DOCUMENTS OF UKRAINIAN SAMVYDAV

AN INTERVIEW WITH POLITICAL PRISONERS IN A SOVIET PERM CAMP

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No. 2 1978

"An Interview With Political Prisoners in a Soviet Perm Camp"

TRANSLATED BY TARAS DROZD
EDITED BY OREST OLHOVYCH

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AN INTERVIEW WITH POLITICAL PRISONERS IN A SOVIET PERM CAMP

Second Edition

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PREFACE

Smoloskyp continues its series *Documents of Ukrainian Samvydav* with a work which has only a marginal justification for being included in a series by that name. "An Interview with Political Prisoners of Camp VS 389/35" came out of the Russian *samizdat*—the 1974 undertaking of smuggling the questions into the Perm Region camp, conducting the interview, and getting the document out again was presumably the work of the same people who are responsible for the *Chronicle of Current Events*. We saw fit to include it here because five of the eleven prisoners interviewed were Ukrainians, representing several "generations" of Ukrainian political prisoners, from a member of the anti-Soviet underground of the forties and fifties to the poet and the writer of the seventies, while a sixth is a Ukrainian Jew from Kiev. Furthermore, the document's origin does not preclude the possibility that it is now or will be in the future circulating in a Ukrainian translation in Ukraine.

And, above all, the document is unique. First, in its originality—can the idea of an *interview* conducted in the middle of a hard-labor camp for political prisoners in the Perm Region of the Soviet Union not help but add to our faith in the eventual victory of the human spirit? And second, what we have here is a document which, by its form and content, cannot but make it easier for us in the West to understand what it means to be a political prisoner in the Soviet Union, to be deprived of liberty for exercising rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the land, to be forced to resort to hunger strikes in order to defend yourself against lawlessness on the part of the authorities. These men seem to be speaking to us, asking us to understand why their belief in the rightness of their cause has given them the strength to stand up and to stand together, telling us how important for them it is for us in the West to raise our voices in their defense.

THE LIST OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE INTERVIEW

ANTONYUK, Zinoviy Pavlovych, b. 1933; Ukrainian economist from Kiev; sentenced in 1972 to seven years' camp imprisonment and three years' exile under Art. 62, Sec. 1, of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian S.S.R.

BALAKHONOV, Vladimir Fyodorovich, b. 1935; Russian from Moscow; worked as a translator at the UN's meteorological service in Geneva. In 1972 he requested asylum in Switzerland, later returned to the U.S.S.R.; sentenced in 1973 to twelve years under Art. 64 of the CC of the Russian S.F.S.R.

GLUZMAN, Semen Filipovich, b. 1946; Jewish psychiatrist from Kiev; sentenced in 1972 to seven years' camp imprisonment and three years' exile under Art. 62, Sec. 1, of the CC of the Ukr.S.S.R.

KALYNETS, Ihor Myronovych, b. 1939; Ukrainian poet from Lviv; sentenced in 1972 to six years' camp imprisonment and three years' exile under Art. 62, Sec. 1, of the CC of the Ukr.S.S.R.

KANDYBA, Ivan Oleksiyovych, b. 1930; Ukrainian lawyer from Lviv; sentenced in 1961 to fifteen years under Art. 56 of the CC of the Ukr.S.S.R.

KHNOKH, Arye-Leib Hirshevich, b. 1944; Jewish electrician from Riga, Latvia; sentenced in 1970 to ten years under Arts. 64, 70, and 72 of the CC of the R.S.F.S.R.

MESHENER, Yosif Yakovlevich, b. 1931; Jewish historian from Bendery; sentenced in 1970 to six years' imprisonment for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda."

PRYSHLYAK, Yevhen Stepanovych, b. 1913; Ukrainian; sentenced in Lviv in 1952 to twenty-five years under Art. 54-1a.

SHAKHVERDYAN, Bahrat Levonovich, b. 1940; Armenian engineer from Yerevan; sentenced in 1973 to five years' camp imprisonment and two years' exile under Arts. 65 and 67 of the CC of the Armenian S.S.R.

SVITLYCHNY, Ivan Oleksiyovych, b. 1929; Ukrainian philologist from Kiev; sentenced in 1972 to seven years' camp imprisonment and five years' exile under Art. 62, Sec. 1, of the CC of the Ukr.S.S.R.

YAGMAN, Lev Naumovich, b. 1940; Jew from Leningrad; sentenced in 1970 to five years' camp imprisonment under Art. 70 of the CC of the R.S.F.S.R.

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* The list of the participants in the interview accompanied the document.

AN INTERVIEW WITH POLITICAL PRISONERS OF PERM REGION CAMP VS 389/35*

Chilean political prisoners, as is known, have the opportunity to meet with members of the press, even the foreign press, and to answer any questions posed.

Soviet prisoners are deprived of such an opportunity; they are totally isolated from the world. But still, regardless of all the difficulties, we were able to pass some questions into the political camp near Vsesvyatskoy (in the Urals), and the person who received them was able to conduct an interview with several political prisoners. The first question, obviously dealt with the very fact of isolation, the methods of enforcing it, and the goals behind it.

IVAN SVITLYCHNY: The camp administration truly strives for maximum possible isolation. All direct contacts with the outside world are limited to two general and one private visits per year, and these only with the most immediate family. The camp administration can deprive the prisoner of all these visits at its arbitrary discretion. In 1974, for example, I have already been deprived of the two general visits—once because I was sitting on the bed (there is nothing about this in the camp rules), the other time because someone disliked several of my poems which had been confiscated. A general visit, when granted, is supposed to last from one to four hours in the mandatory presence of an overseer, who makes sure that the conversations don't cross the bounds of everyday topics, don't dwell on politics, conditions of camp life, and so forth. Personal visits take place in a special room that has been equipped with listening devices. Naturally, there is no chance for any verbal exchange of information, and the use of paper, pencil, and the like during the visit is forbidden. One can judge the total extent of a political prisoner's isolation from the fact that even the overseers, individuals specially chosen and trained, are not allowed to talk to the political prisoners, and the ranking members of the administration discuss only carefully selected topics.

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* The title of the document as it appeared in the original. The introduction is by the samizdat editors.

The second form of contact with the outside world—letter writing—is subject to the most severe censorship. It is forbidden to write about conditions of camp life, to name one's fellow-political prisoners, to mention one's poor state of health. Even simple descriptions of the natural surroundings and the weather are looked upon as attempts to send forbidden coded messages.

