

tional credibility to the experiment and the company. USDA even published a brochure to explain the test. The company "made a concerted effort" to meet with the established environmental groups in Washington, Davis said. It even went so far as to offer to meet Rifkin, but he declined.

Monsanto has been active in public relations too. With its own in-house staff and, in consultation with Hill and Knowlton, it has sponsored the creation of several videos to explain company experiments and agricultural biotechnology in general. It has conducted so many field tests now, that it has developed a brochure format to explain such tests, tailoring it a bit to describe the specific experiment.

Monsanto is also loosening up in disclosing data in advance of field testing. In one of its first proposals to field test a modified organism, the company withheld much of health and safety data from the public, asserting that they constituted confidential business information. It eventually reversed its position and disclosed the data.

Val Giddings of OTA says, "Monsanto is to be commended for increasing their efforts to be open."

Monsanto also has responded in a novel way to general concerns by the public and regulators that modified bacteria might drift off the test site. To improve monitoring, the company has engineered a "marker" microbe that fluoresces. The marker strain is currently being field tested.

Mellon of the National Wildlife Federation says, "These trips to localities are only going to be as useful as the information is available." So far, the track record for releasing information "has been good."

When asked about public relations' efforts by researchers, Jeremy Rifkin says, "The industry shouldn't feel very cocky." Since he began opposing field tests 5 years ago, there have only been five experiments with altered microbes, which, he says, "is not much. No floodgates have opened here." Rifkin, who lately has been focusing more on issues related to global climate and surrogate motherhood, says that he will continue to litigate against specific field experiments. And he warns that the first company that attempts to test an altered microbe on a commercial scale "will face years and years of battle in the courts and in Congress."

But Davis of Crop Genetics says, "The public acceptance of biotechnology will grow as companies do field tests. Industry will be judged on the collection of tests so it needs to present biotechnology as a safe and effective way of protecting crops. In the short term, there will have to be a concerted effort to educate the public."

■ MARJORIE SUN

# Is Soviet Psychiatry Changing Its Ways?

*U.S. delegation to visit Soviet hospitals; new openness may bolster Soviet bid to reenter World Psychiatric Association*

THE QUESTION of Soviet abuse of psychiatry is drawing fresh attention these days with two recent developments. One is that Soviet officials have finally consented to allow a delegation of American psychiatrists to visit a number of alleged political prisoners hospitalized in the Soviet Union. The other, which may not be unrelated, is that the Soviets have made known their intention to reapply for membership in the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), from which they resigned, in face of threatened expulsion for political abuses of psychiatry, in 1983. Some Western psychiatrists have expressed strong opposition to readmission of the Soviets unless they furnish concrete evidence that abuses have been curtailed, however.

The State Department has been actively pursuing negotiations on a visit since last April. Several groups, including the AAAS and the American Psychiatric Association (APA), sent out feelers last year following hints of Soviet receptivity, but requests went unanswered. (The Soviets have made it clear they do not want to do business with the APA, which has been an international leader in pointing out psychiatric abuses.)

The delegation is to be headed by forensic psychiatrist Loren Roth of the University of Pittsburgh, who with Richard Schifter, assistant secretary of state for humanitarian affairs, arrived at an informal agreement with Soviet officials during a visit to the Soviet Union last summer. The arrangement was announced this month following a meeting in Washington between Secretary of State George Schultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

Plans are for a preliminary trip in November by Roth and officials from the State Department and the National Institute of Mental Health to lay the groundwork for a more extended visit by the delegation, which would occur some time before next spring. There is nothing yet in writing, but the Soviets have agreed to allow the psychiatrists to interview between 10 and 30 current and former patients, look at medical records, and talk to patients' family members. Locations of the visits are yet to be determined. The Soviets are also interested

in having the delegation participate in seminars on forensic psychiatry.

Soviet motivations for approving the visit appear to be several. For one thing, failure to find evidence of current abuse could strengthen their bid to reenter the WPA. A State Department official says the "most egregious cases" are likely to be resolved by the time the delegation visits. He adds that the visit could strengthen the hand of the "glasnost/Gorbachev crowd" in undermining the conservative forces in psychiatry and in the bureaucratic struggle between the Health Ministry and the Ministry of Internal Affairs over control of special mental hospitals.

Last year the Soviets released more than 100 political prisoners from mental hospitals, and very few new detentions have occurred in the past year. There is no way of knowing how many remain in hospitals. The State Department has information on about 70 individuals who are believed to still be incarcerated for political or religious reasons. According to Helsinki Watch, the Soviets have disavowed knowledge of about 30 of them, say they have released 9, and claim that the remainder are genuinely mentally ill.

The big question is whether the Soviets, who continue to deny that psychiatry has been used for political purposes, are putting an end to these practices. Although progress has been made, many experts are still extremely skeptical about long-term intentions so long as the country's two top psychiatrists, Marat Vartanyan and Georgy Morozov, remain in power (see *Science*, 5 February, p. 551).

The current situation was discussed recently at a Washington meeting held by the International Association on the Political Use of Psychiatry, days after the Soviet All-Union Society of Neuropathologists and Psychiatrists, which is headed by Morozov, signaled its intent to reapply to the WPA. Members will vote on the application at the next world congress to be held in Athens on 9 to 11 October 1989.

Last year, with glasnost in the air, some observers believed it was only a matter of time before Vartanyan and Morozov would



**Peter Reddaway:** *The current situation in Soviet psychiatry is still "very troublesome."*

be eased out. Vartanyan, the number one apologist for Soviet psychiatry, was deputy to Andrei Snezhnevsky, who until his death last summer was director of the All-Union Center for Mental Health. Snezhnevsky was the author of the notorious diagnosis of "sluggish schizophrenia" often applied to dissidents. Morozov has been intimately involved in cases involving dissidents as director of Moscow's Serbsky Institute for Forensic Psychiatry.

