

# Women Political Prisoners in the USSR



with an introduction  
by Rose Styron

# WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE USSR

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Ukrainian National Women's League of America  
108 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10003

Committee for the Defense of Soviet Political Prisoners  
P.O. Box 142, New York, N.Y. 10003

**TO THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE  
FOR THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS:**

1975, International Women's Year, began on December 12, 1974 in the camp for women political prisoners. For attempting to mark Human Rights Day, they punished not only us, but also our young children, depriving them of their sole annual meeting.

In reply we refused forcible, compulsory labor thereby protesting against laws which permit the degradation of human dignity and the punishment of children for their mothers. Torn from our native land without any justification, we are entirely prepared to endure all the trials to which we are condemned (deprivation of visits, the right to buy provisions, incarceration in a punishment isolator for a term of 13 to 21 days, in a cell-like room from 3 to 6 months), so long as we can preserve in ourselves a feeling of internal freedom.

In October 1974 one of the women political prisoners, Raissa Ivanova, a healthy person in all respects, was declared mentally ill and transferred to a psychiatric hospital . . . solely on the grounds that she did not renounce her convictions. . .

**We beg** representatives of the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights to come here to meet us personally.

February 15, 1975

Iryna Stasiv  
Stefaniya Shabatura  
Nadia Svitlychna  
Nina Strokata  
Odarka Husyak

## THE HIDDEN WOMEN

By decree of the United Nations, 1975 is International Women's Year. The voices of women are emerging from every curve-point on the globe: successful women, oppressed women, keen and sensitive and articulate women. And hidden women, imprisoned for their beliefs, for speaking their minds and advocating human dignity in societies not brave enough to meet the moral challenge of dissent.

Where the voices of these women and fellow prisoners-of-conscience fail to carry, muffled behind thick walls, their spirit, uncontainable, echoes. In 1935 the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam, was arrested for composing unflattering lines about Stalin from one of his cruel prisons. Because his wife, through the cruel years of prison and exile that followed, memorized his beautiful forbidden poems, Mandelstam's voice reaches us today:

Depriving me of sea, of a space to run and a space to fly,  
And giving my footsteps the truss of a forced land,  
What have you gained?  
The calculation dazzles. Yet you cannot seize  
The movement of my lips, their silent sound.

The echoes of such sounds are as loud as the consciences of men and women listening outside the walls, we who can still count ourselves free.

How many women political prisoners are there? How does their number compare to that of the men? We have no accurate statistics with which to answer: outsiders are almost routinely denied uncharted visits and access to data. We know there are at least a thousand women among the 55,000 behind barbed wire in Indonesia. There may be ten times that many. We know that half the political prisoners in Thieu's South Vietnam—at least 50,000—were women and young girls. Amnesty International has published a list of 252 women prisoners whom the organization has adopted on an individual basis. Their 25 homelands include Bangladesh, Brazil, and Bulgaria, Chile, Cuba, and East Germany, Egypt, Haiti, and Iran, Malaysia, South Africa, and Spain, the United Kingdom, Uruguay, and the USSR.

Women in the Soviet Union have been condemned to jails and camps and psychiatric hospitals for their ideas, their religion, the books they read, or for petitioning for national rights and the preservation of a national heritage, for advocating legal reforms, for defending their friends and colleagues, for refusing to denounce their kin. The cases of six are highlighted here. The extra punishment they routinely receive when they speak their minds in prison (from solitary confinement on reduced rations, to the denial of their children's once-a-year visiting privileges) is most depressing.

Internationally, more and more cases of women being subjected to special physical and psychological abuse are coming to light. Conditioned for childbearing, women frequently have a higher threshold of pain than men, enabling them on occasion to hold out longer against "confessing". In Chile under the junta, for example, this clearly infuriates

interrogators, particularly the military men trained to execute their will swiftly. Thwarted, they resort to sexual indignities, attempting to degrade and dehumanize each prisoner. The imagination, the "emotionalism" a woman is classically assigned—the passion she has developed defending her children, the compassion (or insight into human motive and possibility) she has acquired being alert to the needs and demands of her family or community—can make her into a fierce opponent for her tormentors. It can also make her exceptionally vulnerable. Separation from her family, threats of a child being kidnapped or brutalized or reeducated, of a husband or parent maimed or murdered, have been used as successfully to control a woman in Chile as have the savage physical tortures inflicted on her. There are cases of a woman and her husband and children being tortured at length in front of each other. To watch her husband die and her child go mad, or to feel the baby in her womb receive shocks that will destroy its brain, its body, is intolerable. Only the toughest woman will not break.

