



# **UKRAINIAN WOMEN IN THE SOVIET UNION**

**DOCUMENTED  
PERSECUTION**

**1975 — 1980**

**COMPILED BY NINA STROKATA**

**DOCUMENTS OF UKRAINIAN SAMVYDAV**

**UKRAINIAN WOMEN IN THE SOVIET UNION**

# **DOCUMENTED PERSECUTION**

Compiled by Nina Strokata

Translated and edited  
by Myroslava Stefaniuk and Volodymyr Hruszkewych

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**DOCUMENTS OF UKRAINIAN SAMVYDAV**  
**Smoloskyp Samvydav Series No. 7, 1980**

**UKRAINIAN WOMEN IN THE SOVIET UNION**  
**DOCUMENTED PERSECUTION**

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# CONTENTS

Preface	7
M. Landa, T. Khodorovich, An Appeal to Medical Doctors of the World, in Defense of Nina Strokata, October 20-23, 1976	11
N. Strokata, M. Landa to the International Federation of Participants in the Resistance Movement, October 1976	19
N. Svitlychna to the Ukrainian Public Group to Promote the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords, December 10, 1976	21
S. Shabatura to the Attorney General of the USSR	27
N. Strokata-Karavanska, S. Shabatura to Ukrainians of the American Continent	33
O. Meshko to the Belgrade Conference Reviewing the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords	37
N. Strokata-Karavanska to the Authors of the Draft of the Soviet Constitution-77, September, 1977	41
S. Shabatura to the Head of the GUITU, February 24, 1978	45
V. Sira to the Citizens of the West	49
O. Meshko, N. Strokata, I. Senyk, "Lamentation", October 30, 1979	53
S. Kyrychenko to the International Association of Lawyers and others, January 5, 1980	57
I. Zisels, An Open Letter to the Wives of Political Prisoners	63

## List of Illustrations

Nina Strokata-Karavanska	9
Malva Landa	13
Nadiya Svitlychna	17
Nadiya Svitlychna with her son Yarema	19
Darka Husyak and Nadiya Svitlychna	21
Stefaniya Shabatura and Nadiya Svitlychna	23
Iryna Stasiv-Kalynets with her husband Ihor	24
Stefaniya Shabatura	25
Oksana Hel, Atena Pashko, Maria Hel and Stefaniya Shabatura	32
Oksana Popovych	34
Oksana Meshko	35
Zvenyslava Vivchar-Serhiyenko with her son Ustym and Oksana Meshko	37
Nina Strokata-Karavanska	39
Iryna Senyk	43
Valentyna and Leonid Siry with children	47
Stefaniya Sichko with her daughter Oksana, husband Petro, son Vasyl and Oksana Meshko	51
Olena Terelya with daughter Maryanna	52
Svitlana Kyrychenko-Badzyo with husband Yuriy	55
Children of Svitlana Kyrychenko-Badzyo and her husband Yuriy, Bohdanna and Serhiy	59
Olena Antoniv, Oksana Osadcha, with daughter Olenka, Lyuba Popadyuk and Zinoviy Krasivsky	62

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# PREFACE

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1975 — the International Women's Year — began in a camp for women political prisoners on December 12, 1974. For our attempt to observe Human Rights Day, the authorities punished not only us, but also our young children by denying them their single yearly visit with us.

In answer to this, we refused to do compulsory labor, and in this manner we protested against laws which lead to the degradation of human dignity and the punishment of children for the crimes of their mothers. Torn from our native land for no earthly reason, we are fully prepared to endure any suffering for which we are destined. . . so long as we can treasure within ourselves the feeling of intrinsic freedom.

February 15, 1975

*Iryna Stasiv-Kalynets  
Stefaniya Shabatura  
Nadiya Svitlychna  
Nina Strokata-Karavanska  
Odarka Husyak*

From a letter to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

***During 1975, the first year of the International Decade of Women, these Ukrainian women were serving illegal and unjust sentences in Soviet penal institutions for "crimes" against the state. Today, as the mid-decade World Conference of Women opens in Copenhagen to review the progress of the objectives set forth in Mexico City in 1975, the women in Soviet Ukraine continue to suffer every form of discrimination, repression and destruction at the hands of the Soviet government.***

***They are persecuted for openly expressing their ideas and beliefs by a regime which deliberately stifles individual expressions. They are imprisoned for defending their ideals, their national culture, heritage and right in a system bent on obliterating them. For advocating legal reforms and for refusing to renounce their families, friends and colleagues who have become victims of Soviet repression, they are themselves repressed. They are punished like criminals for upholding human dignity in a society not brave enough to meet the oral challenge of dissent.***

***Their treatment, then and now, is incompatible with the Soviet Union's role as one of the initiators of the International Women's Year and one of the principal supporters of the United Nations Charter and is in direct conflict with the spirit of the International Decade of Women.***

