

The International Sakharov Hearings and Transnational Human Rights Activism, 1975–1985

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The International Sakharov Hearings were a series of hearings examining human rights violations in the Soviet bloc. The first session took place in Copenhagen in 1975, the second was held in Rome (1977), the third in Washington, DC (1979), the fourth in Lisbon (1983), the fifth and last in London (1985). A sixth, planned to take place in Bonn in 1986 on Andrei Sakharov's 65th birthday, never materialized.¹ The organizers saw them as crucial for the process initiated by the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. In 1984, Sakharov's stepson-in-law, Efrem Yankelevich, defined their role as follows:

Many Soviet human rights advocates, including Dr. Andrei Sakharov, see the pressure of the world public opinion, including governmental pressure, and pressure coming from international organizations, as an extremely important factor in the struggle to promote liberalizing tendencies in the Soviet society. Thus by educating the public on the human rights situation in the USSR, the Sakharov Hearings help to sustain and direct this pressure, and therefore to promote democratization of the Soviet society.²

The hearings typically had an organizing committee, an executive director, a group of sponsors or advisers, a questioning panel (which would also function as a jury-like institution, issuing a statement at the closing of the hearing), a more or less honorific chairmanship or presidency, witnesses (mostly

1. Efrem Yankelevich to Allan Wynn, 8 June 1985, in Edward Kline Papers, Andrei Sakharov Archives, Harvard University (henceforth Kline Papers); Cornelia Gerstenmaier to Martin Dewhirst, 12 June 1985, in Kline Papers; Dewhirst to Michael Bourdeaux, 11 July 1985, in Kline Papers; Dewhirst to Wynn, 19 September 1985, in Kline Papers; and Dewhirst to Lawrence Elliott, 30 September 1985, in Kline Papers. Many of the Kline Papers used for this article were donated to Kline by Dewhirst.

2. Efrem Yankelevich, "The Fifth Sakharov Hearings in London, Proposal" (draft application sent to the National Endowment for Democracy), 1984, in Kline Papers.

exiles freshly arrived from the Soviet Union who had not testified at a previous Sakharov Hearing), a message from Sakharov (until he was sent into internal exile in Gorky in January 1980) and sometimes also from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a focus on the Soviet Union (though some hearings also allowed discussion of East European issues), an evaluation of Moscow's compliance with the Helsinki Final Act's human rights stipulations, a few recurrent participants (e.g., the "founding father" Øjvind Feldsted Andresen, Mario Corti, Lyudmilla Thorne, Martin Dewhirst, Kronid Lyubarsky, Simon Wiesenthal, and Yankelevich), an invited audience (comprising activists, politicians, experts, intellectuals, prominent Soviet-bloc exiles), special guests (such as Cardinal Josyf Slipyj in 1977, Solidarność representatives in 1983, members of Sakharov's family), coverage by major news outlets, a concluding statement, aspirations to have a political impact at the domestic level and on the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) process, allegedly private but not always transparent funding, a prestigious setting in a Western capital, a subsequent publication, occasionally an institutional aftermath, a duration of two to four days, and a biannual rhythm.³

It all started with the "Moscow Appeal." The publication of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* in Paris on 28 December 1973 put a dramatic spotlight on human rights violations in the Soviet Union. Six weeks later, Solzhenitsyn was arrested and deported to West Germany. On 13 February 1974, one day after the arrest but just before the deportation, a group of Soviet dissidents met in Sakharov's apartment in Moscow and issued a statement, which became known as the "Moscow Appeal." It called for the release of Solzhenitsyn, the publication of his work, and the establishment of an "international public tribunal" to investigate human rights abuses in the Soviet Union.⁴ A biography of Sakharov asserts, somewhat misleadingly, that the appeal was not heard.⁵ The error is understandable, insofar as it reflects the fact that the

3. The organizational set-up and denominations (executive committee, organizing committee, panel, executive director, chairman, president, honorary committee, advisory board, etc.) varied from one hearing to another. In 1984 Yankelevich wrote: "Most, if not all, of the Soviet dissidents and former Soviet human rights activists now residing in the West have participated in the Hearings." Efrim Yankelevich, "The Fifth Sakharov Hearings in London, Proposal," September 1984, in Box 49, Human Rights Watch Archives (HRWA), Columbia University.

4. Andrei Sakharov et al., "An Appeal from Moscow," *A Chronicle of Human Rights in the USSR*, No. 7 (January–February 1974), pp. 12–13; and Andrei Sakharov, *Memoirs* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), p. 406. The signatories of the appeal were Andrei Sakharov, Elena Bonner, Vladimir Maksimov, Mikhail Agurskii, Boris Shragin, Pavel Litvinov, Yurii Orlov, Sergei Zheludkov, Anatolii Marchenko, and Larisa Bogoraz.

5. Richard Lourie, *Sakharov: A Biography* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2002), p. 260. For a more positive assessment of the appeal's resonance in the West, see Friederike Kind-Kovács,

Sakharov Hearings have been largely ignored in the scholarly literature. They are mentioned in passing or in footnotes in various publications.⁶ But readers are generally left to ponder what these hearings were actually about, who instigated them, and what role they played. With one exception—devoted to the sole Copenhagen hearing—no scholarly study has been published about the individual Sakharov Hearings, let alone the whole process.⁷ The slightly greater historical interest in the first hearing reflects the intensity of Cold War controversies in Denmark, where the Copenhagen hearing has been used in heated finger-pointing debates about who were the “good guys” and the “bad guys” during that period.⁸ Historians’ lack of interest can to some extent be explained by the dearth of readily accessible sources. No “Sakharov Hearings archives” exist. Much material may no longer be extant. This no doubt has much to do with the short-lived nature of most of the organizing groups. The one exception, the Danish group, would delight any conspiratorially minded researcher. The organization itself allegedly did not keep its own archives, and the relevant material of three key individuals—Feldstedt Andersen, Ernø

Written Here, Published There: How Underground Literature Crossed the Iron Curtain (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), p. 74; and Sakharov, *Memoirs*, p. 407. On the domestic impact, see Robert Horvath, *The Legacy of Soviet Dissent* (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 23–24; and Marco Clementi, *Storia del dissenso sovietico* (Rome: Odradek Edizioni, 2007), p. 194.

6. See for example: Valentine Lomellini, *L'appuntamento mancato: La sinistra italiana e il dissenso nei regimi comunisti (1968–1989)* (Milan: Mondadori, 2010), p. 153; Sarah B. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 116, 162; Warren I. Cohen, *Profiles in Humanity: The Battle for Peace, Freedom, Equality, and Human Rights* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), pp. 191–192; Richard D. Kahlenberg, *Tough Liberal: Albert Shanker and the Battles over Schools, Unions, Race and Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 226; Gene Sosin, *Sparks of Liberty: An Insider's Memoir of Radio Liberty* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), p. 190; Jean Chiama and Jean-François Soulet, *Histoire de la dissidence* (Paris: Seuil, 1982), pp. 388–389; Charles Rhéaume, “Science et droits de l’homme: Le soutien international à Sakharov, 1968–1989,” Ph.D. Diss., McGill University, Montreal, 1999, pp. 145–146; Cécile Vaissié, “Le combat des dissidents de Russie en Occident,” in Wojciech Falkowski and Antoine Marès, eds., *Intellectuels de l'Est exilés en France* (Paris: Institut d'études slaves, 2011), pp. 143–155, esp. 149–150; Clementi, *Storia del dissenso sovietico*, pp. 241–242; Hans Olav Lahlum, *Haakon Lie: Historien, mytene og mennesket* (Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2009), pp. 551, 768; George Bailey, *The Making of Andrei Sakharov* (London: Allen Lane, 1989), p. 339; and Tomas Venclova and Ellen Hinsey, *Magnetic North: Conversations with Tomas Venclova* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2017), p. 341.

7. Bent Boel, “Menneskerettighedspolitik fra neden? Sakharovhøringen i København, oktober 1975,” *Fund og forskning*, Vol. 50 (2011), pp. 549–588.

8. Bent Boel, “Go East! Danish Contacts with Soviet Bloc Dissidents during the Cold War,” in Ann-Marie Ekengren, Rasmus Mariager, and Poul Villaume, eds., *Northern Europe in the Cold War: East-West Interactions of Security, Culture, and Technology* (Turku: Aleksanteri Cold War Series, 2016), pp. 158–185. In Italy, the Sakharov hearings have belatedly found a posthumous political use. In 2014, supporters of Silvio Berlusconi, under investigation for various criminal offenses, purported to have set up a “Tribunale Dreyfus,” explicitly modeled on the “Tribunale Sacharov,” to investigate what they claimed was the unjust persecution of “today’s Dreyfus.” See “Forza Italia contro la ‘malagiustizia’: Nasce il Tribunale Dreyfus,” *Il Mattinale*, No. 13/05 (13 May 2014), p. 3.

Eszterhás, and Erik Dissing—has vanished under more or less mysterious circumstances.⁹

For various reasons, the Sakharov Hearings deserve our interest. The Copenhagen hearing was an innovation. Never before had such a major international citizens' tribunal been convened to review human rights violations in the Soviet Union. The hearing increased international focus on Sakharov and his human rights agenda, and it took place despite considerable Soviet pressure on the Danish government and other institutions and despite wavering in some political quarters. The five Sakharov Hearings taken as a whole constitute a case of international citizens' tribunals that were original because of their organization, longevity, and political orientation.¹⁰ In four of the five host countries (Italy being the exception), the tribunals resulted in the most important hearings ever organized to examine human rights violations in the Soviet Union. They also offer an interesting example of a sphere for transnational political debate involving a large number of Western groups and individuals supportive of Soviet-bloc dissidents. Key twentieth-century human rights figures such as Sakharov and Wiesenthal were involved in all five hearings, and many prominent exiled Soviet dissidents, as well as some East European dissidents, played important roles.

Throughout the years, the Sakharov Hearings were mostly well covered by the media. In 1984, the Soviet dissident and historian Lyudmilla Alekseeva hailed the International Sakharov Hearings as “one of the most established tools for informing the West” about the human rights situation in the USSR.¹¹ In 1985, former U.S. CSCE Ambassador Max M. Kampelman paid tribute to the “extraordinarily vital role that the Sakharov Hearings have played in recent years.”¹² Wiesenthal devoted part of his memoirs to his participation

9. Hans Kristian Neerskov, interview, Bagsværd, Denmark, 2 May 2007. Øjvind Feldsted Andresen's sister-in-law Mikki Andresen and Ernő Eszterhás's son, Peter Eszterhás, respectively recall that Feldsted Andresen's and Eszterhás's private archives were removed by a group of people whose identity they did not know or no longer remember. Mikki Andresen, telephone interview, February 2007; and Peter Eszterhás, interview, Copenhagen, 2 March 2007. Erik Dissing's papers have vanished except for his agendas for 1967–1973 and 1976. Agendas for the two years relevant to the Copenhagen hearing, 1974 and 1975, are missing.

10. On international citizens' tribunals, see Arthur Jay Klinghoffer and Judith Apter Klinghoffer, *International Citizens' Tribunals: Mobilizing Public Opinion to Advance Human Rights* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); and Arthur W. Blaser, “How to Advance Human Rights without Really Trying: An Analysis of Nongovernmental Tribunals,” *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 14 (1992), p. 348.

11. Lyudmilla Alexeyeva, “On the Sakharov Hearings,” *Russia*, No. 9 (1984), p. 55.

12. Kampelman to Wynn, 14 January 1985, in Folder “International Sakharov Hearings (5th Session, London), Correspondence,” Box 25, Human Rights Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

in “the famous” Sakharov Hearings.¹³ The experienced *Guardian* journalist Hella Pick later stated,

By keeping Sakharov’s plight in the forefront of international attention, the International Sakharov Hearings certainly helped to convince Gorbachev, newly installed as President, that his credibility in the West demanded freedom for Sakharov as one of the early moves of his Presidency.¹⁴

All of this justifies scrutiny of these hearings as a special and presumably significant case of transnational human rights activism.

The Copenhagen Hearing: Origins

The timing of the “Moscow Appeal” seemed auspicious. It fit in neatly with the growth of dissidence in the Soviet Union since the mid-1960s, the concomitant increased Western interest (at state and non-state levels) in dissidents and refuseniks, the renewal of the tradition of “international citizens’ tribunals” begun by the Russell Tribunals in the 1960s, and the rise of human rights as an issue in international relations as demonstrated during the negotiations leading to the Helsinki Final Act.¹⁵ What may seem more surprising is that the only country in which the “Moscow Appeal” was really heard and acted upon was Denmark.¹⁶ The country lacked various factors that typically encouraged support for and interest in Soviet-bloc dissidents, such as numerous politically active Soviet-bloc exiles, a strong Communist Party, and significant Trotskyist groups.¹⁷ Nevertheless, Denmark is where the story of the Sakharov Hearings begins.

13. Simon Wiesenthal, *Recht, nicht Rache: Erinnerungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1988), pp. 446–450.

14. Hella Pick, *Simon Wiesenthal: A Life in Search of Justice* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996), p. 239.

15. Philipp Gassert, “Das Russell-Tribunal von 1966/67: ‘Blaming and Shaming’ und die Nürnberger Prinzipien,” in Norbert Frei and Annette Weinke, eds., *Toward a New Moral World Order? Menschenrechtspolitik und Völkerrecht seit 1945* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2013), pp. 149–163; and Daniel Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 58–88.

16. The appeal did gain notice in other countries, and in West Germany the Internationale Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte circulated a petition that gathered many signatures. But nowhere else were attempts made to set up a tribunal as requested by the “Moscow Appeal.”

17. Boel, “Go East”; Bent Boel, “Western Trotskyists and Subversive Travelling in Soviet Bloc Countries, 1956–1989,” *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (December 2017), pp. 237–254; and Bent Boel, “French Support for Eastern European Dissidence, 1968–1989: Approaches and Controversies,” in Poul Villaume and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *Perforating the Iron Curtain. European Détente, Transatlantic Relations and the Cold War* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2010), pp. 215–241.

On 29 June 1974, the Common Committee of East Exiles in Denmark wrote to the Praesidium of the Folketinget, the Danish parliament, referring to the “Moscow Appeal,” and suggesting that a tribunal be set up in Christiansborg Palace, the parliament building, to discuss human rights violations in the Soviet Union.¹⁸ After lengthy debates, the suggestion was accepted in November 1974, when the country was still ruled by a center-right coalition led by Venstre, the liberal party. Parliamentary leaders then reaffirmed the go-ahead after the January 1975 elections, which handed power to a Social Democratic minority government. The hearing finally took place in October 1975.¹⁹

Who Organized the Copenhagen Hearing?

The proposal emanated from the largely unknown Common Committee of East Exiles, which had been created in 1969 by what its founder called a “microscopic group,” a handful of Danes involved in various anti-Communist activities working together with another handful of Soviet-bloc exiles.²⁰ The driving force behind the initiative was Feldsted Andresen. But each member of the committee had his (initially they were all men) own agenda, interests, and trajectory, of which little is known. Among the myriad groups, networks, and other entities frequented by these people were the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN), the Assembly of Captive European Nations (ACEN), the World Anti-Communist League (WACL), the European Freedom Council (EFC), and an informal circle gathered around Ole Bjørn Kraft, a conservative leader and minister of foreign affairs in the early 1950s who subsequently got involved in groups such as ABN, EFC, WACL, ACEN, and Interdoc A/S.²¹ Feldsted Andresen, officially second in command but de facto leader of the group, had a past in the Danish resistance during World War II and later took

18. Feldsted Andresen to the Praesidium of the Folketing, 29 June 1974, in Folder “38.C.1, Fællesrådet for Østeksiler i Danmark 1974–1975,” Folketingets Arkiv (Archives of the Danish Parliament, FA). The “Copenhagen” section of my discussion here draws largely on Bent Boel, “Menneskerettighedspolitik fra neden? Sakharovhøringen i København, oktober 1975,” *Fund og Forskning*, Vol. 50 (2011), pp. 549–588.

19. For a detailed account of these negotiations see Boel, “Menneskerettighedspolitik fra neden.”

20. Øjvind Feldsted Andresen, “Vejen til Glasnost,” *Berlingske tidende* (Copenhagen), 30 June 1989, p. I:11. Initially, there were perhaps ten; by 1979 there were six.

21. For more on Interdoc, see Giles Scott-Smith, *Western Anti-Communism and the Interdoc Network: Cold War Internationale* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). The relationship between Interdoc and Interdoc A/S has not been elucidated.

part in Danish anti-Communist networks.²² Erik Dissing was the youngest and was farthest to the right—in the late 1960s and early 1970s he privately professed Nazi sympathies. He supported all kinds of groups and activities, including the South Vietnamese regime, the Greek military junta, and the National Alliance of Russian Solidarists (Narodno-Trudovoi Soyuz; NTS).²³ He had contacts with far-right elements around Europe and with the Danish secret services. At the same time, he tried to pursue a career in more solidly established political parties, starting in the Conservative Youth, moving to Venstre, and then joining the right-wing populist Progress Party.²⁴ Preben Kühl was another far-right activist. By the mid-1970s he was a lieutenant colonel in the Danish Defense Research Establishment. He had participated in activities with the Danish far-right activist Hans Hertel, a link that allegedly prompted him to begin a one-year self-exile in the United States around 1970 after an action went wrong.²⁵ Eszterhás and August Koern were active in Hungarian and Estonian exile politics. The former almost became minister in a Hungarian exile government after 1956, and the latter was minister of foreign affairs

22. Feldsted Andresen to Koern, 21 July 1968, in August Koern Papers, Baltiska Arkivet, Riksarkivet (Swedish National Archives, SNA); Øjvind Feldsted Andresen, "Oversigt over modstandsaktiviteter under besættelsen 1940–45," in Erstatningsrådet, Rigsarkivet (Danish National Archives); and Poul Dalgaard, "Sabotage der var nær ved at koste 300 livet," *Ekstra bladet* (Copenhagen), 20 December 1963, p. 28. Feldsted Andresen had been close to the prominent Social Democrat Urban Hansen since 1949, the very year Hansen founded the social democratic Arbejdernes Informationscentral, an anti-Communist propaganda and intelligence center. He also claimed to be close to Jens Lillelund (leader of the World War II resistance group Holger Danske and allegedly involved in U.S.-financed intelligence activities after the end of the war). See Feldsted Andresen to MPs of the Social Democratic Party, 13 October 1974, in Folder "38.C.1," FA. Among Feldsted Andresen's international contacts in the 1960s was the French former Socialist turned far-right anti-Communist activist Suzanne Labin, with whom Feldsted Andresen worked closely. See Feldsted Andresen to Jay Lovestone, 19 April 1969, in Box 350, Jay Lovestone Papers, Hoover Institution Archives (HIA). The nature of Feldsted Andresen's political activities prior to 1969 remains unclear. His profession (in the late 1960s/early 1970s) has variously been described as machine manufacturer, lamp producer, and ophthalmologist. For the last, see "Østflygtninge i Danmark ønsker Solsjenitsyn-høring," *Berlingske tidende*, 3 September 1974, p. 1:7. Feldsted Andresen allegedly maintained a friendly relationship with the Chilean embassy after 1973. Bernard Gilland, interview, Copenhagen, 6 August 2018.

23. The NTS was a rightwing, Soviet-exile organization with headquarters in Frankfurt am Main. See Bernd Stöver, *Die Befreiung vom Kommunismus: Amerikanische Liberation Policy im Kalten Krieg 1947–1991* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2002), pp. 519–536; and Benjamin Tromly, "The Making of a Myth: The National Labor Alliance, Russian Émigrés, and Cold War Intelligence Activities," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Winter 2016), pp. 80–111.

24. Agenda and notes of Erik Dissing, 1967–1973, Erik Dissing Papers. Dissing was one of the Conservative Youth's two full-time employees. He was excluded because he was deemed too extreme. Berit Dissing, interview, Copenhagen, 24 November 2013; Tue Rohrsted, telephone interview, 17 February 2014; and Agenda, 1969, in Dissing Papers.

