

INTERNATIONAL SAKHAROV CONFERENCE

Forty Years after Andrei Sakharov's 1968 Essay, *Reflections on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom*: Russia Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

A Harvard University Conference celebrating the 40th anniversary of Andrei Sakharov's 1968 essay *Reflections on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence, and Intellectual Freedom*¹ was held on October 24-25, 2008, at the Norton's Woods Conference Center, Cambridge, Mass. The Conference was organized by the Davis Center's Sakharov Program on Human Rights, the Physics Department, and the Andrei Sakharov Foundation (USA).

OPENING REMARKS

Timothy Colton – *Morris and Ann Feldberg Professor of Government and director of the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies since 1992. His many publications include The Dilemma of Reform in the Soviet Union (1986); Moscow: Governing the Soviet Metropolis (1995); and Yeltsin: A Life (2008).*

I was asked to say a very short, but not perfunctory word of greeting at the very beginning of this event. It's great to see you all here. This is a very unusual gathering of students of history, but also makers of history, in surroundings that are conducive to thinking big thoughts, as long as you don't fall asleep in the soft seats. So, we'll all have to stay awake in this serene setting, but of course that won't be difficult because the subject matter is so interesting and so important and so timely, despite the fact that Andrei Sakharov has not been with us for almost 20 years -- it's hard to believe.

I'm a political scientist, and so I don't know a lot about natural science, let alone physics. One thing I do know a little about is leadership, and so if you ask someone like me to frame Sakharov and his work, the word that does leap to mind for me is "leader". He was a great leader. And yet, he was a leader of a curious sort, because he certainly was not a conventional, political or state leader. He was of course elected to the Soviet Academy of Sciences, and he was a member of the 1989 Congress of People's Deputies, that very unusual body. So he represented people at various points in his career, but he never held a high state office.

Robert Tucker, a great scholar of Soviet history, once, in retirement, wrote a book where he drew the distinction between "constituted leaders" and "non-constituted leaders". And

¹ The essay was published in its entirety in *The New York Times* on July 22, 1968, and can be found at <http://physics.harvard.edu/%7Ewilson/sakharovconference/76953998.pdf>

he said that we tend to over-emphasize the role of the "constituted leaders," the ones who hold the high, constitutionally-founded office, and to underplay the role of unconstituted leaders. And he gave as an example Martin Luther King, in our own country, Martin Luther King, Jr., who was never, I believe, elected to any office whatsoever, certainly any political office, and yet played a huge role in 20th century American history. So, if one is looking for an American analogy, a highly imperfect one might be King, although King, of course, was not a scientist. And here we confront the enormous range and diversity of Sakharov's activities. The program today and tomorrow is designed to draw on those several -- many -- sides of Sakharov's life. I don't think we're presuming to try and integrate it, and tie a bow, but to reflect on the different sides and what they teach us.

The occasion, as we all know, is the 40th anniversary of the publication of Sakharov's, I think, still most famous writing, his essay *Reflections on Progress, Peaceful Co-Existence and Intellectual Freedom*, that happened 40 years ago this year. It so happens that 20 years ago this year another influential short writing, "The Inevitability of Perestroika," was published, and so these two essays seemed like a nice way to frame our conversation this weekend.

Sakharov, therefore, is a complex figure. I think there are some good books on him already, and he wrote his own memoirs. I'm sure, though, that there will be plenty of profound explorations of his life in future. It's interesting to realize that he lived his whole life in the Soviet period. I hadn't really thought about it until I went back to the dates. He was born three years after the Bolshevik Revolution. And he died just two years before the collapse of the Soviet Union. So he was entirely confined to that period. Yet in every other way, of course, he was a much broader figure who reflected trends in world culture and civilization, despite the fact that he lived in this one place, in this one time. He had extraordinary breadth.

So that breadth is what brings us here today, and the sense that Sakharov speaks not only to the often tragic history of his own country, which changed shape so remarkably after his death, but also that he addresses general human questions.

This conference is a joint project of three entities: the Department of Physics, represented in particular by Prof. Richard Wilson, who is the Mallinckrodt Research Professor of Physics here at Harvard; by the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies that I'm still the director of, and that Tatyana Yankelevich works for, heading our Sakharov Program in Human Rights; and thirdly by the Andrei Sakharov Foundation, whose president, Ed Kline, is seated right here in front of me. I might also acknowledge the very important support of USAID for the Sakharov Program in general, and for this event.

As I was thinking last weekend about what remarks I would make, one question I have is what Sakharov would make of things that have happened since his departure? He was not present to witness the death of the Soviet Union. Would he have approved of that? It's not so clear. He wanted the USSR to be reconstituted, and he wanted it to join the mainstream of civilization. But whether he would have wanted it to break up into 15 separate states is not so clear. Perhaps we'll get some illumination on that from Elena Bonner today, as she clearly had misgivings about it. What would he have thought of shock therapy? What would he have thought of two Chechen wars? But of course, as a citizen of the world, he was interested in much more than just his own country. What would he have thought of Abu Ghraib? Or Guantanamo? These are questions that we may find ourselves in a better position to answer tomorrow. I want to thank you all for coming on such a beautiful morning and I look forward -- and I'm sure we all look forward -- to our discussion.

I would now like to open the first session, which I will be chairing.

Panel 1 – The Publication of Andrei Sakharov’s 1968 Essay, *Reflections on Progress, Peaceful, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom*: Context, Reactions, and Consequences.

The panelists and their topics were:

Timothy Colton -- *Chair*

Richard Wilson -- *The reaction of Western scientists.*

Pavel Litvinov – *The reaction of the Soviet intelligentsia.*

Yuri Orlov – *The Political Ideas of Soviet Scientists in the 1950s and 1960s.*

Peter Reddaway – *The Reaction of the Soviet Authorities.*

Timothy Colton

Our first speaker will be a distinguished physicist who came to Harvard from Britain, Professor Richard Wilson.

Richard Wilson -- *Mallinckrodt Professor of Physics at Harvard. After receiving a D.Phil. from Oxford University for a thesis on nuclear physics, in 1955 Wilson joined Harvard’s physics department, where he has spent much time on scientific issues relevant to risk and public policy, chairing an American Physical Society committee on the consequences of the 1986 Chernobyl reactor accident. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a director of The Andrei Sakharov Foundation.*

In 1958 I went to the high energy physics (Rochester) conference in Geneva Switzerland. At the same time discussions were taking place in Geneva on the Limited Test Ban Treaty. As scientific and technical advisors there were on the US side Professor Hans Bethe and on the Russian side, Professor Igor Tamm. While it was clear to Americans that Hans was chosen not only because of his knowledge of nuclear arms and his overall intelligence (he had a Nobel Prize), but also because of his goodwill, we did not, at first, know that these were the reasons the Russians chose Igor Tamm. We knew that Igor was a mountain climber so a few of us, myself, Peter Hillman, Wolfgang “Pief” Panofsky and Bob Hofstadter, suggested we go up a small mountain, maybe Mt. Pele, just north of Lausanne. As we walked up it, Igor told us about his life, his recent trip to China, and other interesting details. The particular comment of interest for this meeting is that: "I have a young student who is brighter than I am. Watch out for him. Andrei Dmitrievich Sakharov."

