

letters

members who seek exemption because of conscientious objection must be judged by union appointees. Applicants are required to bare their souls to the union by submitting documentary testimony and are tried and judged *in absentia* by a union tribunal. Among those suspended in March, and those threatened with suspension in December, were faculty members whose applications for recognition as conscientious objectors had been denied by the union. The union is faced with the paradox that its *raison d'être* prohibits recognizing as genuine conscientious objection argued on the grounds that militant unionism violates the spirit of higher education.

The lawsuit now pending has two main thrusts. First, it seeks to establish the validity of tenure granted to faculty members prior to the contracts negotiated with the union. Second, it seeks to clarify the conditions determining what constitutes conscientious objection, and to gain a ruling requiring that objectors be judged by persons not identified with union interests. This second point conforms with common sense and common law.

Nissim-Sabat states in his letter that the union was "formed and elected by the faculty" (his italics). We lack evidence that a faculty majority on this campus voted in favor of a union. The bargaining unit, determined by the pro-union State Labor Relations Commission, consists of librarians and faculty of the Amherst Campus, represented by the Massachusetts Society of Professors, and librarians and faculty of the Boston Campus, represented by the Faculty Staff Union. We have thus the anomaly of one bargaining unit and two unions, and both unions are backed by the politically powerful Massachusetts Teachers Association and National Education Association. Librarians have no teaching duties, and many faculty members on the Boston Campus are part-time teachers; both these groups in the bargaining unit favor education unions. As far as we can determine, a faculty minority on the Amherst Campus voted for a union, and, on the principle of divide and rule, the majority has been gerrymandered into an unwanted union. When a move was made in 1980 to institute decertification (a petition from more than one-third of the bargaining unit members is required for a decertification ballot), the 450 signatures obtained on this Campus were sufficient, but insufficient to carry the Boston Campus.

I make these remarks in order that the academic community may understand how this unfortunate university, having aspirations to excellence, has suffered in the interests of unions

serving political causes. By all means let us organize, in the form of faculty senates, and by all means let us contribute handsomely to the campaign expenses of politicians, if we must, but not by affiliation with unions.

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3/84

Scientific freedom

I would like to comment on Robert Marshak's editorial "The peril of curbing scientific freedom" (January, page 192). At an APS symposium in Washington, D.C., in 1982, our Executive Secretary William Havens gave an invited paper whose arguments were similar to those presented in Marshak's editorial. In answer to my comments, which concerned the inconsistency of his arguments in view of the fact that the *Physical Review* journals used a policy of censorship similar to that proposed by the government, Havens agreed with the argument that there is no such thing as an objective physicist, but defended the *Physical Review* policy on the grounds that it saves paper and that people are free to start their own physics journal. I suspect that the government officials concerned with creating the new censorship policy who attended the symposium probably felt that national security is a better reason for censorship than saving paper, and, after all, anyone is free to move to a different country.

The APS Council has approved a POPA resolution on open communication (January, page 99). The resolution states that the Council "Affirms its support of the unfettered communication at the Society's sponsored meetings or in its sponsored journals of all scientific ideas and knowledge that are not classified." The policy of unfettered communication at APS-sponsored meetings is an established practice, but it has not been the policy of the APS *Physical Review* journals. A *Physical Review Letters* editor has arbitrarily rejected a current paper I submitted without sending it to a referee. I suspect the true reason for the rejection was the fact that I had the audacity to publish a letter in *PHYSICS TODAY* that was critical of the journal's editorial policy (January 1983, page 11). If the Council follows up on its resolution by adopting a policy of allowing APS members the right to publish in the *Physical Review* journals, the concerned government officials will see that the resolution is more than hypothetical rhetoric, and may see the wisdom of adopting a similar policy!

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St. Petersburg, Florida
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