

## Psychologists: Searching for Social Relevance at APA Meeting

"Oh my—another one—oh my," sighed George A. Miller, president of the American Psychological Association (APA), as he learned of yet another disruption at the APA's annual meeting in Washington last week. For the first time the APA had a topic, "Psychology and the Problems of Society," for its annual convention. As it turned out, there was little need for the psychologists to impose a theme on their meeting. Last week, society's problems stormed into the gilded rooms of the Shoreham and the Sheraton-Park hotels to confront the psychologists directly.

According to veteran psychologists, last week marked the first time in the organization's 77-year history that an APA meeting was physically disrupted. Meetings that were more dramatic than usual also marked the annual gathering of the American Sociological Association last week. So far, most of the natural sciences associations have escaped disruption at their meetings. In view of the way things are going, however, the leaders of these organizations would be well advised to begin preparing to cope with the prospect of more boisterous conventions.

The demands of black Americans

were again brought to the clear attention of the psychologists when black graduate students in psychology appeared in force at George Miller's presidential address. The students were told that they would be allowed to present their case before the APA council meeting the next morning; Miller was then left to give his presidential address unimpeded.

The next morning, the regular agenda of the APA council was set aside so that the black students could be heard. Twenty-four black students stood shoulder to shoulder at the front of the room confronting the council while their statement and the council's reply were discussed. The black students told the council that it was being allowed 24 hours to come up with its response. Although the council's publicly articulated answer to the students was generally sympathetic, some council members expressed resentment about the confrontation tactics of the students. One of the most activist members of the council, Milton J. Rosenberg of the University of Chicago, told the students that, although "we have our burden to bear in the redemption of the last 200 to 300 years," the council was "beyond racism" and was tired of the "make it hot for whitey routine."

Howard Gruber, a psychology professor at Rutgers but not a member of the APA council, suggested from the audience that the council declare an emergency assessment of \$50 or \$100 from each person in the 29,000 member APA to improve the opportunities for black people in psychology.

In an impassioned speech, Robert L. Green of the Michigan State University faculty, one of the cochairmen of the Association of Black Psychologists, argued that the APA could afford a \$50 commitment from each member. "This can allow APA to become the most meaningful professional organization in the country," Green said. The assessment, he continued, should be made not so that "your building won't be burned down now but rather so

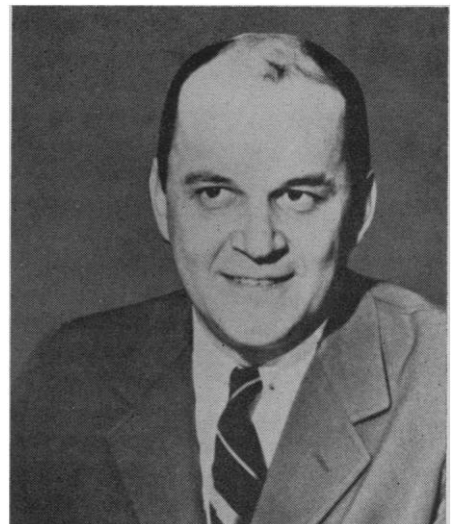
that black people can be aided in becoming strong Americans." Green told the council that black psychologists had not been given proper training in universities "to assist black people in liberation," and that "white psychologists and sociologists have shirked their duty to black people and poor people . . . all you have done is attend meetings and read your reports on verbal learning." Green termed such studies "passé."

The idea of a \$50 assessment was not mentioned in the request of the Black Students Psychological Association. The students' requests centered around developing procedures to obtain more black undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty members in psychology; providing community experience for black psychology students; and developing programs that "would equip black students to function in the black community." The students said that APA should provide the "seed money" necessary for research and development on these proposals. The council adopted "in principle" the black students' statement and authorized the establishment of a committee to devise a more concrete set of proposals to present to the APA council meeting on 4 October. The council shied away from setting a specified money figure, but there were private mutterings that anything like a mandatory \$50 assessment would drive thousands of APA members out of the organization.

Among APA leaders there seemed to be much more sympathy for the demands of black students and psychologists than for the demands of the radical white psychologists who were also active at the APA meeting. Anne Anahot for whitey routine."



George A. Miller



George W. Albee

## NEWS IN BRIEF

● **ALVIN SALVAGED:** *Alvin*, the 23-foot-long Woods Hole research submarine which sank last October in 4500 feet of water 120 miles south of Cape Cod, was recovered last week. The recovery was made by the U.S. Navy after two earlier attempts to rescue the submersible had failed because of bad weather and technical difficulties. Navy officials say *Alvin* is the largest object the Navy's rescue teams have ever salvaged in water that deep. For the recovery operation, the Navy used the *Aluminaut*, a deep-diving submersible owned by the Reynolds Corporation, to locate *Alvin* and attach towing gear. The Navy research ship, *Mizar*, raised *Alvin* with special winches by means of a clump bar and towed the tiny submarine to land. *Alvin*'s rescue operation is estimated to cost in excess of \$100,000. The tiny research submarine, which cost \$1.5 million to build, belongs to the U.S. Office of Naval Research, but is presently on lease to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute.

