

buildings and the precincts, like the luxury of quiet thought. Between 1944 and its inaugura- tion, and since, committees of scien- tists and architects have given a great deal of thought to the func- tions of the institute, but its short history shows that while it is pos- sible to design and erect impressive buildings, it is not possible to "blue- print" the future of a research insti- tute. It is an organism, which, once conceived, assumes a life and char- acter of its own.

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Weizmann Institute

their histories, they have "budded" from universities or centres of learning or they have been devoted to a subject—cancer, physics, nutri- tion and so on. They are not com- prehensive. Searching for approxi- mations, one might find one in the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute (now the Max Planck) or in the diverse acti-

which, in older countries, grew from long-established academic tradi- tions.

The Weizmann, however, is dif- ferent. Although, as has been said, Dr. Weizmann was always con- cerned about practical applications, the Institute, in its conception, was really dedicated to pure research. It might, and some hoped it would, have attracted to Israel great Jew- ish Nobel prize-winners. It was a good thing that it did not, because it might have become a pantheon of the Immortals. Instead it became a nursery of talent, giving young scientists every opportunity to build their own reputations. First, it embodied Weizmann's belief that pure research without the compul- sions of a university syllabus or of direct application is the foun- tainhead of scientific progress. Second, it must, he insisted, be truly inter- national, part of the great world commonwealth of science; but be- cause of its remoteness, geographi- cally, from kindred institutions it must, while keeping open its lines of communication, be scientifically viable. A third factor, however, which influenced its character was the creation of the State of Israel. From being an outpost of experi-

mental science in the Middle East, it became a research centre in the new State. As the scientist-presi- dent declared, in words which are carved in the Galilean marble of the amphitheatre, near his grave, "I feel sure that science will bring to this land both peace and a re- newal of its youth, creating here the springs of a new spiritual and material life. And here I speak of science for its own sake and applied science." The Weizmann Institute is unique because of the diversity of its departments and of its re- searchers, not in one discipline but in many and in the opportunities it offers for bridging the disciplines and overcoming that over-specializa- tion which has become the bane of science.

Yet that was not implied in his request. The "expansion of the Sieff Institute" could have meant the in- tensification of researches in his own subject, organic chemistry, which had been the function of the Sieff Institute. Instead, with the blessing of Weizmann, a committee of scientists in America, during the preparatory phase, had planned an institute with a wider purpose. But even that early planning bore little resemblance to the outcome. One can say that the Institute was not planned—it evolved.

For example, "Expansion" could have meant the provision of auxil- iary services. It did. Organic chemistry, in the advanced prac- tices of today needs spectroscopy and X-ray equipment. Weizmann had made spectroscopy an auxiliary to his chemistry as early as 1904,

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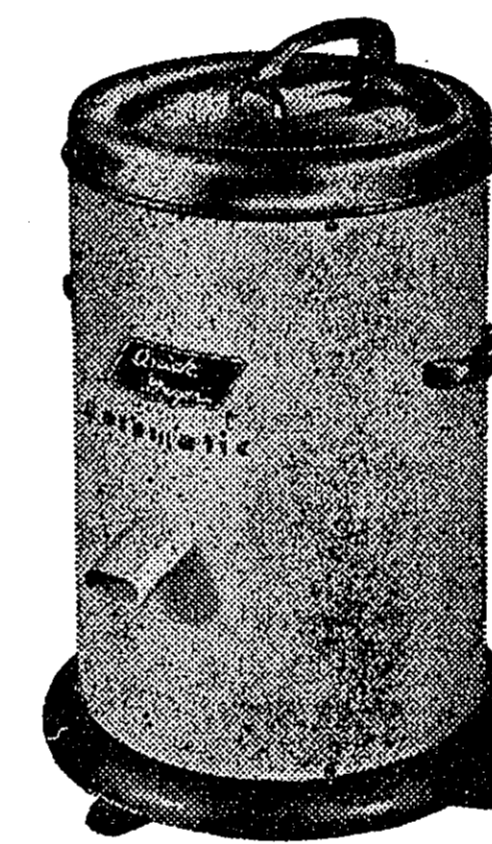
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