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letters

versities claim to be racially neutral. They are subject to the laws of apartheid and must comply. It is hard for us to imagine that a freedom-loving American physicist would accept a position anywhere in South Africa or care to live in such a society.

Exhortations of the civilized world continue to be ignored. It is time we unequivocally show our disapproval. If this hurts South African physicists, maybe they should think of emigration. Others have done it. We subscribe to your journal and like it.

A. BHATTACHARYA
MURRAY GOLDMAN
T. SCHAFER

Community College of Philadelphia
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
4/85

While perusing the March issue of PHYSICS TODAY, I encountered several prominent advertisements for positions at the University of South Africa. Individual physicists and The American Physical Society have taken a prominent role in protesting abuses of human rights around the world. I question the propriety of PHYSICS TODAY publishing advertisements from an institution that explicitly practices racial discrimination.

According to the fine print at the head of the Information Exchange section, readers of PHYSICS TODAY are to assume that "unless otherwise stated in the advertisement," the advertisers "wish to receive applications from qualified persons regardless of race, age, national origin, religion, sex or physical handicap." Although the advertisements from the University of South Africa make no mention of the laws of apartheid in South Africa, I doubt that the University intends to make appointments "regardless of race."

CHARLES HYDE-WRIGHT
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts
4/85

Physics and politics

I wish to bring to the attention of the physics community the following incident:

I was invited to participate in the "Winter school and international colloquium on exactly solvable problems in condensed matter and relativistic field theories," which was held in Panchgai, India, from 30 January to 12 February 1985. I was to be a member of the American delegation whose travel expenses were covered by a special grant from NSF. The invitation was issued well in advance by the meeting's organ-

izers from the Tata Institute at Bombay.

Despite their considerable efforts, however, the Indian government refused me a visa on the grounds of my holding an Israeli passport.

The meeting took place with some (too few!) delegates canceling their participation in protest.

I believe that a country that cannot assure free access to scientists who wish to participate in a scientific meeting should not be accepted as a suitable host for an international conference in the future. Nor do I believe that NSF should fund the travel of an American delegation to a country pursuing this policy.

NATAN ANDREI
Rutgers University,
New Brunswick, New Jersey

6/85
RESPONSE FROM THE TATA INSTITUTE: We are surprised and dismayed by the reaction of Natan Andrei, which we feel is unwarranted. The sanctions suggested by him can only have undesirable effects as far as interactions between international scientific communities are concerned.

Andrei suggests that India should not be allowed to host international conferences and that NSF travel funds should not be made available to US delegations visiting India, because he claims that the Indian Government pursues the policy of not granting visas to Israeli passport holders. Such a policy does not exist as far as we are aware; we have had several Israeli scientists attending conferences in India in the last few years with valid visas and landing permits. The incident involving Andrei was unfortunate, insofar as we could not have the benefit of his expertise; however it is factually incorrect to assert that he was denied a visa because he holds an Israeli passport. The precise reason for the delay in granting a visa is unknown to us; indeed all governments in the world would appear to regard the granting of a visa as a prerogative, with no public justification thought necessary.

Andrei's suggestion, in a broader sense, is a case for politicizing physics further—with the right to withhold expertise being used to exert pressure on governments at the expense of the scientific communities of those countries. We feel that this would be counterproductive in the long run, and suggest a more balanced attitude towards the issue.

B. V. SREEKANTAN
Tata Institute of Fundamental Research
Bombay, India
8/85

Correction

July, page 69—In the second paragraph, the phrase in brackets should read "integral quantized Hall effect." □