

AAAS Meeting: Policy Change on Activists Brings Police

Having put up with raucous demonstrations at its annual meetings for 3 years running, the AAAS leadership took a stand this year against the radical dissidents who had been the source of the tumult. In the end, it was hard to tell who won, if anybody; but the AAAS did succeed in having a passel of young activists evicted from the meeting's main registration area. The price was a noisy brawl between the activists and Washington police that ended with the arrest of eight persons on charges of disorderly conduct.

The incident marked the first time that AAAS officials had asked police to intervene in a dispute with dissenters since the first disruptions occurred at the association's annual meeting 3 years ago in Boston. Ironically, the AAAS's tougher attitude toward dissidents comes at a time when the intensity and frequency of disruptions seems to have declined, and the number of activists in evidence seemed smaller than at any meeting in recent years. But, as retiring president Mina Rees noted, "There's no point in setting a policy if you're not going to stand by it."

The policy in this case was a decision in March 1972 by the AAAS Board of Directors not to give dissident groups room at the meeting for holding caucuses or for their customary literature tables, although the board had done so in previous years. Henceforth, it decided, such privileges would be accorded only to organizations formally taking part in the meeting.

What the board hoped to accomplish by this ruling is not entirely clear, although one objective cited by meeting director Richard Scribner had to do with logistics—preventing protest activities from "proliferating" in congested registration areas.

It was also clear, however, that the embarrassments of previous meetings were a strong motivating factor for some form of restriction on dissident activities. Particularly fresh in the minds of the directors was an incident at the 1971 meeting at Philadel-

phia in which Senator Hubert Humphrey was spattered by a thrown tomato that narrowly missed him. New board member Daniel P. Moynihan thereupon canceled a scheduled appearance and issued a statement criticizing both the demonstrators who, he said, represented a "threat to free inquiry," and the AAAS for policies which, he said, encouraged disruptions. Moynihan then said he hoped the directors would take up the question of "how a professional society defends itself against efforts to politicize and thereby destroy it," and evidently the board did exactly that. In addition, one director said that the AAAS leadership was responding to a "torrent" of complaints from the membership about the disruptions.

The main target of the new restrictions was the dominant dissenting group, Scientists and Engineers for Social and Political Action (SESPA), a loosely knit organization composed mostly of graduate-age students and doctorate holders centered in Cambridge and Chicago. A perennial feature of AAAS meetings, SESPA members say their intent is to stimulate their "fellow scientific workers" to think about the broad social and moral implications of research, and to consider the SESPA view that the present system deprives scientists of full control over the use of their work; the AAAS is viewed as the embodiment of this system, a tool of a ruling corporate structure.

Last November, SESPA applied for table space from which to distribute literature and for a caucus room at the Washington meeting. The AAAS turned down both requests on the grounds that it was not an affiliated organization. And thus the central point at issue in this year's meeting became not a controversial scientist or political figure, but a flimsy fold-up table.

As the meeting got under way on Tuesday, 26 December, about a dozen SESPA members staked out a small spot in one corner of the meeting registration area in the fashionable Sheraton-Park Hotel, erected the for-

bidden table, and proceeded to sell antiwar and antiestablishment literature, in particular the SESPA bimonthly, *Science for the People*.

It was not an unexpected turn of events, and in fact the AAAS staff had worked out a scenario of escalating responses for just such an occasion. The first step was to ask the hotel to ask the dissidents to leave. Accordingly, the hotel's security manager, Wayne Hostetler, strode grimly to the table, grasped it firmly, and asked a milling group of activists to depart. They refused, and the security manager retreated, clearly uncomfortable in his role of stalking horse.

Step two was the direct approach. As a dozen uniformed police and security guards hovered conspicuously nearby and a clutch of reporters waited, Richard Scribner, the meeting director, again asked the activists to remove their table. They did not, and Scribner left the scene.

Later in the day, Scribner proceeded with what apparently was the next step in the contingency plan—an offer to let the activists move two floors down to an "interaction area" or indoor "Hyde Park" at the confluence of several hallways. After a quick inspection of the alternative site, SESPA members decided that it was too isolated (although two other less conspicuous groups of dissenters had moved down). "We're not exactly overwhelmed at your generosity," said Allen Weinrub, a 29-year-old physicist and the chief SESPA strategist in evidence. Scribner reminded him that the group could have participated formally in one or more of the meeting sessions where he insisted there was "ample opportunity for dissent." Weinrub said SESPA would not participate in any way that would seem to "legitimize" the AAAS as a spokesman for radical scientists; this was to be avoided at all costs. In the meantime, the SESPA members had rented their own room in a nearby hotel.

There matters rested until shortly after noon on Wednesday, when the confrontation over the offending table was renewed. This time, waiting reporters were not disappointed.

