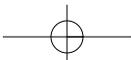


PART V
Human Rights and the Defense
of Sakharov: 1973-1987



CHAPTER 14

1973-1979: Defending Sakharov
Through NAS and Moscow

After an initial defense of Sakharov in Finland, in 1973, has real resonance, EAS policy toward the Soviet Union is reshaped. A subsequent boycott of a Moscow conference seems to have assisted Elena Bonner in getting a visa to Italy. In 1975 an electric visit to Sakharov and the refusenik scientists in Moscow is written up in the EAS newsletter. Through chains of circumstance involving a public dispute with the imperious president of the National Academy of Sciences, the newsletter catalyzes a change in the attitude of the American scientific community toward the defense of oppressed colleagues abroad by institutionalizing human rights committees inside the scientific societies.

My defense of Andrei Sakharov, which lasted for fourteen years, began in far-off Finland at the end of August 1973. The Aulenko, Finland, Pugwash Conference started rather inauspiciously when efforts were made to persuade me to withdraw a submission to the conference entitled “Superpower Détente Could Threaten Soviet-American Scientific Cooperation.” The paper, only a few hundred words long, was, a Pugwash official told me, “too terse and logical” to be ignored and was upsetting the Russians. Shaped by my training in mathematics, it was hard to ignore because it was formulated as a “proof” with two lemmas (each proved) and a conclusion.²¹⁹ I reproduce the summary proof below:

Lemma I. Superpower détente may lead to fewer American restrictions on free circulation of scientists but greater Soviet restrictions.

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[e.g., Soviets might become more concerned about ideological penetration and brain drain.]

Lemma II. Détente may lead American scientists to feel freer to criticize Soviet treatment of Soviet scientists. [e.g., U.S. scientists might become less concerned about war and less concerned about being associated with anticommunists in their criticism of the Soviet Union.]

Conclusion: Détente may lead to rising American scientific protests about the treatment of Soviet scientists and may imperil Soviet-American scientific cooperation.

I declined to withdraw the paper, and the Russians began distancing themselves from me; it seemed they would not speak to me. This included Georgi Arbatov and others I knew. But this paper may well have been my most precise prediction. As I show in this and the next two chapters, it was also a self-fulfilling prophecy in which my own activism, triggered especially by a subsequent visit to Moscow, played a significant role.

The conference was important for another reason. On August 29, forty Soviet academicians denounced Andrei Sakharov in *Pravda*, the official organ of the Soviet Communist Party, and it appeared that a campaign was being developed against him. The academicians said that Sakharov had spoken out “against the détente policy of the Soviet Union,” that he had become the “instrument for hostile propaganda” against their country, that his activity was “fundamentally alien to Soviet scientists,” and that they wanted to “emphatically condemn his activity, which discredits the honor and dignity of Soviet scientists.”

Both Artsimovich and M. D. Millionshchikov had recently died, and I seized the opportunity of a memorial session to make some pointed comments to all 120 attendees of the Pugwash conference—comments that drew Western applause, with the Soviets sitting on their hands. Readers will recall the scene to which I refer:

In 1964, when I first met Millionshchikov, I was presenting a paper against the ABM, and everyone on the Soviet side was denouncing me.

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I went up to Millionshchikov, whom I came very much to love, and said, "At least one Soviet academician agrees with me; look at what academician Artsimovich has said." Millionshchikov responded, without hesitation, "Artsimovich always disagrees with everyone else."

But now it is 1973, and the treaty banning ABMs was ratified by the Soviet Union just last year. So we see that one academician can be right even when all others disagree! Accordingly, it is possible that academician Andrei Sakharov could be right even while forty academicians say that he is not. So he should be with us at these conferences, and we should defend him.

This anecdote was so apt that Arbatov suggested to others that it showed that I was a "professional" propagandist.

The famous Peter Kapitza was at the meeting, a physicist so great that Stalin had refused to let him leave the country to return to England. He was the only Soviet scientist friendly to me, and the reason was revealing. Kapitza had lived under a kind of self-imposed house arrest for a half dozen years because of his criticism of Beria. Of all the people at the meeting, only he had the prestige to resist the demands in Moscow that all delegation members must sign the *Pravda* statement denouncing Sakharov. So we were dissidents together in a common cause, he and I. And I feel now the honor this historic figure did me by defecting from the Soviet chill with which I was surrounded by showing me personal warmth.

