

a few members of the society assume that they can speak for the majority of the membership on political issues that have not even the remotest connection with the purposes of the society. It is especially offensive to me when those few members who wish to speak for the society are influenced by left-wing political activists. I could not be more opposed to their political views.

How ludicrous and infantile that a proposal such as this should be dignified to the extent of a poll! I sympathize with the president, vice-president and council in their efforts to represent the wishes of the membership, but it is ridiculous that such matters as this be brought to the attention of the membership.

Is ours a scientific society or a political organization? I thought this question was answered adequately by the rejection of the "Schwartz amendment." If the society attempts to fulfill the role rejected, it can no longer fulfill its proper role. If and when the society fails to fulfill the purposes for which it was founded, I will promptly resign my membership.

CECIL E. LAND
Sandia Laboratories

The question of the Chicago meeting is the second instance in which the Council of the American Physical Society saw fit to provide, to a certain undefined fraction of the membership, a wide forum for airing their political beliefs. Moreover, that the membership was polled indicates the officers' willingness to commit the society to political positions in no way related to physics, should a majority of the members so desire.

I believe very strongly that the council would violate its duty as well as the rights of all members should it support or even condone acts or changes that are basically alien to the constitution of the society.

This country provides every opportunity for political association, and there can be no moral or legal justification for imposing on members of a scientific society the political judgments of some faction.

Moreover I believe that the position of Jay Orear and Marc Ross as presented by the recent APS pamphlet is basically undemocratic and would ultimately lead to the destruction of a free physical society. It seems that we

are asked to condemn the Chicago city administration and all of Chicago as guilty by association. But what about the rioting students and their collaborators? And if we judge the political climate of a meeting place, would we not be morally obliged to clean house first in our own society? Do we require for membership a declaration of loyalty to the enlightened principles of the New Left Radicalism? Should we exclude Goldwater Republicans? Will Humphrey voters be acceptable as members? What about the servants of the "military-industrial conspiracy?"

I am deeply troubled by what I saw at the New York meeting: the political buttons, the "ad-hoc" meetings, the packed business meeting and the declarations to the press by self-elected spokesmen. I request that the APS officers take the proper initiative to avoid further political demonstrations at future society meetings and to disassociate APS officially from any such incidents should they take place despite all proper precautions.

RUDOLF E. THUN
Raytheon Co

Quality of urban government

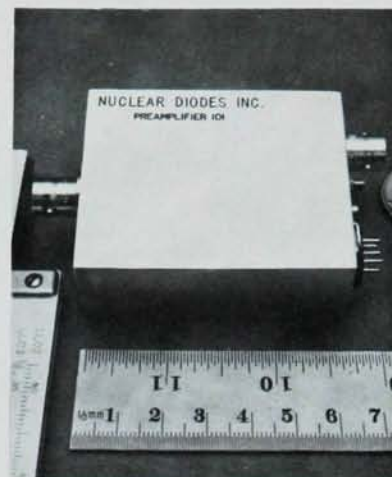
The letter by Conyers Herring (PHYSICS TODAY, February, page 11) adequately describes my attitude in the matter of the 1970 Chicago meeting of the American Physical Society. However, I do wish to add what I hope are a few pertinent comments.

One reason that strong feeling toward cancellation of the Chicago meeting seemed to be prevalent at the January business meeting may have been that it was held in New York City. Having attended several consecutive prior annual meetings in New York City, I chose not to attend this year because I am tired of being gouged by the high prices, discourteous service and generally unsuitable atmosphere and accommodations experienced in the past. I have friends throughout the physics community who concur in this judgment. Conversely at the 1968 (annual) Chicago meeting, for reasons I don't understand, the East-Coast segment of the physics community was, for the most part, conspicuous by its absence. If an annual meeting, in spite of its name, takes on a regional flavor, then such a meeting should rotate about the country from year to year. Possibly also a time of year should be

