

Symbolic Changes at NSF

The National Science Foundation, in keeping with the trendiness of the times, has chosen to emphasize its concern for humanity and cooperation by adopting a new seal that depicts little hand-holding people arrayed around a circle containing a map of the world.

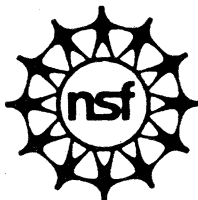
The chauvinist, imperialistic-looking eagle perched atop a clutter of scientific paraphernalia was too "busy," an NSF spokesman explained, and didn't print well. In its place is a simpler graphic that bespeaks the internationality of science.

On letterheads, the world map is replaced by the initials of the foundation.

The NSF has been pulling up its socks throughout the image department. Press releases are now topped by a blaring blue strip of newsprint rather than the stodgy old black-and-white seal.—C. H.



Old seal



New logo

dictable. Less easy to anticipate are the wide differences of emphasis even within the developed world. The many environmental meetings that have preceded Stockholm have shown that Americans tend to take a much gloomier view of the situation than do Europeans. Marshall Goldman of Wellesley College, who reported the Jyväskylä meeting for *The Nation* (18 October 1971, p. 358), noted a wide gap between U.S. and European attitudes. British environmentalists habitually take an optimistic (they would say level-headed) view of the future of mankind. Even a man like Kenneth Mellanby, author of *Pesticides and Pollution* and something of a guru among the British conservation movement, can find good words to say about DDT and does not believe that SST's will disrupt the atmospheric balance. The more apocalyptic visions of the future remain a minority taste in Britain, though a growing one. The Royal Commission on Pollution, Britain's watchdog body, produced a report that even environmental minister Peter Walker feared might be taken as complacent. But so far there is no substantial public pressure in favor of a more radical stance; the environmental movement here is still a collection of pressure groups with no real constituency.

What line will the British take in Stockholm? Throughout the preparations for the conference, U.N. sources have been complaining privately of the obstructive attitude the British have taken. Conservative governments normally behave suspiciously toward the

United Nations, and this attitude has been dutifully reflected by the delegates sent to Geneva. Both British and American delegates have been critical of the slow-moving U.N. bureaucracy. "The incompetence of the U.N. may not matter in the normal course of events," said one source. "If a development project is late starting, or doesn't get the money it needs, then who notices? But it's no use saving the whales after the last whale has died." The attitude has therefore been that, if the environmental problem has any importance at all, it has too much importance to be entrusted to the U.N.

As the conference approaches, there are signs that this hard line is softening a little. Peter Walker is anxious to make a good impression in Stockholm and is politician enough to ensure that Britain takes a positive role. But even Walker's confidence that Britain's environmental organization is right must have taken a battering in the last few months. Conservation groups have revealed that fly-by-night dumping contractors have been depositing waste cyanide on ordinary municipal rubbish heaps, and *Private Eye*, a scurrilous fortnightly magazine, broke the story of a smelting plant owned by Rio Tinto Zinc and opened as recently as 1968 which has been poisoning its workers with massive doses of lead. (The plant has since been closed for improvements.) Failures like these have exposed the inadequacies of British control measures.

The most enthusiastic European nation at Stockholm will undoubtedly be

Sweden, a pacesetter in environmental concern. In 1969, the Swedes passed their Environment Protection Law, probably the most comprehensive attempt yet to legislate against environmental damage. A Concessions Board grants licenses for new industrial developments and requires guarantees that such developments will not cause environmental damage. It is advised by a powerful Environmental Protection Board, which brings together all of the government agencies with an interest in the environment. The system depends on cooperation between government and industry, with legal sanctions being applied only as a last resort. The Swedes have worked hard to make the Stockholm conference a success.

Other European countries seem to be taking the conference as it comes. The French are said to have taken a reasonable line during the preparations, as have the West Germans, when they were not insisting on the exclusion of East Germany. The documents prepared for the conference will be published in March and are said to be a fair compromise between predictions of doom and overconfident optimism.

"In facing the environmental challenge," conference Secretary-General Maurice Strong has said, "we are all equal—all underdeveloped. The high technology, high income, high pollution societies of the industrialized world today need to rediscover the values and the social concerns which are deeply embedded in the cultures of the developing world at least as much as the developing countries need to have access to the technologies and markets of the industrialized world." This neat attempt to associate both developed and underdeveloped countries in a joint concern for the environment is perhaps typical of the kind of rhetoric that is to be expected from Stockholm. Perhaps the best chance of producing something more concrete comes in the discussions about ocean pollution, a subject that everybody agrees is international in its implications. With luck, it may be possible to achieve initial agreement on a master plan for managing global ocean resources. Other possibilities include steps toward a global monitoring system to keep watch over the atmosphere and the oceans, the creation of an international registry of chemical compounds, and support for research into the forecasting of the effects of economic growth on human welfare.—NIGEL HAWKES