

Future Directions Committee

Reports to Council

An increased commitment to international science and technology activities, analysis of problems in science education, public outreach at the local level, and examination of the state of basic research are four tentative recommendations made in the Progress Report of the AAAS Committee on Future Directions, presented to the Council on 16 February 1978.

The Committee was created by the Board of Directors in 1975 "to discover and examine possible projects, programs, organizational structures, and activities which will help the AAAS to better carry out its declared objectives and to be of greater service to its members and others in the scientific and engineering communities." In an earlier Interim Report (January 1977), the Committee urged the Association to make greater use of its potential conyenor and collaborator roles, to become more involved in areas of scientific controversy, and to extend its public outreach efforts.

In the area of international activities, the Committee's 1978 Progress Report concluded that AAAS objectives should not be restricted to a national framework. It recommended, among other projects, initiating "one or more major long-range science policy efforts of international consequence;" increasing initiatives in the area of scientific freedom and responsibility; and taking the role of critic and counselor on governmental policies and programs involving science and technology on an international scale.

Regarding science education, the Committee asserted that AAAS has an important role to play, both in terms of professional education and public information. Specific tasks of the Association should include the identification and analysis of fundamental problems in science education; initiatives to increase educational opportunities for minorities, women, and the handicapped; projects aimed at charting new directions for government and private organizations capable of impacting on these problems;

and expanded activities to better define ways to inform the general population about issues in science and technology.

To increase the effectiveness of AAAS public outreach activities, the Committee recommended the establishment of cooperative or collaborative arrangements with affiliates which already have localized activities and with other local science-oriented organizations.

Finally, the report recommended that AAAS examine the state of basic research, promote awareness of its importance and its problems, and formulate improved policies. The Committee is awaiting additional discussion of this issue by the Board of Directors before making more specific suggestions about a AAAS role in this area.

The Committee expects to submit its final report and recommendations to the Board in the fall of 1978. For a copy of its Progress Report and earlier reports, write to Richard Scribner, Office of Special Programs, at the AAAS address.

CSFR Clearinghouse on Foreign Scientists

—A Review

The AAAS Clearinghouse on Persecuted Foreign Scientists of the Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility (CSFR) has been in operation for 7 months. During this time, the Clearinghouse has worked to establish, in response to a charge in the CSFR charter, working liaisons with AAAS affiliate organizations to whom cases of alleged violations can be referred. Thus far, 34 such official contacts have been named, and 33 dossiers on cases of alleged violation of the scientific freedom and/or human rights of scientists, occurring in nine countries, have been compiled and referred to these affiliate contacts.

The Clearinghouse staff also has estab-

lished an extensive working file on issues related to scientists' rights, which has been a source of regular exchange of information with refugee and exiled scientists, individual U.S. scientists, congresspeople, staffs of U.S. government agencies, media representatives, and a variety of professional and human rights-oriented organizations.

Other activities undertaken by the Clearinghouse over the past 7 months include organizing a series of meetings in Washington for Mark Azbel, the Soviet refusenik physicist and former leader of the Moscow Seminar on Collective Phenomena; assisting in the preparation for an on-site visit to Argentina by then-president and current Board chairman of AAAS Emilio Q. Daddario, during which Daddario met with government officials, leading scientists, and the families of a number of scientists who have been arrested or have disappeared (*Science*, 3 February 1978, p. 520); and writing two background papers, one on the conditions in Argentina and one focusing on the situation of refuseniks in the Soviet Union. The Clearinghouse also has produced several articles on its goals and activities and on questions regarding the relationship between science and politics, for example, the issue of scientists being denied, on political grounds, their right to practice science.

On several occasions, Clearinghouse staff have met with recent emigrants and relatives of persecuted scientists from Argentina and the Soviet Union to discuss the situation in those countries and the types of advocacy which might be most effective in attempting to alleviate the conditions under which many of these scientists must live.

CSFR activities at the February AAAS Annual Meeting included a symposium entitled "Human Rights and Scientific Freedom: Are Scientists Special?," and a meeting of Clearinghouse contact people and other AAAS members. The latter meeting featured discussion of a question central to Clearinghouse efforts: Can scientific societies legitimately undertake advocacy on behalf of scientists whose professional freedom and human rights have been violated, and if so, on what basis?

Anyone interested in receiving copies of the background papers described above, papers presented at the CSFR symposium during the Annual Meeting,

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