

# Reviews

## *The International Sakharov Hearing*

edited by Marta Harasowska and Orest Olhovych.

Smoloskyp Publishers, Baltimore, Toronto, 1977, 335 pp., no index, \$8.95.

## *Basket III: Implementation of the Helsinki Accords*

(Hearing before the Commission on Security

and Co-operation in Europe, Ninety-Fifth [US] Congress,

Second Session on the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords)

*Vol. VII, Repercussions of the Trials of the Helsinki Monitors in the USSR,*

11 July, 1978, US Government Printing Office, 1978, 112 pp., \$2.50.

## *Alarm and Hope*

by Andrei D. Sakharov,

edited by Efrim Yankelevich and Alfred Friendly, Jr,

Collins and Harvill Press, London, 1979, xix + 200 pp., hardback £5.50.

Stase Luksaite, a Lithuanian Catholic activist and former nun with a science degree, aged 59, "who continued to teach children their catechism despite strong official pressure against the religious education of youth, was found at a crossing over the Neman River in Kaunas on the morning of 30 October (1975) in critical condition from numerous bodily injuries. Regaining consciousness in the hospital just before she died . . . she said that she forgave her murderer." Mikhail Marenko, a Romanian who served in the Red Army as a boy of 14 "was arrested ten times and forcibly committed to psychiatric care four times between 1948 and July 1969 . . . for his energetic role in organizing exhibitions of nonconformist artists . . ." In 1970 he was given eight years in a strict regime camp for "anti-Soviet agitation". These examples of legal-illegal persecution are given by Sakharov. There are scores more.

"In 1972, in the city of Lviv (Ukraine), the church on Artem Street was wilfully destroyed by a tank. The parishioners threw themselves before the tank to block its way, but the militia dragged them away." "In the village

of Smilna . . . the church was covered with chemicals. The parishioners cleaned the church and continued to come there. The church doors were then welded shut." Elsewhere, "Party thugs broke into the church, stole all the treasures, tore the cloth embroidery, and slashed the icons. For several days thereafter, a Jewish junk dealer named Broder was commanded to take the destroyed church property in order to incite anti-semitic feelings among villagers. Broder steadfastly refused to do this. He was beaten until he needed hospitalization . . ." A man was harassed, fined and imprisoned for three days for painting his yard gate in Ukrainian national colours. Four scientists were dismissed from their university posts because the KGB managed to photograph them standing by the statue of Ukraine's national poet. These examples of freakish and spiteful illegality, worthy of the ancient caliphs of Baghdad, come almost at random from *The International Sakharov Hearing*.

An extract from the testimony of Representative Joe Moakley to the US Senate Hearing in 1978 (*Basket III*) reads:

Another Soviet abuse that has recently been called to my attention is the case of Grigory Goldstein and Pavel Abramovich who are to be tried for "parasitism"—the crime of being unemployed. But they are unemployed because when they applied for exit visas they were fired from their jobs. Abramovich then made a frugal living as a Hebrew teacher. Nevertheless he was charged with unemployment because the Soviets allege that Hebrew is not an official language.

Mr Jerry Goodman, Executive Director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, spoke at the same Hearing, on the 1980 Olympiad and possible violations of the Helsinki Act:

I would suggest that a series of guidelines be developed. For example, it would be considered a violation if tourists would get permission to come to the Soviet Union on a selective basis—if a number of tourists, such as Jews and others whom the Soviet authorities might deem "unwelcome" would not obtain such visas. The matter of whether *Soviet* Jews are able to attend the games would be one for consideration. It is worth recalling that in 1975, during the World University Games in Moscow, Jews were not permitted to attend games—to observe any event where the Israeli team performed.

Again, the above examples are taken almost at random. In these four volumes the silly, vicious and deadly forms of persecution in defiance of Soviet law are multiplied by the hundred. One emerges saddened, depressed and stupefied, despite the heroism of the protesters. Added to the immense revelations of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, what does it all

amount to? Simply that the Soviet authorities behave like an army of occupation. One could understand, while one deplored, the military reasons for all that is reported if it was about the Nazi occupation of France which it was hoped to make permanent—the rounding-up, deportation or shooting of patriots and protesters; the systematic destruction of national religion and culture; the use of the Jew as scapegoat; the holding of women and children as hostages; the utter indifference to the health and well-being, even the lives, of the conquered and subject people. Appalling as that would have proved in occupied France, it would have had some *raison d'être*. But against one's *own* people, and continuing with scarcely any break in intensity for 60 years? It does not bear thinking about.

