

## Handler Protests Orlov Trial

Some American scientists and scientific organizations, including the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), are coming to view the just-finished trial of physicist Yuriy F. Orlov and the forthcoming trials of scientists Alexander Ginsburg and Anatoliy B. Shcharanskiy, as a watershed in the scientific relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Orlov, a high energy physicist who has been active in human rights causes in the Soviet Union, was given the maximum sentence on 19 May on a charge of "slandering the Soviet state" after a closed trial in which no record was allowed to be kept, in which no foreign observers were allowed, and in which Orlov was not allowed to call witnesses in his own defense.

After the sentencing, NAS president Philip Handler, who previously has advocated private protests to the Soviets, made a public statement that said, in part, "We have repeatedly informed Soviet authorities that the issue of human rights threatens to erode the willingness of American scientists to cooperate with their Soviet counterparts. . . .

"Should the trials of Ginsburg and Shcharanskiy turn out similarly, Soviet-American scientific relations will have been profoundly damaged."

Ginsburg and Shcharanskiy are colleagues of Orlov's who also participated in the unofficial group in the Soviet Union that monitors the government's compliance with the Helsinki accords. Shcharanskiy has been charged with treason and accused of working with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. The Soviets have intimated that trials of both men will take place soon, and the Carter Administration, which has made statements attacking Soviet abuses of human rights, has said it views both trials as serious matters.

Also in the wake of Orlov's sentencing, several leading scientists cancelled forthcoming trips to the Soviet Union and sent cables and letters of protest to Soviet authorities announcing their decision.

A 19-member scientific delegation due to depart for the 6th joint symposium on condensed matter theory in Moscow beginning on 22 May unanimously decided to cancel the trip. It was to be held under the official US/USSR science exchange program and had been organized by the NAS. A cable sent by the group's cochairs, William F. Brinkman of Bell Laboratories and Elihu Abrahams of Rutgers University, to their Soviet counterparts said that they felt "distress" about the outcome of the Orlov trial. "There is a strong conviction that the present atmosphere has made useful scientific discussions impossible," the cable said.

Two other scientists also cancelled trips. Nicolaas Bloembergen, professor of applied physics at Harvard, cancelled and wrote, "If the impending trials of Ginsburg and Shcharanskiy are conducted in a similar manner, the effectiveness of the scientific exchange agreement between our Academies will be further jeopardized."

Robert Marshak, president of the City College of New York, who is also a physicist, cancelled a forthcoming visit to attend a Soviet seminar on field gauge theories. His cancellation and accompanying cable of protest was particularly noteworthy as he was one of the first Americans to reopen exchanges with the Soviets in 1956 during the Cold War. In the intervening years, Marshak has been a strong supporter of continued cooperation with the Soviet Union.

So it seems that these leaders of American science are treating as a "package deal" all three trials and plan to judge the Soviets' willingness to accommodate Western concerns by the outcome of all three. At the same time, several of them seem vague about what they will do if, as seems likely, the Soviets use the trials as an occasion to show the West, and the Carter Administration in particular, that it will not be bullied on the human rights question.

Robert W. Kates, professor of geography at Clark University and chairman of the NAS Committee on Human Rights, told *Science*, "We are just taking this thing one step at a time. We hope there will be some mitigation of the sentence for Orlov, and we're hoping that Ginsburg and Shcharanskiy will be treated better."—D.S.

riety of arrangements for research and consultation with individuals and other institutions, governmental and nongovernmental.

To carry out its coordinating role in science and technology activities, the bill foresees the department undertaking an ambitious program of training both internally and by providing opportunities for detached service for department personnel for graduate study in colleges and universities.

The bill would leave the details to the department by delaying implementation for a year, and requiring the Secretary to spell out by 20 January 1979 budgetary and personnel requirements to carry out the objectives of the bill.

Prospects for the bill will be clearer when the Office of Management and Budget comes forth with the Administration's formal position. The military and intelligence agencies have not commented publicly on the proposal, but are said to fear that the "oversight" function given State might be construed as a "management" responsibility. Congressional sources insist that the committee was generally satisfied with present coordination arrangements between State and DOD and CIA; the legislative history of the bill, both hearings and report, make clear that the aim of the section is to achieve better coordination of the science and technology activities of civilian agencies such as the departments of Commerce, Agriculture, and Energy.

The Office of Science and Technology Policy attitude currently is a cautious approval of the general principle of the bill but no comment on the specifics. Much the same is true at State but the department is concerned about the burden of extra work the bill requires of it, and has not yet fully assessed what the implications of carrying out the new duties would be.

On Capitol Hill, the State authorization bill is expected to be acted on in the House by early June. No equivalent of Title V is in the Senate version of the bill. Zablocki and Pell have discussed Zablocki's Title V, and backers of the measure hope that the Senate will accept it substantially intact in the House-Senate conference on the bill.

Whatever the immediate fate of the bill, proponents of science and technology at State have reason to take heart. The problem of the succession at OES seems at last to have been settled. And the signal from the Secretary's office may mean that, on the subject of science and technology, the education of the State Department is under way.

—JOHN WALSH