

'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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