

**POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE U.S.S.R.**

# **VALENTYN MOROZ**

**UKRAINIAN HISTORIAN**

## **SENTENCED**

On November 18, 1970, to 9 years' imprisonment and 5 years' exile.

## **SERVED**

6 year sentence in Vladimir Prison

## **TRANSFERRED**

In May, 1976 to Moscow's Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry.



## VALENTYN MOROZ

Valentyn Moroz, a Ukrainian historian, has since 1965 spent all but nine months in Soviet prisons. If he survives the regime of isolation cells, the beatings by inmates, the starvation diet, the constant pressures by government and prison authorities to recant his beliefs, it will be 1984. That is the year when Valentyn Moroz, Ukrainian dissident and one of today's foremost advocates for national self-determination and basic human freedoms in the Soviet Union, is scheduled to be released. Scheduled. For on May 18, 1976, Reuters reported that Moroz was moved from Vladimir Prison near Moscow to Moscow's Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry, the Soviet Union's leading institute of criminal psychiatry.

The Reuters dispatch noted that the Serbsky Institute has been frequently accused by Soviet dissidents of declaring critics of the regime to be insane and sending them to insane asylums for an indefinite period . . .

# VALENTYN MOROZ

Valentyn Moroz was born on April 15, 1936, in the village of Kholoniv, Volyn region, Ukrainian S.S.R., into the family of a collective farmer. He attended the University of Lviv where he majored in history. After graduating in 1958, Moroz taught history and geography at the secondary school level. From February to September 1964 he lectured in modern history at the Pedagogical Institute in Lutsk, then transferred to the Pedagogical Institute in Ivano-Frankivsk. At that time Moroz was also working on his doctoral dissertation.

## FIRST ARREST

Moroz was arrested in 1965 for possession of *samizdat* (*samvydav* in Ukrainian) literature and foreign publications that were banned in the Soviet Union. In January 1966 he was sentenced to four years of hard labor under Article 62 of the Ukrainian Criminal Code for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda."

## SOCIETY OF "COGS"

During his imprisonment in the labor colonies of the Mordovian A.S.S.R., Moroz wrote *A Report from the Beria Reservation*, an incisive essay on the roots of the Soviet system of double-standard legality and the relationship between Soviet order and the concept of individuality. According to Moroz, the arbitrary power of Soviet law in the hands of the KGB (committee on state security) is undeniably the result of the first priority of the Soviet rulers: the perpetuation of their own power and privileges. In his essay, Moroz also exposed the Stalinist legality and dehumanizing character of the Soviet state, which, he said, has through the uses of terror reduced its citizens to robots, or "Cogs."

*"An obedient herd of Cogs may be called a parliament or an academic council, and it will give rise to no worries or surprises. . . The Cog will be released from prison and immediately write that he was never there, and he will also call whoever demanded his release a liar. . . The Cog will shoot whomever he is told to and then, at an order, fight for peace. . . It is safe to introduce any constitution and grant every right after turning people into Cogs. The whole trick of it is that it will not even occur to the Cog to take advantage of these rights."*

## PROGRESS THROUGH INDIVIDUALITY

Those who refuse to become Cogs will sooner or later end up in prison. According to Moroz,

*"... People convicted for 'anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda' are people who think*

*differently, or who think at all, and whose spiritual world cannot fit into the Procrustean bed of Stalinist standards which the KGB upholds so assiduously. They are men who dare to claim the rights proclaimed in the Constitution and who have raised their voices against the shameful oppression of the KGB and against the violations of the Constitution."*

The numbers of such persons is growing, Moroz maintains. It is impossible to erase completely man's spiritual nature — reason, honor, and conscience. Many individuals will be arrested but others will take their place. The defenders of individuality can no longer be silenced.

