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A Reason for Reasoning? Theorizing the Function of Public Argument through an Analysis of Dissident Protest

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines Andrei Sakharov's dissident protests against the Soviet regime as arguments to a non-cooperating interlocutor. Approaching the 1970s-1980s Soviet dissident public sphere as a Toulminian 'field' of argumentation, I infer a field-dependent function of Sakharov's argument from an analysis of its structure and implicit assessment criteria. Besides justification, the function of Sakharov's argument is performative: he argues for political action by demonstrating a model of practical reasoning that raises private consciousness to the level of public agency. By exposing his own political rationality as a 'live' mode of proof for the speculative 'truth' of his conviction, Sakharov suggests a connection between theoretical thinking and action.

KEY WORDS: argument function, Stephen E. Toulmin, dissident protest, Andrei D. Sakharov, values, public authorization, practical reasoning, action

In *The Uses of Argument*, Stephen Toulmin introduces the concept of function to define 'argument' in field-invariant terms, as a discursive act of the justification of a thesis (2003, p.12). The 'primary' function of justification determines the structure of argument on the most general level, formalized as a procedural model based on the judicial process (Toulmin, 2003, pp.16-21). Toulmin derives his notion of field-dependence from this generic judicial-justificatory model: what distinguishes arguments within different fields is different 'logical types' of assertions, those of facts to support assertions, and those of transitions between facts and assertions—all serving the common goal of justification (2003, pp.13-14). For Toulmin, the notion of function precedes that of the field largely because identifying a function of argument is unproblematic, the purpose of arguing being transparent to the arguers in the context of the interaction and to the analyst interpreting the encounter. In a number of fields with well-established rhetorical practices this may very well be the case. However, when applied to the ambiguities of argumentation in the public sphere the question of function becomes a difficult one. As I will show in this paper, it is not always clear what functions public arguments perform, why they are put forth, and why they are structured one way rather than another. Here Toulmin's theory allows us to formulate a set of important questions: What is 'function' in public argumentation? What functional features of argument are field-dependent? If, upon Toulmin's definition, the field is comprised of arguments of the same 'logical type' appealing to the same criteria of assessment, what kind of field(s) is the public sphere? How does the field determine the structure of reasoning in public argumentation?

This paper argues that the question of argument function in the public sphere should be kept open as a productive approach to the study of real-life argumentative events. Beyond theorizing broad taxonomies of 'the uses of argument', we can enrich our

understanding of how public arguments function through a bottom-up, empirical analysis of concrete argumentative practices in specific historical-political contexts.

As a sample of such analysis, I concentrate on political argument in an equivocal functional setting, when arguing is by all practical standards supposed to fail. I turn to the work of the Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov, who in the heyday of the Soviet empire produced a number of public statements against the regime, including open letters to the Soviet authorities. Such situations exceed the definition of argument implicit in the work of Toulmin and many other argument theorists, who predicate argument on the precondition that both sides to the interaction be willing to engage in rational debate (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 1992; van Eemeren et al., 1993; Blair and Johnson, 1987; Johnson, 2000; Willard, 1982, 1989; Walton, 1989; Walton and Krabbe, 1995). In this study, I address three questions: (1) What rhetorical function does Sakharov's argument perform, and how? (2) How is his argument structured? (3) Given the fragmentary, emerging status of the Soviet dissident protests in the 1970s-1980s as a 'field' or rhetorical practice, what assessment criteria can be inferred from Sakharov's appeals?

For the purposes of text analysis, I use the term 'argument' to designate a sustained effort at explicit reason giving, when the author intends his pattern of inference to be sufficiently manifest.[1] Given loose genre conventions of public discourse, Sakharov is a remarkably rigorous arguer in this sense. He not only advances claims, clearly framed as such—be they specific suggestions for action, thought, or policy making—but also systematically adduces support for them. I focus on Sakharov's work of the late 1970s-early 1980s, most written during his exile in Gorky (1980-1986). By this time, he is a Nobel peace Prize winner (1975), with a solid reputation in the international human rights movement. At home, Sakharov's career is less straightforward. He starts off as 'a pillar of the Soviet Establishment', one of the inventors of the hydrogen bomb, but, having faced the destructive potential of his own scientific endeavors, he turns to political struggle against the regime (Friendly, 1978). In Sakharov's life and in the late Soviet history as a whole, the stagnation of the 1970s-early 1980s stands out as a period of political repressions, the military intervention in Afghanistan (1979-1989), escalating international hostility, and mass dejection and indifference in Soviet society. Sakharov's public statements of the period include appeals to specific officials and a wider publicity in the USSR and the West, in which he mounts an attack against totalitarianism (Babyonyshev, 1982, pp. xxvi-xxix). Focusing on the argumentative means by which he does so, I approach all of his statements of the period as arguments to a non-cooperating majority. Many Soviet dissidents of the time find attacking the system headlong, through rational argument, futile; instead, they opt for literary and other non-argumentative forms of expression as a vehicle for political ideas (Shatz, 1980, pp. 140-144). Unlike those, Sakharov chooses argument, despite repeated criticisms of naiveté from Soviet politicians and intelligentsia (Sakharov, 1978, 'Afterword', pp.169-170; Friendly, 1978, pp. viii-xv). Why he insists on argument, what he achieves by it, and whether he is really naive I discuss further in this paper.

