



REPORTS from Moscow indicate that a new campaign is in preparation against the illicit "Sunday seminars" of *refusenik* scientists. Since the departure for Israel of Professor Aleksandr Voronel, founder of the seminar, the group has continued to meet, the venue alternating between the apartments of three leading members: mathematician Aleksandr Lunts, and physicists Viktor Brailovskii and Mark Azbel.

Of these three, Lunts has been threatened by the KGB with a show trial under Article 64 of the Soviet Penal Code, which relates to treason, which could result in a death sentence. The charge, phrased in deliberately vague terms, being that he had "undertaken a task on behalf of someone outside the Soviet Union for monetary gain".

Brailovskii, while not directly threatened, was called in for a discussion with Investigator Aleksandrov, who informed him of the charges being prepared against two other dissidents, dentist Mark Nashpits and engineer Boris Tsitlionik.

Mark Azbel, so far, does not seem to have attracted the attention of the authorities to the same degree, although there has been the usual routine harassment, and being a theoretical physicist, he is making a determined effort to continue his academic work, although cut off from all libraries and other facilities. The events of the last few years, however—arrests, hunger-strike and the

nervous stress caused by constant uncertainty—has resulted in considerable deterioration of his health (he is suffering from severe cholelithiasis with reflex attacks of angina pectoris), and any increased pressure from the authorities could have very serious consequences.

● A DECREE of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), published on March 21, 1975, states that the Jubilee Meeting of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR will be held in October 1975.

This meeting, originally scheduled for May 1974, was postponed, ostensibly on the grounds that further preparatory work was needed, although, at the time, the decision to cancel the planned international gathering was widely assumed to be connected with the concern expressed by Western scientists about the lack of academic freedom in the USSR and, in particular, the plight of Soviet Jewish scientists wishing to emigrate to Israel. This assumption was reinforced by the notice of postponement, which suggested that the celebrations would now be aimed at the grass roots of Soviet society.

The text of the new decree, after commenting on the successful local celebrations held throughout the Soviet Union on the theme "The achievements of science are for the national economy", states that the Jubilee Session of the Academy will be held

"in Moscow, in October this year, with the participation of a Party, Soviet and community organisations, representatives of workers, scientists from the Academies of Science of the [constituent] republics, the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR, the Lenin All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences and the Academy of Pedagogic Sciences of the USSR. The Academy of Sciences of the USSR is given the task, together with the Jubilee Committee, of working out and presenting to the Central Committee of the CPSU proposals connected with the accomplishment of the celebrations of the Jubilee of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

"The Central Committee of the CPSU expresses its assurance that the Jubilee Session of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in honour of the 250th anniversary of its foundation will be interpreted as a nation-wide festival, and will be conducted under the badge of a review of the achievements of Soviet science and the mobilisation of scientific teams for the solution of the problems proposed by the Twenty-fourth Party Congress on the acceleration of the rates of scientific and technological progress, ensuring the economic might of our homeland, strengthening the defensive potential of the country, raising the material prosperity of the workers, consolidating peace, and strengthening friendship between nations."

courses should be broadened to include experience in teaching, computer applications and electronics. "It is up to the entire community of astronomers to correct the image that astronomers are able only to look through a telescope and ponder the riddles of the universe," the committee adds.

● To help create more jobs for astronomers, the committee recommends that undergraduate astronomy

programmes should be expanded. At present, the bulk of the astronomy community is employed in departments which award PhDs, and very few are to be found in undergraduate departments and colleges; the expansion of undergraduate astronomy courses would therefore help open up teaching posts. Coupled with that suggestion, the committee recommends that astronomy centres should establish arrangements for carrying out collaborative projects

with astronomers in more 'isolated' research environments—such as undergraduate departments and liberal arts colleges.

Although there is considerable financial incentive for universities to carry on expanding their postgraduate departments, Goldberg said he has "considerable optimism that the recommendations will be taken up" and he pointed out that Harvard has already cut enrolment in astronomy PhD courses. □