**The women, whose unshaken faith in the righteousness of their cause is documented here, come from all walks of life. They are wives, mothers, talented and professional women, creative artists and writers, condemned to deteriorate in prison or to waste their lives doing debilitating and senseless work in exile. Their common bond is the "crime" of speaking out against the repressive policies of the Soviet Union.**

**An undetermined number of Ukrainian women are at this moment imprisoned in concentration camps in the Soviet Union, under conditions and for reasons which are contrary to all principles of justice. The stories of those better known — Iryna Senyk, Stefaniya Shabatura, Iryna Stasiv-Kalynets, Oksana Popovych, Nina Strokata-Karavanska, Nadiya Svitlychna, Valentyna Sira, Iryna Zisels, Odarka Husyak, Svitlana Kyrychenko, Maria Palchak — are told here in the hope that world public opinion will come to realize that the continued imprisonment of these women, and the persecution of their sisters in Ukraine and in the rest of the USSR is completely at odds with the Human Rights Declaration and with the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women.**

***She was subjected to brutal torment, including torture by hunger, cold, and isolation. . .***

***Malva Landa***

***Tetyana Khodorovich***



**Photo: Peter Fedynsky**

**Dr. Nina Strokata-Karavanska, member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group and former political prisoner. The photo was taken after her arrival in the West in December, 1979.**



**The letter of Malva Landa and Tetyana Khodorovich, human rights activists in the USSR, in defense of Nina Strokata, tells about how a professional person who deviates from the norm of official thinking becomes the victim of endless repressions in the USSR.**

**Returning from exile, Nina Strokata was forced to settle in the city of Tarusa (in Central Russia). For almost four years after her release she was kept under police surveillance. This police surveillance made any kind of travel outside Tarusa impossible, even for medical treatment.**

## **An Appeal to Medical Doctors of the World, in Defense of Nina Strokata**

Nina Strokata-physician, a prisoner of conscience released from imprisonment in December, 1975—asks for your attention.

At present Nina Strokata is seriously and dangerously ill. Her illness is the result of inhumane treatment and torture to which she was subjected during her imprisonment in the so-called corrective labor institutions; the result of systematic malnutrition; the result of exhausting and senseless labor; the result of the punishment and torture to which she was subjected, especially those for not fulfilling work quotas and for refusing compulsory work.

Her illness is the result of discrimination, even after the completion of her sentence, especially the forced exile in a foreign land and continuous police surveillance, because of which she is denied the opportunity to take advantage of beneficial and qualified medical help. (She was forbidden, under threat of a new arrest, to leave the city of Tarusa, where she is forced to live after her release.)

The current very serious state of Nina Strokata's health is the result of the insufferable conditions of her transfer from Tarusa to the Kaluga regional hospital (a distance of 70 km.), during which she was deprived of vital care. Strokata's transfer was carried out by medical employees, not according to medical procedures, but according to directives set by those operatives who carry out the overt and covert surveillance over her. (Strokata was transferred immediately after a severe attack of bloody vomiting, in an un-equipped ambulance). Her concerned friends were deceived with assurances that a medical helicopter had been summoned for the transfer.

Here are some details of Nina Strokata's illness:

Nina Antonivna Strokata, born in 1926, was imprisoned from December, 1971 to December, 1975. The first nine months she was situated in a KGB interrogation cell ("special prison"); following this, she was sent to a woman's strict-regime labor camp for political prisoners (corrective labor Institution ITU ZhKh 335, 3-4, in the Mordovian ASSR). Several times the administration of this camp placed Strokata in a clinic for political prisoners because of a suspected oncological disease (a breast tumor). During her arrest Strokata suffered from numerous hemorrhages, as well as from confirmed chronic anemia. Undoubtedly, she also suffered from exalbuminous edemas.

Without consideration for the poor state of her health, Nina Strokata was forced to do work that was too much for her: sewing gloves (60 pairs a day). She was subjected to additional brutal torment, including torture by hunger, cold, and isolation; they would not let her sit or lie down. Even the most elementary sanitary-hygienic conditions were lacking.

After nine months in an interrogation prison, Nina Strokata spent thirty-nine months in a labor camp. Of this "camp" time, she spent eight months in a hospital and nearly eleven months in an internal camp prison (in women's criminal camp ZhKh, Institution ZhKh 385/2). Of those eleven months, nine months were in the PKT (cell-type accommodations) with a strict prison regimen: one half-hour walk per day, one letter every two months; during most of this time she received rations according to a specially designated norm — "norm 9b" — officially 1300 calories daily, but, in fact, considerably less (the amount of proteins was less than half of the minimum requirement). Strokata was deprived of all possibility of obtaining or receiving even the smallest amount of [additional] food.

