

Initial comments on the final report of the CERN Review Committee

SUMMARY

A.- The Staff Association has read the Final Report of the CERN Review Committee with the closest interest. It contains some praise for the Organization, the Scientific programmes and staff and some constructive recommendations based on objective arguments and presented in an agreeable style : these are intended to improve the management and staff policy and the Association willingly accepts most of them. The Management should be made fully responsible for them and they should be introduced in an orderly and unhurried way in concertation with the Staff Association.

B.- The Staff Association has also found recommendations to reduce staff numbers immediately, change the status of some staff and change employment contract policy : these measures would, without any justification, upset the Organization and the Association firmly rejects them.

C.- The Association also considers that, throughout the report, there is an attitude of ill-will towards the CERN staff, which comes through in subjective or fallacious arguments, mixed with half truths, untruths, offensive insinuations, unsubstantiated gossip, misleading associations, and stylistic triviality which are quite astonishing in a document of this kind. This attitude culminates in the proposal that the personnel budget might be reduced considerably by a large-scale cut in staff numbers or the systematic whittling down of salaries : these measures would be disastrous for the Organization, the scientific programmes, and the staff. The Association advises very strongly against them. Furthermore the Association formally condemns the Committee's attempt to put scientific programmes and employment conditions, CERN users and CERN staff in opposition to each other.

D.- Below, the Association puts an original and constructive proposal to the Council for reducing the personnel budget immediately. It considers that for a relatively low cost, a cup of tea (in Geneva) per annum, per inhabitant, the Member States have developed a centre of excellence, where scientists from very different countries can collaborate peacefully and which makes a contribution to the process of detente and peace. By uniting their forces, the Member States have been able to conquer new scientific territory : let us hope that they will decide to consolidate and broaden it and that their governments will not chose to throttle CERN gradually until it suffocates, but, instead, give it new opportunities to expand!

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A.- The Review Committee recognises that CERN is a centre of excellence that fulfils the scientific mission entrusted to it by the governments of the Member States and, what is more, that it is an outstanding example for European cooperation and European industry. CERN's scientific programmes are excellent and must be fully exploited; the R + D programmes on accelerators and detectors must be vigorously expanded. Resources are well-used and there is little room for savings in the materials budget without entailing a disproportionate cut in the programmes. The Committee adds that if CERN continues along this road, "it is doomed to an inefficiency already met in other institutions", a threat that is all the more daunting because it is vague!

Unlike the Review Committee, the Staff Association believes that CERN has always adapted its management practices to the "fundamental changes which have occurred in the general environment of CERN" over the "last ten to twenty years" and that there is no reason to paint an apocalyptic vision of its future. CERN has developed a style of management that may differ from a particular industrial-style management but which suits its special character and needs, based as it is on initiative and individual responsibility, on flexible and often informal vertical and horizontal chains of command which depend on the staff's competence, enthusiasm and dedication which qualities the Committee acknowledges. The results prove the worth of this.

Management and staff policy can be improved by constructive measures: by improved staff planning, organizational structure, rationalisation of activities, advancement which takes more account of performance within clearly defined career paths, improved training and internal mobility, clearer definition of the rights and obligations of the scientific users and so on. The CERN Management must have full responsibility for this policy which should be introduced in an orderly and unhurried way in concertation with the staff's representatives.

The Association believes that these changes will be needed all the more because other parts of the report will act like a cold shower which will cool the staff's enthusiasm and its dedication unless the Council's reaction is both moderate and sensible.

B.- The Review Committee recommends that staff numbers be reduced immediately, that subsidiaries be set up under Swiss and French law for "lower-grade" or "non-specific" staff, that indefinite contracts be practically abolished for higher grade staff, with the aim of reducing the Organization's commitments in the event of dissolution.

The Staff Association strongly disputes the Review Committee's claims that the Organization has no future outside particle physics : a wide variety of skills are available among the Organization's staff and if, one day, this particular field of research were to fall out of favour, CERN could demonstrate imagination and courage to propose a diversification in its programmes or a change of direction. An attitude of this type would be more constructive than to "demonstrate courage and imagination" in preparing for the dissolution of CERN. The Association believes that CERN has a long-term future and it supports a forward-looking study of a possible diversification of its activities.

