

Czechoslovakia, and who is now living in the United States, "the representation by the National Academy of Sciences in the case of Sakharov was effective. Of that I am sure". He added that "in every case when the Soviet bureaucracy has given in, it has been done by open pressure". Handler maintains that the public protest on Sakharov's behalf was made in response to a critical situation—the fear that Sakharov was about to be arrested and tried for treason. He suggested that such an approach should not be used in less dramatic situations.

Stone believes, however, that the initial success of the Sakharov protest should convince the Academy that occasional public protests would greatly strengthen its hand in private negotiations. And Lipman Bers, an Academy member and President of the American Mathematical Association who has made representations on behalf of beleaguered scientists in several countries, notes that "my impression and experience is that so-called quiet diplomacy and public protests reinforce each other". Similarly, Harrison Brown, a former Foreign Secretary of the National Academy of Sciences who played a key role in the Academy's protest over Sakharov, suggests that "if anything, the Academy has erred on the side of not doing enough publicly", though he adds that he believes that the private approach "has tempered Soviet actions" and notes that "it is very difficult to get a proper balance between public and private approaches".

Stone, meanwhile, is working to get the prestige of Academy members behind some public protests to be launched by the FAS on behalf of dissident Soviet scientists. Last month, he sent a letter to every member of the Academy, asking whether they would be willing to lend their support to petitions "for scientists being denied the right to function as scientists". He said last week that he anticipates a positive response from about 25% of the Academy's members. In addition, he has circulated a petition among physicist members of the National Academy of Sciences asking for their support for Andrei Tverdokhlebov, a physicist who was arrested nine months ago for allegedly disseminating false material and whose trial is imminent. A very high proportion has already responded. A petition has also been mailed to some 20,000 biologists in support of Kovalev. Stone also attempted, unsuccessfully, to ensure that international observers would be allowed at Kovalev's trial.

The Academy is therefore under some pressure to take a more aggressive, public stand in support of dissident Soviet scientists. It should be noted, however, that such a move would draw

strong criticism from the State Department and other government agencies since it would seem to run counter to the spirit of detente. The Administration would much prefer a quasi-government body like the Academy to work behind the scenes, leaving the public protesting to private organisations like the FAS.

The issue of how learned societies should handle relations with their

counterparts in the Soviet Union has, of course, also been aired in other countries. In the UK scientists debated the subject on television in 1973, and in 1974 the Council of the Royal Society considered the issue following an initiative by Professor John Ziman. The continuing low profile of the society makes it reasonable to assume that proposals for a more public stance were turned down. □

### An appeal for help

THE following quotations are taken from a letter written by Valentin F. Turchin, a Soviet mathematician who was fired from his job in July 1974 after he had made a public statement in defence of Andrei Sakharov. Turchin, who is chairman of the Soviet group of Amnesty International, has been out of work for 18 months, and has applied for permission to visit the United States to work at Columbia University. He was informed on December 15 that his application had been denied. The letter was received on January 13 by Jeremy Stone, the FAS Director. Turchin says that he wants it to be discussed by the scientific community in the West. It will eventually be published in full by the Khronika Press in New York.

Turchin begins by describing the harassment and the trial last month of Sergei Kovalev. Kovalev, an eminent biologist, was given the maximum sentence of 7 years' imprisonment with hard labour and a further three years of exile within the Soviet Union for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". Noting that, together with Sakharov, he had appealed for help for Kovalev from Western scientists, Turchin states that "there was no response deserving to be mentioned and I don't know whether there was any response at all . . . No action was made which could have attracted serious public attention and influenced Soviet authorities. The world scientific community betrayed Kovalev".

He continues: "You are very proud, my dear colleagues, that you separate science from what you call politics. You do not go in for politics, you say. Neither do we. Dissidents in the Soviet Union do not go in for politics: they struggle for air. What you are separating science from is not politics but mere decency. And in fact, it is not separation, but a reversal, changing of the sign. For whatever you think, you are not neutral in the conflict between totalitarianism and freedom. You actively cooperate with totalitarianism, support it . . .

"People of science are intrinsic enemies of totalitarianism, because they professionally need intellectual freedom. The core of the Soviet dissidents consists mainly of scientists. But the state presents to the scientist a dilemma; either to support totalitarianism, to lie and betray comrades, or to challenge it to some extent and pay in proportion, by professional losses up to the point of losing work and freedom. The Western scientific community helps to conduct this policy by fully accepting the totalitarian rules of the game in scientific contacts with the USSR and the satellite countries. One example will suffice: did you ever turn back a Soviet delegation because the scientists you had invited were not included [because they were] politically unreliable? Politically reliable people, that is those who help strangle the recalcitrant, are allowed by the Soviet authorities to come out on the international scene. You give your sanction to this selection . . .

"Why not demand, for example, that a small proportion of those who participate in scientific exchange—say, one in ten—must be the other side's choice, and if not, then firmly refuse to cooperate? Scientists hold powerful levers of influence on totalitarian countries. Why do they not use them to save a colleague from imprisonment? . . .

"The detente is necessary, I'm completely for the detente. But in the absence of strong public pressure for human rights all over the world the detente will automatically lead to proliferation of totalitarianism. The Helsinki agreement reveals a typical pattern: the West makes real concessions in exchange for imaginary ones from the East. After Helsinki, the situation with human rights in the USSR has become only worse . . . The proponents of the Helsinki agreement argued that it would provide the grounds for exerting pressure on the USSR for exchange of people and ideas. But what is the use of the grounds if there is no desire to exert pressure? . . ."