

LETTERS

Electioneering at the polls

I would like to voice a strong protest against the procedure of the Council of the American Physical Society in presenting its statement on the "Schwartz amendment" in the same letter as the ballot itself. This is "electioneering at the polls" in the worst way. If the council felt so strongly about the responsibility of having its views known, the same medium was available to its opinions as was used so freely by the other members of the APS, namely *PHYSICS TODAY*. At best the council's decision shows a poor judgment of human nature; a physicist might be just ornery enough to vote against the establishment if that establishment abuses its power.

I would suggest that the present balloting be declared void and that a new unprejudiced vote on the Schwartz amendment be taken. Perhaps it is also necessary to have an amendment preventing the enclosure of opinion-expressing material with APS ballots.

PETER E. SCHMIDT
University of California, Berkeley

I hope that your forthcoming "Letters" department will express the regrets of those of us who wish that the American Physical Society "establishment" had not been quite so flagrant in including their last-minute denunciation of the pending APS constitutional amendment[†] in the ballot mailing where there remains no recourse for rebuttal. I would hope that in the future, regardless of the outcome of this vote, the society will adhere to that section of the amendment that reads, "The executive secretary *shall* prepare and distribute along with the ballots a summary of the arguments *pro and con*."

PETER W. MONTGOMERY
Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company

Inclusion of this piece of paper with the ballot and associated documents is outrageous! The columns of *PHYSICS TODAY* have been as open to the council as to other members, and if the council has an opinion to express, it should express it in the same forum as

the membership and should support its position.

We, among whom are supporters and opponents of the amendment, urge that the vote on the section-6 amendment conducted by this mailing be declared invalid on the grounds of improper procedure. A new ballot should be mailed out not earlier than 15 Sept. and not later than 1 Oct., as this is the earliest period when most academic physicists can be reached again.

THOMAS M. DONAHUE, RICHARD H. PRATT, PHILIP STEHLE, JURG X. SALADIN, JOHN R. TOWNSEND, ALLEN I. JANIS, NORMAN AUSTERN, IRVING J. LOWE, EZRA T. NEWMAN

University of Pittsburgh

APS Council position

There have been several letters of protest concerning the "Statement by the Council of the American Physical Society" on the "Schwartz amendment" which was distributed in the same envelope as the ballot. These letters have been addressed to the officers and members of the Council of the American Physical Society and to *PHYSICS TODAY*. In view of these letters it appears desirable to review briefly the actions of the council.

Since this was the first time that a proposed amendment to the constitution had been introduced by petition of 1% of the membership, there were no guidelines to follow. Unresolved were questions of principle as to what role the council should take in regard to amendments introduced in this manner. Experience gained in the present case, some of it positive and some indicating possible pitfalls to be avoided, may be useful if similar cases arise in the future.

The amendment was introduced by Charles Schwartz and others in late July, 1967, when Charles H. Townes was president of the society. Procedures to be followed were discussed at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Council on 11 Sept. In the meantime, background information had been circulated by mail and an opinion had been obtained from legal counsel as to whether the proposed amendment was consistent with the



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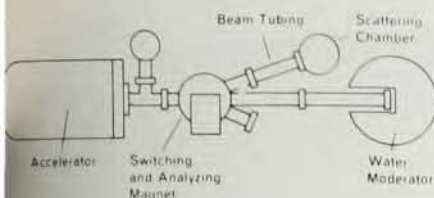
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APS charter. At this meeting, it was decided to publish the text of the amendment in the *Bulletin* without giving arguments pro or con, and that, with the agreement of the editor and officials of the American Institute of Physics, debate on merits of the amendment would be published in the "Letters" department of *PHYSICS TODAY*. It also was decided to arrange a panel discussion and debate at the annual meeting in Chicago. The executive committee recommended that while council members as individuals might write letters to *PHYSICS TODAY* expressing their views on the amendment, the council itself would consider taking a position only after the debate had taken place.