However, according to Netherlands psychiatrist Robert van Voren, the situation has shifted since last November when Boris Yeltsin was expelled as head of the Moscow party organization. Since then, he said, no more articles critical of corruption in psychiatry have appeared in the Soviet press. What existed in the way of a "liberal wing" in Soviet psychiatry no longer has any links with the political leadership, he said, and the psychiatric centrists and conservatives, who oppose any overhaul of the system, are now in control. Van Voren said another bad sign is that the health minister of the Russian republic, who previously had joined in some of the public criticisms of psychiatry, has gone back to a "hard line" position since Yeltsin's ouster. Furthermore, Vartanyan has been promoted from acting director to director of the All-Union Center for Mental Health.

Speakers at the symposium asserted that there is no indication at this point that Soviet psychiatry is changing its ways. Anatoly Koryagin, the dissident psychiatrist released last year who now lives in Switzerland, said that new laws to protect the rights of mental patients are nothing more than public relations to placate human rights activists. The regulations, passed last March, permit a patient or relative to protest an involuntary hospitalization in court, and require that someone involuntarily hospitalized be examined by three psychiatrists within 24 hours. They also transfer the system of "special" hospitals (more prison-like than "ordinary" mental hospitals) from

the Ministry of Internal Affairs (the MVD) to the Ministry of Health.

Koryagin said, however, that the regulations are nothing more than a codification of instructions that were already in existence. Peter Reddaway of the Smithsonian Institution's Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies also said that the right to appeal a hospitalization is still contingent on approval by the regional chief of psychiatry.

The transfer of the 18 special hospitals to the health ministry does not yet appear to have resulted in any real changes, according to Alexander P. Podrabinek of the Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes, who addressed the meeting via a videotape from Moscow. (He did not attend the meeting because he was afraid he would not be let back in the country.) Podrabinek said the Leningrad special mental hospital is still in the same building with the same guards, walls, barbed wire, and living conditions.

Reddaway pronounced the current situation "very troublesome" with regard to the Soviet bid to reenter the WPA. "Clearly it is impossible to have them back under the present leadership, which is totally and utterly compromised."

The coming year is likely to feature intense debates leading up to the WPA congress. There are sharp divisions within the organization, in many cases reflecting the East-West political divide, which is couched in terms of whether the WPA should focus on ethical matters at the expense of promoting international collaboration and unity.

At the symposium, speakers from Europe and the United States were overtly critical of WPA president Costas Stefanis of Greece who, with his deputy Fini Schulsinger of

Denmark, has reportedly been holding secret negotiations with the Russians. Stefanis has denied such talks even though, according to Reddaway, they have been reported in the Soviet press.

A provocative exchange occurred between panel members and Stefanis, who was sitting in the audience. Asked to comment on his apparent desire to help the Russians get back in, Stefanis countered "I never said that." Although the WPA passed a resolution at its 1977 meeting in Hawaii calling on member societies to work at expunging political abuses of psychiatry, Stefanis said this principle "does not imply that we have to disregard the realities of the world." He said he did not want to do anything to undermine the WPA policy of "promoting collaboration." Asked point-blank whether he believes the Soviets abuse psychiatry, Stefanis would not answer, saying he does not take sides in disputes between WPA members.

Debate is likely to be fierce at the congress next October. The Soviets are extremely desirous of getting readmitted in order to establish their scientific respectability in the eyes of the world. British and American psychiatric organizations are equally keen that prior agreement be reached on certain conditions. The British Royal College of Psychiatry has named two: that all political detainees be released, and that Soviet authorities "disassociate themselves from past abuses and take measures to prevent their repetition." The APA, which states "apology for past abuses is not sufficient," wants guarantees that authorities have taken "effective action" to prevent future political use of psychiatry, and that the Soviets agree to respond to any WPA inquiries on possible abuses. ■ CONSTANCE HOLDEN

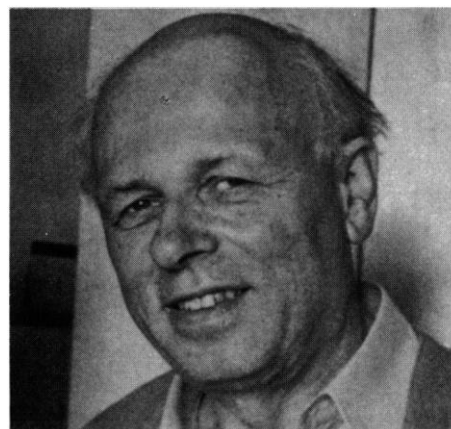
## Rehabilitation of Sakharov Continues

Soviet dissident physicist Andrei Sakharov announced on 21 October that he is now allowed to travel outside the country. He plans a 2-week visit to the United States, arriving in Washington, D.C., on 6 November, according to the *New York Times*.

The announcement came the day after Sakharov was elected to the governing body of the Soviet Academy of Sciences by a vote of 152 to 82.

Sakharov plans to attend a Washington conference of the newly formed International Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity, which is headed by Yevgeny P. Velikhov, who is vice president of the Soviet academy.

Sakharov, who with his wife Elena Bonner was exiled to Gorky for 5 years, was allowed to return to Moscow in December



1986. His forthcoming trip, which will be his first visit to the West, will include stops in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and Boston. ■ C.H.