Probably as a result of Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace speech, relations between Soviet and American scientists had improved, in particular in nuclear and particle physics. Starting about 1955, Russian papers were sent to the American Physical Society as soon as they were accepted and the Society arranged for their translation. Sakharov's paper "The Initial Stage of an Expanding Universe and the Appearance of a Nonuniform Distribution of Matter" appeared in the Soviet Journal of Experimental and Theoretical Physics in 1965 without an address for the author. We knew what that meant. So some of us, myself included, were ready for the printing in the *New York Times* on July 11, 1968, of an article about Sakharov's *Reflections on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom* and of the full text of the essay on July 22nd.

It was summer time. I was in Aspen, Colorado, where we were planning the experimental program for the 350 GeV accelerator at FERMILAB. I talked about *Reflections* at once. I talked, by phone, with Bernard "Bernie" Feld who was a leading member of the Pugwash committee. I am not a member of the US National Academy of Scientists but others were and Robert R. "Bob" Wilson in particular promised to raise it *at once* with the President of the National Academy. But there was no public response from anyone for several weeks. Meanwhile other actions took place.

In 1945 Soviet troops were welcomed by Czechs and Slovaks as liberators. In 1968 the Soviet troops were no longer welcomed. Could an immediate response by western scientists to Andrei's article have prevented the catastrophe of the Soviet invasion?

In September 1968 a High Energy Physics conference took place in Vienna. I talked to a Czech high energy physicist, whose name I forget, who had been working at Dubna and had just left Czechoslovakia for good. He informed me that in mid-July there was a meeting of the communist party in Dubna and my friend Bruno Pontecorvo, who was a Soviet citizen by that time, made an impassioned plea for supporting the Czech "alternate road to communism". I assume this is true, although I only met my friend Pontecorvo once after that (in 1978) when he came to a lecture of mine in Dubna with a fever of 104 degrees, and the opportunity for discussion of this and other issues was limited.

More direct perhaps, was the visit of Pyotr Kapitsa to Harvard University in September 1968. This was the first trip overseas that Pyotr and his wife Anna had made since 1934. In public Pyotr was cautious in talking about the invasion of Czechoslovakia. But privately he said that the decision to proceed was made with a majority of one vote. He also said that he agreed with Sakharov's analysis in *Reflections*, although, as is well known, he preferred to "work within the system." Perhaps that one vote in the Politburo could have been changed by a prompt positive response to Sakharov.

There was very little public discussion in Vienna of Sakharov's essay. No one sent a letter of approval or support. Why were these high energy physicists, who were clearly the group that one would most expect to understand and to respond, so reticent? I cannot answer for everyone, but I'll give my own answer. We had all met Soviet scientists and in many cases made friendships -- friendships limited by our duties and loyalties to our respective countries, but friendships nonetheless. I had met Yuri Orlov, for example, at the High Energy Physics conference in Dubna in summer 1964, where he had given all the visiting American physicists a hard time about the Tonkin Gulf incident. We thought there really had been a planned attack on the U.S. Navy. Orlov, correctly, thought it was a fake. I knew that he and my other Russian friends agreed with what Andrei had written. The invasion of Czechoslovakia seemed to demonstrate their limited power. Why was Andrei's letter any different?

We did not realize at once, and it took about 4 years for us to find out, that Andrei was extraordinary. He was persistent and put everything on the line. For me, I suppose, the realization came in May 1970 when Andrei walked into an international conference on Biochemistry and Genetics and asked for help in getting Zhores Medvedev released from a psychiatric hospital. Even then I did nothing about it and went to the High Energy Physics Conference in Kiev in 1970 where again no one discussed *Reflections*. I, of course, applauded the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1975 to Andrei. But I did not really get involved till Orlov and Sharansky were sentenced in 1977.

My first meeting with Andrei and Elena in May 1979 will always stay in my mind. But one comment in particular stands out. "There must be a hundred people who have tried to do what I am doing, of whom we will never hear." I took this, and still take it, to mean that these hundred were liquidated in some way. Andrei knew his strength and power and put it on the line. He used it to help others who were less fortunate - such as Yuri Orlov who survived 7 years of labor camp and several years of domestic exile. I am delighted that Yuri survived and is here today. Interestingly, earlier that day, another friend of mine, Tanya Kapitsa had said: "one per cent of our friends just disappear."

The cold war continued another 18 years till the Reykjavik Summit in fall 1986, and the Moscow Conference organized by Evgeny Velikhov in February 1987 which I always think of as a conference on a nuclear free world, although its official title was the Forum for a Nuclear-Free World and the Survival of Mankind. Gorbachev asked Andrei to return to Moscow just in time to participate in that historic meeting. After the Reykjavik conference there were still a couple of sticking points on the Reagan-Gorbachev agenda and therefore for the peace of the world. Gorbachev would not negotiate while the US was working on the Strategic Defense Initiative (anti-ballistic missile defense) and was testing atomic bombs. In a five minute intervention Andrei

(supported semi-independently by Jerry Wiesner of MIT and myself) addressed the first issue. I asked: "Why should the USSR be concerned if the USA wastes its money?" A West German politician addressed the second. Speaking at the final session in the Palace of the Congresses in the Kremlin he said, "Don't test bombs: test Gorbachev." Unfortunately, the USA did carry out a planned series of tests, but within a month they stopped, and after that, Gorbachev changed his tune.

Now it seems that relations between Russia and the U.S. are becoming sticky again. President Bush has accused President Putin of restarting the cold war. Others think that Bush is restarting the cold war with his push for NATO to take in Ukraine and Georgia, and his proposals for an anti-ballistic missile defense in the Czech Republic and Poland. Who restarted the cold war will be discussed for many years in as many books and Ph.D. theses. But it is comparatively irrelevant. It is important to realize the difference between the two wars. The first cold war was about political control of the world. In this, the American optimism, hope and generosity of post WW II gave the U.S. a bit of an edge. But neither capitalism nor communism won the cold war. Bureaucracy won the war. The new cold war is about natural resources, and the U.S. has two hands tied behind its back. The U.S. imports oil and a host of minerals. Russia supplies 30-40% of Europe's gas and oil. A former OPEC secretary general, Dr. Adnan Shihab Eldin, with a Ph.D. in nuclear chemistry from the University of California at Berkeley, has commented that when a U.S. congressman makes a rude comment about Iran, whether right or wrong, the price of oil futures rises. Then Russia profits and America loses, without Russia having to say or do anything. It is clear to me as an American that America needs Russia. I hope that Russia also needs America. I call to your attention this simple three letter word: OIL. The cause of our prosperity and the root of much evil.

I wonder what Andrei Sakharov would make of it all. Both Russia and the U.S. need his intellect, his humanity, his patience, and his ability to stand up to bureaucracy and political authority and say, "No!"

Timothy Colton - *Director, Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies*

It's my honor to introduce Pavel Litvinov. Most people here know about Pavel Litvinov's background. Mr. Litvinov trained in physics but he came to world attention in his role as a citizen, in particular through the remarkable demonstration on Red Square in 1968 against the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. He and a handful of other hardy souls held up signs that said "*Za Vashu i Nashu Svobodu*" ("For Your Freedom and Ours") - and they were of course rewarded for the sign with serious penalties: arrest, trial and

exile. In 1973, Pavel Litvinov was allowed to leave the Soviet Union and travel to America, where he has lived and taught mathematics and physics at the Hackley School. He will reflect on the reaction of Soviet society and the intelligentsia to Sakharov's essay.