For two months they kept Nina Strokata in a penal cell, which means they subjected her to intricate torture — by starvation, cold, the forced requisite of having to stand for sixteen hours a day, stench and lack of air (they don't take you for walks from the penal cell). No mattress or bedding is provided. Before being placed in the penal cell, the prisoner is stripped naked, then dressed in a special garb that is worn-out, washed-out, with stains of dubious origin. The menu alternates: one day of black bread and water - no more than 800-900 calories — the next day, in addition to the bread, a bit of cooked scraps — officially on this day the prisoner receives 1300 calories, the same as the decreased ration in the PKT. In many instances, Strokata was transferred from the PKT to the penal cell, then back to the PKT. It also happened quite frequently that, completely weakened by these changes in regimen, she was transferred to a hospital regimen. One of Strokata's punishments by penal cell was given on the basis of a report by a medical employee of criminal camp 385/2, in which it was stated that Strokata regarded the author of the report — a doctor's assistant who serviced the internal camp prison, the PKT, and the penal cell — a fascist.

During her stay in internal corrective labor institutions, Nina Strokata five times held protest hunger strikes of four to eight days each and no fewer than fifteen one-day hunger strikes. Strokata says that the situation became such that it was impossible not to declare hunger strikes

After her release, worn-out and completely exhausted, Nina Strokata not only did not get assistance from a physician-oncologist, but, considering the state of her health, did not have even the most rudimentary necessities. She is allowed to live only in the area of the small town of Tarusa, which is more than 100 kilometers from Moscow. She is under constant police surveillance; she is not allowed to

go out beyond the boundaries of the town or to go out on the street between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. She is obligated to report to police headquarters every Monday at 9 a.m. In addition to this she is forced to engage in "socially useful work", that is, she must work at any kind of government job. At the same time, work in her profession is closed to her.

On Monday morning, October 11, Strokata, vomiting blood, fell unconscious. The bloody vomiting recurred several times on the 12th and 14th of October, along with considerable weakness and fainting spells. She was then placed in the Tarusa hospital. Her friends planned to take her to a hospital in Moscow after the vomiting and hemorrhaging ceased. The doctors at the Tarusa hospital agreed. However, on the 14th (Thursday), immediately after vomiting blood, she was taken to the regional hospital in Kaluga. As indicated earlier, this was done despite the danger of a new hemorrhage en route. The transfer was done under circumstances which endangered the patient's life.



**Malva Landa, activist in defense of human rights in the USSR, in exile in Siberia.**

In the Kaluga regional hospital, Nina Strokata (like many other seriously ill patients) finds herself in unfavorable circumstances. The room where she is kept (No. 38) measures 20 square meters and houses six beds. Some of the beds, particularly the beds of Strokata and her neighbor on the left, who just underwent surgery for a ruptured appendix, stand right next to each other, while the distance from the bed on the right is half a meter. The clinic lacks sufficient service personnel and is particularly short of orderlies (their work must be

done by nurses who receive no additional pay to supplement their meager salary). The patients' dressings, particularly those of Nina Strokata (the points of entry into her veins have become infected), are not changed on schedule. Conditions in the hospital are such that patients who are bedridden cannot obtain a glass of water, a hot-water bottle, or a bedpan, and there is no one to feed the very ill.

Nevertheless, friends who visited Nina Strokata were allowed to stay with her only during the general visiting hours (weekdays, from 4-6 p.m., and on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4-6 p.m.).

\* \* \* \* \*

Some details from Nina Strokata's professional and "political" biography.

Nina Antonivna Strokata, a Ukrainian, formerly a permanent resident of Odessa, graduated from the Odessa Medical Institute in 1947. She worked with distinction as a practicing physician, as a lecturer in microbiology, and, from the early 1960's as a researcher in the Central Research Laboratory of the Odessa Medical Institute. She carried out important microbiological research. Her articles — the results of her research — were published in a series of specialized journals and in collections of papers presented at conventions and conferences. Nina Strokata was a talented worker, full of initiative. However, because of political persecution, she was forced to leave her job at the Odessa Medical Institute in May, 1971, and to relocate in the city of Nalchik (Northern Caucasus), where she lectured in a school of medical technology.

In December, 1971, Nina Strokata was taken by a KGB special transport from Nalchik and placed in an interrogation isolation cell (a special prison) of the Odessa KGB. In September, 1972, following the farce that was officially called an investigation and trial, Nina Strokata was deported to a camp in Mordovia.

The persecution of Nina Strokata began in the mid-1960's, following the repeat arrest of her husband, Svyatoslav Yosypovych Karavansky.

(S. Y. Karavansky, born 1920, was first arrested in 1944 for his participation in the Ukrainian national liberation movement. He was sentenced to twenty-five years deprivation of freedom. Seventeen years later, in 1961, he was released. As a free man he proved himself to be a talented philologist-Ukrainianologist, as well as an honorable and courageous citizen. He was arrested again in 1965 because the Prosecutor-General of the USSR decided he had not been imprisoned long enough and should therefore complete his entire twenty-five year term. Since then Svyatoslav Karavansky has not been free and is on a special regimen in a special prison. He is presently in solitary confinement, in a camp of special regime. For ten years Nina Strokata was not able to obtain permission to see her husband.)