In October 1974 Soviet women prisoners did an extraordinary thing: they appealed to be allowed to send their prison wages to the victims of the junta in Chile. The Soviet government denied this gesture of humanity. Yet the offer stands as testimony to the fresh understanding, the shared responsibility for justice, the new determination to communicate between individuals who, though they may never meet, are united by their experience in suffering, and by the ideas they have refused to abandon.

Rose Styron  
May, 1975

## APPEAL ON BEHALF OF UKRAINIAN WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE USSR

The United Nations has proclaimed 1975 as International Women's Year. As a result many states, organizations, agencies and individuals are launching programs aimed at achieving political, social and economic equality of women throughout the world.

On this occasion we are launching this appeal on behalf of those Ukrainian women who have suffered and continue to suffer persecution. Many have received lengthy imprisonment sentences because of their outspoken defense of human rights and dignity, because of their religious convictions or because they have refused to condemn their husbands, who themselves have been subjected to repression by the Soviet authorities for similar motives.

On the occasion of International Women's Year we urgently appeal to the authorities of the Soviet Union to declare a general amnesty for all women political prisoners in the USSR and to refrain from taking further repressive measures against them.

We also appeal to those who represent their governments at various United Nations Conferences, and those who will participate in programs associated with the International Women's Year, to raise the issue of women who are prisoners of conscience.

We appeal to women and men of good will everywhere to add their voices in defense of the unjustly persecuted women in the USSR, by signing this petition below and forwarding it to the Soviet government.

Doris Anderson

Margaret Atwood

June Callwood

Ald. Elizabeth Eayrs

Prof. Teresa Harmstone

Judy LaMarsh

Gloria Steinem

Controller Barbara Greene

Sen. Renaude LaPointe

Flora MacDonald, M.P.

Sen. Muriel McQueen Fergusson

Letty Cotton Pogrebin

Prof. Jay MacPherson

Gloria Shulman

Susan Swan

(This petition reprinted with permission of the "Action for Women's Rights in the USSR", 2200 Yonge Street, Ste. 1701, Toronto, Canada)

## AN APPEAL FOR AMNESTY ON BEHALF OF WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE USSR

During International Women's Year, a year when women throughout the world are joining together in calling for an end to hunger, oppression and war, we ask you, the members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to urge your party to adopt a resolution on general amnesty for women prisoners of conscience as part of an international effort to secure the release of all women political prisoners.

We believe that the incarceration of men and women for their beliefs, whether it be in Chile, Brazil, Vietnam or the Soviet Union, is a shameful phenomenon that degrades all of humanity.

It is in this spirit that we demand amnesty for those mentioned below and the many others whose names do not appear here:

*Shabatura, Stefaniya.* Ukrainian SSR. Sentenced in 1972 to 5 years' imprisonment and 3 years' exile.

*Stasiv, Iryna.* Ukrainian SSR. Sentenced in 1972 to 6 years' imprisonment and 3 years' exile.

*Strokata, Nina.* Ukrainian SSR. Sentenced in 1972 to 4 years' imprisonment.

*Svitlychna, Nadia.* Ukrainian SSR. Sentenced to 4 years' hard labor.

*Kiaudieno, Vera.* Lithuanian SSR. Sentenced in 1967 to 10 years' imprisonment.

*Ivanova, Raissa.* Russian SFSR. Incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital.

*Sokolova, Tatiana.* Russian SFSR. Sentence unknown.

*Kekilova, Annasultan.* Turkmen SSR. Incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital.

We call upon all people of good will to support this appeal and to work toward securing the release of women prisoners of conscience throughout the world.

