

In 1937, after preclinical studies, he graduated B.Sc. (Lond.) with first-class honours in physiology and in 1953 he obtained his Ph.D. (Lond.). In 1938, a junior appointment in the Department of Physiology marked the beginning of his research association with the late B. A. McSwincy. In 1941, he was promoted to lecturer and later senior lecturer, until 1954, when he moved to the Royal Free Hospital as reader in physiology. Dr. Downman is well known internationally for his investigations in neurophysiology. His main work lies in the field of visceral afferent reflexology, early papers being concerned with vascular reflexes of skin and with the distribution of afferent fibres of the intestine; the spinal cord and cerebral distribution of splanchnic afferent impulses has been mapped and the properties of the reflexes set up by such impulses has been analysed. More recent work has been concerned with the controls of these arcs in the brain stem. During the Second World War Downman was for a time a member of a team investigating oxygen poisoning at the National Institute for Medical Research under the leadership of Sir Lindor (then Dr. G. L.) Brown. In 1948 he went to Dunedin, New Zealand, for one year, where in collaboration with J. C. Eccles he studied spinal motoneurone physiology. In 1953 he went to the United States and together with C. N. Woolsey studied the interdependence of the subdivisions of the auditory cortex.

The British Biophysical Society

It is proposed to form a new society, to be known as the British Biophysical Society, the object of which will be to provide a common meeting ground for those interested in the functioning and structure of living organisms viewed from a physical point of view and in the application of physical and physico-chemical techniques to biological problems. The first meeting of the new society will be held at King's College, London, during December 19-20. It will consist in part of symposia, with invited speakers, on comparative work on muscular contraction and on the structure of ribonucleic acid, and in part of short contributed papers on the subjects of the symposia or on other subjects. Those interested in joining the Society or in attending (or contributing papers to) the meeting should apply to the honorary treasurer, Dr. P. M. B. Walker, Department of Zoology, West Mains Road, Edinburgh 9. All other correspondence should be addressed to the honorary secretary, Dr. J. C. Kendrew, Peterhouse, Cambridge.

Radioactive Contamination of Materials and Reagents

THE Committee of the International Commission on Radiological Units which is concerned with Standards and Measurement of Radioactivity has appointed a sub-committee to report on problems arising from low-level radioactive contamination of raw materials used in various types of scientific work. Particular attention is being given to: contamination in shielding materials; contamination in the materials used in the construction of detectors and in the mounting of sources; contamination of reagent chemicals used in the separation for analysis of small quantities of radioactive material. The aims of the Sub-Committee are four-fold: to collect general information on the occurrence of contamination, in raw materials, for the information of possible users; to trace the origin of the contamination found in particular materials; to consider whether tests

might be made at certain points in a manufacturing process or in distribution, to ensure that the level of any possible contamination was less than a defined amount; to consider special operations in tracer work or in the preparation and use of standards of radioactivity, where unsuspected radioactive contamination of reagent could lead to significant errors in measurements. The chairman of the Sub-Committee is Dr. N. G. Trott (Institute of Cancer Research), and the members are as follows: Mr. C. O. Peabody (Atomic Energy Research Establishment); Dr. B. Grinberg (Centre d'Etudes Nucléaire de Saclay); Dr. W. W. Meinke (University of Michigan); Dr. R. Brown (Atomic Energy of Canada, Limited, Chalk River). Dr. J. Rundo of the Health Physics Division, Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Harwell, is to act as consultant.

Russian Intelligentsia

THE summer issue of *Daedalus* deals with the condition and prospects of a body of intellectuals known in Russia, pre-Revolutionary and Soviet, as the 'intelligentsia'. In Russia the question of the social function and historic mission of the intellectuals has a particular urgency, first because the early and rapid Westernization of the country produced an extraordinarily large, virile and self-conscious body of intellectuals, and secondly, because there modernization has been carried out with greater intensity and single-mindedness than anywhere else in the world.

What is the 'Russian intelligentsia', or an 'intellectual' or 'intelligent' anywhere? As the passage quoted by Leopold Labedz at the beginning of his essay suggests, these terms can mean all sorts of things to all sorts of people. Some use the term intelligentsia to refer to anyone engaged in non-physical labour, whether he is a lyric poet or a veterinarian (such, for example, is the official Soviet definition); others apply it to a person with a liberal education regardless of the nature of his employment; yet others confine it to persons critically disposed to the existing economic and political order, and ready to sacrifice themselves in order to change it fundamentally in accord with some higher (but secular) ideal. Ultimately, the criterion turns out to be a subjective one, and, to define the term 'intelligentsia' with any degree of accuracy, it would be necessary to have free access to all the groups which could possibly come within the meaning of the term. But this is not possible. The lack of direct access to the Russian intelligentsia of to-day posed difficulties for the writers in *Daedalus*. Rather than seek a comprehensive treatment of the intelligentsia of Russia, it seemed preferable to the authors to concentrate on several crucial aspects of the problem. To begin with, there is the question of the character of the pre-Revolutionary intelligentsia; in particular, its attitude toward civic responsibility. The first of these topics is treated by Martin Malia, the second, from different standpoints, by Leonard Shapiro and Boris Elkin.

"Science, the Endless Frontier"

As part of the observance of its tenth anniversary, the National Science Foundation has re-issued the report, "Science, the Endless Frontier", which Dr. Vannevar Bush, director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, presented during July 1945 to the President of the United States on a pro-