5 May 1969

Dr. George D. Pappas
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Dear Dr. Pappas

I regret I cannot agree with your attitude towards the Fourth Advanced Study Institute of Molecular Biology, which will take place on Spetsai this July. This meeting was only organised by myself and my colleagues after long and careful deliberation. The main reason we agreed to do this was that we were asked to do so by Evangelopoulos and his colleagues, who organised the previous meeting on Spetsai in 1966. We feel that while the boycott of scientific meetings is unlikely to seriously inconvenience the present Greek Government, it is certain to harm Greek science, which would otherwise be completely isolated. We are naturally more inclined in this matter to follow the advice of Greek scientists in Greece than of those overseas. More than one quarter of the students accepted for the Spetsai meeting are Greek.

Attendance at the Spetsai meeting can in no way be taken to support, even faintly, the Greek Government. This is shown rather clearly by the fact that the Greek Ambassador has assured me that visas will be ~~passed~~ issued to students from Eastern Europe, accepted by us, who wish to attend the meeting.

I have been in correspondence with Francois Jacob, Jacques Monod and Francois Gros on this matter, and you may be surprised to learn that there is not a great deal of difference in our points of view. We are all now agreed that these matters are difficult, and that hasty action, of the kind advocated in your letter, may easily do more harm than good. While it is true that the present Greek Government is newer than those of Spain, Portugal or Poland, this does not imply that it can be toppled by boycotting a few scientific meetings.

I am hoping to meet both Monod and Gros some time during this summer to discuss actions which might have some tangible influence on the Greek Government without at the same time damaging Greek science. If you have any suggestions I should be pleased to hear them.

Yours sincerely

F.H.C. Crick