the North Atlantic Assembly propose the setting up of such an agency. However, given its ambitious scope, the assembly adopted a more modest amendment under which member governments will be invited to "consider" such a proposal, leaving it for the time being up to them to take any further action.

However, according to committee member Peter Emery, a Conservative member of the British Parliament, the resolution is still significant in that it gives individual members of the assembly a mandate to go back to their own governments with formal requests for reports on the actions that have been taken to coordinate activities on technology controls, both in terms of defining the limits to East-West technology transfer and strengthening West-West technological cooperation.

At the minimum, he said, this would promote an initial dialogue between governments and their parliaments over the broader impact of technology transfer regulations "in a way that has never happened before."

Emery points to the European Space Agency as an example of the progress that can be achieved in international cooperation on technological projects provided ground rules are decided in advance.

"In the more general field of technology transfer, we have never come together in the same way to write such ground rules," he said. The advanced technology subcommittee, he added, might make suggestions on "the type of ground rules which could be developed leading to greater collaboration with the United States."

He admits that the proposal to establish a new agency is ambitious; several other members of the scientific and technical committee said that such responsibilities might be given to an existing body such as the Paris-based Coordinating Committee on Export Controls (COCOM) which is already responsible for coordinating the efforts of Western nations to regulate exports to the Eastern bloc.

There is a wide feeling in Europe, however, that COCOM is excessively dominated by the United States. Ibrügger and others see the proposed new agency as a way of complementing COCOM's work by helping to sketch out strategies for closer cooperation in a more positive sense. And Emery adds that "the fact that this suggestion comes from NATO parliamentarians rather than from government economists could itself give it a greater chance for success."—**DAVID DICKSON**

NIH Bows to Part of Rifkin Suit

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has bowed to one of Jeremy Rifkin's legal challenges and decided to conduct environmental assessments of certain field tests involving genetically altered organisms. The recent decision narrows the legal issues to be argued in federal court next month in the ongoing battle between Rifkin and NIH over these types of experiments.

Rifkin contends that NIH did not properly evaluate the ecological consequences of testing genetically modified organisms in the environment before approving the experiments and, in 1983, took the agency to court. He asserted that NIH violated the National Environmental Policy Act by allegedly failing to conduct two kinds of ecological analyses defined by the act: an environmental assessment and a much more involved analysis called an environmental impact statement. In May, U.S. District Judge John Sirica ruled in Rifkin's favor when he stopped University of California researchers from conducting an NIH-approved field trial pending a decision on Rifkin's suit.

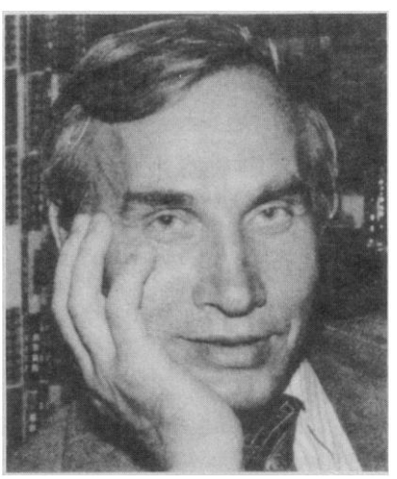
Now NIH has decided it will carry out the simpler of the two evaluations. NIH official Bernard Talbot says that the agency will basically repackage data it has already collected, adding some additional information to write the formal assessments. NIH has already drafted an analysis of the University of California experiment, which would involve bacteria genetically engineered to prevent frost formation in potato crops. NIH also plans to assess two field trials proposed by private companies, which have been approved by the recombinant DNA advisory committee and are awaiting a green light from NIH director James B. Wyngaarden.

Rifkin argues that in 1978 NIH should have analyzed the ecological consequences when it revised its recombinant DNA guidelines and set forth a policy concerning the deliberate release of genetically modified organisms. Now that NIH has agreed to perform environmental assessments of deliberate release experiments, the main legal issue boils down to whether environmental impact statements are also required. In addition, Rifkin argues that NIH has failed to develop an administrative program to analyze in depth the ecological consequences of these experiments. NIH will challenge Rifkin's assertions in the U.S. Court of Appeals here in Washington on 5 December.—**MARJORIE SUN**

Soviet Psychiatrist Near Death from Hunger Strike

Anatolyi Koryagin, a Soviet psychiatrist who was jailed in 1981 on charges of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" after publicly criticizing the political use of psychiatry in the Soviet Union, is reported to be near death as a result of a hunger strike. His condition has prompted several human rights organizations and scientific bodies to appeal to Soviet authorities for him to receive proper medical care.

Koryagin's apparent crime was that he diagnosed as sane several political



Anatolyi I. Koryagin

dissidents that Soviet authorities had confined to psychiatric hospitals. He examined the patients at their own request when he was a consultant to the Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes, an unofficial human rights group that was later broken up by the authorities and whose members were all arrested.