● **NEW OIL LEASING RULES:** The Interior Department has released new U.S. Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas lease regulations that have stiffer requirements for well development, but skirt the long-debated question of whether the industry should provide the government with geophysical and geological research data before it grants preliminary permits for exploratory operations (*Science*, 2 May 1969). Interior's new standards require more detailed reviews by the U.S. Geological Survey of plans for well drilling, casing and cementing to prevent environmental contamination and also frequent testing of blowout equipment, prompt reporting and cleanup of oil spills, and suspension of any operation found by a regional U.S. Geological Survey supervisor to threaten the environment. The modified standards do not require, however, that oil companies provide the government with a preliminary geological and geophysical evaluation of offshore lands that the industry wishes to develop. The government has only limited resources (about \$1.2 million annually) to conduct its own geophysical research studies before granting permits, whereas a single oil company may spend an estimated \$10 to \$30 million a year gathering and interpret-

ing offshore data. The new regulations, which require oil companies to file research data before a permanent lease is granted, do not give the federal government the authority to release this data to the general public after the lease has been granted without industry's permission.

● **REPORT ON ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES:** The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has released its second major report on oral contraceptives, which says present benefits of pill use outweigh the risks. The report was compiled by the Food and Drug Administration's 15-member Advisory Committee on Obstetrics and Gynecology, which is chaired by Louis Hellman of the State University of New York in Brooklyn. The 200-page report, which is primarily a review of recent medical literature, includes task force studies on contraceptive utilization, effectiveness, and current investigations; blood clotting, cancer risks, and biological effects of pill use. "Second Report on the Oral Contraceptives" may be obtained at the end of October from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. The cost of the document has not yet been determined.

● **AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT LIMITS DDT USE:** Following a 30-day moratorium on the use of persistent pesticides in its pest-control programs, the Agriculture Department, on 15 August, permanently reduced the use of persistent pesticides in some of its programs and substituted less toxic, less persistent pesticides where possible. Agriculture Department officials say that the programs were examined on a case-by-case basis, and that the use of persistent pesticides was retained only in those instances where there were no effective alternatives. For most uses, chlordane, a less toxic, less persistent pesticide, will be substituted, particularly in the control of the Japanese beetle, the European chafer, and the white-fringed beetle. The Agriculture Department's action covers only U.S. Forest Service and federal-state pest-control programs administered by the department. It does not affect private use of DDT or other federally administered programs which authorize the use of DDT.

stasi, chairman of Fordham's psychology department, commented that she was "depressed" by some of the actions of the white radicals. "The blacks are much more constructive" she said; "we have more faith in their sincerity." Of course, the case of inadequate representation of blacks in psychology has been well documented. A report prepared recently by George W. Albee of Case Western Reserve University indicates that, out of 3767 Ph.D. degrees in psychology granted by the ten most prestigious psychology departments from 1920 to 1966, only eight were given to black psychologists.

The radical white psychologists were also a little bit more difficult to take seriously because of their often playful manner. When the most radical white psychologists, who call themselves the Psychologists for a Democratic Society, took over the stage in the middle of the business meeting, they carried such placards as "Up Against the Wall—APA" and "Produced and Directed by Harold Pinter."

### CIA Spooked Away

Radical psychologists were not successful in getting their resolutions acted on by the APA council at this meeting. One of these resolutions involved initiating a committee to study the possibility of eliminating the APA's division of military psychology, and another concerned cutting off business dealings with firms which practice racial discrimination in employment; action on these resolutions was postponed until the APA's October council meeting. Threats by at least one radical psychologist were successful in persuading the APA leaders to ask the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to stop its recruiting at the APA meeting. According to APA executive officer Kenneth B. Little, telephone callers had threatened "to bust up the joint" if the CIA remained.

The Psychologists for a Democratic Society and the less radical American Psychologists for Social Action joined forces toward the end of the APA convention to march to the White House to protest the Vietnam war. (One observer asked, "What would a scientific meeting in Washington be these days without a march to the White House?") A couple of hundred marchers struggled through the rain to President Nixon's home. The march illustrated one of the difficulties of achieving relevance—the principal occupant of the White House was sunning himself on

the beaches of San Clemente at the time of the march.

