

but it was abolished in 1972 and its functions were merged in the new Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Technology. There is no doubt, Kostrzewski told *Polityka*, that the establishment of this ministry as the body which would administer science was a mistake. The proposal to set up the two new bodies is a practical consequence of this conclusion.

The role of the State Committee is fairly obvious. In Kostrzewski's words, "only the state can undertake the burden of financing science and can support in a compact organizational framework the strategic reorientation of our technological policy". The Council for Fundamental Research, however, is a specifically Polish concept, and is, said Kostrzewski, the idea of the academy. Basic research, he explained, has its own specific features.

The new bodies, however, will not apparently mean the disbanding of the Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Technology. In 1981, when the question of reorganizing Polish science was seriously mooted for the first time since the 1972 reforms, there was strong support for the idea that the ministry should be divided, with higher education amalgamated with the existing Ministry of Education and Upbringing, to give a single education ministry covering the whole learning process from kindergarten to *Doctor*

habilitatus. Dr Kostrzewski, however, when asked if the new Council for Fundamental Research might not conflict with the interests of the Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Technology, replied only that the minister, Dr Benon Miskiewicz, was in favour of the new council, and that if the two bodies did have any conflicts, they would "solve them jointly".

The creation of new administrative bodies, however, cannot solve the main problem facing science in Poland — the lack of funds, and, in particular, of hard currency for foreign journals and equipment. In real terms, the science budget for 1982 was only 54 per cent of that for 1978. During the same period, employment in research and development establishments has fallen by 25 per cent, scientists' pay by 37 per cent and that of professors by as much as 60 per cent. Years of underinvestment in industry have led to a constant decline in the country's technological level. According to Dr Kostrzewski, the new "steering mechanism" for science, embodied in the proposed new bodies, offers a chance of remedying the situation. Without a major injection of funds, especially hard currency, however, the new bodies may be of as little use, as one pessimistic academician put it, "as stirring the tea without adding sugar". **Vera Rich**

UK agriculture

Shake-up for research

A RADICAL transformation in the direction of British agricultural research is promised by the announcement, earlier this week, of the formation of a new government committee, called the Priorities Board for Research and Development in Agriculture and Food. The new committee, whose chairman will be Mr Kenneth Durham, chairman of Unilever, will have the unusual task of giving advice both to the three British ministries of agriculture (one each for Scotland and Northern Ireland and one for the rest of the United Kingdom) and the Agricultural and Food Research Council (AFRC).

The creation of the new board seems to have been brought about by the long-standing difficulties in the relationship between the agriculture ministries and the research council. Attempts in the past decade to follow the Rothschild principle that much of the research council's activity would be research commissioned by the ministries have been repeatedly frustrated.

Research planning within the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) are said to have been frustrated by the down-grading of the post of chief scientist, while the ministry's own Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (ADAS) has not been as influential as it could have been.

Relationships have been further complicated by the intervention of a body called the Joint Consultative Organisation, originally intended as a means by which farmers could be consulted about research policy, which has become a more than candid critic of AFRC. It is not clear which parts of that organization will continue under the new arrangements.

The membership of the priorities will include Sir Ralph Riley, the retiring secretary of AFRC, and two members of the council, Sir Hans Kornberg (Cambridge) and Mr Ronald Halstead (chairman-designate of Beecham), who will be resigning from the council. The other members are Professor Ronald Bell, director-general of ADAS, Dr Alan Raven, scientific adviser to the Scottish department, and two farmers, Mr John Martin (Cambridgeshire) and Mr John Moffit (Northumberland).

The importance of the new arrangements stems from the way in which the priorities board, by offering advice both to government departments and the research council, will be able to influence the whole pattern of agricultural research in Britain. It should be able also to defend the research council from some of its wilder critics, but also to foster the rationalization of ADAS and the research council. Whether it will wring more money from the Treasury is another matter. **John Maddox**

Yugoslav dissent

Physicist's passport confiscated

DR Ivan Supek, the most senior member of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and founder of the Pugwash movement in Yugoslavia, has been deprived of his passport and called in for police interrogation, as part of a new clampdown on intellectual dissent.

Dr Supek, originally a physicist, is one of the earliest known campaigners against nuclear arms. During the Second World War, he was instrumental in passing on to the Western Allies a warning from Heisenberg that Nazi Germany was working on a fission bomb.

In 1958, Supek resigned from the Yugoslav Atomic Energy Commission, fearing that even peaceful nuclear research could too easily be diverted to military ends, and switched his attention to the history and philosophy of science, founding (in 1962) the Institute for Post-graduate Studies at Dubrovnik, whose courses have a strong orientation towards the ethics of science. During the past few years, he has become increasingly critical of contemporary Yugoslav politics, and has published two books abroad, *A heretic of the left*, and a "documentary novel" about the pre-war Croat communist leader Andrija Hebrang.

The clamp-down against intellectual dissent began on 20 April with a police raid on an unofficial seminar in Belgrade. Twenty-eight people, including the lecturer and dis-

sident Marxist philosopher Milovan Djilas, were taken in for questioning. Six of them, including three students, now face conspiracy charges, and the trial for anti-state activities of a seventh, Dr Vojislav Seselj, a former sociology lecturer at the University of Sarajevo, who is being treated as the main ideologue of the group, opened last week.

The Belgrade seminar is accused of "great Serbian nationalism", an ideology unlikely to inspire sympathy among Croats. Nevertheless, a group of Croat prisoners in the Lepoglava prison protested in May to the then Yugoslav head of state, Mika Spiljak (the office has since rotated), demanding political prisoner status for themselves and expressing their sympathy with the Belgrade group. When this action was punished by solitary confinement, they smuggled out a further appeal to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, again pledging support to the senior participants.

This Croat support for the Belgrade dissidents has apparently provoked the security authorities into action against Croat dissidents still at liberty, including Dr Franjo Tudjman, a historian and former partisan general who had been conditionally released from a three-year prison sentence on health grounds but who has been rearrested, and is now in prison.

Vera Rich