Mari Alyceiaconi  
Julia Arnold  
Joan Baez  
Patricia Barnes  
Nell Blaine  
Kay Boyle  
Babette Deutsch  
Mimi Farina  
Rita Giglio

Penelope Gilliatt  
Molly Haskell  
Phyllis Jacobson  
Jeri Laber  
Jean Linder  
Lesta Morningstar  
Adrienne Rich  
Nancy Schimmel  
Rose Styron

## PRISONER PROFILES

Humanitarian concern requires that all women unjustly incarcerated in Soviet concentration camps or psychiatric hospitals be of equal concern to us. The choice of the following six women as subjects for individual profiles was dictated by the fact that their plight has received most attention in the Soviet Union and can thus serve to illuminate the harsh fates of all women prisoners in the USSR.

### ANNASULTAN KEKILOVA

The popular Turkmen poet Annasultan Kekilova is the author of three books. In 1971 she sent several letters to the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union criticizing shortcomings in the Turkmen SSR. The repressions which followed (loss of her job, a ban on publishing her works) drove her to renounce her Soviet citizenship. On August 26, 1971 Kekilova was forcibly placed into a psychiatric hospital. In a letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU, her mother O. Seydova explained that her daughter was in perfect health and had never had to visit a psychiatrist.

O. Seydova also sent a letter to the international section of the CC CPSU, along with a copy to KGB chief Yu. Andropov, explaining the circumstances of the case: "On August 26 we received a visit from a 'first aid' group at our home. . . . They grabbed Annasultan, twisted her arm, roughly shoved her young son aside, pushed her into an automobile and spirited her away to the asylum. . . . The doctors in the psychiatric hospital told her that she was well, but added that unless she signed a statement saying that the letters to the Congress were written under stress, she would remain in the psychiatric hospital for the rest of her life. . . ."

### IRYNA SENYK

Iryna Senyk, a poet, was first arrested in 1944 at the age of nineteen for her membership in the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and was subsequently sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. While in the Stalinist camps, she contracted tuberculosis of the spinal column. After her release in 1954, Senyk worked as a nurse in a tuberculosis clinic in Ivano-Frankivsk in West Ukraine. She was again arrested in October 1972 in Ivano-Frankivsk for violating Article 62 of the Ukrainian SSR Criminal Code ("anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda"). Her alleged crimes included writing and circulating poetry which expressed "subversive" ideas, questioning the USSR's nationalities policy, associating with Ukrainian dissidents Vyacheslav Chornovil and Valentyn Moroz, and defending Svyatoslav Karavansky. Senyk was sentenced at a closed trial to six years' camps and three years' exile.





s. shabatura



n. svitlychna



i. senyk



i. stasiv-kalynets with husband and daughter

## STEFANIYA SHABATURA

Stefaniya Shabatura, a weaver and tapestry maker, was born in 1938 in West Ukraine. Shabatura's tapestries [kylymy] have been shown in a number of exhibits, most recently at the republican fair and exhibit in Kiev in December 1971. She is also mentioned in the sixth volume of *The History of Ukrainian Art*. In 1970 Shabatura was one of a group of Lviv writers and artists who appealed to the Ukrainian SSR Procuracy for permission to attend the trial of Valentyn Moroz. Shabatura was arrested in 1972 and sentenced to five years' camps and three years' exile on the basis of Article 62 of the UkSSR Criminal Code ("anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda").

Shabatura is reportedly in poor health.

## IRYNA STASIV-KALYNETS

Iryna Stasiv-Kalynets was born in 1940 in West Ukraine. She studied at Lviv University and, after receiving her degree in pedagogy, worked as a teacher at a secondary school in Lviv. Later she lectured in Ukrainian language and literature at the Lviv Polytechnic Institute.

Stasiv first became politically active as a result of her opposition to the Soviet policy of Russification. She signed a collective letter in defense of political prisoner Valentyn Moroz in October 1970 and sent a letter to Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin asking him to intercede on behalf of the seriously ill Moroz. Stasiv's efforts resulted in the loss of her job at the Polytechnic Institute.

In 1971 Stasiv joined the "Citizen's Committee for the Defense of Nina Strokata." The activities of the Committee were public and legal; in spite of this, the Committee's members were soon arrested and imprisoned.

Stasiv, herself, was arrested in January 1972 and sentenced at a closed trial in July 1972 to six years' imprisonment and three years' exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" (Article 62 of the Ukrainian SSR Criminal Code). Her husband, Ihor Kalynets, was sentenced under the same article to six years' imprisonment and three years' exile. The Kalynets' twelve year old daughter is living with her grandmother in Lviv.

