

In my second Editorial dealing with the need for an International Association for the Advancement of Science, I repeated briefly the five main functions and then criticised the four Meetings I attended in 1968. I found that the AAAS in Philadelphia had only attracted 2700 members of its total membership of more than 133000, and asked if science had lost its attraction—as in previous years the attendance had regularly been in excess of 10000. With 1500 speakers and 21 symposia, no richer offering could have been presented to the 500 representatives of the media for whom 22 press conferences had been organised, on the hour—every hour. If only 2700 members attended, at least millions of newspaper readers and television viewers benefited.

The British Association Meeting in Bristol was attended by 1700 members, among whom were a large proportion of senior school pupils from all over Britain. They belonged to the 'British Association of Young Scientists', the BAYS movement, organised as clubs in the best schools of the country. To me this was the most valuable contribution to an IAAS, to be repeated by all other National Associations and the greatest hope to attract once again the elite of the young to the excitement of a scientific career. At the special BAYS lectures one could hardly see any adults.

At the biannual meetings of the GDNÄ, only one lecture is offered at a time, and in consequence audiences number several hundred, whereas at the AAAS and the BA only 10 to 100 hear a speaker. At Munich the lecturers often indulged in lengthy historical introductions and then had little time left for the latest developments in their subject.

In Bangalore at the Indian Science Congress Association, the most impressive feature is the continuing tradition of a keynote address by the Prime Minister. Begun by Nehru in 1947, in 1986 it was Rajiv Gandhi who delivered a stirring message to the 3500 members, promising more money for science and calling for a campaign to improve the standards of science, to rid itself of mediocre practitioners, of its bureaucracy and of its vested interests. Never before had I heard a Prime Minister deliver an address, let alone a critical one, to a Meeting for the Advancement of Science. I can only recall the occasion when Hubert Horatio Humphrey, Vice-President of the United States of America, addressed a controversial lecture to the AAAS, to be promptly pelted with eggs and tomatoes. Speeches by senior Government Representatives would no doubt be welcome at other Associations, and need not be followed by insulting missiles.

This particular AAAS meeting addressed by Vice-President Humphrey was also memorable for a second reason. When leaving it at the end, I noticed a number of gentlemen in business suits among the generally informal attire of scientists. On closer inspection I found that all of them had a bright blue button in their left lapel which I had never seen before, and I asked one of them which new scientific society the button represented. "No, Sir, I am a member of the US Secret Service, and the button identifies me, so that when the shooting starts, we do not fire at one another". (In the USA, the Secret Service guards the lives of the President and the Vice-President and also tries to prevent the counterfeiting of the national currency.