CORRESPONDENCE

HeLa

SIR,—I would like to thank all those who responded to my letter (*Nature*, **242**, 144; 1973) especially Dr Howard W. Jones, jun., of the Johns Hopkins Hospital. He drew my attention to a publication[1] which leaves no doubt that HeLa cells were named after Henrietta Lacks. The mother of five children, she died less than eight months after her tumour was diagnosed at the age of thirty-one. Others have sought to correct my grammar; to one of these I would point out that the feminine noun "negress" was deliberately avoided as it is known to be offensive to some, and to another that it is just an accepted anomaly of our language that a person's name (singular) is invariably two or more names (plural). I was amused by the suggestion that Gey named HeLa after a favourite film star but it does not fit the facts — Hedy Lamarr is a caucasienne so she, along with Helen Lane, Helga Larsen, Heather Langtree and other unlucky guesses, must now withdraw as gracefully as they can.

Yours faithfully,

J. DOUGLAS

Department of Applied Biology,
Brunel University,
Kingston Lane, Uxbridge

[1] Jones, H. W., McKusick, V. A., Harper, P. S., and Kuang-Dong Wuu, *Obstet. Gynecol.*, **38**, 945 (1971).

Scientists' Careers

SIR,—It is a pleasure to notice as a common strand running through your excellent group of articles on "Careers for Scientists" (*Nature*, **242**, 375; 1973) the recognition of science courses as an education fitting the graduate for an almost unlimited range of work rather than as a narrow vocational training. Naturally somebody of my persuasion would have liked to see the point emphasized even more, would have liked to see it everywhere accepted with joy rather than as, here and there, with a somewhat regretful attitude, would have liked all the articles to echo Dainton's admonition to the universities to adapt their teaching accordingly. But, above all, employers must more generally look at scientists not as a unique species fitted only for laboratory jobs, but as educated people who must be considered with all others for every task requiring intellectual ability.

It is, however, not only at the start of his career that the scientist should look beyond the confines of the laboratory bench job. An increased mobility of experienced research scientists, just as of raw graduates, would benefit them, their employers, society at large, and the graduates who follow them. My Task Force is trying to assist this mobility through arranging interchanges so that the scientist can experience a new kind of work without having to give up his earlier career irrevocably.

Yours faithfully,

HERMANN BONDI

Task Force on Interchange of Scientists,
Civil Service Department,
Whitehall, SW1

Looting Art Treasures

SIR, — As an Italian-born American citizen I feel that I belong to the looting and the looted party in the case of the Greek vase bought by the Metropolitan Museum in New York from a dealer resident in Rome (*Nature*, **242**, 155; 1973). From this vantage point I am not so sure that the singling out of the Metropolitan Museum is wholly justified. It seems to me that all nations at one time or another have practised looting of art objects on a grand scale. From the Bronze Horse of the Pala D'oro in St Mark to the tapestries of the Duke of Burgundy in Berne, and from Lord Elgin's marbles to the illuminated manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale Française, it seems to me the looting has been the rule rather than the exception for several centuries. (I must say that if I have omitted other nations it is not because they are innocent, but simply that their looting has been inferior in quality rather than quantity.)

The only trouble with the Metropolitan Museum is that they arrive with a wolf's hunger to a banquet that is already over; or, to put it in biblical terms "whosoever is without sin, let him cast the first stones" (or should I say "the first marbles"?).

Yours faithfully,

RENATO BASERGA

Department of Pathology,
Temple University Health Sciences Center,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19140

Obituary

Academician A. N. Tupolev

ACADEMICIAN ANDREI NIKOLAEVICH TUPOLEV, the famous Russian aircraft designer, died on December 23, 1972, after a long illness.

Tupolev, who was born on November 10, 1888, the son of a notary, was educated at the *gymnasium* in Tver' and then at the Moscow Higher Technical Institute, where he studied under N. E. Zhukovskii, the aviation pioneer.

In 1918, after graduating, Tupolev assisted Zhukovskii in the organization of the Central Institute of Aerohydrodynamics, becoming one of its Deputy Directors, and, in 1922, Director of its Design Bureau. From then on, Tupolev became increasingly the most prominent figure in the Soviet aviation industry, designing in all some 120 types of aircraft.

During the 1920s he carried out extensive research into the use of duraluminum in aircraft construction, and is widely regarded as one of the pioneers of all-metal aircraft. In 1934 he constructed an experimental eight-engine pasenger aircraft, the "Maxim Gorky" with a wing span of some 65 m and weighing 40 tons. This aircraft made a number of successful test flights but crashed in 1935, an accompanying fighter plane being, apparently, responsible for the disaster.

In 1936, Tupolev visited Germany and the USA to study foreign aircraft construction. Shortly after his return to Russia, during the Stalinist purges, he was accused of "divulging aviation secrets" and sentenced to forced labour. During his imprisonment he designed a twin-engined divebomber, the Tu-2 which was put into production in 1939 and formed an important part of the Soviet air arm during World War II. Shortly after designing this aircraft,