Nina Strokata has been persecuted because she refused to declare her husband a criminal, because she refused to condemn his views and renounce him. She was also persecuted for her stand (written statements to Soviet party agencies) in defense of the talented young historian and publicist, Valentyn Moroz; she was persecuted for her

friendship with some of the more outstanding members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia (Ivan Svitlychny and Nadiya Svitlychna, Ivan Hel, Vyacheslav Chornovil, Vasyl Stus, Yevhen Sverstyuk and other).

Strokata was sentenced to four years' deprivation of liberty in a strict-regime labor colony (camp) on charges of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda." The trial was held in May, 1972 in Odessa. Strokata was accused of having kept and disseminated (among several close friends) uncensored *samvydav* works. She was also accused of preparing a letter to the International Association of Journalists in Prague (the letter was found during a search on Strokata's back in 1967) which dealt with the illegal sentencing of the writer Yu. Daniel, and a letter to the staff of the magazine "Perets" (in the verdict it was stated that the letter slandered the nationalities policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the Soviet government, the life of the collective farm peasantry, and the activities of the Soviet Government organs).

Nina Strokata was charged with the possession and dissemination of the following *samvydav* publications;

The poems, "The Heirs of Lavrentiy Beria," "Lina in Lviv," "Lara";

The anthology of poetry "Kryk z Mohyly" [A Cry From the Grave], by the renowned Ukrainian poet M. Kholodny;

A letter with the signature "the priest S. Zheludkov";

The publicistic works of Valentyn Moroz "Sered Snihiv" (Amid the Snows) and "Moysey i Datan" (Moses and Dathan);

A "document" — the publicistic work "Dumaty" (To Think);

The journal *Ukrayinsky Visnyk* (The Ukrainian Herald), first two issues, and the bulletin *Chronicle of Current Events*, No. 13.

In addition, Nina Strokata was charged with having stated (in a private conversation with two people) "that the artist Alla Horska was killed with the knowledge of Soviet authorities."

During her imprisonment Strokata worked diligently and long on a dictionary of medical microbiology and immunology (in that limited time when she was free of compulsory labor, when she was not incarcerated in a penal cell, where even paper or a stub of a pencil is forbidden). Experts who became acquainted with this work recently attest that it is on a high level.

Several months prior to her release, while Strokata was in the PKT, all her manuscripts relating to her professional activities were confiscated. Ill and exhausted, Strokata went on a hunger strike, demanding the return of her notes. After four days of starvation, she had the fruits of her persistent labor returned to her.

While imprisoned, Strokata despite unbelievable conditions, despite brutal punishments, continued to struggle for the rights of political prisoners, for human rights, for basic humaneness.

After her release, she continues this struggle. Recently, she sent a series of petitions to various international humanitarian organizations regarding illegal discrimination against a recently released prisoner of

conscience, the mother of a small child, Nadiya Svitlychna, and also regarding the brutal abuse of psychiatry in the case of the composer-writer Petro Starchyk.

Nina Strokata is a member of the American Society for Microbiology. She received an invitation to attend the annual convention of this association in May, 1976. In spite of her great desire to attend, she was not able to obtain permission for the trip from the Soviet authorities. Just now she received an invitation to attend a course in tumor biology to be held at the Harvard Medical School on November 15-19, 1976. The state of Strokata's health prevents her from taking advantage of this invitation. But even were she (physically) able to attend this seminar, undoubtedly, the Soviet authorities would find some pretext for not letting her go, or would simply deny her without any pretext, permission for the trip.

Today Nina Strokata, unjustly sentenced and brutally punished, is a prisoner of conscience who is being subjected to discrimination even after the completion of her term of punishment, who needs conscientious medical treatment, painstaking care and simple human attention.

October 20-23, 1976

**Malva LANDA**  
(Moscow Region Krasnoyarsk  
Tchaikovsky Street 11, Apt. 37)

**Tetyana KHODOROVICH**  
(Moscow, Prospect Mira 68, Apt. 156,  
Tel. 280-01-02)

***Unless you quickly intervene, you will become transformed from participants of the resistance into accomplices of violence. . .***

***Nina Strokata  
Malva Landa***



**Nadiya Svitlychna, Ukrainian philologist, arrested in 1972 during a the mass repressions in Ukraine and sentenced to four years' imprisonment. After her release she was not allowed to return to Kiev, where she had lived with her infant son Yarema prior to her arrest. Up until her departure for the US in 1978, she was under police surveillance and was constantly persecuted.**



**In all of the republics of the USSR, an internal passport is necessary in order to relocate from one place to another, and permission ("propyska") must be obtained to live in a given area. The Soviet authorities practice discrimination, especially with regard to former political prisoners, in the assignment of living quarters: after being released, political prisoners are forbidden to return to their own apartments.**

**Printed on the next page is a document signed by Nina Strokata and Malva Landa about the case of Nadiya Svitlychna and her son Yarema.**

**To the International Federation of Participants in the  
Resistance Movement, Vienna**

**To all Federation members:**

We turn to all of you because you actively struggle to defend and secure the freedom and dignity of man.