The reduction in staff numbers recommended by the Committee is arbitrary and the consequences on the programmes have not been analysed. The Staff Association urges the Council to take no precipitate decisions and proposes that a system of incentives for early departures be set up, financed outside the normal budget and complemented by a recruitment policy, in order to bring young people into the Organization. This policy should be combined with other measures : redistribution of some of the staff by proper training, extension of part-time working close to retirement and so on... There should be no dismissals which the Association would strongly resist.

The Staff Association is in favour of maintaining the single international status for all categories of the Organization's staff, of reducing the number of service contracts and of improving the management of them and of using European industry more effectively.

The Staff Association is against any imposed reduction in the number of indefinite employment contracts. The Management has the responsibility of assessing the effects of such a recommendation on the working of the Laboratory and the Association fully supports the opinion of the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization, according to which " anyone who enters the international civil service at the beginning of his working life (...) expects to make a career in it, providing he has the right abilities. If such a hope were not created and fostered, the best candidates would come in fewer numbers" (Judgment No. 675, June 1985). The Association favours greater mobility, based on free choice, and not on compulsion, which means first of all that the conditions for reintegration into the staff's countries of origin and for integration into the two Host States must be considerably improved. Past experience and recent developments on these points, however, make us very sceptical.

C.- The Review Committee then raises the question of the "advisability of changing a personnel status, practices and staff numbers which have yielded such excellent scientific results in the past (...)". Quite so! Its reply is ultimately conditioned by budgetary considerations.

In this context and to refute the fallacious arguments advanced by the Review Committee (p.14 and p.52), the Staff Association wishes to point out that CERN salaries have been established on the basis of comparisons with net salaries, i. e. with tax deducted . The payment of gross salaries, which are taxable,as would be the case with subsidiaries constituted under French and Swiss law would increase the budget : it is the Organization which benefits from tax advantages and not the staff, as the Review Committee knows very well.

At the end of its report, the Review Committee declares that "extensive budget savings can still be carried out, although a very serious effort has already been achieved during the past years" but does not claim that these savings can be achieved by the changes it recommends earlier in the report.

Finally the Review Committee thinks the only way to reduce the budget is to cut large numbers of staff or to implement a phased reduction in salaries and allowances, which it puts forward , while saying, like Pontius Pilate, that it "does not wish to take a position about these measures". It should be stressed that it has not done, nor asked for, a study on this point : to use the word "objectively" when presenting tendentiously subjective opinions on CERN employment conditions (p. 52) is clearly a ploy to mislead the reader.

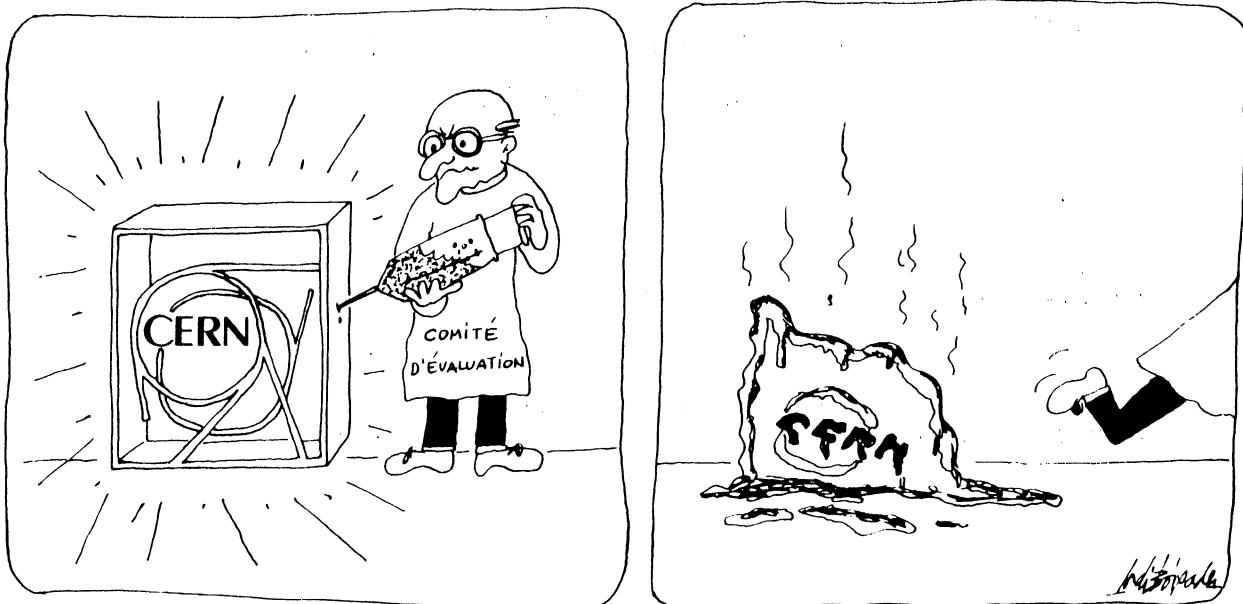
Measures of that sort would reduce to nothing the effect of the constructive recommendations made by the Committee itself and referred to above; by their effect on the recruitment, motivation, enthusiasm and dedication of the staff, they would entail a reduction in the scientific programmes disproportionate to the savings made. The Staff Association strongly advises against them.