25. Preben Kühl, interview, Hillerød, Denmark, 23 September 2011; and Osbrandt to Kühl (Forsvarets Forskningstjeneste, Østerbrogades Kaserne, Copenhagen), 12 January 1976, in Preben Kühl Papers.

in the Estonian government-in-exile from 1964 to 1981 and was ACEN's representative in Denmark from 1954 to 1972.²⁶ The exiles associated with the Common Committee were generally elderly and had come to the West in the 1940s or 1950s. What they all had in common was a fierce anti-Communism; unbridled activism; membership in small, sometimes secretive and informal groups and networks; and, to various degrees, international contacts. The focus of the Danish group members, however, was on domestic politics.²⁷ From the outset the committee stated that its key goal was to fight domestic left-wing propaganda.²⁸ Dissing partook in these endeavors, which landed him in the right-wing populist Progress Party, for which he stood as a candidate during the parliamentary elections in 1973.²⁹ Hardly anything was known about the committee at the time of its creation, and perhaps even less was known five years later because it did almost nothing to publicize itself. Journalists were struck by the secretiveness of the group, which fed rumors and fueled accusations of "crypto-Nazism."³⁰

By February 1974 this tiny, obscure group with a dubious reputation seemed destined for oblivion. Its members were isolated anti-Communists in search of a mission. Then came the "Moscow Appeal." Feldsted Andresen was apparently the one who got the idea of holding a hearing in Christiansborg Palace. He was probably inspired by the Frankfurt am Main-based Internationale Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte (IGfM), which had circulated a

26. Peter Kyhn, "Danmark og det baltiske spørgsmål 1940–1991," M.A. Thesis, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, 2000, pp. 51–52; Pauli Heikkilä, "Cold War in Margin in Denmark: August Koern as the Representative of Assembly of Captive European Nations in Copenhagen" (paper presented at the 29th Congress of Nordic Historians, Aalborg, 15–18 August 2017); Eszterhás, interview; and Lars Fredrik Stöcker, *Bridging the Baltic Sea: Networks of Resistance and Opposition during the Cold War Era* (New York: Lexington Books, 2018), pp. 147–148.

27. The key individuals in the Common Committee of East Exiles (in 1975 renamed "The Organizing Committee for the Sakharov Hearing") were Eszterhás (the nominal chairman, in line with the view that the chairman ought to be a Soviet-bloc exile), Feldsted Andresen (officially second in command but the de facto leader), Dissing (secretary general of the committee and in charge of financial issues), Bernard Karawatski (whose linguistic skills occasionally gave him an important role as a translator/interpreter), and Kühl. Among those who joined during the preparatory phase were Osbrandt, Neerskov, and Bernard Gilland.

28. Bent Nørgaard, "Propaganda skal bekæmpes med fakta," *Berlingske tidende*, 23 November 1969, p. 3.

29. Election ad for Erik Dissing, n.d., in Folder "Fællesrådet for Øst-Eksiler i Danmark," Koern Papers, SNA.

30. Frank Osvald, "Eksilpolitisk kold krig i Danmark," *Information* (Copenhagen), 10 December 1969, p. 4; August Koern, "Fællesrådet for Østeksil," *Information*, 20–21 December 1969, p. 9; Mads Nissen Styrk, "Erhard i tvivlsomt selskab," *Ekstra bladet*, 13 September 1974, p. 14; Feldsted Andresen to MPs of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), 13 October 1974, in Folder "38.C.1," FA; Feldsted Andresen to Helge Hjortdal, 3 November 1974, in Folder "38.C.1," FA; and Feldsted Andresen to Kühl, 27 April 1975, in Kühl Papers.

petition to support the appeal.³¹ The Danes, however, decided to give the idea a twist. The signatories of the Moscow Appeal wanted to “investigate the crimes described in The Gulag Archipelago,” but Feldsted Andresen and his friends swapped the somewhat distant past for a decidedly more contemporary—and politically more controversial—focus on the post-1965 period.³² Once the committee had decided to organize a hearing, its activity increased considerably, and it undertook to expand its international network. Having earlier defined itself as an anti-Communist group, it now switched to a language of human rights.³³ Despite remaining tiny and secretive and still lacking proper contemporary contacts in the Soviet bloc, a few new individuals joined it, including two young exiled Poles; the leader of the Bible-smuggling group Danish Europe Mission (DEM), Hans Kristian Neerskov; and a Dane of Russian descent, Lyudmilla Osbrandt.³⁴ Neerskov’s network facilitated the subsequent funding of the hearing by various Scandinavian Bible-smuggling groups. Osbrandt soon became the secretary and the “soul of the Copenhagen group.”³⁵ In July 1975, after more than a year’s planning, and less than three months before the hearing was supposed to take place, Eszterhás worried that everything might have to be canceled because of lack of funding.³⁶ A month later the designated chair, Ib Thyregod, expressed similar concerns. In September, however, the financial problem was solved, and the hearing was again on track to take place as planned in October.

31. Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte e.V., “Moskauer Appell,” February 1974, in Folder “Sakharov høringen København 1975,” Koern Papers, SNA; Feldsted Andresen to Kühl, 13 March 1979, in Kühl Papers; Kühl to Feldsted Andresen, 16 March 1979, in Kühl Papers; Leonid Leszcynski and Herbert Binsky, “International henvendelse,” *Berlingske tidende*, 17 June 1974, p. II:7; and Preben Kühl, “Moskva-appel,” *Berlingske tidende*, 30 January 2001, p. I:17.

32. Sakharov, *Memoirs*, p. 406; Feldsted Andresen to Praesidium of the Folketing, 29 June 1974, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; and Arrangørkomiteen for Den Internationale Sakharov-Høring, ed., *Sakharov-Høringen: Dokumenter om menneskerettighederne i Sovjet 1965–75* (n.p.: n. pub., 1975), n.p.

33. Morten Sørensen, “Forsøget på objektivitet førte til udvisning af medlem af spørgepanelet,” *Information*, 18–19 October 1975, p. 2; and Arrangørkomiteen, *Sakharov-Høringen*, p. 10.

34. Bent Boel, “Denmark: International Solidarity and Trade Union Multilateralism,” in Idesbald Goddeeris, ed., *Solidarity with Solidarity: Western European Trade Unions and the Polish Crisis, 1980–1982* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), pp. 219–242, esp. 222. On DEM, see Bent Boel, “Bible Smuggling and Human Rights in the Cold War,” in Luc van Dongen, Stéphanie Roulin, and Giles Scott-Smith, eds., *Transnational Anti-Communism and the Cold War: Agents, Activities, and Networks* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 263–272; and Hans Kristian Neerskov, *Sejrende martyrer* (Copenhagen: Doxa Forlaget, 2004), p. 116.

35. Rainer Hildebrandt to Corti, 28 April 1978, in Mario Corti Papers.

36. “Referat af møde angående Sakharov-høringen hos Høeg Hagen den 21. juli 1975,” in Viggo Fischer Papers. By 1 July 1975 the organizers claimed to have gathered 22,680 Danish kroner (DKK) (the budgeted expenses amounted to 200,000 DKK). See Feldsted Andresen, Circular letter No. 5, July 1975, in Folder “1.1.2. Korrespondenz zum Hearing,” Box 1, “Sakharov Hearing 1975,” Simon Wiesenthal Archives (SWA).

A 40,000-Deutschmark donation from an unidentified West German source no doubt helped, and some of the Scandinavian Bible-smuggling groups may also have contributed funding. Finally, some reports indicate that the group received funding from the U.S. embassy in Copenhagen, from the American Federation of Labor–Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), and possibly from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Allegedly, Feldstedt Andresen regularly went to the U.S. embassy and also met with AFL-CIO leader Irving Brown.³⁷ Although the full story of the funding remains to be elucidated, it is clear that the Copenhagen hearing benefited from a substantial amount of non-Danish funding.³⁸

The Copenhagen Hearing: The Domestic Political Battle

Of the five Sakharov Hearings the first caused the most prolonged domestic political debate, both contemporarily and subsequently. Originally proposed in June 1974, the hearing did not take place until sixteen months later. Why was there such a long delay? The Danish Social Democrats are often assumed to have been the main culprits, but the reality is rather different.³⁹

What made the Copenhagen hearing so controversial was the organizers' desire that it take place in the parliament building, Christiansborg Palace. For this to happen, the Praesidium of the Folketing had to give its go-ahead. It had done so twice in the recent past: once for a hearing devoted to the Vietnam War (an opening session of a Russell Tribunal in October 1972) and another for a meeting devoted to Chile after the military coup that had removed the

37. On AFL-CIO funding, see Neerskov, interview; and Brown to Bonner, 10 January 1979 (misdated 1978), in Box 14, Houghton Library. On regular visits to and funding by the U.S. embassy, see Kühl, interview. On CIA funding, see Gilland, interview. Brown was a key figure in the AFL-CIO's anti-Communist activities in Europe during the Cold War, and he was closely associated with the CIA. See Frances Stoner Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 2000), pp. 74–75; and Douglas Valentine, *The Strength of the Wolf: The Secret History of America's War on Drugs* (London: Verso, 2006), p. 270.

38. "Rapport af møde den 28.5.1976," in Kühl Papers; "Rapport af møde den 24.10.1975," in Kühl Papers; and "Referat af møde i planlægningsudvalget den 25.8.1975," in Kühl Papers. Neerskov claims to have been regularly in contact with the CIA whenever he went to the United States, which he started doing in the early 1970s. His trips there increased from 1975, when he established a U.S. outpost—Mission Possible—of his Bible-smuggling group (Danish Europe Mission). Neerskov, interview.

39. The Social Democrats are singled out in Feldstedt Andresen, "Flygtningenes tribunal," *Berlingske tidende*, 11 September 1974, p. II:5; and Neerskov, interview. See also Bent Jensen's comments in Bent Blüdnikow and Mikael Jalving, "Den uartige systemkritiker," *Berlingske tidende*, 3 February 2007, pp. II:18–19; and Bent Jensen, *Ulve, får og vogtere: Den kolde krig i Danmark 1945–1991*, Vol. 1 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2014), p. 552.

democratically elected Salvador Allende (the so-called Chile tribunal in June 1974).⁴⁰ The Common Committee argued that the two hearings had resulted in a political imbalance that should be corrected. That is, after two hearings devoted to “Western” crimes it was only fair that a hearing should be devoted to “Eastern” crimes. The parallel the committee sought to draw was not perfect, however. Only the opening session of the Vietnam hearing was held in Christiansborg, with the remainder taking place in Roskilde. Moreover, both hearings were sponsored by the biggest party in parliament, the Social Democratic Party. The Bureau of the Folketing, which initially refused to host the Sakharov Hearing, emphasized that it had been very reluctant to accept the earlier hearings because “Christiansborg by lending out rooms for such purposes gave the hearings an ‘official Danish stamp of approval.’”⁴¹ That, of course, was exactly what the Common Committee of East Exiles was seeking.

Two other arguments spurred opposition to holding the hearing in Christiansborg Palace. First, left-wing politicians and activists, concerned about the allegedly dubious nature of the Common Committee, were skeptical.⁴² Similar misgivings were also found in more mainstream circles, voiced for instance by the Chief Rabbi Bent Melchior and the former World War II resistance leader Jens Lillelund.⁴³ Second, fear of antagonizing the Soviet Union induced the Danish Foreign Ministry to advise the Bureau of the Folketing against holding the hearing in Christiansborg.⁴⁴ Such worries were paramount for the center-right Venstre, the mainstream party that most adamantly opposed the Sakharov Hearing. The U.S. embassy in Copenhagen cabled the State Department that Venstre was “strongly opposed being sensitive presumably to the Government’s relations with the Soviet Union.”⁴⁵ Conversely, the Social

40. The opening session of the Vietnam Tribunal was introduced by a speech by Danish Prime Minister Anker Jørgensen, and this prominent sponsorship further exacerbated the already tense relationship between Denmark and the United States in 1972–1973. See Dansk Institut for Internationale Studier (DIIS), *Danmark under den kolde krig*, Vol. 2 (Copenhagen: DIIS, 2005), pp. 700, 733; and Thorsten Borring Olesen and Poul Villaume, *I blokodelingens tegn 1945–1972* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2005), pp. 685, 693.

41. Christian People’s Party, Press release, 2 October 1974, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA. For details, see Boel, “Menneskerettighedspolitik fra neden.”

42. “Sakharov-høring med huller i spørgepanelet,” *Jyllands posten*, 30 September 1975, p. 4.

43. Bent Melchior, interview, Copenhagen, 10 March 2014; and Bent Melchior, email to author, 2 June 2014. The organizers wanted Melchior as a sponsor, but he declined. See “The Honorary Committee of Protectors of Andrei Sakharov,” n.d., in Kühl Papers.

44. Jespersen to Karl Skytte, Note, 9 August 1974, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; and Koesgaard-Pedersen, Note, 19 August 1974, in Box 124, UM.5.D.30.A, Udenrigsministeriets Arkiv (UMA, Danish Foreign Ministry Archives).

45. Telegram (Tel.) No. 3317, American Embassy (AmEmb) (Crowe) to Secretary of State (SecState), 25 November 1974, in National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Citations from

Democratic Party was first among the major parties to give the hearing a green light.⁴⁶ Despite this, some have pointed to the Sakharov Hearing in Copenhagen as evidence that the Danish Social Democrats were “soft” on Communism or at least “soft” when it came to criticizing the Soviet Union. In this particular case, however, the main “softies” among the mainstream parties in Denmark were members of the Liberal Party.

Soviet Pressure

Previous Danish criticism of Soviet human rights violations had triggered fierce Soviet rebuttals, and the Danish Foreign Ministry worried about possible negative repercussions for bilateral relations if the Sakharov Hearing went ahead. Such concern was understandable. The Soviet State Security Committee (KGB) took credit for several actions against the planned event.⁴⁷ The organizers of the hearing later asserted that they were subjected to threats, sabotage, phone tapping, misinformation, and attempted infiltration.⁴⁸

Moreover, Moscow exerted constant pressure on various Danish authorities, asking them, sometimes quite rudely, to prevent the hearing from taking place.⁴⁹ The Soviet ambassador even took up the issue twice with the prime minister. The second time, on 16 September 1975, the ambassador reiterated the view that the hearing amounted to “crude interference in Soviet domestic affairs” and violated the Helsinki Final Act. Danish Prime Minister Anker Jørgensen pondered the issue and declared:

NARA here and in subsequent footnotes are available online at <https://aad.archives.gov/aad/index.jsp>. See also Nathalie Lind to Knud Enggaard, 3 October 1975, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; Minutes, Meeting of Praesidium, 21 November 1974, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; and Minutes, Meeting of Praesidium, 6 October 1975, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA.

46. Minutes, Meeting of Praesidium, 23 October 1975, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA.

47. Morten Heiberg, *KGBs kontakt- og agentnet i Danmark: PET-Kommissionens beretning*, Vol. 13 (Copenhagen: Ministry of Justice, 2009), pp. 54–55; Regin Schmidt, *PET's overvågning af politiske partier 1945–1989*, PET-Kommissionens beretning, Vol. 7 (Copenhagen: Ministry of Justice, 2009), pp. 242–244; DIIS, *Danmark under den kolde krig*, Vol. 2, p. 325; and Joshua Rubenstein and Alexander Gribanov, eds., *The KGB File of Andrei Sakharov* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 21–24.

48. Jens Thomsen, “Sakharov-høringen udsat for trusler og sabotage,” *Berlingske tidende*, 14 July 1975, p. I:5; and Jens Thomsen, “Sakharov-vidner skræmmes med overfald og trusler,” *Berlingske tidende*, 12 October 1975, p. I:1.

49. Friis-Møller to Hjortdal, 3 January 1975, in Box 125, UM.5.D.30.A, UMA; Prime Minister's Office (Gersing) to Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (UM), 18 August 1975, in Box 125, UM.5.D.30.A, UMA; Despatch No. 508, Danish Embassy in Moscow to UM, 10 October 1975, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; Tel. No. 393, Danish Embassy to UM, 12 November 1975, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; and Nils Morten Udgaard, “Tass er vred over tribunal i Folketinget om Sovjet,” *Politiken* (Copenhagen), 24 December 1974.

In principle it was right, that there should be no interference in the domestic affairs of other states, but sometimes it was reasonable that countries did voice themselves about the state of affairs in other countries when human rights were violated. The Prime Minister could, for instance, inform the Ambassador that the Danish government today has issued a statement concerning the capital punishments meted out in Spain.⁵⁰

Jørgensen's final remark put the debate about interference to rest, as the Soviet ambassador conceded that Moscow, too, intended to condemn the executions ordered by Francisco Franco's regime.⁵¹ Contrary to what has been asserted, implied, or taken for granted by some, there is so far no convincing evidence that Soviet pressure had any significant impact on the attitude of Danish political parties, decision-makers, or media outlets toward the Sakharov Hearing in Copenhagen.⁵² The one important exception was the Liberal Party's negative stance toward the hearing, a position motivated by fear of how the Soviet Union might react.

The Bumble Bee That Flew

The International Sakharov Hearing in Copenhagen was apparently an amazing and unlikely success story: a tiny, obscure, allegedly dubious group, whose members were unknown but generally well to the right of the Danish political mainstream and who initially lacked parliamentary support, had managed to gain significant establishment support and win the rare privilege of holding a hearing in the parliament building on a theme likely to strain the country's relationship with the Soviet Union. It took a combination of audacity, cunning, deceitfulness, bullying, luck, and a few useful contacts to make this happen.

The organizers shrewdly identified Christiansborg Palace as the key to success. They had a friendly contact—increasingly a partner—in Jens Thomsen, a journalist for the conservative newspaper *Berlingske tidende*.⁵³ He successfully conveyed the impression to his readers that a tiny group constituted a

50. Prime Minister's Office (Gersing) to UM, 16 September 1975, in Box 125, UM.5.D.30.A, UMA. Unless indicated otherwise, all non-English quotations have been translated by me.

51. *Ibid.*

52. Heiberg, *KGBs kontakt- og agentnet i Danmark*, pp. 54–55; Schmidt, *PET's overvågning af politiske partier*, pp. 242–244; and Jensen, *Ulve, får og vogtere*, pp. 557–562.

53. Feldsted Andresen, "Forslag fra Jens Thomsen til Sakharov Komiteen," 31 June 1979, in Kühl Papers; "Møde den 21.8. 1980," in Kühl Papers; and Jens Thomsen, "Dansk hyldest til de forfulgtes talsmand," *Berlingske tidende*, 27 September 1979, p. I:5.

large organization representing 6,000 Soviet-bloc exiles in Denmark. He also vividly described the righteous outrage and shock allegedly felt in the exile community after the Folketing's initial refusal to host a hearing that almost no one had heard about, thus triggering a wider media debate.⁵⁴ Thanks to this decisive assistance from a newspaper that had helped launch the Common Committee of Exiles by hosting its press conference in 1969, the organizers managed to mobilize support from two small centrist parties, the Center Democrats and the Christian People's Party.⁵⁵ The members of these parties turned out to be effective lobbyists. They organized a petition in support of the hearing and collected signatures among their fellow members of parliament (MPs), thus putting pressure on the Bureau of the Folketing. The organizers deftly used the argument of political balance and fairness. They misleadingly created the impression that they had the support of organizations that were blissfully unaware of the project (such as Amnesty International and the International Confederation of Trade Unions).⁵⁶ They sold the planned event as something it was not; namely, a literary hearing in which the witnesses would primarily be exiled Soviet writers, such as Andrei Sinyavsky, Pavel Litvinov, Valery Chalidze, Vladimir Maksimov, Anatolii Radygin, Joseph Brodsky, Zhores Medvedev, Viktor Nekrasov, and Solzhenitsyn—none of whom showed up at the hearing. They threatened to launch a campaign if the Folketing did not budge.⁵⁷ Once permission to hold the hearing at Christiansborg was granted, they managed to obtain broader support by sending out letters again making it appear to be something it was not—an official Danish parliamentary hearing—thereby convincing several well-known and respected Danish and non-Danish personalities to join “The honorary committee of protectors of Andrei Sakharov” (although some of these celebrities may have been unaware of the group's existence).⁵⁸ The organizers secured the

54. “Østflygtninge i Danmark ønsker Solsjenitsyn-høring,” p. I:7. See also Jens Thomsen, “Sakharov til de danske MFere: Hjælp Sovjets mange forfulgte,” *Berlingske tidende*, 22 November 1974, p. I:1.

55. Nørgaard, “Propaganda skal bekæmpes med fakta.” *Berlingske Tidende* also hosted the Copenhagen group's phone conversation with Sakharov on 22 November 1974.

56. “Proposal list for a preparing-meeting [*sic*] in Copenhagen for a public international tribunal in defence of human rights in the USSR,” n.d., in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; Minutes of Meeting of Praesidium, 16 October 1974, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; and Jespersen to Hjortdal, 15 October 1975, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA.

57. Note (concerning letter from Common Committee of East Exiles), November 1974, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; and Feldsted Andresen to Hjortdal, 3 November 1974, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA.