## NINA STROKATA

Nina Strokata was born on January 31, 1925 in Odessa. She graduated from the Odessa Medical Institute with a degree in microbiology and then worked as a physician in southern Ukraine. From the early 1950s until May 1971 she continued her studies at the Institute.

In November 1961 she married Svyatoslav Karavansky, recently released from a long-term imprisonment for his participation in the wartime Ukrainian nationalist movement. Shortly thereafter, Karavansky was again arrested for "anti-Soviet activity."

As a result of her actions in defense of her husband and of Valentyn Moroz, Strokata was dismissed from the Medical Institute. She

was arrested on December 8, 1971 after a house search revealed two of her husband's poems and other *samizdat* material in her possession. At her closed trial in Odessa on May 4-19, 1972 Strokata was charged with dissemination of "anti-Soviet" literature (Article 62 of the Ukrainian SSR Criminal Code) and sentenced to four years of hard labor.

Nina Strokata is reported to be suffering from breast cancer.

### NADIA SVITLYCHNA

Nadia Svitlychna was born in 1936 in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. After graduating from Kiev State University with a degree in philology, she worked at the State Radio station in Kiev editing scripts. In 1968 she was relieved of her job at the station for disobeying her superiors by attending a national rally at the Shevchenko Monument in Kiev. Svitlychna was subsequently employed as a librarian, but lost that job in 1969. She has been unemployed since.

In 1969 she met Danylo Shumuk, a former political prisoner and later father of her son Yarema.

During the 1972 wave of arrests, Svitlychna, already a long-time dissident, was repeatedly interrogated and finally arrested in April 1972. Tried behind closed doors on March 23, 1973 she was charged with Article 62 of the Ukrainian SSR Criminal Code ("anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda") and sentenced to four years' hard labor and an unspecified period of exile.

Svitlychna is suffering from hepatitis and non-contagious tuberculosis. Her four year old son, Yarema, is living with relatives in Kiev.

### LIST OF WOMEN PRISONERS

It should be noted that the following is a partial list of women political prisoners in the USSR. The information provided below can be found in the Russian *samizdat* journal, "The Chronicle of Current Events."

Abbreviations:

OUN—Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists

TOC—True Orthodox Church

Article 62 of the Ukrainian SSR Criminal Code—"anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda"

Article 70 of the Russian SFSR Criminal Code—"anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda"

Mord. Camp—Mordovian Camp

## BAPTIST PRISONERS

- HRYTSENKO, Kateryna Ivanovna. b. 1943, sentenced in 1974.  
KASPER, Elya Valterovna. b. 1949, sentenced in 1974 to 3 yrs. imprisonment.  
KOZHEMYAKINA, Tatiana Sapronovna. b. 1937, sentenced in 1974.  
KORZHANETS, Lidiya Aleksandrovna. b. 1932, sentenced in 1974 to 4 yrs. imprisonment  
KOROTUN, Ida Danilovna. b. 1938, sentenced in 1974.  
KRAVCHENKO, Dina Yosyfivna. b. 1941, sentenced in 1973.  
LEVEN, Anna Abramovna. b. 1952, sentenced in 1973 to 1½ yrs. imprisonment  
LVOVA, Nadezhda Gerasimovna. b. 1946, sentenced in 1974.  
NIKORA, Olga Georgievna. b. 1950, sentenced in 1974 to 5 yrs. camps and .5 yrs. exile.  
TARASOVA, Zinaida Petrovna. b. 1942, sentenced in 1974.

## UKRAINIAN PRISONERS

- BOZHAR, Vira. b. 1924, sentenced in 1963 on the basis of Art. 62 of the UkSSR Criminal Code to 7 yrs. imprisonment and 5 yrs. exile.  
NASTUSENKO, Lyubov. Incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital.  
PALCHAK, Maria. b. 1922 or 1927, member of the OUN; sentenced in 1961 to 15 yrs. imprisonment. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.  
POPOVYCH, Oksana. b. 1927, sentenced in 1975 on the basis of Art. 62 of the UkSSR Criminal Code to 8 yrs. camps and 5 yrs. exile. Previously imprisoned 1944-1954.  
SENYK, Iryna Mykhaylivna. b. 1925, in prison from 1944-1954; sentenced in 1972 to 6 yrs. camps and 3 yrs. exile. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.  
SHABATURA, Stefaniya Mykhaylivna. b. 1938, sentenced in 1972 to 5 yrs. camps and 3 yrs. exile. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.  
STASIV-KALYNETS, Iryna Onufriyvna. b. 1940, sentenced in 1972 to 6 yrs. camps and 3 yrs. exile. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.  
STROKATA, Nina Antonivna. b. 1925, sentenced in 1972 to 4 yrs. imprisonment. Was admitted to the American Society for Microbiology in 1974. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.  
SVITLYCHNA, Nadia Oleksiyivna. b. 1936, sentenced in 1972 to 4 yrs. camps and an unspecified period of exile. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.

