

Trends in Physics

Wiesbaden, Fed. Rep. of Germany, 3-6 October 1972

General Assembly Meeting

'Healthy and strong in spirit but somewhat ailing and weak in financial support' was the impression given of the state of EPS at the General Assembly Meeting on 4 October 1972 attended by around 400 Individual Ordinary Members and representatives of Member Societies. The occasion was one of stock-taking, since the only previous General Assembly Meeting had been at the Inaugural Conference in Florence in 1969, a few months after EPS had been founded.

Before commencing his report to the Society, EPS President H.B.G. Casimir announced the decision of the Council to offer the first Honorary Membership to the founding father and first President, Gilberto Bernardini. In accepting, G. Bernardini expressed his warm appreciation and thanks to all his friends who had so honoured him.

The President had the pleasant task of reviewing the wide variety of the activities of the Society in the past three years. He pointed to the Wiesbaden Conference itself, the regular appearance of *Europhysics News*, the reports of Advisory Committees, and the scientific events arranged by Divisions as signs that the Society was fulfilling its aim to promote the advance of physics in Europe. However, he acknowledged that there had been some administrative difficulties and were likely to be more financial problems in 1973. The President's final words concerned the need for balance in EPS affairs: between the Divisions and central activities; between Member Societies and Individual Ordinary Members; and between Eastern and Western European countries.

EPS Secretary L. Jansen then dealt with the administrative matters about which there had been much concern in the past. He was frank about the difficulties that had faced the Society in its initial period, but was confident that experience was now building up. He likened the administrative problems of EPS to that of getting three elephants into a Volkswagen. (The solution is to have two in the front and one in the back). His closing tribute to the work of the Executive Secretary, L. Etienne, was warmly received by the audience.

Treasurer L. Cohen had the unenviable job of explaining to the General Assembly Meeting that al-

though there had been a surplus of income over expenditure in 1971, in the present year the budget was only anticipated to break even, whilst, in 1973, EPS faced the prospect of being unable to meet commitments. One possibility was that the number of Associate Members might be increased, and another that the fee structure might be re-arranged. However, this latter move could not be made until 1974, because of the six months' notice required by the Constitution.

The audience were given the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions. In reply to F. Netter, it was revealed that the present EPS Membership comprised 2325 Individual Ordinary Members, 26 Member Societies, and 26 Associate Members. O. Heavens suggested that EPS might guard against future inflation by agreeing an index to which fees would be referred annually. Recruitment was the subject of several comments, since, clearly, there was disappointment over the comparatively low number of Individual Ordinary Members. The need was expressed for a planned drive to encourage members attracted by a statement of future aims and activities.

N. Kurti took the long term view that *Europhysics News* should emerge as the one European publication in which Member Societies would insert their own bulletins.

E. Burhop was keen that the balance of Individual Ordinary Members in Eastern and Western European countries should be redressed since it was apparent that the Society was now largely dominated by the latter.



G. Bernardini, EPS founding father and first President, accepts the first Honorary Membership of the Society at the General Assembly Meeting in Wiesbaden

E.E. Schneider made an attempt to present the following motions to the General Assembly:

- 1 The Society is to pay special and continued attention, by existing machinery and/or the establishment of a new Committee, to matters of policy, planning and priority in physics research, development and education with particular reference to the supply of and demand for manpower.
- 2 The Society is to arrange for far-ranging discussions, in the first instance on a regional basis and on sufficiently small scale to allow an effective interchange of ideas, on all problems concerning the social responsibility of physicists in the light of the threatening environmental crisis and long term prospects of the human situation.

These declarations have been submitted to the attention of the Executive Committee; they could not be passed as motions from the procedural viewpoint, since six months' notice was required for motions to the General Assembly Meeting.

At the close, many physicists must have been satisfied with the second General Assembly Meeting, although much concerned by the inability of EPS to look to the future with confidence because of financial insecurity. But what is to be done now?

Trends in Physics

The Plenary Lectures presented at the Second General Conference of the European Physical Society in Wiesbaden, Fed. Rep. Germany, from 3-6 October 1972, are scheduled to be published under the title *Trends in Physics*, together with a selection of the Divisional Lectures, in a volume expected to be 324 pp, A5, and available in March 1973.

