

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[Brief letters to the Editor that make specific scientific reference to papers published previously in the *BIOPHYSICAL JOURNAL* are invited. Receipt of such letters will not be acknowledged but those containing pertinent scientific comments and scientific criticisms will be published.]

### *A Letter from Three Presidents of the Biophysical Society*

It is appropriate that the final pages of the first volume of the *Biophysical Journal* set forth comments of representatives of the sponsor, the Biophysical Society.

In the sense that many eminent scientists of earlier generations, Poiseuille, Helmholtz, Volta, and others, made important contributions to both physics and biology and used the ideas of the physical sciences to explain biological processes, biophysics is old. For a number of decades many distinguished scientists in America, in the British Isles, and elsewhere have called themselves biophysicists. Nevertheless, it is only since World War II that this special field of science has gained recognition as a discipline in its own right. During this time, many universities and research organizations have established laboratories, divisions, committees, and departments of biophysics, and students are now trained at all levels from baccalaureate to doctoral.

A key step in the emergence of biophysics was the founding of the Biophysical Society. Under the sponsorship of a committee of four, Samuel A. Talbot, chairman, Kenneth S. Cole, Ernest C. Pollard, and Otto H. Schmitt, and with financial support of the United States Air Force Office of Scientific Research, a National Biophysical Conference was held in Columbus, Ohio, on March 4 to 6, 1957, at the invitation of Ralph W. Stacy, chairman of the Committee on Local Arrangements. At a business meeting held during this conference over which Max A. Lauffer presided, it was decided to establish a society, and a temporary council was elected for that purpose. Robley C. Williams was named its chairman. During the ensuing year, plans for the establishment of the Biophysical Society were developed and, at a scientific meeting held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the Society came into being officially when its Constitution and By-laws were adopted on February 5, 1958. R. C. Williams served as interim president for the first year and was subsequently elected president in the first regular election. He was succeeded by E. C. Pollard, who was in turn succeeded by M. A. Lauffer. S. A. Talbot and R. W. Stacy have served, respectively, as secretary and treasurer during and since the establishment of the Society. The Society now has a membership of almost 900. More recently, comparable societies have been founded in other countries. The first international congress of biophysics was held and an international organization was formed in August, 1961.

The purpose of the Biophysical Society is to promote the science of biophysics. Inevitably, however, it must define the field. It is trying to do this, not by accepting the dictates of a single individual or of a committee, but by keeping its membership open to all well trained serious scientists working in various capacities in the broad field involving the interaction of the physical and biological sciences and by permitting its members and others to present their research at its scientific meetings without arbitrary restriction of subject matter. Sooner or later, a consensus will evolve concerning the scope of biophysics. The annual scientific meetings have provided not only contributed original research reports but also well organized symposia covering important aspects of biophysics. These meetings have been very well attended and represent an important contribution to science.

The crowning achievement of the Biophysical Society is the establishment of the *Biophysical Journal*. In this venture, the Society gratefully acknowledges its indebtedness to Detlev W. Bronk, a pioneer in our discipline, for contributing substantially through the resources of The Rockefeller Institute Press which publishes the *Journal* for the Society. It acknowledges further the contribution made by Walter Rosenblith, chairman of its Publications Committee, who spearheaded the effort to found the *Journal*.

The editorial policy of the *Biophysical Journal* is controlled by the Biophysical Society through its Editorial Board and its Editor, Frank Brink, Jr., both elected by the Council of the Society. It is the aim of the Society to provide a journal with the most discriminating standards of excellence but with widely representative subject matter. Review of the titles published in the first volume shows that the coverage is not narrow; nevertheless, there are important fields of biophysics not represented. The Editor and the Editorial Board are of necessity limited in their choice to manuscripts actually submitted. It is hoped and believed that high quality contributions in aspects of biophysics not thus far covered will be received in the future. All responsible for its development desire that the *Biophysical Journal* become the standard medium of communication for biophysicists of both biological and physical orientation with broad diversity of interests.

*Received for publication, October 9, 1961.*

MAX A. LAUFFER, *President*

ERNEST C. POLLARD, *Immediate Past President*

ROBLEY C. WILLIAMS, *Past President*

Dear Sir:

Mauro (1) has discussed the property of anomalous impedance displayed by time-variant resistances. When the impedance locus plot falls partially in the second or third quadrants, negative values of A. C. resistance are displayed.

Mauro developed the analysis of current-voltage relationships of the thermistor as an example of a time-variant resistance showing a slow negative resistance in its current-voltage plot (Fig. 1a). Further, it was shown that when the system is operated at a  $I_0$ ,  $V_0$  in the negative slope region of the  $I$ ,  $V$  characteristic, it may also be described by the impedance diagram shown in Fig. 1b.

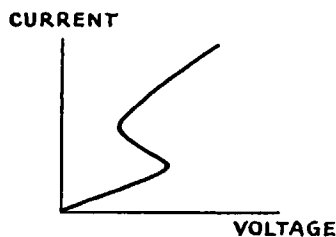


FIGURE 1 a

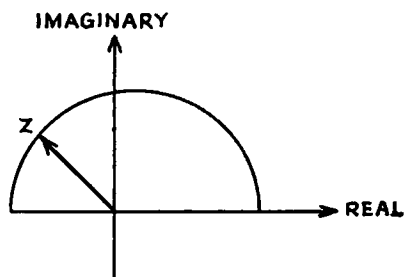


FIGURE 1 b