

FOREWORD

Increasing recognition of the social implications of human biology and of the biological background of many social problems is opening up a field of great interest—the common ground between biology and the social sciences. The annual symposia organized by the Eugenics Society are designed to promote contacts within this interdisciplinary area and the success of the meetings and of the published proceedings demonstrates clearly the need for additional means of communication among those concerned. Many of the disciplines involved have their specialist journals, but no existing periodical covers fully the many and varied points of contact between them. For this reason, the newly established Galton Foundation, with widely expressed support, has launched the internationally orientated *Journal of Biosocial Science*, the purpose of which is to focus attention on this new and exciting field, and to promote communication within it by catering specifically for its rapidly growing literature.

An aim of this kind is easier to describe than to attain. It has been well said that we cannot give definition to biosocial science merely by putting papers on human biology within the same cover as papers dealing with the social sciences. If papers are not overtly ambivalent, those which are primarily biological should have obvious social implications and those which are primarily social should have obvious biological undertones. For various reasons, it may take a little time to achieve this ideal, but we can maintain that we have made a fair start. Of the papers in this first issue, several are good examples of what we mean by biosocial science, and the others are likely to be of interest in varying degrees to both biologists and social scientists. In the course of time, we may confidently expect to develop this integration fully so that the journal will become the publication medium of choice for those working in these overlapping territories.

Lest it be thought that we are adding yet another word to the over-extended vocabulary of science, we may point out that the word biosocial was used by Scheinfeld and Schachter in 1961 in the title of a paper on twinning, in exactly the same sense as it is used here. Moreover, the word offers a neat contrast with bio-medical, which is now widely accepted, and as such it fulfils a need.

In matters of editorial practice we shall work to a few simple ideas. We shall shun both the savage editing which squeezes all personality out of even a good paper and reduces it to a colourless formula, and the other extreme of working up indifferent presentations of indifferent material. It is no encouragement to an author to know that his paper however competent will be mutilated in an editorial office, and, by contrast, no service to him or others to give an exaggerated impression

of his ability to present his material. In between these extremes, we shall recognize that the Journal has a reputation to establish, but we shall remember that it is the author, not some nameless referee, who ultimately carries the responsibility for what appears under his name and gets the credit or discredit for it. To meet these various considerations we shall, so far as possible, accept or reject papers as submitted, but we shall recognize that many authors, especially those of the rising generation, are quick to profit by and often very appreciative of constructive comments from editors.

It remains to be seen whether such a policy of perfection is really practicable. In any event we can assure all authors with appropriate material that papers submitted will receive careful and sympathetic consideration.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the widespread interest which the announcement of this new journal has aroused and in particular the promise of financial assistance from several sources, including the Eugenics Society and the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

A.S.P.
For the Editorial Board