

M.I.T.: March 4 Revisited Amid Political Turmoil

Cambridge, Massachusetts. At first glance the March 4 anniversary celebration here seemed a decided comedown from last year's success.

Fifteen months ago some M.I.T. graduate students enlisted a sizable number of senior faculty members in support of a one-day "research stoppage" on March 4. The idea of a protest against war research and the call for scientists to assume social responsibility for their work found wide acceptance. March 4 observances were held on approximately 40 campuses around the country, the most prominent ceremonies taking place at M.I.T. and Stanford. Faculty and students seemed united in a rare atmosphere of common purpose by the call for moral action and reformist politics. It was predicted that March 4 would become a significant movement in the politics of science (*Science*, 14 March 1969).

Last week the second March 4 conference in Cambridge, a discussion of the arms race, unfolded in an atmosphere that succeeded in being both fractious and anemic. The common purpose of last year's conference—"young and old together"—clearly was lacking. Indeed, the conference organizers feared that student radicals might physically disrupt the proceedings. In contrast to events of a year ago, the press paid scant attention to the conference, no doubt because the novelty of former science advisers to the government speaking against the antiballistic missile and MIRV was thoroughly exhausted last year. Also, the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), which organized the meeting, gave less than 2 weeks' advance notice of their plans to celebrate the anniversary. This year the organizers abandoned, as too controversial or too dull (it wasn't clear which), the idea of calling for another stoppage of research. Except for the possibility of student demonstrations, there was a decided lack of drama in the occasion.

No demonstrations took place. But the conference did not avoid what a Harvard professor called an "M.I.T. family quarrel" over military contracts held by Tech's special laboratories.

Since the quarrel has considerable

relevance to the problem of the social responsibility of scientists, however, it is worth examining, especially as it has split the coalition which organized the first March 4 conference. This year the Science Action Coordinating Committee (SACC), a group of graduate students who first put forward the idea of a research stoppage, took no hand in organizing the commemoration of March 4. SACC has devoted most of its energies this year to two projects aimed at ending military research at the special laboratories. In December it sponsored a conference on the problems of conversion, with particular emphasis on the special laboratories. And throughout the year it has organized demonstrations against the continuation of MIRV development work at M.I.T. MIRV is a multiple, guided warhead system at present scheduled for installation on Minuteman III land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles and on Poseidon submarine-launched missiles. The M.I.T. Instrumentation Laboratory holds two Navy contracts for development of guidance systems for the Poseidon MIRV.

In September, M.I.T. president Howard Johnson announced that, while the Institute would not accept new contracts to develop weapons systems, it would not cancel the MIRV contracts now in force through September 1970 and December 1973. Shortly thereafter, students pushed their way into a meeting of the M.I.T. Corporation to

demand cancellation of the MIRV contracts and an immediate end to all other "war research." The confrontation was led by SACC and an M.I.T. splinter group of the Students for a Democratic Society, the Rosa Luxemburg SDS. Since then, SACC and RLSDS have kept steady pressure on the M.I.T. Standing Committee on the Special Laboratories to allow greater student participation in the review of new contract proposals and to allow students to take a stand on existing weapons contracts.

Conflicting views of M.I.T.'s "institutional responsibility" on the MIRV contracts brought to the surface differences between SACC and most UCS members over political objectives. SACC members argue that the notion that the scientist has responsibility as an individual for the social uses of his work should extend to M.I.T. as an institution. Many UCS members, who want the government to suspend MIRV tests and are in sympathy with SACC's desire to convert the special labs to nondefense work, nevertheless believe it would be unconventional and hence harmful for M.I.T. to break its contracts unilaterally. They argue that the way to convert the government is to mobilize political pressure across the nation against both MIRV and the ABM.

At the March 4 conference, SACC members sought to point out, in questions from the audience, the "contradiction" in this position. Jerome Wiesner, M.I.T. provost and former science adviser to President Kennedy, who was a speaker at the first session, had the following exchange with a representative of SACC in the audience:

Q. If you are so convinced, as I'm sure you are, that MIRV jeopardizes the world, if you're so convinced that you suggest the U.S. unilaterally stop testing it, don't you think it's a very minor thing for M.I.T. to unilaterally break a contract?

Wiesner: I think it would be very destructive, in the sense that it would infuriate a lot of people, [and] possibly . . . it would undercut any ability we have to argue and fight for things if people were to regard us as that irresponsible.

Q. You think it would decrease respect for M.I.T. rather than increase it?

Wiesner: I think so, not among some of you in the audience, I suspect, but generally in the country.

The conflicting styles could not be clearer. SACC is confrontation-minded and interested primarily in mobilizing the student community. But the faculty liberals are respectful of conventions



Political Button: Militancy at M.I.T.

and seek a national constituency. They are in an uncomfortable position, as they try to maneuver between the radicals in their classrooms and the enigmatic "silent majority," at all times fearful of reprisals against the universities by the government. Many may temporarily adopt the outward symbols of radicalism now fashionable on campuses—the "fist in the flask" button was in wide evidence among faculty on March 4 this year—but this appears to be merely protective coloration. The UCS organizers of this year's meetings, for example, carefully avoided such expressions of militancy as the "march forth" pun much favored last year by those who had hoped to found a political movement on the day.

