

Being Jewish in Russia

I am very grateful to the editor for publishing Vladislav Bevc's letter (August 1982, page 15). Some of my American friends find it difficult to believe that in present-day Russia one may be harassed solely for being a Jew.

Bevc parades what the Soviets try to camouflage: that "Brailovskys, Azbels, Dikiis, Freidlin, Freimans, Irlins, Reitmans and Vasilevskis [are] none of them Russians," despite their centuries-long residence in Russia, their bona fide Russian citizenship, their many contributions to Russian culture, and despite their being decorated war veterans or children of those who died fighting for Russia in World War II. And, in stating that "all of them have had their education paid in its entirety by the Soviet government," Bevc conveniently ignores their decades of productive work for a pittance—with almost all the real income appropriated by the Soviet state.

The implicit conclusions of Bevc's logic are clear. As "outsiders," Russian Jews are not entitled to the privileges of Soviet citizenship. Should not Bevc be judged in consonance with his own ideas? According to Vladislav Bevc's reasoning, his own name proves he is not an American. Why then does he work and draw a salary at an institute in California, rather than somewhere in Eastern Europe?

The Bevcs are the rulers in Russia. That is why I hope every American scientist reads and rereads the Bevc letter and then decides—should he be silent and thus join the Bevcs versus the refusniks or should he try to save refusniks from the Russian Bevcs?

The way to help the refusniks is first by understanding that, contrary to their statements, Soviet science officials are responsible for the fate of refusniks. Academician Anatoly A. Logunov, current rector of Moscow State University, in fact has a long history of involvement with the Brailovskys' emigration application, his protestations to the contrary notwithstanding (May 1982, page 119).

Martin Kruskal, professor of mathematics and of astrophysical sciences and Chairman of the Program in Applied Mathematics at Princeton University, in a report on his October 1978 visit with Logunov attests to the rector's role:

Among other matters we discussed the situation of Irina Brailovskiy. He told me that the university had no objection to her emigration, and had informed the visa office to that effect.

Further corroboration of Logunov's part in the Brailovskiy case came in a letter dated 2 January 1979, from Academician S. V. Vonsovsky, Director

of the Ural Science Research Center of the USSR Academy of Sciences in Sverdlovsk, to Professor Arthur Freeman of Northwestern University:

... I have come into contact with president of Moscow State University Academician Logunov and informed him of your letter. He has replied the university has no claims to raise.

Knowing Soviet bureaucracy firsthand, I was positive at that time that the Brailovskys would soon receive their exit visas, barring a change in Soviet policy leading to a directive for Logunov to change his position. Unfortunately, this is exactly what happened, as reported by Martin Kruskal in March 1979. Having learned that the Deputy Minister of the Interior, Boris Shumilin, had informed Irina Brailovskiy that the visa office had not received clearance for her emigration from Moscow State University, Kruskal cabled Logunov twice but received no reply. Repeated attempts to reach Logunov by telephone left the impression that the rector wanted to avoid discussing the Brailovskiy matter. Finally, after nearly a month, Logunov accepted Kruskal's telephone call. According to Kruskal:

The case is now out of his [the university's] hands, since he submitted the information [as to Irina Brailovskiy's clearance] to the office of the Minister of Higher Education, whose name is Vishislav Petrovich Elyutin, and this is all the university can do.

Here, Logunov still admits that it is within his province as rector to submit clearance for emigration. He does, however, embark on the process of distancing himself from the visa process, by stating that he had reported to the Minister of Higher Education, rather than to the visa office, as he had earlier indicated.

Logunov introduced still another element when, in a meeting on 18 September 1979 with Kruskal and two American colleagues, he stated (according to Kruskal) that:

► His information to the Ministry of Higher Education (mentioned above) was imparted only verbally to personnel there

► He has issued no document to "clear" Irina, neither to that Ministry, nor to OVIR (the government office that issues emigration visas—or doesn't issue them, as the case may be), nor to anyone else

► It is not customary in cases of employees wishing to emigrate for the university to issue any such document (expressing its lack of objection).

Since emigration officials had informed Irina that such a document was required for the issuance of an exit visa, Kruskal pressed Logunov to cooperate

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in this regard. Obdurate, Logunov asserted that the university had no contact with OVIR.

It is therefore ironic that in his May 1982 letter to *PHYSICS TODAY*, Logunov invokes considerations of individual conscience. Indeed, in light of his refusal to pen the crucial clearance, should not the tragedy of the Brailovsky family weigh heavily on his conscience?

