

Letters to the Editor

Unemployed physicists to assist developing countries?

Sir,

One of the most serious problems that mankind is facing at present is the problem of the third world. Without a rapid scientific, technical, economic and cultural development in this sector of our planet, our generation will most probably be faced with a threat to our civilization, more dangerous than the nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles of present times.

To overcome and remedy this state of affairs, science and technology must unquestionably play a determining role. For this reason one cannot but welcome wholeheartedly the *World Plan of Action*, worked out by UNO and published in the November 1972 issue of *Europhysics News*.

The large international non-governmental organizations, among them our own society, must, without any doubt, dedicate much of their attention to the implementation of this plan. It is thus extremely significant that, as our journal has pointed out more than once, physicists (like some scientists in other fields) are at present going through a sort of employment crisis in the developed countries, due to an imbalance between the number of scientists trained and the number of jobs that are available to them.

The result is, that intellectual and scientific capacity is being wasted and all humanity is being deprived of this potentiality for scientific, technical, economic and cultural development.

May I therefore suggest, that EPS should, in cooperation with similar international organizations and national societies, initiate discussion on the way in which those qualified scientists, who, for whatever reason, are unemployed, could contribute toward the noble and humane task of giving assistance to the developing countries.

In my own country at present, many young and elder scientists, among them men of high renown from various fields of science, are required to leave their research institutes or universities or retire whilst still at full creative strength.

The solution of the creation of an international centre of science for developing countries is logical and hu-

mane. It is acceptable not only to the scientific workers themselves (there can be no doubt about their sense of social responsibility and good will), but also to the authorities of most countries. Scientific and technical assistance to developing countries is one of the basic precepts of foreign policy of many governments, including that of my own country.

I am therefore submitting this recommendation at the same time to our national Society, to the respective Czechoslovak authorities, as well as to the corresponding committees of UNO and UNESCO.

I am convinced that this suggestion is worth considering and I am signing this letter in the belief that EPS will take steps to support such a solution.

F. Janouch, Prague, Czechoslovakia

Unsigned articles

Sir,

As a member of the European Physical Society. I am disturbed by the appearance, in *Europhysics News*, of unsigned articles passing judgement on various topics, including controversial issues. For instance, in the March issue, there is an un-

signed review of the books *Physics in Perspective* and *Physics in the Twentieth Century*, and an unsigned review of *Malthus with a Computer*, in which the important MIT-Club of Rome study on *The Limits to Growth* is treated in a rather cavalier and high-handed fashion. In view of the possible implication that these unsigned articles represent an opinion held by EPS, I would like to dissociate myself publicly from them, and to emphasize publicly that these matters have never been discussed and voted upon by the membership. If these articles represent the personal view of some person, I suggest it might be of interest to the readers of *Europhysics News* to know who this person is.

Let me emphasize that what I object to is the publication on *Europhysics News* of unsigned articles on controversial subjects. I have instead no objection — in fact, I do favour — the publication of signed articles on controversial topics, such as those mentioned above, provided, of course, a fair chance is provided to different people to present different points of view.

F. Calogero, Rome, Italy

Editor's comment :

Unsigned articles in all cases express the opinions of the Editor and not those of the Society. Corporate views of the Society, when presented, will be clearly identified as such. Advisors to *Europhysics News* have the opportunity of seeing such articles before publication and are of the opinion that their appearance is in the best interest of *Europhysics News*. At the same time, it is hoped that readers who are in disagreement with the views expressed will make their own opinions known through the 'Letters' columns.

University of Oxford

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