58. In 1979, Arthur Koestler wrote, “I cannot remember having joined any Danish Committee.” Koestler to Thorne, 12 June 1979, in Box 14, Houghton Library. See also Feldsted Andresen to Jens Otto Krag, March 1975, in Jens Otto Krag Papers, Box 2 (“Sakharov høringen”), Arbejderbevægelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv (Danish Labor Movement's Library and Archive), Copenhagen.

acceptance of Thyregod, a Supreme Court barrister and former MP for Venstre, to chair the hearing.⁵⁹ Although the organizers initially planned to call the event a “tribunal,” they switched to the more neutral “hearing,” and after initially contemplating naming the event after Solzhenitsyn, they finally opted for Sakharov.⁶⁰ Taking ownership of the name of the Soviet regime’s “public enemy number one” was no doubt decisive for the success of the subsequent endeavors.⁶¹ More than any other Soviet dissident, Sakharov had the potential to become a figure around whom human rights activists in the West could rally.⁶² Once the parliamentary leadership had given its go-ahead to the hearing, Sakharov voiced his support during a phone conversation with Feldsted Andresen, affirming that the hearing was “extremely important” and giving permission for it to bear his name.⁶³ Subsequently, Sakharov allowed his wife, Elena Bonner, to get involved in the preparatory discussions. (She met with the Copenhagen group in September 1975 in Florence.) Other international contacts were established when Niels Schoubye went to London to meet Peter Reddaway and brought back material from Amnesty International to be exhibited during the hearing.⁶⁴ Suspicions of “crypto-Nazism” were successfully dismissed as fruits of KGB propaganda and manipulation.⁶⁵ To help deflect suspicions and increase the hearing’s legitimacy, the organizers sought to win over prominent Social Democrats, explicitly emulating what they saw as earlier Communist endeavors to manipulate leaders from that same political tradition.⁶⁶ Social Democratic sponsors (such as former prime minister Jens Otto Krag and the chairman of the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions,

59. Feldsted Andresen to Bureau of the Folketing, 17 February 1975, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA.

60. Minutes of the Meeting of the Praesidium, 21 November 1974, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; Christian People’s Party, press release, 16 October 1974, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; Christian People’s Party, press release, 23 October 1974, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; Ib Larsen to Praesidium of the Folketing, 8 September 1974, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; Feldsted Andresen to Skytte, 14 November 1974, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; Feldsted Andresen, “Flygtningenes tribunal”; and “Østflygtninge i Danmark ønsker Solsjenitsyn-høring,” p. I:7.

61. Rubenstein and Gribanov, *The KGB File of Andrei Sakharov*, pp. 21–24.

62. On the international campaign to support Sakharov, see Charles Rhéaume, *Sakharov: Science, morale et politique* (Laval: Presses de l’Université Laval, 2004), pp. 33–39. On the differences between Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn, see Andrei Sakharov, “In Answer to Solzhenitsyn,” *The New York Review of Books*, 13 June 1974, pp. 3–5. For a semi-fictional account of the differences between the two men, see Leonid Tsyplin, *Summer in Baden-Baden* (New York: New Directions, 2001), pp. 54–57.

63. Thomsen, “Sakharov til de danske MFere.” See also Minutes of the Meeting of the Praesidium, 21 November 1974, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA.

64. Niels Schoubye, interview, Vanløse, Denmark, 14 March 2014.

65. Feldsted Andresen to MPs of the Social Democratic Party, 13 October 1974, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA.

66. Feldsted Andresen to Kühl, 27 April 1975.

Thomas Nielsen) were successfully courted. The committee also distanced itself from its more sulfurous friends, such as Hans Hetler, editor of *Minut*, a Danish weekly named after the French far-right weekly *Minute*.⁶⁷ Finally, they switched from a confrontational, Cold-Warrior, anti-Communist rhetoric to the language of human rights. All of this helped them recruit witnesses and members for the hearing's questioning panel.⁶⁸

The Copenhagen Hearing: Chronicle of a Fiasco Foretold?

Solzhenitsyn seems to have been skeptical early on, as were other exiled Soviet writers, who all stayed away.⁶⁹ Bonner was allowed to go to the West for an eye operation in Italy in 1975, and in early September she met Feldsted Andresen in Florence, together with Cornelia Gerstenmaier, Maksimov, Zinaida Shakhovskaya, and Victor Sparre. When Bonner saw the draft program, she was horrified and requested the removal of several witnesses whom she considered unfit because of their extremist views, unethical stands, or general untrustworthiness. Her advice was politely listened to and then ignored. This, allegedly, induced Maksimov and other Soviet émigrés to stay away. Likewise, when Wiesenthal heard that former Nazi collaborators had been invited, he threatened to boycott the hearing. However, in the end he did participate.⁷⁰

67. Feldsted Andresen asked Kühl to be cautious in his dealings with the far-right activist Hetler: "I have absolutely nothing against this newspaper or its editor, but when we have gotten the Social Democrats as sponsors and *Minut* is involved in a court case against [the Social Democratic Prime Minister] Anker Jørgensen," any publicized cooperation between Kühl and Hetler or *Minut* in such a delicate moment could seriously compromise the cause of the Sakharov hearing. Feldsted Andresen to Kühl, 27 April 1975; and Hetler to Neerskov, 11 January 1976, in Kühl Papers; and Neerskov to Hetler, 8 January 1976, in Kühl Papers. Dissing remained a key figure until late 1975. "Opstilling over Sakharov Høringen per 1.12. 1975"; "Rapport af møde den 31.10. 1975"; and "Rapport af møde den 24.10. 1975," all in Kühl Papers.

68. Arrangørkomiteen, *Sakharov-Høringen*; and Nørgaard, "Propaganda skal bekæmpes med fakta." Within the group, the tone remained strongly anti-Communist. In 1979, Kühl denounced the "Holocaust happening right now . . . in the Eastern European communist dictatorships." Kühl to Feldsted Andresen, 16 March 1979.

69. Tel. No. 788, AmEmb to SecState, 18 March 1975, in NARA, available online at <https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=207864&dt=2476&cdl=1345>.

70. Corti, Note, n.d., in Corti Papers; Osbrandt, "Rapport af ferieophold i Paris fra den 8.4. 1979," in Kühl Papers; Shakhovskaya, "I kongeriget Danmark," n.d. (most probably a translation of an article published in *Novoje Russkoje Slovo*, 1 January 1976), in Kühl Papers; and Victor Sparre, *Lågan i mörkret: Kampen för de mänskliga rättigheterna i Sovjetunionen—Som jag har sett den* (Uppsala: Pro Veritate, 1983), p. 100. Maksimov's application for a visa was rejected by the Danish authorities because it was handed in too late. Maksimov complained to the press that this decision was politically motivated. However, the Danish organizers of the hearing accepted that the visa denial was justified.

The hearing took place on 17–19 October 1975. It seemed to start under a lucky star. Through what may or may not have been a coincidence, Sakharov was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize just a week before the hearing.⁷¹ From the outset, though, it was beset by “grotesque” scenes and bitter conflicts, including “scenes of hysteria and fainting” and accusations that various participants were “KGB agents.”⁷² On the first day of the hearing, two members of the questioning panel, Michael Bourdeaux and Shakhovskaya, who carried Sakharov’s message to the hearing, threatened to leave unless a third member of the panel, Michael Wurmbrand, was removed.⁷³ Wurmbrand was the son of the Romanian Christian minister Richard Wurmbrand and represented the staunchly anti-Communist organization Jesus Christ to the Communist World Inc.⁷⁴ After “an apparent rambling [*sic*] and highly-strung statement lasting one and a half hours,” Wurmbrand was escorted out of the conference room by security guards.⁷⁵ Feldsted Andresen subsequently stated that, without this forced removal, “the hearing would have collapsed.”⁷⁶ The next day the French-Romanian writer Eugène Ionesco left the hearing in protest after one of the witnesses stated that he did not care about the Communist regime’s treatment of homosexuals, who he said were criminals. Ionesco stated, “this whole circus is pointless if there are such people among the witnesses. Because they are no better than those they accuse.”⁷⁷ Five of the most prominent

See Jan Michaelsen, “Sakharov-vidne får ikke lov til at rejse ind i Danmark,” *Aktuelt*, 17 October 1975, p. 10; and Jan Michaelsen, “Panel-medlem smidt ud under Sakharov-høringen,” *Aktuelt*, 18 October 1975, p. 10. It is unclear why the application was handed in too late. According to Corti, Maksimov’s absence from the Copenhagen hearing had little to do with the visa issue and a lot to do with his disapproval of the turn the hearing was taking. Corti, Note, n.d.

71. “Sakharov fik Nobels fredspris,” *Berlingske tidende*, 10 October 1974, p. II:1. The chair of the Nobel Committee was Aase Lionæs, a close friend of Haakon Lie (who participated in the Copenhagen hearing) and later herself a participant in the Sakharov hearings.

72. Corti, Note, n.d.

73. Bourdeaux was the founder and head of Keston College and editor of *Religion in Communist Lands*. Shakhovskaya was the editor of the Paris based *La Pensée russe*.

74. Jens Thomsen, “Appel fra Sakharov: Vesten må redde de politiske fanger,” *Berlingske tidende*, 18 October 1975, p. I:5; and “Spørger bortvist fra Sakharov-høringen,” *Kristeligt dagblad* (Copenhagen), 18–19 October 1975, p. 1. Wurmbrand’s entry ticket to the panel was a \$10,000 donation to the hearing. See Shakhovskaya, “I kongeriget Danmark.”

75. Tel. No. 3099, AmEmb (Lukens) to SecState, 21 October 1975, in NARA, <https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=292392&dt=2476&dl=1345>; and Michaelsen, “Panel-medlem smidt ud under Sakharov-høringen.”

76. Britta Nielsen, “Sakharov-høringen sluttede i splid,” *Jyllands posten*, 20 October 1975, pp. 1–2. For a similar assessment, see C. G., “Sacharow fordert Amnestie für politische Häftlinge—Spannungen zwischen den Gruppen der Emigranten bei der Anhörung in Kopenhagen,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 18 October 1975, p. 3.

77. “Dramatisk slutning på Sakharov-høringen,” *Kristeligt dagblad*, 20 October 1975, newspaper clipping, in UMA.

dissident participants, who happened also to be among those closest to Sakharov, then issued a vehement protest on the last day of the conference:

We feel compelled to declare that the elements of intolerance, prejudices, and lack of objectivity and the propagandistic tone in many of the testimonies we have heard, are incompatible with the principles which are the reason why we are present at this hearing in Copenhagen.⁷⁸

Eszterhás had to abbreviate the closing press conference because it broke down in heated verbal infighting.⁷⁹ At stake were sensationalist claims made by some witnesses concerning chemical experiments allegedly performed by the Soviet regime on political prisoners and the current number of such prisoners (20 million or at most 10,000?).⁸⁰ The hearing was plagued by conflicts between those who advocated a moderate tone and insisted on the need for objectivity in the examination of Soviet human rights violations, and those with a more explicit political agenda who saw the hearing as an anti-Communist operation.⁸¹ Michael Wurmbrand was among the latter: he had made his participation and financial support conditional on there being no criticism of the United States during the conference, and he insisted that neither Vietnam nor Chile be mentioned. The organizers accepted his conditions.⁸²

The organizers later expressed their satisfaction, and the event was covered by all significant Danish newspapers as well as by some international media, but the disorder and even chaos that characterized the proceedings was obvious in many press reports.⁸³ With one notable exception—the *Berlingske tidende's* Thomsen, who dismissed the clashes as “minor episodes”—most

78. *A Chronicle of Human Rights in the USSR*, Nos. 17–18 (October–December 1975), pp. 23–24. The protest was signed by Andrei Grigorenko, Viktor Balashov, Lev Kvatsjevskij, Viktor Fainberg, and Boris Shragin—the latter had also signed the “Moscow Appeal.”

79. Jan Michaelsen, “Sakharovhøringen endte i kaos: Vidner kom op at skændes,” *Aktuelt*, 20 October 1975, p. 5; and Morten Sørensen, “Sakharov-høringen i København: Panelet tilslutter sig kravet om generel amnesti for politiske fanger,” *Information*, 20 October 1975, p. 2.

80. Bent Falbert, “Sakharov-høringen druknede i kaos,” *Ekstra bladet*, 20 October 1975, newspaper clipping, in UMA.

81. “Sakharov-høring med huller i spørgepanelet,” *Jyllands posten*, 30 September 1975, p. 4. The U.S. embassy considered the event “an anti-Communist hearing.” See Tel. No. 3317, AmEmb (Crowe) to SecState, 25 November 1974, in NARA, <https://aad.archives.gov/aad/index.jsp>.

82. Shakhovskaya, “I kongeriget Danmark”; Jesus to the Communist World Inc., Press release, 24 October 1975, in Folder “38.C.1,” FA; and Alexander Vardy to Editorial Board (probably of *Novoje Russkoje Slovo*), March 1976, in Kühl Papers. Wurmbrand alleged that his removal from the hearing was orchestrated by Soviet “agents infiltrated in the committee.”

83. See, for example, Bjarne Nederby Jessen, “Menneskerettighedserklæringen må efterleves i Sovjet,” *Frederiksborg amts avis*, 22 October 1975, p. 13.

observers found that the hearing was marred by serious weaknesses.⁸⁴ Several media organizations declared that it was “amateurishly organized and led” and that it “drowned in chaos.”⁸⁵ The weaknesses were mentioned in both Danish and non-Danish press reports and can hardly be dismissed as the result of KGB manipulation or the media’s ostensible left-wing political bias.⁸⁶ Former Prime Minister Poul Hartling (Venstre) stated that the contribution of the Sakharov Hearing to the cause of the West had been a “bare plus.” The prominent and broadly respected political scientist Erling Bjøl called it “scandalous,” “amateurish,” “badly organized,” and a “failure.”⁸⁷ Key dissident exile circles and some of their supporters likewise considered it a failure. Shakhovskaya was extremely critical.⁸⁸ Solzhenitsyn called it “tomfoolery” and wanted nothing to do with it.⁸⁹ Reddaway found that, as a result of the Copenhagen hearing, “harm was done to Sakharov’s cause and image.”⁹⁰ Based on discussions with Soviet exiles who had been involved in the hearing, Corti, the organizer of the subsequent hearing, concluded that the Danish organizers were amateurs, ignorant in Soviet matters, and lacking proper contacts in the dissident milieu. The Danes’ overriding concern, Corti felt, had been to realize “an anti-Communist and anti-Soviet operation using the authoritative cover of Sakharov’s prestigious name,” and the result had been “a fiasco.” Corti warned that “lies, even made for a good cause, will be counterproductive.”⁹¹

So, was the Copenhagen hearing a success or a fiasco? Arguably, it was both. The holding of the hearing, the fact that it actually took place, was an

84. Jens Thomsen, “Sakharovhøringens appel til Sovjet: Stands den ubarmhertige forfølgelse,” *Berlingske tidende*, 20 October 1975, p. I:3; and Jens Thomsen, “Slavearbejderne er nødvendige for Sovjet,” *Berlingske tidende*, 18 October 1975, p. I:5.

85. Per Sjögren, “Sacharovförhören gav växlande råmaterial,” *Dagens nyheter* (Stockholm), 20 October 1975, in author’s personal archive; Niels Stensgaard, “Sakharov-høringen endte i uenighed,” *Politiken*, 20 October 1975, p. I:1; and Falbert, “Sakharov-høringen druknede i kaos.” See also Michaelsen, “Sakharovhøringen endte i kaos: Vidner kom op at skændes”; Grit Bendixen, “Høringen endt i kaos,” *B. T.*, 20 October 1975, p. 10; “Dramatisk slutning på Sakharov-høringen,” *Kristeligt dagblad*, 20 October 1975, newspaper clipping, in UMA; and Nielsen, “Sakharov-høringen sluttede i splid.”

86. Heiberg, *KGBs kontakt- og agentnet i Danmark*, pp. 54–55; Camille Olsen, “L’Audition Sakharov demande l’amnistie de tous les prisonniers politiques en URSS,” *Le Monde*, 21 October 1975, p. 5; “Sakharov-høringens svagheder,” *Weekendavisen* (Copenhagen), 24 October 1975, p. 8; and C. G., “Sacharow fordert Amnestie für politische Häftlinge,” p. 3.

87. Tel. No. 3099, AmEmb to SecState, 21 October 1975, in NARA, <https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=292392&dt=2476&dl=1345>. See also Michaelsen, “Sakharovhøringen endte i kaos.”

88. Shakhovskaya, “I kongeriget Danmark.”

89. Corti, Note, n.d. (probably early 1978), in Corti Papers.

90. Reddaway to Thorne, 8 February 1979, in Kline Papers.

91. Corti, Note, n.d.

impressive feat, but the hearing itself was not. In its immediate aftermath, no one would have been surprised if the first Sakharov Hearing had also been the last. Corti wrote: “The Copenhagen hearing had clearly discredited the initiative in the eyes of those on whom the success of [a second hearing would] depend, the Soviet dissidents and the experts on these issues.”⁹² This, however, was not the end of the story.

The “Tribunale Sacharov”⁹³

The Second International Sakharov Hearing took place in Rome, Italy, in the EUR Palazzo dei Congressi on 25–28 November 1977. The “Tribunale Sacharov” or “Udienze Sakharov” presents a double mystery. Given the mishaps of the first hearing, how did a follow-up hearing materialize? And why in Italy?

Even after the disappointment of the poorly executed first hearing, many still felt that an international citizens’ tribunal named after Sakharov and devoted to human rights violations in the Soviet bloc was an excellent idea. One positive lesson from the experience in Copenhagen was that such a hearing had the potential to generate significant media coverage. The intensity of dissident misgivings about the first hearing was not public knowledge.⁹⁴

The drive, stamina, and resourcefulness of the Danish “amateurs” helped keep the idea alive. The Common Committee of Exiles had become the Organizing Committee for the International Sakharov Hearing in 1975.⁹⁵ A year later it preemptively laid claim to Sakharov’s prestigious name and rebranded itself the International Sakharov Committee.⁹⁶ The Danes were keenly aware that Sakharov’s name was their main asset, and they were determined not to let go of it. Together with like-minded groups they organized events in Denmark and abroad. Among these were a press conference about the German

92. Ibid.

93. Comitato italiano di “International Sakharov Hearings,” *Tribunale Sacharov, atto secondo* (Milan: La Casa di Matriona, 1979). “Tribunale” was used for the book title and favored by some people, but the official term was “udienze.”

94. Corti, Note, n.d.

95. “Vedtægter: Forbundet til afholdelse af ‘Andrej Sakharov høringen i Danmark,’” n.d., in Kühl Papers.

96. The International Sakharov Committee, despite its name, was a Danish committee, comprising Danish citizens and a few Soviet-bloc exiles living in Denmark, some or most of whom had become Danish citizens. Feldsted Andresen stated: “Sakharov’s name was the key that opened the door to our own parliament in Denmark and to many human rights organizations.” “An Interview with the Founder of the Sakharov Hearings,” *Smoloskyp*, Vol. 1, No. 5 (Fall 1979), pp. 3, 5.

Democratic Republic (GDR) held on 12 August 1976 in Copenhagen with the Berlin-based group “Arbeitsgemeinschaft 13. August”; a well-publicized hearing in Bad Godesberg concerning alleged Soviet use of forced labor to build gas pipelines, held with the IGfM on 18–19 November 1982; cooperation with the NTS and the Wilberforce Council; and human rights events devoted to Cuba, the Baltic countries, and Raoul Wallenberg.⁹⁷ In November 1975, when the U.S. Helsinki Commission sent a delegation to Europe, Feldsted Andresen was among the handful of Danes selected to meet the U.S. delegates.⁹⁸ Although other organizing committees proved short-lived, the Danish one survived, at least in name, until 2017. From 1976 to 1991 the committee regularly issued a publication about human rights violations in the Soviet bloc, *Danizdat*. The Danes claimed paternity of the successful proposal to exchange the Soviet prisoner Vladimir Bukovsky for the Chilean dictatorship’s prisoner Luis Corvalán.⁹⁹ But a key objective for the group from the outset was to institutionalize and perennialize the Sakharov Hearings, holding them in different countries while ensuring that the Danish committee stayed in charge and thus deserved its “international” label. The publication of the proceedings of the Copenhagen hearing in six languages—Danish, Swedish, English, German, Italian, and Russian—helped stimulate interest in a follow-up.¹⁰⁰

Any follow-up hearing, however, was contingent on Sakharov’s blessing, and the problem was that Sakharov was dismayed by what he had heard about the Copenhagen hearing. He asked his stepson-in-law, Yankelevich, who left the Soviet Union in September 1977, to be his representative in the West and

97. The hearing in Bad Godesberg was mentioned in U.S. Congress, *Congressional Record, Senate*, 16 February 1983, p. 2,363.

