

Dissent in the Soviet Union: The Role of Andrei Sakharov in the Human Rights Movement / GRIN Verlag, 2004 / 9783638278348 / Kirsten Kuptz / 32 pages / 2004

The archives in the region are filled with documents regarding dissident movements, samizdat literature and transborder cooperation of dissidents, which can offer fresh empirical, methodological and conceptual perspectives to this issue. On both Sides of the Iron Curtain: Cultures of Dissent in Italy; France, USSR_On line Project: www.culturedeldissenso.com For those who had been active dissidents in the Soviet Union, this entailed a whole change of strategy: they were now cut off from the Soviet people in whose name they had been struggling. At the same time, new possibilities in terms of activism also opened up before them. In 1970 Sakharov, with Soviet dissidents Valery Chalidze and Andrei Tverdokhlebov, founded the Moscow Human Rights Committee. In the movement he met Elena Bonner, who became his partner and companion-in-arms; they married in 1971. She gave him a sense of personal happiness and greatly enhanced his contact with other people. Only a few individuals in the Soviet Union dared to defend "traitors" like Sakharov. In September 1973, writer Lydia Chukovskaya wrote and circulated a remarkable article, "The People's Wrath," which explained that Sakharov's ideas had been distorted in the Soviet press. But the true historic role of the UIS will be to break down the barriers to the exchange of information among countries and people. (Saturday Review/ World, 24 August 1974.) The father of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, Andrei Sakharov, was awarded the Peace Prize in 1975 for his opposition to the abuse of power and his work for human rights. The leaders of the Soviet Union reacted with fury, and refused Sakharov permission to travel to Oslo to receive the Prize. His wife, Jelena Bonner, received it on his behalf. Sakharov was subsequently deprived of all his Soviet honorary titles, and the couple was for several years kept under strict surveillance in the town of Gorkij. Only when Gorbachev came to power in 1985 were they allowed to return to Moscow. Sakharov revealed During the 1970s, dissidents like Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn dominated Western perceptions of the USSR, but were then quickly forgotten, as Gorbachev's reformers monopolised the spotlight. This book restores the dissidents to their rightful place in Russian history. Using a vast array of samizdat and published sources, it shows how ideas formulated in the dissident milieu clashed with the original programme of perestroika, and shaped the course of democratisation in post-Soviet Russia. But this book also demonstrates that dissidents played a crucial role in the rise of the new Russian radical nationalism. Both the friends and foes of Russian democracy have a dissident lineage.