

# Letters to the Editor

## Encouraging visits to physics institutions

Sir,

The European Physical Society is dedicated to 'promote the advancement of physics, in Europe and in neighbouring countries'. This is accomplished chiefly by bringing physicists of different countries together by suitable means. However, a map of Europe and its neighbouring countries demonstrates that some physicists are closer together than others a priori. EPS might well consider whether it would be appropriate for the Society to use its good services to improve the situation.

The establishment of a large scale effort comparable to the American International Committee on Education in Physics is a larger question which the Society might wish to discuss. However, a simple system might offer considerable assistance. The Secretariat of the Society could, at nominal cost, maintain a file of institutions which would welcome visitors. Since a person travelling to a conference can often visit an extra city en route at no extra cost, the principal obstacle to such visits is discovering who might be interested in seeing him and where to write in order to make arrangements.

A system with a central file would benefit travellers going either to or from one of the centres of physics activity. A visitor from the fringe areas of Europe to one of the centres of physics activity, would, by use of such a file, be able to make contacts with several laboratories on his trip and thus make the trip that much more valuable. A traveller from one of the centres of physics activity passing near an institution in a fringe area, where visitors are extremely rare and contacts few, would have the opportunity to learn first hand of the efforts and problems of that institution and by his very presence provide a significant stimulus.

The success of such a programme depends on the desire of members of EPS to promote physics as a whole in addition to their special interest, but, without such a desire on the part of its members, EPS can hardly flourish. I would, therefore, hope that EPS can establish a suitable file of reference information about interested institutions and encourage visits to institu-

tions in different countries particularly those involving persons from and institutions in the 'neighbouring countries' mentioned in the EPS constitution. I would appreciate hearing comments from EPS on the feasibility of such a programme.

The Physics Institute of Hacettepe University, for one, would like to express its interest in such a programme. When we make our travel plans, we often do not know where else we could profitably visit. On the other hand, we would welcome physicists who, on a business trip or a vacation, might be passing reasonably close to Ankara. It would be desirable to write us ahead of time so that details of the visit can be discussed and suitable plans made. There are three major Universities in Ankara as well as several government research institutions with physics sections, so that most branches of physics are represented in the neighbourhood.

**R.L. Morehouse,**  
Hacettepe University,  
Department of Physics,  
45 Ankara, Turkey

## Code of ethical practice for scientists

Sir,

I read with interest the President's address to the Second European Physical Society General Conference. In particular, I was heartened to see Professor Casimir's recommendation that *no scientist in an academic position should, of his own free will, be active in or advise on military technology.*

I was fortunate some years ago in finding a communally-owned company whose constitution contains a commitment not to become involved in the supply of arms. Therefore, like the physicist in an academic position, following this recommendation presents no great difficulty.

However, I feel this type of thinking needs to go further. It is surely time to prevent or at least put more obstacles in the way of the inexorable 'progress' towards whatever is scientifically and technically possible, regardless of the consequences. Society is not yet organised in a way in which it is able to prevent the progress of undesirable developments, even though they may include more effective methods for individual or large scale unselective annihilation, which are widely recognised as being undesirable.

During and since the last World War, scientists have made unsuccessful attempts to exert some control over the final stages of such develop-

ments. The reasons for their lack of success are complex, but so called 'national interests' have invariably been a major obstacle.

An internationally agreed code of ethical practice for scientists could do much to reduce this particular obstacle. It would also encourage a healthy sense of responsibility and provide a much needed 'touchstone' for tomorrow's scientists.

Should not such a code find its origins in the European Physical Society, an international body which represents those countries which have always been at the forefront of civilised and scientific thought?

**J.A. Raymond,**  
Scott Bader,  
Wollaston, UK

## Europhysics Style Manual

Sir,

In the May 1972 issue of *Europhysics News*, you recommend the *Europhysics Style Manual* with Appendices A, B and C.

May I draw your attention to a source of misunderstandings in the recommendation of the *Europhysics Style Manual*? There is mentioned, as Appendix A, the IUPAP/SUN document U.I.P. 11; my address is given for requests for this document. Then follows a description of Appendices B and C, without any indication where these documents can be obtained. So I am getting requests for the whole *Europhysics Style Manual*. I should be very grateful, if you would insert a correction into the next issue of *Europhysics News* giving the addresses where the different parts can be obtained.

**U. Stille,**  
Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt,  
Bundesallee 100,  
D - 33 Braunschweig,  
Fed. Rep. of Germany

**Editor's Note :** Only the IUPAP/SUN U.I.P. 11 (Symbols, Units and Nomenclature) is obtainable from U. Stille. The *Europhysics Style Manual* is available from EPS (P.O.B. 39, CH - 1212 Petit-Lancy 2, Switzerland) for Sw. Fr. 10.—.

## The needs of developing countries

Sir,

We would like to comment on the letter from F. Janouch appearing in the May issue of *Europhysics News*. First of all, the title 'Unemployed phy-

sicists to assist developing countries?' is certainly controversial due to the fact that unemployment is not restricted to the developed countries but is also a severe problem for the developing countries. Clearly the criterion of unemployment among scientists does not distinguish a developed country from an developing country. It would be inappropriate to think that an easy solution to the employment crises in the developed countries could be attained just by sending the unemployed scientists to the developing countries. In addition, we believe that assistance given by developed countries, while intended to be noble and humane, is often justly or unjustly viewed by the recipients as a self-serving facet of foreign policy motivated by politics and/or economics.

Science should make every effort to remain independent of the foreign policy of the developed countries.

Finally, the need of the developing countries is for expertise in practical and applied technology. Those most affected by the present employment crisis tend to be in the fields more closely related to pure science. It is important to match the needs of the developing countries with people with

right background and experience and not those who are merely unemployed.

However, we agree fully with Mr. Janouch that EPS should initiate discussion which is based on the realistic situation and needs. We feel this discussion should not take the form of a large international conference but rather be confined to a systematic series of widespread workshops. Hopefully the interest in these ideas and in the proposals of Mr. Janouch will not be confined to unemployed physicists.

**S. Chakraborty**  
and **L. Peddicord**  
(in Switzerland)

### Malthus with a Computer

Sir,

I was interested to read the review you included, under the above title, in the March 1973 *Europhysics News*. Sufficiently so to purchase the editions of *Futures* containing the articles under review.

I would concede that there is a marginal attempt at 'balance' in the review but it did far less than justice to both an objective and competent appraisal by any professional scientist

and the 'reply' by Meadows that was also included in the same issue of *Futures*.

The 'self-delusions arising from the MIT computer model building' referred to by your reviewer are of a far lower significance, if at all, than those accompanying the current practices of politicians, economists and sociologists in countries throughout the world — whatever their ideological bias and orientation.

In the absence of knowledge, information and, at least, broadly validated 'models' of a dynamic — yet resource-limited — world, the only prospect is increase in entropy, disorder and instability in all societies.

'Taking thought for the morrow' is still materialistic, as well as moral and ethical, 'good advice' and it will be only arrogant, if not unethical, scientists who seek for 'perfection' prior to reliance, in action, on 'guidance' models and mechanisms.

**R.L. Drew,**  
Slough, UK



## UNIVERSITY OF NIJMEGEN THE NETHERLANDS

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### band structure of solids

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## professor

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Applications (including curriculum vitae, list of publications and references) should be sent to professor A. R. de Vroomen, Department of Physics, Toernooiveld, Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Suggestions for possible candidates are also appreciated.

*L'Ecole polytechnique fédérale  
de Lausanne*

met au concours le poste de

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33 avenue de Cour, 1007 Lausanne - Suisse.*