

not yet enjoy people's support and are considered to be corrupt and irresponsible. Superficially, it looks like giving the money to the same people who are responsible for the decline of science.

• Because of an undeveloped infrastructure, the contacts of international organizations with FSU scientists go through Moscow. A not unexpected side effect is that most of the laboratories awarded funds by the ISF, for example, are located there. Top-level officials from the government and the Academy of Science are skilled in dividing a pie to their own benefit. Evidently, international contacts are much easier for Muscovites to make than it is for scientists from other regions; but that does not mean that Moscow is the only home of Russian science. On the other hand, the demands from new republics to contact them directly, although justified, can hardly bring much new. Unfortunately, besides the Baltic states, all of them have suffered heavy losses in research because of aggressive nationalism, lack of a system of national priorities, and economic decline. Having lost financial support for the projects in Russia that received recent ISF awards (and were thus considered successful and promising in the

West), I gratefully accepted an award from the U.S. National Research Council that permitted me, in this situation, to continue my research in the United States. But does Russia benefit from this? And whom to blame? Revenging Russian bureaucracy or the ill-minded "West," which, according to the newest discovery of Russian nationalists, tries to destroy Russia by offering research opportunities to scientists who otherwise were supposed to change their occupation.

International cooperation is critical for the survival of science in FSU countries. Politically, it is important to preserve an intellectual elite who may be the only basis for future development and even renaissance. International recognition gives some moral support and raises the self-esteem of the best researchers in the currently suppressive, anti-intellectual political climate in most FSU countries. Scarce, but still existing, chances to escape as a "scientific refugee" or, at least, to get a temporary relief as a grantee or graduate student in a foreign laboratory is now almost the only motivation for the younger generation to join the scientific community. However, it is most important to keep pressure on the local governments,

which are responsible for the survival of national science. They are almost insensitive to domestic demands, but still may be influenced from outside. Tax exemption of foreign grants and information about domestic funding of the awarded (and, presumably, the best) laboratories must be demanded. Among international programs, long-term cooperation between laboratories is much more productive than any short-term grants.

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Black Hole Theories

Faye Flam's Research News article "Theorists make a bid to eliminate black holes" (23 Dec., p. 1945) describes some new theories by John Moffat, and by Huseyin Yilmaz and Carroll Alley. The article quotes physicists Charles Misner and Wil-

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¹Brun, et al. Transfusion. 1994; (34)162-166
²Funderud, et al. Eur. J. Immunol. 1990; (20)201-206.

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liam Unruh as being skeptical about these theories and then says, "But in spite of the doubts, some physicists applaud these maverick efforts to modify Einstein's theory." I was extremely surprised to discover that I was the physicist who supposedly was applauding these efforts. The fact is that I completely agree with Misner and Unruh. I made it clear to your reporter that I did not support the efforts of Moffat and Yilmaz and Alley. Although the quote attributed to me is accurate, it does not appear in context and is used in such a way that its meaning was completely changed. (My comments about modifying general relativity were related to string theory.)

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Italian Academic Life

I was only mildly surprised when I saw the News & Comment article by Susan Biggin (11 Nov., p. 965) about scandal in Italian universities. Having gone through all the steps in the Italian academic career, I can

only confirm, overall, what is said in the article.

I was a bit more startled by the inset quote, "university chairs . . . reward[ing] favorites and bootlickers." As any experienced editor knows, the casual reader can go through the title and the inset, forget the details, and stay with the impression that the whole lot of Italian professors are, mainly, bootlickers. This comes as a slap in the face to a whole category, which includes a substantial number of illustrious members.

What the article does not say is that the judgment of corruption or malpractice, issued by Italian courts, is not ad personam, but cancels the whole proceedings of the *concorso*. This is precisely what happened to me, 8 years after I was awarded a professorship, together with some 50 colleagues: guilty or not guilty, we were all stripped of our titles and ended up in the newspapers depicted as a bunch of crooks. Chaff and wheat went down the drain together.

As far as former Minister Stefano Podestà is concerned, as a former full-time university professor he was not above suspicion himself. His first duty should have been, in my opinion, to resign and let himself be judged along with others.

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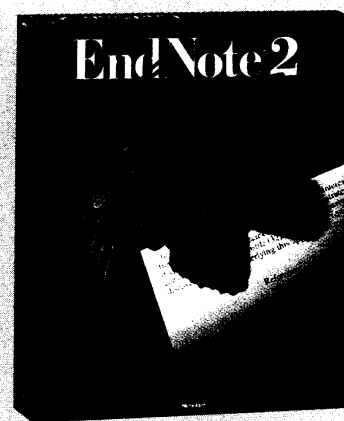
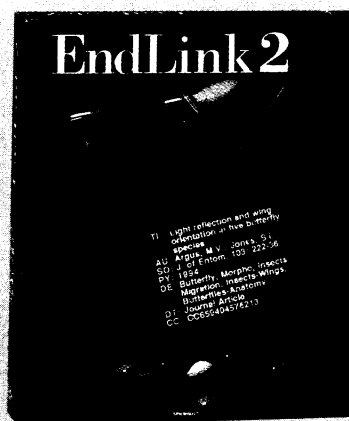
Corrections and Clarifications

The ScienceScope item "Nonprofit to launch gene-mapping effort" by Richard Stone (27 Jan., p. 443) gave the wrong number of gene fragments (expressed sequence tags) in a database maintained by Human Genome Sciences of Rockville, Maryland. The correct number is 380,000.

The Research News article, "Shedding light on blindness" by Marcia Barinaga (27 Jan., p. 452) did not mention that Napoleone Ferrara, of Genentech, is a collaborator with the research groups of both Lloyd P. Aiello and Anthony Adamis.

The caption accompanying the News article by Steve Sternberg "The emerging fungal threat" (9 Dec., p. 1632) should not have included the words "in the body." *Candida albicans* produces hyphae, but not chlamydo-spores, in the body.

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