

Dear Colleague,

We have learned with surprise and regret that the 4th Advanced Study Institute of Molecular Biology, planned for July 1967 and cancelled owing to the seizure of power in Greece by the military junta, is to be held on the Island of Spetsai this summer. The Nato Advanced Study Institute on the Structure and Evolution of the Galaxy, a Symposium on the Radiation-Induced Neoplasms and nine others Advanced Study Institutes are planned to be held this summer on the Island of Crete and on Lagonissi in Greece.

It is however barely a year since the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs in the colonels' government dismissed 56 professors from the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Medicine of the Universities of Salonica and Athens, on charges of "disloyalty" and "lack of moral authority" brought against them by the special police services. They were not given any means of defending themselves. Ministerial decisions regarding dismissals of certain numbers of professors have also been published recently.

Information provided in a pamphlet on the "cleansing" of the Greek Universities, throws some light on these illegal measures. With the exception for few cases concerning questions of "moral authority", the large majority of professors dismissed have been deprived of the possibility of working any longer in their field on account of political opinions unfavourable to the government.

Many of these men, appreciated far beyond the Greek frontiers for their moral authority and scientific competence, are now without means of support. Some have been invited officially as associate professors by universities and other scientific institutions in France, and Germany. But information coming in from reliable sources confirms the fact that passports to leave Greece are being refused in all cases despite repeated requests on their behalf from various Embassies in Athens and despite permanent appointments to university posts dating three and four months back.

Under these conditions we believe that one cannot accept to take part in a discussion of scientific problems when political prisoners (including a large number of intellectuals and students) are being tortured in camps or deported to islands far less attractive than those of Spetsai and Crete.

The participation of scientists at meetings like the summer schools of Spetsai Lagonissi or Chania, is bound to take a political meaning since ministers of the military junta have for the past two years marked every international scientific meeting held in Greece with their official presence and political speeches. They appeal to congress members to speak when back in their own countries "of the respect of Freedom and Democracy they found in Greece" and maintain that "the national Revolutionary Government is striving to establish a Moral and Spiritual Civilization". In a word, they try to use every scientific meeting for their political purposes and propaganda.

It seems obvious to us that the 400 signatories to the appeal not to participate in scientific meetings held in Greece are actuated by the motives other than respect for freedom and democracy and are not victims of "propaganda" that distorts the truth about the present Greek regime.

We are convinced that if you agreed to go to the meetings, it was because you were not fully aware of the true situation in Greece and especially in the universities.

We hope that impartial reconsideration of the situation will lead you to adopt an attitude similar to that of the many American, Belgian, British, Danish, Dutch, French, Swedish and Swiss professors and scientists who are refusing to go to Greece as things stand at the present time.

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SCIENTISTS FOR DEMOCRACY IN GREECE

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