

## Pasteur Institute Scientists Demand Sweeping Reform

Something very like revolt broke out in December at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, whose fame had just been increased by the award of the Nobel prize to three of its researchers.

In an extraordinary meeting 16 December 1965, 144 out of 149 members of the institute's scientific staff approved a document demanding the resignation of the institute's entire 12-member council of administration. If the resignations were not forthcoming, the scientists decided, there would be an appeal to the government to step in and dissolve the council.

The revolt was successful. On 23 December, the scientists were allowed to name 15 new members of the general assembly of the institute, which names the council and is named by it.

Then, on 18 January, the newly enlarged general assembly received the resignations of the whole council of administration and appointed a new council, keeping only three members.

The character of the new council is sharply different. It includes scientists from the institute (not represented directly before) and outside, and a heavy representation of top French government science administrators who should be able to lend strong support to the enlarged budget the scientists are likely to need. Also on the council is a former director of the French Social Security Agency. Administrators of the institute once rejected the prospect of aid from Social Security because, as political conservatives, they disapproved of the source (*Science*, 19 Nov.).

The scientists had objected not only to personalities (the council includes such aged politicians as Paul Reynaud, André Francois-Poncet, and Antoine Pinay) but also to what they considered to be a dictatorial system of administration inimical not only to scientific freedom but also to sound management of the institute's industrial activities, such as the manufacture of vaccines and serums, from which the institute gets some income.

There were also more particular and more recent grievances, such as the council's flat but undocumented refusal to accept grants for a molecular biology building, its unwillingness to increase the number of scientists in the 44-member general assembly beyond the present three recently appointed members, and its slowness in imple-

menting a 4-year-old promise to bring salaries up to the level prevailing at the University of Paris.

These grievances led to the resignation of Charles Gernez-Rieux, who had been brought from the Pasteur Institute's branch in Lille to be director of the institute after his predecessor, Jacques Trefouël, was forced out 20 December 1964 because of disagreements with the scientific staff over such topics as how to meet a deficit of, it is said, at least \$2 million.

Despite constant shortages of money since its founding in 1888, the institute has consistently pioneered in such basic studies as biochemistry, microbiology, and virology and has responded to various public health emergencies, notably during the two world wars, by carrying out research leading to drugs and vaccines and by undertaking their manufacture. But private gifts, similar to those solicited from the public to found the institute, have been necessary to add many of the new activities. A Rothschild grant set up the laboratory of cellular biochemistry under Jacques Monod in 1954. American grants supplied large sums for the conduct of research in a number of Pasteur Institute laboratories, and the government agency for supporting basic research, the CNRS, paid the salaries of many researchers.

The scientists demanding reform want this situation straightened out. The institute's industrial activities should be separated and put under a commercial-minded director, they say. Up to now, the manufacturing has been undertaken in emergencies and has been regarded as an adjunct to the research, not as a source of income. At the same time, the scientific activities should be grouped under an administration in which scientists would have a major voice (they have practically none now), and which would receive a regular grant from the government much larger than the sum of the various grants that are now given to scientific research at the Pasteur Institute.

These plans were drafted by a commission of scientists which considered reform of the institute from March 1964 to March 1965.

In urging swift action on their proposals, the members of the reform commission said, "The situation could

rapidly become tragic, and the consequences could be such that even if the name were kept, one would no longer recognize the Pasteur Institute."

But there was no quick action, and director Gernez-Rieux felt he had to resign. So the institute's scientists protested in their 16 December statement:

"For several years, the scientific staff of the Pasteur Institute has watched a slow degradation of the situation of this institute. Conscious of being depositories of the Pasteur tradition, the scientific staff has patiently striven to draw the attention of both the director and the council of administration to the inevitable decline and moral and material bankruptcy which will result from the council's refusal to undertake the necessary reforms."

The statement referred to the "neglect" and "negative attitude" of the council, which, it said, "is in no way qualified to represent the Pasteur Institute, and which by its incapacity and carelessness leads this scientific institution to its ruin."

Restating their confidence in Gernez-Rieux, the scientists said they would refuse to recognize the authority of any new director appointed by the present council of administration.

There was a paradoxical element in their statement. The president of the council they were attacking is their warm supporter. He is Louis-Joseph Pasteur Vallery-Radot (a grandson of Louis Pasteur), who has backed Gernez-Rieux and the reform efforts. In the election of 18 January, Pasteur Vallery-Radot did not join the new council of administration. Instead, he was named honorary president. In their statement, the scientists reaffirmed their confidence in Pasteur Vallery-Radot.

Among those drafting the statement were François Jacob, André Lwoff, and Jacques Monod, who had just returned from Stockholm, where they had received the 1965 Nobel prize in medicine for their studies of genetic regulation, and who have kept up a stream of criticism aimed at reinforcing the considerable progress in loosening previously rigid structures for scientific research in France.

The criticism they and their 141 colleagues directed at the council of the Pasteur Institute may be extreme, but it is not an isolated phenomenon in Europe. Widespread discontent and resultant improvement in the climate for research are perhaps the major intellectual news today in Europe.

—VICTOR K. McELHENY