Pavel Litvinov – *Grandson of Stalin's Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov. Exiled to Siberia in 1968 for organizing a demonstration on Red Square to protest the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia, Litvinov emigrated to the United States in 1973, where he taught physics at the Hackley School in Tarrytown, NY, until retiring in 2007. He continued to support Soviet human rights activists from abroad, speaking on their behalf and serving on the editorial board of Khronika Press. In December 2008 he received the "Hasten To Do Good" medal awarded by Vladimir Lukin, Human Rights Commissioner of the Russian Federation.*

First of all, nobody should mention me as a physicist together with people like Andrei Sakharov because my physics achievements are more than modest. I haven't done much physics since I was expelled from graduate school and lost my job as an assistant professor of physics, and that was in Moscow long ago in 1968. Since that time, I have only been a teacher of physics.

My life intersected with the life of Andrei Dmitrievich Sakharov before we met in person. I was one of the early activists among those who became known as "Soviet dissidents," although we didn't call ourselves that at the time. That name came later. We preferred to call ourselves "human rights advocates". In 1965 we started a movement which tried to defend human rights as they were reflected in the Soviet Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We wrote letters protesting violations of human rights, we wrote about the fate of political prisoners, about Soviet censorship, about putting people into mental hospitals for their political convictions. The movement grew, and the first half of 1968 could be considered one of its high points. By that time, I had already lost my position as assistant professor of physics and I was involved in many so-called *samizdat* publications. With the help of other people, I edited several books. But the most important thing I was doing was to meet regularly with foreign correspondents in Moscow and give them *samizdat* materials, mostly letters of protest. There were hundreds of people signing letters of protest after the arrests of people like Sinyavsky and Daniel in 1965; Ginzburg, Galanskov, and Bukovsky in 1967-1968; and many others. I won't mention more names, but protests and arrests were continuing.

Everybody should understand that at that time, the only means to copy *samizdat* materials for circulation was a simple instrument called "the typewriter". It was before personal computers existed; Xerox-type copy machines had just appeared and they were kept under state control. The only way a person could express his views on Soviet problems, other than speaking with friends in "kitchen conversations," was to type something on a

manual typewriter – electric typewriters were unheard of – using carbon paper to make multiple copies. Most of you, depending on age, have probably used or heard of carbon paper, but as a teacher, I have already met young people who have never seen a typewriter in their lives, so I have to explain. I’m sure it’s not the case with this audience, but I just wanted to remind you of the conditions we had to cope with.

The KGB – the Soviet security police – and the authorities generally in the Soviet Union weren’t interested in serious public discussions unless they were officially organized and published in Soviet newspapers and journals. Censorship of *everything* printed in the Soviet Union was total at the time. There were periodicals such as the journal *Novy Mir* and the newspaper *Literaturnaya gazeta* where occasional discussions were permitted, but they were officially controlled discussions. During the 1960s, *samizdat* - the distribution of manuscripts in typewritten form - was born.

I was one of the early and very active dissident leaders. I and my friend the late Andrei Amalrik were the “press officers” of the human rights movement, as Amalrik jokingly called us. We would meet foreign correspondents regularly and give them *samizdat*, which would be smuggled out of the country, printed in the *New York Times*, *Le Monde*, or other publications, and then broadcast by Western radio stations like Radio Liberty, Voice of America and the BBC back to the Soviet Union, so that many people who couldn’t be reached directly by *samizdat* would hear about its content.

In 1968, another friend of mine, a physicist from the city of Obninsk whose name was Valery Pavlinchuk, brought me a manuscript. That manuscript was signed by a physicist, Andrei Sakharov, and it was called *Reflections on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom*. I had heard of Sakharov, but almost no one except some physicists in Russia knew his name, because he was a super-secret scientist who lived in a super-secret city where weapons research was conducted. Even in an officially published Academy of Sciences reference book, he was mentioned simply as “Andrei Sakharov, member of the Academy of Sciences, *otdeleniye tekhnicheskiky nauk* (section of technical sciences). Nothing about his achievements or who he was. Physicists talked about him among themselves and discussed his very few published scientific papers. I remember I heard about his paper on the theory of a magnetic thermonuclear reactor or “Tokamak,” when I was in Moscow University; and there were a couple more of his papers which I didn’t read at the time.

His work on thermonuclear weapons was super-secret. But one thing we knew: that Sakharov spoke up at meetings of the Academy of Sciences against the worst political hacks whom Soviet officials tried to promote in the Academy of Sciences, people like Nuzhdin and Trapeznikov. Sakharov spoke against them, and we heard about this. That

was practically all we knew. And suddenly, I received Sakharov's essay from my friend from Obninsk. As I learned later, he had been given this paper by Zhores Medvedev, the biologist, who was then a friend of Sakharov, as was his twin brother Roy Medvedev, a historian. Pavlinchuk said Sakharov wanted me to have his essay. I asked, "What do you mean, to have it?" And he said, "Well, he just wanted you to read it." "Does he mean that I should send it abroad? Does he want it to be published and circulated in *samizdat*?" I asked, and Pavlinchuk answered, "Yes, yes, of course." That was the end of our conversation.

I read Sakharov's essay that evening, and then brought it to Amalrik. We were completely amazed by this article; it was extremely interesting for us, but not primarily because of its content. For me, for Amalrik, and for many others of our circle this article seemed a bit mild. At that time, we went much farther in our criticism of the Soviet regime, and we were much more radical in our attitude towards Communism. I don't like the word "anti-Communist," but we had already completely rejected the Soviet regime by that time, and most of our friends were dissidents. Some of my friends, like Pyotr Yakir and General Grigorenko, still used a kind of official Soviet language in their petitions and in their writing for *samizdat*, but they were rapidly getting over this habit.

What amazed us was that this essay was written and signed by Sakharov -- a great scientist, a person from the establishment who was close to the country's leaders. That was incredible. Another important factor for many people, surprisingly, was that Sakharov wasn't Jewish, that he was an ethnic Russian. He was publicly expressing his ideas about intellectual freedom, about the threat of the destruction of humankind, about the danger of nuclear war, about the need for cooperation between nations, and he put both superpowers -- the Soviet Union and the United States -- on the same level. He was definitely a person who came to these ideas from his own serious thinking. I felt that I had to do something, that Sakharov's essay had to be distributed.

Every Saturday, Andrei Amalrik and I met our friend, Karel von het Reve, who would receive *samizdat* from us. He was a correspondent in Moscow for the Dutch newspaper *Het Parool*. He was an absolutely brave man, much braver than the average foreign correspondent in Moscow. He received *Reflections* from me, looked at it, and he too was absolutely amazed. He took it to his apartment in Moscow and right away translated it into Dutch. He read his translation over the phone to his newspaper in Amsterdam, trusting that any censor listening in would not understand the Dutch language. That's why the first publication on the essay was in *Het Parool* on July 6, 1968. Karel gave the essay to Ray Anderson, a young, inexperienced correspondent of *The New York Times*, who took it for advice to Henry Shapiro, a senior correspondent of United Press International. Shapiro, a veteran Moscow correspondent but an extremely cautious man,

said, “It can’t be. There’s no such man as Sakharov. It was Litvinov who wrote it. You better not touch it.” Nevertheless, after some delay, Ray Anderson sent it to the United States, where it was published in full in the *New York Times* on July 22. Sakharov’s essay became a world sensation. In 1968-69 more than eighteen million copies of it were published around the world in more than a dozen languages.