I would not have expected all this to have any effect whatsoever—except to impair my relations with the Soviets. Certainly I did not expect my actions to inspire anyone. But I realized later that, under the longstanding conditions of U.S.-USSR confrontation, Western scientists in dialogue with the Soviets had learned to expect that their counterparts, if affronted, would bang an enormous pair of cymbals, pick up their papers, and leave. Under the emerging conditions of détente, however, walkouts were not a part of Soviet instructions.

Awareness of these new circumstances began to dawn in Wash-

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ington. On September 8 the National Academy of Sciences sent a cable defending its “associate member Andrei Sakharov” and saying that “harassment or detention of Sakharov will have severe effects upon the relationships between the scientific communities of the U.S. and the USSR and could vitiate our recent efforts toward scientific interchange and cooperation.”²²⁰ This was a key act in the effort to protect Sakharov. An article in *Science* magazine detailed its origin at some length because, although the sentiments were obvious, NAS did not take this step easily.^[221] *Science* said the letter’s authors were encouraged by reports from the “scientific grapevine from Pugwash” noting, “In two instances, the crisis concerning Sakharov was mentioned or alluded to.” A reporter observed, “In years past the Russians would have gotten up and walked out of the room. Instead, they ‘just sat there’ while other delegates warmly applauded.”^[222]

In the October 1973 FAS newsletter, prepared on my return, I began developing the theme that became the basis for FAS’s policy toward the Soviet Union—and for the later defense of Sakharov. Entitled “The Responsibility of Scientists Under Conditions of Détente,” the lead editorial argued that FAS had been correct in putting peace first on the agenda under the conditions of the Cold War. But now, under conditions of détente, I argued that FAS should give more emphasis to freedom for our foreign colleagues. The council approved these views, unanimously I think, although some of the older members who had courageously devoted many years to resisting the crude forces of American anticommunism were loath to join in what seemed at first to be a reversal of that position.

The newsletter stated that American scientists should no longer provide the Soviet Union with the “special dispensation” we did not provide to other countries: refraining from comments on Soviet intellectual freedom. “So long as nuclear armed states exist, it is entirely appropriate—as a security matter—for citizens everywhere to advocate the intellectual freedom required to ensure that détente

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is not lightly discarded.”^[223] We also warned that détente could lead to more repression in the Soviet Union. Scientific cooperation was essential to scientific advances and, for this, Soviet scientists needed free speech and travel. “Acts of intellectual courage,” I wrote, “must be protected and encouraged.”

In a speech I was invited to give to State Department employees at their Open Forum, I explained our position and indicated that we had decided to become, in a sense, a “balance wheel to U.S. government policy.” It meant that we would pursue détente when the State Department pursued Cold War, but in the context of détente, we would feel free to pursue our own hostility toward Soviet repression of our Soviet colleagues.

The State Department was especially interested because at that time Senator Henry Jackson of Washington was attacking the Nixon-Kissinger policy of détente with amendments that would deny most-favored-nation trading status to the Soviet Union until it eased its policy on Jewish emigration. Our position became a minor straw in the wind of that giant struggle, but it was noticed. A *Washington Post* story about the Jackson and Mondale amendments devoted an unusual five paragraphs to our position, which had been released in a press conference the day before.^[224]

Up to this time, U.S. scientific concern for Soviet colleagues had been shown by 150 scientists at the National Institute of Health (NIH), whose petition threatened noncooperation unless the emigration of Jewish scientists was permitted. But there was not a lot more going on.

To help change the atmosphere, we sent our October 1973 newsletter to the hundred thousand members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and others in a direct-mail solicitation. We said we would send a delegation to Moscow if enough joined us. We generated two thousand signatures and sent them to the Soviet ambassador, Anatoly Dobrynin, on August 12, 1974.²²⁵ We also testified about our policy to the House Foreign Affairs Committee.²²⁶

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By 1975 the Helsinki Accord had been signed. It seemed natural to visit Moscow, to see if the accord would make any difference and to have our long-promised on-the-site visit. The FAS chairman was strongly opposed to this, and tried, without success, for ninety minutes on the phone, to dissuade me, even though he had been a core signer of mass appeals for help for Soviet scientists. He failed.  ^[227]

The Second Sakharov Hunger Strike

On May 9, 1975, we saw a brief mention of a three-day hunger strike by Sakharov designed to persuade the authorities to give a visa to his wife, Elena Bonner, for an eye operation in Italy. (This was actually Sakharov’s second hunger strike; the first hunger strike in 1974 was the only one on which we did not help.)^[228]

