

Celebrating the Life and Work of Andrei Sakharov

May 21, 2021

Andrei Sakharov was born on May 21, 1921. After a career developing Soviet atomic and hydrogen bombs, he began to speak out for nuclear proliferation as early as the 1950s. In 1968 he published in samizdat his ground-breaking essay “Reflections on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence, and Intellectual Freedom.” After publication he was banned from military research and began to dedicate more of his efforts to the political battle for democratization and human rights in the Soviet Union. In 1970, Sakharov was one of founding members of the Committee on Human Rights and worked actively to support dissidents. In 1975 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. Not permitted to accept it in person, his wife, Yelena Bonner, received it on his behalf and read his speech, entitled “Peace, Progress, Human Rights.” In 1980 he was banished to Gorky (now Nizhny Novgorod) and only released in 1986 after Mikhail Gorbachev became head of the Communist Party. Sakharov was elected member of the new Congress of People’s Deputies and was co-leader of the democratic opposition. He died on Dec. 14, 1989 at home of a heart attack. These photographs and quotes from the writing of Andrei Sakharov are some of the materials prepared for the centennial celebration of his life and work by the Sakharov Center. They were meant to be mounted on stands along one of Moscow’s boulevards. The city government did not permit the installation.



Courtesy of the Sakharov Center

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