As Hostetler, the security manager, pulled the plug on a slide presentation of American weaponry in Vietnam, Howard Greyber, a meeting official, said, "I respectfully ask you to withdraw in an orderly manner." The dissidents did not, and, in the ensuing debate, Greyber strayed from the script

a bit to accuse the dissidents of "fascist activities."

Moments later, as a policeman reached out to collar one SESPA member others in the group leaped forward to pull the two apart, and the fray began. A half dozen more police and hotel security guards jumped in, hats and badges flew, and one officer momentarily unsnapped the strap on his holster, as if to draw his revolver. (He did not, and pulled out handcuffs instead.)

The brawl spilled out into the hotel's spacious lobby, scattering a crowd of registrants. Three SESPA members, Allen Weinrub among them, were carried bodily out the front door, kicking and shouting and all but drowning out the Christmas carols that jingled cheerfully over the hotel's music system. Outside, police arrested five more angry activists.

After the confrontation, SESPA retreated to the designated "Hyde Park" area two floors down. (One AAAS staff

official who visited the area the next day said it really was isolated.) Next came a brief battle of press releases and news conferences in which SESPA accused the AAAS of being "unable to understand and tolerate the free exchange of ideas." The AAAS countered with a statement that said in part that the association "condemns acts that deny others the opportunity to present their views or engage in dissent . . . [and those] who attend our meetings should be protected from the mischief of disrupted meetings."

Several AAAS officials appeared in a subsequent press conference to reiterate the statement and to review the events of the day. But some newsmen expressed sharp disappointment that none of the association's top management or its elected officials were available to explain the rationale behind the organization's hard new attitude toward the activists.

On Thursday, Scribner and four SESPA members met for several hours

of conversations that Scribner described as "very reasonable and productive." In exchange for a pledge to observe a measure of decorum, Scribner offered SESPA a more visible location for its now-symbolic table. "I may be kidding myself," he said later, "but I feel that I made some friends and that now we can talk."

Ironically, the crackdown on disruption came at a time when the "mischief" seemed to be waning of its own accord. All told, several sessions were briefly interrupted on Thursday by "flying squads" of activists announcing an antiwar rally. Roughly a dozen other speakers were subjected to accusatory questioning, although observers generally agreed that it would be an exaggeration to call such questioning heckling. In no case was a podium commandeered, a speaker forced to flee, or a meeting broken up as in years past.

It is possible that a show of police force had a deterrent effect. But SESPA

Technological Initiatives: NBS Funds in Holding Pattern

In an apparently strenuous effort to hold federal spending below \$250 billion in the fiscal year ending 30 June, the White House budget office has begun withholding huge sums of money appropriated by Congress last year. The early signs suggest that one major casualty of this new retrenchment may be the vaunted "technological initiatives" program that President Nixon enunciated last March in a special message to Congress.

In his message, the President promised a "strong new effort" to apply the nation's vast R & D resources to the solution of domestic problems. Coupled with this was a \$700-million increase in R & D spending for fiscal year 1973, and this, Nixon said, was "only the beginning."

By some lights, though, the end is already in sight. The full magnitude of the White House impoundments will not be known for some time, but if the stringencies being felt by the National Bureau of Standards in recent weeks are any indication, the overall impact on R & D spending this year may be severe.

Last year, as part of the President's effort to turn "science to the service of man," the White House approved an unusually high, 45 percent increase in the budget of the NBS, boosting it from \$50 million to \$72 million for fiscal 1973. Since the early part of November, however, the White House Office of Management and Budget has frozen nearly the entire increase. So far, according to former NBS director Lewis M. Branscomb, the only one of several technological initiatives assigned to the NBS and still relatively whole is the "technology incentives" program, an experimental effort shared with the National Science Foundation and aimed at finding

new ways to stimulate industrial R & D.

Branscomb, who left the NBS last May to become chief scientist for IBM, touched briefly on the bureau's surprising plight during an invited lecture at the AAAS annual meeting. Sources at the bureau confirmed and amplified his comments.

The sources said the White House had impounded 30 percent of the \$11 million allotted by Congress to the NBS for the technology incentives program, which was widely regarded as the most imaginative revelation of the President's message. Of the remaining \$11 million in new money for such things as fire prevention and control research, development of improved air- and water-pollution measuring devices, and work on super-cooled electric power generators, the White House has withheld all but about \$1 million. Each of these programs were among those selected by a special White House task force headed by former SST chief William Magruder as deserving special support, and each was singled out in budget documents last January as an example of the ways in which the Administration was turning "science and technology to the service of man."