The amendment and procedures to be followed were discussed in detail by the full council at its meeting in New York City on 15 Nov. Schwartz was present for part of the discussion to present his case, to discuss some difficulties he had in publishing his arguments in *PHYSICS TODAY* and to answer questions from council members. Mechanisms for bringing pro and con arguments to the attention of members, including the possibility of presenting statements pro and con in the *Bulletin*, were discussed by the council. The council in general went along with the recommendations of the executive committee.

Procedures were discussed further at an executive committee meeting on 28 Dec. and at a meeting of the full council in Chicago on 28 Jan. It was decided to mail the ballots no later than 10 May, and the deadline for accepting marked ballots was set for 14 June. Considerable discussion was given as to whether or not the council should make a public statement of its position before or when the ballot was mailed. The council decided that no council position pro or con on the amendment be published in the *Bulletin*, and deferred to the Washington Meeting the question of whether a position statement should be made at the time of balloting.

In advance of the Washington meeting information on the "Schwartz amendment," including copies of the letters published in *PHYSICS TODAY*, was mailed to council members. At the meeting, there was considerable discussion as to whether or not the council should take a position. One view was that the members were well

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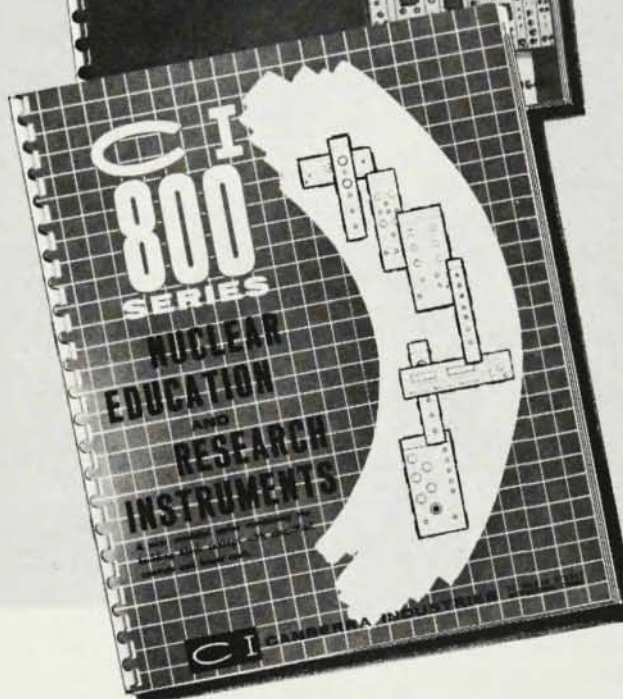
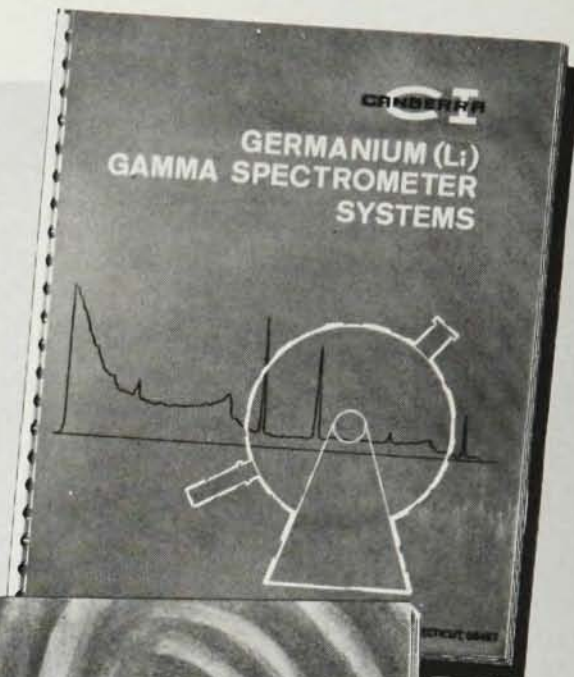
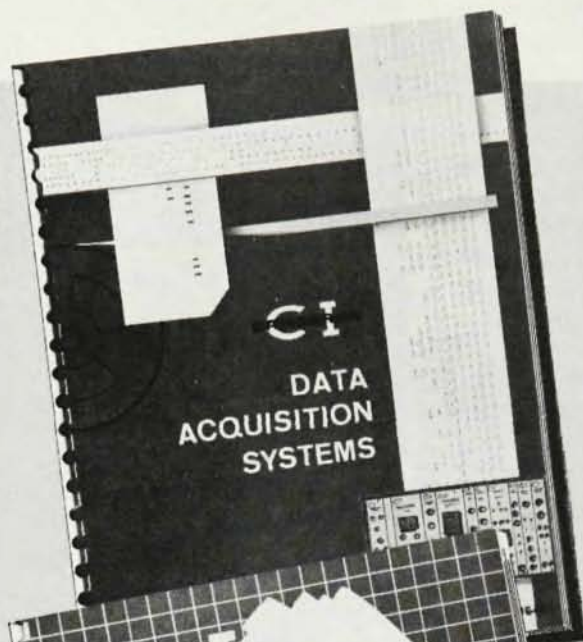