For Moroz, who sees progress as the force in history, individuality is of utmost importance:

*"So it is in the society; there is stability achieved through a harmonious balance of all social factors and forces, and there is 'order' built after their destruction. Such an 'order' is not difficult to achieve; the degree of maturity of a nation, however, is measured not by it, but by the power to achieve social stability while allowing maximum scope for the individual's creative ability, the only force of progress. Intellect is an individual matter. The history of progress is therefore the history of the development of individuality."*

Chapter by chapter, *"The Report"* renounces the Soviet system of society with a bitter and sardonic twist which is epitomized by the following:

*"They reached a mad nightmarish condition, when the question: 'Where is Comrade Ivanov? I have come to arrest him' was answered by; 'He left not long ago to arrest you.'"*

For his *Report*, which he addressed to the Deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian S.S.R., Moroz was punished with solitary confinement.

## **A SHORT-LIVED FREEDOM**

Upon his release on September 1, 1969, Moroz was unable to find employment because of his conviction. Similarly, his wife Raissa had been dismissed from her job because of her husband's imprisonment.

During the next nine months, Valentyn Moroz wrote three more essays: *A Chronicle of Resistance*, *Amidst the Snows*, and *Moses and Dathan*. In *A Chronicle of Resistance*, Moroz discusses Russification, the policy of imposing Russian language, tradition, and culture on non-Russian nationalities of the U.S.S.R. Moroz demonstrates that the Soviet authorities are carrying out a policy of destroying cultural and religious treasures in Ukraine. A people without a cultural heritage, he implies, will be easier to assimilate into Russian culture.



*Amidst the Snows* is directed against those Ukrainian dissenters who have capitulated under pressure and have renounced their former views, thus leaving the Ukrainian people without moral leaders. To save the nation from assimilation and therefore extinction, "apostles" are needed who are afraid of nothing and can inspire the people to defend their language and culture.

*Moses and Dathan*, of which only a resume reached the West, deals with the concept of nationality. The author deplores the non-Russian's feeling of inferiority with respect to Russia, and maintains that in a person fully developed spiritually, the nation—the fatherland—should be a thing treasured above all.

## RE-ARREST AND CLOSED TRIAL

Moroz was arrested on June 1, 1970, again on charges of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda." Although the arrest was secret, news of it spread quickly through Ukraine. Numerous resolutions and letters in defense of Moroz were sent to various authorities. His defenders pointed out that his writings and ideas were not, according to the Constitution, anti-Soviet, because the Ukrainian and U.S.S.R. Constitutions guarantee freedom of speech and press.

Nevertheless, Moroz was put on trial on November 17-18 in Ivano-Frankivsk. His four essays formed the basis of the government's charge against him. Although Moroz and several witnesses refused to testify, and although he was being tried in closed court — illegal under Soviet law — he was sentenced to six years' special prison, three years' special-regime camp, and five years' exile.

## A BOOMERANG EFFECT

At the opening of his second trial, Morov handed his judges a written statement which was secretly passed to his friends. In it he declares that he is ready for any sacrifice for his country: I am to be tried behind closed doors. But your trial will boomerang even if no one hears me, or if I sit in silent isolation in my cell in Vladimir Prison. *Silence can sometimes be more deafening than shouting.* You could not muffle it even by killing me, which is, of course, the easiest thing to do. But have you considered the fact that the dead are often more important than the living? *They become symbols* — the building blocks of spiritual fortresses in the hearts of men.

Moroz believes that the cause he serves shall not perish but shall prosper and triumph: *"With universal literacy in Ukraine, 800,000 students, and a radio in every home, every socially significant movement becomes a mass movement. Is it possible you do not comprehend that soon you will be dealing with mass social movements? New processes are only beginning, and your repressive measures have long ceased to be effective."*

## VLADIMIR PRISON

Valentyn Moroz was sent to Vladimir Prison, where authorities reportedly tried to break his will and make him renounce his views. In November, 1971, Moroz became ill with a liver condition. He reportedly suffered heart seizures, was forcibly injected with drugs, and his food was being contaminated with chemicals, thus further undermining his fragile health. According to Amnesty International, in October 1972 Moroz was attacked by criminal inmates and seriously injured, suffering four stab wounds. He was transferred to a prison hospital in Kiev, only to be returned to Vladimir Prison three months later, where he was placed in solitary confinement for almost two years.

