

U.S. Scientists Threaten Soviet Boycott

The recent federal move to cold-shoulder the Soviets in cooperative scientific exchanges has taken on a personal dimension. Goaded by the Soviet banishment of outspoken nuclear physicist and Nobel laureate Andrei Sakharov (SN: 2/2/80, p. 67), several prominent scientific bodies in the United States threatened a personal and voluntary boycott by their members of U.S.-Soviet scientific exchanges.

The political rally behind Sakharov by scientists in this country began within a day of the Soviets' move to exile — and thereby silence — him on Jan. 22. Harsh protests by organizations such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science were cabled to Anatoly Dobrynin, the Soviet ambassador to the United States. Other groups issued strongly worded condemnations of the Soviets' gesture. Such actions marked a sharp contrast to the near apathy that met a move by President Jimmy Carter, several weeks earlier, placing an immediate ban on most government-funded cooperative exchanges with the Soviets (SN: 1/12/80, p. 23).

A Jan. 22 statement by the 4,000-member New York-based Committee of Concerned Scientists called the expulsion of Sakharov from Moscow to Gorky and the stripping away of his honors "repulsive." The statement went on to suggest that coming "as the aftermath of the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan, we are concerned that [these actions] portend a change which threatens the continuance of cultural and scientific relations between our countries." CCS cochairmen Max Gottesman and Mark Kac went on to charge, in their Jan. 25 cable to Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, that "punishing Dr. Sakharov for his attempts to ensure your government's respect for its human rights commitments . . . is a travesty." And they added that Sakharov's detention in Gorky "will only serve to deter Western scientists from engaging in scholarly exchanges with the USSR."

The Federation of American Scientists went so far as to "adopt" Sakharov, saying his plight "deserves and requires an unprecedented defense by foreign colleagues." As the first step in his defense, FAS is asking individual member scientists to consider signing a pledge asserting that individual's intention to boycott any official bilateral scientific exchange with the Soviet government — either here or in the Soviet Union — until Sakharov is released from exile. Among initial adherents to the pledge are five Nobel prize winners and the four highest FAS officials.

FAS announced that several other organizations, including the American Physical

Society, American Chemical Society and New York Academy of Sciences, had pledged to carry the adoption suggestion to their members. In justifying the campaign, the FAS asserted that "scientific support for Sakharov, through his individual adoption, is probably the only immediate strategy which cannot be credibly dismissed by the Soviets as politically motivated by hostile foreign forces."

Recognizing "the importance of having some scientists go and complain, even as others refuse to go and complain," FAS officials said individuals would be asked to consult their consciences before endorsing any boycott pledge because some exchanges — such as the swapping of reprints, diplomatic missions in search of peace and personal contacts between individual friends — should be preserved regardless of the political climate.

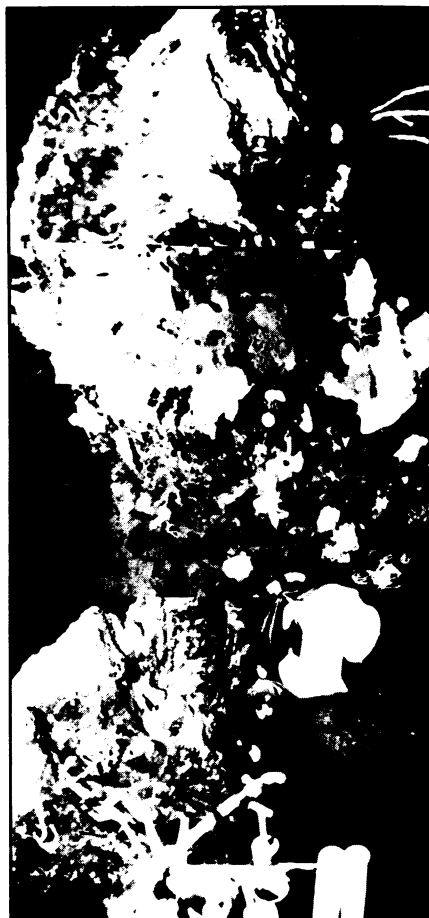
On Feb. 3, following a weekend in Gorky, Elena Bonner relayed a message from her husband, Sakharov, charging that local

Soviet authorities had threatened further sanctions against both him and his wife if he didn't keep quiet. Despite a warning that his Jan. 23 criticisms of the Afghanistan invasion and the direction of Soviet foreign policy violated the terms of his exile, Sakharov has refused to be silenced.

When Sakharov was threatened with repression in 1973, National Academy of Sciences President Philip Handler wrote the then-president of the Soviet Academy of Sciences that "harassment or detention of Sakharov will have severe effects on the relationships between the scientific communities of the U.S. and USSR."

"That statement is as true today as it was then," said Handler last week. "This blatantly punitive act against Sakharov can only be regarded as a challenge to further cooperation and an act of deliberate ill will. What the consequences may be I cannot foresee, but I find it difficult to imagine scientific exchange continuing in the spirit we had created heretofore." □

Leg 70: Return to the Galapagos



Taken by Alvin, composite shows top of undersea mound like those cored by Leg 70. Deep sea biota covers exterior.

Like an out-of-the-way island suddenly "discovered" by jetsetters, the Galapagos Rift seems to be the trendy spot for researchers lately. The relatively shallow depth of the spreading center (located off the coast of Ecuador) and its unusual thermal characteristics attracted several research cruises in the early 1970s. Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution's research submarine *Alvin* took a good look in 1977 and 1979 and found spectacular undersea hot water vents and an amazing collection of animals (SN: 3/19/77, p. 182; 1/12/80, p. 29). Now, the Deep Sea Drilling Project's *Glomar Challenger* has made its second voyage to the area.

Unlike *Alvin*, Leg 70 concentrated on less sensational, though no less important, features of the Galapagos region called hydrothermal mounds. Located about 20 kilometers south of the spreading center and its hot water vents, the mounds are quite different in formation and much less active than the vents. But both features appear to be part of the little-understood system that cools and changes newly formed ocean crust by the circulation of water beneath the sea floor.

In 1977, DSDP's Leg 54 attempted to get to the inner workings of that plumbing system by coring the mounds, but had relatively little success. The recently completed Leg 70, which was led by Richard Von Herzen of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and Jose Honnorez of the University of Miami, was better prepared. With an acoustic locator attached to the drill string for the first time and armed