The Nazis labelled some peoples as sub-human. It would seem that the Soviet authorities (deeply fearful at heart?) have privately labelled all their citizens who are not part of the governing structure (KGB, Communist Party and the militia—probably in that order) as sub-human, their lives, jobs, freedom at the rulers' disposal without regard to their own laws. This applies to religious people especially. I recall that Jean Jaurés said of the dictatorship of the proletariat that it would prove to be nothing less than a band of brigands camping on a nation, and so it has proved.

Why does not the Soviet people bring this to an end themselves? A few million people in the streets of Iran toppled the Shah and his powerful army. Perhaps there really are two nations in the USSR, the occupiers and the occupied. The occupiers, themselves made deaf by the propaganda of decades, cannot hear the cries of the occupied and benefit too much from their power to want ever to yield it on grounds of an abstract justice.

The burden of these several reports is that the persecution of religion, dissidence and any forces of originality in the arts will continue. It will be mitigated by fear of the ultimate military consequence of defying external protest and appeasing gestures will be made. But the extent of religious persecution will never be fully known because it is pursued with bureaucratic<sup>4</sup> secrecy in remote provinces. The examples in the two reports are the tip of the iceberg. No doubt the Kremlin would prefer to rule over a spiritual desert. It would present fewer problems. If the Kremlin has a split mind over this it is because it fears losing the race with the West through military and intellectual incompetence—and this is the opening for western protest which must continue and intensify.

Andrei Sakharov is a noble and honourable fighter, and his courage and fidelity in protesting about the repression of human rights in the USSR are beyond praise. His new volume does not tell us much more about his policies—the best source for that is still *My Country and the World* (1975)—but it illuminates his life by giving us his correspondence with President Carter, by pointing out the complications and dangers brought to the dissident movement by the subway bomb (January 1977), and by revealing the complexities of his own and his family's persecuted life. There is also

a mass of information on dissidents, including a valuable Biographical Appendix on those whom Sakharov has defended.

Sakharov is, of course, a scientific humanist. He believes that:

Progress is possible and innocuous only when it is subject to the control of reason . . . Freedom of conscience, the existence of an informal public opinion, a pluralistic system of education, freedom of the press, and access to other sources of information—all these are in very short supply in socialist countries . . . a result of the political and ideological monism which is characteristic of these nations . . .

An effective system of education and a creative sense of heredity from one generation to another are possible only in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom. Conversely, intellectual bondage, the power and conformism of a pitiful bureaucracy, acts from the very start as a blight on humanistic fields of knowledge, literature, and art and results eventually in a general decline . . .

One must agree. Sakharov makes a grand restatement of humanistic aims, with little or no mention of religion, such as might have been written by a Julian Huxley or a Bertrand Russell. But scientific humanism, proud child of the Enlightenment, is also on trial in the world for its materialism, its spiritual emptiness. Marxism itself has always claimed to be both scientific and humanist, and is in deep disgrace. There must be a new passion in the heart of Russia for Sakharov's liberal programme to succeed. That passion, I think, will have to be religious.

LESLIE PAUL

#### *Editor's Note*

Additional US Congressional publications which deal in some measure with religious liberty in the USSR and Eastern Europe are:

*Religious Persecution in the Soviet Union*, 24 and 30 June 1976;

*Religious Repression in the Soviet Union: Dissident Baptist Pastor Georgi Vins*, 2 September 1976;

*Religious Freedom in the Soviet Union: The Case of Pastor Georgi Vins*, 24 September 1976;

*Human Rights and US Consular Activities in Eastern Europe*, 1977;

*Reports of Helsinki-Accord Monitors in the Soviet Union: Documents of the Public Groups to Promote Observance of the Helsinki Agreements in the USSR*, 24 February 1977;

*Basket III: Implementation of the Helsinki Accords*, Vol. 2, 27 and 28 April, 9 May 1977;

*Reports of Helsinki-Accord Monitors in the Soviet Union: Vol. 2 of the Documents of the Public Groups to Promote Observance of the Helsinki Agreements in the USSR*, 3 June 1977;

*Implementation of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe: Findings and Recommendations Two Years After Helsinki*, 1 August 1977 (republished 23 September 1977).

US Congress reports are available for reference in the UK at the Embassy Library by appointment (The Reference Library, Embassy of the United States of America, Grosvenor Square, London W1).