

take up correspondence with their Soviet colleagues. But recent testimony before the House Subcommittee on Postal Operation and Service indicates that much of this correspondence never reaches its addressee, and that which does get through may be censored.

In testifying before the subcommittee, Mark Mellman, executive director of the Committee of Concerned Scientists, argued that, because "free communication is the lifeblood of scientific progress . . . if any scientist is prevented from conducting his research or communicating it to others, scientific progress as a whole suffers." Mellman feels that the Soviet government uses interference with the mail as a means of isolating refusenik scientists from the "outside world." For example, Mellman testified that letters of invitation inviting refuseniks to participate in international scientific conferences rarely arrive at their destination, and when they do, they usually arrive after the

conference has already ended.

Although the extent of the problem is hard to measure—no one keeps tabs on the number of letters that arrive without interference—a 1975 project initiated by the Federation of American Scientists gives some indication. The December 1975 *FAS Newsletter* urged its members to choose a refusenik scientist from a list it provided and initiate correspondence with that scientist. Of 140 letters sent by registered mail (return receipt requested), only 76 were received by the addressee, as evidenced by the return of a signed card.

The problem is not limited to personal correspondence, as is shown by the case of *Physical Review Letters*. In November 1974 The American Physical Society began sending PRL to the Moscow Sunday Seminar every week by registered airmail. During the periods when no copies were getting through, APS temporarily discontinued sending the journal.

Between November 1974 and July 1978, the APS mailed 204 issues to the USSR. Only in 85 cases were advice of delivery cards returned to the senders.

According to Mellman, the problem may go even deeper than nondelivery of mail. He has collected evidence that he feels shows that Soviet postal authorities are sending return receipts to the sender when the article in question has, in fact, not been delivered. This is a direct violation of the Universal Postal Convention, which sets the international laws governing the handling of mail.

The US Postal Service has apparently found the matter of Soviet postal delivery sufficiently involved to have produced a booklet, *Guidelines for Mailing to the Soviet Union*. Copies can be requested at no charge by writing E. Walker, General Manager, International Mail Classification Division, Room 1610, 475 L'Enfant Plaza, Washington, D. C. 20260.

—MEJ

## the physics community

### Acoustical Society elects von Gierke

Henning von Gierke of the Aerospace Medical Research Laboratory, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base has been chosen president-elect of the Acoustical Society of America, and Edith Corliss, a physicist at the National Bureau of Standards, was selected vice president-elect. Both will serve in these posts until June, when they will assume the offices of president and vice president, respectively.

Von Gierke was born in Karlsruhe, Germany and received his doctorate in engineering from the Technical University there in 1944. He joined the Aerospace Medical Research Laboratory as a consultant in 1947, became chief of the bioacoustic branch in 1954 and in 1963 became director of the biodynamics and bionics division there, the post he currently holds. Von Gierke also became an associate professor at Ohio State University's department of preventive medicine in 1963. His major research interests have been physical, physiological and psychological acoustics, biodynamics, the effects of noise on man, communication biophysics and bionics. In accordance with the new bylaws adopted by the ASA last May, the Executive Council also appointed von Gierke as standards director for a one-year term.

Corliss attended MIT, from which she received her master's degree in 1941. She was hired as a junior physicist by the National Bureau of Standards in 1941 and then by the US Weather Bureau in 1942. From 1943 to 1944 she worked at the US Naval Observatory as a junior astronomer. She is currently a physicist at NBS,



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a position she has held since 1944.

In the same election James E. Barger, vice president and chief scientist at Bolt Beranek and Newman, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts, and W. Dixon Ward, a professor of environmental health and of otolaryngological and communicable diseases at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, were voted new members of the Executive Council of the ASA.

### Employment outlook for new grads improves

The employment outlook for recent physics graduates is continuing to improve, according to *Employment Survey*

1977, a report recently released by the AIP Manpower Statistics Division. The report, a compilation of data from a survey of 1387 recent physics and astronomy degree recipients, found a lower rate of unemployment this year (3–6%) for doctoral, master's and bachelor's degree recipients than last year (6–8%).

The survey dispels the commonly held belief that a postdoctoral fellowship is a graduate's "last resort" when he or she is unable to secure potentially permanent employment. "...Only during the early 1970's was this assumption correct . . . not only did two-thirds of the 'postdocs' specifically seek those temporary positions, but 17% of them turned down offers with potential permanence to accept postdoctoral fellowships."

Also addressed is the question of how much time the graduates required to secure employment. For example, after seven months of searching, 12% of the PhD's seeking permanent positions still had not found jobs.

The report is available at no charge from Susanne D. Ellis, American Institute of Physics, Manpower Statistics Division, 335 East 45th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017. Request AIP publication number R-282.1.

## in brief

*National Patterns of R&D Resources; Funds and Manpower in the United States, 1953–1977* (NSF 77-310) may be ordered for \$1.50 per copy from the US Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. □