We turn to all of you because you speak out against all manifestations of discrimination.

We turn to you also because you, without a doubt, are against all forms of fascism, and you demand the punishment of those who are capable of perpetuating crimes against mankind.



**Nadiya Svitlychna, in a camp dress, with her son Yarema after her release.**

But we are not asking you to punish anyone. We are appealing to you to help one prisoner of conscience. We are referring to Nadiya Svitlychna, who was sentenced for political reasons during those same repressions that led Leonid Plyushch to a psychiatric hospital.

Nadiya Svitlychna, a Ukrainian philologist from Kiev, was the mother of a two-year old son when she was sentenced to four years of deprivation of liberty. In May of this year, she completed her term of imprisonment. But Nadiya still does not live in freedom, not even in the sense that our countrymen do. Nadiya is not free because she is deprived of the right to settle with her son where they had lived together prior to her arrest.

Settling in any kind of living area is allowed in the Soviet Union on condition of fulfilling a procedure called a "*propyska*" [residential registration]. And so, for a period of five months, Nadiya Svitlychna and her now six-year-old son Yarema (her son also!) are without this registration because the police officials that issue these *propysky* claim that there is not enough room now for an orderly life in a living area that has not changed its dimensions during the time of Nadiya's forced absence.

We want you to understand all of this, namely, that the lack of such registration not only makes it impossible for Nadiya Svitlychna to settle with her son in her own apartment, but also prevents her from finding employment, because no manager of a Soviet firm will hire someone who does not have this *propyska*.

Finally, please understand one more thing: the lack of a registration, according to Soviet law, means you are a vagrant, and the forced nonparticipation (again, because of lack of registration) in socially productive work is, according to Soviet law, idling. Do you hear us: *idling, by a mother who is raising a child!*

However, you must not only hear, but also understand, that unless you quickly intervene in what is happening with Nadiya Svitlychna, you will become transformed from participants of the resistance into accomplices of violence.

Demand the right of a registration for Nadiya Svitlychna and Yarema Svitlychny in the capital of Ukraine, in the city of Kiev!

**October 1976**

**N. [Nina] STROKATA**  
**Former political prisoner of the Soviet Union**  
**Tarusa, Kaluga Region**

**M [Malva] LANĐA**  
**Krasnogorsk, Moscow Region**  
**Tchaikovsky Street 11, Apt. 37**

## **To the Ukrainian Public Group to Promote the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords To the Central Committee of the CPSU**

The newly formed Ukrainian Public Group to Promote the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords, as well as the government of the Soviet Union, has proclaimed its deference to human rights, with particular regard to Article 19 of the Human Rights Declaration and the constitutional guarantees of freedom.

At one time, indiscreetly believing in the declared inviolability of human freedom, I was caught for a long time in the trap set up by the letter of the law. Towards the end of the 1960s, having been an active member of the Komsomol, sensitive to injustices, I became interested in *samvydav* literature, particularly in those issues concerning political arrests in our country; for almost six years now I am paying for that interest, not only with my own health, but also with that of my young son.



**Former Ukrainian political prisoners after their release: Darka Husyak, who spent 25 years in prison; and Nadiya Svitlychna, who spent 4 years in prison.**

In 1972 this two-year-old child was insidiously taken to a child care center and deprived of the right to visits from his parents, in effect, to prison, in order to thus influence me and his mother, who ended up in a far less comfortable prison with all of its ancient acquisitions.

But the two-year-old nationalist did not fulfill the intended mission and did not force his mother to renounce her conscience. And he was almost pardoned: the imprisonment was changed to four years of exile. In truth, neither I nor my son were given sentences and our fate was decided behind tightly closed doors.

Nevertheless, I bow gratefully to the Soviet government and to the KGB agencies that personify it, for their troubles concerning me and my son. For had I not personally experienced those transfers, the countless spies, the privies, and the total degradation of human dignity, could I have ever rid myself of the ballast of illusions?

Could I have ever believed that towards the end of the 20th century, in a civilized society that announced communist slogans, Stefaniya Shabaturova would be given a meticulously formulated statement decreeing the destruction of nearly 200 of her works ("by means of burning") and that she herself would be incarcerated to rot in penal isolation merely for refusing to disavow her artistic vocation and for not falling to her knees before her torturers? The statement was signed by the inspector of the operations section of ZhKh 385/3 Sergeyev, and the inquisitorial pyre was given the blessing of the head of the camp, Major Shorin.

