

letters

field in the science of living systems. Further information concerning the results of the SRI experiments can be obtained from Russell Targ or Hal Puthoff at SRI. Targ and Puthoff were formerly involved in high-power laser physics and quantum electronics and have recently entered the field I call "teleneural physics."

The point I would like to make in this letter is that if the experimental results with Geller and with other subjects are correct representations of neural interactions with other living systems and with matter, then the physics community should not, in my estimation, disregard the results as being "nonphysical," quackery or fraud. Rather, a new stance of openness, with skepticism, of course, might better be assumed and the questioning mind of the interested not hindered from exploratory work in this area.

References

1. I. M. Kogan, *Telecommunications and Radio Engineering* 21, 75 (1966); 22, 141 (1967); 23, 122 (1968).
2. H. K. Puharich, *Internat. Jour. Neuropsychiatry* 2, 474 (1966).
3. A. Puharich, *The Sacred Mushroom*, Doubleday, New York (1959), Appendix 1.
4. Time, 12 March 1973.

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Centralized preprints

Recently the Publications Committee of the Division of Particles and Fields of the American Physical Society has proposed establishing a centralized preprint duplication and distribution system. This would replace the existing unorganized system, in which each institution sends out preprints on a large scale, by one in which a central depository would handle the distribution and duplication (perhaps on microfiche). I am highly unfavorable to such a suggestion. A centralized system seems most unwise to me, for it would further the already apparent trend to replace quality with quantity, by pressuring premature publication. The need is not for more unrefereed, unreadable reports, but for fewer. Obviously, in spite of assertions to the contrary, these proposals are an attack on the journal system and the associated virtues of objective standards and universal accessibility which, if not achieved, are at least the goal. Frankly, it is hard to believe that advances in physics require such an instantaneous "publication" scheme, and it seems undesirable for the physics community to set up a system that might

well have the effect of lowering quality of work done and of papers written, as well as intensifying the struggle for priority.

The present *ad hoc* preprint system shares many of these disadvantages, although not to the same degree. A more modest proposal, which has been suggested to me by a colleague would seem to offer some improvement: Instead of institutions mailing out 200 or so preprints as they do now, they would send one to SLAC. Anyone interested would learn the title from the (already existing) SLAC listing, and then could obtain a preprint by writing directly to the author. (Of course, this is just what people at institutions not on the mailing lists do now.) In this way, only preprints desired would be collected, and there would be no undesirable archival connotations of publication.

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COMMENT: At its March 1973 meeting, the Publications Board of the American Institute of Physics (a board which is advisory to AIP's Governing Board and consists of editors of all the journals published by AIP, including the journals of the Member Societies) unanimously passed a motion "[deploring] the centralized dissemination of material in preprint form as being contrary to the best interests of orderly physics communication." A similar resolution was adopted at the last meeting of the Publications Commission of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics, an organization whose principal business is the sponsorship of international physics conferences.

It is clear that neither of these resolutions is aimed at the present *ad hoc* preprint systems. Instead, they address themselves to precisely the problems outlined so eloquently by Milton. The journal system, imperfect though it is, has evolved from its beginnings in the 17th century as the sciences have evolved, and is now precariously balanced between information needs and resources. It might be better to think of ways to strengthen it, rather than circumvent it.

A. W. K. METZNER
Director, Publications
AIP

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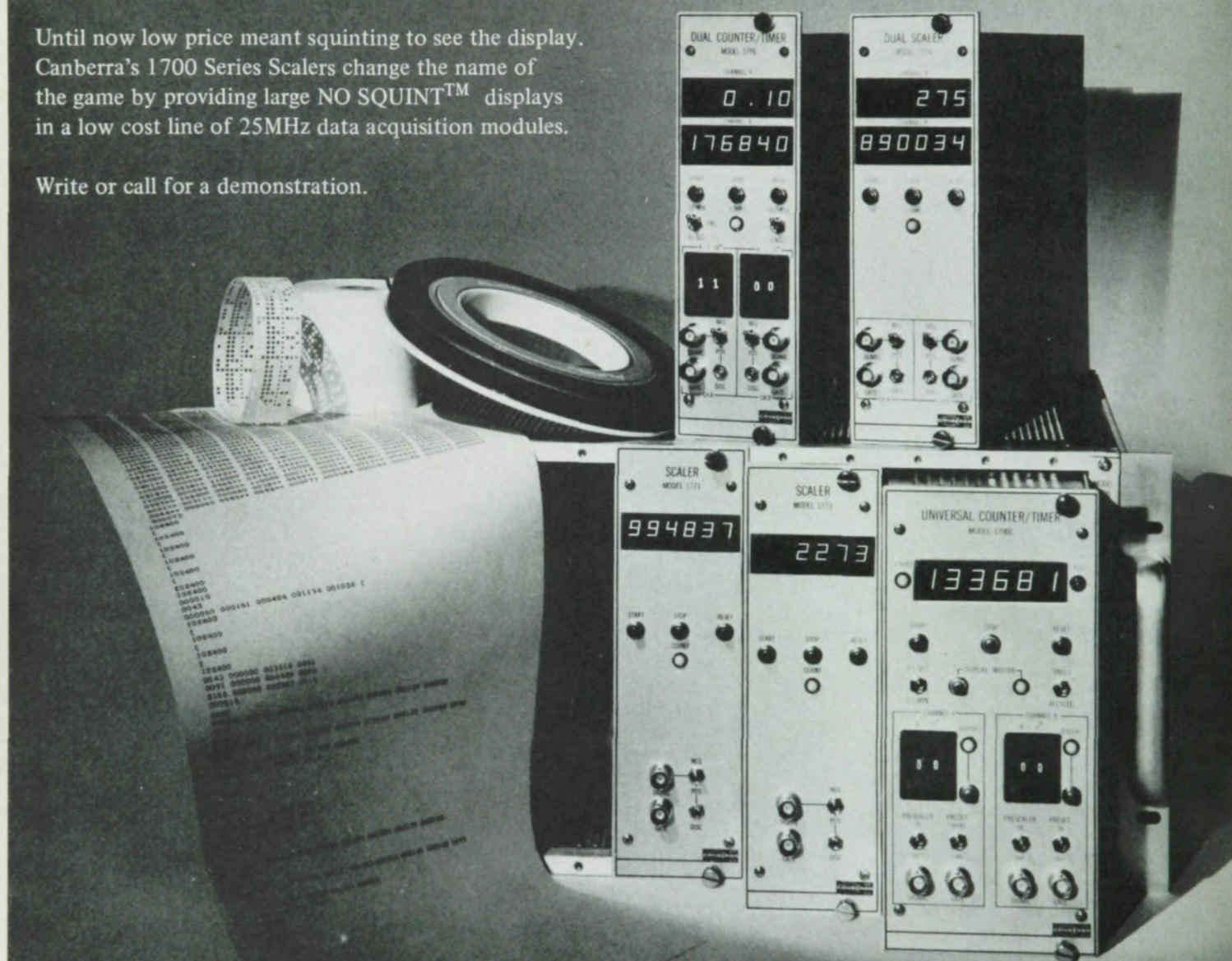
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tions as well as more general inquiries concerning possible openings. Aside from the downright discourtesy of such a practice it greatly increases the difficulties, which at present are already sufficiently large, for those seeking a new position because they can never be certain of whether or not an application has even been received.

