

human organism (a job that would seem to take more than two days).

The last goal drew some inflight comments from the rookie Rukavishnikov. During one session, he noted that the presence and advice of the two veterans had helped him to get "accustomed to weightlessness, overcome unusual and rather unpleasant feelings arising as a result of the increased blood flow to the head," according to a news report.

In spite of the underlying tone of success following the Soyuz crew's return, Western space observers were puzzled by several other characteristics of the flight that had led some to speculate that something went wrong with one of the craft. One was the unexpected four-day gap between the launches of Salyut 1 and Soyuz (the Russians have the ability for multiple launches and they have in the past launched three manned Soyuz on consecutive days). And according to one scientist, Soyuz was launched at an hour that when plotted with the launch-hours and mission-durations of Soyuz 1 through 9 would have meant that Soyuz 10 should have stayed in orbit from 25 to 30 days (although there is some question of the capability of staying that long with three men).

The most plausible explanation comes from the French AFP out of Moscow, which quotes "reliable sources" as saying that the Salyut launch was to have occurred March 27, and had to be delayed because of some problem. The French continue "the mission of Soyuz 10 . . . was to check the anomalies in the behavior of Salyut and draw up a new system of telemetry retransmission."

If this report is true, it could explain why there were two engineers on the flight. A Soviet Government report of an interview with Cosmonaut Rukavishnikov stressed the spaceman's hobby—"a passion to remake everything . . . from refrigerators to radio receivers." If the cosmonauts succeeded in repairing the lab, however, the question still remains why they should have returned as early as they did.

While Western officials are still searching for clues to the mission of Soyuz 10, the official Government announcements out of Moscow have ceased talking of the flight and have switched to discussions of the next steps—continued work with Salyut from ground control and strong hints of more manned launches to dock with the lab. The French reports estimate that Soyuz 11 will be launched the latter part of May.

Meanwhile the Kremlin this week congratulated the cosmonauts and confirmed that Soyuz 10—whatever its mission—was only the beginning of an extensive project with the lab. □

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IGNORED NO LONGER

New visibility at the NAS

The National Academy of Sciences sometimes used to worry that it suffered from a lack of visibility. There was concern at times that, outside high-level scientific-Government circles, it seemed that nobody knew or cared that the organization existed.

That perception may have been more or less accurate a few years ago. But in recent months the Academy has been showered with concern and interest from the outside. One of the more unusual circumstances of this week's annual meeting of the Academy in Washington, for instance, was the presence of more than two dozen reporters at each of two briefings for the press after sessions of the NAS's closed business meetings, briefings that in most previous years stimulated at best the dutiful attendance of a handful of science press corps regulars, who politely took notes and left with a few hohums. This year there was even a petition signed by newsmen to allow future NAS business meetings to be open to the press. Public criticisms of the Academy in the past year (some less well-founded than others), the initiation of a Ralph Nader-sponsored study of its activities (SN: 4/10, p. 247), requests by Congress for advice on several controversial matters, and disgruntlement by one or two Academy members who have provided material to newsmen—all help account for the new level of concern. The Academy is clearly moving into the public light.

One action approved in the business meeting, which this year lasted through Wednesday morning, was to change the bylaws to allow election of more members from the clinical medical sciences and the social and behavioral sciences. Instead of electing 50 new members, as it did this year, the Academy will elect 75 next year, 100 in 1973, and then taper down to a steady level of 60 in 1977 and succeeding years. This may seem to some a trivial in-house action, but NAS President Philip Handler was probably on firm ground in calling it a large move for the Academy. "It is a symbol of our intentions to become more usefully engaged in the larger problems of the United States." Full recognition of the behavioral and social sciences and clinical sciences was a long time coming at the Academy. The action will give a broader representation on which to draw in recognizing and dealing with social and health problems.

In another action, the Academy rejected two of the three recommendations of its Committee on Policy with Respect to Studies of Genetic Quality.



NAS

Handler: Concern with larger issues.

The committee was formed in 1969 in response to a proposal that the Academy urge the nation to give particular attention to the study of "hereditary aspects of our national human quality problems." Stanford University physicist William B. Shockley has been trying to promote official Academy interest in "reducing the environment-heredity uncertainty" since the fall of 1966. Academy members have been reluctant to involve the organization in the sensitive issue. They have had doubts about the validity of available information and felt that the racial overtones involved would cloud the matter.

The committee assigned to examine the issue recommended that the "National Science Foundation consult with other Federal agencies . . . in collating disparate knowledge and adding new knowledge" with respect to the possible educational implications of human behavioral genetics. It also asked that the Academy establish a working group to study the feasibility of an effective, long-range program of study in this area. Both recommendations were defeated by a voice vote of Academy members Wednesday.

A long statement by the committee assessing present knowledge of the behavioral and social aspects of human genetics was approved, however, and will be published by the Academy. It in effect respects the validity of the questions involved, but emphasizes the difficulties and costs of such studies and questions their high priority.

Another issue that has surfaced in recent years is the degree of involvement by the Academy—an official, but private, adviser to the Government—in classified advisory studies for the military. These represent a small share of the NAS's operations, but Dr. Richard Lewontin of the University of Chicago moved to forbid all studies that couldn't be made available to all members. The action was, in effect, tabled. Lewontin said he would resign. □