## RUSSIAN, JEWISH AND OTHER PRISONERS

- ALESHINA, Ekaterina. Mordvian; sentenced for belonging to the TOC. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.
- GRUNWALD, Natalia Frantsevna. b. 1912, sentenced to 25 yrs. imprisonment. Her son is also imprisoned. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.
- IVANOVA, Raissa. b. 1912, sentenced for belonging to the TOC. Incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital for refusing to work in a camp.
- KEKILOVA, Annasultan. Turkmen; incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital.
- KHVOTKOVA, Aleksandra. Received a 2nd sentence for belonging to the TOC. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.
- KIAUDIENO, Vera Iosifovna. Lithuanian; b. 1920, sentenced in 1967 to 10 yrs. imprisonment for "treason." Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.
- KIREEVA, Irina Andreevna. Received a 2nd sentence for belonging to the TOC. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.
- KOGAN, Anna Moiseevna. b. 1920, member of the CPSU; sentenced in 1969 to 7 yrs. imprisonment. Her son is also imprisoned. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.
- KRASAIEVA, Tatiana Pavlovna. b. 1904, sentenced to 7 yrs. imprisonment. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.
- KULDYSHEVA, Glafira. b. 1929, sentenced for belonging to the TOC. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.
- PAYLODZE, Valentina Serapionovna. Georgian; sentenced in 1974 to 1½ yrs. imprisonment for "slandering the Soviet state."
- SELIVONCHIK, Galina Vladimirovna. b. 1937, sentenced in 1969 to 13 yrs. camps and 5 yrs. exile for attempting to hijack a plane with her husband and brother. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.
- SEMENOVA, Maria Pavlovna. b. 1925, received a 3rd sentence for belonging to the TOC. Completed her 2nd sentence in 1971. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.
- SOKOLOVA, Tatiana. b. 1934, sentenced for belonging to the TOC. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.
- TSAST, Erika. Details unknown. Was the subject of an appeal by dissidents Sergei Kovalev and Andrei Sakharov in which they characterized her as the victim of an "unjust trial."
- VOLKOVA, Anastasia Andreevna. Sister of I.A. KIREEVA; received a 2nd sentence for belonging to the TOC. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.
- VOLKOVA, Klavdia. Received a 2nd sentence for belonging to the TOC. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.
- USOEVA, Nadezhda. b. 1942, sentenced for belonging to the TOC. Currently in Mord. Camp No. 3.

## AN ACTION GUIDE FOR DEFENDING WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS

Pavel Litvinov, one of the leaders of the democratic movement in the Soviet Union, said upon his arrival in Vienna in 1974: "It was public pressure in the West which kept some of us free." His words can serve as a general guideline for all defense actions.

Public pressure means keeping the fate of Soviet political prisoners on the pages of the press through the organization of rallies and demonstrations in defense of prisoners, and through the creation of a broad front of public opinion that will condemn the practice of imprisoning people for their views.

### FORMING LOCAL BRANCHES

To implement such a campaign, the CDSPP and the UNWLA urge that local branches of either group be organized in different cities in the United States and Canada so that massive defense actions can be conducted in various localities. We can supply both literature and speakers to local groups or individuals who are interested in defending prisoners.

### HOW TO WRITE TO PRISONERS

An important aspect of defense work is the maintenance of contact with prisoners in the USSR, which can be done through letter writing.