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[1] My definition of argument is influenced by Ralph Johnson's theory of 'manifest rationality', which demands that arguers commit themselves to the public display of reason giving (2000, pp. 161-163). I do not directly rely on other parts of his normative conception.

In my approach to the questions of function, structure, and assessment criteria, I proceed inductively. I reverse Toulmin's conceptual hierarchy and start at the bottom level, with the analysis of structure—of the specific inference patterns at work in Sakharov's original texts on the micro and macro level. I focus on Sakharov's five major public statements of the period: 'Alarm and Hope', 1977; 'Open Letter to Anatoly Alexandrov, President of the USSR Academy of Sciences', 1980; 'An Alarming Time', 1980; 'Open Letter to Brezhnev', 1980; and 'The Responsibility of Scientists', 1981. Here, my goal is to define the 'logical type' of his argument, i.e., to conclude what kind of assertions, support, and logical transitions he employs to build his case. I discuss my method of argument reconstruction and my conclusions in Section 1. In Section 2, I extend my analysis of argument structure to include some considerations of assessment criteria, as they inform argument design. I focus on one specific line of justification, typical of Sakharov's protests, that thematizes reasons for the arguer's right of public, as opposed to private, voice. From a broader assessment criteria perspective, I approach Sakharov's argument as an architectonic that comprises several levels of validity justification, from which I infer his model of practical reasoning. On the basis of my analysis, in Section 3 I finally concentrate on the question of function. I attempt to explain why of all available resources of persuasion Sakharov chooses to emphasize reasoning in his public statements.

1. ARGUMENT STRUCTURE

To unravel the structural complexities and ambiguities of the text, I adopt a two-step method of argument reconstruction. First, I identify the framework of structural relations among discursive units by using Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) by Mann, Matthiessen, and Thompson (1989). RST is a method of text analysis that allows me to parse the text along the lines of functional distinctions among its components (which express, among the most recurrent ones, the relations of motivation, evidence, concession, background, circumstance, solutionhood, elaboration, purpose, result, means, sequence, contrast, joint, etc.) and reconstruct them as propositions (Mann et al., 1989). I start on the level of clauses and sentences, and proceed to the level of paragraphs and larger stretches of discourse, diagramming each of the five texts as a complex system of propositions on the micro and macro level. Second, I examine the RST scheme of structural relationships to identify the main trajectories of claim-and-support at work in the texts. I see when and how the Toulmin model applies, as well as what other argument configurations emerge from my mapping of the discourse structure. At this stage, I identify grounds in support of more local claims, as well as the relationship among the latter, which also tends to assume a hierarchical claim-support structure, building towards one culminating thesis.

As an interpretive tool of text analysis, the Toulmin model applies to Sakharov's argument, with a few qualifications. In the narrow sense of 'physiological' micro inference, from factual evidence to claims about the world, the data-claim-warrant pattern explicitly figures at limited junctures of the text, without backing or rebuttal. In fact, 'factual evidence' often takes the form of descriptive, generalizing references to the experiential reality, imbued with evaluation—judgments, rather than 'hard facts'. Ostensibly, Sakharov's argument is speculative: he delivers a sort of theory of totalitarianism, which arises from his reflection on his experience of living in the Soviet

Union. Yet it would be a mistake to say that his reasoning is removed from reality. His choice and presentation of data reveal certain strategic preferences, with an important role in argument structure.