Today we can see that Sakharov’s ideas evolved after he wrote *Reflections*. He became more and more of a human rights defender after he was barred from work on weapons and left the world of Soviet officialdom. When the authorities wouldn’t listen to him, he became a dissident, and one of the best and bravest human rights defenders. During all the years he spent defending human rights and criticizing the Soviet regime, he never forgot about his whole view of the world, about his idea of peace. If you reread *Reflections* and the ideas set forth in it, you will see that all of them are alive. His ideas about economics, about nuclear war, about nuclear power, about tolerance, about human rights. Sakharov was a great man of peace. I am just amazed at how great a contribution Sakharov made, and how his ideas live on.

Today I understand how far ahead of his time Sakharov was and how different he was from us in certain ways. As I already mentioned, by the time I read Sakharov’s essay I had rejected the Marxist-Leninist world-view and arrived at the idea of non-violent resistance to the soviet regime, demanding that it observe its own laws and its international commitments. My ideas were close to the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. I rejected Soviet socialism and believed that market capitalism was incomparably better, but prevailing view among dissidents was let us achieve political freedom and after that the people will decide what kind of economic system they want.

Sakharov was different. He was in his essence a *gosudarstvennik* (statesman) in the best sense of this word. To some degree it was his personality. It was also, I believe, the fact that he met with the Soviet leaders. He had “access,” and he tried to find a way to get from “here to there,” to peacefully change the regime, to change its foreign policy, to change the treatment of dissidents and to make the leaders participate seriously in seeking a solution of world problems. In other words, he tried to involve “them” in a practical discussion. Predictably they did not want to listen. They pushed him toward us and turned him into a dissident, a *pravozashchitnik* (human rights defender). But he never stopped trying to resume his dialogue with authorities, through the Moscow Human Rights Committee which he co-founded in 1970, and through his participation in policy-making during *perestroika*. His untimely death in 1989 came at the moment when his contribution might have been perhaps most fruitful...

His ideas are still alive and as important for Russia now as they were in 1968.

Timothy Colton

Thank you, Pavel. I'm sorry about the time element, because it was quite evident that there was a lot more where that came from, I hope we will find occasions to continue to learn more. Those were very eloquent remarks.

Now I'd like to introduce Yuri Orlov, who has been mentioned several times by the previous speakers. He is a member of Sakharov's generation, born in 1924. He worked at the Moscow Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics. He got in trouble in the mid-1950s for advocating reform of the Soviet system and was forced to relocate to Armenia for several years. He then returned to Moscow, and returned to human rights activity in the 1970s. In 1976, he became the founder of the Moscow Helsinki Group, the organization which was formed to monitor Soviet compliance with the Helsinki Accords. This, predictably, got him into more difficulties with the authorities, and in 1977 he was given a 12-year-sentence and sent to Siberia.

He was released in 1986 in the early Gorbachev period. He was stripped of his citizenship and sent abroad. Since that time, Orlov has been pursuing his research in theoretical physics at Cornell University. He's a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He's now going to share with us his reflections on the political ideas of Soviet scientists in the formative period of the 1950s and 1960s and their reaction to Sakharov's famous essay.

Yuri Orlov – *Orlov served as an officer in the Soviet army from 1944 to 1946, graduated from Moscow State University in 1952, and then worked as a physicist at Moscow's Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Physics. He was expelled from the Communist Party and fired from his job for a pro-democracy speech he made in 1956. He found work at the Yerevan Institute of Physics, where he was elected a corresponding member of the Armenian Academy of Sciences. In 1972, Orlov returned to Moscow and worked at the Institute of Terrestrial Magnetism. He was fired in 1973 after becoming a founding member of the first Amnesty International group in the USSR. In May 1976, he organized and became chairman of the Moscow Helsinki Watch Group. He was arrested and sent to labor camp in 1977. Released in October 1986 and deported to the United States, he has worked since at Cornell University's Newman Laboratory of Nuclear Studies, Brookhaven National Laboratory and the European Laboratory for Nuclear Research (CERN). He is currently Professor of Physics and Government at Cornell. Author of Dangerous Thoughts: Memoirs of a Russian Life, William Morrow, 1991.*

I believe I first met Sakharov about 1967. I first met Sakharov's wife Elena Georgievna in 1973 when I visited her and Sakharov in the Academy of Sciences hospital where she was being treated for a thyroid condition and he was having his heart tested.

The organizers of this conference assigned me the topic “The Political Ideas of Soviet Scientists in the 1950s and the 1960s and their Reaction to Sakharov’s Essay.” I decided not to survey any literature on the subject, but instead to use myself as a “probe particle,” especially for the 1950s. I had a lot of conversations then with leading scientists in the Soviet Union.

First, let’s remember what was happening in the early 1950s. Stalin was still alive. According to the official press, medical doctors tried to poison Stalin. Unfortunately, it was not true, but the doctors were put in prison. There were also campaigns against “cosmopolitans,” geneticists, and others. There was an attempt to condemn Einstein’s theory of relativity and Bohr’s quantum theory as pseudo-scientific concepts, but that campaign was stopped on orders from above. I was a student at that time of Vladimir Berestetsky. Perhaps Richard Wilson remembers Berestetsky. The introduction of the first edition of *Quantum Electrodynamics* cites Lenin’s remark that the electron was as rich as, and no less complicated than, the atom. (Lenin, by the way, wasn’t stupid; what he said about the electron is generally true.) Later, of course, the authors (Akhiezer and Berestetsky) excluded this citation. But it’s amazing that leading theoreticians in a leading book on quantum electrodynamics would cite Lenin in their introduction. That’s how it was at the time.

The question – “What were the political ideas of scientists in the late Stalin era?” - makes no sense at all if we recall that probably 15 percent of scientists were forced by the KGB to write denunciations. In my group of students at Moscow University’s Physical-Technical Department, at least 25 percent of them were denouncing each other. Some of them came to me later and described what was going on. In such a situation, to ask about their political views is a silly question.

The situation changed rather quickly after Khrushchev’s speech to the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 denouncing Stalin. I was a young scientist then at the Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Physics (ITEP), and a member of its Party Committee. After Khrushchev’s speech, I was asked to help organize a meeting of the Institute’s Communists in order to discuss the situation. We, the Party Committee, prepared for it well, rehearsing who would say what.

Robert Avalov, a Georgian and a dedicated Marxist-Leninist, proposed that in order to avoid Stalinist regimes in the future we needed to arm the people by giving weapons to the workers. We all agreed with his suggestion, and decided he should speak first.