The political movement never jelled. What is left is a splintered collection of groups like UCS, SACC and Scientists and Engineers for Social and Political Action (SESPA), a West Coast group which also has a small following in Cambridge. "Nobody has got anything to say to anyone else politically," says Jonathan Kabat, an M.I.T. graduate student and one of the founders of SACC. "Everybody's on his own particular ego trip."

The Meaning of March 4

But it would be a mistake to dismiss the original March 4 effort as without effect. On the contrary, the current political situation at M.I.T. can be seen as a direct result of the heightened interest in social questions symbolized by the original research stoppage. That first March 4 program also helped unleash, among students, the current interest in the environment. The USC committee on the environment, headed by M.I.T. physicist Henry Kendall, reported that students "enlisted in droves" in their projects during the recent March 4 meeting. It was, incidentally, the first time that undergraduates have shown much interest in UCS.

The anniversary of March 4 was observed with mixed success on a number of other campuses. At Stanford, Wolfgang K. H. Panofsky, director of the Linear Accelerator Center, attacked the ABM, and Charles Schwartz of the University of California at Berkeley explained his "hippocratic oath" for scientists, a pledge to refrain from weapons research. A similar program was held at University of California at Los Angeles, and a more wide-ranging one at Berkeley. There and at Stanford the March 4 sponsors drew

large crowds of students to see a recent film on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To cap the Berkeley observances, 50 persons took a "pledge" to shun military research, in a ceremony conducted by an ordained minister. The UCS reported other observances at the University of Washington and at Syracuse, Yale, Columbia, and the University of Minnesota.

The Cambridge meeting lacked the Berkeley revivalistic spirit, but it had its testimonial side, as several former "insiders" confessed to the limitations of trying to stop the arms race from within government. Harvard chemistry professor George Kistiakowsky, former science adviser to President Eisenhower, declared that it was only as he became older that he began to think about the social implications of weapons research he was engaged in, and to recognize "the operations of the military industrial complex" as potentially harmful. Wiesner gave the major credit for moving President Kennedy toward the limited test ban treaty of 1963 not to arms controllers inside the government but to the Women's Strike for Peace and to SANE and Linus Pauling. Princeton physicist Marvin Goldberger, who recently headed the strategic weapons panel of the President's Scientific Advisory Committee and was a founder of the "Jason Group" at the Institute for Defense Analyses, also testified to the frustrations of working inside the government. "A period of disillusionment comes over you," he said. "You see the way decisions are arrived at. The officials talk only to each other. . . . You give excellent advice but you are always 180 degrees out of phase, and you become bitter. And so you are forced to the conclusion that it can't be done from the inside and one simply has to work from the outside."

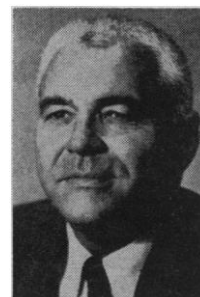
Last year, some M.I.T. organizers of the research stoppage wore buttons proclaiming, "March Fourth is a Movement, Not a Day." In retrospect, however, one must say that the reverse proved closer to the truth. The original March 4 manifestation was a significant wave in the political currents that are channeling scientific activities away from military concerns into new fields. This year other currents and eddies dominate the surface of this fluid movement. To many, the environment seems the clear wave of the future. But March 4 was worth commemorating, if only as a symbol of the new tide in science.

—ANDREW HAMILTON

APPOINTMENTS



R. W. MacVicar



W. J. McGill

William J. McGill, psychologist and chancellor of the University of California, San Diego, to president, Columbia University. . . . **Robert W. MacVicar**, chancellor, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, to president, Oregon State University. . . . **John G. Kemeny**, professor of mathematics and philosophy, Dartmouth College, to president of the college. . . . **Enoch L. Dillon**, legislative affairs and program planning officer, National Council on Marine Resources and Engineering Development, to acting executive secretary of the council. . . . **Albert G. Hill**, physics professor and a director of the Research Laboratory of Electronics, M.I.T., to the new position of vice president for research at M.I.T. . . . **Robert McC. Adams**, professor of anthropology, University of Chicago, to dean, division of social sciences at the university. . . . **George K. Davis**, director, division of biological sciences, University of Florida, to director, division of sponsored research at the university. . . . **Ernst Weber**, president emeritus, Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, to chairman-designate, engineering division, National Research Council. . . . **James H. Soper**, chief botanist, National Museum of Natural Sciences, Canada, to acting director of the museum. . . . **Marc J. Musser**, executive director, North Carolina Regional Medical Program, to chief medical director, Veterans Administration. . . . **Robert H. Ellis**, vice president, the Travelers Research Corporation, Connecticut, to president.

Erratum: An article in *Science* of 9 January incorrectly identified Senator Ralph Yarborough's (D-Tex.) interest in endangered species with an area near Belmont, Texas. The area is actually near Beaumont, Texas.

Erratum: In the report by Nelson and Rennels [*Science* 167, 301 (1970)], the last sentence of the first column on page 302 should read "One might also speculate that axons lacking granulated vesicles of this size but containing concentrations of agranular vesicles, shown in other locations to contain acetylcholine (15), are cholinergic or parasympathetic."