On a larger, 'anatomical' scale of Sakharov's reasoning, the tripartite model of data-claim-warrant can well capture the properties of the deliberative 'practical inference' that I find characteristic of his reasoning style (Walton, 1990). What Sakharov finally wants his reader to do is not just reason along, but act—to engage in some kind of political activism against totalitarian regimes. For the West, Sakharov demands that it joins the struggle for civil rights all around the world ('Alarm and Hope'); for the Soviet leaders, that they stop expansionism abroad and repressions at home ('Open Letter to Brezhnev'); for Soviet citizens, that they rise against the regime by joining the dissidents, at the cost of political persecution ('An Alarming Time'). As a general pattern, Sakharov argues from experience (data) to normative claims about policy and moral behavior by thematizing logical transitions between the two (warrants), which tend to assume a complex logical architecture of their own. Although Sakharov's are by no means warrant-establishing arguments in Ryle's sense (Toulmin, 2003, p. 112), he always *elaborates* on warrants, as a distinct focus in his argument structure. Below, I will briefly discuss the architecture of his argument, with close attention to the warranting mechanism.

Sakharov's argument unfolds on two levels, giving reasons in support of two kinds of claims—those that define problems and those that offer solutions. The lower level, problem-defining, claims concern no less than the comprehensive 'tragic problems of the modern world', which Sakharov diligently diagnoses and contemplates (1978, 'Alarm', p. 99). He grounds his diagnoses in four kinds of data: (1) historical events (e.g., the 1968 Soviet invasion in Czechoslovakia, the assassination of Kirov, etc.); (2) expert technical and broad political knowledge (e.g., facts about nuclear energy, weapons, environment, the contemporary political scene, etc.); (3) specific information about today's victims of political repressions in the USSR (names, prison sentences, personal qualifications, etc.); (4) descriptive references to the common experience of living in the Soviet Union (e.g., snippets of everyday Soviet parlance, like 'No use banging your head against the wall') (1978, 'Alarm', p. 101). Sakharov accords different status to different kinds of data. Some he presents cursively, as background information (1 and 2); some he amplifies, aiming at increased presence (3 and 4). Functionally, the data portraying the stark realities of totalitarianism (3 and 4) play a special part in the global argument structure. Besides supporting problem-defining claims in the narrow sense of 'hard evidence', his factual testimony also, however indirectly, reinforces the transition between problem-defining and higher-order solution-claims of moral obligation. Here the shift from 'what is' to 'what should be' depends on the deontological assumption that human beings ought to oppose injustice, whenever they encounter it; the more they are aware of injustice, the more reason they have to resist. As far as warrants on the data-based level of inference are concerned, Sakharov leaves them tacit. Yet in the overall structure of his argument, he does not at all trust the self-evidence of moral appeals.

When connecting problem-defining claims to solution-claims on the second tier of argument, Sakharov develops elaborate sets of reasons for why his reader should act justly or morally. Such transitions involve multiple value assumptions of a teleological and deontological nature (Ricoeur, 1992), but the weight of the actual proof falls on non-moral reasoning. Below, I focus on the role of deontological values—propositions of moral obligation, involving 'the ought'—in the warranting architecture of Sakharov's arguments, designating them 'moral' values (in my reconstruction of values as

propositions, I follow Sillars and Ganer, 1982). Across the examined texts, his recurrent moral imperatives include the values of equity, humanity, integrity, freedom, individual responsibility, and compassion. In Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's terms, they function as 'absolute values' (1969, pp.77-79), yet Sakharov does not present them as discrete, self-sufficient reasons for his conclusions.

Moral propositions recur in two components of Sakharov's argument structure: in culminating solution-claims, where they find direct discursive expression (e.g., 'Lawlessness and infringements of human rights cannot be tolerated on this planet'; 1978, 'Alarm', p.111), and as an implicit part of the complex warrant that links declarative statements about the present to final appeals to action. As a general tendency, Sakharov carefully reinforces deontological warrants by different 'instrumental' kinds of reasoning, i.e., embeds them in explicit pragmatic considerations. Upon the resultant impression, ethical imperatives are not superimposed, but, as it were, emerge from non-moral practical reasoning about the common good.