I was more of a theoretician. Although I was a Marxist, I didn’t believe in determinism. In my speech, I said that the socialist economic system was all right, but the political

system can be repressive or terrorist. I used the phrases “terror policy” and “socialist but not democratic country.” I suggested the Soviet Union should become more liberal like Yugoslavia. I also talked about the moral degradation of the Soviet people from the top to the bottom.

Another member of the committee, Vadim Nesterov, talked about freedom of information and asked why the Soviet Union was jamming the BBC.

All our speeches are available now. Drawn from the Party archives, they have been printed in various publications. I was very happy to read my own speech; I had forgotten large parts of it.

So those were our very radical thoughts as young scientists. I wasn't familiar with human rights concepts at that time. What I had were revolutionary thoughts: arming the workers and resisting a future bureaucratic regime. Earlier, in the mid-1940s when I was an officer in the Red Army, my personal view was that we didn't have a dictatorship of the working class; we had a dictatorship of the bureaucracy.

What was the reaction of leading scientists to our speeches? All the Communists of the entire Institute lost their Communist Party cards because they supported us during that meeting. They had to condemn in writing our speeches and apologize for not having condemned them at the meeting. Those who did not write properly did not get their Party cards back. And a week later, we, the organizers, lost our jobs.

The director of ITEP, Abram Alikhanov, summoned us to his office. He explained that he had called Khrushchev on our behalf, and Khrushchev said, “I'm not alone in the Politburo. All I could do was see to it that they weren't arrested.” When Alikhanov asked him not to fire us from the Institute, Khrushchev said that was impossible. Alikhanov concluded our meeting by saying, “If you knew what you were doing, you're heroes. If you didn't, you're fools.”

I first met the Italian physicist and Communist Bruno Pontecorvo in Dubna when I was employed by ITEP. I met him again on Gorky Street after losing my job by order of the Politburo and working as a tutor in order to feed my two kids. He asked me what I had said at the meeting. I told him I'd said that we needed democratization on the basis of socialism. But, he objected, socialism and Western democracy are not consistent with each other. That was his opinion at the time.

In 1975, 20 years later, when we discussed the political situation in the Soviet Union, that was still his opinion. Pontecorvo told me that if I would try to organize a Democratic

Party, as he had heard I might do, we would be enemies. He was not so much pro-Soviet as he was pro-Italian. He said he was a member of the Italian Communist Party, which was a bit different from the Soviet Party, but he still said we'd be enemies. That was his reaction.

The reaction of scientists from Novosibirsk's Institute of Nuclear Physics, Leningrad's Ioffe Institute, Kharkov's Physical Technical Institute, and Moscow's Lebedev Physics Institute as well as ITEP was quite different from Pontecorvo's reaction: they gathered money for us. Boris Chirikov twice brought assistance for me personally from the Novosibirsk Institute, because I had two kids at that time. Gersh Budker at a scientific meeting said, "Why so grim? You're a hero. Cheer up!"

That was the reaction, mostly a very supportive reaction. It's true that Lev Landau was unhappy, but for a special reason. You know his story. He was arrested in 1938 and released only in 1939 after Pyotr Kapitsa's personal intervention on his behalf. Landau considered 1956 a turning point in the development of the Soviet Union, and he wasn't happy about what we had done. He said to me: "If you want to make science your career, don't make speeches." He wanted me to do physics. He considered me able.

That was the 1950s. During the 1960s, most scientists were quiet. Probably one reason was that in the early part of that decade, there was a movement among them to join the Communist Party "in order to transform it from inside," as some of them explained to me. I was rather skeptical at the time, saying that the Party might transform them instead of being itself transformed. Now I think that this movement wasn't bad for the time.

The 1960s was of course the period when dissidents emerged in force. And 1968 was a peak year: in April there was the first issue of the samizdat journal *A Chronicle of Current Events*; in July Sakharov's *Reflections*; in August the demonstration on Red Square by Pavel Litvinov, Bogoraz, and six others protesting the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. On May 20, 1969, the Initiative Group for the Defense of Human Rights, founded by Pyotr Yakir, Viktor Krasin, with fifteen members, including Sergei Kovalev, issued an appeal to the United Nations on behalf of Soviet political prisoners. (There was no response from the United Nations at that time.)

I had decided to concentrate on physics and succeeded in becoming a Professor and a Corresponding Member of the Armenian Academy of Sciences. However, Sakharov's essay, first, and the demonstration on Red Square, second, made me ashamed that I had done nothing after 1956 to promote democracy and human rights. So 1968 was a turning point for me. But I didn't want to do something insignificant. If I simply opened my mouth in Yerevan, the next day I would find myself on the way to the Urals.

In 1973, I became a founding member of the first Amnesty International group in the Soviet Union. In May 1976, after considerable thought, I organized the Moscow Helsinki Watch Group and served as its chairman until my arrest in February 1977.

As I have said, Sakharov's essay and the demonstration on Red Square were crucial for me in 1968. As for the reactions of scientists generally to *Reflections*, Pavel Litvinov in his talk has described them completely correctly. It was not important *what* was written in the Sakharov article. It was important that *Sakharov* wrote it. It was his position both in science and in the political structure of the Soviet Union that made it important. *Reflections* completely contradicted the official line. To say that we needed democratization was a crime, because we were supposedly the most democratic country in the world.

There were quite a few scientists like Gersh Budker, who in private conversation with me or in my presence expressed serious concern about the fate of Sakharov and discussed how to help him if he were to be punished.

In the 1960s, scientists in the Soviet Union were generally supportive of critics of the regime. But most scientists, particularly in the provinces, did not sympathize with sending criticism abroad. They considered involving foreigners anti-patriotic.

I'm afraid that I've run out of time.

Timothy Colton

We turn finally to Professor Peter Reddaway, who is a Western observer of Russia and the Soviet Union. He taught for a number of years at George Washington University, from which he retired in 2004. Before that he was director of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies in Washington, and before that he was professor at the London School of Economics.

I think it would be fair to say that of all the senior scholars working on Soviet affairs in the 1970s and 1980s, that Peter was the one who took the dissent phenomenon most seriously. I mean, there were people who didn't think it was important, and there were even people who didn't think it was interesting. I think, though, the consensus position was that it was interesting but not important; that is, the system was so solid that one could imagine within-system reform, but not the more fundamental changes that some of the dissidents were starting to press for.

Peter clearly thought it was both interesting and important, and he was right on both counts. His publications included general works on the human rights movement, and several specifically focused on the use of psychiatric incarceration to punish dissidents. He's also worked on many other things in his long career, but I highlight these as they are most pertinent to today's discussion. He will tell us about the reaction of the Soviet authorities to Sakharov's coming out as a dissident.

Peter Reddaway – *Professor emeritus of political science at George Washington University. Reddaway was a senior lecturer at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and then served as director of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies from 1986 to 1989. His principal publications include* *Uncensored Russia: The Human Rights Movement in the USSR (1972); The Tragedy of Russia's Reforms (with Dmitri Glinski, 2001) and The Dynamics of Russian Politics: Putin's Reform of Federal-Regional Relations (two vols. edited with Robert Ortung, 2003-4).*

Thank you, Tim, for your kind words. I'd like to start by thanking also the organizers and funders of this conference, which has brought together a very interesting collection of people. I hope similar conferences will happen in the future, but events of this sort are rare.