98. *Report of the Study Mission to Europe to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977).

99. They are far from the only ones to have made that claim. See Guillaume Nicolas-Brion, “Un rouage contre la machine ou les combats de Vladimir Boukovski,” M.A. Thesis, IEP de Toulouse, Toulouse, 2004, p. 56. Among those credited with the idea are Sakharov, Gerstenmaier, and the International Sakharov Committee. See, respectively, Vladimir Bukovsky, interview, Cambridge, UK, 28 August 2013; Cornelia Gerstenmaier, telephone interview, 2013; and C. P., “Wiesenthal inizia l’istruttoria sull’arcipelago Gulag,” *Il resto del Carlino* (Bologna), 8 October 1977, pp. 1–2. The Danish group most probably played a significant role, but the exact nature of this role still needs to be ascertained. Concerning the exchange, see Olga Ulianova, “Corvalán for Bukovsky: A Real Exchange of Prisoners During an Imaginary War: The Chilean Dictatorship, the Soviet Union and U.S. Mediation, 1973–1976,” *Cold War History*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2014), pp. 315–336.

100. Feldsted Andresen to the U.S. Sakharov Hearing Committee, 8 June 1979, in Box 39, Houghton Library. The activism of the Danish group ensured that the Soviet authorities kept an eye on its leader, Feldsted Andresen. “Isvestija: Dansk hetz mod Sovjet: Dirigeres af erfarne provokatører i CIA’s sold, skriver avisen,” *Jyllands posten*, 23 August 1977, p. 2.

to co-organize any subsequent hearings.¹⁰¹ He was later quite happy with this decision:

Efrem's logical mind, knowledge and absolute integrity ensured the exclusion of any false, unsubstantiated, or sensational testimony, and a focus on significant issues. The success of the Rome hearings (and of the later ones in Washington and London) was due in large part to his efforts.¹⁰²

Sakharov let the Danish committee know that his go-ahead for the next hearing would be conditional on finding trustworthy witnesses.¹⁰³ The physicist's determination to achieve some degree of control bore fruit. Bonner had a significant impact on the Rome hearing and Yankelevich helped shape all subsequent hearings.

The follow-up hearing took place at the same time that the Biennale del Dissenso was being held in Venice (15 November–15 December 1977), thus running the risk of being eclipsed or engendering dissidence fatigue. At least two factors help to explain this potentially self-defeating duplication. The first has to do with the intensity of Italian interest. In Italy, as in France at the time, Soviet-bloc dissidence was an important domestic political issue largely because—in the Italian case—of the prominent role played by the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and the fact that the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) under Bettino Craxi's leadership (1976–1993) had decided to make Soviet-bloc dissidence a major theme in its rivalry with the PCI.¹⁰⁴ A Sakharov Hearing in Italy was thus less surprising than one held in Copenhagen. Second, the organizers of the two initiatives were apparently unaware of the other until they were both well advanced. They came from different circles, although contacts were established later on.

Who took the initiative in Italy? In 1975–1976 nobody questioned that the Danes “owned” the Sakharov Hearings and that it was up to them to decide who should be in charge of the next hearing. Among the options discussed were Norway, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Italy. In Norway the Danes were in touch with the prominent Labor Party leader Haakon Lie. In the United Kingdom, Geoffrey Stewart-Smith and David Markham were

101. Yankelevich left together with his wife, Tatiana Yankelevich (Bonner's daughter), and their two children. Sakharov, *Memoirs*, p. 473.

102. *Ibid.*, p. 474. The two omitted hearings (Copenhagen and Lisbon) were also the most politicized ones.

103. “Rapport fra møde den 30.10. 1976,” added note by Osbrandt (concerning a meeting in Moscow between her cousin and Sakharov), 2 November 1976, in Kühl Papers.

104. Lomellini, *L'Appuntamento mancato*, p. 131.

interested. Former Canadian Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker was willing to chair a Canadian hearing. Such plans failed for various reasons. The Norwegians were involved in difficult fishery negotiations with the Soviet Union, which they did not want to jeopardize. The Canadians gave up, possibly because of upcoming elections. London seemed the most serious option, and by September 1976 planning was underway for a hearing there in May 1977. However, in January 1977 the hearing was called off because Stewart-Smith was caught up in a legal battle in Seoul with his ex-associates from the WACL.¹⁰⁵

The most persistent suitors were the Italians. Terenzio Magliano, MP for the Italian Democratic Socialist Party (PSDI), had attended the hearing in Copenhagen and upon returning to Italy suggested setting up a permanent section of the Sakharov Hearings in Italy. He allegedly got the backing of a half dozen parliamentarians from other political parties (Republicans, Liberals, Socialists, and Christian Democrats). The request for their support was made on Magliano's behalf by Lyudmilla Thorne from the Radio Liberty-funded and Rome-based Associazione Letteraria Internazionale (ALI, part of a secret CIA-run book-distribution program aimed at the Soviet bloc).¹⁰⁶ The Danes asked for additional information, but it is not clear whether they ever received an answer. In any event, the Rome option was abandoned.¹⁰⁷ Soon, however, it was back, this time promoted by Bonner, who suggested Corti as a suitable organizer. Once the London project had faltered, the Danes obliged

105. "Rapport af møde den 28.5. 1976"; "Rapport fra møde den 24.9. 1976"; "Rapport fra møde 8.10. 1976"; "Rapport ang. møde lørdag den 30.10. 1976"; "Rapport, møde den 19.11. 1976"; "Rapport af den 18.1. 1977"; "Rapport fra møde 10.2. 1978"; and "Danizdat," all in Kühl Papers.

106. "Dagsorden, møde den 31.10. 1975," in Kühl Papers; Thorne to Karawatzki, 18 November 1975, in Kühl Papers; and Lyudmilla Thorne, "Memoirs" (unpublished manuscript), pp. 179–180, in Kline Papers. Thorne was born in the Soviet Union in 1938 (d. 2009), moved to the United States in 1949, worked for the Radio Liberty Committee (1961–1971), became vice president of Bedford Publications (later renamed the International Literary Center) (1971–1973), and then became project manager at the International Literary Association (ALI) in Rome (1973–1975). She was a friend of Gerstenmaier (who participated in the Copenhagen hearing), and she knew Bonner (she hosted her in Rome in late 1975) and would thus have been well informed about the Copenhagen hearing. See Thorne, Resume, in Kline Papers; and Ombretta Orlandini, interview, Rome, 27 May 2017. Leonard R. Sussman (executive director of Freedom House from 1967 to 1988) devotes a chapter to Thorne in *A Passion for Freedom: My Encounters with Extraordinary People* (Amherst, MA: Prometheus Books, 2004), pp. 383–390. On ALI, see Alfred A. Reisch, *Hot Books in the Cold War? The CIA-Funded Secret Western Book Distribution Program Behind the Iron Curtain* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), p. 508. Another Italian group, the far-right Europa Civiltà, also manifested an interest in the Sakharov hearing. See Feldsted Andresen to Facchinetti, 23 June 1975, reproduced in Loris Facchinetti, *Il Manifesto Umano: La Destra Invisibile* (Rome: Prima Edizione, 2011), p. xxx [sic].

107. "Dagsorden, møde den 31.10. 1975"; Thorne to Karawatzki, 18 November 1975; "Forslag til besvarelse af skrivelse af den 18.11. 1975 fra fru Ludmilla Thorne," in Kühl Papers; and "Møde den 5.12.," in Kühl Papers.

and handed over the torch to Corti, who initiated the planning with a trip to Copenhagen in February 1977.¹⁰⁸

Who were the Italian organizers? Corti was in charge and became president of the executive committee. A former Fiat employee, he had been involved in Fiat's business relations with the USSR.¹⁰⁹ He had learned Russian and for many years been involved in the work of Russia Cristiana. From 1972 to 1975, Corti had worked as a translator and interpreter at the Italian embassy in Moscow, where he "became deeply involved with the Moscow human rights community."¹¹⁰ He had befriended Sakharov, Bonner, and Solzhenitsyn, and after Solzhenitsyn's deportation he organized, with the help of Italian embassy staff, an effort to smuggle out a sizable part of the writer's personal library. Corti himself brought the suitcases to Zurich. In Italy, he was in touch with ALI, and he knew Thorne (they traveled together to visit Solzhenitsyn in Zurich in early 1974).¹¹¹ Although Russia Cristiana and its publishing house, Casa di Matriona, were not the official organizers of the hearing, the bulk of those formally or informally involved in the preparations came from that milieu. Russia Cristiana was created in 1957, focused on links with Orthodox Russia, and for a while had been involved in the smuggling of religious literature into the Soviet Union. From the late 1960s it was close to the group Comunione e Liberazione. Its activities allegedly had earned it a good reputation among Soviet dissidents.¹¹² In contrast to the Copenhagen group, the Italians had the expertise, knowledge, and contacts required to organize a serious hearing.

108. Feldsted Andresen to Wiesenthal, 1 September 1977, in Folder "B., I., 1.2.3.," SWA; and "Møde den 30.3. 1977," Kühl Papers.

109. In 1966 Fiat and Moscow reached an agreement to build a major car manufacturing plant in the Soviet Union at the center of a new town, the so-called Togliattigrad. The plant started operating in 1969. See Valentina Fava, "Between Business Interests and Ideological Marketing: The USSR and the Cold War in Fiat Corporate Strategy, 1957–1972," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Fall 2019), pp. 26–64.

110. Thorne, "Memoirs." These activities, unsurprisingly, made him unpopular with the Soviet authorities. "Mosca accusa ex dipendente ambasciata: 'Quell'italiano à un agente CIA,'" *Il giorno* (Milan), 21 August 1980, newspaper clipping, in Corti Papers.

111. Thorne, 'Memoirs'; Mario Corti, interview, Artegna, Italy, 4 May 2012; Orlandini interview; Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, *Invisible Allies* (London: The Harvill Press, 1997), p. 248; and Mark Hopkins, *Russia's Underground Press: The Chronicle of Current Events* (New York: Praeger, 1983), p. 135.

112. Romano Scalfi, interview, Seriate, 2 May 2012; Pigi Colognesi, *Russia Cristiana: Una biografia di padre Romano Scalfi* (Milan: Ed. San Paolo, 2007), pp. 104–108, 133, 138–141, 151–152, 184, 209, 214–224; Maria Barberis, "Centro Studi Russia Cristiana (1957–2000): Un approccio storico," M.A. Thesis, University of Pavia, Pavia, 2003, pp. 209–213, 224–225; and Corti, note, n.d. Politically, Comunione e Liberazione was close to the rightwing Christian Democrat party Movimento Popolare.

In addition to Corti (president), the executive committee officially comprised Dario Staffa (vice president), Giovanni Codevilla (secretary), and Erminio Salmoiraghi (treasurer).¹¹³ The actual membership was larger, however, and may have included Sergio Rapetti, Giovanna Gruccio, Lucio dal Santo, Tatiana Khodorovich, Efrem Yankelevich, Irina Alberti, and possibly still others.¹¹⁴ Moreover, the Italians knew that to some degree they had to accept Danish “ownership” of the Sakharov Hearings and that the green light to hold the second hearing came with strings attached. Indeed, the Danes expected significant co-involvement in both substantive and practical matters. Bilateral meetings were held in Copenhagen, Munich, Milan, and Florence, sometimes also attended by others in addition to the Danish and Italian organizers such as Maksimov, Bonner, and Chalidze. Some decisions seem to have been taken in common. The Copenhagen group helped with much of the official correspondence and with most non-Soviet contacts, possibly sending an emissary, Schoubye, to meet Jacek Kuroń in Warsaw.¹¹⁵ The Danes argued that Soviet dissidents were too difficult to deal with and therefore advocated that the second hearing focus on Eastern Europe rather than on the Soviet Union. The Italians insisted on maintaining a focus on the Soviet Union, but they agreed to expand the scope of the hearing to include human rights violations in Eastern Europe. However, cooperation between the two groups was not frictionless. According to Corti, the Danish group was paranoid and obsessed with anti-Communism. When Corti told them about the Biennale del Dissenso in Venice and voiced his concern that this might interfere with their plans, Feldsted Andresen denounced the Biennale as a provocative act aimed at sabotaging the Rome hearing and even suspected Corti of colluding with the Biennale organizers.¹¹⁶

The success of the hearing depended on getting the right participants, starting with the honorary president. The Danes initially favored Count Otto von Habsburg for the position, but Corti made clear that such a choice would not be popular in Italy. They then suggested the former Nuremberg trial

113. Liano Fanti, “Contro il crimine dovunque e da chiunque perpetrato,” *Avanti* (Milan), 9 October 1977, newspaper clipping, in SWA; and Sandro Scabello, “I diritti umani nell’URSS,” *Corriere della sera* (Milan), 7 October 1977, newspaper clipping, in Box 13, Houghton Library.

114. About Rapetti, see Colognesi, *Russia Cristiana*, pp. 113–114.

115. Schoubye, interview. See also “Meeting of the Sakharov Hearing Committee with Giovanni Codevilla in Copenhagen on 1–2 June 1977,” in Kühl Papers; “Rapport af møde den 8. juni 1977,” in Kühl Papers; “Report re. the meeting in Milano with the Comitato Organizzatore, Sezione Italiana on 25–26 June 1977,” in Kühl Papers; “Møde afholdt den 1.8. 1977,” in Kühl Papers; Corti to Feldsted Andresen, 29 April 1977, in Kühl Papers; and “Møde den 30.3. 1977.”

116. Corti, Note, n.d.

prosecutor Hartley Shawcross, who excused himself on grounds of other engagements. The French liberal intellectual Raymond Aron also was not available. Finally they came to favor Wiesenthal. The Italian committee was divided, but Corti sided with the Danes, and the choice then fell on the well-known Nazi hunter, who accepted.¹¹⁷ That he could not be accused of being a fascist was considered crucial.¹¹⁸ Prestigious sponsors—members of the advisory board—were another precondition for success. Corti convinced, among others, the mathematician and human rights activist Ennio de Giorgi and World War II resistance fighter, politician, and journalist Leo Valiani to join the board.¹¹⁹

Finding good witnesses proved more challenging. Disagreements arose concerning the potential witnesses, some of whom were accused of anti-Semitism or of having betrayed fellow dissidents. In Corti's view, a good relationship with Sakharov was essential for a successful hearing. In practice this meant a good relationship with Bonner and, subsidiarily, with Yankelevich.¹²⁰ Corti's Moscow years and his well-established relations with the Sakharovs proved crucial for ensuring just that. Bonner played a key role in overcoming the skepticism generated by the Copenhagen hearing among Soviet exiles (e.g., writers associated with *Kontinent* and *La Pensée Russe*). In the end, Lyubarsky (exiled in 1977 and the publisher in Munich of *USSR News Briefs*), Alexeyeva, Leonid Plyushch, Valentin Turchin, Tomas Venclova, and Arkady Polishchuk all agreed to testify. At Bonner's suggestion, a fourth day was added to the originally planned three days. The additional day was devoted to Western lawyers of indicted Moscow Helsinki Group members. Bonner got so involved in the preparations that some teasingly suggested renaming the event "the Bonner hearing."¹²¹ Thanks to Solzhenitsyn's assistant, Alberti, Solzhenitsyn was persuaded to send a supportive message to the hearing.¹²²

117. "Møde afholdt den 1.8. 1977"; and Shawcross to Feldsted Andresen, 4 April 1977, in Corti Papers. For a more skeptical assessment of Wiesenthal's credentials as a "Nazi hunter," see Tom Segev, *Simon Wiesenthal: The Life and Legends* (New York: Schocken Books, 2010), pp. 9, 27.

118. "Rapport af møde den 8.6. 1977," in Kühl Papers.

119. Corti, Note, n.d.; Feldsted Andresen to Corti, 7 May 1977, Corti Papers; Sergio Rapetti and Giovanni Codevilla, interview, Milan, 30 April 2012; Corti, interview; and Bukovsky, interview. On Corti's stay in Moscow, dissident contacts, and smuggling of material out of the Soviet Union, see Colognesi, *Russia Cristiana*, pp. 110–111.

120. Corti, Note, n.d.

121. Ibid. Bonner did not attend the Tribunale Sacharov. Soviet authorities insisted on a quick return to Moscow to prevent her from attending the hearing. See Yankelevich to Robert Bernstein, 21 October 1978, in Box 14, Houghton Library.

122. Alberti was a Rome-based correspondent for Radio Liberty who moved to Vermont, where she worked for Solzhenitsyn from 1976 to 1979. In 1980 she succeeded Shakhovskaya as editor of *La*

Also thanks to Alberti, the organizers obtained the participation of the U.S. delegate to the CSCE meeting in Belgrade, Millicent Fenwick; the psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton; the Western legal counsels of Alexander Ginzburg, Alexander Sergienko, and Mykola Rudenko; and several other human rights advocates.¹²³

Corti and Bonner agreed to organize an undercover operation to carry a message from Sakharov to the Rome hearing. Rapetti went to Moscow after signing up for a trip organized by a PCI-associated travel agency. Once there, he slipped away from his fellow travelers to meet and film Sakharov giving a message. The footage was subsequently shown at the opening of the Rome hearing. The initiative, initially kept secret (although the treasurer and the main funder were aware), did not escape the attention of Soviet authorities. As Rapetti was boarding his return flight, he was approached by an official and told that if he ever ventured back to Moscow he would be killed.¹²⁴

The Biennale del Dissenso and the Tribunale had completely different origins. Links, however, developed. The Socialists Carlo Ripa di Meana and Craxi, who played a key role in the Biennale, also expressed their support for the Tribunale.¹²⁵ Ripa di Meana and Corti worked closely with the exiled former Czechoslovak television director Jiří Pelikán, who assisted with both events. Rapetti's trip to Moscow benefited not only the Tribunale but also the Biennale, for which he also brought back a filmed message from Sakharov.¹²⁶ Some, like Sister Anne Gillen, executive director of the U.S. National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, participated in both events. Staffa, one of the organizers of the Tribunale Sacharov, was also involved in the Biennale del Dissenso.¹²⁷ Ripa di Meana invited Father Romano Scalfi, one of the founders of Russia Cristiana, and Codevilla to participate in the committee in charge of religious issues at the Biennale. This, however, prompted the resignation of two other Biennale committee members, Giorgio Girardet and Renato

pensée Russe in Paris. Irina Alberti, "Io, esule alla scoperta della Russia," *La nuova Europa*, No. 2 (2001), pp. 4–14.

123. Feldsted Andresen to Corti, 7 May 1977; and Corti, Note, n.d.

124. Andrei Sakharov, *Memorie* (Milan: SugarCo Edizioni, 1990), p. 549 (translation by Corti's wife, Elena Corti). The source of this information is no doubt Rapetti. See also Sergio Rapetti, "Andrej Sacharov a dieci anni dalla scomparsa: Une testimonianze," paper presented at the "Andrej Sacharov a dieci anni dalla scomparsa: Dall'URSS alla Russia" seminar, Trento, 2 November 1999–14 January 2000, in Sergio Rapetti Papers; Corti, interview; and Rapetti, interview.

125. Corti, interview; and Rapetti, interview.

126. Rapetti, "Andrej Sacharov a dieci anni dalla scomparsa."

127. Staffa wrote the first part of the report. Gianfranco Dogliani, ed., "B77 [Biennale del Dissenso], Tecniche del consenso e forme del dissenso all'est," in Archives of the Centro Studi sulla Storia dell'Europa Orientale.