Koryagin was sentenced in 1981 to 7 years' imprisonment and an additional 5 years of internal exile. He was transerred in July 1982 to the notori-

ous Cristopol prison, the main Soviet institution for political prisoners, where he remains.

According to Peter Reddaway, a British political scientist who has been monitoring Koryagin's condition, he has been on a hunger strike for more than 4 months. He wants to end the strike, but is said to be physically incapable of taking food. He has apparently been force-fed, but the feedings have been inefficiently administered, and he is now said to be incapable of swallowing food.

Britain's Royal College of Physicians and the American Association for the Advancement of Science are among those that have sent telegrams asking that he be given proper medical treatment.—**COLIN NORMAN**

Carnegie-Mellon Lands Federal Software Center

A high technology prize that inspired universities to strenuous competitive efforts has gone to Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh. The Pentagon on 14 November announced the selection of Carnegie-Mellon to operate a Software Engineering Institute (SEI) with the mission of making state-of-the-art software available to the Department of Defense.

The DOD award will bring a contract worth $103 million over 5 years and is expected to provide a strong stimulus to computer software activities in the area. DOD and Carnegie-Mellon must conclude negotiations on details, but agreement is expected by the end of the year and a start-up of operations shortly afterward.

SEI will function as a nonprofit, federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) managed by the university. Carnegie-Mellon officials say the facility will be located near the campus and will have close links with the university's computer science department.

DOD sponsorship was prompted by concern in the military about a lag in translation of new developments in software technology into DOD systems. SEI will be expected to identify such new developments and assist in their adoption by industry.

The Pentagon request for proposals earlier this year created a rush among research universities to bid for the award (*Science*, 5 October, p. 26). The competing universities viewed the institute as a major asset in attracting faculty and establishing a leading position in an important field. State and local officials and industry interests saw SEI as offering a high technology boost to local economies. The Carnegie-Mellon bid was depicted as a potential boon for the Pittsburgh area which has been hard hit by the decline in so-called smokestack industries. Press accounts of the contest for the contract have featured accounts of well-orchestrated efforts by Senator John Heinz (R–Pa.), other Pennsylvania officials, and industry lobbyists in behalf of Carnegie-Mellon. Other bidders also mobilized their congressional delegations and state officials in their causes.

The unsuccessful bidders, though disappointed, appear to accept the decision as having been determined by the merits of the proposals. Usually mentioned is that Carnegie-Mellon, along with MIT and Stanford, ranks at the top in academic computer science and engineering.

The Carnegie-Mellon view as expressed by university provost Angel G. Jordan, who headed the campaign for the contract, is that "the competition was formidable," and DOD made the decision on the basis of the technical content of the proposals.

Jordan says that Carnegie-Mellon is appreciative of the efforts of Pennsylvania legislators and others but thinks that "too much was made of the political war." He points out that factors in Carnegie-Mellon's favor were that the university was the first to establish a separate computer science department and "has been working on software engineering for years." Carnegie-Mellon also has an extended history of research support in computer science from DOD.

In respect to SEI's implications for the economic fortunes of the Pittsburgh area, Jordan is sanguine but cautious. He notes that a number of software engineering companies have located in the area and he predicts the trend will accelerate. Jordan says the institute can't be regarded as the only solution to the problems of the Pittsburgh area, but will be an "important ingredient in the transition" to a stronger local economy.—**JOHN WALSH**

Britain Cuts Student Grants to Boost Research

Britain's Secretary of State for Education and Science, Sir Keith Joseph, has responded to recent complaints from the scientific community about their current acute shortage of funds by adding $30 million to the science budget for 1985 to 1986. The money will come from a reduction in the government's direct support for university students.

Of the total figure being made available, $10 million will be allocated to the joint budget of Britain's five research councils for the support of fundamental research, $7.5 million will be spent on restructuring two of the councils—the Agricultural and Food Research Council and the Natural Environment Research Council—and the remaining $12.5 million will go to the University Grants Committee for upgrading scientific equipment in the universities.

Research council heads have recently warned that the types of costs they face—such as increased subscriptions to international agencies caused by the falling value of the pound—mean that the amount of research they are able to support has been shrinking significantly. A spokesman for the Science and Engineering Research Council says that the extra money should now make it possible to fund a substantial proportion of those "alpha quality" grant requests which the council is currently having to reject because of a lack of resources.

The extra money for science is being raised by abolishing the "minimum grant" previously paid by the government to all university students and increasing the student contribution to university tuition fees. In future, any student whose parents' income is greater than $25,000 a year will no longer be eligible for the $260 annual grant which he or she currently receives from the government, and will in addition be expected to pay $650 a year toward university tuition fees. Higher education students from 64,000 families in Britain are expected to be affected by the measure, and grants will also be reduced for students from lower income brackets.

—**DAVID DICKSON**