Most of my remarks will be on my announced subject, but I was also asked by the organizers if I could say at least a few words about Western reactions to the appearance of Sakharov's first essay in 1968. These, of course, were numerous, and came from a variety of what you might call constituencies. First of all, from experts on the Soviet Union and its internal affairs, secondly from international relations experts, and third, from scientists, environmentalists, human rights groups, politicians, and so on.

An interesting example as regards the reaction of a Western politician was the late Nelson Rockefeller, who was then campaigning for the Republican nomination for president. He read Sakharov's essay promptly, and made a public statement that, if elected, he would be pressing consistently and tenaciously for détente between the United States and the Soviet Union, along the lines so constructively suggested by Andrei Sakharov in his essay. He added that he was in agreement with Sakharov's fundamental views.

As for Western analysis and bibliography regarding the essay, the best account I've read is a long 1969 article by Vladimir Poremsky, which was praised by Sakharov in his memoirs. This is a fine analysis and contains quotations from the reactions of many eminent people, including quite a few scientists. It also has a detailed bibliography.²

² Poremsky's article - V.D. Poremskiy, "Diskussiia po memorandumu akademika Sakharova v inostrannom mire"- appeared in the anonymously edited book Memorandum Akademika Sakharova: Tekst, otkliki, diskussiia, Posev Verlag, Frankfurt, 1969, pp. 71 – 102. Among the scientists whose

Another interesting bibliographic point is that Sakharov ranked third in the total number of copies of his works published in 1968-1969 according to statistics from the International Publishers' Association. In Sakharov's case, even though no work other than his *Reflections* had appeared, eighteen million copies had been published worldwide, a phenomenal figure. Eighteen million. We academics think we're lucky if we get more than 500 copies of a book published. The only authors who beat him – those in places one and two - were Mao Zedong and Lenin. Agatha Christie followed in 4th or 5th place.

The most helpful of the sources I've used for the main part of my talk today are two: 1) Sakharov's own *Memoirs* (Alfred Knopf, 1990, in English, one volume, and the Russian edition, *Vospominaniya*, Moscow, 1996, two volumes, see footnote 1) and 2) the valuable book edited by Joshua Rubenstein and Alexander Gribanov, *The KGB File of Andrei Sakharov* (Yale University Press, 2005). The latter contains 146 official documents of the Soviet leadership concerning their attempts to control Sakharov and put an end to his dissident activities. The first twenty or so of the 146 documents relate to the early period that I'll be talking about.

Another preliminary note I'd like to make, based on my writings on Soviet official reactions to various dissenting groups and movements³, is that the ways in which the authorities treated Sakharov, in the early stages particularly, did not differ substantially from the ways they handled other dissidents. They applied a gradually escalating scale of punitive measures, with the notion of arrest as a final option that hopefully could be avoided if the preliminary measures deterred his dissident activities.

Now let me present what I see as the most interesting episodes involving official reactions to Sakharov's early activities as a dissident.

Like most dissidents, Sakharov had what you might call a "pre-history" as a person who dissented from official norms. Prior to becoming a public dissident in 1968, he was, as early as 1952, when Stalin was still alive, quite often a dissident behind the scenes. During this period, the official responses to his protests, whether these were written or otherwise, carried out solo or together with others, varied.

comments are included are Paul Doty, Gerald Peel, and Edward Teller. For Sakharov's praise of the article see his *Vospominaniya*, vol. 1, Izdatel'stvo "Prava cheloveka", Moscow, 1996, p. 400.

³ My most recent article on this topic, "Patterns in Soviet Policies Towards Dissent: 1953 – 1987", 2008, 30 pp., is due to appear in a volume of papers presented to a conference at Bremen University on samizdat and alternative cultures in the USSR and Eastern Europe, and edited by Wolfgang Eichwede. Among many other sources, the article makes use of the first wide-ranging and painstakingly edited collection of archival documents on dissent policy that were issued by the party's Politbureau and Secretariat and the KGB. See A.A. Makarov, N.V. Kostenko, and G.V. Kuzovkin, eds., *Vlast' i dissidenty: Iz dokumentov KGB i TsK KPSS*, Moskovskaya khel'sinskaya gruppa, Moscow, 2006.

The first type of response was “no response,” in other words -- silence. The second type occurred when Sakharov approached Soviet leaders. He knew some of them personally, notably Khrushchev and Brezhnev, but also Andropov and several others, and met with them on a number of occasions. The usual pattern was that he would approach them with a complaint or request and get brushed off with some soft-soap, empty promises that led to nothing.

On one well-known occasion, when he protested about the Soviet conduct of a nuclear test in 1961, he was roundly and angrily criticized by Khrushchev in the presence of other people, a testing experience, but one that did not deter him, as he continued to protest.

There was one case in early 1967, when official punitive measures of the sort I mentioned a moment ago were imposed. In punishment for some of his early low-key dissident activities, he was dismissed from one of his posts, as head of his department in the secret weapons institution where he worked. He also had his salary cut from 1,000 to 550 rubles a month.

A notable exception to Sakharov’s lack of success in his civic initiatives occurred in 1964 when he and some of his colleagues managed to block the elevation of an ally of the pseudo-scientist Trofim Lysenko, Nikolai Nuzhdin, from corresponding member to full member of the Academy of Sciences. The authorities were hamstrung by the Academy’s regulations requiring nominations to be confirmed by a two-thirds vote of the Academy’s General Assembly, and were unable to prevent a stinging defeat.

All that said, the shift in the official handling of Sakharov that occurred in May 1968 was sudden and rather dramatic. It began when Sakharov’s *Reflections* reached the KGB. While one copy reached Pavel Litvinov’s friend Valery Pavlinchuk, another copy was given to the KGB by the typist. The KGB read it, and found that it was a thoroughly heterodox work, a serious discussion of issues of war and peace, politics, economics, the environment, and so on. Secondly, the KGB saw that it was clearly designed to be widely circulated and to stimulate public discussion, and not just intended for a limited circle.⁴

So, on May 22, 1968, Andropov wrote his first report to the Soviet leadership and the Politburo about the essay. Also, a few days later, he instructed the head of Sakharov’s institution, Yuly Khariton, to talk with Sakharov urgently about the essay, and get him to withdraw it before it was published in any form. On the 6th of June Khariton duly had a conversation with Sakharov, and found that it was impossible to persuade him to

⁴ This paragraph and much of what appears in the next six paragraphs draws on what Sakharov wrote about his essay and official reactions to it in 1968 in *Vospominaniya*, vol. 1, pp. 390 – 401.

withdraw the essay. On the 13th of June, Andropov sent an urgent report to the Party leaders, stating that dissidents were gathering around Sakharov, and suggesting that a Party leader meet with him and try to talk him out of his dissident activities.

The situation escalated on the 6th of July, when Karel van het Reve's translation of *Reflections* was published in the Dutch newspaper *Het Parool*. Pavel Litvinov has already spoken about that here. On the 18th of July, an alarmed Andropov -- by now publication had begun - wrote to the Politburo, saying that the situation was urgent because dissidents were deliberately using the name and prestige of Sakharov in their activities, and were even thinking about forming an opposition political party.