For Viktor, enduring the rigors of internal exile after nearly a decade of anxious waiting for emigration; for Irina, dismissed from her position at Moscow State University and barred for ten years from professional work; for Leonid, their son, whose own application for emigration was recently refused because of his mother's alleged access to secret work at Moscow State University when he was eleven years old; for Dahlia, their eight-and-a-half-year-old daughter, her entire life spent as an outcast, psychologically scarred, afraid of strangers, almost noncommunicative, still reeling from the effects of night searches and her father's arrest and forced absence; for seventy-five-year-old Fanya Fefer, Irina's mother and widow of a famous Yiddish poet who perished in Stalin's Gulag.

It remains for the international scientific community to determine whether the Logunovs of the USSR will be permitted to inflict suffering on the Brailovskys and their like. As rector of the prestigious Moscow State University, vice president of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and candidate of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Logunov can see to it that the Brailovskys are issued their exit visas. At his level in the Soviet hierarchy he need not be constrained by custom; rather, he should be guided by simple human decency and submit the written clearance required by OVIR. All he would risk is raising a few eyebrows in the Kremlin. During the notorious Sinyavsky-Daniel trial when I was a professor at Moscow State University, the late Rector Petrovsky, with one telephone call, saved me from all KGB harassments. True, Petrovsky was an exceptionally noble person.

The task ahead of Western scientists is twofold: First they should inform Logunov that they believe he is in a position to free the Brailovskys. And secondly, they must convince him that both he and Soviet science will benefit from his acting as a responsible member of the international scientific community.

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10/82

I strongly protest the vicious racism implicit in the letter of Vladislav Bevc

(August, page 15) in which he states that Brailovsky, Azbel, Dikii, Freidlin, Irlin, Reitman, and Vasilvski are "...none of them Russians." Of course they are Russians, born there, brought up there, educated there. Only by applying a pernicious racial or religious test does Bevc assert that they are not Russian, evidently because they are all Jews.

This is precisely the theory with which Hitler and the whole Nazi movement excluded Jews in Germany from society, progressively disenfranchising, dispossessing and finally killing them.

I don't know whether Bevc is parroting the official Russian position in this "Jews are not Russians" tirade, or whether that is only his own personal anti-semitism revealing itself, but, as physicists with a tradition of indifference to the racial or religious origins of ideas and as Americans who cherish the right to diversity and association, we should not let such an ugly slur go unnoted.

I am certain that all of these maligned scientists would have preferred to be able to be proud and productive Russians contributing to their homeland with their heads and hands, had not that homeland, acting precisely on such racist theories as Bevc espouses, made their lives impossibly difficult by depriving them of freedom of thought and expression. So long as the USSR oppresses millions of its own citizens, putting many into second-class status because of racial or religious origins, so long will these Russians feel forced to emigrate from their homeland. This predicament does not make them less Russian. Rather does it teach a lesson about the ugly results of racial and religious paranoia.

Bevc's position is disgraceful, and I regret that PHYSICS TODAY gave it a forum.

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9/82

THE AUTHOR COMMENTS: Emotional charges that treatment of refusniks by Soviet authorities and criticism of their conduct are based on ethnic animosity are not supported by evidence. Ernest Silver, unacquainted with facts, plays for reflex reactions from readers by invoking the specter of the Munich rabble rouser whose polemical style he emulates. A physics journal for "Americans who cherish diversity" should not be a repository of personal attacks and invective, rather it should present a situation from the points of view of all concerned before espousing a position. As it is, rights of American scientists must be discussed elsewhere.¹

The American scientific community is interested in only one human right, namely, the right of any person to leave

any country and that only when it concerns a certain ethnic group for which a small inbred group feels special affinity. Its protestations are disingenuous because it ignores the equally important human rights to economic resources, employment, education, access to cultural life and enjoyment of benefits of one's own scientific work.

Seizing on the refusniks' plight as an issue of paramount concern to APS is particularly bizarre in view of the domestic problems: 10 million unemployed including thousands of scientists, a federal deficit of \$150 billion, inaccessibility of government research facilities to all scientists, censorship of scientific publications² and the forthcoming legislation that will place private research under government surveillance.³ These are problems that are much closer to most Americans.

Every allegation of Soviet iniquity has a commensurate counterpart in the US. The controversy is a case of a pot calling the kettle black.

Concerning the "nationality question" for which I am being taken to task, I realize that the terms "Russian nationality" and "Soviet citizenship" should not be used interchangeably. Silver apparently also uses them in this way. A more precise statement regarding refusniks should be: "None of them (are) Soviet citizens." This is a statement of fact, not a prejudiced denial of their standing in the community. Every applicant for exit visa had of his own free will renounced his Soviet citizenship. This is required by law of all prospective emigrants regardless of their ethnic origin. With what nationality the refusniks identify themselves is for them and the society whose acceptance they seek to decide—it has no bearing on their citizenship as Soviet law does not discriminate on the basis of ethnic origin.

