

SPECIAL ISSUE

ANDREI SAKHAROV

Until Andrei Sakharov published his essay "Reflections on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom," most physicists had never heard of him. That year, 1968, I was attending an international conference on plasma physics and controlled fusion in Novosibirsk. A highlight of that meeting was the Soviet announcement of new experimental results on the tokamak that demonstrated its outstanding confinement properties. The Soviet results led to a major reorientation of magnetic fusion research. But one of the inventors of the tokamak, Sakharov, was absent. When one of us Americans asked after him, our host, Andrei Budker, replied, "Don't ask about him or you may be visited by the KGB."

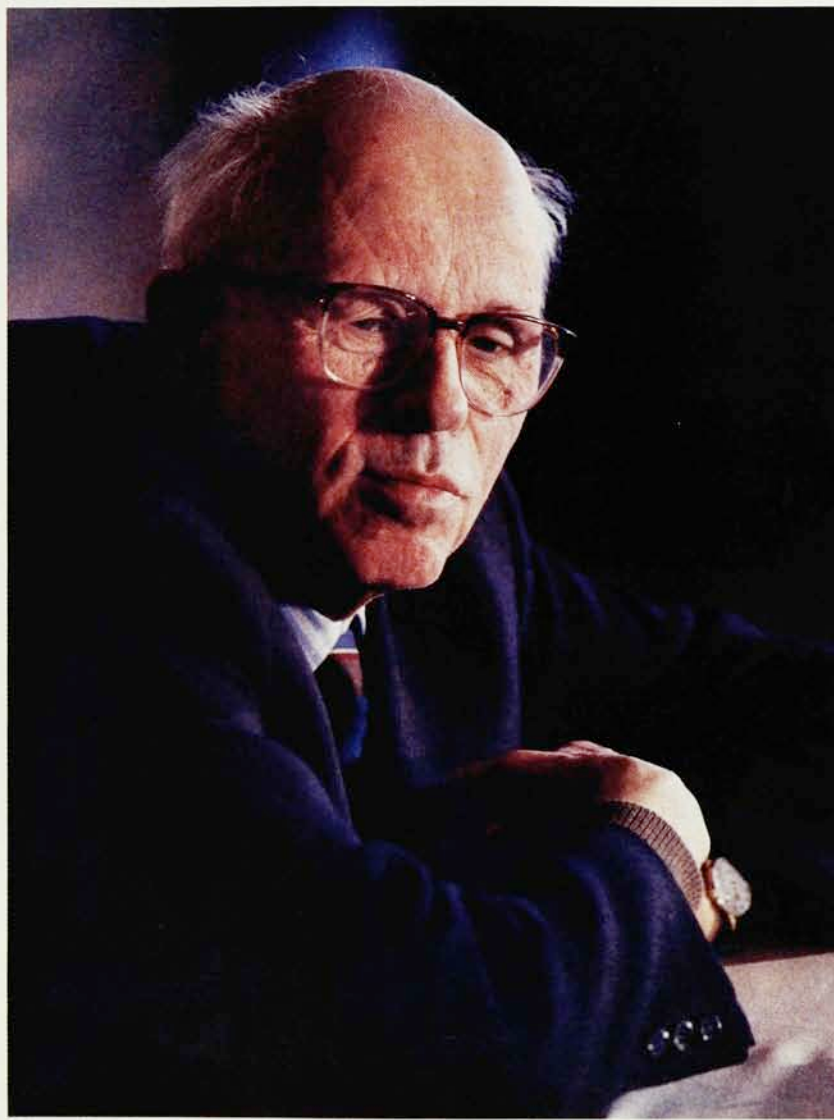
Seven years later *PHYSICS TODAY* had scheduled a special issue on Soviet physics to appear in November 1975. Issues were to be distributed at a physics show in Moscow late in November. In October it was announced that Sakharov was to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and we speculated that if we carried a story on the award in our November issue, the Soviet authorities in Moscow would probably confiscate the special issue honoring Soviet research. We did and they did.

By January 1980 Sakharov had been exiled to Gorki, and his difficulties began to be covered regularly in these pages as physicists led attempts to free him. To celebrate his 60th birthday and publicize his plight, a conference was held in New York City. We published the talk he would have delivered had he been able to attend (June 1981, page 25).

On 23 December 1986 Sakharov returned to Moscow. The following fall I was in Moscow for the 30th anniversary of Sputnik and got my first glimpse of Sakharov, who showed up for an impromptu astrophysics seminar.

In November 1988 I flew to Boston to attend a reception in Sakharov's honor at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Roald Sagdeev introduced me in Russian: "This is Gloria Lubkin, the editor of *PHYSICS TODAY*." Sakharov shook my hand, smiled and said (in Russian): "I always read it. I love it." I was so overcome that I didn't have the presence of mind to ask him how he was able to get copies of the magazine during all those difficult years.

Our special issue in Sakharov's memory opens on page 26 with the article "Andrei Dmitrievich Sakharov," by Sidney Drell (SLAC) and Lev Okun (Institute of



Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow). The article by Vladimir Ya. Fainberg (Lebedev Institute), "Precursor of Perestroika," begins on page 40. The article by Vitalii Goldanskii (Semenov Institute of Chemical Physics), "Scientist, Thinker, Humanist," begins on page 47. The last article, "Sakharov in His Own Words," by Susan Eisenhower (Eisenhower Group) and Roald Sagdeev (Institute for Space Research, Moscow, and University of Maryland), begins on page 51.

—GLORIA B. LUBKIN