In order to amplify this, we put out a release on the same day saying we would boycott an upcoming meeting on “Scientists in World Disarmament” of the World Federation of Scientific Workers (WFSW) and called on scientists to join us . The British news service Reuters put out a three-paragraph report, carried in *The Washington Post*, in which we called the Soviet refusal “barbaric” and said that Mrs. Sakharov might go blind if not given the treatment in Italy.²²⁹

To our amazement, the Soviet embassy actually called, and we affirmed that we would attend if the visa for Bonner was granted. It was, but only on the last day of the conference, July 18. A few FAS members who attended in a personal capacity felt that the visa had been granted in a response to our boycott.²³⁰ (At this time, as will be shown below, WFSW wanted FAS to join their federation; they needed an American affiliate that was more than a paper organization. This gave us a certain influence.)

The momentum building, in November I returned to Moscow. B.J. and I met all the leading Jewish refusenik scientists—scientists who

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had applied for exit visas and been refused. For applying, they were blacklisted and could not obtain work. These included a corresponding member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, the chemist Benjamin Levich; the mathematician Ilya Iossifovich Piatietsky-Shapiro; the cybernetic specialist Alexander Levich (dean of the refuseniks); and others.²³¹ We also met non-Jewish dissidents: Valentin Turchin, a doctor of physics (courageous enough to have started a Moscow office of Amnesty International); Yuri Fyodorovich Orlov, who had been blacklisted for writing a letter to Brezhnev in defense of Sakharov (and who later became a cause célèbre while imprisoned for several years); and corresponding member Igor Shafarevich (a mathematician who had joined with Sakharov in a groundbreaking organization, the Soviet Committee on Human Rights).^[232]

In Val Turchin I saw the face of our own FAS members: independent-minded, honest to a fault, and good-natured. And in Sakharov I saw the mirror image of the movement that had created FAS: atomic scientists burdened with the guilt of discovery and impelled toward greater political awareness and activity.

Turchin took B.J. and me to Sakharov's dacha, where we arrived at about 11:00 A.M. on November 8, 1975, in the area where other high government officials had their dachas. (Sakharov possessed *three* Hero of the Soviet Union Awards, as many as Brezhnev, and so had the right to have his dacha in this protected area, near Defense Minister Grechko and surrounded by many police checkpoints.)

I began by explaining how we had tried to help get his wife, then in Italy, her visa. He seemed to think this boastful and, in a characteristically gentle way, told me a pointed, humorous story. He said that both Willy Brandt and the king of Belgium had taken his wife's case directly to Leonid Brezhnev, and in both cases, Brezhnev had said the same thing: "First I have heard of this."

I said, "Do you know the significance of July 18, the day she received her visa?"

He said, "No, this is interesting because she was told on one day

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that the visa was denied and she said, 'So I will go blind and it will be on your head.' The next day she was called back, and the visa was granted."

I explained that July 18 was the last day of the WFSW meeting, that WFSW had been told they were responsible for the visa, and that we had boycotted WFSW to put pressure on them to do something. He paused and then accepted me—not, of course, as having settled the entire issue but as one who had "played a role" and who proved it by knowing aspects of the problem he had not. (This was confirmed in a letter from Andrei of December 20, 1978, in which he asked for support for a second visa for Elena to go to Italy and referred to the "great support which the FAS and you personally demonstrated in this matter in 1975." And it was further confirmed when a Quaker activist, Terry Provence, visited Sakharov and was told by Andrei that he considered Stone to be "articulate, creative, and brave.")

Andrei was lonely for his wife, he said, with whom he was deeply in love. But he had, at least, his stepdaughter Tanya Yankelevich; her husband, Yefrem; and their new, still-swaddled grandchild, Matvey. They were all crowded together in the dacha kitchen with his mother-in-law; it was a scene out of *Doctor Zhivago*.^[233]

I offered to write a letter urging Pugwash to include him in their talks, but he considered this a "false" issue since he would not be allowed to leave the country. When I amended the idea to meetings in Russia, he agreed. We wrote to the Pugwash Continuing Committee urging this.²³⁴

Asked to provide a statement to FAS members, Sakharov lucidly dictated a statement that revealed much about his attitudes.²³⁵ He warned that Soviet authorities try to "shape the relationship" between American and Soviet scientists along "very strict lines of ideological control" and that a good example "involves the Soviet participants in the Pugwash movement." He thought that U.S. government decisions were "over-flexible and too agreeable." He wanted us to work to permit scientists to go to conferences if invited

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to them and not “just the scientists whose political qualifications are deemed correct.” He urged the “personal defense of concrete persons.” And he urged concern for “disarmament, environment, and all the rest.” Above all, he urged unity among scientists, a unity that he thought would be most easily achieved by scientists because they were the “least egotistic part of society.”

