

Letters from Readers

The Plight of Orlov

TO THE EDITOR:

Many readers of *Freedom at Issue* are aware of the plight of Professor Yuri Orlov (pictured on its cover, March-April, 1986), the distinguished Soviet physicist and champion of fundamental freedoms associated with human rights. In Article VII of the Helsinki Final Act, the 35 participating nations had entered into international covenant to “. . . respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief. . . . They confirm the right of the individual to know and act upon his rights and duties in this field” (my emphasis).

Orlov was the first to recognize that the agreed upon principles of international accountability in the Helsinki Accords would be moot without procedures to monitor, record, and transmit . . . to the participating states information on violations of the humanitarian provisions of the Final Act . . .” and that “interference with the free exchange of information is a fundamental violation of the spirit and letter of the Final Act. . . .” (Orlov’s statement of May 27, 1976). In affirmation of the Act’s assertions of “rights and duties” and of the essential linkage between international security and fundamental human rights, Orlov thereupon founded The Helsinki Watch Movement. For this act of conscience he was arrested and subsequently imprisoned. Unyielding in his convictions regarding humanitarian values, upon his arrest, Orlov assumed a role as a Helsinki monitor within the prison camp. Numerous abuses and reprisals against Orlov have been recorded.

Some readers may know that from his imprisonment, Orlov created the “wave logic of consciousness”—a new way to apply the physical formalism of quantum theory to the workings of the human mind. For having written and having attempted to transmit his purely scientific work, Orlov was placed for six months into a camp isolator (P.K.T.). (The retaliation against Orlov for having practiced science is further overviewed in my

“Terms in Orlov story require clarification,” *The Stanford University Campus Report* 9 January 1985, p. 10.) Unremittingly, Orlov continued to practice science. Two of his papers on his “wave logic” approach and his “quantum model of doubt” have already been published. Two further papers are being translated and edited in expectation of future publication. As Orlov’s work is similar to my own, I have been involved in this effort.

During 1984, Orlov and I corresponded over our mutual scientific ideas. We both believe that our approach provides a way to understand how people codify their experiences and choose their actions; and, that it has applications in certain domains of subjective, ambiguous experience, such as found in decision processes, in choice/will functions, in beliefs, in ethics, in aesthetics, etc. We both believe that there are physical correlates to such thought processes and have proposed independent objective tests which we anticipate might demonstrate our point of view. As expressed by Orlov, “I am convinced that the wave logic is not a mathematical, but rather a natural science . . . close to . . . quantum mechanics. I think there will emerge various deep applications based on wave logic.” Such issues are important and, as science, will ultimately be settled by nature.

Always faithful to his convictions regarding matters pertaining to peace, Orlov then brings up possible consequences of his work as they might relate to the communications of individuals or of nations. In expressing his hope for “scientific cooperation,” Orlov continues: “In particular a theory of dialogue should be constructed. In a dialogue . . . participants speak ‘different languages.’ Their statements . . . (have intrinsic ‘incompatibilities’) . . . even if they use the same words. Theory should develop methods to analyze . . . (these) . . . mutual misunderstandings and to overcome them”—based upon principles which can be formally expressed and, hopefully, objectively confirmed by means of Orlov’s “wave logic.”

Even if we are incorrect regarding our current convictions about experiments, considering the tension and mistrust that exists in our turbulent world, might it not

be a meritorious, symbolic cooperation for a scientist from the East and a scientist from the West to attempt such an endeavor? At worst, we will err regarding our ideas . . . at best, might we all not benefit? I hope that Orlov and I will have an opportunity to try.

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South Africa’s future

TO THE EDITOR:

I have read with fascination Jiri Pehe’s article in the March-April, 1986, issue of *Freedom at Issue*. The article is well headlined, “South Africa through East European Eyes.” What the article makes clear is that East Europeans know no more about South Africa than most Americans know. A recent news article in the *New York Times* referred to a study which found that most Americans are against *apartheid*, but do not know why. Apparently most Europeans in the East also do not know the philosophy and practice of *apartheid* as applied in South Africa.

Mr. Pehe’s article would have been more meaningful to American readers if he had explained the difference between East European and South African thinking. But evidently he himself does not know the difference. The article is so full of misstatements of fact that I conclude that Mr. Pehe has never been in South Africa, and has not spent the time in the 42nd Street Library to inform himself of a culture which is quite different from either American or East European. Let me cite a few:

1. “The last bastion of democracy.” South Africa does not have a democracy, but an oligarchy, according to the dictionary.

2. “Being deprived of certain political and civil rights and being humiliated by racial laws.” This is not an accurate description of the effects of *apartheid*.

3. “South Africa is one of the few countries on the continent where blacks do not die from hunger.” Privileged whites and blacks in Johannesburg and Cape Town do not go hungry, but the

(continued on p. 34)