

# international news

## Appointment to Soviet Academy threatens autonomy

from Vera Rich

THE election of Academician Anatolii Petrovich Aleksandrov as President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, to replace the interim President appointed last May, Academician Vladimir A. Kotel'nikov, took place in an atmosphere which may well indicate a greater degree of governmental supervision of the Academy's work in the future.

It is significant that in the election of the last two presidents, Nesmeyanov in 1951 and Keldysh in 1961, it was an academician who proposed their candidature to the general meeting of the Academy. For on this occasion, following a brief statement from Kotel'nikov that the Presidium of the Academy had recommended Aleksandrov for the post of President, the main speech of proposal was made, not by a member of the Academy, but by the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, M. A. Suslov. Furthermore, in addition to proposing Aleksandrov, who is also a member of the Central Committee, Suslov took the opportunity to outline what may well prove to be the official science policy of the Party for the next five years.

While stressing that "the Party gives foremost significance to fundamental research", he also stressed the importance of fundamental research for "all aspects of human activity, increasing the efficiency of social production, the social consequences of the scientific and technological revolution" and laying "new main lines of scientific and technical progress." Quoting Brezhnev's speech at the recent Jubilee celebrations of the Academy, he reiterated that "the Party expects from scientists ever deeper and bolder investigations into new processes and phenomena, an active contribution to the work of scientific and technical progress, a thoughtful analysis of problems which arise, and responsible recommendations on the best means of solving them in the interests of strengthening the power of the country, improving the life of the people, in the interest of the building of Communism".

Drawing attention to the forthcoming 25th Conference of the Party, which will approve the "Theses" of the next five year plan, Suslov said that this would be a plan of "quality and productivity", in which science would be expected to play its part in applying the results of basic research to technological practice and emphasis would be put on a closer connection between research and material production. It would therefore be necessary, he asserted, to improve the control of all academic establishments throughout the Soviet Union, so as to establish a "united system, working clearly and in coordination". This system would include the Academy itself, together with its various new scientific centres and the Academies of the Union Republics. Attention must be given, he added, to those Institutes of the Academy where there are still "insufficiencies and unresolved problems", in order to utilize fully the "enormous scientific potential" of the country. A greater return is thus expected on government investment in a science.

This is, of course, a politician's speech, and perhaps would merit less attention had it been delivered simply as an address from the Party Secretary to the meeting of the Academy. However, by making such a statement in a speech proposing the new President of the Academy, it might also be construed as presaging a greater involvement of the Party in the running of the Academy. It is noteworthy in this respect that, while Keldysh was elected to the Central Committee of the CPSU in 1961, the same year as he took office as President of the Academy, Aleksandrov has already been a member of the Central Committee for nine years, and his involvement in the higher echelons of Party life must accordingly be considerably greater.

Aleksandrov is, of course, well-fitted scientifically for the prestigious post of President of the Academy. His scientific interests are wide ranging, and range from high-polymer compounds to nuclear energy. In the 1930s he was part of Ioffe's nuclear research team in Leningrad, and later worked with Kurchatov, whom he succeeded in 1960 as director of the Kurchatov Physics Institute of the Academy. He has won both the Lenin and Stalin (now State) Prizes for science and holds a number of Soviet awards in-

cluding the Order of Lenin, which he has received seven times. He is well-known internationally for his participation in the Geneva Conference on the peaceful uses of atomic energy in 1958 and the sixth Pugwash Conference. He also has considerable experience in practical applications of fundamental research and in the coordination of research activities, and is a skilled scientific administrator. In effect, on the basis of his curriculum vitae, and taking into account the trend of Party policy for science as outlined in Suslov's speech, he would seem an ideal candidate.

There is, however, one major factor against him. At 72 years of age he is older than both Kotel'nikov and Keldysh. He can hardly hope for a long term of office, and, it would seem, must be regarded as effectively another interim President. The greatest significance of his election for the future of the Academy may well be the manner of it. The Academy has always attempted to maintain an autonomous status in Soviet life. The close participation of Party Secretary Suslov in the election of the new President may well presage a situation in which its independence will in the future be considerably more circumscribed. □

## Nuclear exporters agree safeguards

FOLLOWING a series of secret meetings held in London since last April, senior officials representing the seven industrial nations which supply most of the world's exports of nuclear materials have reportedly reached agreement on means of preventing the adaptation of nuclear technology to military ends by other countries.

The Nuclear Suppliers Group, or Group of Seven, came together following India's explosion of a nuclear device based on imported Canadian technology. It consists of the UK, the USA, the USSR, France, West Germany, Canada and Japan. The notable exception—China—is thought not to be ready to export nuclear technology at the present time.

The agreement seeks to establish more stringent safeguards governing the ways in which nuclear material, equipment and expertise is used by the Group's customers. It does not