To illustrate the point, I will focus on 'Alarm and Hope', a 1977 essay Sakharov writes at the request of the Norwegian Nobel Prize Committee. The piece is organized as a gradation of ends-means arguments for a solution to the overarching problem of the threat of nuclear war. First, Sakharov stipulates that in order to escape the danger of mutual destruction, the socialist and the capitalist political systems must 'converge'. Within this scenario, he suggests increasingly more specific means to achieve the ends, until he reaches the culminating deontic solution-claim: it is the West that *'ought to'* take the onus for convergence, by assuming a pro-active position in disarmament negotiations and the defense of human rights in the totalitarian countries (1991, p. 105). Between the top problem and the bottom solution, Sakharov lays out a complex warranting mechanism with the following reasons: the West *ought to* actively fight totalitarianism (1) because it is the only agent capable of progressive change; if it does not promote convergence, *nobody else will* (Sakharov develops a mini-treatise on the nature of totalitarianism to support this point); (2) because it *can*, having the appropriate means at its disposal, such as its potential for internal transformation due to the principle of pluralism (here Sakharov gives his reasoned assessment of Western democracy); (3) because it *has to* if it wants to avoid the destruction of civilization. Besides, (4) a purely deontological 'ought' remains an implicit part of the warrant: the West ought to fight totalitarianism simply because it is an unqualifiedly right thing, dictated by 'absolute' moral imperatives.

Judging by the sheer bulk of discursive expression, non-moral components of Sakharov's reasoning far outweigh references to 'the ought'. The latter surface at the far end of rational justification, accompanied by a cluster of circumstantial ends-means expositions of how world events happen. Sakharov thereby inscribes absolute moral values in the logic of historical necessity. He concomitantly lends public status to morality. By embedding deontological warrants in matters of political causality, he shows that the dictates of individual conscience are in internal harmony with the structure of public reality, that one's innermost moral values of justice, freedom, human dignity, etc., are validated by the very force of historical development. His appeals to action, then, depend on his reader's realization of her belonging in transcendental contexts of the large historical-political reality, which makes certain demands on the individual. Importantly, this realization is achieved not through any act of non-rational identification with the values, but through careful reasoning about the world.

2. CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT

Sakharov's position—a system of cognitive propositions about the world, which play the role of claims in his argument structure—receives two types of support. On my reading, each text builds towards one culminating claim, which, in the spirit of the practical syllogistic, I interpret as a call to political action. Sakharov adduces one body of reasons to justify why such actions are meaningful by virtue of historical necessity that he constructs through his use of logical inference and data. These reasons unfold in the bulk of his argument; I discuss them above in Section 1. Sakharov's argument features another body of reasons to justify the validity of his position on a different front—not only as a sensible and internally coherent account, but also as a legitimate *public* statement.

The question of what makes discourse public, as opposed to private, has significance for both contemporary rhetorical theory and argumentation studies. In rhetoric, it affects the very definition of its disciplinary identity as 'a theory of public discourse', as well as conceptions of political deliberation (Bitzer, 1978; Kaufer and Butler, 1996; Asen, 2004). In argumentation theory, the question of public entitlement falls under the problematic of assessment criteria. Here, I approach Sakharov's reasons for his right of public voice as a field-dependent mode of claiming validity for his argument, with implications for theories of deliberative rationality.

As a claim to validity, Sakharov's defense of his public entitlement reflects the conditions of the 1970s-1980s Soviet dissident public sphere: he gives more prominence to his self-authorization in those addresses where he anticipates the biggest skepticism—to the Soviet authorities and to the Soviet citizens, who would jeopardize their lives and careers by following his 'heroic' prescriptions.

Sakharov's public entitlement arguments are interspersed through the texts and take a different place in the argument structure of each. In no particular order, the major reasons in support of Sakharov's right for public discourse include: (1) his civic right to freedom of speech and freedom of conscience *as a citizen* of his country; (2) his international visibility as *a Nobel Prize winner*; (3) his empathy and indignation, *as a human being* endowed with a sense of morality, which he holds universal, in the face of human rights violations in the USSR; (4) the gravity of the modern problems, which urgently demand solutions, whoever can contribute to them—i.e., his creative capacities *as a thinker* and problem-solver; (5) his *speaking on behalf of* at least two groups of individuals, with whom he has been working over extended periods of time—Soviet nuclear scientists and human rights advocates; (6) in a somewhat less straightforward fashion, Sakharov claims the supra-subjective status of his position as a product of rigorous reasoned reflection, his subjective vision of the world 'objectified' by the power of *rationality*. To support this point, Sakharov stresses that his position developed at the expense of the break of continuity with his earlier views and convictions (1991, p. 185).