Could I have perceived as anything but slander that while the poet Vasyl Stus was being taken to complex stomach surgery, an eavesdropping device would be sewn into his jacket and that later nearly 800 of his poems and translations would be taken from him, while Stus himself would be cruelly abused, mistreated morally and physically, and even to being tormented by Sydelnikov-type police dogs. (In July of last year Stus was so badly beaten by this henchman that he had to be hospitalized for stomach hemorrhage). The guiding force behind this detective vaudeville was the head of the operational group of ZhKh 385/3, Captain Shalin, again not without the participation of Major Shorin. But the director, as always, hid humbly in the wings.

I was fortunate. I was given only four years of strict-regime labor camp. During those four years I saw my son three times; on the last visit, he even recognized his mother's face. Mykhaylo Soroka, who served a thirty-year sentence there, never saw his grandchildren and died in captivity. His wife, Kateryna Zarytska, who was finishing a twenty-five-year sentence, was not even allowed to bid farewell to her dead husband. They buried him worse than they would a dog—under guard and with a number tag tied to his foot. It cannot be said of him that, in Chekkerini's words, "He found pardon in death."

In any event, physical death is frequently only the beginning of the killing. In 1970 Alla Horská was killed. Later, all her letters were seized, and finally the very name of the artist was removed from her works. But

who are Horska or Soroka when defamation of the dead has become the norm of behavior even in the highest circles (it happened to Stalin, then to Khrushchev, and now the next opportunity to trample on the dead is impatiently awaited).

I am now free—"as free as a dog on a leash"—perhaps less so, for at least a collar is not a noose.

And as a free person, as the mother of her child, today, on Human Rights Day, I declare with full responsibility that after all these experiences, I consider it beneath human dignity to be a citizen of the world's largest, most powerful, most perfect concentration camp.

**December 10, 1976**

**Nadiya SVITLYCHNA  
Kiev, Umanska Street 35/20**



**Former Ukrainian political prisoners: artist Stefaniya Shabaturova and philologist Nadiya Svitlychna.**



**Poetess Iryna Stasiv-Kalynets with her husband, poet Ihor Kalynets. After completing their terms of imprisonment, both are in exile in Siberia.**

***Tomorrow they will throw not only the works  
of art into the fire, but the artist. . .***

***Stefaniya Shabatura***



**Stefaniya Shabatura**



Like the Nazis under Hitler, so the Soviet regime of Stalin, and now of Brezhnev, in its battle with free thinking has taken to burning books, artistic and literary works, libraries, churches and historical architectural monuments. In Ukraine this is done with a very clear purpose — to destroy the Ukrainian national identity and culture and, by means of ethnocide, to bring about the national annihilation of the Ukrainian people. During the imprisonment of Stefaniya Shabatura, the concentration camp's administration confiscated and burned over two hundred of her original bookplates, sketches and paintings.

Stefaniya Shabatura was born in 1938. She is an art institute graduate; her works have been displayed at exhibitions in the USSR and in various European countries. In 1972, during the period of mass repressions in Ukraine, Stefaniya Shabatura was arrested and sentenced to five years' labor camp and three years of exile.

**To the Attorney General of the USSR,  
(From) political prisoner SHABATURA, S.M.  
[Stefaniya Mykhaylivna]  
Mordovian ASSR, Yavas, Institution 385/2  
Camp Prison, cell no. 7**

I proclaim the 10th of December, 1976, a day of protest against the violations of human rights in the Soviet Union, against the persecution and repressions of dissidents and nationally conscious persons, against the use of mocking fascist methods towards prisoners confined in places of deprivation of liberty.

Fascism is not only the physical destruction of people in the ovens of Auschwitz. Fascism is also the hatred of people of different opinions, different national and religious convictions, such as that exhibited by the administration of Institution 385, where chauvinism, degradation insults, threats and blackmail, brazenness and villainy are all regarded as normal behavior in dealing with the prisoners. Here fascist methods are used against people of creative work. Without a second thought they destroy on inquisitorial pyres the creative ideas for an artist's future works, and throw the artist himself behind bars and keep him in solitary confinement, for no reason other than that he dared to defend his legal right to creative labor and to speak out against forced slavery.

All these abuses are consciously aimed at undermining the health of and destroying quickly not only the person, but also all that he could create.

Yes, that is fascism. And I can attest to that on the basis of all the abuses that I endured during my five years in a Soviet concentration camp. Or maybe you will explain to me what I should call the conduct towards me by the head of KGB camp 385, Colonel Dratenko, who, having burst in during a visit on October 22, in the presence of my mother argued for two hours, used brazen provocation and base blackmail, threatened and, not even attempting to conceal his hatred or desire for revenge, was not ashamed to declare that he would give orders to confiscate the rest of my works, which I had completed after October, 1975. To my demands that all works that had been confiscated in 1975 be returned (various sketches, drawings, bookplates for artists, writers, acquaintances and children) he brazenly answered: "You never had any such works, and as for the children? Look at what kind of children!" As you can see, for the Colonel even children are not divided into the fit and unfit, so sincerely does he defend Soviet rule. And to frighten me even more, without any basis whatsoever for such a claim he categorized all my confiscated work as anti-Soviet,

although in the indictment shown to me by the administration the works were not labeled as anti-Soviet. But for those like Dratenko there is no limit to vileness and brazenness, and if tomorrow he receives permission he will throw not only the works into the fire, but also the artist and will do so with special satisfaction.

