

letters

Levich who wish to emigrate to Israel. Nonetheless, I wish to register two objections to your report.

Firstly, by repeated use of the word "apparently" you cast doubt on the reality of the problem—but first-hand reports by many Western scientists who have recently been to Moscow leave no room for doubt.

Secondly, you close by quoting Murray Todd to the effect that "the tragedy is that men of very high competence are being lost to the world of science..." But surely the tragedy lies far more in the fact that *numbers* of individuals, highly competent and average, scientists and ordinary people, are being intensely persecuted without justifiable cause.

LEE A. SEGEL
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Troy, N. Y.

The employment problem in physics has often been described in PHYSICS TODAY. It is encouraging that this problem is not world-wide. Recently, the Soviet Union has indicated its need for Doctor of Science degree holders by refusing to part with them unless a payment of \$39 000 is made. I propose that holders of PhD or equivalent degrees in physics investigate the possibility of immigration to the Soviet Union, to take advantage of the twin benefits of guaranteed employment and a \$39 000 bonus to pay for their privately financed educations.

JEROME W. ELBERT
Salt Lake City, Utah

Like many fellow scientists I have been stirred up by the Levich case and feel that some effective action should be taken by the scientific community to stop this atrocious repression. The professional societies seem to be slow and reluctant to act on this matter, and the effectiveness of a protest letter to the USSR Academy of Sciences with an appended list of signatures is somewhat doubtful also. I would like to suggest a course of action that can be taken individually and might have some impact. Many of us receive reprint requests from Russia and other East Block countries. If the professional societies could supply us, on request, with reprints or copies of reports and reactions dealing with the Levich case, this material could be included with or substituted for the reprints requested by the other side. Such an information campaign would be quite

unpleasant for the Russian authorities and might carry some weight towards changing their minds.

H. E. HUNZIKER
Saratoga, Calif.

Hippocratic oath

In reading over the comments of various physicists (The APS Amendment on Professional Responsibility, November, page 42), I was struck by the overall misunderstanding of the purpose of the amendment. My understanding of the rationale behind the amendment was that some physicists desired an equivalent of the physician's Hippocratic Oath. They wanted to tell the people of the world where physicists stood *vis-a-vis* society's needs. This amendment was not meant as a rule or law, to be enforced as such, but it was meant as a general statement of what was in physicists' hearts. Each individual was to be his own judge as to what was "humane" and what was "harmful."

So let us consider the amendment in the light of what it says about our desires and motives, and not in the darkness of paranoia and distrust of officials.

RICHARD ROTHCHILD
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona

Metric-time history

The "metric time" suggestion of N. R. Kunchur in his letter (June, page 13) is a great idea. As with many great ideas this one has actually been tried before—179 years ago!

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