

exposures to it may be allowed while exposures of other organs may be being ignored — the exact opposite of the intention of the weighting scheme. Similar arguments have been raised in the Swedish National Institute for Radiation Protection.

Robert Walgate

Cosmonauts

More and merrier

ON 26 MAY, Bertalan Farkas of Hungary became the fifth non-Soviet citizen to go into orbit aboard a *Soyuz* spacecraft. With more than half the Comecon allies now accounted for, Soviet space planners are stressing that hospitality aboard their space-stations is theoretically open to countries outside the Socialist bloc. France and India are already on the waiting list. The possibility of wider participation in the Soviet space programme was advertised last February at the Hamburg Scientific Forum by Academician Nikolai Blokhin.

For the Comecon guests aboard the *Soyuz* and *Salyut* spacecraft, a certain pattern of experimental work has emerged. As well as taking part in routine biomedical and astrophysical observations, the participating country also contributes a set of experiments reflecting its own particular interests. It further contributes a crystallography experiment, in which a hermetically sealed ampoule containing a mixture of compounds that will not normally crystallize homogeneously under gravity is treated in a furnace aboard the *Salyut* station in the hope of producing new semi-conductor substances. Traditionally the experiment is given a name symbolizing the national traditions of the country concerned. For Hungary, the name chosen was *Otvos* (Goldsmith), referring to an ancient Hungarian craft, and also a tribute to Lorand Eotvos (the pronunciation is the same), the nineteenth century Hungarian physicist.

More specifically Hungarian in origin are the thermoluminescent dosimetry experiments *Integral* and *Pille* (Moth). The Central Research Institute for Physics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has been interested in the thermoluminescent monitoring of ionizing radiations for more than 15 years, and since 1970 has contributed dosimetry instruments to the *Interkosmos* programme.

The *Integral* test measures accumulated radiation at various points of the spacecraft over several months. The first test run was inaugurated aboard *Salyut-6* in 1979, and a second set of monitors (crystalline samples of $\text{CaSO}_4:\text{Dy}$ and $\text{SaSO}_4:\text{Tm}$) have now been installed. *Pille*, a miniaturized instrument by Comecon standards (1 litre volume, 1 kg mass, and with a dosage range from 10 mrad to 10 rad), is a short-term monitoring device, giving readings of accumulated dose every 2-3 days. The same type of dosimeters will ultimately be used for monitoring the personnel of the Paks nuclear power



Farkas — looking alike

station, now under construction in Hungary.

Photography and telemetry of the participating country is also now a traditional part of joint flights. For Hungary, this has meant geodesic surveying (to check existing maps and optimize land use), photographing the whole of the Hungarian section of the Danube (preparatory to monitoring environmental changes expected after construction of the hydroelectric plant at Nagymanos and the nuclear power station at Paks) and the observation of eutrophication and pollution of Lake Balaton and its tributaries.

Farkas was given charge of a series of experiments intended to throw light on the production of interferon by leucocyte cultures, but more practical considerations have not been neglected. Apparently sceptical of claims in 1978 by the Soviet-Polish mission that cosmonauts lose their sense of taste, Farkas was provided with special picnic packs by the Quartermasters' Division of the Hungarian People's Army and the Research Institute of the Cannery and Paprika Processing industry. The packs included goose-liver pate, pork-paprikas, bean salad with sausage and chicken in aspic, and were designed so that Farkas could share them with his hosts.

Vera Rich

UN assistance

No rows yet

Washington

As UN events go, last week's meeting in New York of the new Inter-Governmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development was a relatively tame affair. There were no late-night sessions, and little of the international tension that pervaded last year's UN conference on the same theme in Vienna.

But if the outcome of the meeting can be weighed more easily in terms of bureaucratic prose than in targeted research

dollars, many third world delegates returned home confident that they had helped to steer the scientific activities of the UN system closer to their self-perceived needs.

Set up by the UN General Assembly on the recommendation of the Vienna conference, the IGC provides a forum on science policy matters for all member states of the UN — and is thus an implicit move to shift the control of such matters away from groups more heavily dominated by the developed countries (as the now-defunct Office of Science and Technology was perceived to be).

The committee has been created by another new creation, the Centre for Science and Technology for Development. Two days before the New York meeting, the director of the centre — who has the rank of assistant secretary-general — was named as Dr Amilcar Figueira Ferrari, an engineer who was director of Brazil's National Research Council and a member of that country's delegation to UNCSTD.

Some of the developed countries made little secret of their frustration with the meeting's emphasis on administrative matters, urging that work should start on specific projects. The Canadian delegation, for example, put in a strong bid for the setting up of an international scientific and technological information system and were disappointed when the IGC decided that organisational and institutional arrangements should take precedence.

Most delegates from the developing countries, however, expressed the view that the coordination and control of research efforts within the UN system — as well as efforts to stimulate national and regional research programmes — may prove of more long-term significance than attempts to raise additional research funds from the industrialised nations, particularly at a time of general financial stringency.

The New York meeting faced three particular issues: how to set in motion the main recommendations of the Vienna conference; how to define the role of the Centre for Science and Technology with respect to the Interim Fund for Third World Science established and administered by the United Nations Development Programme; and how to approach the thorny question of 'harmonising' the scientific and technological efforts of the specialised UN agencies.

On the first issue, there was little contention. A new Scientific Advisory Committee will be set up, a successor to the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development (ACAST) serviced by OST. And member countries of a 27-member group of experts were named to report on the long-term prospects for a new science and technology financing system within the UN.

On the second issue, there was a rerun of debates in Vienna, with some Third World delegates demanding greater control by the new centre over the UNDP Fund — for