The budget of the NBS, of course, amounts to only a small fraction of the overall government expenditure for R & D. Nevertheless, Branscomb, for one, is convinced that the bureau represents a fairly accurate barometer of White House attitudes toward research, particularly in a climate that seemed to favor applied R & D. "But if these impoundments develop as a pattern," Branscomb told *Science*, "the technology message would seem to have been a sham."—R.G.

was also low on manpower. Although they claimed to have fielded about 100 activists, a head count on any given day might have come closer to 25 or 30. Moreover, SESPA has not only lost vigor, but—if the attitude of liberal anthropologist Margaret Mead is any indication—it has also alienated some important allies. In casual conversation, she said she is still sympathetic with SESPA's basic aims. "But they haven't developed, they haven't matured. You still see the same faces and the same placards. They are not recruiting anyone, and they're not going to get anywhere with this kind of arrogance. It's counterproductive."

Indeed it may have been, for the tribulations of SESPA overshadowed a more sober expression of protest at the AAAS meeting by several prominent scientists distressed at the renewed bombing of North Vietnam. In a news conference of their own, the scientists—among them Yale biologist Arthur Galston and University of Montana zoologist E. W. Pfeiffer—released a letter to President Nixon deploring in

particular the technique of "carpet bombing" with B-52's in populated areas. The scientists said the letter would be circulated through the AAAS meeting in the form of a petition. Among signatures already on the letter were those of liberal Nobelists George Wald of Harvard, Salvador Luria of M.I.T., and Albert Szent-Györgyi, of the Wood's Hole Marine Biology Laboratory.

Pfeiffer, who is a member of the AAAS governing council, said he had introduced a resolution to the council calling for a wide-ranging study of the overall effects of the war on the Vietnamese environment. The council was scheduled to act on this and other business, most notably the proposed new AAAS bylaws, on Saturday, 30 December.

An early printer's deadline caused by New Year's Day prevented coverage of the council meeting in this issue, however. A report on this meeting and events of the final day of the annual meeting will appear in the next issue.

—ROBERT GILLETTE

APPOINTMENTS

Rex E. Paulsen, former department manager, Martin Marietta Corporation, to chairman, civil and environmental engineering department, University of Denver. . . . At West Virginia University: **Arnold J. Levine**, director of sociology, Medical School, Emory University, to chairman, sociology department; **Albert S. Klainer**, associate professor of medicine and medical microbiology, Ohio State University, to head, infectious diseases division; and **William R. Moore**, associate professor of chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to chairman, chemistry department. . . . **Atilano A. Valencia**, associate professor of education, University of Colorado, to chairman, education department, Highlands University. . . . **Elmer S. Dunskey**, former director and vice president, Chaminade Preparatory School, to chairman, education and psychology departments, Chaminade College, Honolulu.

RESEARCH NEWS

Energy and the Future: Research Priorities and National Policy



The energy problems facing the United States are only partially amenable to technological solutions. Not every new energy conversion device nor every exotic energy source needs to be developed. More significant, in the long run, will be new attitudes and policies that take into account finite resources and equitable distribution of the costs of producing energy. But it is certain that better methods of extracting energy from coal, for example, and more efficient means of using energy will be needed well before the end of the century. Heat and electricity from solar and geothermal sources may also be essential by then, as may the improved utilization of uranium resources in breeder reactors. It is not at all certain that these and other technologies will be available without more deliberate, well-funded and well-managed efforts to develop them than exist now.

How soon the technology to exploit new energy sources or to improve the

use of existing sources will be available depends partly on how much money and effort are devoted to their development. Hence the extent to which technology could help to solve the larger energy problems—the conflict between environmental standards and energy needs that is exemplified by the dilemmas encountered in siting power plants, the massive waste of energy by inefficient technologies and careless practices, the balance of payments deficits, and national security worries arising from projected huge imports of oil—is related to the priorities that are adopted for energy R & D. There is now no consensus among the diverse groups clamoring for a national energy policy as to what these priorities should be. There is, however, general agreement among environmentalists, industrialists, university scientists, and government officials that the present distribution of research efforts is greatly imbalanced and that much more money for research should be spent both in industry and government. A task force established by the utility industry, for

example, recommended research funding of more than \$1 billion per year for electrical energy alone, an amount nearly double existing outlays.

The earlier articles in this series have focused on specific technologies for supplying energy and on the "technology" of energy conservation. These necessarily brief assessments have nonetheless indicated that the state of knowledge concerning many of these technologies is rudimentary and that few are free from potential environmental problems and substantial engineering difficulties. At the same time many clearly have high potential for contributing to the resolution of current and prospective energy problems, and many deserve to be investigated far more seriously than present R & D patterns—largely the result of historical precedents, such as the wartime development of nuclear energy by the government and past legislative biases toward oil—or traditional funding mechanisms make likely. This final article discusses R & D priorities. A useful starting point is to consider the