The same strict censorship is applied to letters to the prisoner. And here the censor, as a rule, does not burden himself with the necessity of seriously justifying the confiscation of letters. . . .For this it is sufficient to state that the letter contains some sort of message or information that may not be announced, or that its content is suspicious, or that it contains "distortions of international reality." To what extent this is done arbitrarily can be determined from the fact that they confiscated letters to Kalynets and me from relatives in Mordovian political camps; those letters that had been let through by the Mordovian censors were considered seditious by the Ural censors, and vice versa. What's more, the behavior of the censors of one and the same camp can vary entirely from day to day. Toward the end of 1973, a letter I wrote to my wife was confiscated. I then carried out a simple experiment: I wrote the same letter a second time, adding to it only a mention of the confiscation of my previous letter. And this second letter was passed by the censor. I still don't know what this indicates: were these letters censored by different persons, or did it depend on the mood of one and the same person? I suspect the latter. But what's worse is that the camp administration controls your correspondence, and when letters are confiscated, there's no one to complain to. Confiscated letters are destroyed, and determining the reason for confiscation is made impossible.

QUESTION: What are the reasons for such strict isolation?

I. KALYNETS: It's clear to me that this is done solely to cover up facts and deeds which contradict international legal and moral standards as well as the articles of the Soviet Constitution. I, for example, was tried solely for my literary activity, which had neither anti-Soviet undertones nor any more or less tangible socio-political character in general. It's ridiculous to say then that my "case" involved any state or military secrets. And yet my case was examined in a closed trial which not even my closest family could attend. This is understandable: there was, of course, no case; the "especially dangerous crime against the state" consisted of a few totally unpolitical poems, and this could have baffled even a Soviet society which is used to anything.

As a rule, transcripts of all similar trials are kept in strict secrecy, and many individuals—contrary to existing legal norms—can't obtain even copies of their verdicts. Naturally, this is possible only under conditions of maximum isolation of the prisoners.

Besides this, the camp administration keeps all these so-called "criminals" under inhuman conditions: they are kept on semi-starvation rations, they are tortured by cold, exhausted by heavy work. Their human dignity is being constantly degraded. If all this became publicized, such actions couldn't go unpunished.

It's in the authorities' interest to cover up the truth, and this is only possible with the strictest isolation of the subjects of this barbaric experiment.

Such are the "cases" of V. Stus, Y. Sverstyuk, M. Osadchy, and many others.

A. M. Horbal was sentenced to five years' camp imprisonment and two years' exile for a single poem, "Duma."

QUESTION: What can you say about the legal status of political prisoners in the U.S.S.R.?

I. KANDYBA: It is well known that in the U.S.S.R. the authorities always deny the existence of political prisoners, and they forbid us to call ourselves political. This tradition had its origins in tsarist Russia. Only then political prisoners were called "state criminals," whereas today the authorities have also added the term "especially dangerous." The difference here is also that in the U.S.S.R. there are far more "especially dangerous state criminals" than there were in tsarist Russia, and the authorities treat them much more harshly.

The situation of political prisoners in the U.S.S.R. is marked by yet another important peculiarity. When one takes into account the fact that a Constitution actually exists in the U.S.S.R., and that it is the fundamental law, then most of the so-called political prisoners were illegally sentenced for violating the Constitution; all they were attempting to do was to take advantage of their constitutionally guaranteed rights. In the strict sense of the word, it is truly difficult to call such people political activists. But, in practical life, there's also the Criminal Code, which restricts the use of constitutionally guaranteed fundamental democratic rights, and which calls people who dared to make use of these rights "especially dangerous state criminals."

Therefore even the political prisoners appraise themselves and their actions variously: those who have the Constitution in mind consider themselves innocent, while those who call on the Criminal Code ac-

knowledge their guilt. Thus the position of political prisoners in the U.S.S.R. is dichotomous from the very beginning.

LEV YAGMAN: Besides this, the disparity that we discern between the paper constitution and the actual code also exists between the statutes of the CLC [the Correctional Labor Code] and the actual rights of the political prisoners.

I'll try to present a few examples. The preamble of the Code states that the serving of one's punishment should not cause physical and mental suffering.

But how then is one to understand the much-used practice of transferring zeks [prisoners] into the PKT [the camp prison] for periods of up to six months, where food is distributed according to the notorious Norm 9. This is nothing other than a well-planned method of undermining a person's health. You can imagine what it means for a zek to subsist over a half-year period on a decreased diet, when even camp doctors (employees of the MVD) acknowledge that the normal camp rations as a rule cause stomach disorders when consumed over a period of several years.

How can it be said that no form of mental suffering is imposed, when faithful are forced to shave off their beards and those who refuse are handcuffed and then shaved; when one can't obtain any religious literature in camp, while the literature that we have in manuscript form is being confiscated during searches; when faithful Jews and Moslems are punished for wearing head coverings indoors; when all possible efforts are made to hinder religious ceremonies and the observance of holydays; when we are forced to work on Sundays, and punished when we refuse.

The question of correspondence has already long ago become a much-discussed topic. Article 30 of the CLC states that letters must be delivered and sent out within three days, but the administration and the KGB representatives feel that we should be glad if the letters are sent and delivered at all; it is senseless to even speak of time-limits. Letters in Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, Armenian, and other languages travel for months. Letters from abroad in Hebrew, English, and other languages are not delivered for months; letters arrive in Moscow after ten - fifteen days and then reach the camp one and a half to two months later. "We have no translators" is the reply to all our complaints. So why are letters from abroad, written in Russian, also delivered after one and a half to two months? What happens to dozens of letters? For several years now we haven't been able to receive answers to these questions. Of course, the mythical 5110 institution in Moscow, which handles all letters from abroad, is not even under the control of

a department of the administrative organs of the CC CPSU [Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union].

The CLC states that prisoners should receive their work assignments according to their ability to work and, where possible, according to their profession. Nevertheless, camp practice shows that everything possible is being done to prevent the zeks from working according to their specialty. And this comes at a time when there is, as a rule, a shortage of specialists: engineers work as common laborers, physicians as stokers, philologists as lathe operators, etc.

IVAN KANDYBA: Political prisoners of non-Russian nationality have their rights abridged in additional ways. They are taken beyond the borders of their republics, into foreign lands, where they are forced to live in a climate that is extremely severe and to which they are not accustomed.

Often their families are not able to come for the visits that are granted by law.