Nonetheless, this year's convention was full of statements about the need for psychologists to become more "relevant" to society. Kenneth E. Clark of the University of Rochester told the group, "I believe that if a strong program of participation and involvement does not characterize their work, professional psychologists are no more than run of the mill. . . . The professional psychologist must be a professional activist."

A psychologist-turned-political-leader, Timothy W. Costello, deputy mayor of New York City, said that psychologists "have failed to communicate the value of our science to today's urban decision makers" and urged his fellows to "put aside our professional incest and seek to make friends with politicians, legislators and municipal bureaucrats."

#### Wiesner Urges New Agency

M.I.T. provost Jerome B. Wiesner told the group that "social and behavioral scientists should get out of their ivory tower." He called for the establishment of a new profession of social engineering to apply the findings of the social sciences to pressing social problems. (Wiesner also said that he had come to believe in a more centralized system for the federal support of science, since efforts to get the mission-oriented federal agencies sufficiently interested in research support had failed. He urged the creation of a National Institutes of Science similar in structure to the National Institutes of Health, with overall management of scientific funding but with a great deal of autonomy for the individual institutes.)

Why did psychologists express so much concern about social relevance at this year's convention? First, it is obvious that, in an era of mounting social problems, activist students are putting great pressure on their professors to reexamine their attitudes toward their disciplines. Second, it should be remembered that last year's APA convention was held immediately after the violence of the Democratic convention in Chicago. The APA voted, in protest, to move this year's convention from Chicago to Washington, and then decided to devote this year's meeting to the problems of society that had been given such vivid demonstration in Chicago.

George W. Albee, APA president-

elect, thinks the concern for social relevance is also related to the historical stage that the psychological profession has now reached. "In the beginning, psychology was concerned with guild building and with establishing legitimacy," Albee noted in an interview. "As these goals are achieved, there is more concern for developing a social consciousness. There is a pervasive awareness that doing psychotherapy with middle-aged neurotics is not the best use of a psychologist's time. The idea of just seeing eight people a day begins to pall after a few years."

George A. Miller of Rockefeller University elaborated similar ideas in an interview. Miller noted that, in the beginnings of the profession of psychology, there had been tensions between the clinicians and the experimentalists, which had become resolved with the increasing respectability of the clinician. Later tensions between academic psychologists and practitioners have also now been resolved, he maintained. "Now, our problem is how to make all these activities relevant to the crisis in our own country," he said.

Miller also pointed out that clinical psychologists are increasingly displacing medical people in "getting out in the community" and working with mental health problems on a large-scale basis. "More and more they're getting their noses rubbed in real problems," Miller explained, "and they ask what in their psychological training is relevant to their current needs. They come bleeding to our meetings asking frantically for help. They feel that what they were taught in the university is *not* what they need to know."

#### Resistance to Ghetto Research

If the comments at last week's meeting are an accurate indicator, one thing psychologists can avoid doing in their hunt for social relevance is conducting more studies of ghetto residents.

Robert L. Green commented that the black community had served as "a research colony" for social scientists: "Psychologists and sociologists go into the black community and do research but refuse to specify and push major programs of improvement for the black community." In his fiery address to the APA council, Green argued, "Your research has had a negative impact. . . . Do not use us for research efforts any longer. . . . Help us instead to mitigate the effects of white racism."

The warnings against using the ghetto as a "research plantation" were

directed against black psychologists as well as white ones. At a scholarly meeting on "the psychology of blackness," a black woman who identified herself as a "nonprofessional" from the inner city told the black psychologists present, "You psychologists come and tell us that we're uneducable. You people shut up and come to listen to us for a change. If you don't, we're going to shut you out of the ghetto. Fortune tellers, that's all you are—a bunch of fortune tellers."

In his talk to the APA, Wiesner criticized social scientists for an "abdication" of responsibility in not protecting the people who are the subjects of their research. "I don't know why the hell social scientists shouldn't defend the people they are talking about," he argued; "I can't understand why the great weight of social sciences can't be put behind worthy causes."

#### Doubts About Relevance

Not all psychologists want to be "relevant." This was symbolized after the take-over of the business meeting, when a senior psychologist angrily brushed by a student with a placard. The radical asked him, "Aren't you here to promote human welfare?" The senior psychologist heatedly answered, "No, I'm here as a psychologist!"

Although sympathizing with the people who wanted to be socially relevant, George Miller said he was also "fully in sympathy" with the psychologists who maintained that their discipline was a science and who asked "How can we keep it a science if we try to solve everybody's goddamn problems?"

There is also a good deal of doubt among psychologists about how much their discipline has to offer the world. Even among the activists, one heard the statement, as made by one psychologist in a meeting of the Psychologists for a Democratic Society, "Let's face it. We have no answers now. There is no radical psychology yet. We're just trying to get people together."