Maiocchi. The former believed that Russia Cristiana was CIA-financed and linked with the extreme right.¹²⁸

A crucial issue for all the hearings was funding. The person who made the Tribunale Sacharov possible was the businessman Silvio Berlusconi. The future Italian prime minister took a significant step in 1977 by venturing into politics and journalism with his acquisition of the conservative newspaper *Il giornale*. The funding of the Tribunale Sacharov is a hitherto unpublicized case of Berlusconi's early anti-Communist endeavors. The link between the Milan-based organizing committee and the Milan-based Berlusconi was dal Santo, who knew the entrepreneur from their school days at the Salesian college preparatory school and decided to ask his old schoolmate for a contribution. Berlusconi obliged and in March 1977 agreed to cover up to \$65,000 of the hearing's expenses, so long as the funding was kept secret.¹²⁹ Berlusconi named Salmoiraghi to be his personal representative on the organizing committee. A special bank account was set up that was accessible only to Corti and Salmoiraghi. To protect Berlusconi's anonymity, face-to-face contacts between the organizing committee and Berlusconi were taken care of by dal Santo. However, a few meetings evidently occurred, especially during the early phase, between Berlusconi and some of the organizers of the hearing. Corti occasionally circumvented dal Santo if major unforeseen expenses arose. Two such cases were the "Moscow operation" (Rapetti's trip to see Sakharov in Moscow) and the addition of a fourth day as suggested by Bonner. Berlusconi apparently also got involved, through intermediaries, in other practical issues with cost implications, such as the length of the Italian publication devoted to the Copenhagen hearing.¹³⁰

The aim of the Second Sakharov Hearing was to investigate the human rights situation in the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the GDR. It had four components. The first day and part of the second day were devoted to civil and political rights, the remainder of the second day to social and economic rights, the next to religious freedom, and the

128. Colognesi, *Russia Cristiana*, p. 141; on suspicions of CIA financing of Russia Cristiana, see pp. 131–136.

129. Corti, Note, n.d.; Corti to Feldstedt Andresen, 29 April 1977; and "Møde den 30.3. 1977." On Berlusconi's early political involvement, see Alexander Stille, *The Sack of Rome: Media + Money + Celebrity = Power = Silvio Berlusconi* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), pp. 28–29, 63–65, 67, 79–80.

130. Corti, interview; Corti, email, 2 August 2012; Corti, Note, n.d.; Georgio Ponti to Corti, 22 April 1977, in Corti Papers; Osbrandt, "Report re. the meeting in Milano with the Comitato Organizzatore, Sezione Italiana, on 25–26 June 1977," 27 June 1977, in Kühl Papers; and Corti to Vittorio Moccagatta, 12 September 1982, in Corti Papers.

fourth and last day to presentations by Western lawyers of Soviet dissidents.¹³¹ The organizers made clear that the hearing would evaluate the extent to which the Soviet Union was living up to its Helsinki Final Act commitments. “It was all about human rights, it was not an anti-Communist or anti-Soviet operation,” Dario Staffa stated. “We do not want to condemn a regime. . . . We are also in solidarity with political prisoners in Chile, Brazil, and so many other countries.”¹³²

The hearing was not marred by the sort of publicized conflicts that had plagued the Copenhagen hearing. Messages were read from both Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn, and the hearing also benefited from the participation of numerous prestigious human rights activists and from the presence of Wiesenthal, who opened the event and presided over its “commission” (sometimes referred to as a “panel”). Judging from the significant and largely positive media coverage, the hearing was a success. According to Corti, the most successful day was the fourth, which was devoted to presentations by the Western legal counsels of the Moscow Helsinki Group prisoners. Another highlight was a surprise visit by Cardinal Slipyyj.¹³³

The hearing concluded with the issuance of a written statement signed by the “fellow members of the Panel”: Wiesenthal (“president”), Neerskov (“secretary general”), Feldsted Andresen (“member of the arranging committee”), and Corti (“member of the arranging committee”). The statement referred to the declaration issued at the end of the Copenhagen hearing, which had raised doubts about whether the Soviet Union was living up to its international commitments under the Helsinki Final Act and the UN International Covenants.¹³⁴ The verdict reached in 1977 was that such doubts no longer existed: the Soviet Union was *not* living up to its commitments.¹³⁵

131. “II Sessione, Udienze Internazionale Sacharov, Programma,” in Corti Papers.

132. Franco Mimmi, “Tribunale Sacharov si riunirà a Roma,” *La stampa* (Turin), 8 October 1977; and Scabello, “I diritti umani nell’URSS.” When asked about his attitude toward Communism as compared to Nazism, Wiesenthal stated: “The nazi idea was criminal and so was its practice; the communist idea is not criminal. But its practice is.” C. P., “Da cacciatore di nazisti a difensore dei dissidenti,” *La nazione* (Florence), 8 October 1977, p. 12. For Wiesenthal on “Red fascism,” see Piero Benetazzo, “Scende in campo per il dissenso il cacciatore di criminali nazisti,” *La repubblica* (Rome), 8 October 1977, newspaper clipping, in SWA.

133. Corti, Note, n.d.. Sakharov’s assessment, based on reports from his friends and family in the West, was also positive. See Sakharov to Feldsted Andresen, 12 May 1978, in Kühl Papers (the letter was translated and forwarded by Yankelevich).

134. Arrangørkomiteen, *Sakharov-Høringen*, pp. 166–168. In 1975, the Copenhagen organizing committee had issued its own resolution, which was “considerably tougher on the Soviet Union than the Panel resolution.” Tel. No. 3099, AmEmb (Lukens) to SecState, 21 October 1975, in NARA, available online at <https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=292392&dt=2476&dl=1345>.

135. “II. Session, Udienze Internazionali Sacharov, Conclusion,” in Kline Papers.

Polemics appeared in the media and elsewhere about the political orientation of the hearing. Some outsiders saw it as closely linked to Russia Cristiana and, by association, to the extreme right and the CIA. Others (on the far right) accused the hearing of being “Eurocommunist.”¹³⁶ Still others asserted that the PSI was trying to control it.¹³⁷ Although some on the committee were close to the Christian Democratic Party (DC), a majority wanted it to “relate to the moderate area,” understood as extending from the PSI to the Liberal Party (PLI) as well as the DC.¹³⁸ This was in line with Berlusconi’s views, since he cultivated ties both with the DC and with Craxi’s PSI. However, the committee also hoped to obtain the support of individuals further to the left. As a result, PCI Senator Umberto Terracini was among the sponsors of and participants in the hearing. Although his participation was a meager piece of evidence in support of the claim of “Eurocommunism,” it was sufficient to cause alarm among some of those dismayed by the strength of the PCI and the conjectures about a so-called historic compromise between it and the DC. One of the striking moments at the hearing was the reading of Solzhenitsyn’s message warning against “Eurocommunism’s siren song.”¹³⁹

Though some argued that the Biennale “stole the show” from the Tribunale Sacharov, such an assessment seems exaggerated.¹⁴⁰ The Rome hearing attracted a great deal of media attention, both domestically and internationally. Even Feldsted Andresen had to concede that the Rome hearing had been more successful than the Copenhagen session.¹⁴¹ However, the aftermath was less uplifting. Once the hearing was over, the committee split up, possibly because of a clash of personalities rather than strong political disagreements. Corti and Rapetti were forced to leave the committee, which thus lost crucial expertise on Soviet dissidents, and Corti moved to Munich to work for

136. “Quattro Giornate per Sacharov,” *Euroitalia* (Rome), Vol. 7, No. 257, 1 December 1977, pp. 1–2.

137. Andrea Albertini, “In pieno svolgimento l’offensiva del PSI per giungere al ‘controllo del dissenso,’” *Corriere del Ticino* (Muzzano, Switzerland), 23 December 1977, newspaper clipping, in Corti Papers.

138. Corti, Note, n.d.

139. Fausto de Luca, “Solgenitsyn: L’eurocomunismo è un nemico del dissenso,” *La repubblica*, 26 November 1977, p. 4. One Italian newspaper emphasized the political diversity of the exiled dissidents participating in the Rome conference: “many of these dissidents still identify themselves as Marxists or at least Marxian.” See Paolo Pinto, “Denunciata la tragica utopia del marxismo dal volto umano,” *Il popolo* (Rome), 29 November 1977, p. 3.

140. Franco Jappelli, “Cronache del ‘Tribunale Sacharov’: Terracini che c’entra?” *Il Borghese* (Rome), 4 February 1977, pp. 1, 107–1, 109.

141. Feldsted Andresen to Wiesenthal, 6 December 1977, in Box “2. Sakharov Hearing. 1977. Rom,” SWA.

Radio Liberty. However, Corti was widely perceived to be the primary figure responsible for the success of the Rome hearing, and he was the one Italian who remained significantly involved in the subsequent Sakharov Hearings.¹⁴²

The Washington Hearing

The third hearing was held in Washington, DC, on 26–29 September 1979 in the Dirksen Senate Office Building. Actually, two separate hearings were planned. The first was Danish. After the Rome hearing, the Danish committee seemed convinced that nothing had changed and that it still “owned” the Sakharov Hearings. It praised Corti and Rapetti for organizing the Rome hearing in cooperation with the Danes but took the view that the International Sakharov Committee (i.e., the Copenhagen committee) should decide what to do next. Brown from the AFL-CIO secured funding from the union for the Copenhagen group. In February 1978, the Danes suggested to Brown that the next hearing be held in the United States, and together they decided that it should focus on workers’ rights. By June 1978, the AFL-CIO president, George Meany, had given his support to that idea.¹⁴³ At this stage the Danish committee believed it had the overall responsibility for planning the Washington event. By August 1978, however, Brown believed that the hearing would be co-organized as a transatlantic event and that a European committee (he saw the Danes and the French anti-Communist intellectual Jean-François Revel as key partners in such an endeavor) would be cooperating with a U.S. committee. The latter was to be set up by the AFL-CIO and its members designated by Meany. Brown soon realized that he had misread the situation.

Another initiative, taken by Yankelevich and Thorne, proved to be the consequential one. Yankelevich, whom Sakharov had designated as his representative in the West and as the person in charge of supervising the Sakharov

142. Corti to Alberti, 26 September 1978, in Corti Papers. Yankelevich sympathized with Corti: “Unfortunately, as it often happens, those who do the most are also susceptible to the greatest criticism. As a result of a variety of accusations, which, in my opinion, were unjustified, and which emanated from other members of the Italian Committee, Mr. Corti was forced to leave the Committee in the beginning of this year, and Mr. Rapetti soon followed suit.” See Yankelevich to Kahn, 2 October 1978, in Box 14, Houghton Library. According to Vladimir Poremsky from the NTS, Berlusconi likewise took Corti’s side. See “Møde den 12.8. 1978 med Poremsky fra NTS (Possev),” in Kühl Papers.

143. “Rapport af mødet den 10.2. 1978,” in Kühl Papers; Brown to Feldsted Andresen, 28 June 1978, in Kühl Papers; International Sakharov Committee, “The Aims and Activities of the Sakharov Committee,” n.d., in Archives of DEM; Brown to Yankelevich, 3 August 1978, in Box 14, Houghton Library; Brown to Meany, 9 August 1978, in Box 14, Houghton Library; and Feldsted Andresen to the U.S. Sakharov Hearing Committee, 8 June 1979.

Hearings, had arrived in Italy just in time to participate in the Rome hearing. In the immediate aftermath of the Tribunale, while Yankelevich was still in Italy but soon to leave for the United States, where he settled near Boston, Yankelevich discussed with Corti and Thorne the setting up of a more permanent institution, an Italy-based Sakharov Foundation for human rights. However, the splitting of the Italian group put that idea to rest.¹⁴⁴ Another topic they broached was a follow-up hearing in the United States. Thorne, a U.S. citizen of Russian descent, had pioneered Italian attempts to get the hearing to Rome. She was well connected with the AFL-CIO leadership, and when the Tribunale materialized she attended it and covered it extensively for the publication *AFL-CIO Trade Union News*.¹⁴⁵ Thorne had moved from Rome to New York by December 1975, and two years later Yankelevich moved to the U.S. as well.¹⁴⁶ By then, an agreement in principle had been reached, and Yankelevich asked Thorne to be in charge of the U.S. hearing, for which they set out to create an organizing committee. When making these preparations, Yankelevich endeavored to stay in touch with his stepfather-in-law and told the committee that “of course, the time, place and participants of the Hearing will also need to be approved by Dr. Sakharov.”¹⁴⁷ By the summer of 1978, a tentative program was starting to take shape, and contacts with some of the potential funders had been established.

When Brown learned that Yankelevich and Thorne had made these plans, he emphatically took up the Danes’ cause. Since the Copenhagen hearing, he had admired their anti-Communist commitment. He saw Feldsted Andersen and Osbrandt as “rare souls here in Europe,” who were “working day in and day out on the problem of the Soviet and East European dissidents” and thus should be involved in the hearing.¹⁴⁸ No doubt, the shared commitment to a hearing focused on workers’ rights, a focus Brown deemed crucial to mitigate Western sympathy for Soviet Communism, helped make the Danes an attractive partner in his eyes.¹⁴⁹ Yankelevich, however, made clear to the AFL-CIO that Brown was not going to be able to change things and that he

144. Yankelevich to Bublil, 15 January 1978, in Box 14, Houghton Library; and Yankelevich to Kahn, 27 February 1978, in Box 13, Houghton Library.

145. Thorne, “Memoirs,” p. 195; and Lyudmilla Thorne, “Testimony in Rome at the Second International Sakharov Hearing,” *AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (March 1978), pp. 10–13. The latter item was the second part of a two-part article on the Rome hearing.

146. Thorne, “Memoirs,” p. 198; and Barbara Gamarekian, “Soviet Dissidents’ Wives Share a Crusade in U.S.,” *The New York Times*, 5 February 1978, p. 7.

147. Yankelevich to Kahn, 2 October 1978.

148. Brown to Thorne, 28 November 1978, in Box 14, Houghton Library.

149. *Ibid.*; and Brown to Bonner, 10 January 1979 (misdated 1978).

and Thorne were now in charge of the U.S. hearing. Moreover, he added, Sakharov wanted a hearing devoted to human rights rather than to workers' rights.¹⁵⁰ As Yankelevich pointed out to Tom Kahn (assistant to the president of the AFL-CIO): "the purpose of the hearing will again be to pose the question: Are human rights in the USSR respected or are they not, rather than is 'Soviet socialism' good or bad and is it better or worse than 'American capitalism.'"¹⁵¹ Moreover, neither Yankelevich nor Bonner shared Brown's enthusiasm for the Danes.¹⁵² From the late summer of 1978, the Third Sakharov Hearing was scheduled to place in Washington, DC, with Thorne in charge and Yankelevich having a supervisory role.¹⁵³ Brown's displeasure with the dismissive treatment of the Danes and what he considered insufficient attention to workers' issues made Thorne worry that he might organize a parallel and potentially rival hearing. However, in the end the AFL-CIO accepted the Thorne-Yankelevich hearing as the only show in town.¹⁵⁴

The Danes took much longer to accept this new state of affairs. Thorne and Yankelevich repeatedly tried to make clear that although the Danes deserved great credit for their pioneering role, their future role would be consultative only. Sakharov had intimated that the Copenhagen committee "should work in close touch and harmony with" Yankelevich, but the Danes proved extraordinarily resistant to this message. When Neerskov met Thorne in New York in November 1978, he insisted that "his Danish committee would continue with the organizing of the United States Hearing, and that [the U.S.] committee should carry everything out on the technical side."¹⁵⁵ His arguments were that the Copenhagen committee came "first," that it was an "international" committee, that it alone could ensure overall continuity and permanence of the hearings, and that it should be in charge of the Washington hearing. The Danes unsuccessfully tried to convince the AFL-CIO to withhold any financing pending Thorne's and Yankelevich's acceptance of their

150. Yankelevich to Kahn, 2 October 1978.

151. *Ibid.* See also Yankelevich to Kirkland, 21 August 1979, in Kline Papers.

152. Feldsted Andresen to Yankelevich, 28 July 1978, in Box 13, Houghton Library; Yankelevich to Feldsted Andresen, 4 July 1978, in Box 14, Houghton Library; Brown to Meany, 9 August 1978; and Osbrandt, "Rapport af ferieophold i Paris fra den 8.4. 1979." Yankelevich's cool feelings were reciprocated by the Danes. Feldsted Andresen to International Sakharov Committee, 10 December 1978, in Kühl Papers.

153. Thorne, "Progress Report," 23 March 1979, in Kline Papers.

154. Brown to Thorne, 13 October 1978, in Box 14, Houghton Library; Thorne to Brown, 3 November 1978, in Box 39, Houghton Library; Brown to Thorne, 28 November 1978; and Thorne to Brown, 14 December 1978, in Box 14, Houghton Library.

155. Thorne to Brown, 14 December 1978. See also Brown to Meany, 9 August 1978.

demands. When that did not work, the Danes briefly considered working with West European trade unions to organize a competing hearing.¹⁵⁶ They also stated that they were already planning the hearing that would come after Washington.¹⁵⁷ In June 1979, the Danes were still pretending to dictate the content of what they persisted in calling a “Labor hearing.”¹⁵⁸ They had, however, reluctantly conceded that they were being sidetracked. They knew that a break with Yankelevich would mean a break with Sakharov, which would lead to the drying up of all significant sources of income and, probably, to the demise of their group.¹⁵⁹

The Washington hearing was well, though not entirely transparently, funded.¹⁶⁰ The two main contributors were the AFL-CIO (\$47,127) and the Smith Richardson Foundation (\$40,000). Somewhat smaller amounts were donated by the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries (\$5,000), the United Federation of Teachers (\$5,000), the Unione Italiana del Lavoro (\$3,100), the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (\$1,000), and the Jewish Documentation Center (\$1,000). The Smith Richardson Foundation, however, did not want its support disclosed.¹⁶¹ As a result, *The Washington Post* reported that the hearing was financed “by unidentified private individuals

156. Feldsted Andresen to Brown, 16 December 1978, in Kühl Papers; and Feldsted Andresen to Kühl, 13 March 1979.

157. The Danes were not really planning anything. They were corresponding with a Spanish journalist, Gabriel Amiama, who was interested in organizing a hearing in Spain. “Rapport fra møde 15.12. 1978,” in Kühl Papers; Osbrandt, “Rapport af ferieophold i Paris fra den 8.4. 1979”; and Amiama (Carta del Este, Prima-Press International) to the U.S. Sakharov Hearing Committee, 3 August 1979, in Kline Papers.

158. Feldsted Andresen to the U.S. Sakharov Hearing Committee, 8 June 1979.

159. U.S. Sakharov Hearing Committee to Danish and Italian Sakharov Hearing Committees, 4 May 1979, in Kline Papers; “Rapport om mødet den 10.2. 1978,” in Kühl Papers; Sakharov to Feldsted Andresen, 12 May 1978; Yankelevich to Kahn, 2 October 1978, in Kühl Papers; Feldsted Andresen to the International Sakharov Committee, 10 December 1978; Thorne to Osbrandt, 12 December 1978, in Kühl Papers; Feldsted Andresen to Brown, 16 December 1978; Thorne to Brown, 22 January 1979, in Kühl Papers; Brown to Feldsted Andresen, 29 January 1979, in Kühl Papers; Feldsted Andresen et al. to Brown, 14 February 1979, in Kühl Papers; Feldsted Andresen to Kühl, 13 March 1979; Kühl to Feldsted Andresen, 16 March 1979; Feldsted Andresen to Brown, 31 March 1979, in Kühl Papers; Brown to Feldsted Andresen, 2 April 1979, in Kühl Papers; Thorne to Osbrandt, 12 April 1979, in Kühl Papers; Brown to Osbrandt, 2 May 1979, in Kühl Papers; Feldsted Andresen to the U.S. Sakharov Hearing Committee, 17 May 1979, in Kühl Papers; Feldsted Andresen to the U.S. Sakharov Hearing Committee, 8 June 1979, in Kühl Papers; Feldsted Andresen, “Til orientering for Sakharov komiteen,” 24 June 1979, in Kühl Papers; Thorne to Feldsted Andresen and Osbrandt, 12 July 1979, in Kühl Papers; and Feldsted Andresen to Thorne, 20 July 1979, in Kühl Papers. See also Thorne to Feldsted Andresen, 14 August 1979, in Corti Papers.

160. Yankelevich to Wiesenthal, April 1980 (received 2 May 1980), in Folder “B I.1.6.,” Box “3. Sakharov Hearing. 1979. USA,” SWA.