## HUNGER STRIKE

On July 1, 1974, Moroz went on a hunger strike in protest over the conditions of his imprisonment, declaring that he would not take food until he was transferred to a labor camp. If necessary, Moroz said, he would fast until his death. The hunger strike lasted 145 days. Moroz was kept alive by force-feeding. The lining of his esophagus became torn and bleeding, his health deteriorated rapidly, he was coughing blood. Finally, on November 22, 1974, Moroz ended his hunger strike after authorities promised that he would be taken out of solitary confinement; they refused, however, to transfer him to a labor camp or to reduce his sentence.

## IN DEFENSE OF MOROZ

Moroz's hunger strike received world-wide attention: Committees in defense of Valentyn Moroz were formed. Ukrainian students in the West held hunger strikes in solidarity with Moroz outside Soviet missions in numerous cities. Prominent figures have raised their voices in protest over Moroz's fate, among them Andrei Sakharov, Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, Heinrich Boell, Jean-Paul Sartre, Arthur Schlesinger, Eric Fromm, Noam Chomsky, and others. Amnesty International, the International Commission of Jurists, the Canadian Jewish Congress, P.E.N. International, the AFL-CIO, United Auto Workers, the Cardinal's Commission on Human Relations, among others, all have come forward in defense of Moroz. In the U.S., some 100 senators and congressmen have introduced or co-sponsored resolutions which would urge the U.S. Government to state its concern over Moroz's fate. The Canadian Government twice raised the Moroz issue with Soviet officials, and the British and Australian parliaments as well have taken a stand in defense of Moroz. In 1974, and again in 1975, Harvard University invited Moroz to join its Ukrainian Research Institute.

Moroz has been the subject of articles in papers and journals such as *The New York Times*, *Amnesty Action*, *Matchbox*, *Time*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Baltimore Sun*, *The Detroit News*, *The Atlanta Journal*, et al. The New

York Times, in an editorial carried September 12, 1974 titled "Ukrainian Injustice" called Valentyn Moroz and Leonid Plyushch, another Ukrainian dissident since permitted to emigrate to the West, the "current symbols of the Ukrainian campaign against Russian domination," and warned Moscow's policymakers not to wait until some specific outrage against the dissidents evoked a genuinely universal protest.

Moroz's works have been compiled and published in the West by Smoloskyp Publishers (*Boomerang: The Works of Valentyn Moroz*) and Peter Martin Associates Limited (*Report from the Beria Reserve: The Protest Writings of Valentyn Moroz*).

Valentyn Moroz, Ukrainian historian, political prisoner, today remains the symbol of the Ukrainian campaign against Russian domination.

*Moroz's eloquence and boldness as a defender of civil rights has branded him as an enemy of the Soviet regime, a particular enemy that, judging from the severity of the punishment, the government is fearful of. For his outspoken stand, Moroz has been singled out for special punishment, which may ultimately break his body and health, but which will surely leave his spirit uncompromised. Although he has been removed and hidden from society, his thoughts are not hidden. They, as well as his spirit, as champions of civil liberties live in his writings.*

*Paul L. Gersper  
May 1974, University of  
California at Berkeley*



"History has its housing shortage. Even so, Moroz will have his honored place. His ordeal has been a saga of the human spirit as noble as that of Socrates, as bold as Joan of Arc's."

— James Eayrs, "Moroz: Soviet Political  
Captive No. 1," **The Toronto Star**

"[Moroz] is a teacher and historian who has spoken out for the freedoms of national identity and of speech, press and assembly that presumably are guaranteed under the Soviet Constitution."

— Frank Angelo, **Detroit Free Press**

"Moroz's account of the destruction of Ukrainian art treasures reveal the thoroughness with which this is being undertaken."

— Edith Kermit Roosevelt, **The Evening Bulletin**

Published by **SMOLOSKYP**  
**Organization for Defense of Human Rights in Ukraine**

**P.O. Box 6066, Patterson Station**  
**Baltimore, Md. 21231, U.S.A.**