

When the EPA shipped the last stocks of Kepone to England and West Germany for incineration, a great outcry resulted in both places.

The difficulty, says one State Department official, is that "we have no way to get a legal handle on this." The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, which EPA is preparing to implement now, does not extend to hazardous waste exports. Yet the new regulations, which are expected to cost the industry at least \$750 million, make it virtually certain that additional firms will attempt to ship the problem outside the United States.

Donald King, director of environment and health at the State Department, says he would like the industry to have to get export permits, a requirement that could be accomplished through an executive order. "Although there are existing proposals to control the export of hazardous products generally, we want to move forward on the issue of wastes independently."

A more general proposal is now circulating in draft form among an 18-agency federal task force. The draft, which was written by the White House Council on Environmental Quality and the Consumer Affairs office, requires that manufacturers notify both the federal government and the foreign country before they ship overseas products that are banned in the United States. The Commerce Department could impose a ban on the export if it posed a severe threat to the citizens or environment of the importing nation, its neighbors, or the United States. At present, Commerce Department officials favor only the notification provisions. But the policy has the support of other agencies, and White House officials predict its eventual adoption.

Science Groups Consider a Soviet Boycott

The major American scientific societies are cautiously beginning to confront the professional and ethical issues surrounding a curtailment of scientific exchanges with the Soviet Union, in retribution for the internal exile of Soviet scientist Andrei Sakharov. Representatives of 50 societies and associations gathered on 8 February under the auspices of the AAAS

in Washington to consider what, if anything, ought to be done in the way of protest. The majority favored a cut-back in official contacts but maintenance of ties to individual Soviet scientists, some of whom are presumed to be sympathetic to Western ideas.

Suggestions ranged from a serious restriction, counseled by an official of the Association of Computing Machinery, to the maintenance of the status quo, offered by a representative of the National Association of Social Workers. William J. LeVeque, of the American Mathematical Society, said his group was being pressured by members to end its English translations of

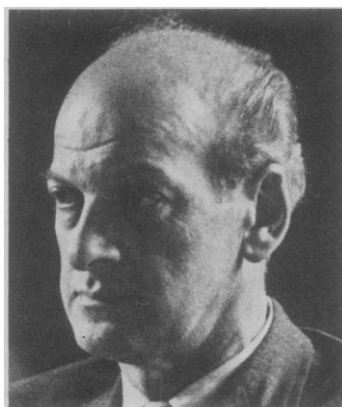


Photo by Finnigan and Associates

Philip Handler

the *Matematicheskii Sbornik*. Someone from the American Physical Society countered that that was "cutting off one's nose to spite one's face." This dichotomy is perhaps explained by the benefits that each group's scientists draw from the exchange.

Few of the groups represented at the meeting have done anything as yet, with the singular exception of the National Academy of Sciences. NAS president Philip Handler told the conference that "we will defer all bilateral seminars and the like, while permitting the activities of individual scientists to proceed. I know nothing to do but keep talking, to stay in contact no matter how much we detest what they do, and tell them what it is we dislike—to slap their wrists but not their faces, to make clear there are penalties."

Frank Press, the President's science adviser, Edward Hurwitz, an official with the State Department, and Handler all stated firmly that whatever moves were being carried out or were contemplated now would last only as long as the Soviet's ill behavior. Press

spoke of preserving the budget for exchanges even though most exchanges had been canceled; Hurwitz noted that "we have made it clear that we are not dismantling the whole structure of cooperation."

The most clear guidance seemed to be offered by Handler. "Several scientists on their way to Russia have asked me what I would do if I were in their place," he said. "I confessed I would not go."

EPA Receives First Prod on Toxic Substances

The Environmental Protection Agency has been ordered by a federal judge to decide immediately whether it will require animal testing of some highly toxic and widely used chemical compounds. The decision, which was sought by the Natural Resources Defense Council, is the first to take the agency to task for its cautious implementation of the Toxic Substances Control Act, passed in 1976. The law requires the agency to decide within a year whether it intends to force testing of high-priority chemicals, such as toluene (a gasoline additive and solvent in consumer products), xylene (a solvent), and ethylene oxide (a common industrial chemical).

The judge ruled more than 2 years after the deadline had passed. Both the Chemical Manufacturers Association and the American Petroleum Institute had intervened on the agency's behalf.

The ruling points up the difficulty of implementing a regulation with congressionally written deadlines. EPA says it wanted to develop guidelines for the testing before it decided if the testing might be needed; the law itself gives the agency longer to develop the guidelines than it does to order the tests.

At present, the agency plans to publish its guidelines this summer. Their absence might explain the paucity of long-term testing data submitted by the industry under a requirement for newly invented chemicals. EPA officials are complaining about the industry submissions, and recently proposed that all unpublished studies on toxic chemicals be sent in post-haste.

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