leverage judiciously on behalf of dissenters. Philip Handler, president of the National Academy of Sciences, is of that persuasion. "I share Sakharov's view that a government-to-government détente is not enough if the two societies are unable to live with one another." Handler says.

Far more is at stake in the Sakharov matter than in the usual civil liberties case. The fact that this courageous scientist has been harassed but not yet silenced reveals an ambivalence in the Soviet system. Sakharov is hoping that his sympathizers in the West will seek to tip the balance in the favor of greater freedom in the U.S.S.R.—LUTHER J. CARTER

II. How NAS Stepped into Furor over Soviet Dissenter

Highlighting what could be the worst problem yet in United States–Soviet Union scientific relations, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), on 8 September, sent a long, eloquent telegram to its Soviet counterpart protesting the harassment of Russia's most prominent scientist and dissident, Andrei D. Sakharov. The cable, of which *Science* published the text (21 September), was the culmination of a chain of events that, since February, had led a small number of prominent U.S. scientists to become increasingly concerned for Sakharov and his family.

Although unprecedented for the academy, the action was not unique: several other scientific societies have made formal protests, still others are considering such protests; also, a number of individual scientists have expressed concern. Stated in the NAS cable, and implied in many of the other statements which emanated from U.S. scientists last week, was the likelihood that U.S. scientists would withdraw from U.S.–U.S.S.R. scientific exchange programs, should the civil liberties of dissidents such as Sakharov continue to be threatened.

Like other Soviet citizens such as Jewish electrochemist Veniamin G. Levich and gerontologist Zhores A. Medvedev who have had difficulties with the authorities, Sakharov has from time to time communicated with the West. In fact, the academy's telegram, widely noted as a response to members' concern for Sakharov's personal welfare, was also a response to a letter Sakharov sent to the academy's president Philip Handler in July, appealing to him for help in obtaining exit visas for a stepson, a stepdaughter, and her husband.

Sakharov's appeals to Handler and others came in a roundabout way. In the fall of 1972, at a conference in Tblisi in the Soviet Union, John A. Wheeler, professor of physics at Princeton, talked with Sakharov about some of the latter's ideas on general relativity. Wheeler later mentioned Sakharov's ideas to colleagues at Princeton, and, on 1 March, the department chairman, Marvin L. Goldberger, wrote Sakharov inviting him to be a visiting professor for the academic year 1973–74.

In the meantime, through a member of the M.I.T. faculty with contacts among Soviet scientists, Jerome B. Wiesner, M.I.T.'s president, had learned that Sakharov wanted his three young relatives to leave the U.S.S.R. to attend school in the United States. All three had suffered reversals, which, although they could have been coincidental, are not unlike the misfortunes that have befallen the children of other dissidents, and have been viewed as a part of the government's harassment. Sakharov's wife's daughter, Tatyana Semenova, 23, had been expelled from her university; her husband, Alexy Semenov, had lost his job; and her brother Yefrem Yankelevich, 17, had been denied a place in college. After arranging M.I.T. scholarships for the two students and a job for the stepdaughter's husband, Wiesner wrote Sakharov early in the year to invite the three to M.I.T. In April, the three applied to the Soviet government for the necessary exit visas, but, despite repeated inquiries, heard nothing.

Early in the summer, Princeton received, indirectly, a message that Sakharov had been pleased by its invitation. But Princeton was informed that the physicist would not consider such an invitation unless it included his family. Goldberger was away, but the acting chairman of the department sent another offer explicitly including Sakharov's family. The president of Princeton, William G. Bowen, had also written encouraging him to come.

Observers close to these appeals are careful to note that at no time, even in later letters to Handler and to Harvey Brooks, current president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, has Sakharov expressed a desire to leave Russia. They point out that, although he has indicated that he would not leave the country without his family, he has not yet accepted any invitation, even conditionally. Philosophically, Sakharov has taken the position that the loyal citizen must "bear witness" to events by remaining physically present in Russia.

In July, as the official campaign to denounce dissidents mounted, Sakharov wrote two letters to the West: one to Brooks and one to Handler. The letters (in Russian, Sakharov does not use English) urged both men to use their offices and their respective academies to pressure Soviet representatives to help his family. The tone of the two appeals is fairly ominous. The longer letter, to Brooks and dated 23 July, stated at the outset that his family was finding it hard "to study, to work, or even [to maintain] their safety." Referring to the M.I.T. invitations to the stepchildren, he said, "There is no other road for them." Sakharov also encouraged others to telephone him, a way by which concerned Westerners can sometimes maintain contact with Soviet residents. "I am always at home on Tuesdays after 6 in the evening," he said, and gave his number.

Both Handler and the executive officer of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, John Voss, stated that they interpreted Sakharov's letters as asking for nothing more than help for his relatives—at least until Sakharov himself dramatically altered the situation. In a surprise move, on 21 August, from the bedroom of his Moscow apartment, Sakharov gave an impromptu news conference with 11 Western journalists. He was quoted as having said, "Of course, something might be done to me personally, but you can't make any predictions." Some observers here described the press conference as "provocative" and suggested that it could heighten the chances that the authorities would retaliate against Sakharov or his family. To Handler and Brooks, the 21 August press conference signaled the need for a quick and vigorous response on the physicist's behalf. Handler, Brooks, Harrison Brown (Foreign Secretary of the NAS), and Paul Doty, professor of biochemistry at Harvard, all active in the Sakharov cause, were encouraged during the week after the

press conference when reports began drifting back from the summer's Pugwash meeting then being held in Finland. The scientific grapevine from Pugwash was reporting that, in two instances, the crisis concerning Sakharov was mentioned or alluded to. "In years past the Russians would have gotten up and walked out of the room," an observer said. Instead, they "just sat there" while other delegates warmly applauded. American scientists interpreted this as a sign that open discussion of the Sakharov case would not imperil him further.