Trends in Physics will also contain a report on the open discussion at the Conference on 'Physics and Society — Public policy and current prospects'. The volume may be ordered now for Sw. Frs 55.— (including postage), or for **Sw. Frs 50.— (including postage) if you are an Individual Ordinary Member of the European Physical Society.** Please order now: You will be sent an invoice, and on settlement, the volume will be posted to you on publication. We kindly ask you to make payment to our account No 164.899/4 with Société de Banque Suisse, Genève, or to our Postal Cheque Account (CCP) No 12-19107. (If you pay by cheque drawn on other than Swiss banks kindly add Sw. Frs 3.— for our expenses).

Trends in Physics, European Physical Society, PO Box 39, CH - 1213 Petit-Lancy 2, Switzerland.

'Public policy and current prospects'

The EPS Advisory Committee on Physics and Society had published their working paper in the July 1972 issue of *Europhysics News* so as to give physicists a basis for discussion at the open evening meeting on 3 October 1972 at the Wiesbaden Conference. The meeting was chaired by G. Alaga. G. Diemer, Chairman of the Advisory Committee, introduced the working paper. Diemer explained the role of the Advisory Committee within EPS and outlined their 'cahier des charges', before presenting their major conclusions.

Diemer mentioned that further work faced the Advisory Committee as a result of the need for studies of the

budgetary and manpower situation in physics.

The audience of physicists then addressed the issues that the working paper raised. Each speaker had a different point of view, ranging from the ostrich head-in-the-sand approach to the socially open-minded attitude, and it is apparent that the Advisory Committee will have a difficult task to cover the whole spectrum of EPS opinion as they press forward to the next stage.

The essence of many of the problems under discussion is: finding an adequate R and D programme and job specifications, according to the local or national needs. This obviously requires an enormous amount of preparatory work and imagination.

SHADOWS OF BLISS

Shadows of Bliss. A 45-minute, colour film by Denis Postle and Nic Knowland. A Tattoist International Production, for BBC TV and CERN. Featuring Jeremy Newson. Music Pete Townshend. Scientific Consultants R. Hagedorn, H. Schopper, J. Bailey, M. Ferroluzzi, W. Thirring, J. Charap. CERN Producer Edwin Shaw. BBC Producer Peter Goodchild.

Relayed by the British TV channel BBC2 in November to an audience of 1¼ million, *Shadows of Bliss* shows that even the most advanced theory and complex experimentation in physics can be presented as significant to the public. The film on particle physics was produced in collaboration between CERN, Geneva, and the British Broadcasting Corporation, London. Virtually every sequence brings a fresh insight, and the film is full of a creative zest so appropriate to the fast-moving high-energy physics field.

Particle accelerators are visualized as machine guns aiming at hidden targets, and strong nuclear interactions are simulated in crashes involving cars and vans, men and boys. The violence is not gratuitous but, by its imaginative use, the viewer's attention is held and understanding of the types of reasoning in particle theory is obtained.

The continuity of communication of the physics to the public is assured

by the ingenuous pilgrim, Jeremy Newson (popsinger, poet and actor). His journey through the intricacies of high-energy physics leads him to an awareness and interest. The carefree attitude with which he wanders around the CERN site in Geneva is worthy of contrast with the frenetic attempts of the victim to escape in *Alphaville*, Godard's horrific film of man caught in a scientific maze. By the end of the film, the pilgrim can understand that, underlying the disorder and diversity in our daily lives, the world is fundamentally in harmony and unity. He compares his pleasure of grasping the basic symmetry of hadrons (the particles in strong nuclear interactions) to that given by a poem. And he even shows interest in the possibility that 'quarks' will establish an even more fundamental explanation of the properties of subnuclear particles.

Shadows of Bliss is not a conventional, instructional film; it sets out to treat physics as an element of human culture from which the public should expect to gain some benefit.

The EPS Advisory Committee on Physics and Society increasingly emphasises communication with the public. This film is a clear example of what could be achieved if physicists, film-makers and television companies co-operated.

Shadows of Bliss has also been produced in French, German and Italian under the titles *Les grains de l'ordre*, *Teilchen im Einklang* and *Misteri ed armonie della fisica*. TV networks may screen the film by arrangement with BBC Television Enterprises. For non-paying audiences, copies are available on loan from the Public Information Office, CERN, CH-1213 Geneva 23, Switzerland.

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