In parallel to the grounding of moral warrants in historical causes discussed in Section 1, Sakharov's reasons for public entitlement provide a bridge from private to public consciousness. Here, it is not an abstract individual subjectivity but his own authorial 'I' that stands at the nexus of the particular and the universal. Through reason-giving in support of his public authority, he transforms the individual as a seat of reason and values into a public agent who draws on the private, deeply personal resources of reason and values to promote the common good. On the one hand, Sakharov does not eliminate his personal voice from his writing. He speaks from feeling, in a personalized, non-clichéd, and at times even poetic style, in jarring contrast to the Soviet officialese.

On the other hand, he minimizes descriptive references to himself as a private person. He directly speaks of himself only to justify why his position matters—where it originates and how it represents other people. For example, in 'The Responsibility of Scientists', he mentions repressions against himself and his family at the end of the long list of other victims of the regime, as a particular case in the general practice. Nowhere in the piece does he explicitly claim his entitlement to advise scientists on moral issues by virtue of also being a scientist, speaking from above the moral ideals that he happens to embrace while others fail. As the vectors of claim-support in his texts indicate, his first-hand experience only entitles him to a public voice from below: it equips him with an expertise in moral decision making, empathy, and a certain kind of political thinking—along with others, on behalf of whom he chooses to speak.

The concept of assessment criteria can yet be applied to Sakharov's argument in a broader sense—as a tactical orientation of his text design on the level of invention (Kaufer and Butler, 1996). As long as we assume that he structures his argument in anticipation of certain validity expectations, we can look at his reasoning pattern as pre-emptive defense on a few fronts. To put it more neutrally, Sakharov aims at a match between his own moves and his audience's criteria of what counts as reasonable and worthy in public political discourse. Sakharov gears his argument for evaluation along the following assessment criteria: (1) what gives him the right of a public voice: self-authorization arguments; (2) how well-reasoned his position is: the power of logical inference, including (3) the use of data, i.e., the grounding of his speculation in reality; (4) his conformity to certain moral standards, in part determined by the cultural tradition[2]; and, (5) perhaps less directly but unequivocally, Sakharov is aware of the demand that he follows in deed what he prescribes in word, which he does as a practicing human rights advocate. With the exception of the final criterion, which goes beyond the limits of text design to action, all of the above validity concerns are directly addressed and unified by explicit reason giving in the global structure of his argument. Approaching Sakharov's argument as a multidimensional technique of justification, I will now discuss its function.

3. FUNCTION OF ARGUMENT

In my view, one of the most essential functions of argument (reason giving) in Sakharov's texts consists in demonstrating a model of practical reasoning that he deems normative for democratic political deliberation. Its components include (1) wide knowledge of the world, including history; (2) deep thinking, across various kinds of rationality, speculative, technical, and practical, which Sakharov seems to regard as continuous; (3) a refined sense of morality, holding some deontological values as 'universal'; (4) care for the particular, for the 'concrete' value of unique people and circumstances (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, p.77); (5) representative stance, speaking on behalf of valued others; (6) enacting one's principles in practical deeds. This model of practical reason has two interesting features. First, it stands at the intersection of deduction and induction, combining reasoning from the 'universal' premises to the particular and from the novel particular to broader, intellective generalizations. Second, Sakharov's practical rationality is intrinsically public. It demands a reasoned extension of

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[2] Sakharov's ethics is not unique. To a large extent, it represents the values of the Russian intelligentsia, a distinct social group with deep roots in the nineteenth century Russian tradition of state opposition (Shatz, 1980; Shlapentokh, 1990). At the same time, Sakharov challenges their norms of passive, apolitical resistance by initiating an open confrontation with the authorities (Chalidze, 1982).

consciousness from the focus on private self-interest to the affirmation of public agency. Through the six above operations, one transcends the limits of the private by relating it to wider historical, political, and moral causes. In Section 1, I discussed how Sakharov lends public stance to morality by embedding personal values in the logic of world-event causality. In Section 2, I focused on how he extends his own 'I' by arguing for his representative power. In its entirety, the structure of validity defense situates Sakharov's claims on two levels of contextualization, aligned along the axis of selfhood. On the one hand, he lends meaning to his calls to action on the level of the global and the universal—that of world events, rationality, and deontological ethics. On the other, he justifies them on the level of the particular—that of concrete human beings, himself included, who, through their personal quest, have come to an understanding of a world larger than their own and who act upon this realization. The force of grounded rational conviction, residing with an individual, subjugates the personal to the public.