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informed of the arguments pro and con through the discussion in *PHYSICS TODAY* and that an expression of a council opinion might be considered unfairly prejudicial to the vote. The alternative view was that the council has the responsibility as the elected representatives of the membership to study carefully questions which may have an effect on the future of the society and inform the membership of its position. In a split vote, the latter view prevailed.

The council decided that its statement should reflect the differences in opinion as to whether or not the council should take a position and should be in the form of a separate communication rather than be placed in the instructional letter accompanying the ballot. It was not possible to publish the statement in the *Bulletin* or in *PHYSICS TODAY* without delaying the vote into the summer period. After being informed that a separate mailing would cost over \$2000, the council decided to send the statement in the same envelope as the ballot. In view of questions raised, this economy move was perhaps unwise.

For possible guidance in future cases, the council plans to review procedures for dealing with amendments submitted by petition of 1% of the members. It will welcome suggestions members may have for handling such cases in the long term best interest of the society.

JOHN BARDEEN
President, APS

W. W. HAVENS, JR
Executive Secretary, APS

AIP as an arm of government

A while ago I received a letter soliciting my cooperation with the National Register of Scientific and Technical Personnel. Among other things it states, "Your cooperation and assistance are vital to the maintenance of a useful National Register which is used not only to obtain an up-to-date profile of our profession, *but to identify those whose special knowledge and ability might suddenly be of paramount importance to our nation* (my italics).

I do not particularly want to discuss the pros and cons of the National Register. The maintenance of such a register is a legitimate activity of government, and were I to receive the aforementioned letter from the De-

fense Department or the National Science Foundation, I would not give it a second thought. This letter, however, was on AIP notepaper, was signed by the director of AIP and enclosed a return envelope addressed to AIP.

Since I am not a US citizen but merely an expatriate Englishman, it may be that my perspective is confused. It seems to me, however, that if the American Physical Society is to remain remote from politics, as I believe it should, then AIP, of which APS is a large component part, should not participate directly in governmental activity.

It really boils down to whether AIP is primarily an organization of physicists, most of whom happen to be Americans, or rather an organization of Americans who happen to be physicists. If the latter, then acting as an arm of the US government, together with the necessary concomitant political debate, might indeed be appropriate. I, however, would not wish to belong to such an organization.

R. F. LEVER
Putnam Valley, N. Y.

THE AIP DIRECTOR REPLIES: We welcome this opportunity to answer this protest with regard to the cooperation of the American Institute of Physics with the National Science Foundation in maintaining the Physics and Astronomy Section of the National Register.

Lever and we do seem to be agreed that the National Register is a legitimate activity of the government. In addition, we feel that it is the source of the most authentic data on the scientific community available and, as such, is a most desirable activity.

Prior to the establishment of the National Science Foundation, rosters of scientific and engineering personnel were assembled by the Office of Naval Research and the federal Office of Education. The shortcomings of this procedure were soon apparent and the Foundation recognized that a cooperative effort between the government (NSF) and the scientific societies was the most efficient way to get the job done. The societies have access to information, such as current addresses of their members, that are difficult for government to maintain. The societies, for their part, foresaw the advantages of having available to them better profiles of their professions than had ever before been

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