Both the political prisoners and their families suffer from this; families break up under such circumstances. This is precisely what the authorities are looking for and they promote this consciously. Afterward, they explain it by saying that this happens for political reasons. Non-Russian political prisoners are forced to communicate with the administration exclusively in the Russian language, and outgoing and incoming letters are also delayed under the pretext that they are not written in Russian. It's forbidden to converse in one's native tongue even during visits with relatives. The countless pleas and demands of political prisoners that they be allowed to serve their sentences in their native republics are rejected.

LEV YAGMAN: It's interesting that in all cases where the law gives the administration the right to make its own interpretation, the administration always decides against the interests of the zeks. If the law stipulates that long visits should last one to three days, and short visits one to four hours, then for all practical purposes there's no chance of getting the maximum. If the law does not mention the right to rest during daytime or to sun oneself in specially designated areas, then the administration forbids such practice. It's a wonder that till now it hasn't been forbidden to breathe—the laws don't mention this either.

IVAN KANDYBA: Thus, saying that there is no physical and mental suffering is nothing but empty talk. The whole system of incarceration is based on subjecting political prisoners, by all means and

actions, to physical and mental suffering; it is only in this way that the authorities are attempting to achieve their goals.

QUESTION: The goal of every penal system is re-education. In what ways are they attempting to achieve this goal in your circumstances?

SLAVA GLUZMAN: Rehabilitation of political prisoners under existing camp conditions means only one thing: bringing their moral-esthetic outlook to such a state where they become apathetic to all problems save one—their personal well-being. There can be no talk about a sincere change of convictions, or about the sincerity of actions that follow such changes, because the way in which laws are applied in practice, as well as the "humaneness" of the methods that are used, eliminate all illusions and not a few ideals.

It's impossible to "rehabilitate" political prisoners with the methods of education delineated by law for the MVD system. . . .What's more, a political prisoner who has become disillusioned with his previous social beliefs and attitudes will often turn his search toward spheres of the ideal—religion and the like—but not toward official dogma.

Political-educational work in the MVD system consists of lectures, political activities, individual sessions and, of course, personal example. The person directly in charge of this work is the assistant camp warden for political education. The actual work is usually carried out by the group leaders. The level of these lectures, discussions, and activities is unusually low, reflecting the MVD officers' level of education and maturity. As a result, our educators often make statements that are blatantly absurd and "ideologically harmful" from the standpoint of the current situation and party dogma. At other times they allow themselves statements that fall under Article 190 of the Criminal Code of the R.S.F.S.R. Thus one of the officers told me in the first of his lectures that he "respects and esteems Stalin."

There is no law that says that zeks must participate in the lectures and activities. In practice, however, such participation is "encouraged," to put it mildly. Indeed, one of the reasons why Meshener was placed in the PKT was his lack of participation in community life, his refusal to attend political activities, as well as his unwillingness to work on Sundays.

The absurdity of similar methods of "education" becomes obvious when one takes into account the fact that a great number of political prisoners have higher education and are well familiar with the socio-political literature, while by far not all of the "educators" read the papers.

With such a goal of "education" it is of course natural that the law forbids us to subscribe through the government printing office to any foreign publications, including Communist and specialized publications.

Constant searches, inspections, confiscation of manuscripts and other material impede systematic work on books, as well as all creative work. In a political camp the printed word definitely does not promote "rehabilitation."

And yet an occasional "rehabilitation" of a political prisoner does occur. Usually those are "rehabilitated" who happened to land in camp by chance, who never possessed any strong moral principles or well-defined convictions; these are the individuals who were sentenced not for their "deeds" but for their "words." But even they don't conceal from their friends the fact that the underlying reason for their "rehabilitation" was not that their camp-education made them realize their "criminal past," but that they were concerned about their personal well-being.

At times (though very rarely) a political prisoner, exhausted by numerous camp methods and serious, consuming illnesses, will on his own agree to formal "rehabilitation." It should be noted that even the camp administration understands the mere formality of such a "rehabilitation" of the political prisoner. Once released, such "rehabilitated" individuals never receive what had been promised them earlier: neither higher education, nor passports for this or that city, and so forth and so on.

ZINOVIY ANTONYUK: Work holds a prominent place in the system of re-education of zeks, insofar as it is work that forms an individual's basic moral qualities, such as collectivism, love of work, respect for the work of others, etc. But permit me to ask which of my comrades did not develop these moral qualities ten, twenty and more years ago, without the interference of the camp administration?

LEV YAGMAN: I think that the entire problem lies in the fact that the law does not differentiate between people sentenced for common crimes and the group that is found in political camps; in our case work has been transformed from a means of promoting re-education into yet another form of punishment. One can distinguish several categories of zeks by their attitude toward work. Into the first category fall those who for various reasons try to use work as a means to forget, to kill time, those who can't or don't want to use work for other purposes. They work for the sake of working. The second group comprises those for whom work is yet another means of obtaining the administration's favor; finally there are those, the third group, who regard work in the

colony as a real curse, because it takes them away from activities which interest them, and because it is physically hard, undignified, and often senseless. Prisoners are frequently given harmful jobs, such as working with polyether varnishes; resanding the finish of decorative boxes, in Camp ZhKh 385/19 in Mordovia; repairing used filters from chemical factories, in Camp VS 389/35; or recharging batteries in Camp VS 389/36 of the Perm Region. Naturally, it is useless to talk about on-the-job safety under existing camp conditions.

ZINOVIY ANTONYUK: And in general, work, elementary technical quotas, and material incentives exist for only one purpose—to get the maximum out of each person while paying him the minimum. The compulsory combining of jobs is widespread (without pay, of course!). The prolongation of work into nighttime is not at all regulated. They constantly force us to work two consecutive shifts (without any compensation for overtime work); there are no shorter workdays in jobs that are harmful to health (or any sort of compensation for work beyond one's quota); special rations (as a rule powdered milk) are meted out infrequently and by far not to all who are entitled to them (these rations have become a sort of incentive). Shift schedules are like fiction: the second shift has no opportunity to rest (living quarters are huge and house all shifts). . . .In theory there are two shifts, but in reality there are actually three (the second shift works two consecutive shifts). The minimum wage that has been established by law is nonexistent. Instead there is a form of pay depending on output. Work distribution plans are a fiction: jobs done by one individual during the course of a month are credited to another, and the prisoners are paid according to some unknown wage schedules which are strictly arbitrary (the same job may, over a period of a month, differ in pay by a factor of two, and invariably in the direction of decrease). The distribution of wages according to rate categories shows a similar trend: yesterday a worker's wage was determined according to the fourth rate, today it's being determined according to the third rate, and tomorrow it'll be determined already according to the second rate. This is one of the legal methods of improving the economic indicators of productivity—at the prisoner's expense. Special clothing and footwear have also become, thanks to the administration, a lever for improving the economic indicators.

