letters

Graduate intern program

I read with interest (January, page 103) of the new Industrial Graduate Intern Program proposed by the Education Committee and approved on a trial basis by the Council of the American Physical Society (APS). While ineligible for participation (telephone conversation with Mary L. Shoaf of APS, 1/17/79), Argonne National Laboratory will follow with considerable interest the development of this new program.

Argonne National Laboratory and other US Department of Energy Laboratories have had considerable experience with activities of this type, principally in the form of research participation programs for college and university faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. Argonne's experience indicates that student research participation and internship programs are an effective component of science education and a major stimulant to the professional growth of science students. The APS Education Committee is to be commended for its recommendation of this new program. If it has not already done so, the Committee should additionally give consideration to the merits of similar programs for faculty and undergraduate students and the role which the APS might play in encouraging development and support of these activities.

In an era in which the name of the game is to make better use of existing physical resources, it is encouraging to read of efforts to make better use of existing educational resources.

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1/24/79 *Argonne National Laboratory*

Opinionated scientists

A recent letter "Scientists' public image," by George M. Stamps (January, page 15), brings to mind ways scientists tarnish their own image other than through misplaced ex-cathedra statements.

The treatment of Velikovsky is a first example. Your magazine published a book review by a "scientist" (one prone to detached observations) who calls another's theories "absurd" and "asinine" or "part of a neo-religion." Very fine, unemotional, detached words. Then one finds out that most "scientific" commentors on Velikovsky haven't even read his works, which is like saying elephants don't exist, without turning around to face the big grey beast.

But these scientists continue a long history of opinionated conclusions. Many scientists I knew laughed at and refused to read Rachael Carson before it was OK to admit to ecological disasters. And like Christians, scientists come in various faiths and beliefs. "Scientists say brightly blinking lights traveling over several counties against the wind are effects of marsh gas." "Government scientists say smoking is hazardous to health." "Industry scientists say smoking is good for you." "Atomic energy safe." "Safety report shown erroneous." Union of Concerned Scientists, and so on. Remember Fulton's Folly?

If Velikovsky is wrong, what did cause the disasters, catastrophies, and chaos recorded in history and in geology?

It is not only scientists speaking out about things out of their fields of expertise, it is also their pronouncements about things in their fields, that causes the public to lose faith in them.

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2/14/79 *Bristol, Vermont*

Pauling on human rights

I have today sent to President Carter a letter about human rights, reading as follows:

> I support you in your work to help people in every country in the struggle for human rights.
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> A quarter of a century ago I was prevented from participating in a two-day symposium held by The Royal Society of London to discuss my discoveries about the structure of proteins by the refusal of the United States government to grant me a passport. I have hoped that the United States would not continue to interfere in this way with the rights of scientists to discuss their scientific work with one another, but I have seen in *New Scientist* for 11 January 1979 that a well-known French physicist, Jean Pierre Vigier, was prevented from attending a symposium on materialism and causality in physics when the United