Airmail letters should be sent by registered mail requiring return receipt (about \$1.70). State in writing that it is to be delivered only to the addressee. Ask for insurance on the letter of up to \$13.00—it's free. Just include something of value (such as pictures or stamps) in the envelope. If the letter is returned, send it to the Committee for the Defense of Soviet Political Prisoners for vital documentation. If neither the receipt nor the letter is returned to you after a month, file a "tracer" at the post office. If nothing happens within another month, file a claim for the insurance money, which you may receive in several months and can use to send more letters. Regular airmail letters to the USSR are \$.26 per 1/2 oz.

A simple message of greetings, or an inquiry as to health will suffice, but letters should be sent on a permanent basis, until the prisoner you are writing to is released.

Letters may be sent to prisoners at the following addresses. Consult the prisoner list for locations of individual prisoners.

Vladimir prison: USSR g. Vladimir 600020 uchr. OD-1, ST-2 Name of Prisoner	Mordovian Camp No. 1: USSR 5110/1 Moskva Mordovskaya ASSR p.ya. Zh. Kh. 385/1 Name of Prisoner	Mordovian Camp No. 3: USSR 5110/1 Moskva Mordovskaya ASSR p.ya. Zh. Kh. 385/3 Name of Prisoner
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Mordovian Camp No. 19:	Perm Camp No. 35:	Perm Camp No. 36:
USSR	USSR	USSR
5110/1 Moskva	5110/1 Moskva	5110/1 Moskva
Mordovskaya ASSR	Permskaya oblast	Permskaya oblast
p.ya. Zh. Kh. 385/19	p.ya. VS 389/35	p.ya. VS 389/36
Name of Prisoner	Name of Prisoner	Name of Prisoner

### PROTEST CAMPAIGN

Individual letters, telephone calls and telegrams to representatives of the Soviet government are also an important facet of defense work. We urge that individuals and groups make inquiries about the state of health, the conditions of imprisonment and the reasons for imprisonment of individual prisoners at the addresses listed below.

Letters to the Soviet Union should be sent air mail, registered, with return receipt requested.

USSR  
 Moscow, RSFSR  
 The Kremlin  
 Soviet Party Secretary  
 Leonid Brezhnev

Anatoly Dobrynin  
 Embassy of the USSR  
 1125 16th Street N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20036

USSR  
 Moscow, RSFSR  
 Pereulok Ogareva  
 Minister of the Interior  
 Nikolai Schelokov

Ambassador Yakov Malik  
 Soviet Mission to the United Nations  
 136 East 67th Street  
 New York, N.Y.

### THE MASS MEDIA

As past events have conclusively shown, there are few pressures that the Soviet government is as sensitive to as Western public opinion. Although rallies, demonstrations and teach-ins are valuable as means toward informing the public about Soviet political prisoners, their effect is still far less than that of a quiet but calculated penetration of the media: radio, television or press. But aside from letters-to-the-editor and the like, individuals will frequently find themselves at a loss as to what actions to pursue. It is therefore imperative for concerned persons to group together under the aegis of either some established or newly created organization (local branches of the CDSPP or UNWLA, of Amnesty International, etc.) and thereby exert a collective form of pressure on the media to publicize the plight of women political prisoners in the USSR.

Personal contacts within a particular medium should be sought out and then utilized as permanent channels of providing the radio station, television network or newspaper with pertinent information. Those stations or papers which express a lively interest in Soviet women political prisoners should be urged to give even more extensive coverage to the issue. "Experimental" radio stations, for example, are always looking for

interesting programs to air and should prove to be approachable.

The more ambitious activists can press local newspapers to print articles or interviews on political prisoners, which you can even arrange to do yourself. In this respect, seek out those former Soviet political activists who emigrated and may now be living in your area. Speak to them, urge them to write articles, to be interviewed.

### **ADS AND POSTERS**

This takes little effort but lots of money. Although a several-hundred dollar advertisement in the right journal or newspaper can pay for itself, if not bring in a small profit, more often than not it'll be a losing venture financially. But, most important, remember that few things tend to discredit a cause more, than bad grammar, sloppy artwork, or hackneyed messages. So if your group finally does decide to take an ad out, make sure it's literate and up to professional standards.

### **WORKING THROUGH THE GOVERNMENT**

Although writing letters to government leaders is always worth a try, one shouldn't realistically expect a president to overhaul his foreign policy for the sake of women prisoners in the USSR. Lesser ranking officials who do exert influence on the course that a government may take should, however, be contacted, informed of the problem, and continually supplied with information. Those United States Congressmen and Senators who express reservations about the USA's policy of detente with the USSR should especially be singled out.