LEV YAGMAN: The camp administration hates it when we draw parallels between their work methods and the methods used by the Nazis. But how can one not think of the Nazi practice of having prisoners carry stones from place to place, when in the punitive isolation cells

of Camp VS 389/35 political prisoners are forced to hand-thread bolts brought specifically for this purpose from the neighboring camp where common criminals do such work with the help of machines. Compare the output: by hand–70 bolts, by machine–700. For people who over a period of several months are fed only every other day this kind of work is not the easiest.

I assume that everything we have said illustrates clearly enough that work in the political camps plays absolutely no educational role. Rather, it serves only as yet another means of oppression, making life hard for the prisoner and undermining his health.

ARYE KHNOKH: Yes, it is precisely this main goal that is served by the entire complex of measures which constitute the conditions of the zeks' confinement. The semi-military regime with its endless inspections by day as well as by night; the lining up and walking in rows; the life in barracks-like accommodations; the government-issue clothing and footwear; the degrading identification tags which every prisoner must sew to his outer wear; the low-calorie, bland food for forty-three kopeks a day, and so on. And on top of all this there are countless restrictions: one can write only two letters per month and receive an unlimited number from any correspondents, but the censors have the right to confiscation, and they make extensive use of this right. It is permitted to receive one five-kilogram package a year and to buy in the camp store items for up to five rubles per month, though the items are of an extremely limited assortment. But even this opportunity is very often denied the zek. It's permitted to receive one long (from one to three days) and two short (from one to four hours) visits per year from one's closest family, but it often happens that relatives, having travelled one, two, or three thousand kilometers, are told at the camp's gates that the camp administration denied the zek his visitation right just a day earlier. I think that it is unnecessary to continue this enumerating. It is entirely obvious that in practice the political camp system in the Soviet Union does not place as its goal the re-education of the zek; it is simply not capable of doing so. All of its efforts are directed towards one goal–to force the political prisoners to reject their convictions, at least outwardly. If this can't be accomplished, then everything is done to physically break the individual. To this end the administration employs a wide variety of "legal" methods (such as a poor diet, the lack of normal medical care, SHIZO [punitive isolation cell], PKT, prison) as well as illegal methods (such as hard and harmful work, physical and moral exhaustion with the aid of constant petty badgering).

QUESTION: What can you say about the representatives of the camp administration?

LEV YAGMAN: In my opinion, when answering this question it is important to always remember that the government, paying special attention to the political camps, sends its best personnel here. Thus it can be imagined who "educates" the common criminals.

Recent years have seen a marked rejuvenation of the administrative staff of political camps. This was undoubtedly done with the view of raising the educational level of the camp administration. One can already draw some conclusions about this. It appears to me that the attempt to fundamentally change conditions in the political camps with the help of youthful personnel ended in total failure for two reasons: the first has to do with the simultaneous change in the contingent of political prisoners; the second reason is that although the educational level of the new overseers and officers is higher than that of their predecessors there is no essential difference between them. Whereas the former were mostly individuals without a trade who had found a place where one could without exceptional difficulties reach retirement age, the latter are people who, because of indolence or lack of any talents, seek an "easy life." But both groups are united by a lack of ideals, by a lack of belief that what they are doing is correct and necessary. This determines their moral outlook and carries in its wake drunkenness and debauchery, cynicism and a total lack of principle.

YOSIF MESHENER: It seems to me that one can obtain a clearer picture of the administrative personnel if we try to group them according to their most characteristic traits.

1) Sadists. This group comprises those who derive pleasure from persecuting political prisoners, who treat them cruelly, using the most refined methods. If they deny the prisoner his visitation right, then they do this after the family is already on its way. If they deny him the right to receive packages, then they do so after a package has already arrived. In summer they forbid us to sun ourselves and in winter they take away warm clothing.

The most typical representatives of this group are Captain Bakaykin from ZhKh 385/17 in Mordovia, Major Fyodorov from VS 389/36, Captain Khromushyn and Lieutenant Chayka, both from VS 389/35 of the Perm Region.

2) Cynics. They understand everything, but this makes them nonetheless capable of base acts. These people usually attain great success.

Good examples are the Deputy Minister for Internal Affairs of Mordovia, Colonel Nikolayev, who told a zek: "If we'd feed you well, we'd never get you to leave the camp"; Lieutenant-Colonel Usov (commandant of ZhKh 385/19), Major Pimenov (commandant of VS 389/35), who during a month-long hunger strike told the strikers: "I can make you stand on your heads, if I want; I have 200 soldiers outside the zone."

3) Those who suffer from an inferiority complex and try to compensate for it at the expense of the zek. They are particularly touchy when it comes to issues that pertain to their own person. These people are usually officers who progress poorly in the service, such as Lieutenant Bulochnikov* and Lieutenant Kuznetsov from 389/35 and Captain Tyshkin from 385/19.

4) A substantial group of fools, and fools with initiative. Excellent examples are Lieut. Colonel Vyelmakin (ZhKh 385/19), for whom punishment was the answer to everything; Kytmanov (deputy for political-educational work in Camp VS 389/35), who for ten minutes searched a map for the Jewish Autonomous Region—and still couldn't find it; Lieutenant Nikolayev, from the same camp, who declared: "I've attained much in life; I'm only 26 years old and already I'm a Lieutenant"; Captain Zhuravkov (commandant of VS 389/36), who thought that the word "German" was an invective. And of what worth is Lieutenant Baybushev from 385/17, who declared: "I will give you such a character reference that they will believe even in Israel"?

5) The last group includes those who are indifferent to everything, who lack initiative (to do either good or bad things). These are typical Soviet bureaucrats. We mind them the least, though naturally they do everything they are told.

Naturally, this entire categorization is very subjective, and no one is a perfect example of any one category; nevertheless, there's always a predominant characteristic.

