

that of inpatient psychiatry as a "profit-making business." In addition, Hyman would like to do something more to build "stable career paths for young people" in research, perhaps by focusing assistance at "the most vulnerable point"—the first grant renewal.

■ **Peer review.** One possibly disruptive change confronting NIMH in the next year is an order from Congress to merge its formerly independent peer review system with NIH's study sections. Current NIMH grantees are nervous: They fear their projects might be shut down by hostile NIH reviewers. The worst solution, Hyman says, would be to "put two mental health types" on each NIH study section. The result, he fears, would be that the NIH culture would "kill our grantees." Hyman says he hopes Varmus will give NIMH "a reasonable amount of time" to come up with a better solution; "one wants to approach this thoughtfully." Oddly enough, Hyman adds, the task of redesigning NIMH

peer review is one of the things that attracted him to the job, because it offers a chance to "break down barriers" between disciplines.

■ **Improved tools.** Hyman says that the use of brain imaging, a technique that has consumed lots of energy and dollars, needs to be reviewed more carefully. He says: "A lot of clinical neuroimaging, which is done without having strong prior hypotheses about the circuitry that's involved and doesn't have any input from cognitive neuroscience, ... has led to a lot of very splashy and colorful publications." But the results don't always stand up, Hyman thinks.

■ **Molecular bogeyman.** "Because I am a molecular biologist," Hyman says, some people "are worried that I'm a bogeyman reductionist." Not so, he claims. While Hyman is enthusiastic about "serious molecular approaches" to mental health, he says NIMH should focus on "integrative neurobiology," a phrase that pops up again and again in his

conversation. By this, he means researchers should plan research projects—such as a hunt for a new gene or a brain-imaging effort—in terms of how they relate to an overriding scientific hypothesis about brain function. Far from pushing behavioral research to the sidelines, he argues, this strategy would make it "absolutely critical," as a bridge between lab studies and clinical research.

As for his own research, Hyman says he intends to continue the work he's been doing at Harvard. Varmus has promised him a lab of his own at NINDS, although it is about "one-half the size of the lab I have now." Hyman admits that may create the appearance of a conflict, because he will be supervising a field in which he is also a major player. But he says, "Just watch me. See if I misuse resources." He adds: "I couldn't have taken this job at the age of 43 if I couldn't continue as a scientist: It would just kill me."

—Eliot Marshall

## RUSSIAN PARLIAMENT

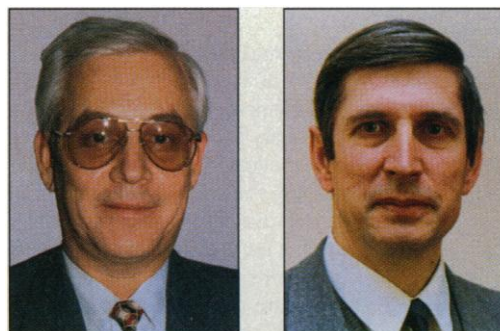
### Communists Dominate Science Panels

MOSCOW—Ever since last December's elections gave the Communist Party of the Russian Federation the largest faction in the Duma, the lower house of Russia's parliament, researchers have been nervously waiting to see how their concerns would fare in this new political environment. They got a promising sign last month, when the Duma weighed in on the side of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) in its battle to get the government to turn over long-overdue funds. But key politicians in the Duma itself are warning that political infighting could hamper the work of the committees that oversee science.

First, the good news. As one of its first acts, the new Committee on Science and Education initiated an emergency parliamentary debate on the RAS's funding crisis—a crisis that virtually halted research in many institutes and prompted RAS researchers to stage demonstrations on the streets of Moscow (*Science*, 23 February, p. 1052). As a result, on 17 February, the Duma passed a special resolution demanding not only that the government pay off all the debts run up by RAS research institutes, but that government officials responsible for delaying the payment of RAS's budget be prosecuted. The deputies also called on the government to initiate an urgent recovery program for Russian science, and they resolved to set up a special parliamentary body to monitor government finances and to inform the Duma of any delays or underpayments.

That good news, however, is tempered by concerns about the makeup of key Duma committees. Since the election, the new deputies have spent most of their time electing various committees and subcommittees.

Most of them are now headed by Communist Party members, and eight of the 12 seats in the Committee on Science and Education are held by communists. There are also many more committees than in the previous parliament. For example, the Committee on Science and Education, having shed the responsibility for culture held by its predecessor,



**Duma duo.** Science and Education Committee Chair Ivan Melnikov (right), a Communist Party member, and Deputy Chair Mikhail Glubokovsky, a reformist.

will now operate alongside a newly created Committee on Conversion and Scientific Technologies. And because the exact duties of this new committee are yet to be defined, it is unclear how the two committees will divide their responsibilities.

Mikhail Glubokovsky, a member of the reformist Yabloko faction and deputy chair of the Committee on Science and Education, expects serious conflicts. "Although the majority of the [Science and Education] committee members are eager to work constructively instead of arguing over political issues, the tendency to multiply the number

of committees, and hence the number of bosses brought in by the Communists, may create serious obstacles to creative work," he says.

One particular source of worry for reformers like Glubokovsky is Viktor Shevelukha, a former member of the hard-line Agrarian Party and now a Communist Party deputy. Although he lost his seat as one of the vice chairs of the old committee, he is now chair of the subcommittee on science. Shevelukha is one of two deputies accused of tampering with the text of a law on science and technology policy last December (*Science*, 12 January, p. 139). "My relations with Viktor Shevelukha could not be called unclouded, because we have different values," Glubokovsky told *Science*. "I hate to have conflicts with him. Still, it may happen, and these conflicts could spoil the work of the committee."

A more encouraging development is the election of Ivan Melnikov to chair the Committee on Science and Education. Although a Communist Party member, Melnikov is much respected and is considered reasonable even by his political opponents. He is more optimistic about the prospects for his committee. "One cannot avoid conflicts at the very beginning, but in due time it will settle," he told *Science*. His first priority for the committee is to draw up a more coherent legal framework for the work of scientific institutes and research groups. Researchers are hoping that, under Melnikov's stewardship, the new committee's support for RAS in its funding battle won't be the last time the committee speaks with one voice on behalf of Russia's beleaguered scientific enterprise.

—Vladimir Pokrovsky

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