### **WOMEN'S GROUPS**

The fate of women political prisoners in the USSR has so far been ignored by most feminist and women's groups. Approach those organizations you believe you can work with, establish contacts, and then urge them to take a public stand on the issue of women prisoners. (Consider the impact of a well-timed article in *Ms.* magazine.)



## PETITION OF THE CITIZENS' COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF NINA STROKATA

. . . We, the undersigned, have come to the conclusion that there exists a vital need, especially in unusually flagrant instances of unwarranted persecution, to conduct organized activities in the defense of Soviet citizens who are being persecuted for political reasons. We consider the arrest of microbiologist Nina Antonivna Strokata (Karavanska), on December 8, 1971 by the Odessa KGB, to be such an instance for the following reasons:

1. We are dealing here with the arrest of a person known to both the Ukrainian and Russian democratic communities for her vigorous stand in the defense of sound and just principles of social order.

2. We are dealing here with the placing of a woman into a penal situation with the obvious intent of later sentencing her to an imprisonment characterized by conditions especially degrading for a woman. This is a state of affairs which a morally sound society can allow to take place only in absolutely desperate conditions (this pertains equally to the case of the American communist Angela Davis as to the case of the Ukrainian patriot Nina Strokata).

3. We are dealing with a case in which a woman has been arrested solely because she has refused, in spite of considerable pressure, to renounce her husband who himself is incarcerated for political reasons, and because she has attempted to defend his interests. We are well aware, nevertheless, that these facts will not only be ignored during the preliminary investigation but covered up through the concoction of charges of "dissemination of propaganda."

The Citizens' Committee for the Defense of Nina Strokata has been founded upon the firm base provided by the principles and basic guarantees contained in the USSR Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In its activities the Committee will abide by Soviet laws. . .

### Committee Members:

Pyotr Yakir—historian, Moscow

Iryna Stasiv—philologist, Lviv

Vasyl Stus—writer, Kiev

Leonid Tymchuk—sailor, Odessa

Vyacheslav Chornovil—journalist, Lviv

To the Procurator General, A. Rudenko:

The United Nations Charter contains the following words: "We the peoples of the United Nations resolve to reaffirm our faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person." These words offered hope to whole peoples and to individuals, who were being discriminated against up to the moment of the Charter's adoption. Rights, and the international-legal documents resulting therefrom were written while those who found freedom only with the death of Stalin suffered in the camps of Pechera, Kazakhstan, Siberia and Kolyma . . .

I, who have been brought to tears while reading several hundred poems written in prison during years which were hard not only for me but for all my country, have finally lived to see trials over poems and poets. Therefore, I, one of the first members of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, ask you, the Procurator General: is it possible to discuss poetry in courtrooms?

By announcing a hunger strike for the tenth of December, I want to remind you that many international-legal documents which held much promise have been forgotten.

December 5, 1973

I. Senyk



To the Procurator General, A. Rudenko:

. . . During the Middle Ages, the Inquisition burned the artist or his work for heresy. In the second half of the twentieth century they neither burn nor shoot artists; instead, they sentence them to be rehabilitated in camps of harsh regime. This regime is the fire of the Inquisition; it burns the artist and that which he might have created.

. . . Our descendants will speak of our time as an age of great scientific and technological advances, but not as an age of the harmonious development of the individual. What kind of progress is it when the blood vessels of culture are periodically cut in interrogation rooms and courtrooms?

How long is this to continue unpunished?

Perhaps you share Sherwood Anderson's notion that "every person on earth is a Christ and will be crucified." If this is so, then I am willing to be crucified for my land and for my people, who have not been allowed to stand upright and develop properly first by the hordes of Batu, then by the tsarist oppressors, and now by your own colleagues.

December 7, 1973

S. Shabatura

To the Procurator General, A. Rudenko:

... Look at U. Reshetova's article, "In the Name of the Rights and Freedoms of Man", in the journal *Novoye Vremya* [New Time] (1973, No. 39) and pay attention to the last lines of the left column. There you will read that "... in accordance with the pact [The Universal Declaration of Human Rights] the right to free thinking may be limited." If the government's right over thought is the essence of socialist democracy, then anyone who repudiates that democracy will be correct in doing so. Or is it, perhaps, because of my isolation that I am unfamiliar with the extent of thought-control that has resulted from a broadening of the meaning of Art. 62 of the UkSSR Criminal Code?

