power of our governors to adjust to will not be well taken by the cyberneticist or the social scientist. In making your forecasts do you think you should make room for contingency planning? Suppose that the green-house effect of increasing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere does show up, and that the Antarctic ice-cap does begin to melt. Have you a plan ready for what we should do then?

These are problems in which our own emotional responses are necessarily involved, and perhaps we should disclose our "interests", our convictions. I believe that mankind has a responsibility to more than himself; if the Earth is our space-ship, then we are only the officers and we must have a care for the crew. Of all the dangers, perhaps the worst are those of genocide. Once a species is extinct, its loss can never be made good. What is the present rate of genocide, in terms of species per century? The destruction of non-human societies and local ecosystems must be proceeding at an accelerating pace. It is probably impossible, I would say, for any ordinary man to make an equivalent positive contribution over the course of his lifetime for all the damage he does just by living. Right now, every new child born is an entry on the debit page, acceptable only if required for replacement. I conceive it our first duty to try to contain this destructive process; and to turn ourselves from exploiters to guardians, curators, trustees. It is not too soon, now, to be thinking of what the Earth will be a million years from now.

Yours faithfully,

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The Third London Airport

SIR,—One had become accustomed to the way in which the popular Press has long been campaigning for a decision to locate the Third London Airport at Foulness without