

Letters

Support for the Uspenskiis

The recent departures of Anatoly Shcharansky, Yuri Orlov, and Lev Goldfarb are bright spots in the otherwise discouraging picture for hundreds of refusenik scientists in the Soviet Union. A case in point is that of Inna Ioffe and her husband Igor Uspenskii, medical entomologists who applied for exit visas in 1979. Within 2 years they were both dismissed from their positions at the Martsinovskiy Institute of Medical Parasitology and Tropical Medicine of the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Health. They have been denied permission to publish, go on expeditions, and attend meetings, and have suffered the additional outrage of having their names expunged from doctoral dissertations they directed. Ioffe is now unemployed, while Uspenskii works as an elevator operator and translator.

Their desperate situation was the subject of a recent resolution by the membership of the Entomological Society of America and an address by the president of that body (1). Close to 150 entomologists and other scientists endorsed a petition calling for the granting of their exit visas in accordance with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Helsinki Final Act to which the U.S.S.R. is a party (2).

This is a particularly auspicious time to make our concerns known to Soviet officials through our representative to the Vienna Followup Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (3) and, given the new official policy of openness, to other appropriate political and scientific officials in the U.S.S.R. (4). Finally, we can correspond directly with the Uspenskiis and provide them with articles and books on medical entomology and acarology and professional society memberships (5). This will let the Uspenskiis, as well as the officials who are monitoring their mail, know that we have not forgotten them and that they still have professional standing.

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REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. *Bull. Entomol. Soc. Amer.* 29 (No. 1), 63 (1983); *ibid.* 31 (No. 2), 6 (1985).
2. Committee of Concerned Scientists, Inc., news release, 23 December 1986.
3. Send letters and telegrams to Ambassador Warren Zimmermann, Chairman, U.S. Delegation to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe,

American Embassy, Vienna, APO New York, NY 09108.

4. Mr. Mikhail S. Gorbachev, Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee, The Kremlin, Moscow, RSFSR, U.S.S.R.; Gennady I. Tomlin, Chief, Moscow OVIR, Kolkachny Pereulok 9, Moscow, RSFSR, U.S.S.R.; Academician N. N. Blokhin, President, Academy of Medical Sciences, Ul. Solovka 14, Moscow 109801, RSFSR, U.S.S.R.; His Excellency Yuri V. Dubinin; Ambassador of the U.S.S.R., 1125 16 Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036.
5. Drs. Inna Ioffe and Igor Uspenskii, Prospect Vernadskogo, Building 125, Apartment 237, 117571 Moscow, RSFSR, U.S.S.R.; for assistance in sending books and journals contact the Committee of Concerned Scientists, Inc., 330 Seventh Avenue, Suite 608, New York, NY 10001.

Transplantation of Neural Tissue from Fetuses

Several decades of experimental work with rodents, and recently with nonhuman primates, have shown that transplantation of fetal neural tissue holds the promise of great benefit to victims of serious neurological disorders (1). At a recent meeting* held to address ethical questions raised by the possibility of transplanting neural tissue obtained from human fetuses, the undersigned neuroscientists, ethicists, and lawyers concluded that retrieval of such tissue from fetal remains is analogous to the transplantation of organs or tissue obtained from adult human cadavers. Similarities include the fact that the donor is dead, and the expectation that there will be significant benefits for the recipient. These similarities suggest the appropriateness of using the same ethical and legal criteria now followed for cadaver transplantation.

It was also agreed, however, that there are dissimilarities between the treatments. First, although use of fetal remains for transplantation is legal in most states (in the United States), it is ethically controversial because of its association with abortion. Second, although parental consent to the donation of fetal remains is legally sufficient in most states, it may not be ethically sufficient. For these reasons, and because the use of neural tissue for transplantation is experimental, such transplantation in humans should be subject to careful review. This review should apply to transplantation supported either by nonfederal sources or by federal funds.

Points to consider in the review process include the need for (i) a clear separation between decisions related to the acquisition of tissue and decisions regarding the transplantation of tissue into a recipient; (ii) anonymity between donor and recipient, with the implication that donors and recipi-

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ents should not be familial relations; and (iii) adequate input from knowledgeable experts concerning the soundness of the research design and the assessment of risks to human subjects.