Except for the criticism of our government as overly agreeable—not our point of view—the rest could have been taken from our own editorials. He was a true counterpart of FAS.

We left Sakharov’s dacha in the late afternoon and took the 5:00 P.M. train back. Plainclothesmen were in evidence at the train station and lurked on the return train. As we left our taxi a few blocks early to hide our destination, we saw them sitting in a car. We approached them, and B.J., on my instruction, said in Russian, “Why are you following us? We have done nothing wrong.” They said, “You are guests.” But whether it meant we needed extra protection or extra surveillance was unclear.

In the darkening gloom, we walked on a few blocks to dine with another refusenik. The reader can imagine how much these contacts with refuseniks galvanized my concern. Especially moving was the visit to the “refusenik seminar” of Mark Ya. Azbel in which Jews refused exit visas tried to keep up their science by lecturing to one another. An important incidental purpose of the seminar was to provide a place where visiting foreign scientists could meet with Jewish refuseniks in a scientific context.²³⁶

But the most important meeting in shaping FAS policy was the meeting with the highest-ranking refusenik, corresponding member Benjamin Levich. He made two complaints about the National Academy of Science’s lack of commitment to the refuseniks, which, in the end, became bombshells in changing NAS policy. *Q*

Levich told me that the NAS foreign secretary, George Hammond, had broached his own case and those of other refuseniks but had not pressed the issue when the acting chief scientific secretary of the Soviet Academy, G. K. Skryabin, had said, “It is not up to us.” (And,

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according to the story, Skryabin had later told the refuseniks, maliciously, “You see, they complained and bounced right off us; do not expect any help from them, they are calmed down.”)

Levich’s second anecdote was that on an earlier visit, Levich, expecting a meeting with the NAS’s president, Philip Handler, then in Moscow, had called him, but that Handler had refused to meet with him.

Levich also gave me a powerful quote from Einstein:

A prime responsibility of every academy is to encourage and defend the scientific life of the country. Despite this fact, scientists of German society, as far as I know, have become silent witnesses to the fact that a considerable part of German scientists, students, and teachers have been stripped of the possibility to work and obtain for themselves the means for subsistence. I haven’t the slightest desire to belong to any scientific society capable, even under outside pressure, of conducting itself in such a fashion.²³⁷

Our visit to Moscow ended with a bang. While leaving off letters asking if we could send an observer to the trial of the human rights activist Sergei Kovalev, we found ourselves at the apartment of a very nervous V. F. Turchin, who had reason to believe that Sakharov was undergoing a police search—or was about to be searched—and they were quite worried until they were able to reach him. It gave us the flavor of life in the dissident community.^[238]

I paced up and down on the plane on the long flight home, thinking about how to handle these issues. But I did not anticipate the full explosion that resulted.

I wrote the December 1975 newsletter as a trip report.²³⁹ I put the Levich complaints in a small “box” in the corner of page 9, where they could not be missed, under the headline “Complaints About the National Academy of Sciences,” and I added the Einstein quote.²⁴⁰ I then secured the names and addresses of all one thousand members of NAS and mailed them the newsletter with a letter drawing their

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attention to the complaints and to Sakharov's and Einstein's injunctions; I asked them whether they could be relied upon to "sympathetically consider" relevant petitions. We asked them to affirm the following: "I will do what I can to encourage the National Academy to defend scientists in difficulties for the above indicated actions."²⁴¹

One hundred fifty of the thousand members of NAS responded affirmatively, but the president, Philip Handler, responded explosively. This explosion, which I did not anticipate, made the campaign to raise the consciousness of the scientific community a success. Accordingly, some background may be appropriate.