My future has long since been planned out here. KGB agents Tryasoumov and Boroda revealed to me in conversation that there are no guarantees that my works will not continue to be destroyed even after I have regained by freedom and that in exile, during searches, they will continue to confiscate all that they deem necessary.

For five years I have sought protection and justice from you, Prosecutor-General, and from other higher government agencies, but I have never received a single reply, not from you nor from any other government representative. All my complaints and depositions were answered by the local administration, whose actions I was appealing.

The replies came in the form of insults, threats, and punishments. Each time, I listened to cynical statements like: "Go on, write your complaints. Object! Write your complaints! Maybe it will do some good. It is your right to write complaints. Ha-Ha-Ha!"

Well, I wrote my complaints, but the soulless and deaf did not hear. Thus there is not now, nor ever will be, a limit or ending to all this, since the system is structured along these lines and everything is done with your knowledge, so that those like Dratenko, Shorin, Sergejev and others upon whom our fate shall now long depend, feel themselves secure in their insolence.

Today, on the 10th of December, as I have done every day for five years, I protest against every form of repression, against fascist methods in Soviet concentration camps, against lies and hypocrisy, against hatred and chauvinism, against vileness and coercion, against violations of the most elementary human rights.

### **I proclaim a hunger strike and demand:**

- 1. The cessation of the repression of dissidents and nationally conscious persons;**
- 2. An end to abuses and coercion in Soviet concentration camps;**
- 3. The release of all prisoners now wasting away in camps for political prisoners;**
- 4. The return of my works, confiscated for burning:**
  - 1) Pencil drawings, graphic works using the monotype technique, embodying motifs from Ukrainian writers; "Lisovna Pisna," "Viy," a sketch for a tapestry "From the history of the Kozak Free State," and others;**
  - 2) Various rough sketches in a small pad of light blue-gray paper.**
  - 3) One hundred rough sketches for bookplates (*ex libris*) on eight loose sheets and in a small pad.**
  - 4) Fifty-six finished *ex libris* and four unfinished (on loose sheets in a folder).**

***Ex libris* done for the following writers:**

( 1)	Ex libris	O. Honchar
( 2)	"	P. Zahrebelny
( 3)	"	H. Lohvyn
( 4)	"	Lohvyn
( 5)	"	O. Berdnyk
( 6)	"	Dr. Biletsky

***Ex libris* for the following artists:**

( 7)	Ex libris	B. Ruta
( 8)	"	Sh.S.
( 9)	"	Haletska
(10)	"	Nataliya Pauk
(11)	"	Oksana Dukh
(12)	"	Tsehelska-Krypyakevych
(13)	"	Karlo Zvirynsky

***Ex libris* for friends and acquaintances:**

(14)	Ex libris	Maksymchuk
(15)	"	Les Tanyuk
(16)	"	Kadyrova
(17)	"	I. Korsunskā
(18)	"	V. Zelenchuk
(19)	"	N.S.
(20)	"	Sternyuk
(21)	"	Solotvyn
(22)	"	Stepan Kozak
(23)	"	O. Popovych
(24)	"	N. Svitlychna
(25)	"	N. Strokata
(26)	"	Demchenko
(27)	"	M. Palchak
(28)	"	Zalmanson
(29)	"	Iryna Senyk
(30)	"	D. Husyak
(31)	"	S. Zalmanson
(32)	"	M. Osadchy
(33)	"	I. Hel
(34)	"	Iryna Stasiv
(35)	"	M. Palchak
(36)	"	Vyacheslav
(37)	"	E. Kuznetsov
(38)	"	V. Stus
(39)	"	V. Romanyuk
(40)	"	Iryna Stasiv
(41)	"	S. Karavansky
(42)	"	Ye. Sverstyuk
(43)	"	Kalynets

*Ex libris* for children:

- (44) *Ex libris* Olesya S.
- (45) From the library of Irynka B-Sh.
- (46) From the library of Romchyk B-Sh.
- (47) From the library of Tarasyk Ch.
- (48) V. Morozenko's book
- (49) *Ex libris* Zvenyslava Kalynets
- (50) *Ex libris* Tarasyk Luchuk
- (51) From the library of Yarema S.
- (52) *Ex libris* Ivasyk and Tarasyk
- (53) From the sheet music of Marichka A.
- (54) From the library of Tanya Kotsyubynska
- (55) From the library of Andriyko Korohodsky
- (56) Orko Senyk's Book
- (57) *Ex libris* Oksana Hel
- (58) Tarasyk Osadchy's Book
- (59) *Ex libris* Corvalan
- (60) *Ex libris* L. Corvalan

S. SHABATURA'S POSTSCRIPT:

It seems that all my sketches and the enumerated *ex libris* are regarded as portraits of "convicts" and "paintings of convict life," and my statements as "slanderous," although this same Ganichev in the five years of answering these statements not once called them "slanderous."

