tic categories used in many genetic studies—such as "violent," "aggressive," and "criminal"—are impossible to quantify, as they are legal and social rather than scientific in origin, said Andrew Futterman, a psychologist at Holy Cross College in Worcester, Massachusetts. Behaviors that are "moving targets" don't provide credible grounds for the search for genetic determinants, Futterman and Washington University biologist and historian Garland Allan said.

Such studies are worse than inconclusive, critics continued—they are racist and dangerous. Katheryn Russell, a criminologist at the University of Maryland, pointed out that because a disproportionate number of arrests for violent crimes occur among members of minority groups, genetic therapies for antisocial behavior would be inherently racist. "My concern is that we will be taking a step backward," Russell said.

That specter prompted six conference participants, including Billings, Allan, Green, and Indiana University historian William Schneider, to author their formal protest statement. The statement read in part: "Scientists as well as historians and sociologists must not allow themselves to be used to provide academic respectability for racist pseudoscience."

Once a piece of research has been completed, opponents added, even the most conscientious scientists have little control over how it will be applied. The leaders of the eugenics movement in the United States—although they had acted out of a sincere desire to build a better society—could do little when these ideas took root in Nazi Germany in the 1930s and transmuted into the Holocaust, Allan said.

Then internal critics got some uninvited outside reinforcements. Flag-waving demonstrators, including self-described communists, members of the Progressive Labor Party, and representatives of Support Coalition International—an alliance of "psychiatric survivors" endorsing Breggin's program against psychiatric medication—stormed the auditorium and seized the microphones. The protesters repeated many of the same themes voiced by conference participants. "You might think that you have a right to do the research you are doing, but the bottom line is that it will be used to subjugate people," asserted Robert Cook, a student at Rutgers University.

It took 2 hours to clear the protesters from the buildings and another 8 hours of sessions to bring the proceedings to a close. And at that point, to the participants' quiet surprise, they found a small rapprochement. Part of the text of the protest statement arguing that the conference should not be held was scratched out. In place it read that the meeting "should not have been necessary." Billings, one of the signers, explains that researchers should be very aware of the dangerous misuse to which their findings can be put and shouldn't require a costly scientific conference to drive the point home. "I think the conference should have taken place. I also think it should have been disrupted," he says.

A few researchers acknowledged they needed an eye-opener. "Only historians have never had their results misused," says David Goldman, a neurobiologist at NIH's National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Raine notes that "I feel much more sensitized to the potential tragedies and misuses of biological research."

Sensitized enough to bring his work to a halt? "The answer is no. I will worry more about how could I live with myself if this research is misused. But if we were to block biological research, then the protesters who came to this conference would have to live with the blood of innocent victims on their own hands—the victims of crime we could have prevented if biological research was allowed to continue."

–Wade Roush

FRENCH BUDGET

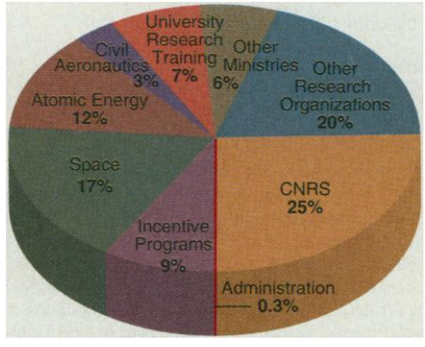
Research Given an 'Apparent Increase'

PARIS—Ever since Elisabeth Dufourcq, a relatively unknown academic trained in political science and public health, was appointed France's secretary of state for research last May, her rambling press conferences have become legendary with the nation's corps of science and medical journalists. Last week's get-together was no exception. For more than an hour, several dozen reporters packed into a reception room at the research ministry's elegant headquarters on the Rue Descartes scratched their heads in bewilderment while Dufourcq, flanked by a half-dozen aides, attempted to explain the government's proposed research budget for 1996.

Their task was made particularly difficult by France's complex accounting system, which makes it hard to determine whether research spending is going up or down from one year to the next. Dufourcq kicked off by announcing that expenditures for civilian research and development in 1996 are projected to reach $10.6 billion, an increase of 2.4% over the 1995 budget as revised during the second half of the year. But when compared to the budget initially proposed for 1995—the victim of a series of economy measures (*Science*, 7 July, p. 22)—the 1996 increase is only 1.4%. And these figures do not take into account France's inflation rate, which has been running at an average of 1.9% over the past 12 months.

Nevertheless, said Dufourcq, compared to key ministries such as defense and industry, which will see their budgets sharply cut in 1996, "one cannot say that research has been mistreated." Moreover, she argued, the phasing out of a number of programs in civil aeronautics research will allow a more substantial increase in the money allocated to several research agencies, including the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), which will receive a 4.79% increase over 1995, and the biomedical agency INSERM, the beneficiary of an additional 5.42%.

France's 1996 Civil Research Budget



These figures might seem worth celebrating during a time of fiscal hardship, but some French scientists caution that the numbers should not be taken at face value—particularly as at least 80% of the agencies' budgets are tied up in salaries. When the costs of purchasing large-scale equipment are added in, they say, very little is left for running laboratories. "We should call it an apparent increase, like apparent molecular weight," says Jean-Paul Thiery, director of the new cell biology research complex at the Institut Curie in Paris. "Even an apparent 4% increase can lead to minus 6 or 10%" in actual money for doing research, Thiery contends.

At last week's press conference, the assembled journalists—who have grown skeptical from hearing good news pushed by research officials contradicted in later interviews with French scientists—fired question after question at Dufourcq and her aides before adjourning to partake of the customary spread of champagne and eclairs.

"We have found ourselves in a financial situation that is very, very far from being brilliant," Dufourcq said, in a reference to the financial problems the conservative government says it inherited from its socialist predecessor. And in an apparent dig at past fiscal mismanagement, she added: "This budget is not fabulous, but it contains no fiddling of the accounts."

–Michael Balter