

NEWSLETTER

girep

Groupe international de recherche sur l'enseignement de la physique
International Group for the Advancement of Physics Teaching
Internationaler Arbeitskreis zur Förderung des Physikunterrichts

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I. THE GIREP SEMINAR AT MONTPELLIER 6-10 SEPTEMBER 1976

The 5th GIREP Seminar took place at the Université des Sciences et Techniques du Languedoc under the auspices of the Société française de Physique, of the Union des physiciens, and of UNESCO. It was organized by Prof. Coery Delacote of the Université Paris VII. About 20 people took part in the meeting.

The subjects were "Statistics and probability in the teaching of physics in the secondary school" and "The first steps in the teaching of physics at the beginning of the secondary school".

The scientific programme took the following shape. In the morning "invited papers" were read, followed by discussion; in the afternoon the participants, who according to their choice had been divided into ten groups, worked separately. There was an exhibition of apparatus and books, and in the evening films were shown. On the last day the results attained by the groups were set forth, and some general concluding talks were delivered, where the various results were summarised and analysed.

The University was responsible for the hospitality in general; the social activities programme included receptions, town sight-seeing and tours.

The proceedings from this successful meeting will be published as a book in the GIREP series "The Teaching of Physics in Schools".

II. MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF REPRESENTATIVES AT MONTPELLIER. ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Commission of representatives took place at Montpellier according to previous practice (cf. Newsletter No. 3 - June 1976). Prof. Erwin Baumann had previously resigned. The voting was unanimous with the result:

President:	Poul Thomsen, Denmark
Vicepresident:	John L. Lewis, U.K.
Vicepresident:	Arturo Loria, Italy
Secretary:	Maria Ferretti, Italy
Treasurer:	Karl A. Thernøe, Denmark

Prof. Erwin Baumann was elected honorary member of GIREP, an event which was marked by the following exchange of letters:

DR. ERWIN BAURMANN

The Commission of representatives sitting on September 7th, 1976 has authorized and charged me to offer you an honorary membership of GIREP according to article 5 of the Statutes:

"It is within the General Assembly's competence to elect as honorary members of the Group any person whose especially valuable work in favour of physics teaching or GIREP deserves recognition. The honorary members do not pay any membership fee, and enjoy the same rights as the ordinary members."

I kindly ask you to accept. With this offer, voted for unanimously, the Commission wishes to express its gratitude for your valuable services to GIREP during the many years you held the office of Vice-president.

Copenhagen, September 16th, 1976

Poul Thomsen
President of GIREP

PROF. POUL THOMSEN

Dear Professor Thomsen,

I was greatly touched by your kind letter of thanks dated 16th September 1976. Of course I readily accept your offer to become an honorary member of GIREP. I shall not discontinue however, to pay my membership fee as before. If necessary it may be classified as a regular grant.

.....
..... I am happy to learn that Montpellier was a success. Congratulations to you all! Best personal regards and many thanks again.

Yours sincerely,

Erwin Baurmann

III. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TREASURER

Treasurer's Report

The situation as to the payment of membership fees for 1976 has

improved somewhat since my last report (cf. Newsletter No. 3 - June 1976). But still a considerable number of fees remain to be paid. Therefore, those of you, who have not yet paid the fee for 1976, are urgently requested to do so very soon. The ones who according to our files have not yet paid for 1976 will find enclosed a form with all practical information as to the payment.

It is most essential that this procedure be followed!!!

Please note especially that the cheque should NOT be issued to GIREP but to Credit Suisse in favour of GIREP's account No. 0425-376089-91 (this new, and more extended number of the account is due to the fact, that a new, and more effective system for data processing has been introduced, calling for a re-numbering of all accounts. Hence GIREP's account is identified by the number above).

Please note too that a cheque should NOT be issued to GIREP and then mailed to the treasurer!!!

In case you have settled your duty with GIREP these very days please ignore the form enclosed.

There is an indication that members sometimes may feel a little unsure as to the question of having paid or not paid for the current year.

In order to meet this, a personal membership card will be provided from 1977 onwards (to be issued, when I am notified by the Swiss bank about your payment). For economical reasons the card will not be sent separately but will be enclosed in the first ordinary mail. It will still be possible to pay several years ahead, as the period for which you have paid will be indicated on the card.

You may be interested to learn that GIREP now counts 209 members, representing 36 countries. A revised list of members is enclosed too. Please check that your name and your mailing address is correct. If not, please inform us of the changes (block-letters!) to be made (there have been some mailing troubles).

IV. THE NEXT GIREP SEMINAR (6th)

At the meeting of the Commission of representatives the following subjects were considered for the next seminar (6th):

- 1) Optics in a modern way, including light, signals and communication;
- 2) Technology in secondary education;
- 3) Electronics in secondary education;
- 4) Education of teachers.

