MEETINGS

Union of German Physical Societies

ONLY one meeting of the Union of German Physical Societies (Verband Deutscher Physikalischer Gesellschaften) occurs each year. The most recent of these was held in Vienna, together with the Austrian Physical Society, during the week of October 15-21, 1961. The annual conference of the Union is a much more important event than the meetings of the regional societies which are banded together into the Union. This was evident from the number of participants (2250), from the recognition accorded to it by the Austrian Bundespräsident's opening address, and from the fact that the principal sessions were held in one of Vienna's largest auditoriums, the Konzertsaal. The old imperial pomp of Vienna furnished an appropriate background for the meeting and provided for the ladies' program interesting places for excursions and beautiful museums to visit. There were suggestions also for the participants' evening entertainment, including an excellent performance at the opera and a show in the Burgtheater. There was no banquet similar to that of the American Physical Society. Unfortunately, the weather cooperated only during the first three days.

The meeting itself, which occupied all of the five working days of the week, was organized along somewhat different lines than are the APS meetings. There was only one session in the morning; this was held at the Konzertsaal. It was devoted to reviews of different branches of physics—reviews in the true sense of the word. The speaker made a serious effort to remain comprehensible to the entire audience and spoke principally about the subject, not his own work in connection with it. Such a procedure was possible because every subject (there were about ten reviews) was reviewed by only one carefully selected speaker, and because the speakers were well aware of the problem of communication which has become increasingly difficult in the post-war years. The nature of this problem and the importance of finding ways to overcome it were considered by the president of the Union, Professor Walcher, in the first address at the conference. There was no discussion following the papers delivered at the morning sessions.

The afternoon sessions, consisting of contributed papers, were held at the Institutes of Physics of the University. There were four simultaneous sessions, each devoted to a well-defined subject. They started at two and ended, as a rule, well after six o'clock. The time allotted to each paper varied from ten to twenty minutes and the papers were followed by discussion. The quality of the papers was, on the whole, very good, and the remarks in the discussions clear and mostly to the point. One gained the impression that physics in Germany is well on its way toward repairing the damage inflicted by the national socialistic government.

Reviews were given on the following subjects: theory of quantum-mechanical measurement, statistical mechanics of irreversible processes, isotopic constitution of meteorites and the history of cosmic radiation and of the planetary system, atomic beams and spectroscopy, masers, theory of nuclear forces, Mach's principle, stripping reactions, many-body problem at low temperatures, radiation damage, and semiconductors. The speakers started with a short historical introduction, followed by a review and an appraisal of present knowledge of the subject. Most speakers paid much more attention to shortcomings of the theory than is customary at APS meetings, and this led naturally to programs for future study. The work of the speaker himself was covered, as a rule, in the last five minutes. Two of the speakers came from other countries, the rest from Germany or Austria.

The Fachausschüsse, corresponding to the Sections of the APS, played a much more important role than is usual for the latter in arranging programs of contributed papers. Very often, the papers on fundamental problems occupied the first part of the session, and instrumentation the second. Typical subjects were neutron physics, gas discharges, thermodynamics and statistical mechanics, β decay and nuclear spectroscopy, and low temperatures. There were very few papers on quantum field theory and none on dispersion theory.

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APS-AAPT Joint Meeting

THE combined annual meeting of the American Physical Society and the American Association of Physics Teachers, which will take place from January 24 through January 27 in New York City, will hold most of its sessions at the Statler-Hilton, this year's headquarters hotel, although some sessions will be located in the Hotel New Yorker. An exhibit of scientific instruments, apparatus, and materials is planned which will be more than twice as large as any show previously held in conjunction with an annual joint meeting of the two societies. The exhibition will be located on the mezzanine floor of the Statler-Hilton, adjacent to the Grand Ballroom and to the registration desk and message center that will be operated in connection with the meeting.

In addition to the usual series of parallel sessions

scheduled by the Physical Society, there will be a number of special symposia included in the programs of both societies. The joint ceremonial session will be held on January 25, when the retiring presidential address of the APS and the Richtmyer Lecture of the AAPT will be presented. The session will also include the annual award of the AAPT's Oersted Medal for notable contributions to the teaching of physics. The joint APS-AAPT banquet will be held the evening of January 26.

Approximately 10 000 square feet of floor space will be occupied by the exhibit, which will include displays by 78 companies. There will be an unusual showing of magnets and magnetic-system accessories by eight of the leading manufacturers in the field. Magnets will range in size from small demonstration models for teaching purposes to standard laboratory magnets weighing more than two tons. The latest innovations in laser optics and related developments will be featured by seven companies in their displays. Included will be solid-state laser materials and components, spectrophotometers for laser research, optical crystals for infrared devices, single crystals of 3–5 and 2–6 compounds, etc. Three firms will demonstrate high-speed photographic equipment, including what is claimed to be the world's fastest camera. Some eight companies will be on hand to show new demonstration and teaching apparatus, including equipment developed for use in the PSSC program, and more than a dozen firms will exhibit a variety of nuclear test equipment and electronic instruments. The latest developments in vacuum technology will be represented in the displays of seven manufacturers offering pumps, valves, baffles, evaporators, and other components. Exhibits of books on physics and related areas of science will be presented by leading publishers of technical material. A complete list of the exhibitors appears on the facing page.

Topical Symposia

PHILCO has announced a series of symposia to be held in the near future at the Philco Research Center, Blue Bell, Pa. The first of these meetings, to be devoted to the general subject of self-organizing systems, will take place January 11. It will be followed by symposia on hot electrons (March 15) and communication theory (May 17). Requests for additional formation should be sent to Mr. B. T. O'Connor, Philco Research Division, Blue Bell, Pa.

Biophysical Society

SYMPOSIA and invited papers in three areas of biophysical interest (the excited state and photobiology, biological replication, and statics and dynamics in biological systems) will be included in the program of the annual meeting of the Biophysical Society, which is to take place February 14–16 at the Sheraton-Park Hotel in Washington, D. C.

Further details, including information on the sessions of contributed papers, will be available in mid-January