Psychologist Stanley D. Klein, now a member of the staff of Boston's mayor, said in a paper that his psychological knowledge had been of "limited value" in his political role. He said that psychologists should avoid the fantasy of thinking they "can be especially helpful in social-political situations."

One leading psychologist, Sigmund Koch, a professor at the University of Texas, told *Science* in an interview, "Is psychology socially relevant? I would give an atypical answer. So far

as any backlog of scientific knowledge, psychology has very little to offer. Society expects more than we have to provide. It is a very unhappy situation."

Koch, who is a member of the APA council, said he watched with "mixed feelings" the confrontation "with those beautiful black students—these are people who are asking desperately to be taken into our field, but the trouble is that psychology has no answers in respect of the problems that they are concerned about." Koch thinks the main thing psychology can do is to "contribute to our respect for the multiplicity of factors which affect human behavior and the cautions which must be taken into account in describing behavior."

Even if all psychologists were sure how their discipline could be truly relevant to today's social problems, the organization and reward system of their profession, many believe, will have to

be drastically changed before much significant work on social issues can be attempted. Kenneth E. Clark pointed out that, in most universities, "the young investigator is taking a grave risk if he takes up a big problem" and that it usually seems more beneficial to one's career to work on smaller problems. Ernest R. Hilgard of Stanford University said his study indicated that most university departments still respect basic research most highly. Hilgard called for independent graduate schools of applied behavioral sciences. In a small group discussion, one psychologist said to Wiesner, "We all have a social commitment, but our department chairman wants published papers so we have to join our colleagues in running rats so that we can get publishable results."

A difficulty which some psychologists encounter in their quest for social relevance is the feeling that "relevance" is too general a word to give them

much direction. What they believe they need is some hard thinking about how to take the small, progressive steps necessary to make their disciplines more socially meaningful.

With the continued pressure from student activists and from the social agonies of our age, there will doubtless be a sustained impulse to change the training given by various disciplines in the social and natural sciences and to alter the role of the professional organizations which represent these disciplines. It may not be entirely true, as Charles W. Thomas told an APA meeting, that "the social revolution has caught social scientists in the wilderness resting on a cot of science for science's sake with their proverbial pants down." But it is safe to say that scientists will be arguing for many years about the types of pants best suited to forays through the tangled thickets of social problems that they feel increasingly pushed to explore.—BRYCE NELSON

## The Environment: ACS Report Is Practical Anti-Pollution Guide

In the past several years, the public has become increasingly concerned over problems of environmental pollution. Scientists have warned that pollution is disrupting the world's ecology, legislators have taken the first faltering steps toward alleviating the problem, and news media have even assigned specialists to cover the "environment beat." Considerable attention has been focused on the all-too-visible evidence that the environment is deteriorating, but relatively less concern has been given to the question of just what can and should be done to clean up the mess created by a modern technological civilization. Indeed, arguments between conservationists and polluters often bog down in sterile debate over whether various antipollution measures are technologically feasible and economically practical.

Last week the American Chemical Society (ACS) issued a report entitled "Cleaning Our Environment—The Chemical Basis for Action"\*—which

may make a valuable contribution toward the search for a "cure" for our environmental ills. The 249-page report, which covers air and water pollution, solid waste disposal, and pesticides, culminates a 3-year study by more than 100 experts from various disciplines assembled by the ACS. It reviews the current state of the art of the science and technology of environmental improvement (what is known and how it is being used; what must be learned and how it might be used) and also makes 73 recommendations to accelerate the development and use of that science and technology.

The central conclusion of the report is that technical know-how has advanced to the point where "this country can take enormous strides, now, toward a cleaner environment" if it is willing to devote sufficient energy and financial support to the task. Though

the report states that "extensive fundamental research" is still required to "elevate man's understanding of the environmental system," it stresses that "the nation's effort to improve its environment should be concentrated, for the present, on the use of existing science and technology."

The report is aimed at legislators, government officials, industrial leaders, and others who must deal with environmental problems but who are "one or more steps removed from direct involvement with the pertinent science and technology." It also seeks to interest scientists, engineers, and university professors who are not now involved with environmental problems but who may have useful ideas to contribute to their solution.

Lloyd M. Cooke, a Union Carbide scientist and chairman of the ACS subcommittee that put the report together, said the document offers "nothing particularly dramatic . . . no panaceas" but he said it is "probably the most comprehensive study of its kind." Another subcommittee member, Franklin A. Long, of Cornell, described the study as a "concise encyclopedia or handbook" summarizing the results of research and actual experience with pollution abatement. Long said the report contains nothing startlingly original or new, but that the ACS hoped it has performed a useful service by pulling

\* Available from Special Issue Sales, American Chemical Society, 1155 16th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; \$2.75.