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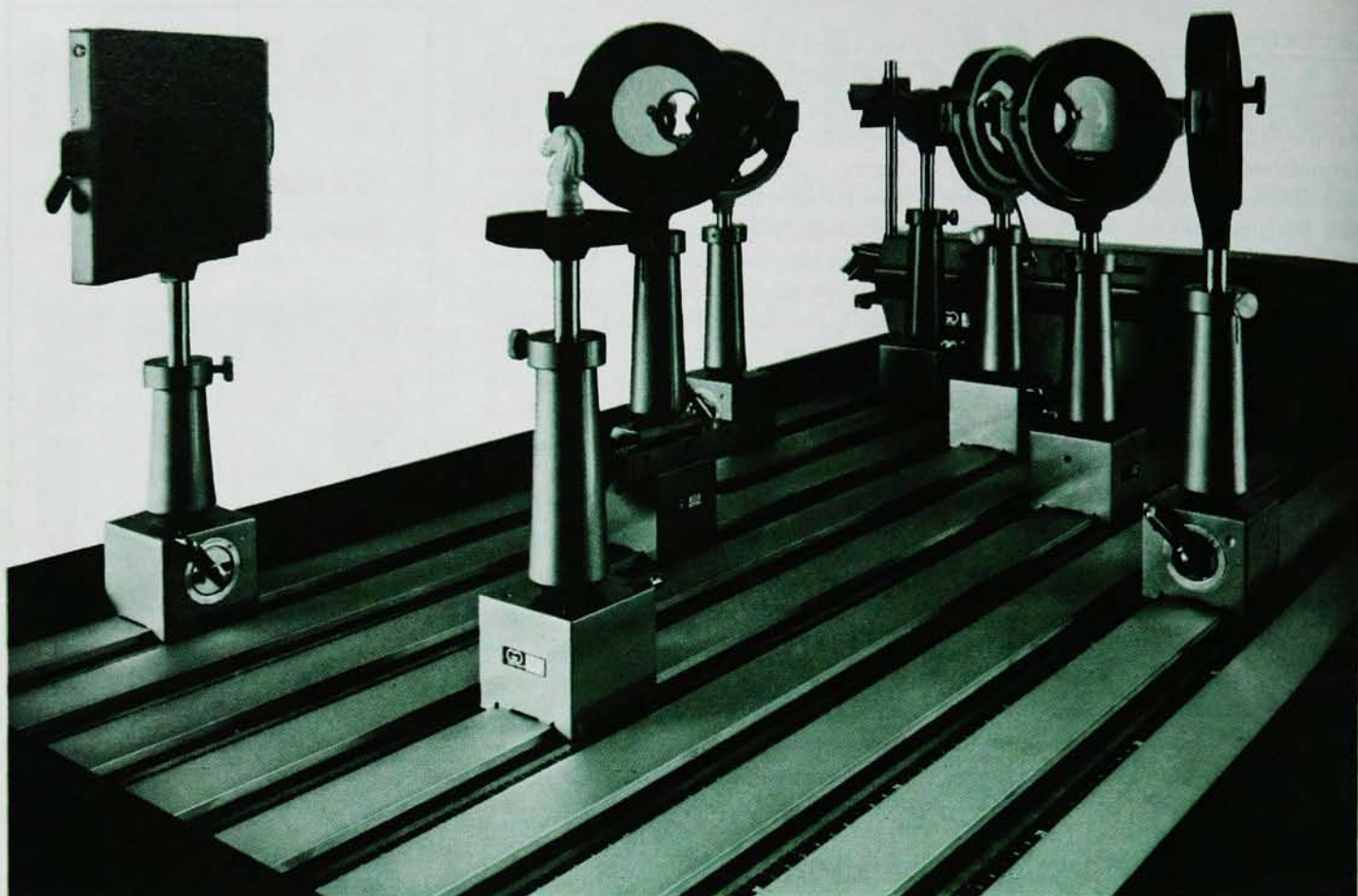
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chosen to make traveling less difficult.

If some of the APS members wish to use the allocation of the meeting sites as a club against political incompetency and police brutality, why was there not an outcry against holding the 1969 annual meeting in New York City? Are our memories so short that we can no longer conjure up the bloody incidents of last spring at Columbia University or examples of racial bigotry and violence condoned or handled ineffectively by Mayor John Lindsay this past fall? And unless there have been major improvements most recently, my personal recollections on the quality of urban government in Ithaca, N. Y., and Ann Arbor, Mich.—the stamping grounds of Jay Orear and Marc Ross, respectively—are not pleasurable. Perhaps to avoid lending tacit approval to imperfect municipal governments, all APS meetings should be held on Indian reservations or ocean liners.

The argument of Orear and Ross that past action by APS banning meetings in Southern cities represented a political policy is specious. This action was taken to ensure that all APS members receive proper respect, services and accommodations—things which are not always available in New York City. When it can be shown that APS members are likely to experience physical abuse or indignity at the hands of Mayor Richard Daley or the Chicago police while attending to their professional interests at a meeting, I shall be in the vanguard of those fleeing the city. Until then I trust that the majority of APS members will continue to show good judgment in exercising their concern for social and political justice outside the framework of APS.

HAROLD WEINSTOCK
Illinois Institute of Technology

To achieve greater relevance

The January meeting of the American Physical Society pointed up the growing recognition that physics (as well as many other intellectual disciplines) must somehow be more relevant to the society that nurtured it. Yet there is great division and some indifference among the membership about accepting the responsibility of judging the humanistic relevance of science. One group, small but concerned, wants the society at the very least to present the

technical facts on such issues as the antiballistic-missile system; they also believe that the APS Council, as well as the Governing Board of the American Institute of Physics, is "establishment." A larger, less vocal, group believes that its participation as scientist-citizens should be in organizations outside APS. A third group recommends strict neutrality (a concept held to be meaningless by the first group). The last two groups form the largest part of the membership. By virtue of its power the APS Council should also be mentioned as a separate group.

A progressive way out of this dilemma would be to synthesize these views. Such a synthesis, it seems to me, would embody the following elements:

1. The council should establish a division dealing with the interface between physics and society.
2. The council should be more representative of different types of members (small industry, large industry, graduate students, old-timers, et al).
3. Because a large part of the membership is apparently disinterested in some of the concerns of some scientists, individual members of groups 1 and 2 should pragmatically use the evenings of APS meetings to form non-APS groups of scientists who will "do their own things." The evening rump session at the New York meeting was in my opinion an excellent action that should continue.

These suggestions taken together should provide both a more relevant society that grows with the times and a more involved membership for those so inclined.

HERBERT N. HERSH
Zenith Radio Corp

Division on physics and society

At the January New York meeting of the American Physical Society we presented a petition (with approximately 600 signatures) to the APS Council asking for the formation of a Division on the Problems of Physics and Society. The petition is currently under consideration. Although the fact of the petition received some coverage in the scientific press, the text itself has not appeared, and we believe there is merit in bringing it to the attention of the society membership. The text follows:

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