As departmental chairmen normally have secretarial assistance, it does not seem too much to expect at least a form-letter acknowledgement to the effect that an application has been received and is either being considered or else is immediately rejected.

COLIN H. BARROW
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Intercity problems

Michael Moravcsik¹ has recently written an interesting article (September, page 40) on the problem of physics education in the developing nations. It is interesting to note that the problems cited therein, isolation from the scientific mainstream and lack of an adequate supply of trained manpower from the community itself are common to the developing group of black people right here in this country. Meeting and solving the problems of black schools at home could serve as an effective workshop for individuals, universities, and other institutions prior to engaging in foreign endeavors.

C. J. Overbeck² has written an earlier paper, which deals with the same problem. He mentions the need to develop a manual with instructions for simple, effective, demonstration experiments that could be manufactured in the physics department from locally available materials. He felt, as I do, that this would be a valuable tool. In addition to that need, there is the desirability of having available a mass-produced, low-cost (possibly paperback) text that explains physics with simple, direct, non-erudite language, and which is written with some conception of the cultural background of black students (those who don't think this might be important should consider the fine article by Francis E. Dart³).

The present function of most physics departments in black colleges, including those located in the now almost all-black inner cities, is to turn out prototypes who "escape" into job slots in the suburban industrial complex. This brain drain does the inner city no good, and is in fact a replication of the situation that is such a problem for other developing world areas. If we look at the typical white "go-go" science or engineering department, we see it is serving their community functions. First-

ly, it takes students from the white communities, trains them, and returns them to useful employment in the white community be it in the industrial, academic, or governmental sector, and secondly, it creates "spin-off" industries within the surrounding white community, thereby generating needed employment. These functions are served only minimally by black colleges. In this regard, it is interesting to observe the practical emphasis displayed in the recently reported China example.^{4,5} One wonders if such methods, suitably modified, wouldn't be useful in the black community.

References

1. M. J. Moravcsik, *PHYSICS TODAY*, September 1972, page 40.
2. C. J. Overbeck, *PHYSICS TODAY*, August 1963, page 33.
3. F. E. Dart, *PHYSICS TODAY*, June 1972, page 48.
4. C. N. Yang, *PHYSICS TODAY*, November 1971, page 61.
5. G. B. Lubkin, *PHYSICS TODAY*, December 1972, page 23.

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No visas and no jobs

I read with interest your report on Veniamin Voronel and Alaksandr Levich (September, page 69) who have lost their jobs because they applied for exit visas to emigrate to Israel.

The Israel Physical Society has followed their developments with great concern. I should like to point out the following facts.

► We know of at least 40 physicists who have now applied for exit visas and who have been refused emigration. Most of them have lost their jobs upon applying for the visa. Some are now threatened with an accusation of parasitism, after having been refused jobs at the post office, street cleaning, and so on.

► The Soviet Government, in many of these cases, has agreed that Jewish (Jews are considered as a nationality in the USSR) scientists can leave for Israel provided that they pay an exorbitant ransom to compensate for the education they have received from the Soviet Government. This has been done even in cases where the man has repaid his studies by working ten or twenty years in teaching and research. In some cases the ransom fee may be removed, depending to a large extent on the moral resistance of the individual, but entailing considerable physical and economic danger.

► In many cases, particularly for leading scientists, the exit visa is denied even if a ransom fee is paid. The argument is that those scientists had

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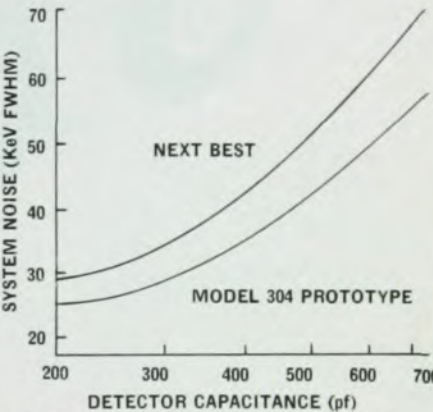
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