The second escalation came when the *New York Times* published the essay on July 22nd. A few days later, the minister responsible for the design and production of atomic weapons, Efim Slavsky, to whom Sakharov's institution was subordinated, summoned Sakharov, evidently because no senior Party leader was prepared to talk with him. Slavsky tried persistently to get Sakharov to disavow the essay, and to criticize publicly its appearance in the West, but Sakharov refused. Slavsky then launched into a long, detailed and hostile critique of Sakharov's essay, describing his views as either ignorant, or wrong, or distorted, or in some other way totally undesirable. Slavsky justified himself by saying he was being bombarded by complaints from Party leaders all around the country with questions such as, "Why on earth haven't you stopped this hostile propaganda, which is causing us problems in our regions?"

In the wake of this interview, Slavsky decreed that Sakharov should lose his job at the secret atomic weapons institution. A year later he was offered and accepted a senior scientist position at the Lebedev Physics Institute in Moscow.

A month later, on August 21, the USSR led Warsaw forces in the invasion of "fraternal" Czechoslovakia. No doubt, Slavsky's harsh line stemmed in part from the Kremlin's worries about developments there over the previous few months, and also about the enthusiasm that Sakharov evinced in *Reflections* for the same developments. The latter were clearly stimulating the spread of dissenting attitudes and actions in the USSR.

In any case, a new twist came on August 26, 1968, when the KGB reported to the Politburo that the Kremlin's silence about *Reflections*, which was circulating all over the world and being discussed at length by eminent people, had led to a mounting belief by experts and diplomats abroad that the Kremlin had permitted the essay to appear deliberately. Why? Because it planned to follow Sakharov's advice and improve relations with the West in pursuit of some sort of détente.⁵

⁵ Let us note that it did in fact start to pursue what came to be widely known as détente only a year or so

However, despite this note from the KGB, the Kremlin still declined to respond in any public way to the essay. Indeed, it didn't do so, to the best of my knowledge, for five years, until 1973. Instead, for the next two years, until 1970, the KGB and the Party leadership decided to live with the undesirable situation in which Sakharov was an active dissident in a variety of ways. Several factors contributed to the reluctant tolerance that they exhibited. First of all, Sakharov didn't actually join any dissident group. Second, he didn't meet personally with Western journalists or conduct press conferences during this period. And third, he was no longer working at a secret institution.

However, in November of 1970 Sakharov shook up the status quo, when he and two friends formed a carefully constituted Human Rights Committee. This conducted an active human rights program in conjunction with colleagues outside the Committee. The group attracted increasing attention, both at home and abroad, something that Andropov complained about in an urgent report to the Politburo.⁶ Analytically, his main point was that the Human Rights Committee was already seen by Soviet and foreign observers and activists as a center of opposition that appeared to be permitted and legal, since no authorities were doing anything about it. Andropov complained that this created a dangerous precedent.

His chief recommendation -- and he made it in four successive reports in three months in early 1971 to the Politburo -- was that a top Party leader should meet with Sakharov and try to talk him out of his dissident activity. On the fourth occasion, Andropov suggested that Brezhnev himself, the General Secretary, who had known Sakharov personally for a number of years, should be the person to step forward and do the job.⁷ At this point, the number three leader, Podgorny, who had, I suspect, been put up to this by Brezhnev, suggested that a more junior member of the Politburo, either Ustinov or Demichev, should take on the task.⁸

Joshua Rubenstein and Alexander Gribanov are persuasive when they argue in their book that the probable reason why no leader stepped forward to do this was that the chance of success in such a conversation looked bleak. Sakharov would almost certainly have continued on his way, and would probably have written a detailed report about the conversation and circulated it to the world media.

Two years later, in August 1973, Andropov tried once again to get one of the Party leaders to talk to Sakharov, but again, he got no takers. Instead, the Politburo resorted to

later, when it began to warm its relations with Chancellor Brandt of West Germany.

⁶ See the text, dated January 18, 1971, in Rubenstein and Gribanov, at p. 114.

⁷ See the text in Rubenstein and Gribanov, at p. 115.

⁸ On this episode see Rubenstein and Gribanov, p. 116.

ordering a deputy procurator general, Mikhail Malyarov, to talk with him. However, Malyarov, doubtless following Politburo instructions, used the occasion primarily to threaten Sakharov, saying that he would be arrested if he went on with his dissident activity. Thus there was no real discussion and no chance to co-opt him.⁹

Later, in November 1986, at the Politburo meeting that decided to free Sakharov from exile in Gorky, Gorbachev commented on the leadership's repeated failure to engage him directly. Gorbachev said: "Had we talked with Sakharov before, perhaps this whole situation wouldn't have arisen".¹⁰

In any case, the interview with Malyarov in 1973 signaled the start of a vicious campaign against Sakharov in the Russian media. It came five years after *Reflections* was published, but nonetheless the essay was attacked. The authorities quickly found out, however, that the campaign provoked so many negative responses and protests at home and abroad that it was advisable to halt the campaign after three weeks and not proceed with Sakharov's planned arrest. Among other factors, they saw that his arrest would jeopardize the continuation of their current policy of détente with the West.

Thus Sakharov's arrest had to wait seven more years, until Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan, and détente with the West, already faltering, had finally collapsed. The political price to be paid for his arrest - in terms of Soviet political and economic "capital" in the West - had fallen to a sufficiently low level for it, at last, to proceed.

Timothy Colton

Thank you, Peter. I see in the audience a number of scholars who work on history of Soviet science and intellectual history, Paul Josephson, Loren Graham, David Holloway, Ben Nathans, and there are probably others as well. It would seem to me for people who are in this line of work, that a very interesting theme to pursue - maybe people are already doing it - would be something about the diffusion of these ideas, not only across occupational groups, which has been our main interest here, but also territorially, to what extent was samizdat was circulated in the provinces by word of mouth or physically.

The man whose career I studied at great length, Boris Yeltsin was at this time a provincial figure, far from Moscow. Gorbachev came to Moscow much earlier than Yeltsin did, and I think we'll hear from Bill Taubman this afternoon about his connections with Sakharov. Yeltsin had none whatsoever. I mean, there was a dissident movement, very tiny, and harassed, in Sverdlovsk, which was somewhat of a surprise to me, and it was quite small, but people did rather daring things like throw pamphlets on to

⁹ See the account of the meeting written for the Party leadership, Rubenstein and Gribanov, pp. 148 – 150.

¹⁰ See the transcript of the meeting in Rubenstein and Gribanov, at p. 328.

the November 7 parade from an overpass, and placed manifestos of one kind or another, and some of these individuals were caught and punished; others were not. The KGB wasn't always successful in catching them. And certainly samizdat was in circulation in Sverdlovsk, so Sakharov's essay must also have been in circulation.

Yeltsin actually told me that he read Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag Archipelago*, when he was First Secretary, supplied to him by his wife, who got it at work. He didn't mention Sakharov, but we could probably find out if he had a look at that as well.