My Relations with Philip Handler

I had never met Philip Handler and, really, had never wanted to. He once confided to an intimate, "If the Federation [FAS] continues as it is, there will be *two* voices of science in Washington." To him, this was heresy; for me, it would have been a great success.²⁴²

But there was more to it than institutional rivalry. It was clear that Handler harbored a certain antipathy, common in the scientific community, toward activism. In one of his speeches, he said:

We have learned that the scientist-advocate, on both sides of such a debate, is likely to be more advocate than scientist and this has unfavorably altered the public view of both the nature of the scientific endeavor and the personal attributes of scientists.²⁴³

According to Handler, "Once the scientific community has presented the facts, however, it must leave final decisions to the policymakers and the public."²⁴⁴

Handler was known to be an imperious and skillful infighter. I kept my distance. I knew, from time to time, we would be criticizing NAS, or might want to. I remembered what Spartacus had said in Howard Fast's novel: "Gladiator, befriend not gladiator."

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The month before I left for Moscow, I received just such an invitation to get into the ring with NAS—an urgent phone call from the director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Fred Ikle. Fred said that ACDA had contracted with NAS to do a study entitled "Long-Term Worldwide Effects of Multiple-Nuclear Weapons Detonations." NAS, he said, was about to release the study, and he feared it would give the wrong impression. Could I help? He sent me a copy of the study and the cover letter from Handler.

Parkinson would have loved this incident. ACDA had expected, of course, that NAS would write a report detailing the terrible effects of nuclear war.²⁴⁵ According to Handler's cover letter, however, the chief question posed by NAS was, "Would the biosphere and the species *Homo sapiens*, survive a nuclear war?" Failing to find a single mechanism that could provably destroy the planet, it had concluded, "Yes."²⁴⁶ This affirmation had been watered down in the press release to "probably yes."

Most bizarre of all, the report had focused on the Strangelovian scenario that some nation might consider it advantageous to trigger World War III. Since the NAS study would have persuaded such a nation that worldwide effects were minimal, Handler's cover letter felt obliged to backtrack and say that the results of a nuclear holocaust were "entirely unpredictable."

I threw together a statement and got the approval of the FAS's executive committee for its release to the press on October 4. It said the academy had "studied the wrong form of the right question" and added, "Evidently, with its customary alacrity, the National Academy of Sciences has gone about answering, after eighteen years, Nevil Shute's 'On The Beach.'"²⁴⁷ (One executive committee member, a member of NAS as well, felt that the title of the press release went too far and was in poor taste: "The National Academy of Sciences Seems to Lack Public Policy Sense." In retrospect, I can only agree with him.)²⁴⁸

Standing outside NAS, I hawked the press release. The worst part for Handler was that *The New York Times* report showed that Dr.

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Ikle and I were on the same wavelength; both of us were quoted as saying that the report's conclusion was "irrelevant" to public policy.²⁴⁹ *Science* magazine said that ACDA was "dismayed at the tone of the report." It even reported that Handler had contacted *Science* to express "anguish and concern" that "his letter, and the report itself" had given an impression opposite to the one he wanted—that there would be "no hiding place" for anyone.²⁵⁰

This October flap occurred in the month before I met Sakharov and two months before I was mailing letters to Handler's members asking them to note his acts of omission in Moscow. So he was still smarting from a perceived defeat.

Handler fired off an eight-page, single-spaced, letter to the FAS's chairman at that time, Philip Morrison, demanding "an appropriate public apology to the Academy, to Dr. Hammond and to me." He said that otherwise these "calumnies" would "damage my ability and that of our Foreign Secretary to serve the Academy and the ability of the Academy to serve our country."

He said my two campaigns had been "an effort to derogate the National Academy of Sciences" and that my letter to NAS members with the December newsletter was using against NAS "the very tactics which the PIR [FAS *Public Interest Report*] advocates be used against the Soviet Government." For Mr. Stone "deliberately to seek to turn our friends and members against the Academy is an ugly act." It was all "*cheap, yellow journalism*" (emphasis in original). He explained all that he would have told me had I only asked—and this question of my not phoning him for his comment (I *had* phoned his foreign secretary) became the major charge against me. (He being a fellow president of a scientific society, I had felt I should not badger him; I invited his press secretary to have Handler call me and left it at that.)^[251] In retrospect, I should have pursued him more directly. But the FAS executive committee backed me up and declined to apologize.^[252] And the former NAS foreign secretary Harrison Brown supported me also, telling *Nature* magazine, "If anything, the Academy has erred on the side of not doing enough publicly."²⁵³