However, according to Handler, the NAS council might not have acted so decisively had it not been for one, final, precipitating factor: a letter denouncing Sakharov by 40 members of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, including its president, M. V. Keldysh, and 5 associate members of the NAS. Appearing in *Pravda* on 29 August, the letter accused Sakharov of undermining peaceful coexistence and of trying to discredit the Soviet system. That Soviet academicians should join in the public condemnation of a colleague appeared to some in the U.S. as outrageous.

Handler says that on 7 September he was impressed by a statement in the *New York Times* by emigré physicist Valery Chalidze. "I do not know how to defend Sakharov—I know only that you will never save anyone by silence," Chalidze had written. That night, between 1 and 3 o'clock in the morning, after having mulled over the matter all the previous evening, Handler drafted a message of protest to be sent to the Soviet academy. It warned, "Were Sakharov to be deprived of his opportunity to serve the Soviet people and humanity, it would be extremely difficult to imagine successful fulfillment of American pledges of binational scientific cooperation, the implementation of which is entirely dependent upon the voluntary effort and goodwill of our individual scientists and scientific institutions." At a previously scheduled meeting of the executive committee of the NAS council the next morning, the message Handler had drafted—together with a shorter message to the same effect drafted earlier in the week by Brown, Doty, and others—were approved and dispatched by cable.

Reaction to the telegrams was swift. On Monday, Caspar Weinberger, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, in what was widely interpreted as a rebuke of Handler, expressed a preference for "communication" with the Russians, rather than "firing brickbats in the daily press."

Despite this, however, the mail coming to NAS ran heavily in favor of the academy's act of protest. By the end of the week, the NAS had received 48 letters approving the action, and one telephone call and one letter from members disapproving it. The one letter of disapproval stated to Handler, "You . . . and the council, are free as individuals to advise any foreign government on any issue you choose. . . . I specifically disengage myself . . . from any such political positions that you and the council wish to assume."

In taking a strong stand, the NAS was not alone, however. The NAS telegram and the apparent threats to Sakharov evidently served as a catalyst and a goad for the American Psychiatric Association (APA), which for 3 years has been pondering the charges of involuntary confinement of political dissenters in Soviet mental hospitals. On Monday, the trustees of the APA sent a cable to S. B. Snezhnevsky, of the All-Union Society of Psychiatrists. (Medvedev, who originally charged that this practice takes place, has identified Snezhnevsky as one of the three semiofficial state examiners responsible for diagnosing mental illness in political dissenters.)

The APA cable called for Soviet and Amercian psychiatrists to meet "to discuss involuntary psychiatric confinement and specific cases where abuse has been alleged." It added that there have been charges of political misuse of psychiatry in the United States also, and that the APA would be prepared to discuss this, too.

Reaction to Sakharov's plight also came from an organization, the Committee of Concerned Scientists (CCS), based in New York, which had been primarily concerned with the problems of Soviet Jews. On 15 September, the CCS released a statement addressed to Keldysh protesting both the treatment of Sakharov and of Soviet Jews who are not permitted to emigrate. Among the signers of the CCS statement were eight Nobel prizewinners. Two of the signers, Bernhard Witkop and Julius Axelrod, have been active on the issue of emigration for many months, and even wrote to Sakharov about it when the newest science accords were signed in June by the governments of both countries. Previously CCS warned that U.S. scientists' willingness to cooperate in exchange programs "might be impaired" if the treatment of Jews in Russia does not improve. Petitions to this effect have been circulated among scientists employed at the National Institutes of Health, the Agricultural Research Service laboratories in Beltsville, Maryland, and in parts of the Naval Research laboratories.

The Federation of American Scientists (FAS), in a formal statement, argued that the present détente will be highly perishable as long as the Soviet Union suppresses dissent. "So long as nuclear armed states exist, it is entirely appropriate—as a security matter—for citizens everywhere to advocate the intellectual freedoms required to ensure that détente is not lightly discarded." The FAS noted that Sakharov had been outspoken about the misuse of science, a matter of concern to all scientists. "The scientists we protect today in the Soviet Union may protect our freedoms tomorrow," the FAS said.

Another reaction, far more difficult to gauge and report, is that of individual American scientists. Many U.S. scientists are Jewish, and many are politically liberal and sympathetic to the issue of human liberties. At NIH, one scientist is said to have approached an activist colleague saying that he had a Russian due to start in his laboratory the next day. "What do I do?" he reportedly asked—but decided to take the Russian in anyway. Another scientist in the mental health area, who asked not to be named, stated that in his view cooperative schizophrenia research—which was just added to the list of joint U.S.–U.S.S.R. projects—was worth, substantively, very little. He said, "if anything happens to Sakharov I'd just as soon say to hell with it." Asked what his feelings are, now that he too is a private citizen, former science adviser Edward E. David, Jr., executive vice president of Gould, Inc., stressed that he felt cooperation was still important because, "It is awfully difficult for any government to respond constructively to an ultimatum." But David said he was "personally distressed" about the Sakharov crisis. "I would not criticize any single person from acting according to his consicence. I think it's a very personal decision. I would not question anyone's right to make his own choice."

Thus, it remains to be seen what choices American scientists, individually, will make as Sakharov's precarious situation unfolds in weeks ahead.

—DEBORAH SHAPELY