Allegations of Soviet anti-Semitism are not credible when one considers that Jews have an autonomous province in the USSR and that many persons of Jewish ancestry such as Trotsky (Bronstein), Kamenev (Rosenfeld) and Litvinov were architects of the Soviet system. Israel, however, is considered "capitalistic and no friend of the Soviet Union" which may account for the Soviets' disdain of the refusniks. This attitude is based on ideological rather than "racist" grounds.

A cohesive ethnic group within a larger nationality which maintains its identity often arouses animosity by setting itself apart. The special privilege of emigration and prospective foreign citizenship may well cause envy in the USSR. Austria, the Helsinki accord notwithstanding, practically annihilated its Yugoslav minority. A million Arabs are very unhappy in a

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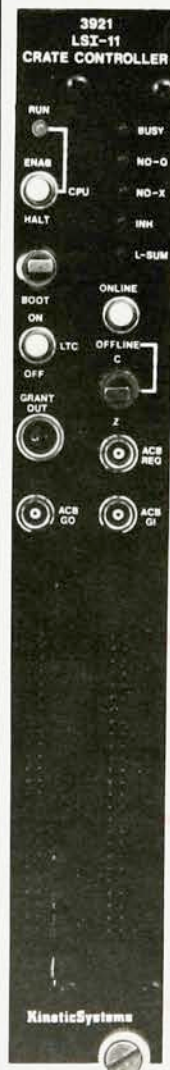
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Middle Eastern country (no names mentioned). The Indians in America know that no one has monopoly on extirpation of ethnic groups. Sometimes a subversive minority such as the deported Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia provokes a retribution which is justified. Emigrants returning to the USSR do not blame their repatriation on the anti-Semitism of Israel. Should all ethnic minority problems be discussed in PHYSICS TODAY?

After renouncing their citizenship, the refusniks became ineligible for the positions of trust they held. An employee of Oak Ridge National Laboratory would likewise be fired if he renounced his American citizenship. Exceptions, such as employment of Klaus Fuchs at Los Alamos, require special international agreements. Today a dismissed expatriate physicist could still leave the country but when Admiral Inman's proposals become law he might not be.^{2,3} It is well known that Linus Pauling and aerodynamicist Hse-Shen Tsien of Caltech were denied passports when the government felt it would be prejudicial to its interests.⁴ Not a breeze of protest came from APS or the Academy of Sciences at that time.

Urging ostracism of Logunov,⁵ a member of the Soviet establishment, for failure to help the Brailovskys actively (whom he may consider inimically disposed toward the regime he cherishes) is as unrealistic as expecting the directors of the American national physics laboratories—who protest the refusniks' predicament—to grant research facilities to their American colleagues ousted from work in their profession for budgetary or political reasons. Charles Schwartz had to sue before he gained access to Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, a part of the university where he teaches. Photographs of him being manhandled by the university police on another occasion looked as brutal as any beating Sakharov reportedly sustained from the KGB when he tried to meddle in the Orlov trial. Schwartz, too, had problems in getting a forum in PHYSICS TODAY.⁶

Emigration from the communist countries is generally allowed only if (1) it is not prejudicial to the government and (2) the applicant has settled all his outstanding obligations to the society. The Soviets hold that the refusniks have not met these conditions.

The dissident agitation in which refusniks, as a rule, became active only after they lost their comfortable positions would of itself pose no threat to the Soviets. There is, however, the following problem with unrestricted emigration.

If members of a given group could leave the USSR at will, every Soviet citizen would eventually have to enjoy the same right. Most likely to leave would be those who find the Soviet system intolerable—the dissidents. Dissident activities would escalate if it were known that one could leave the country when things become too hot. Once the Soviet government relinquished absolute control over its citizens it could not continue to exist in its present form—it would become an entirely different government. No government is willing to change.

Brailovsky is said to have spoken ill of the Soviets⁷ who feel that he would continue to do so were he allowed to leave. In the Soviet law there is a basis for detaining him. *Dura lex, sed lex*. Brailovsky and his friends may be fine fellows in the eyes of those who have no use for the Soviet system but the Soviets do not see him in this light. They think that giving dissidents a forum would be disgraceful. Sounds familiar?

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10/82

History of CP violation

In July (page 38) James Cronin recalls his recollections of the discovery of CP violation in 1964. Those recollections, while perhaps having been dimmed by time, do not today accurately reflect the true and total picture of the events that took place at that time. In particular, they totally disregard the important contributions made by me and by my colleagues at the University of Illinois in the discovery. This is especially surprising since Cronin, in his report to the 1965 International Conference on Weak Interactions held on 25–27 October 1965 at Argonne National Laboratory, begins his talk with the statement, "The discovery^{1,2} of the decay mode $K_2^0 \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^-$ is most naturally interpreted as a violation of CP

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