

April 7, 2007

Dr. Lars Leijonborg
Minister for Education and Research
Utbildningsdepartementet
103 33 Stockholm
Sweden

Subject: Request for an Inquiry

Dear Dr. Leijonborg,

On Thursday, February 8th 2007, the Rector of Uppsala University Anders Hallberg, in the guise of a “warning”, left two prominent mathematicians, chaired professors Burglind Juhl-Jöricke and Oleg Viro, with little choice but to resign from their positions.

Oleg Viro is a world renowned topologist. Burglind Juhl-Jöricke is an expert in analysis and the first woman to hold a chaired professorship of mathematics in Sweden since Sonya Kovalevskaya.

The forced resignation of two professors, especially of this caliber, is unprecedented, not only in Sweden but also in the recent history of academia in democratic countries. The style of this action is also very questionable in that the professors were neither presented with precise charges nor given a real opportunity to defend themselves. Instead they were presented with threats about the consequences of their not resigning.

We are very concerned about the case because it raises many questions, among which are academic freedom and the right of academics to the kind of procedure that is considered normal. This is why we are asking the Ministry of Science of Sweden to conduct an independent investigation of this case.

What is really alarming is that the Rector claims that Juhl-Jöricke and Viro freely “tendered their resignation”. They separately tape recorded their meetings with the Rector, and a summary appears in the Swedish newspaper UNT,

http://www2.unt.se/avd/1,1786,MC=6-AV_ID=599671,00.html

There is a noticeable contradiction between the taped recordings, which demonstrate coercion, and the Rector’s public assertions.

We are forwarding this letter to the chair person of the board of the University Hans Dalborg, to the Rektor of Uppsala University Anders Hallberg, and to our colleagues around the world.

Sincerely yours,



Salah Baouendi

Professor of Mathematics, University of California, San Diego

Member and Past Chair, US National Committee of Mathematics

Member, Executive Committee of the International Mathematical Union

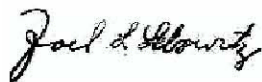


Arthur Jaffe

Professor of Mathematics, Harvard University

Past President of the International Association of Mathematical Physics

Past President of the American Mathematical Society



Joel Lebowitz

Director of the Center for Mathematical Sciences Research, Rutgers University

co-chair of the Committee of Concerned Scientists

Past President of the New York Academy of Sciences



Elliott Lieb

Professor of Mathematical Physics, Princeton University

Past President of the International Association of Mathematical Physics



Nicolai Reshetikhin

Professor of Mathematics, University of California, Berkeley