

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.

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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
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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:

"The purpose of the proposed division is to advance and diffuse a bet-

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