

When Kovalev was denied a defense counsel of his choice, he tried to defend himself against the charge of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda." The judge struck all his motions and would not permit the calling of witnesses who could have testified to the truth of the alleged "slander" by the accused. Kovalev declared a hunger strike and left the courtroom, certain of the preordained verdict—guilty—and the sentence—a maximum 7 years in a "strict regime" camp for "especially dangerous state criminals," followed by three years of internal exile.

He was not present to hear the prosecutor's revealing final words: "The Soviet authorities don't care about a man's opinions if only he keeps them to himself and does not engage in criminal activity. In Kovalev's thoughts on liberty as expressed in the documents he signed, one thing is clear—he is trying to portray liberty as something independent from society. We know that liberty is the product of the historical development of society and that each society has its own particular character. . . . Our state forbids actions which are foreign to its nature."

Sakharov, who had himself been barred from testifying for Kovalev, was aghast at such a "blatantly unlawful" trial. He called the defendant "my close friend, a man of great spiritual beauty and force, of limitless altruism, dedicated to the defense of human rights and the struggle for publicity against illegality."

Cornell University's Section of Neurobiology and Behavior recently offered Kovalev an appointment as visiting scholar, citing the more than 60 publications that demonstrate Kovalev's competence as a researcher. Cornell would give Kovalev a chance to resume his scientific work. If the promises of the Soviets and 34 other nations at Helsinki in August 1975 carry any weight, then Kovalev's path would be cleared by the official blessings given scientific exchanges (1).

The latest word from Sakharov is that time is running out. He sees Kovalev's survival as dependent on an operation that only the Leningrad central prison hospital is equipped to perform. He asks Kovalev's American colleagues to appeal to Soviet authorities to grant this request, adding their voices to the unanswered pleas of Mrs. Kovalev, Lusya Boitsova.

Because of the international nature of science, its practitioners have a more direct concern—and responsibility—for the human rights of colleagues in other

countries. Those who wish to respond on behalf of Sergei Kovalev can send a letter, telegram, letter, or card to the Medical Administration of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs, Moscow, Petrovka 25a, Medupravleniya, MVD SSSR.

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Notes

1. A. resolution has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Matthew F. McHugh (D-N.Y.) expressing the sense of Congress that the President should urge the Soviet Union to allow Kovalev to accept the invitation of Cornell University to be a visiting scholar, in keeping with the Helsinki accord.

Radioactive Waste Disposal

A panel established by the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management of the National Research Council has been assigned the task of evaluating waste practices at the Hanford Reservation in Washington State. Such practices include the partial solidification by evaporation of huge quantities of high-level radioactive liquid waste remaining from plutonium production, the separation of radioactive nuclides from the liquid wastes, the discharge of low-level radioactive liquid waste to the ground, the trapping of gaseous and particulate waste, and the recovery for safer storage of soil into which waste containing actinide elements has previously been discharged.

The panel is seeking information from all possible sources to guide its study. In particular, reports on recent work dealing with ideas or technological innovations that might be applicable to Hanford practices would be helpful. Many reports of this sort have been published and are readily available, but some may exist in unpublished form. The panel would appreciate knowing about unpublished work, and reports describing it can be sent to Dr. John Pomeroy, Executive Secretary, Committee on Radioactive Waste Management, National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20418.

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