

letter to the editor¹

Weather Education Clearinghouse

A number of meteorologists and weather educators in this country are suggesting the time has come for the development of new strategies to promote greater public awareness and understanding of weather and its impacts on people. It is thought by many of these concerned individuals that a national clearinghouse or similar entity could provide the leadership, coordination, and encouragement of educational activity leading to a public adequately educated on weather matters.

The AMS Board of Education in Schools and Popular

¹ This section of the BULLETIN is made available to members who wish to express opinions about problems of concern to the AMS. (For guidelines followed in accepting letters, see "Minutes of the Council," BULLETIN OF THE AMS, 51, p. 40, ¶4; 51, p. 434, ¶7.) The opinions expressed in "Letters to the Editor" are those of the writers and do not represent the official position of the American Meteorological Society.

Meteorological Education is currently examining the feasibility of establishing a general weather education clearinghouse. As Chairman of the Board, I am asking BULLETIN readers who have interest in general weather education in one way or another to send their names and addresses to me. The Board expects to send questionnaires to these and other persons to gather information as it attempts to determine whether or not a clearinghouse is feasible and, if it does appear that a clearinghouse should be established, what shape it should take and how it would operate.

It is hoped proponents of general weather education will make themselves known to the Board. Please let us hear from you.

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A letter to AMS members from the Executive Committee

To AMS Members:

In recent months Academician and Nobel-laureate Andrei Sakharov of the Soviet Union has been exiled from Moscow and his official national honors have been stripped from him by his government. These actions were taken in retribution for his criticism of Soviet policies respecting nuclear weapons and his support for dissident Soviet citizens.

The U.S. National Academy of Sciences has taken the unprecedented step of suspending its bilateral institutional activities with the Soviet Academy of Sciences for a period of six months as a protest. A number of scientific societies have taken other actions. The actions taken or contemplated by institutions have not affected multilateral scientific programs, where the United States, the Soviet Union, and other nations participate, and this has conformed with U.S. government policy.

The Sakharov case presents difficult issues for individual scientists. Some have decided not to participate in bilateral exchanges with the Soviet government until Sakharov is released from exile. Others are continuing to participate in such exchanges.

The AMS Executive Committee calls this issue to the attention of members of the Society, recognizing that more specific actions should be left to the individual conscience of its members. We do feel, however, that as the Executive

Committee of the AMS we wish to register some protest because of the importance to the atmospheric sciences of close international collaboration on both personal and official levels. We have therefore transmitted the enclosed statement to the Soviet Embassy in Washington.

Executive Committee, AMS

To Embassy, U.S.S.R. (open release)

Free exchange of data among nations and international cooperation in research have been and are the hallmarks of the atmospheric and hydrologic sciences as in many other sciences. Future progress in weather forecasting and in understanding man's influence on the atmosphere require global data and close collaboration among scientists of many nations. Actions which inhibit such international collaboration among scientists are, therefore, of deep concern to all.

For these reasons, the Executive Committee of the American Meteorological Society wishes to express its deep concern about the actions of the Soviet government against Academician and Nobel-laureate Andrei Sakharov. We believe that restrictions on the freedom of scientists to communicate will undermine the spirit of international cooperation which is vital to the atmospheric sciences as well as to other fields. We appeal in the most urgent terms for the restitution of official honors and personal freedom to Academician Sakharov.

American Meteorological Society
Executive Committee

¹ Approved by the Executive Committee, May 2, 1980.