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The Theory of the Majoron

In M. Mitchell Waldrop's article "Possible first hints of double beta decay" (*Research News*, 30 Jan., p. 534), one point should be clarified. The theoretical model that might explain such results, should they be confirmed, was not forwarded only by European physicists in 1981. The early ideas concerning the ramifications of the breaking of lepton number symmetry were published in a paper (1) by Chikashige (then at the Max

Planck Institute), Mohapatra (University of Maryland), and Peccei (then at the Max Planck Institute). This model, although very interesting, projected little in the way of physically observable consequences. A completely different model, based on the breaking of the same symmetry, was forwarded (2) by Gelmini and Roncadelli while they were at Max Planck. This model is rich in phenomena that could signal physics beyond the standard model. Subsequently, but independently, Georgi and Glashow (Harvard University) and Nussinov (Tel Aviv University) developed a similar model (3). It is also important to note that the particular model that our experiments test, as well as other similar experiments, is the Gelmini-Roncadelli model. It is even referred to as that in the paper by Georgi, Glashow, and Nussinov.

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1. Y. Chikashige, R. N. Mohapatra, R. D. Peccei, *Phys. Lett.* **98B**, 265 (1981).
2. G. B. Gelmini and M. Roncadelli, *ibid.* **99B**, 411 (1981).
3. H. M. Georgi, S. L. Glashow, S. Nussinov, *Nucl. Phys.* **B193**, 297 (1981).

Retraction of Research Findings

In his editorial, "Fraud in science" (9 Jan., p. 141), Daniel E. Koshland, Jr., approves the procedures recently adopted by the National Institutes of Health and various universities to deal with scientists caught reporting falsified research findings. While these retributive steps seem appropriate and may be sufficient to alert investigators intimately connected with the area of research in question, more must be done. Specifically, the general reader of the published scientific literature must be able to learn that an article he or she has read has subsequently been retracted.

The National Library of Medicine has instituted such a capability through its MEDLINE system for on-line access to references and abstracts. When the user retrieves a reference to an article that was later retracted, it displays prominently the phrase, "retracted in . . ." followed by a journal reference. The published *Index Medicus* now also carries retractions. Thirty-six such retractions have been identified since the policy was begun in the summer of 1984. A similar procedure is in place for handling published errata (and, when possible, the correction is actually made in the citation or the abstract).

The ability to correct the on-line file quickly is a great advantage of electronic information retrieval. MEDLINE is updated monthly, both with new references and with any retractions or errata that have come to our attention. Corrections of essential data, such as a dosage figure, are made immediately.

The current system, useful as it is, has one drawback: it requires a printed statement of retraction, withdrawal, or erratum signed either by the article's author or the journal's editor. The statement must be published, but we welcome an advance copy, proof sheet, or letter so that we can make the change as quickly as possible.

We believe that this approach offers MEDLINE users more protection against misinformation—deliberate or accidental—than would be possible by simply browsing through the literature. A more aggressive approach by the Library would risk placing us in the inappropriate role of censor.

The Library welcomes the advice of scientists on how we can improve the procedure. We also ask the help of editors in sending us timely notice of retractions and errata.

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Erratum: The article "Back to the energy crisis" by Mark Crawford (*News & Comment*, 6 Feb., p. 626) overstated American imports of petroleum and petroleum products for the years 1977 and 1985. Imports in 1977 averaged 8.8 million barrels per day as opposed to 8807 million barrels as stated. By 1985 imports had fallen to 5.07 (rounded) million barrels per day, not 5067 million barrels daily. The United States' use of petroleum—not foreign consumption as stated in the article—is projected to hit 17.7 million barrels per day in 1995. U.S. imports could then reach 9.8 million barrels a day.

Erratum: In the caption for the picture accompanying the article by John Walsh "Teacher certification program under way" (*News & Comment*, 20 Feb., p. 838), National Science Teachers Association executive director Bill G. Aldridge was incorrectly identified as NSTA president.

William A. Chapman, AAAS Comptroller and an employee of AAAS since 1973, died suddenly on 25 February at his home. William D. Carey, AAAS Executive Officer, said that Chapman had been an outstanding senior staff officer. "We worked as close partners for more than a dozen years," he said, "and the shock of his death is hard to absorb. It's a severe loss for AAAS, not just because he carried an important part of our institutional memory but even more because of the exceptional standard of professional ethics to which he was wholly committed."