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Handler’s colorful letter was, in fact, the instrument of our eventual success. It was so quotable as to be irresistible to the press.  *Science* magazine ran a long article entitled “Academy vs. Federation of Scientists: Handler Accuses Stone of ‘Ugly Act.’”²⁵⁴ This article dealt, unfortunately, more with the dispute about journalistic procedure than with the substance.²⁵⁵ But this, too, we turned to our advantage. We took the newsletter in question and mailed it to some 125,000 scientists —most of them received *Science* magazine—and told them they might want to know more about the debate. We sent the whole FAS newsletter in question and a request for support and membership.²⁵⁶ We also circulated a four-page analysis of NAS’s position.²⁵⁷ The entire debate was going out on Voice of America, which must have made me seem quite anti-Soviet in the Soviet Union.²⁵⁸

During my 1975 trip, I had promised to try to get support for three scientists in different disciplines: the biologist Sergei Kovalev (who later, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, became Russia’s most celebrated defender of human rights); the physicist Andrei Tverdoklebov; and the mathematician Leonid Pluysch, whose internment on psychiatric grounds was the most celebrated such case of that period and upon whose behalf even the French Communist Party had protested in vain.

We held a press conference for Kovalev and then wrote to thirty thousand American biologists in his defense. ²⁵⁹ With regard to the physicist Tverdoklebov, we held a press conference of March 2, 1976, and when we could not get the American Physics Society list promptly, we rounded up 62 of 120 NAS physicists and sent a press release about it to the Voice of America.  A subsequent letter from Turchin was kind enough to say that this Voice of America statement had saved Tverdoklebov from prison and had resulted in the milder punishment of internal exile.

In the case of the mathematician Pluysch, we decided to try to manipulate the Soviet system, and we may have succeeded. On November 28, 1975, we sent a letter to Mrs. Pluysch expressing our

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intention to send a report on his case to seven thousand scientists and to send “subsequently, a copy of our conclusions to every American mathematician by mail.” ²⁶⁰

By mid-December we read, in a column by Vera Rich in *Nature*, I think, that rumors in Moscow suggested Pluysch might be released. So on December 18, we wrote to Ambassador Dobrynin indicating our plans to send a relevant letter defending Pluysch to every American mathematician (and even enclosing a copy of the proposed letter). We said we would not send it if the rumors could be verified. A week later Reuters reported that Mrs. Pluysch had been asked to submit an application for an exit visa. On January 4, AP reported that Soviet authorities were saying they would release Pluysch. And on January 8 they did. One observer thought that it was conceivable that the last straw in Pluysch’s case was the possibility—which our involvement suggested—that his case would jump the Atlantic and become a major issue in American scientific circles, an eventuality that Ambassador Dobrynin may have moved to prevent. But of course, our actions may have had nothing at all to do with it.

Appalled by the lack of support from our fellow professional societies, we prepared a second newsletter entitled “On the Obligations of Scientific Societies to Defend Scientists Abroad and Encourage Public Involvement at Home.” ²⁶¹ It called the strictly professional disciplinary societies the “real problem children.” We said they were “staffed by directors of long tenure, their placidity unruffled by the annual rites of passage of one (more-or-less-honorary) Chairman to another.” They understood responsibility to mean “obligations of restraint” rather than “demands of conscience.” Their officials were often “ill-informed, philosophically vague and unempathetic.”

By now FAS members were complaining that I should write about something else, anything else; they felt that FAS was not a human rights organization only. But I had one more problem to resolve. What could individual scientists do? And how could we

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agitate without breaking the links of scientific cooperation with the Soviets—which none of our scientists wanted to do?

I solved this problem in the next issue, March 1976, which was headlined "On a Method of Helping Colleagues Abroad: 'The American Refusenik.'" The idea was that American scientists would "refuse" to cooperate with Soviet scientists until a specific "adopted" Soviet scientist was given his rights. Thus *individual* scientists would break off relations, but only conditionally and, it was hoped, temporarily. And since most scientists were not activists, enough of them would remain to carry on scientific exchange. We would, in effect, harass the exchange system but not break it off. The idea was spread around.

This solution was particularly important because, as I soon realized, NAS had no idea how to handle this problem. When it issued a release, it suggested it would refuse to participate in joint scientific ventures unless the harassment stopped.²⁶² But the Soviets were not about to stop being the Soviets, and the harassment would never stop completely. So this policy would only lead to disaster for scientific exchange.