LEV YAGMAN: It's interesting that in conversations with political prisoners the representatives of the KGB, who consider themselves in the elite, often admit the low caliber of the MVD personnel, and declare that it is unfortunate that Ph.D.'s in the pedagogical sciences don't apply for work with the MVD. However, their own caliber isn't all that much higher. I think that the sexually unrestrainable Captain Krapavichus excellently fits the category of "fools with initiative," and Major Afasanov is a typical sadist. And it is obviously not by coincidence

* Bulochnikov himself forms his goal in life thus: "Spend your furlough without your wife and have as many women as you can, drink as much vodka as you can." [Original note].

that the local papers of the Perm Region regularly carry advertisements seeking new personnel for the Correctional Labor Administration of the MVD. The profession of overseer never enjoyed popularity and these are facts which cannot be hidden behind any nice phrases.

QUESTION: What sort of relations exist between the prisoners and the administration?

SLAVA GLUZMAN: Political camps hold people of various nationalities, religious beliefs, educational backgrounds, and ages (from eighteen to seventy and over). Different ways of life prior to imprisonment, longer or shorter camp sentences, one's attitude toward his current situation—all this affects interpersonal relations in the camp. Basically, all prisoners can be divided into three categories: the chastisers, the common criminals, and the political prisoners.

1) The chastisers. These were the participants in activities against partisans, Jews, and communists during World War II. As a rule they are poorly educated, socially inert, aggressively amoral individuals who wish to gain the administration's favor at all cost. Most of them are informants for the administration. They enjoy certain privileges and they try actively to oppose the prisoners' struggle for their rights. We are purposely kept together with these chastisers. This is an important method of getting at us psychologically. Here's an example: my grandfather was murderred at Babiy Yar, while here in the camp a person who participated in that action sleeps next to me; and a little further away is one who participated in crushing the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Another one of these, from Byelorussia, who's close to the administration, openly speaks of his hatred for Jews and declares that he "sees no difference in whom he serves—the Germans or the Soviets."

2) The common criminals. These are people who earlier had served sentences in zones reserved for such common criminals and, while there, were sentenced to a new term under one of the "political" statutes (usually for having prepared handwritten leaflets, or for displaying tatoos of an "anti-Soviet content"). Their arrival at a political camp has a positive influence on some of them, awakening in them an interest in books, in spiritual life, even in politics. Some of them work regularly at their self-education. But some of them remain, in their psychology, common criminals. Such people, as a rule, are very sociable. The administration attempts to turn them into informers.

3) The composition of actual political prisoners is quite varied. There are at least three categories of political prisoners: participants in national liberation movements (Ukrainians, Estonians, Lithuanians, Lat-

vians), persons who were sent to the camp for their "activity," and persons who were sent to the camp for "the word."

The first category is made up of older individuals, most of whom have had no systematic education but who made it through the excellent "camp university." They are the witnesses to Stalin's lawlessness and Khrushchev's "half-way policy." Age, sickness, and simple exhaustion have forced some of them to withdraw from active camp life. Yet they have not lost their human dignity. The state of mind of some has been irreversibly ruined by tens of years of camp life, and still they are not freed, still not "forgiven." They, these so-called "old-timers," are the keepers of the camp traditions and camp morality (there is indeed such a thing). Irrespective of their illnesses and age, they support the young prisoners in their struggle for their rights. They usually stick together in groups according to nationality, but they do associate with the other political prisoners.

Those who came to the camp for their "activity" are usually young, possess a specialized secondary or higher education, and they continue their education in camp. They actively protest against illegal practices of the administration and usually don't let themselves be re-educated or intimidated.

Some people are sent to camp for "words." It is precisely these people, here because of a quirk of fate, who go through the most decisive psychological change. This change can go either way (daily camp life forces them to make a clear commitment). Thus in the case of two zeks who had been sentenced for similar reasons, one, Chekalin, has found himself a place among the conscious and socially-active zeks, while the other, Zhuchlov, faithfully serves the administration.

The absolute failure of the direct, legally designated methods of "education" is also not a secret. Notably more successful are methods which stand outside the law, such as blackmail and intimidation of zeks and their families, minor gratuities in the form of packages, assignment to lighter work, etc. The administration distinctly delimits its attitude toward the various categories of zeks.

Reports are drawn up on especially active political prisoners, allegedly for some violation of camp discipline. They are often punished, denied their visitation rights, never assigned to easy work, etc. The "chastisers" on the other hand not only enjoy all the privileges that are available for zeks, but they also receive a greater number of visits and packages, are sent to the camp hospital for the slightest illness, and receive mostly hospital food. The same goes for the informers and members of the "extra-curricular" groups (SKK and SVV).

Deceptive information is periodically channeled into the small, closed world of the camp. This is done through informers with this or that operational purpose in mind. At times the information carries a chauvinistic character. The intention here is to split up groups, especially the young (the principle of "divide and rule").

In general I can point out that it was here that for the first time I saw internationalism at work not in words but in deeds, especially among those who are labelled "bourgeois nationalists," and this in spite of the fact that for many years now the KGB and MVD have consistently attempted to sow discord among political prisoners of various nationalities.

QUESTION: What sort of changes in the contingent of political prisoners have you noticed?

YEVHEN PRYSHLYAK: In the years following the war, concentration camps held a fairly large number of political prisoners who were categorized as being imprisoned "for the war." Some of them have been released, some have died, and the rest are still imprisoned. Even to this day such "criminals" are sentenced and brought to camp—I think it is no secret for what reason this is being done. Up until the 1960's this category of zeks primarily consisted of participants in the Ukrainian armed underground, their families, and all those who materially and morally supported the underground. These were mostly village youth, then artisans and laborers, then students and intellectuals. The composition of political prisoners from the Baltics was the same. Their sentences were harsh—from 10 to 25 years. Many of them died in the concentration camps because of the harsh conditions. In 1957 a majority was released, others regained their freedom after serving out their sentences, and those who remained in the camps were people with ruined health and broken nervous systems.

After armed resistance had been completely crushed in the second half of the 1950's, a second category of political prisoners began to be brought into the prisons and concentration camps. For the most part these were people who had grown up and matured under Soviet rule. Nearly all of them were intellectuals and workers. Seeing and experiencing that there were no elementary democratic freedoms in the land, they decided to strive and struggle for them. New arrests and trials resulted. In Lviv in 1961 a group of seven people (all with secondary and higher education) was tried because, basing themselves on the appropriate articles of the Constitution, they advocated the secession of Ukraine from the U.S.S.R. (the Lukyanenko-Kandyba group).

