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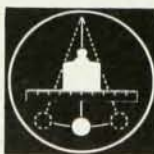
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letters

freedom of the scientific endeavor, should be very worried, as I am, when a totalitarian regime can intimidate the citizens of a free society. The Canadian officials were certainly intimidated by threats and demands made by the Soviet government. If free peoples allow themselves to be threatened like this within the context of an international scientific meeting, what is the value of our freedom? What is the value of our science?

JEFF COLVIN

Los Alamos, New Mexico

IAU CHAIRMAN COMMENTS: Jeff Colvin solicited signatures for a petition when he was a guest on private property. Notwithstanding his own statements, the location he chose to do this, and his placing of a notice on the same stand as an official poster, did embarrass both the National Organizing Committee and members of the IAU, by conveying the impression that Colvin was acting with our authority. We deliberately did not interfere with him on the first day, but when complaints—which were explicitly addressed to the appearance of our own involvement—were received, we decided that if Colvin solicited further signatures in the building where the meetings were being held, we would ask him to stop. Accordingly, when I became aware that Colvin was active again, I asked him, in the presence of a representative of the owner of the property, not to seek further signatures inside the building. I explicitly told him that we would not interfere with him if he continued to solicit signatures outside the building. Colvin appeared unwilling to accept this solution, and enquired what we would do if he refused to comply with our request. At this point he was told that the police could be called and asked to escort him from the building. We did not threaten him with arrest, and never thought of doing so.

ALAN H. BATTEN

Chairman

National Organizing Committee

IAU Montreal

More on ERA

In his letter (October, page 13) Robert H. Good correctly stated, "It is the business of APS to facilitate discussion of physics; decisions should be the prerogative of individual people." Precisely for this reason APS should not be party to decisions that systematically exclude half the population from equal opportunity to participate in discussions of physics. The ERA is designed to facilitate discussion, including discussion of physics. The APS should not support decisions to continue to exclude women from equal opportunity to participate in discussions.

PAUL A. SMITH

Coe College

Cedar Rapids, Iowa □

11/2/79