161. Randolph Richardson to Myron Kolatch, 12 February 1979, in Kline Papers. See also Bernard Weinraub, “Foundations Assist Conservative Cause,” *The New York Times*, 20 January 1981, p. A25.

and the AFL-CIO.”¹⁶² Yankelevich worried about the secretiveness imposed by the Smith Richardson Foundation, which, he said to the AFL-CIO, “has already caused some harm to the Hearings’ reputation.” He added,

As you undoubtedly know, enterprises similar to the Hearings are often held suspect in regard to their financial support, which, it seems to me, should urge us to avoid such suspicion and not give vent to Soviet propaganda which always maintains that the human rights struggle is financed by the CIA.¹⁶³

The problem was not new, and it proved to be a recurrent one for the Sakharov Hearings.¹⁶⁴

Thorne became executive director and was, as of October 1978, hosted by Freedom House in New York.¹⁶⁵ Overwhelmed by the scale of the work for the hearing, Thorne decided in January 1979 to hire Adrian Karatnycky as assistant director. An executive committee was established comprising Patricia Barnes, Corti, Albert Shanker, Yankelevich, and Roman Kupchinsky (who soon left). The committee held its first meeting in October 1978. The driving force was Thorne, who was the only one working full-time preparing the hearing.¹⁶⁶ Others who provided input during the planning of the hearing included Lane Kirkland, Carl Gershman, Kahn, and George Bailey.¹⁶⁷

The hearing was to have three themes. Two were “Freedom of Movement inside the USSR” and “Socialist Legality.” Neither Yankelevich nor Thorne wanted to devote the hearing solely to workers’ rights, as the Danes had agreed with the AFL-CIO. Thorne did accept that one-and-a-half days out of four could be devoted to that theme, though in a somewhat diluted version under the heading “The Workers’ Question: Economic and Social Rights of Soviet Citizens.” Sidestepping that issue entirely would have been difficult in any

162. Robert Kaiser, “Soviet Dissidents Tell Stories of Life in the Motherland,” *The Washington Post*, 30 September 1979, p. A5.

163. Yankelevich to Kirkland, Richardson, and Sherry, 7 November 1979, in Box 14, Houghton Library.

164. In April 1980 Yankelevich wrote to Wiesenthal, who was expected to co-organize the Fourth Sakharov Hearing: “And please allow me to express my hope that all the sources of financial support will be made public and will not be a subject of any suspicions.” Yankelevich to Wiesenthal, April 1980.

165. Thorne to Sussman, 6 October 1978, in Folder “9,” Box 151, MC 187, 1933–2007, Freedom House Archives, Princeton (FHA); Thorne to Shanker, 6 October 1978, Box 14, Houghton Library; and Adrian Karatnycky, interview, New York, 29 June 2013.

166. “Press Announcement: The International Sakharov Hearings, Third Session, 5.9.1979,” in Folder “International Sakharov Hearings,” Box 34, Alfred M. Loewenthal Papers, HIA; and Thorne to Brown, 3 November 1978.

167. “Candidates for Membership in the International Advisory Board of the U.S. Sakharov Hearings, 1979,” in Box 39, Houghton Library.

case, given that the Washington hearing was heavily funded by the AFL-CIO. However, getting European trade unions to participate proved challenging. Thanks to Brown, two Italian trade unions, the *Unione Italiana del Lavoro* and the *Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori*, pledged to send one representative each, and Thorne asked the Danes to convince other European trade unions to support and participate in the Washington hearing. In the end, however, no prominent European trade unionist showed up.¹⁶⁸ The president of the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions, Thomas Nielsen, made clear to Feldsted Andresen that European trade unions had strong misgivings about a hearing so closely associated with the AFL-CIO, which had recently severed ties with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). Nielsen also wrote to Shanker, flatly refusing any participation unless the ICFTU was involved in the preparation of the hearing, something Thorne ruled out. A basic problem seems to have been a perception among some West European trade unions that the Washington hearing was primarily an ideological anti-Communist operation.¹⁶⁹

Just as in Denmark, the organizers believed that a parliamentary venue would heighten the hearing's visibility, send a positive signal to those in the Soviet Union longing for Western support, and possibly have some kind of political impact.¹⁷⁰ Kahn convinced Senators Daniel P. Moynihan and Howard Baker to act as sponsors and allow for the meeting to take place in the Dirksen Senate Office Building. While this was important, it was less unusual and therefore also less publicity-generating than was holding the first Sakharov Hearing at Christiansborg. Moreover, the Carter administration denied the hearing official U.S. support. Patricia Derian, assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs, voiced her sympathy but refused to attend because that "might have the effect of turning the hearings into a government exercise in Soviet eyes."¹⁷¹

168. Thorne to Brown, 24 July 1979, in Corti Papers; "West European Trade Union Leaders to Be Invited through Irving Brown to Participate in the Sakharov Board and Commission," n.d., in Corti Papers; Thorne, Memorandum, 23 March 1979, in Kline Papers; and Brown to Meany, 9 August 1978.

169. Kühl to Feldsted Andresen, 16 March 1979; and Thomas Nielsen to Shanker, 13 September 1979, in Kline Papers; and Yankelevich to Kirkland, 21 August 1979. Shanker was the president of the United Federation of Teachers (1964–1986) and was deeply involved in the preparation of the Washington hearing. Thorne to Shanker, 6 October 1978, in Kline Papers; and Yankelevich to Kirkland, 21 August 1979.

170. Thorne to Reddaway, 9 August 1979, in Kline Papers.

171. "Media Focus on Fonda, Not Freedom Fighters," *Accuracy in Media Report*, Vol. 8, No. 20, 11 October 1979, newspaper clipping, in Box 14, Houghton Library.

The Washington hearing was nevertheless an important human rights event. It had seven congressional cochairmen: Howard Baker (R-TN), Robert Dole (R-KS), Henry M. Jackson (D-WA), George McGovern (D-SD), Daniel P. Moynihan (D-NY), Claiborne Pell (D-RI), and Richard Stone (D-FL). As in Rome, messages were sent from Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn, the latter read by the writer's wife, Natalia Solzhenitsyn. Chalidze delivered an opening speech. Moreover, the event provided an important meeting place for numerous prominent Soviet-bloc exiles.¹⁷² However, although it did feature in U.S. and international newspapers, media coverage was modest compared to that of the two previous hearings.¹⁷³ According to Corti, this was partly because of the organizers' failure to emphasize relations with the media.¹⁷⁴ In a big country like the United States such a hearing would inevitably have to struggle to be visible at all. Moreover, by 1979 some degree of weariness may have kicked in. Human rights violations in the Soviet bloc were no longer big news four years after the Helsinki Final Act and three years after President Jimmy Carter had pledged to put human rights at the center of U.S. foreign policy.¹⁷⁵ The Washington hearing was also the only one, despite several attempts, that did not lead to a book publication. Nevertheless, Freedom House seems to have judged the event a success.¹⁷⁶

A few months after the Washington hearing, on 22 January 1980, Sakharov was deported to the closed city of Gorky, where he, at least in principle, could no longer communicate with the outside world. In reaction to this,

172. "International Sakharov Hearings: Third Session: USA: Program," in Kline Papers; and Kaiser, "Soviet Dissidents Tell Stories of Life in the Motherland."

173. Albert Shanker, "Media Mostly Ignored Sakharov Hearings," *The New York Times*, 21 October 1979, p. E9; and Thorne to AFL-CIO, Smith Richardson Foundation, and United Church of Christ, 10 October 1979, in Corti Papers.

174. Corti to Pereira, draft letter, 1983, in Corti Papers.

175. Joe Renouard, *Human Rights in American Foreign Policy from the 1960s to the Soviet Collapse* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), pp. 158–159. In a similar vein, Bailey has argued that the reporting was modest mainly because in the United States the hearing was uncontroversial (i.e., its message was largely in tune with that of the Carter administration) and media outlets therefore considered it unnewsworthy. See George Bailey and Nico Nagel, *Künstler im Exil: Kontinent-Autoren im Bild* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1982), pp. 15–17.

176. Both Karatnycky and Thorne subsequently became Freedom House staff. In the immediate aftermath—and most likely as a result—of the hearing, Freedom House created a Center for Appeals for Freedom "to serve as a channel for distribution of dissident literature originating in oppressive regimes around the world, both of the left and the right." See Edward W. O'Brien, "Voice of Dissidence," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 29–30 September 1979. The decision was announced by the Republican Senator Clifford P. Case, and on 22 October 1979 Thorne was appointed director of the new center and editor of Freedom House's publication *Freedom Appeals*. In practice, Thorne was put in charge of Freedom House's Soviet-area programs. Thorne to Sussman, 22 October 1984, in Box 56, Folder "7," FHA; and Thorne, "Memoirs." Karatnycky later became president of Freedom House (1993–2004).

Karatnycky and others involved in the Sakharov Hearings launched the Andrei Sakharov Defense campaign, which, among other efforts, tried to enlist Democratic and Republican support during the run-up to the U.S. presidential election in November 1980. The goal was to launch a worldwide campaign for Sakharov's release.¹⁷⁷ This may have diverted some of the energies that otherwise would have gone into preparing the next hearing.

The Lisbon Hearing

The Lisbon hearing, held amid resurgent Cold War tensions, took place in a country in which the Communist Party and the Portuguese Socialist Party (PSP) had recently engaged in a major ideological battle. This dual context no doubt contributed to the strong politicization of the hearing. Initially, the fourth hearing was supposed to take place in Amsterdam in September 1981. Wiesenthal had suggested, and Yankelevich had accepted, that Ivo Samkalden, former Social Democratic (PvdA) mayor of Amsterdam, would be in charge of its organization, with Wiesenthal in a key supportive role. Sakharov had been consulted, and he had requested that education be one of the hearing's themes.¹⁷⁸ For unknown reasons, the Amsterdam hearing was canceled in late November 1980. Both Britain and Canada were briefly considered as alternative venues, but on 3 December Lyubarsky, with a mandate from Yankelevich, wrote to António Maria Pereira (of the center-right Social Democratic Party, PSD), asking him to organize the fourth session in Lisbon. However,

177. Karatnycky, Statement to the Democratic Party Platform Committee, 10 April 1980, in Folder "B I.1.6," Box "3. Sakharov hearing 1979 USA," SWA; Andrei Sakharov Defense Campaign, "Calendar of Events, April–June 1980," in SWA; and Karatnycky to Wiesenthal, 30 April 1980, in SWA. After leading the Andrei Sakharov Campaign, Karatnycky replaced Kahn as assistant to the AFL-CIO's president, Kirkland, and became involved in the union's drive to assist Solidarity in Poland in the 1980s. Kahn, Shanker, Karatnycky, and Gershman all at one time had been activists in Social Democrats/USA. See Beth Sims, *Workers of the World Undermined: American Labor's Role in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), p. 47; Adrian Karatnycky, "How We Helped Solidarity Win," *The Washington Post*, 27 August 1989, p. A17; and Jack Ross, *The Socialist Party of America: A Complete History* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2015), pp. 522, 525–526, 534–535. Even though this group served as a conduit through which some far-left-wingers evolved into neoconservatives this does not necessarily bear out the thesis of neoconservatism's Trotskyist filiation. For a critical examination of that thesis, see William F. King, "Neoconservatives and Trotskyism," *American Communist History*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2004), pp. 247–266.

178. Wiesenthal suggested Amsterdam as a venue to Yankelevich. Wiesenthal to Samkalden, 19 November 1979, in SWA; Wiesenthal to Feldsted Andresen, 23 June 1980, in Folder "B.I.1.6., Sakharov 1983/84," SWA; and Yankelevich to Wiesenthal, April 1980. Among those involved in the planning of the Amsterdam hearing were Wiesenthal, Corti, Lyubarski, Jules Huf, René Eijbersen, and Ivo Samkalden. Corti, Note, n.d.; and "Sakharov Hearing, Amsterdam 1981," in Corti Papers.

the death of the Portuguese Prime Minister Francisco Sá Carneiro (PSD), a friend and close associate of Pereira, the following day, got in the way.¹⁷⁹ At that stage the organizers must have concluded that the session was unlikely to come together. Nevertheless, after several further delays, the hearing eventually materialized in Lisbon on 12–14 October 1983, at the Ritz Hotel.

Why was Lisbon chosen for the fourth hearing? The answer is not obvious. The presence of a relatively potent Stalinist Communist Party and a strong anti-Communism energized by the experience of the Carnation Revolution and its aftermath in 1974–1975 created a favorable context.¹⁸⁰ The proximity of Madrid, where a CSCE follow-up conference started in November 1981 and lasted until September 1983, probably also weighed in Lisbon's favor. The organizer, Pereira, was a lawyer, a human rights expert, and a politician. Though he had no prior significant involvement in Soviet-bloc matters, he had numerous international, especially U.S., connections. The most obvious link between Pereira and the Sakharov Hearings was Jerome J. Shestack, who participated in both the Washington and the Lisbon hearings. The two lawyers were friends and members of two of the hearing's sponsors: the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ; Pereira was the founder and president of the Portuguese section) and the International League of Human Rights (Stehstack was the long-serving president, Pereira a board member). Both men were also politically active. A Democrat, Shestack had been the U.S. envoy to the UN Commission on Human Rights during the Carter administration (1979–1980), and Pereira was an MP for the centrist PSD and a member of its international committee.¹⁸¹

The executive committee for the Lisbon conference comprised five members: Pereira (president), Dewhirst, Lyubarsky, Corti, and Lénia Lopes (secretary).¹⁸² None of the Portuguese organizers had any notable expertise in Soviet-bloc matters, and Pereira was anyhow busy both as a politician and as

179. Thorne to Wiesenthal, 25 November 1980, in Folder "US Committee for the ISH, Correspondence," Box 39, Houghton Library; Pereira to Lyubarsky, 16 January 1981, in Folder "International Sakharov Hearings, Session IV (Lisbon 1983)," Box 19, Houghton Library; Yankelevich to Kahn, 11 December 1982, in Folder "International Sakharov Hearings, Session IV (Lisbon 1983)," Box 19, Houghton Library; Wiesenthal to Samkalden, 19 November 1979; Yankelevich to Wiesenthal, 29 April 1980, in SWA; R. M. Austraat (on behalf of Wiesenthal) to Samkalden, 13 May 1980, in SWA; and Wiesenthal to Feldsted Andresen, 23 June 1980.

180. Jerome Shestack, "Especial para Portugal," *Diário de notícias*, 14 October 1983, p. 4.

181. Lénia Lopes, interview, Lisbon, 15 April 2013; and "António Maria Pereira," in Assembleia da República, *Biografias dos deputados* (Lisbon: Direção-Geral de Apoio Parlamentar, 1990), n.p. In an interview, Pereira identified the International League of Human Rights as the key link between him and the Sakharov Hearings, which seems to confirm that Shestack was indeed the decisive connection, as indicated in *O País*, 13 October 1983, p. 34.

182. "Audiências Sakharov, Lisboa" (Program), in Lénia Lopes Papers.

a lawyer.¹⁸³ As far as dissident participation was concerned, the three non-Portuguese members of the organizing committee were the key players. Corti, Lyubarsky, and Dewhirst had all been involved in at least one Sakharov Hearing, and they all had extensive knowledge of the dissident milieu (Dewhirst had smuggled texts for the NTS in the early 1960s and later cooperated with Radio Liberty).¹⁸⁴ Although overall responsibility for the hearing and many practicalities lay with the Portuguese, nearly all of the substantive input came from Corti, Dewhirst, and Lyubarsky. Decisions were made during meetings in Geneva or discussed via correspondence.

As usual, funding was a challenge. Corti tried to convince Berlusconi to contribute again, and Pereira was in touch with various U.S. grant-making foundations.¹⁸⁵ The Friedrich Naumann Foundation agreed to contribute a modest sum.¹⁸⁶ In the end, the organizers “[raised] considerable (public) funding,” the exact nature of which has not been elucidated.¹⁸⁷

After some hesitation, the organizing committee agreed to call the event a “hearing” (*audiências*) rather than a “tribunal.”¹⁸⁸ Another complicated issue was where to position the hearing on the left-right political spectrum. The organizers decided to ask Portuguese Prime Minister Mário Soares, leader of the PSP, to be the honorary president of the hearing along with Wiesenthal. The latter, however, had to cancel his participation because of a schedule conflict.¹⁸⁹ Soares’s anti-Communist credentials were impeccable, and the nomination of the Socialist leader limited the potential for a drift to the right.

183. Pereira to Dewhirst, 2 November 1982, in Corti Papers.

184. Draft list of members of the questioning panel, 22 September 1975, in Kühl Papers; Corti to Pereira, draft letter, n.d., in Corti Papers; Corti to Ripa di Meana, 4 May 1982, in Corti Papers; and Ann Komaromi, “Samizdat as Extra-Gutenberg Phenomenon,” *Poetics Today*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (Winter 2008), p. 655.

185. Corti to Moccagatta, 12 September 1982; and Dewhirst to Pereira, 9 July 1983, Corti Papers. Moccagatta was apparently one of several go-betweens when Corti needed to get in touch with Berlusconi both in 1977 as the Rome hearing was being prepared and afterward. Moccagatta was a former student at Centro Europa Scuola Educazione e Società and was for a while “the right-hand man of Berlusconi,” according to Johanna Bockman, *Markets in the Name of Socialism: The Left-Wing Origins of Neoliberalism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 154.

186. Bernd Scheitterlein (Friedrich Naumann Foundation) to Pereira, 6 October 1983, in Lopes Papers.

187. Yankelevich to Kahn, 11 December 1982. Tom Gehrels, who had been invited to Lisbon as a “Jury Member” of the fourth hearing, mentioned that he and the other members of the panel were “guests of the Portuguese government.” See Tom Gehrels, *On the Glassy Sea: An Astronomer’s Journey* (New York: BookSurge, 1988), p. 152.

188. In the Portuguese Communist press the hearing was systematically referred to as “audiênCIA.” See, for example, “AudiênCIA Sakharov começa hoje em Lisboa,” *O diário* (Lisbon), 12 October 1983, p. 6.

189. Dewhirst to Pereira, 23 June 1983, in Corti Papers. In the end Corti did not participate, either.

Moreover, the Lisbon hearing was to be devoted to four issues: Sakharov; workers' rights; intellectual and artistic freedom in the Soviet bloc, mainly the Soviet Union; and, as part of a special session, Poland.¹⁹⁰ The focus on workers' rights was an idea originally advanced by the Danish committee and the AFL-CIO for the Washington hearing. Their aim was to highlight the gap between ideology and reality in the Communist countries, thus undermining the attractiveness of the Soviet model among left-wingers.¹⁹¹

The Danes needed to be assuaged or at least "approached soon and kept informed."¹⁹² Feldsted Andresen was invited to Lisbon, where he gave one of the opening speeches. A striking and innovative feature of the Lisbon hearing was the significant French presence: Alain Besançon, Revel, André Glucksmann, Bernard-Henri Lévy, and Jean Elleinstein participated. The international roster—and Glucksmann's participation especially—contributed to securing broad coverage of the hearing in the Portuguese media.¹⁹³

The Lisbon hearing was the most unapologetically political of the five Sakharov Hearings. It was organized by a prominent member of the PSD and postponed several times because of local political developments.¹⁹⁴ It received substantial public funding, and the Portuguese government was heavily involved, with Prime Minister Soares as honorary president, Deputy Prime Minister Carlos Mota Pinto (PSD) and Pereira (PSD) giving opening speeches, and Soares giving the closing speech. Several other Portuguese politicians also participated, including Maria Barroso, a prominent PSP leader (and Soares's wife). Blunt statements were made during the hearing. Pereira situated it squarely in the conflict between "two political philosophies: the pluralist democracy which respects human rights and totalitarianism, which suppresses them."¹⁹⁵ Deputy Prime Minister Mota Pinto condemned the

190. Presidência do Conselho de Ministros, "Audiências Sakharov," n.d., in Papers of Mário Soares, Fundação Mário Soares; and "International Sakharov Hearings, 4th Session, Lisbon," press release, in Box 19, Houghton Library.

191. Dewhirst to Pereira, 6 February 1983, in Corti Papers.

192. Dewhirst to Pereira, 23 June 1983, in Corti Papers.

193. "União Soviética espezinha e anula os direitos dos seus cidadãos," *Diário de notícias* (Lisbon), 13 October 1983, p. 4; "Audiências Sakharov condenam URSS e Polónia," *Diário popular* (Lisbon), 13 October 1983, p. 6; João Carlos Espada, "André Glucksmann: 'Um intelectual não é um senhor que não se engana,'" *Expresso* (Lisbon), 15 October 1983, p. 29; and Hélène Carrère d'Encausse to Pereira, 24 October 1983, in Lopes Papers. The proceedings were published in Russian. Semyon Reznik, ed., *The Fourth International Sakharov Hearing: Lisbon, October 1983* (London: Overseas Publications Interchange, 1985). A planned Portuguese version never materialized. See Lyubarsky to Lopes, 4 July 1986, in Lopes Papers.

194. Dewhirst to Pereira, 17 March 1983, in Corti Papers; and Tel., Pereira to Lyubarsky, n.d., in Folder "International Sakharov Hearings, Session IV (Lisbon 1983)," Box 19, Houghton Library.