In reply to the Committee which suggests a choice between the programmes and employment conditions, (p.52 and p.92), the Staff Association believes that the "real question" is whether the Member States want CERN to continue as a centre of excellence whose raison d'être is to be a leader in its field. If the reply is yes, then they must finance both the programmes wanted by the scientific community and the employment conditions of the Organization's staff. The Association formally condemns the Committee's attitude which attempts to oppose one to the other.

D.- The Staff Association proposes another way of reducing the personnel budget of which an increasing part is being used to reimburse the Organization's debts to the Pension Fund : the staff has already paid its part and the Association urges Council to ensure that the Organization pays its part and reimburses its debts immediately by a special contribution, a decision which would significantly reduce the budget in the coming years.

Not only is CERN a centre of excellence which provides scientific installations and results of the highest order and, an example for European cooperation and European industry, but it is also a meeting point for scientists from very different countries where they can collaborate peacefully and which therefore plays a role in the process of detente and peace. All this for the price of one yearly cup of tea (in Geneva) per head of population in the Member States! By uniting their forces , the Member States have been able to conquer new scientific territory : let us hope that they will decide to consolidate and broaden it and that their governments will not chose to throttle CERN gradually until it suffocates, but , instead, give it new opportunities to expand!

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REUNION DU PERSONNEL

VENDREDI 29 JANVIER 1988, à 14h.00

Amphithéâtre - Bâtiment Principal

- **RAPPORT FINAL DU COMITE D'EVALUATION**
- INFORMATION et DISCUSSION

STAFF MEETING

FRIDAY 29 JANUARY 1988, 2 p.m.

in the Main Auditorium

L'exposé sera retransmis en circuit fermé TV dans la Salle du Conseil dans les amphithéâtres du LEP et du SPS.

Closed-circuit television of the meeting will be available in the Council Chamber in the LEP and SPS Auditoria.

STAFF ASSOCIATION LECTURE

WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY 1988, at 20h.15

in the Main Building

THE VIEW FROM SPACE

by Astronaut James F. BUCHLI (USA)

Colonel Buchli took part in several space missions including the second US Space Shuttle. He will show slides and a film, and also talk about future US space programmes.

The lecture will be in English with simultaneous translation into French.

Admission free.

CONFERENCE DE L'ASSOCIATION DU PERSONNEL

MERCREDI 20 JANVIER 1988, à 20h.15

Amphithéâtre du Bâtiment Principal

VU DE L'ESPACE

par l'Astronaute James F. BUCHLI (USA)

Le Colonel BUCHLI a participé à plusieurs missions spatiales, dont celle de la Deuxième Navette américaine et parlera aussi des futurs programmes spatiaux de son pays.

La Conférence sera donnée en anglais, avec traduction française simultanée. Elle sera agrémentée d'un film et de diapositives.

Entrée gratuite.

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