The following year they tried a group of twenty—the "Ukrainian National Committee," whose goal it was to print and disseminate literature advocating the idea of Ukraine's independence. Two members of that group were executed, the others were sent to camps for five to fifteen years. About twenty persons were tried in 1965 in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kiev, and in other Ukrainian cities for their actions in defense of democratic freedoms. In 1967 in Ivano-Frankivsk there was a trial of members of the "Ukrainian National Front" organization, which published and disseminated samvydav literature.

It is impossible to mention all of the trials, but the characteristic trait of these repressions was that they were directed against writers, artists, scientists, the intelligentsia, in the best sense of these words.

QUESTION to V. F. Balakhonov: Explain, if you please, how you returned to the U.S.S.R.

VLADIMIR BALAKHONOV: I returned to the U.S.S.R. solely out of personal family considerations, because of my exceptionally strong ties with my family, especially with my daughter, who for me is the most precious being in the world. After my wife had left Switzerland, taking my daughter with her, I couldn't at that moment find within me the strength to overcome the longing for my daughter and the despair at the thought that I would never see her again. (My wife—and this had perhaps something to do with her relationship with me—from the very start did not wish to remain in Switzerland and insisted on returning.)

I realized that a return to the U.S.S.R. would mean almost certain doom, if not physical, then spiritual. But at that time I couldn't find the strength to resist the urge to be with my child. I'd like to point out that in Switzerland my friends did everything to ease my troubled spiritual condition, but it was to no avail.

I feel nothing but gratefulness to the Swiss authorities, who gave me full freedom on the question of whether I should remain in Switzerland or return to the U.S.S.R. They made this clear to me several times (I pointed this out during my investigation; they knew about my wife's stubborn refusal to remain abroad and my attachment to my family, to my daughter). The Swiss, without trying to intimidate me, warned me that if I returned to the U.S.S.R. I would have to face a long prison term and spiritual ruin. They wanted to protect me from this. My fate is yet another confirmation of the cruelty and inhumanity of the Soviet system, a system which without hesitation brutally grinds and

destroys individuality, causes personal tragedy, and brings grief and suffering to a person.

I would like to point out that at a meeting with Soviet Ambassador Chistyakov, which took place in Berne on October 11, 1972, he stated in the presence of Swiss authorities that on the previous day, that is on October 10, my mother had died and that my family wanted me to attend her funeral. Later, while getting to know all the details of my case, I found out that on October 11 my mother was still alive, and that she died only several days later.

When I went to the Soviet embassy in Berne I was given a letter from my wife which contained an impassioned call for my return, and they let me listen in on a telephone conversation which they had arranged between my wife and the embassy. This was done with the view of dispelling any doubts I might have had about returning to the U.S.S.R. (though at that time I harbored no such doubts).

The Soviet consul assured me that I would not be subject to prosecution upon my return. In short, they employed their usual methods for such circumstances, but they couldn't fool me. This I told the Ambassador to his face, saying that I didn't believe that they would be indulgent in my case, and that I was returning only because I could not find the strength to endure separation from my family.

I was placed under constant surveillance as soon as I arrived in Moscow. I was called to the KGB quarters several times, where they demanded that I explain myself in writing and threatened that "if I concealed anything at all, I would be shown no mercy." During these meetings I conducted myself with dignity, which, as I later learned, was considered "impudent and provocative behavior." On January 7, 1973, I was arrested and sent to Lefertovo prison. (I had arrived in Moscow from Switzerland on December 1, 1972.)

QUESTION: Is there an opportunity for you to stand up for your rights, and in what ways can you do so?

LEV YAGMAN: The existence of collective responsibility of the camp administration and the regulatory agencies makes it very difficult for political prisoners to stand up for their rights, the more so because the actual master in the concentration camps is the KGB. The KGB checks and directs the activities of the administration. A KGB representative's decision—that's a law that is binding on the camp commandant as well as the public prosecutor. Given such circumstances, no one bothers to adhere to the written law, not even for formality's sake. Many such examples can be cited.

Here are the most recent ones: V. Bukovsky was placed in the PKT, although in fact he had not committed any violations. He was put there because the KGB decided that he should be imprisoned. This was made perfectly clear to him during a conversation with the camp commandant, Major Pimenov. The same thing is happening now with Pavlenko, Butman, and Meshener. In such a situation, the struggle for one's rights through the use of complaints and petitions to higher authorities is not at all effective. Such mehods can elicit a response only if the lawlessness which reigns in the camps becomes publicized. And therefore our main weapon is publicity, which mobilizes public opinion to our aid.

Among the other methods we use in the struggle for our rights, the boycott, in my opinion, deserves attention. It is directed at the most hated representatives of the administration. For instance, a group of political prisoners refused for almost a whole year to deal with the head of the operational section, Captain Khromushyn, who is known for his rudeness and anti-Semitism. An effective weapon in the struggle against chauvinism and anti-Semitism is the practice of communicating with the members of the administration in one's native tongue. This is not a breach of the rules. This method in effect makes it impossible for the administration to communicate with the prisoners. Just now many political prisoners are refusing to have any dealings with the KGB representatives, charging them with organizing numerous violations of the law.

In those cases where the administration has not denied us certain rights totally, it attempts to restrict them as much as possible. As a show of protest, we reject the crumbs they leave us as a favor. Such was the case with the matter of correspondence, when, as a sign of protest against the constant disappearance of nearly 50 per cent of the mail that comes addressed to us, a group of Zionists rejected for a half year the right to write letters. As a sign of protest against their illegal arrests and incarcerations in camps, all Zionists in political camps in the Soviet Union have renounced their Soviet citizenship and are demanding that they be granted the status of citizens of the state of Israel. At this time, political prisoners of other nationalities are beginning to renounce their Soviet citizenship, thus demonstrating their attitudes to what has happened to them.

Just recently, political prisoners have begun to use yet another extreme measure: the refusal to work. This is what happened in the middle of May of this year, when more than thirty zeks from VS 389/35 refused to work in protest over the illegal deprivation of a comrade's visitation rights. The same thing happened in VS 389/36, where since June 23 close to forty prisoners have refused to work, demanding that

the on-duty officer of the colony, Milentiy, be punished for beating up prisoner Sapelyak.

IVAN SVITLYCHNY: The hunger strike is a method of struggle for prisoners' rights that deserves special attention.

