

APR14-2014-020108

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the APR14 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

Sakharov Prize Talk: Creativity of Physicists in the Struggle for Human Rights¹

BORIS ALTSHULER, P.N. Lebedev Physical Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences

USSR was a totalitarian State with an almighty secret service – KGB. To save the repressed victim of regime, let it be dissident or scientists – Jewish refuzenik, was seemingly an absolutely impossible task. “For success of our hopeless adventure!”, - as Andrei Sakharov used to say. There were no natural checks and balances in the Former USSR and there none in modern Russia – that is why the task to save the child in Russia is not less ‘hopeless’ today. But the key word in Sakharov’s motto is ‘success’ – and we managed to reach it earlier in cooperation with the world scientific community, and we manage to reach it now in our work of protecting of rights of children. The Know How is creativity. To achieve something absolutely impossible needs unexpected ‘crazy’ ideas (‘it’s not crazy enough to be true’, - Niels Bohr). The same in science, in physics in particular, the Step to Unknown always demands ‘crazy’ creative ideas. The Talk traces the parallels between creativity in physics and in human rights struggle.

¹I acknowledge the support from the Committee of Concerned Scientists