

Research Psychologists Break with APA

SCIENTIST-MEMBERS of the American Psychological Association (APA), who have long been unhappy with their status in the organization, have created a new society, the American Psychological Society (APS), which will be devoted to the interests of academic scientists and psychologists in industry and education.

The move is potentially a major blow to the 90,000-member APA, which has been through a lot of turbulence this year what with an unexpected deficit and the premature resignation of executive director Leonard Goodstein.

Finally, in July, a long-sought vote on a proposed APA reorganization plan, designed to heal the schism between clinical and research psychologists, was defeated by the membership. In a record turnout of 26,000, it was voted down by almost 2 to 1. What may have been the last straw for the scientists was the fact that in the same ballot an independent practitioner, Stanley Graham of New York City, was chosen as the next APA president-elect.

The formation of the new society is a culmination of sometimes acrimonious conflict between the interests of academics and clinical psychologists that goes back about 50 years, says Goodstein. Periodically, one or the other faction breaks away and starts its own organization. In the 1930s, clinicians went off to form their own organization, but rejoined the APA after World War II. In the 1940s, cognitive scientists, complaining that the APA was too political, broke away to form the Psychonomic Society, which now has several thousand members.

The imbalance between scientists and clinicians reflects overall trends. According to Goodstein the percentage of all psychology doctorates awarded in experimental psychology, for example, fell from 25% to 8% between 1960 and 1984, while doctorates in health care fields quintupled. Furthermore, while 75% of those in mental health care eventually join APA, the organi-

zation only gets 40% of the academics.

The scientists have become increasingly frustrated as they perceive the annual convention increasingly dominated by clinical and social concerns, and a disproportionate amount of the APA's resources going into "guild" issues, such as reimbursement, prescription privileges, hospital privileges, licensing, and certification for clinical psychologists. The new APS president, Janet Spence of the University of Texas at Austin (who is also a former APA president), says that 90% of the agenda at council meetings was dominated by professional issues, and that there was little opportunity to have discussions on topics of interest to scientists, such as graduate education programs and the use of animals in research.

Over the past decade, committee after committee has been formed to make recommendations on ways to organize APA to better meet scientists' needs. But no solutions have been found.

On 10 August the scientists voted to transform the Association for Science and Applied Psychology, a group formed within APA to advance the cause of reorganization, into a new independent society. The advisory board contains a slew of prestigious scientists, including ten former APA presidents. So far, the society, which engaged in strenuous recruitment during the APA convention held in Atlanta in mid-August, boasts about 2000 members. It also collected \$20,000 in private contributions according to APS board member Virginia O'Leary, a former APA staffer now at Radcliffe College.

In a meeting held during the convention the mood was determined and mildly euphoric. The group hopes to have 10,000 members by the end of the year and it believes it has a potential membership of 30,000 scientists and "scientist-practitioners." The APS plans to hold its own annual convention, the first scheduled for next June in the Washington suburb of Arlington, Virginia; and have its own journal, to be called *Psychological Science* and to be modeled

on *Science*, news department and all.

Relationships with APA remain problematic. "The blood's still flowing" from the protracted conflict, said Dorothy Eichorn of the University of California (Berkeley), but the new officers said they wanted to hold out the "olive branch" to APA.

There are many on both sides who think the breakaway move is a bad idea. One clinician called it a "tragedy." APA board member Jack G. Wiggins, a Cleveland practitioner, told *Science* that it is a move exactly opposite of where the discipline as a whole should be going, which is toward more integration of science and practice. If the APS succeeds, it may hasten the day when the APA ceases to be a learned society and becomes a purely professional organization. However, at this point no one can predict how many APA defections the APS will bring about. "Groups that have formed independent organizations in the past have not had a significant impact on the APA," says Wiggins.

There is reason to question whether the times favor a new psychology organization when the science has been scattering in so many different directions. Just as philosophy has served as the root of all knowledge, psychology has become a matrix from which other disciplines spring. Psychologist Howard Gardner of Harvard University, who received the APA's William James Award at the convention, quoted James who said "there is no such thing as a science of psychology." Gardner said he agreed in the sense that "psychology has not added up to an integrated science and will never achieve that status."

Gardner predicted that the mainstream of research will be captured by the "two behemoths"—cognitive science (for which the organizing principle is the computer), and neuroscience. He sees social psychology as becoming a part of "a general cultural discipline" including sociology and anthropology; and developmental psychology becoming a part of human development studies. The only areas left unabsorbed will be the areas of personality, consciousness, self, and will, which, said Gardner, are scarcely more developed now than in the days of James and Freud, and "are equally the concern of writers and other artists" as of students of behavior. ■ CONSTANCE HOLDEN