195. Pereira's opening speech, in Box 19, Houghton Library.

Soviet regime as a historically unprecedented “strong and violent totalitarianism.”¹⁹⁶ The quasi-official government participation in the hearing triggered debates in the Portuguese parliament. A motion of protest by the left-wing Portuguese Democratic Movement/Democratic Electoral Commissions was rejected. Instead, the parliamentary majority voted in support of the hearing.¹⁹⁷ The hearing’s resolution demanded that Sakharov be set free and asked West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher to raise the issue of Sakharov’s freedom with the Soviet leader Yurii Andropov during his upcoming visit to Moscow.¹⁹⁸

The London Hearing

The fifth hearing was held in the London Press Center on 10–11 April 1985. Yankelevich was heavily involved in the choice of London as venue. In February 1984, when he and Dewhirst discussed plans for a fifth hearing, they agreed that they should ask Allan Wynn to join them. Wynn, an Australian physician who had moved to London in 1972, was a veteran among Western supporters of Soviet-bloc dissidents. Inspired by Rosemary Winckley and Markham, he had, from 1973 onward, been increasingly involved in supporting Soviet-bloc dissidents such as Bukovsky, Ginzburg, and Piotr Grigorenko. In 1982, he succeeded Reddaway as chairman of the Working Group on Internment of Dissenters in Mental Hospitals, and the following year he became a member of the board of Edward Lozansky’s U.S.-based Andrei Sakharov Institute. Wynn’s focus was on human rights. He clearly sympathized with Markham’s dismay at how a Soviet exile such as Bukovsky “had been taken under the wing of people whose devotion to rightwing causes appeared to be greatly in excess of their concern with human rights.”¹⁹⁹ In the summer of 1984, Yankelevich contacted Wynn and suggested that he be in charge of the London hearing. Wynn initially was skeptical, arguing “that the Sakharovs

196. “União Soviética espezinha e anula os direitos dos seus cidadãos,” p. 4. Formally, Mota Pinto spoke in a personal capacity and not as deputy prime minister.

197. “1. sess. leg., Reunião Plenária,” *Diário da Assembleia da República*, 13 October 1983, pp. 1,467–1,468; and “1. sess. leg., Reunião Plenária,” *Diário da Assembleia da República*, 20 October 1983, pp. 1,566, 1,590–1,599.” See also <http://debates.parlamento.pt>; and Lyubarsky to James Buckley, 1 December 1983, in Box 19, Houghton Library.

198. “Secretariado das ‘Audiências Sakharov’ pede intercessão de Genscher junto de Andropov,” *A Capital*, 14 October 1983, p. 4; and Tel., Glucksmann et al. to Genscher, in Box 19, Houghton Library.

199. Allan Wynn, *Notes of a Non-Conspirator: Working with Russian Dissidents* (London: André Deutsch, 1987), pp. 37, 60.

[were] to be hostages to Reagan's re-election prospects."²⁰⁰ He had some general misgivings too:

I had been warned by friends who had been involved in the organization of earlier Hearings that, perhaps inevitably, they provided a forum in which disparate dissident groups tried to gain media attention for their views, some of which were, to put it mildly, somewhat extreme.²⁰¹

He feared the potential political impact of the hearing. Ten years after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, Yankelevich wanted the hearing to evaluate Soviet compliance and then to draw conclusions on the desirability of sticking to a policy of détente.²⁰² Because Soviet compliance with the human rights provisions of the agreement left much to be desired, Wynn feared that the final recommendation of such an evaluation would be that the whole process ought to be scrapped, a step that, in his view, would be a serious mistake.²⁰³ Having discussed the issue with Max Kampelman, head of the U.S. delegation at the CSCE meeting in Madrid, and with the British CSCE team, he felt confident that his viewpoint was aligned with official U.S. and British policy. Thus, in part to prevent an undesirable outcome, Wynn accepted responsibility for the hearing. He asked Dewhirst to be in charge of the practical preparations, and an executive committee comprising Dewhirst, Reddaway, and Michael Scammell was established. The London hearing thus assembled a group of exceptionally knowledgeable people, with Wynn and Dewhirst as the driving forces.²⁰⁴ Bourdeaux and his staff from Keston College were also among those who contributed.²⁰⁵

200. Wynn to Dewhirst, 14 July 1984, in Kline Papers; Jack Lennard to Dewhirst, 1 March 1984, in Kline Papers; Yankelevich to Lennard, 18 February 1984, in Kline Papers; Lennard to Yankelevich, 14 March 1984, in Kline Papers; and Yankelevich to Lennard, 14 April 1984, in Kline Papers.

201. Wynn, *Notes of a Non-Conspirator*, p. 177.

202. In March 1985, Yankelevich invited the mayor of Paris, Jacques Chirac, whom he had met during the summer of 1984, to the planned Sakharov Hearing in London and added, "I was pleased to learn that you share my opinion that the suspension of [the] Helsinki Accords, or at least a threat to suspend them, could make [the] Soviet government more sensitive to the Western opinion on their human rights abuses." See Yankelevich to Chirac, 5 March 1985, in Box 21, Houghton Library.

203. Wynn, *Notes of a Non-Conspirator*, pp. 177–188; Yankelevich to Lennard, 18 February 1984; Dewhirst to Lennard, 28 February 1984; Yankelevich to Lennard, 14 April 1984; and Yankelevich to Wiesenthal, 7 January 1984, in Box 21, Houghton Library. Yankelevich's first choice was Scammell. Wynn agreed to take over only because Scammell was unavailable. See Wynn to Gershman, n.d. (probably second half of February 1985), in Box 21, Houghton Library.

204. Dewhirst, "Notes on Discussions between EY, AW and MD 10/84," 9 November 1984, in Box 21, Houghton Library; Yankelevich to Wynn, 6 December 1984, in Box 21, Houghton Library; and Wynn, *Notes of a Non-conspirator*, pp. 177–188.

205. Dewhirst to Bourdeaux, 11 July 1985.

What made the hearing possible at all was the early securing of substantial U.S. funding. The bulk of the expenses were covered by a contribution that Yankelevich obtained from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).²⁰⁶ The London hearing also benefited from practical assistance from the U.S. Helsinki Commission.²⁰⁷ Expenses were further kept down by using Wynn's apartment as the office for the executive committee and by letting Wynn cover some of the administrative expenses.²⁰⁸ As for the event itself, the organizers first sought to have the London School of Economics (LSE) host it. However, LSE administrators decided "it would not be in the best interests of the School to become involved in such a contentious issue."²⁰⁹ The London Press Center was thus chosen in its stead.

Wiesenthal agreed to chair the hearing's panel. Against Yankelevich's wishes, Wynn and Dewhirst opted for a shortened, two- rather than three-day conference. Their goal was for the hearing to have an impact through the media rather than be a "talk fest," and they thus believed that length might be a handicap rather than an advantage.²¹⁰

The organizers tried to elicit a statement of support from British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, but this effort was unsuccessful.²¹¹ However, they did manage to gather a strong group of participants. The London hearing brought together many prominent figures: seasoned Sakharov Hearings participants, policymakers (e.g., U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Elliott Abrams and U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Mark Palmer), government officials (e.g., John MacGregor, assistant head of

206. Dewhirst to Lawrence Elliott, 30 September 1985; Dewhirst, "Notes on Discussions between EY, AW and MD 10/84"; Dewhirst to Charles Janson, 10 January 1985, in Box 21, Houghton Library; Wynn to Yankelevich, 17 February 1985, Box 21, Houghton Library; and Wynn to Gershman, n.d. The NED was established in 1984 as a private organization that was publicly funded through yearly U.S. congressional allocations. From 1984 to 2021, Gershman served as the NED's president. See Robert Pee, "The Rise of Political Aid: The National Endowment for Democracy and the Reagan Administration's Cold War Strategy," in Robert Pee and William Michael Schmidli, eds., *The Reagan Administration, the Cold War, and the Transition to Democracy Promotion* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 51–74.

207. Dewhirst to Dante B. Fascell (Chairman, U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe), 22 March 1985, in Kline Papers.

208. Martin Dewhirst, interview, London, 29 August 2013; Wynn to Yankelevich, 17 February 1985; Wynn to Gershman, n.d. (probably second half of February 1985), in Kline Papers; and "Revised Budget," December 1984, in Kline Papers.

209. Dewhirst to Barrett, 28 May 1984, in Kline Papers; and Barrett to Dewhirst, 7 June 1984, in Kline Papers.

210. Wynn, *Notes of a Non-Conspirator*, p. 180; and Wynn to Yankelevich, 29 November 1984, in Kline Papers.

211. Dewhirst to Reddaway, 31 March 1985, in Kline Papers.

the UK Foreign Office's Soviet Department, Cathy Cosman from the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe), and leaders of non-governmental organizations (e.g., Gerald Nagler, director of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, and Paul Sieghart, chairman of the British section of the ICJ).²¹² A key distinguishing feature of the London hearing was that it gathered experts and decision-makers rather than witnesses. Whereas ambitions to have a domestic impact may have been paramount in Copenhagen and possibly also in Lisbon, the fifth hearing, to a greater extent than any of the others, sought to affect the CSCE process.

The London hearing was scheduled for just before the beginning of the CSCE follow-up conference in Ottawa in order to maximize its chances of having an impact on the latter's proceedings.²¹³ Moreover, the theme chosen for the hearing was domestic developments in the Soviet Union in the first decade after the Helsinki Final Act. The idea was to evaluate the degree to which the Soviet Union had lived up to the commitments entered into in 1975.²¹⁴ Abrams, the Reagan administration's representative at the hearing, defended continued involvement in the Helsinki process, emphasizing that "CSCE is a valuable forum for carrying on the human rights struggle" between the West and the Soviet bloc.²¹⁵ Yankelevich reiterated Sakharov's principled support for détente. However, he also emphasized what he termed "the Sakharov doctrine": that peace and human rights were indivisible and that any détente worthy of the name implied progress for human rights and democracy in the Soviet Union too.²¹⁶ The hearing concluded with a

212. "Fifth International Sakharov Hearing" (Program), in Folder "5. Hearing, London, 4/85, Korrespondenz," Box "S.H. 1985 + Andere Veranst.," SWA. Patricia Derian initially accepted an invitation but later had to cancel. See Derian to Wynn, 27 February 1985, in Box 21, Houghton Library. According to the *Jewish Chronicle*, which had spoken with Wynn, John MacGregor "represented" UK Foreign Minister Malcolm Rifkind. See "Soviet Jews Ignored in Rights Probe," *Jewish Chronicle* (London), 19 April 1985, newspaper clipping, in SWA.

213. Dewhirst to Jeri Laber, 4 February 1985, in Box 48, HRWA. The organizers specifically ruled out the discussion of socioeconomic rights: "It has been unanimously agreed that the topic dealing with living conditions in the USSR is outside the scope of Helsinki—we do not accept that socioeconomic facts are human rights as the Soviets claim (as an excuse for the denial of political rights)." See Yankelevich to Lyman, 17 November 1984, in Box 21, Houghton Library.

214. "Fifth International Sakharov Hearing," press release, n.d., in Kline Papers.

215. Elliott Abrams, "Influencing Soviet Human Rights Policy," in Allan Wynn, ed., *Fifth International Sakharov Hearing* (London: André Deutsch, 1986), p. 150.

216. Wynn, *Notes of a Non-Conspirator*, pp. 180–181. This view was widely shared by other Soviet-bloc dissidents. See, for example, Elisabetta Vezzosi, "The Committee of Concerned Scientists and the Helsinki Final Act: 'Refusenik' Scientists, Détente and Human Rights," in Nicolas Badalassi and Sarah B. Snyder, eds., *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War: Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972–1990* (New York: Berghahn, 2019), p. 126.

resolution that appealed to the participants in the Ottawa “meeting of Experts to prepare the meeting on Compliance with Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms” to consider the material gathered by the Fifth Sakharov Hearing, to improve the human rights situation in the Soviet Union, and to secure Sakharov’s freedom.²¹⁷ The hearing seems to have had a significant media impact.²¹⁸ In addition, Dewhirst and Wynn believed that it had an impact on the CSCE process and on British human rights policy:

[We] feel we made some impact on the Ottawa meeting in May and June. So far as Britain is concerned, we were taken seriously (after, I suspect, some initial misgivings) by “the authorities,” with whom we remain in close touch. Human rights, both in general and always with some carefully chosen specific cases, are now automatically raised by UK representatives every time they meet with any Soviet officials. Dr. Wynn and I feel that we have made, and will continue to make, a worthwhile input here.²¹⁹

Wiesenthal, who had not been involved in the preparations, told Wynn that “he had never attended an event with greater international impact.”²²⁰ The extent to which the London hearing actually had this alleged impact is an issue still needing to be explored.

217. Yankelevich to Yale Richmond, 24 April 1985 (misdated 1984), in Box 21, Houghton Library.

218. See, for example, “Out of Balance” (editorial), *The Times* (London), 9 April 1985, newspaper clipping, in SWA; “Trumpet Call” (editorial), *The Times*, 15 April 1985, newspaper clipping, in SWA; “Moskau unterdrückt die Krim-Tataren,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 12 April 1985, newspaper clipping, in HRWA; and Yankelevich to Jeri Laber and Robert Bernstein, 26 April 1985, in Box 48, HRWA.

219. Dewhirst to Elliott, 30 September 1985. Tracing the origins of such ideas and practices is obviously difficult. Bourdeaux, involved in the London hearing as a sponsor, adviser, speaker, and provider of practical assistance, was an adviser to Thatcher on human rights issues (1983–1989) and a member of the conservative advisory group Centre for Policy Studies. See Dewhirst to Bourdeaux, 11 July 1985. Bourdeaux, Wynn, and Dewhirst all pushed for more explicit support of dissidents during official British visits to Soviet-bloc countries. Michael Bourdeaux, interview, Iffley, UK, 27 August 2013; and Dewhirst to Elliott, 30 September 1985. See also Mark Hurst, *British Human Rights Organizations and Soviet Dissent, 1965–1985* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), p. 138. Whether for this reason or some other, Sir Geoffrey Howe (foreign secretary, 1983–1989) did initiate dissident contacts and advised his fellow Western foreign ministers to do the same. Howe’s prompting is what inspired Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen (Liberal Party) to meet dissidents in Czechoslovakia in March 1989. Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, interview, Hellerup, Denmark, 5 August 2014. Wynn’s and Dewhirst’s connection with Thatcher allowed them to arrange a meeting between the prime minister and Bonner when Sakharov’s wife was in London in May 1986. Wynn, *Notes of a Non-conspirator*, pp. 193, 198–199. See also Dewhirst to Rifkind, 23 January 1985, in Kline Papers; and Roland (Foreign Office, Soviet Section, Research Department) to Sheinwald, 5 November 1982, in FCO28/5093, The National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNAUK).

220. Wynn to Lennard, 16 April 1985, in Box 21, Houghton Library.

An Overall Assessment: Right-Wing Transnational Human Rights Activism?

The International Sakharov Hearings can be depicted as a series of international citizens' tribunals that resulted from right-wing transnational human rights activism pursued in Sakharov's name in the context of the Helsinki process. Each component of this characterization, however, must be qualified or at least explained.

“International Citizens’ Tribunals”

The Sakharov Hearings fit into the pattern of what are customarily called “international citizens’ tribunals.” Initiated in the 1930s, tribunals achieved a renaissance of sorts with the 1967 Russell Tribunal on the Vietnam War.²²¹ Since then, numerous citizens’ tribunals have been set up, some with an international scope, others with a domestic focus. A full explanation of why the phenomenon of the tribunal expanded after the early 1960s is beyond the scope of this article, but among the factors suggested by observers are the “democratization” of foreign policy in the 1960s, the anti-Vietnam War protest movements, and the rise of various social movements in Western countries. The first Sakharov Hearing was presented as a necessary corrective and complement to the Russell Tribunal and included such classic components of international citizens’ tribunals as a “prosecution” (the opening statements); a trial and examination of the evidence (witnesses); the involvement of victims; the absence of any kind of defense (a feature occasionally deplored by some participants); the testimony of lawyers, scholars, and other experts; references to legal documents and international agreements (human rights legislation and the Helsinki Final Act); media participation; attempts to have a broader impact; a strong political agenda; and a verdict (conclusions of the hearing). As international citizens’ tribunals, the Sakharov Hearings were remarkable for their institutional fluidity. No single secretariat was in charge of all the hearings, and it is difficult even now to determine who was really in charge of each individual hearing.

The expression “citizens’ tribunal” is also misleading. The initiatives were taken not by ordinary citizens but by small groups of activists, and the “tribunals” were not really tribunals; they were political rather than legal events. Even among the organizers the term “tribunal” was controversial.

221. Klinghoffer and Klinghoffer, *International Citizens’ Tribunals*, p. 103 ff.

The “Moscow Appeal” called for a tribunal, and the Danes initially used that term, but they soon shifted to the more neutral “hearing.” The Italians were torn. The official name given to the Rome event was “*udienze*” (hearing), in line with Corti’s thinking. However, some members of the organizing group preferred “tribunal,” and the Italian press generally referred to the event as the “Tribunale Sacharov.” After Corti’s exit, those in charge of the publication of the proceedings titled the book *Tribunale Sacharov*, a term that has stuck to the Rome event ever since. Both in Washington and in Lisbon the official name was “hearing,” but occasionally, though rarely in the U.S. case, the word “tribunal” was used in non-official correspondence. In London the event was consistently referred to as a “hearing.”²²²

“Right-Wing”

Most human rights transnational activism in the 1970s can be labeled “left-wing,” at least in its origin.²²³ The Sakharov Hearings appear to be the odd case out. One scholar, Arthur Blaser, has argued that participants in the Sakharov Hearings leaned to the right.²²⁴ His characterization is generally accurate, though in need of qualification. The first hearing was organized by rightwing anti-Communists whose primary concern was to wage a domestic political battle against the left. For those organizers, countering the efforts of the Russell Tribunal by shifting the focus from “Western” to “Eastern” human rights violations was essential. For the remaining hearings, however, the story is more complicated. Russia Christiana had a rightwing reputation, reinforced by its links with *Comunione e Liberazione*. Some even labeled it “fascist,” and some believed it to be CIA-financed.²²⁵ The Washington organizers were

222. Thorne occasionally called the Washington event a “tribunal.” Thorne to Sakharov Hearings Executive Committee Members, Counsel, and Staff and Tom Kahn, Myron Kolatch, Steve Brooks, Roger Kaplan, Roman Kupchinsky, Heather Richardson, Irving Brown, 29 August 1979, in Box 14, Houghton Library. The Lisbon hearing was initially called “Tribunale Internazionale Sakharov” before changing its name to “audiências.” Pereira to Lyubarsky, 13 September 1982, in Corti Papers; and Dewhirst to Pereira, 9 July 1983.

223. Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 4, 168; and Van Dongen, Roulin, and Scott-Smith, eds., *Transnational Anti-Communism*, p. 9.

224. Blaser, “How to Advance Human Rights,” pp. 354–355.

225. On the close links between Russia Cristiana and *Comunione e Liberazione* that developed from the mid-1960s, see Colognesi, *Russia Cristiana*, pp. 100–102. Alberti sympathized with the Movimento Popolare (she considered it “the healthiest group in Italy”), a rightwing Christian Democrat party founded by Roberto Formigoni. Thorne to Sussman, 1 July 1986, in Folder “1,” Box 107, Series 4, FHA. On the links between Russia Cristiana and Movimento Popolare, see Colognesi, *Russia Cristiana*, p. 162.

hosted by Freedom House and later made careers within that organization, whose take on the human rights issue was arguably conservative; its leaders saw the issue as a key one in the Cold War but wanted to limit its application to civil and political rights.²²⁶ The Lisbon hearing was organized by a centrist or center-right politician. The organizers of the London hearing subscribed to the view that socioeconomic rights did not qualify as human rights, but they do not otherwise appear to have had a strongly party-political affiliation, though Wynn disapproved of what he saw as extremist right-wing views. The only high-profile policymaker among the London speakers was Abrams, assistant secretary for human rights in the Reagan administration, and he was not particularly popular among human rights activists. However, the London hearing had a greater political fluidity than a “rightwing” label might lead us to believe. From the outset, the organizers of Sakharov Hearings made an effort to obtain sponsors and participants from the non-Communist left and occasionally even from among Eurocommunists. The Copenhagen group was so satisfied with Social Democrat Ole Espersen’s role during the first hearing that they ensured, despite their disagreements with him, that he was one of a few Danes to serve on the panel for the Rome hearing, with his trip and stay fully covered.²²⁷ When Corti in 1982 gave Pereira tips for a successful hearing, he wrote,

When organizing the Hearings in Italy I realized that another precondition for their full success was the involvement of representatives of the whole political spectrum, and, specifically, of representatives of political forces that, presumably, would have assumed the most critical attitude toward the hearings. So, for example, we succeeded in involving Senator Umberto Terracini . . . a member of the Communist Party’s Central Committee.²²⁸

For both the second and the fourth hearings, a Social Democratic executive director was considered as an option (Lie and Ivo Samkalden respectively), and a Socialist, Soares, was the Lisbon hearing’s honorary president, final keynote speaker, and host of a dinner for the participants.²²⁹ Political considerations also affected the content of some of the hearings, and they help to explain the attention given to workers’ rights in the Soviet Union. These generally

226. Carl J. Bon Tempo, “From the Center-Right: Freedom House and Human Rights in the 1970s and 1980s,” in Petra Goedde and William Hitchcock, eds., *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 223–244.