Both the camp administration and the prisoners react variously to this. "You're hurting yourself" said some officers, not without malicious joy, when in May and June of this year a large group of political prisoners went on a month-long hunger strike in protest over the high-handedness of the camp administration. And there was much truth in these words: such a long hunger strike obviously doesn't strengthen the organisms of prisoners who are already weakened because of the poor camp diet. The hunger strikers themselves are aware of this. If they go ahead anyway, subjecting themselves to serious hardships, then it is only because circumstances force them to do so, and because the choice of means for battle is limited. Because complaints and petitions to any higher Soviet authorities are truly not worth the paper and ink wasted on them. At best, the complainant will get a standard bureaucratic reply. Sometimes even such a reply is not forthcoming.

Clearly, a hunger strike in a Soviet camp, about which a prisoner can't even inform his family—and it's useless to even think of reaching a wider audience—is not nearly as effective as in other countries. But even here it gets some results, and it's not by accident that prisoners resort to this method regularly. I've been in camp less than a year, and already I've participated in four hunger strikes. Until now this method has made it possible to draw, at least to some extent, the attention of regulatory agencies to the camp situation. It is only during and after a hunger strike that representatives of higher departments visit the camp and attempt to clarify the situation in the camp. And because the outrages of the camp administration are always numerous, they focus their attention at least on some of them and attempt to correct them at least partially. Toward the end of 1973, for example, my notes on a philological theme were confiscated. For half a year I attempted in vain to find out what they had done with them. I already considered them lost for good when, unexpectedly, they were returned to me, during a hunger strike.

As a rule, issues which are the immediate reason for hunger strikes are not settled in favor of the strikers (the administration never makes any concessions in such circumstances). Whoever tries to judge the effectiveness of hunger strikes by this criterion must inevitably arrive at sad conclusions. But in fact, one can achieve with this method even greater results. For example, even though after the May-June hunger

strike individual demands were not met by the administration, and even though the strikers received various punishments after they had ended their strike, the general atmosphere in camp improved and the administration became more cautious about its highhandedness; the administration also began to refrain from many illegal actions. Obviously, this happens also because such a serious action as a hunger strike becomes known even beyond the borders of the camps, and some circles of society do exert some influence on the authorities.

Thus, even though for its participants the hunger strike is a hard and risky method of struggle, for the time being there are far too few other effective methods at the prisoners' disposal. The hunger strike will continue to be employed. What's more, it seems that the situation in the camps is such that one couldn't manage without hunger strikes, even in the near future.

LEV YAGMAN: Of course, we should address ourselves, on a separate note, to the most extreme form of prisoners' resistance, one which is used very rarely. I'm speaking of suicide. The point here is that this form of resistance is not merely theoretical. Political camps do have their Jan Palachs. In June of this year, prisoner Opanasenko committed suicide during a long hunger strike in VS 389/35. Several other prisoners had similar intentions. The fact that their intentions were not realized can in no way be credited to any action on the part of the administration. Although I personally oppose such an extreme form of resistance, I nonetheless feel that conditions in political camps are clearly such that they might cause more suicides; and it will be impossible to prevent them, just as it has been impossible to prevent them in the past.

QUESTION: Do you regret it that fate has led you into a concentration camp?

ZINOVIY ANTONYUK: Looking back on my life, at least starting with the 1960's, and observing the mechanisms of the implementation of so-called "legality" vis-a-vis those who think differently, I can only regret that I began considering myself a true citizen at such a late stage, and that for too long I was satisfied with the role of an observer of sociological processes in Soviet society. About other aspects of Soviet law I knew only from hearsay, so I'm glad that I got the chance to test this all out on my own skin. . . .

"He who was not in DOPR [forced labor confinement] is not a true citizen."

LEV YAGMAN: Do I have any regrets? I don't derive any particular satisfaction from the fact that they have separated me from my family, rid me of the basic pleasures of normal human life, herded me behind barbed wire. Obviously, all of this leaves its mark. It affects one's health, to some extent it changes one's character, it brings a new element into a person's perception of the world. These are irrefutable facts. I am certain of one thing, and that is that my imprisonment has definitely freed me of that "intellectual softness" of which Lenin accused the intelligentsia. For this I have no regrets.

ARYE KHNOKH: Long years spent far from one's homeland and one's family evoke sorrow. But at the same time, I'm satisfied in many other respects. The arrest and trial of myself and my friends was one of the factors that influenced noticeable changes in Soviet policy on the question of Jewish emigration. My stay here has helped me to understand the system much better. Had I left the Soviet Union without having seen these places, there is much that I would never have known.

IHOR KALYNETS: Like all prisoners, I, too, long for freedom. But when I soberly appraise today's oppressive conditions in Ukraine, I prefer the camps, and, like Antonych says, "I praise the cruel and toughened life." It has given me friends whose loyalty is being confirmed in daily tribulations rather than in a bohemian life. And here I am again reminded of Antonych's prayer: "But let's pray to the distant stars that they may give us a life of dignity and suffering."

IVAN KANDYBA: I don't regret it a bit that I have embarked on a path that has led me to a concentration camp, and for such a long term at that I can't regret losing my freedom because I never had any. Is it possible to consider yourself free when your fatherland is in captivity? Even though one must suffer many hardships here, I now feel morally stronger than before, when I called myself formally free yet wasn't able to help improve the fate of my fatherland. The longer I remain in these conditions, the more clearly I realize that I chose the correct path and that true freedom and complete happiness will come only when my fatherland—Ukraine—becomes free.

SLAVA GLUZMAN: Yes, I do have regrets, notwithstanding the fact that here I am not just serving a "period of punishment." If I were free, I could more actively and effectively oppose the criminal "treatment" of healthy people. I am a psychiatrist, a competent individual, and it is unfortunate that although in the U.S.S.R. representatives of all

professions have actively protested such practice, psychiatrists themselves have failed to do so. Here I am deprived of such opportunities. But this is an objective reason. My friend Leonid Plyushch is in a special psychiatric clinic of the MVD. These are my "ashes of Klaas." In some ways my knowledge of my profession increases even here. For example, in the camp I saw sadism, so to speak [illegible] outside the walls of the clinic! It seems that I should take comfort at least in this.