After the Montpellier seminar an additional subject was proposed:

- 5) Motion at an elementary level.

The time will very probably be Autumn 1978, or Spring 1978. ^{even}

People from various countries declared their interest, in principle, in organizing the 6th seminar. Later on some practical difficulties arose, so that now the choice is restricted to three possibilities: Holland (Utrecht), Israel (Rehovot) and U.K. (Oxford). The

Committee will shortly decide on subjects, time, and place. Members are invited to communicate their point of view, and to suggest other possibilities besides the ones given above. According to tradition, the last word on the choice of subjects belongs to the organizers of the seminar.

V. WHO IS WHO IN GIREP

There are still several members who have not yet filled in the questionnaire for use in preparing a "Who is who in GIREP". These members will receive a questionnaire together with this Newsletter. Please let the office have them back at your earliest convenience.

VI. INVESTIGATION OF THE EDUCATION OF PHYSICS TEACHERS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

The investigation is developing satisfactorily: so far we have received reports from England (Brian Davis), Denmark (Kent Kasperson), New Zealand (J. Roger Osborne), Holland (W. de Dood and J. Loonen), and Israel (Yehuda Shadmi).

The following persons have promised to prepare a report:

- 1 For Germany: Dieter Nachtigall
- 2 " Scotland: A.W. Jeffrey
- 3 " Belgium: G. Strumane
- 4 " Denmark: E. Halkjaer + Chr. Petresch (education of
grammar school teachers) (1)

- 5 for Mexico: Jorge Barojas
- 6 " Canada: Yvan Chasse
- 7 " Brasil: Anna Maria Pessoa de Carvalho
- 8 " Greece: Dimitris Sotiriou
- 9 " Poland: Kazimierz Badziag
- 10 " Italy: Arturo Loria + Marisa Michelini
- 11 " Yugoslavia: Elza Vernic.

In large countries it may be felt difficult to describe what is going on in all parts of the country. However, it will ^{be} very informative just to get a report on how the education of physics teachers is organized in only one area of the country. We hope to receive offers to prepare a report from many more of our 36 GIREP countries, and hope the contact members in the remaining countries will let us know very soon, who will do the job in their country.

The Committee has considered publishing the reports in the form of a book edited by Brian Davis and Poul Thomsen, with support from UNESCO. To be able to realize this plan we need to receive reports from many countries without too much delay. The educational Committee of the European Physical Society has shown a lively interest in this project, as was kindly announced by its president Dr. A. Janner: probably that will mean a substantial encouragement and assistance.

It was in connection with this matter that Newsletter No. 3 gave the list of the contact members in various countries: they will be pleased to supply information, and to pass on to the office all requests concerning GIREP, and physics education in general.

VII. PHYSICS ACTIVITIES IN WEST GERMANY

On September 19th 1976 Dr. Erwin Baurmann sent the following report.

1. The German Association for the promotion of Mathematics and Science Education (MNU) held its 67th annual meeting of five days duration the week before Easter 1976 at Darmstadt. All annual and regional meetings of MNU are acknowledged as in-service activities by the federal school authorities. The programme regularly contains lectures, panel discussions discussions in small groups on current problems of the didactics and pedagogics of mathematics and science teaching, inclusive of physics, at all levels of secondary school, and and exhibition of new apparatus and books.

2. Again by MNU two seminars on physics, each of 7 days duration, were organized for/student teacher trainers in the Federal Republic:

a) October 1975, Kassel

b) November 1975, Recklinghausen.

Negotiations are under way with the famous "German Museum" to hold such seminars also in Munich.

3. The traditional competition "Young people's research work" (Jugend forscht) had its 11th run in 1975-1976. A large part of it is devoted to physics work by boys and girls of 15-21 years of age. The winners of the final round are entitled to a grant of participation in the American Science Fair.

4. The German Association for the Promotion of Mathematics and Science Education (5200 members) has joined the International Council of Associations for Science Education (ICASE) as a full member beginning from 1976.

5. Associations (for instance MNU, the Section of physics education of the Gesellschaft Deutscher Physiker) as well as many individual physics teachers are presently engaged in the discussions on and the trials of a future detailed unification of the baccalaureate examination procedures (so-called normative books on examinations) envisaged by the school authorities in the Federal Republic. These "norms" deal not only with content, subject matter and its level, but also with the assessment of work, planning of examinations, presentation, grading and final judgement of the examinee.

6. There are tendencies in the federal school authorities to reduce the teaching of science, inclusive of physics, in German secondary schools. A movement of resistance is growing among teachers and their associations in order to prevent this dangerous regress in education.