227. “Møde den 15.12. 1977,” in Kühl Papers; and “Møde den 1.8. 1977,” in Kühl Papers.

228. Corti to Pereira, draft letter, n.d. See also “Møde den 30.3. 1977.”

229. Alexeyeva, “On the Sakharov Hearings,” pp. 55–56.

moderate left-of-center participants did not always limit themselves to just putting in an appearance. They sometimes intervened and helped shape the hearings. Even though the Copenhagen hearing was organized by right-wing anti-Communists with a domestic political agenda, many key subsequent organizers appear to have been primarily and genuinely preoccupied with human rights issues rather than with any kind of party politics. The hearings did not lend themselves to easy or simplistic political categorization.²³⁰

“Transnationalism”

All the hearings had a dual nature. Each was steeped in a particular setting, had unique features reflecting its national, political, cultural, and temporal context, as well as more contingent or agency-related characteristics connected to the specific group of organizers. And yet, the International Sakharov Hearings are an obvious and original case of transnationalism in “the long 1970s.” Each was part of a transnational process, and they all shared certain features. Organized by non-state actors, the hearings took place in five different capitals. Each hearing involved organizers, sponsors, multiple categories of participants (e.g., witnesses, panel members, audiences, chairs), fundraising by non-state actors (Bible-smuggling groups, the National Endowment for Democracy, and various foundations, trade unions, and individuals), and most achieved a broad impact through international media coverage. Moreover, the hearings were all part of a single transnational process. The first hearing would not have taken place without the “Moscow Appeal.” None of the subsequent hearings would have been imaginable without the previous ones. There was also a basic continuity between the hearings. They shared not just the name but also concepts and organization, the human rights theme, and several individuals, networks, and milieux. The International Sakharov Committee (the Copenhagen committee), Wiesenthal, and the Sakharov family were involved in all five hearings. The Sakharov family (Bonner, Sakharov, and Yankelevich) played key roles in deciding the location and giving the go-ahead to each of the gatherings. Several additional individuals played a role

230. In 1982, a British Foreign Office official related his conversation with Corti and Dewhirst. He reported their critical remarks about some Soviet dissidents and then continued: “Dewhirst . . . spoke of the tactical need for the West to support Russian nationalist dissidents who had a greater chance of achieving popularity than the human rights activists. This is, of course, a popular theme with some emigrants—including the NTS—and certain Western academics and, naturally, highly unpopular with most Jewish emigrants. Dewhirst argued that such an approach would be a more realistic way of trying to disintegrate the system from within, even if at first an unpleasant fascist type of State might emerge.” See Roland to Sheinwald, 13 April 1982, FCO28/5093, TNAUK.

in most or all of the hearings: Corti, Thorne, Dewhirst, Bourdeaux, Gerstenmaier, Lyubarsky, and Reddaway. Among the recurring networks and milieux were the Bible-smuggling community (Keston College, the Danish Europe Mission, and other Scandinavian Bible-smuggling groups, Russia Cristiana, etc.); several exile Soviet groups (including *La Pensée russe*, *Kontinent*, possibly also the NTS); the ICJ (Sieghart, Shestack, and Pereira); and the International League of Human Rights (Shestack and Pereira). One means of signaling continuity was for the organizers of previous hearings to be given the opportunity to address all the participants at the opening of the next hearing.²³¹ Finally, this transnationalism involved not only intra-Western cooperation but also East-West cooperation among Westerners, Soviet-bloc dissidents (Sakharov and Bonner in particular), and exiles.

The many links between those involved in the Sakharov Hearings obeyed different and often overlapping logics. In some cases, the links were professional or expertise-based. Reddaway was a professor at the LSE, Dewhirst was a lecturer at Glasgow University, and both were experts on Soviet politics—as academics and as activists. Although Corti was not an academic scholar, he too became an expert on the Soviet Union.²³² For some, opposition to Communism or human rights activism provided the glue (Feldsted Andresen, Gerstenmaier, Thorne, Wynn, Reddaway, Corti, and Dewhirst were all, in various ways, engaged in anti-Communist or human rights–related activities).²³³ For still others, links, whether positive or hostile, were created because the Soviet bloc was a deeply personal issue (e.g., émigrés involved in exile politics).

The International Sakharov Hearings provided a transnational public sphere in which conflicts were waged.²³⁴ The provenance of these conflicts was not always easy to identify. Some were personal, and others were presented as cultural (both the Danes and the British pointed fingers at the Soviet émigrés’ alleged penchant for infighting, self-righteousness, and

231. Yankelevich to Pereira, 14 September 1983, in Box 19, Houghton Library. The London hearing was different in that respect as well. Feldsted Andresen was invited to attend but not to give a speech.

232. A British Foreign Office official praised Corti for doing “a highly professional job” as second in command of Radio Liberty’s Arkhiv Samizdata. Roland to Sheinwald, 13 April 1982.

233. An example: Gerstenmaier, daughter of former Bundestag President Eugen Gerstenmaier, formed together with Thorne and Markham what Thorne called “Bukovsky’s troika” because of their active role in support of Bukovsky until his release in December 1975. Thorne, “Memoirs,” p. 194. Gerstenmaier met Bukovsky during a visit to Moscow in 1970. Bukovsky, interview.

234. On divisions among Soviet dissident exiles, see Vaissié, “Le combat des dissidents de Russie en Occident,” pp. 151–154. On conflicts in Soviet-bloc exile circles, see also Stéphane Dufoix, *Politiques d’exil: Hongrois, Polonais et Tchécoslovaques en France après 1945* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002), pp. 79–85.

long-windedness).²³⁵ Some conflicts boiled down to power struggles (who should have overall responsibility for the hearings—the International Sakharov Committee? another competing institution? the successive organizing committees? Yankelevich?). Some controversies were clearly political, pitting different strands within the Soviet émigré community (such as liberals and nationalists) against each other. Similarly, proponents of détente were opposed to those who advocated that the Helsinki process be scrapped and to other Cold Warrior anti-Communists. Human rights activists who preferred to focus on civil and political rights were at odds with those who believed that socioeconomic rights were also human rights and were therefore topics relevant for the Sakharov Hearings.²³⁶ Underlying all of this was sometimes an ethical tension between those who took an anything-goes approach in fighting the Soviet Union and those who insisted on truth and objectivity.²³⁷

But did the International Sakharov Hearings represent a transnational turn? Transnationalism was not new.²³⁸ Those who organized the hearings had often been involved in transnational activities in the 1960s or even earlier. Many had participated in international anti-Communist networks or in transnational exile politics (Bible-smuggling, ACEN, ABN, EFC).²³⁹ Cooperation between the organizers of the different Sakharov Hearings was greatly facilitated by preexisting personal links and international organizations and networks. Yet, the hearings did represent a transnational turn insofar as they led to a deepening and broadening of international contacts before, during, and after each hearing. Where did this turn lead? The tempting conclusion is

235. See, for example, Wynn, *Notes of a Non-Conspirator*, p. 180: “Russians are very rarely brief when given a public opportunity to air their views. On the contrary, they always seem to be convinced that what they have to say is epoch-making and that, irrespective of prior agreement, they must be given unlimited time to say it.” The time allotted to the speakers or their lack of self-discipline tended to spark acrimony at most of the hearings.

236. Jappelli, “Cronache del ‘Tribunale Sacharov.’” Corti emphasized that for criticism of Soviet-bloc human rights violations to be credible, activists also had to be willing to criticize “Western” human rights violations: “I would like to express my hope that the concern for human rights in the so-called Socialist bloc not lead to the easing of our own consciences but would always be accompanied by an identical concern for the implementation of human rights in our own country, in our own home. If this were not so, then our work could be described in many convenient ways, but it could not be described as a true concern for human rights.” Corti, Notes for speech to the Washington hearing, n.d., in Corti Papers.

237. Corti, Note, n.d.; and Wynn, *Notes of a Non-Conspirator*, pp. 31, 43–44, 93–94.

238. Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present and Future* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013).

239. See, for example, Slava Stetsko to Kühl, 27 August 1982, in Kühl Papers; and Kühl to Yaroslav Stetsko, 15 August 1982, in Kühl Papers.

. . . nowhere. In the five countries that hosted the Sakharov Hearings, hardly any visible legacy or memory of them remains.²⁴⁰

Such a stark judgment, however, may give short shrift to their actual impact. The available evidence suggests that the International Sakharov Hearings did matter at the time they took place. Before concluding that the hearings had no long-term impact, more thorough studies will be needed on the effects of the hearings in the host countries. In principle, many kinds of impact are conceivable. In Denmark the first hearing has been used in memory wars concerning the Cold War. In the United States the third hearing probably influenced the subsequent development of Freedom House and, especially, its focus on Afghanistan and the Soviet bloc.²⁴¹ The London hearing may have had an influence on British human rights policy. All of the hearings—especially the last two—involved a dialogue between non-state actors and policymakers, the impact of which we know too little about. These are some of the issues that deserve further investigation.

“Human Rights”

To what extent were the hearings not just about human rights in the Soviet bloc but about domestic politics in the countries where the hearings were held? Disentangling the instrumental from the genuine is often difficult, or even impossible. Ostensibly, the hearings were about human rights violations in the Soviet bloc. The organizers often stressed that the sessions were not about anti-Communism, anti-Sovietism, or domestic politics. However, domestic politics played a significant role in Denmark and Portugal and was not absent in Italy. In the Danish case, regardless of the official human rights discourse, domestic anti-Communism still appeared to be a driving motive for the organizers. In Italy, Solzhenitsyn’s denunciation of Eurocommunism highlighted the role of the PCI. In Portugal, keynote speakers decried Communism as a totalitarian threat to democracy, and the hearing was hotly debated in the Portuguese parliament. On the margins, the Washington hearing may have fueled polemics about the substance of the Carter administration’s human rights policy, but domestic political instrumentalization of the

240. The one exception is Denmark. However, the International Sakharov Committee was always a tiny group, and its newsletter *Danizdat* ceased to appear in 1991. Neerskov (d. 2017) took over the chairmanship of the International Sakharov Committee when Feldsted Andresen died in 1997.

241. Karatnycky, interview. After the hiring of Thorne, Freedom House became a “center for work on behalf of Soviet dissidents.” See Freedom House, “Remembering Leonard R. Sussman, Former Freedom House Executive Director,” press release, 29 March 2015, <https://freedomhouse.org/article/remembering-leonard-r-sussman-former-freedom-house-executive-director>.

hearing appears to have been insignificant. That seems even more obvious for the London hearing.

“Grassroots Activism”

The hearings were instigated and organized by non-state actors and may be understood as a case of grassroots activism.²⁴² However, rumors that were spread by the Soviet Union—and dismissed by the organizers—circulated about covert U.S. government (specifically CIA) involvement in the hearings. Although some indications of possible U.S. involvement, including testimony about U.S. embassy or CIA support for the Copenhagen group and the NED’s funding of the fifth hearing, have emerged, there is no conclusive evidence. Whether the United States acted as a facilitator of events that would otherwise not have materialized cannot be determined on the basis of currently available sources.²⁴³ Although the Sakharov Hearings certainly appear to have emerged from initiatives taken by non-state actors, these actors persistently sought contact with, support from, and influence on governments. Sometimes their endeavors in this regard were successful, as in 1983 and, possibly (and more significantly if true), in the case of the London hearing.

“Sakharov”

The “Father of the Soviet Hydrogen Bomb,” the prominent human rights activist who by the mid-1970s had become the Soviet Union’s “Public Enemy No. 1,” was involved in the hearings in multiple ways.²⁴⁴ He was a driving force behind the “Moscow Appeal,” suggesting the establishment of a tribunal.

242. “In this memorandum we would likewise like to remind all of us that the main purpose of the Sakharov Hearings is to examine and to bring to light the status of human rights in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and that they should not be considered as a political undertaking. In this connection, the Hearings should not accept funds from any government or governmental body and they should not serve the purpose of any political group or party.” U.S. Sakharov Hearing Committee to the Danish and Italian Sakharov Hearings Committees, 4 May 1979.

243. The explanation for this may simply be that the author has had no access to the relevant intelligence archives.

244. Sidney D. Drell and Sergei P. Kapitza, eds., *Sakharov Remembered: A Tribute by Friends and Colleagues* (New York: American Institute of Physics, 1991), p. 130; and Lourie, *Sakharov*, p. 276. One dimension of Sakharov’s key early role among dissidents in the Soviet Union is illustrated by the following quotation: “In the dissident community, [Chalidze] was known as ‘the prince,’ Sakharov was ‘the physicist,’ Solzhenitsyn ‘the classic,’ and Petr Grigorenko was ‘the general.’ When a group of dissidents was planning to gather signatures for an important human rights document, they would ask ‘Whom should we go to first?’ It was usually ‘the physicist,’ and then ‘the general’ and ‘the prince;’ everyone knew that ‘the classic’ practically never signed joint statements, so there was no use in trying.” Thorne, “Memoirs,” pp. 142–143. This role is hardly remembered in today’s Russia. Serge

He gave the green light to hold the hearings and occasionally provided more substantial input (suggesting some themes, advising against others). Until he was deported to Gorky in January 1980, he sent a message to each hearing. He was, moreover, involved through his wife, Bonner, who tried to co-organize the first hearing and, with much more success, helped shape the second hearing. He also acted through Yankelevich, his representative in the West from 1977 onward, who had a say in major decisions, particularly the choice of host country.

Although the hearings' initial focus was not on Sakharov's own fate, that changed after he had been sent into internal exile. All subsequent hearings concluded with initiatives aimed at easing Sakharov's situation. That the hearings achieved such longevity and managed to involve so many prominent exiles and Western dissident-supporters likely had much to do with the chosen name, which provided both a good cause and a prestigious patronage. The hearings did not make Sakharov famous—he already was. But they helped to enhance international interest in him and the wider dissident community and to keep pressure on the Soviet regime, particularly in the 1980s, when Sakharov became a major bone of contention in the West's relationship with Moscow.²⁴⁵ Mikhail Gorbachev's decision in December 1986 to allow Sakharov to return to Moscow signaled a major step for the Soviet leader's liberalization efforts. However, Sakharov's name was not uncontroversial. Communists campaigned against him. In particular, they used his letter to Augusto Pinochet in an attempt to discredit him as an admirer of the Chilean dictator.²⁴⁶ Generally, however, propaganda against the hearings focused on their purported goals or instigators rather than on Sakharov himself. What is striking is how coveted his name was. Many human rights groups took up his cause, especially after January 1980. Some made Sakharov a major focus of their activities and signaled this by naming themselves after him. In that world the "International Sakharov Hearings" were an important player, as they constituted a recurrent event that enjoyed the blessing of Sakharov and his family. Other actors purported to defend Sakharov too. In most cases this was

Schmemann, "Sakharov, Little Remembered in Putin's Russia," *The New York Times*, 18 December 2014, p. A18.

245. One example could be the U.S. congressional resolution and President Ronald Regan's decision to proclaim 21 May 1983 "National Andrei Sakharov Day." The most dramatic Western gesture came in June 1984 when French President François Mitterrand delivered a speech in the Kremlin and explicitly invoked Sakharov.

246. Harry J. Lipkin, "Andrei Sakharov and the Weizmann Institute," in P. N. Lebedev Physics Institute, *Andrei Sakharov: Facets of a Life* (Gif-sur-Yvette, France: Éditions Frontières, 1991), p. 459.

unproblematic because they did not pretend to speak in his name. However, some uses of Sakharov's name, then and later, caused tensions.²⁴⁷

“The Helsinki Process”

The “Moscow Appeal” was issued in the context of the CSCE negotiations, as was the Danish proposal to organize a Sakharov Hearing. The hearings all referred to the Helsinki Final Act and largely focused on documenting the failure of the Soviet Union to live up to the commitments laid out in that document. Although the hearings were not part of the official monitoring process initiated with the Helsinki Final Act, the organizers saw them as a non-state contribution to that process. The first hearing set out to investigate whether the Soviet Union was living up to its commitments and concluded that this seemed doubtful. At the second hearing such doubt was cast away in favor of an unambiguously negative assessment. The fifth meeting asked whether it made sense to pursue the process further. The conclusion was a “yes, but.” Yes, but only if the Soviet Union began to respect human rights. The hearing made Sakharov's thinking—Yankelevich called it the “Sakharov doctrine”—its own: there could be no international peace without domestic peace, without respect for human rights.

All in all, keeping in mind the necessary caveats, the International Sakharov Hearings can fairly be seen as an international citizens' tribunal that resulted from centrist and right-of-center human rights transnational activism pursued in Sakharov's name in the context of the Helsinki process. While some within this milieu leaned rightward, others seem to have been political moderates or just not that easy to label politically. Despite the murky Danish origins and chaotic beginning of the hearings, they managed to broaden their political appeal and to gain respectability, legitimacy, and even access to influential political actors at both state and non-state levels. These achievements were attributable mainly to a small number of fiery souls, but they could not have succeeded without a permissive environment, several preexisting

247. Examples of individuals, groups, interventions, or events that caused open or hidden controversy, then or later, include Lozansky and his Andrei Sakharov Institute, Michael Stern and his International Sakharov Tribunal of Conscience and Peace (The Hague, 4–5 September 1980), the Internationale Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte, and Marek Halter. Marlene Somsak, “Plan Born at Stanford Meeting Splits Sakharov Backers,” *San Jose Mercury News*, 6 November 1984; Ronald Hilton, “Hilton Protests Secrecy of Sakharov Institute Conference,” *Stanford University Campus Report*, 26 September 1984; Yankelevich to Michael Stern, 4 August 1980, in Box 22, Houghton Library; Andrei Sakharov Institute, Secretary's Memorandum, 21 May 1986, in Sanford A. Gradinger Papers, American Jewish Historical Society; Piotr Smolar, “Enquête sur Marek Halter: Le bonimenteur,” *Revue XXI*, No. 4 (Fall 2008), pp. 142–151; and “L'homme qui a tout vécu,” *Le point* (Paris), 28 April 2005, p. 7.

networks (anti-Communists, Bible smugglers, human rights activists, Soviet-bloc exiles), the support of some less-visible actors, and Sakharov's sponsorship. The hearings seem to have had an impact at many levels. They are among numerous endeavors during the later stages of the Cold War that sought to put a spotlight on human rights violations in the Soviet bloc. However, the Sakharov Hearings stand out for their persistence, diversity, and, occasionally, the weight of their actors and contributors; their dogged and sometimes successful attempts to join forces with politically influential actors; and their contribution to putting Sakharov and other persecuted dissidents high on the East-West political agenda. Beyond their possible impact on overall East-West relations, they seem to have had an impact in several host countries, notably on Freedom House in the United States and on memory politics in Denmark. The International Sakharov Hearings thus illustrate how a transnational process can unfold as a set of extremely diverse events, depending, among other things, on the national context. They also demonstrate that some important "national" events can be understood only if put into their proper transnational context. The International Sakharov Hearings have been undeservedly overlooked in the scholarly literature, and they ought to be taken into consideration when discussing the Helsinki process.²⁴⁸

Acknowledgments

An earlier draft of this article was presented as a paper at the workshop "The 1970s in Europe: A Transnational Turn for Political Cultures?" LUISS G. Carli University, Rome, 25–26 May 2017, where it benefited from comments by the discussant, Federico Romero.

248. Future research into the domestic and transnational impact of the Sakharov hearings will no doubt involve a more detailed examination of the individual hearings, the testimonies, the participants, and their interaction with and influence on other state and non-state actors, among other topics.