IVAN SVITLYCHNY: In my case, the transition from "freedom" to "unfreedom" was not as abrupt as it was for some of the others. For many years prior to my arrest I couldn't find work in my professional field. My literary works, which contained no anti-Soviet themes, were not published simply because the author's name was taboo among official circles. To make it short, even before my arrest I was in effect an outlaw. In that sense, I didn't lose much by my arrest. Naturally, it is hard not to see for several years my wife, mother, close friends and relatives, with whom I had previously shared all my joys and sorrows. Moreover, my main endeavor in life was philology (and not at all "politics"). Here in the camp, unfortunately, there are not even the most elementary preconditions for this kind of work. For me all these losses are irreplaceable.

My arrest, trial, imprisonment, and the resulting ordeals have freed me from some naive illusions and have aided a more serious formation of moral convictions. This school of life has been incomparably richer than my previous schooling. I have lost some of my friends who were not able to withstand the severe tests, but for this my friendship with others was strengthened. What's more, I gained friends whom I could earlier have only dreamed about. Moreover, as a writer, I am able to get to know all kinds of characters here at the camp, and I'm also able to become acquainted with unbelievable human fates, the likes of which I would not come across in a lifetime of freedom. Therefore it's difficult for me to say whether I have lost more than I've gained, or vice versa; but in any case, I'm not complaining about my fate, and I'm not envious of my many friends who are free.

VLADIMIR BALAKHONOV: I have no regrets. Even as I was leaving Switzerland I was aware that I would inevitably lose my freedom. Nevertheless, until I came to the camp I didn't think of the possibility of an active struggle, because the conditions of strict isolation in which I existed as well as the lack of insight into and knowledge of the conditions of camp life, presented neither an opportunity to begin such a struggle on my own nor even the opportunity to prepare

myself for it. Now I have rid myself of the shackles that restrained me earlier, of the fear of losing material goods, of the fear of risking persecution, of the fear of suffering, pain, torment. That which I was forced to go through has totally rid me even of the fear of torture and death. At this time I feel spiritual elation and great satisfaction because I managed to be honest with myself, with my outlooks, principles, and convictions. I had to hide them within myself for the last 20 years, and often I was forced to act and live against them. I consider such a twist of fate fortunate because it gave me the opportunity to fight for my principles and ideals, even though I had to go through severe ordeals.

BAHRAT SHAKHVERDYAN: I knew what kind of fate was awaiting me. But without sacrifice you can't attain freedom! For a true patriot, the fight for independence of his fatherland is good fortune and an honor; it is the essence of life. A fight to the final victory! This is our motto! Our method of struggle is peaceful and honest, even though we are up against perfidy, cruelty, and despotism. We can be physically destroyed, but we can't be defeated! Even though it is difficult for me in the concentration camp, even though it is difficult to put up with the cruel treatment, with a coercive, severe regimen, a regimen which debases human dignity, I will nevertheless not renounce my ideas and goals, and I won't retreat from them. Though I do not feel well (a weak heart, stomach, etc.), nonetheless I derive strength from a strong will, perseverance, spiritual energy, hopes, and dreams. In the concentration camp I have come to know and see many people who have been incarcerated for twenty-five years and more, young patriots–democrats. This has been for me a university of life. People of numerous nationalities–Ukrainians who want an independent Ukraine; Balts–whose only guilt lies in their boundless love for their fatherland; Jews, who wish to live in their own fatherland, Israel; young people of different nationalities, imprisoned for desiring a democratization of society. The guilt of all these people lies in their desire to live in freedom and dignity.

I love life and freedom. I want to have a free, democratic, independent Armenia. And it's not my fault that I was born here, that I'm the way I am. I don't understand how certain governmental, political, and social activists can say that the repressions against patriots and democrats, their arrest and imprisonment in psychiatric clinics, prisons and concentration camps–that all this is an internal affair of the U.S.S.R. For us, the political prisoners, this is an obvious and undignified compromise with one's conscience.

It is a lie and a delusion to say that tyranny can coexist harmoniously and peacefully with democracy. Is it possible that this is still not clear?

Freedom for political prisoners in the U.S.S.R.!

Freedom for political prisoners throughout the world!

QUESTION: Do you believe in the possibility of amnesty for political prisoners?

SLAVA GLUZMAN: No, I don't believe in it, because history never teaches anybody anything, unfortunately.

IHOR KALYNETS: No, because then society would free itself of an oppressive fear. And this would be a catastrophe, at least for the KGB.

IVAN SVITLYCHNY: No, I don't believe in it, even though actual political prisoners in the Soviet Union are relatively few and a general amnesty would not constitute a danger to the government, and even though the government would gain some moral capital with such a move. I've grown used to the fact that those who are in power are not only not guided by common sense, but that they also become aware of what's in their interest only with difficulty and after much delay. Therefore I don't believe in the possibility of an amnesty for political prisoners, unless the Soviet leaders are forced into this by the run of events, and their own interests demand it.

ARYE KHNOKH: I think that this depends entirely on the pressure that world public opinion can exert on the Soviet leadership. I can support this view with the fact that in the U.S.S.R. individuals who are unknown in the West are more readily tried and sentenced to longer terms for so-called anti-Soviet activity. But because it is difficult to judge from here the extent of the movement for amnesty for political prisoners in the U.S.S.R., I am unable to give you a more exact answer.

LEV YAGMAN: Theoretically—yes, practically—no. Theoretically—yes, because I think that from the point of view of common sense, an amnesty for political prisoners would do more good than harm, considering the current world situation. Practically—no, because, first of all, there are certain rather influential circles in whose interest it is to maintain the status quo, since this strengthens their position and raises

their role in the state, a state in whose entire history there has never been an amnesty for political prisoners. It's not only difficult to dare to take such a step, but it's also difficult to even admit that such a possibility exists.

BAHRAT SHAKHVERDYAN: Yes—if progressive people will lead a more extensive and intensive campaign to free political prisoners in the U.S.S.R. No—if the West will betray the ideas of freedom and democracy.

QUESTION: What would you like to add to what has been said?

LEV YAGMAN: I would like to remind people once more that the question of free emigration from the Soviet Union was moved from a dead point only with the help of world public opinion, which was attracted to this problem only by the massive arrests of Zionists and their subsequent trials in 1970-71. Only as a result of protests by Western society was it possible to force the Soviet government to respect to some extent the right of Soviet citizens to emigrate. Up until now, tens of thousands of Jews, and not only Jews, have taken advantage of this right. Therefore one must remember well that we can continue our struggle only if world public opinion will be constantly focused on us.

IVAN SVITLYCHNY: Please extend our sincere greetings to Solzhenitsyn, before whose courage we all bow our heads.