I do remember one occasion, though, in 1983. It was sort of a low point. Andropov was General Secretary. There was an ideological campaign. Sakharov was in exile, and Yeltsin made a point at a plenum of the regional Party committee of condemning a Sverdlovsk dissident Valerian Morozov, who, I believe, was in a psychiatric hospital at the time. He was already locked up, but he kept writing letters to Brezhnev and others, making all kinds of criticisms. Yeltsin, to nail down the point that this Morozov was really a bad element, said, "And he had plans to go to Gorky to visit the well-known *anti-Sovietchik*, Sakharov" -- whom he did not call Andrei, or Andrei Dmitrievich, but simply "Sakharov". That was in 1983. And of course, six years later, Yeltsin and Sakharov are members of the Interregional Deputies Group, so to trace that evolution, and to what extent any of this was grounded in provincial experience I think would be a very exciting thing to do.

However, what I'd like to do now is to open the floor for any comments and questions. Who would like to lead off?

Svetlana Savranskaya

In Roy Medvedev's book on Andropov -- actually, numerous books, he makes some claims about some kind of a relationship between Andropov and Sakharov, at least, respect for Sakharov, and he also implies that there was some correspondence between them. I was not able to find any traces of their relationship or their correspondence. If anybody heard anything about that, I'd love to know more.

Timothy Colton

This is a highly specific question so perhaps Peter might be the best placed to answer it, but there might be others in the hall as well.

Peter Reddaway

What I found in my research is that they had two direct conversations. The first one took place in 1967, when Sakharov called Andropov and interceded with him on behalf of the

imprisoned writer Yuly Daniel. Sakharov was later told by a high official told him that Daniel would be amnestied later in the year, a promise that was not in fact kept.¹¹

The second one relates to, among others, a member of this panel, Pavel Litvinov. Sakharov called Andropov a few days after the demonstration on Red Square of August 25, 1968, against the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and had a short conversation with him. He urged him not to sentence the demonstrators, to allow them to go free. They'd been arrested, of course. Andropov pleaded that he was extremely busy with affairs in Czechoslovakia and that he didn't have any time to talk. But Sakharov kept on pressing and Andropov ended up by saying that "he thought the sentences would not be severe".¹²

Both of the phone calls were initiated by Sakharov.

As regards correspondence, I haven't seen any two-way correspondence and don't believe that any exists. But of course it's highly likely that most of the letters that Sakharov wrote to the Soviet leaders would have been read by Andropov, and he did write a few letters addressed to Andropov personally.¹³ As far as I know, he never received any written communication from Andropov.

Finally, I should note that Sakharov often doubted the accuracy of information given him by Roy Medvedev that allegedly came from high sources in the regime.¹⁴

Timothy Colton

Pavel do you have anything to add to that?

Pavel Litvinov

I actually knew about Sakharov's call to Andropov and very likely it contributed to our sentences being milder -- exile instead of labor camp for Bogoraz and me. I think that what Peter said probably covers everything.

Tatiana Yankelevich

I did want to comment on the question that was just raised by Pavel. I remember distinctly, in Sakharov's telephone book that he kept very carefully: "Yury Vladimirovich Andropov", and the number for his office. In the 1970s there were numerous phone calls between Andrei Dmitrievich and that office, but to the best of my

¹¹ See Sakharov, *Vospominaniya*, vol. 1, pp. 382-83.

¹² Sakharov, *Vospominaniya*, vol. 1, p. 407. See pp. 401 – 407 for his interesting account of his reactions to the invasion of Czechoslovakia and of the Red Square demonstration.

¹³ In 1980, for example, Sakharov sent a telegram to Andropov protesting KGB agents' illegal entry into and search of his apartment. He also wrote to Andropov from his exile in Gorky requesting that the political prisoners Ivan Kovalev and Tatiana Osipova be allowed a conjugal visit.

recollection, there were no direct conversations between him and Andropov. The last one may have been the one in 1968 on behalf of the demonstrators on Red Square. But I know also of several later instances when Sakharov addressed appeals on behalf of political prisoners to Andropov.

I have one question for Yuri Orlov. What was the reaction of Soviet scientists and of the physicists at the Lebedev Institute in particular to Sakharov's December 1989 call for a general strike and for repeal of Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution? I seem to remember that some scientists was quite skeptical, while earlier, in the 1970s, they thought Sakharov was a kind of loony, calling for all sorts of impractical, idealistic things. At the meeting in the Lebedev Institute, shortly before Sakharov's death on December 14, Academician Vitaly Goldansky spoke very sharply against Sakharov's call for a general strike very sharply.

Yuri Orlov

I don't think at the time of the general strike we can consider scientific society as a uniform society with everyone having same opinion about everything. I knew Goldansky very well. He was a good person, in its usual sense. He did not denounce anybody, and he was liberal in his opinions.

From what I recall, the average scientist thought that criticism of Gorbachev was very dangerous for Soviet society. Gorbachev was viewed as a new, very liberal Tsar, and in the West he was accepted in the same way. When we discussed Gorbachev in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and I criticized Gorbachev, people reproved me, "What do you want? That a general will come to power?" So, I think it was a common opinion of the intelligentsia here and in the West that it was a mistake to find fault with what Gorbachev was doing.

But about the reaction to Sakharov in earlier times. Not everyone who signed the letters against Sakharov published in 1973 were coerced into doing so. It's not true.

I was informed by one bureaucrat in the Academy of Sciences that some academicians were KGB informers. They were not bad scientists, but they were promoted by the KGB to the Academy of Sciences because of their work for the KGB. Not all scientists are good people, as we know from the Nazi experience.

There were scientists in the Soviet Union who were against Sakharov, although I personally never met such people. But I knew such persons as Yakov Zeldovich, for example. He understood the regime perfectly well. When he was permitted to travel and

¹⁴ See his Vospominaniya, vol. 1, p. 383.

first came to the United States, he met me, and he hugged me with real feeling. But he spoke once against Sakharov in the Academy of Sciences. He was one of the scientists who still harbored fears from the past. Valentin Turchin wrote a book entitled *The Inertia of Fear* about this lingering illness of Stalinism.

Timothy Colton

Could I ask Pavel to add briefly to that?

Pavel Litvinov

I just want to add that a silent majority of the Soviet elite, not only scientists and writers but all those who, after Stalin's death, gradually got some kind of life in the Soviet Union, sympathized with the ideas of dissidents and of Sakharov. At the same time, they were not just infected with the inertia of fear; they sincerely believed that it would be wrong to rock the boat. There was one writer, Marietta Shaginyan, who said, "I hate those, who, like Solzhenitsyn, try to set the Communist Party and writers to quarrelling with each other." There was a feeling that you shouldn't talk, because things will improve. They already identified themselves with the system, but they basically were quite liberal in their views and they were closer and closer to the ideas of the modern middle class, I would say.

So basically, I would say his views were quite popular throughout the Soviet Union, even when people didn't want to express them and were afraid of those views.

Timothy Colton.

I'm going to give the last word to Prof. Wilson.

Prof. Richard Wilson

I'd like to comment about one thing I heard in my conversations with Russian scientists in the early 1970s, which was confirmed by Pyotr Kapitsa, who had himself had disagreements with the government and had been dismissed from his position for five years. He felt that scientists agreed with almost every word that Sakharov had said. What he felt very strongly was that they should work within the system. That's what I call a "Victorian approach." Quite interestingly, in 1987, the last time I saw his wife Anna Kapitsa, she said, "Andrei Sakharov taught us one thing. It's very important. You must stand up and say, 'No.'"