Best of all, with the refusenik policy, the scientific community could tell the government that we, the scientific community, had a punishment suited to the crime. It could be told to butt out and stop threatening to break off all scientific exchange—something not easily restarted and something that would mean permanent isolation of Soviet scientists and permanent denial of U.S. access to the results of Soviet science.²⁶³

In testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on the Helsinki Accord, we noted that the agreement's call for cooperation in science left it to the institutions and scientists themselves "to determine the opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation and to develop its details." We said we were "not advocating, and will not advocate, wholesale breaks in scientific exchange" between any two nations. And we explained the American refusenik method.²⁶⁴

As a direct result of this confrontation, the National Academy of Sciences was forced to create a Committee on Human Rights,

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whereas until then, all such matters had been dealt with by the president (Handler) and the foreign secretary in conjunction with certain advisers. Now the issue of human rights had been institutionalized.^[265] And where before it had been assumed that aside from rare cases the issue of human rights was not the business of NAS, defending foreign colleagues now became an integral function of the academy.^[266] And as it went with NAS, so it went with the other scientific societies. With the prominent exception of the American Physics Society, most did not then have a committee on human rights. But most did thenceforth, after some urging from us.^[267]

By 1977, we had been successful enough in institutionalizing concern for human rights of scientists inside the scientific community that we stopped hiring staff within FAS to work on this issue. But I continued, of course, to monitor it.

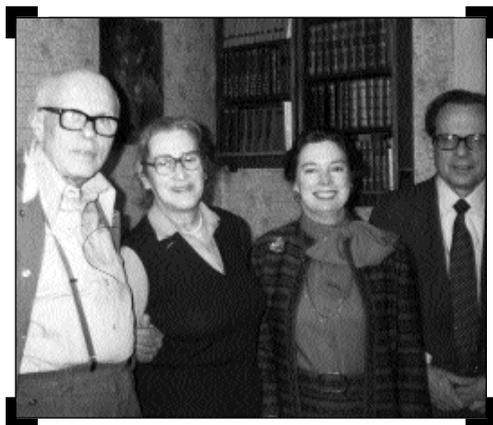
Elena Bonner Sends a Strange Secret Appeal

In September, Elena Bonner flew to Italy for a second time, for treatment for the same eye condition that had provoked Andrei's first hunger strike. During her visit, on October 9, she and the rest of the world heard the news of Sakharov's Nobel Prize, and she eventually traveled to Oslo to receive it.

After the award was announced but before it was granted, we received a letter, dated October 26, from a British psychiatrist, G. A. Low-Ber, with a request that was hard to understand. He said that he had had a conversation with Elena Bonner, that she had asked him to write to me, and that she sounded "very despondent." He wrote:

You may have read in the papers today that the Sakharov flat was ransacked by hooligans of the official type. She fears that they might have left some incriminating material hidden in the flat which could then be used against them. . . . She feels that life has become intolerable for her, her husband and the family. She thinks it would be futile for her husband to ask for an exit visa.

"EVERY MAN SHOULD TRY"



Andrei Sakharov, Elena Bonner, B.J., and the author

In view of this, she would like you to issue a statement saying that in view of the continual harassment and official attempts to make life intolerable for the Sakharov family, the Soviet Government should supply them all with exit visas and allow them to leave. For reasons which I have already stated, she does not at the moment wish to be associated with such a statement, but the ransacking of her flat, which was reported in

the British papers today, together with other "reliable" information which I am giving you now, should form the basis of such a statement.

My own personal impression is that Mrs. Sakharov is very anxious to leave the Soviet Union and that her husband is of two minds. I think that a statement on the lines suggested by Mrs. Sakharov would somehow give her husband a choice in deciding what to do next. Should you wish to talk to her yourself, her telephone number is²⁶⁸

According to Sakharov's *Memoirs*, Elena Bonner's visa for her trip to Italy arrived in August "just as Tanya and Efrem received their visas to emigrate,"²⁶⁹ and all five of them, including the grandchildren, Matvei and Anya, left for Rome on the same flight on September 5, 1977.²⁷⁰

So Elena Bonner was free to defect to the West from Italy, and Tanya and Efrem were already out. The psychiatrist believed, evidently, that we were being urged to make a statement to manipulate Sakharov's decision about whether he could live without her.

This is one of only two occasions when I felt it would be wrong to respond to a Sakharov family request; the second, in 1987, is discussed later. In any event, Andrei and Elena were, of course, never permanently separated.