Since I do not expect an answer from you, I announce a hunger strike for the tenth of December as a sign of protest against all limitations on and repressions of thought.

December 10, 1973

N. Strokata



To the Procurator General, A. Rudenko:

My total faith in such documents as the USSR Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has led me to prison, because it appears that these documents contradict the laws of our country and serve only to hide the real essence of such laws. Thus one of the articles of the Declaration assures us that: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." But Art. 62 of the UkSSR Criminal Code provides punishment for acts consisting of the "dissemination of ideas and opinions by any means" and of the circulation or preparation or possession of anti-Soviet literature. . . .

Therefore, having reviewed my attitudes to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I consider it to be a provocative document which can serve only as a trap for the gullible.

In protest against the Declaration, I announce a hunger strike for the tenth of December of this year—the year of the Declaration's twenty-fifth anniversary.

December 10, 1973

N. Svitlychna

To the President of P.E.N. International, Heinrich Boll, to the President of the World Federation of Medical Workers, to the heads and leaders of international women's, creative and trade union organizations, to the Red Cross and the Red Crescent societies:

A New Year's greeting to you and your countrymen would be impossible without faith in a civilization whose ideal is the sanctity of human life. We women, who today find ourselves in the kingdom of Winter, firmly believe that these fences of barbed wire will be torn asunder by the minds and ideals of our contemporaries.

Respectfully yours, Ukrainian political prisoners, Mordovia, December 1973

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To all our friends outside the interior zone.\* We wish you a happy New Year, dear and faithful ones. May happiness, inspiration, faith and freedom be yours!

Mordovia, December 1973

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To the Secretary General of the United Nations:

January 12, 1972 marked the beginning of a new wave of repressions against the Ukrainian intelligentsia. We are being persecuted and condemned to prisons solely for the fact that, as Ukrainians, we advocate the preservation and development of Ukrainian national culture and language in Ukraine. All the arrests that were conducted in Ukraine during that year constituted violations of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights by the Soviet Government.

We are defenseless before the unjust Soviet court. We have been illegally convicted and now find ourselves in the Soviet political concentration camp No. 3 in Dubrovlag in Mordovia. We dispute every single paragraph of the charges brought against us. We ask not for amnesty, but for a genuine, just, open trial in the compulsory presence of a representative of the United Nations Organization.

May 10, 1973

Stefa Shabaturo  
Nina Karavanska-Strokata  
Iryna Stasiv-Kalynet.:

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\*i.e. to all who are not imprisoned.

From the *Chronicle of Current Events* No. 33:

In September 1974 N. Svitlychna, N. Strokata, I. Stasiv-Kalynets and S. Shabatura issued a statement to the camp administration in which they requested that the wages they earn while at camp be donated to a fund for the victims of the Chilean Junta. They also asked to be allowed to send delegates to the congress of the International Federation of Democratic Women. Both requests were refused.

From the *Chronicle of Current Events* No. 33:

In an open letter to the International Federation of Democratic Women written in late 1974, political prisoners Kronid Lyubarsky, Boris Azernikov, Boris Penson, Zoryan Popadyuk, Serhiy Babych, Izrael Zalmanson and Aleksandr Petrov-Agatov stated: "... There are not many of these women, only about twenty to thirty ... At the moment we're not concerned with discussing the justice or legality of their sentences. Political disputes take time, while these women are suffering now. All we want to ask is whether a mighty state would be undermined and whether the regime that controls so mighty a state apparatus would be weakened if twenty women were given freedom!?. . . They must be freed! Is there a better opportunity for a state that proclaims itself to be humane to prove the sincerity of its declarations? We appeal to you, democratic women: demand of the Soviet government the freeing of these women political prisoners ... They are your sisters. Help them. That wouldn't be a political act, but an act of humanity."

From the *Congressional News* (April 14, 1975):

Congressman Edward Koch of New York City spoke out in defense of "those Ukrainian women who are political prisoners held in Soviet Union prisons." He urged his "colleagues to write to Anatoly F. Dobrynin, Ambassador of the USSR, asking for amnesty for these women and their release from prison."

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Committee for the Defense  
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