To the Readers of Acta Haematologica

Acta Haematologica has lost one of its editors-in-chief. The journal, during the past 10 years, mirrored the personality of Prof. Lüdin, whose qualities and achievements have been outlined by S. Moeschlin in the last issue of this journal.

When the publisher asked me to take over the task of the editorship, I hesitated. A number of questions arose which had to be answered first: Is it really justified to continue publication of Acta Haematologica? What is the place of this journal among the increasing number of haematological publications? What are its special characteristics? How can it fulfill the expectations of the readers? What should be the future policy of publication?

There are many possible answers to these questions. Let us consider a few of them. Acta Haematologica was founded in 1948 as an international journal of haematology. At the time it was one of the first specialized journals connecting a subspeciality of internal medicine with experimental medicine ('Blood' had come out 2 years earlier; Folia Haematologica had disappeared during the war). Since then an overwhelming series of new periodicals has emerged. A few of them cover the whole field of haematology with particular emphasis on the clinical side. However, most of these have a primarily national character, although they are, according to their broad international readership, open to authors from other countries and other parts of the world. On the other hand many new journals are devoted to particular aspects of haematology (immunology, haemostaseology, cytochemistry, etc.).

Therefore, we think that Acta Haematologica should keep its position as an international journal of general character. Many of us are convinced that in spite of continuing 'subspecialisation' in our field, there will always be a place for a general topic 'Haematology'. Acta Haematologica should remain a link between these subspecialities as well as between clinical and experimental haematology, opening its columns to all those who wish to present new data of general interest to an international audience. Papers dealing with clinical problems will be particularly welcome. However, Acta Haematologica will continue to publish experimental work as much as possible. The editors would also like to stimulate the publication of papers on selected chapters from the history of haematology or discussions on problems of edu-

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cation and teaching in haematology. However, at the moment, it is not planned to change the character of Acta Haematologica fundamentally. Articles may be published under the following headings:

original articles;

brief preliminary communications;

illustrative case reports;

letters or discussions on material published in Acta Haematologica.

In 1978, the journal will enter its 30th year. This may give the opportunity to think over what the future trends of the journal will be, and to look out for new possibilities. Since it is our main concern to meet the expectations and wishes of our readers and of all those who potentially will join them, we are grateful for criticism and suggestions concerning the editorship of the journal.

The quality of a journal is defined by the standard of the published articles. It will be a challenge for the editors to keep or even to improve the standard of Acta Haematologica. This means that many papers will have to be rejected even if they are qualified as good. The editors will take freedom to base their decisions on the opinion of one or two referees.

It is evident that the whole burden of editorship cannot be worn by one or two persons alone. Therefore, I am very happy that a number of colleagues agreed to cooperate in this new field. The editorial board will be further expanded in the forthcoming months. At this very moment the contributions of the members of the passed editorial board must be appreciated and, together with the publishers, I would like to thank them for their most valuable help.

There are a few technical points to be added. From the beginning Acta Haematologica has been a multilingual journal. Whereas in the early years German was predominant, a continuous movement towards English took place, corresponding to the general trend in scientific communication. In agreement with the publisher, we decided that articles in German or French will also be accepted in future, although English should be the main language of the journal. Every paper will include an informative summary in English. As to the linguistic details, we would like to leave it to the authors if they prefer the English or the American way of spelling. Concerning units and measurements, we will follow the recommendations of the International Society of Haematology and adapt to the current practice of the main haematological periodicals. One of the main difficulties for each scientific journal is the delay in publication. The editorial board together with the publisher will take every effort to shorten these delays. But authors should be reminded that it takes approximately 6 months from acceptance (not to be confused with receipt) of a paper until its publication. To clarify the situation the dates of receipt and final acceptance will be mentioned in future.

U. Bucher, Berne