Notably, Sakharov *demonstrates* public consciousness at work while he simultaneously argues *for it*, as his final, culminating appeal across various statements. Reasoning here has both a performative and logical function. In the given field-specific practice of a dissident intellectual arguing against the establishment, Sakharov's technique can be interpreted as an argument by model (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, pp. 362-364), where the end and the means of persuasion converge. He calls to public agency by displaying his own way of gaining it, inviting adherence on rational grounds, but also by imitation. While rationality commands agreement, imitation involves free choice, and this Sakharov leaves to the reader. As long as he counts on freedom, he has a reason to reason for the sheer sake of giving presence to what he believes is right and exemplary—here, to the kind of public reasoning that he chooses as his own *modus cogitandi*. Instead of naiveté, I interpret his argument style as revealing distinct value commitments, consonant with his insistence on non-violent protest (Sakharov, 1982, p.246). For all his emphasis on reasoning, he seems to put more faith in the individual's capacity to make choices than in the capacity of argument to convince. For Sakharov, reasoned persuasion is indeed futile unless it takes hold of the interlocutor from within the depth of her inner experience, as a result of free, conscientious reflection on her place in the world rather than merely 'force of the better argument'. By showing his own reflection at work, he aims not so much to win over his opponents by means of rational necessity as to create options—the modes of reasoning to adopt and the worlds to inhabit.

From the perspective of its joint performative-justificatory function, Sakharov's deliberative style marries two traditions of theorizing practical reason, which Robert Hariman terms 'calculative' and 'performative' (2003, pp.3-7). The former originates with Aristotle's *phronesis*; it seeks to formalize the principles of rational decision making in practical circumstances. The latter Hariman associates with Cicero: it foregrounds the unformalizable qualities of the person, *phronimos*, that since Aristotle has intrigued theorists as a core factor in practical decision making—that elusive something 'that can only be captured through embodiment in the specific political actor' (Hariman, 2003, p. 7; Self, 1979; Garver, 1994). By arguing simultaneously for and by means of public practical reason, Sakharov-*phronimos* unites 'rational calculation' and 'intelligible performance' in one rhetorical act.

The very duality of the tradition that Hariman sketches brings out a notorious tension between the basic phenomena of reasoning and action, already implicit in Aristotle's conception of practical inference (MacIntyre, 1988; Walton, 1990, pp.8-16).

Whereas Aristotle presumes that action automatically ensues from a rational sequitur, without an intermediate step of 'decision' as a matter of willing, later theorists have come to see the connection between thought and action as considerably more problematic (Taylor, 1989). While a conceptual distinction between practical and speculative rationality may promise a resolution in theory, in actual political deliberation the line between the two gets blurred. Sakharov's case well illustrates the point. In politics, successful decision making depends on a comprehensive vision of world events, and the latter takes a certain amount of speculation.

I think that Sakharov's model of practical reasoning confirms the connection between political action and specifically *speculative* thinking that has come into the purview of Hannah Arendt (1977). Arendt perceives the disconnect between philosophy, which searches for truth, and politics, which pursues action, to be so great that she declares that philosophizing is unpolitical by nature. In his public statements, Sakharov does not shun the role of a philosopher, in the tradition of Tolstoy's moral philosophizing. The power of Enlightenment rationality is part of his 'philosophical truth'—a universal value that he finds missing in the Kafkaesque world of Soviet totalitarianism. Reflecting on philosophy and politics, Arendt comes to see a connection between the two when she considers Socrates. This connection provides yet another way to define the function of Sakharov's argument. With regard to validity criteria of speculative thinking, Arendt claims that rational (philosophical) truth has only one mode of proof—embodying it in a live example. When Socrates refused to escape his death sentence, he chose a way of defending his otherwise unpersuasive proposition 'It is worse to do wrong than to suffer wrong', which he granted absolute truth. Sakharov with his rational argument to the Soviet regime commits a similar act. By opposing the system, he subjects himself and his family to repressions, and after 1985, to much social rejection and misunderstanding. Yet he gives weight to his point—makes it a tangible worldly thing that others can work with, integrated in the same political realm. According to Arendt, in the experience of transforming 'a theoretical or speculative statement into exemplary truth', a thinker becomes a political actor:

> Where everybody lies about everything of importance, the truthteller, whether he knows it or not, has begun to act; he, too, has engaged himself in political business, for, in the unlikely event that he survives, he has made a start toward changing the world. (1954, p.251)

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