

letters

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
*University of the West Indies
Kingston, Jamaica*

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.

MICHAEL J. SMITH
*Washington Technical Institute
Washington, D. C.*

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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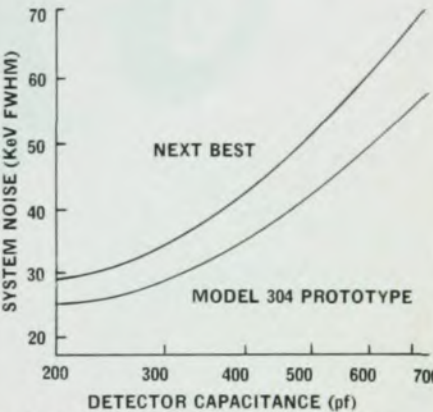
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