The reply to Stefaniya Shabaturova's protest of December 10, 1976, did not come from the Prosecutor-General of the USSR to whom it was addressed. In the tradition of Soviet bureaucracy, her statement-protest was readdressed to that place in which the crime against her camp collection of creative works was perpetrated. That place was Institution 385/2. The All-Union prosecutor readdressed Shabaturova's protest to the prosecutor having jurisdiction over Institution 385/2. Following is the text of this "lesser" prosecutor's reply.

## IN REPLY TO THIS COMPLAINT

To the Head of Institution 385/2:

Please inform the convicted Sh. S. M. [Shabatura Stefaniya Mykhaylovna], that her complaint was investigated and rejected.

Paintings portraying convicts, portions of manuscripts, copies of slanderous statements were destroyed by the administration, of which fact she has already been informed.

16.2.76

(Signed) Ganichev

(Seal of the Corrective Labor Institution)

### Explanation to the Text:

ITU - Corrective Labor Institution. This is the accepted official name for concentration camps in the U.S.S.R.

ITU 385/2—Women's Non-Political Concentration Camp, village of Yavas. The prosecutor sent women political prisoners there as additional punishment for protest actions.

During the time of S. Shabatura's correspondence with the Prosecutor-General of the USSR, Ganichev replied to all her declarations and protests. Ganichev at that time was the prosecutor with the administration of ITU-385. The administrations of all the concentration camps in Mordovia are subordinate to that of ITU-385.



**From left to right: Oksana Hel, daughter of Ukrainian political prisoner Ivan Hel; Atena Pashko, wife of political prisoner Vyacheslav Chornovil; Mariya Hel, wife of political prisoner Ivan Hel; Ukrainian artist and former political prisoner Stefaniya Shabaturova.**

***Another wave of arrests has rolled across the  
Ukrainian land . . .***

***Nina Strokata-Karavanska  
Stefaniya Shabatura***

**To Ukrainians on the American Continent  
from Nina Strokata-Karavanska  
and Stefaniya Shabatura.**

**Sisters, Brothers, Colleagues, and all who care about Ukraine's  
fate!**

Another wave of arrests has rolled across the Ukrainian land. Among those arrested was writer Mykola Rudenko, who was the leader of the citizens' group formed in Ukraine to promote the implementation of the Helsinki Accords.

Oleksiy Tykhy, a member of the Kiev Group, was also arrested.

Mykola Rudenko and Oleksiy Tykhy will remain behind bars if Ukrainians fail to muster the necessary strength and courage to defend them.

All of us who were and who remain political prisoners of the Soviet Union trust that our countrymen across the sea will staunchly defend all the patriots of Ukraine.

**February 17, 1977**

**From places of forced exile,  
Nina Strokata-Karavanska  
and Stefaniya Shabatura**





**Oksana Popovych, born January 30, 1928; member of the Ukrainian Group "Helsinki".**

**In February of International Women's Year /1975/, she was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment and exile for her national and religious convictions. She had spent 10 years in Soviet labor camps from 1944 to 1954 for her participation in the Ukrainian liberation movement.**

***The signing of the Helsinki Accords by the Soviet Union did not promote a democratization of the country, but, to the contrary, led to even greater totalization of its national and social institutions . . .***

***Oksana Meshko***



**Oksana Meshko**

**Oksana Meshko, born in 1905, is a former political prisoner of the Stalin-Beria concentration camps and mother of the Ukrainian political prisoner Oles Serhiyenko, who was imprisoned during the mass repressions in Ukraine in 1972. One of the ten founding members of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, O. Meshko is continually persecuted for her Helsinki-related activity in Ukraine and faces the threat of arrest.**

## **AN APPEAL**

### **To the Belgrade Conference Reviewing the Implementataion of the Helsinki Accords**

In my statement to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, dated May 23, 1977, I wrote about the persecutions to which the Ukrainian Public Group to Promote the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords has been and continues to be subjected, and about the conducted searches and subsequent arrests of four of the ten members of the Group.

A copy of that statement is attached to this appeal.

The situation is such that, having signed the Helsinki Agreement, the leaders of the appropriate organizations in our country have done nothing to implement the humanitarian section of the Final Act, which deals with Human Rights.



**Oksana Meshko, member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, with her grandson Ustym, and her daughter-in-law Zvenyslava Vivchar, wife of political prisoner Oles Serhiyenko.**

Documents of the Helsinki Agreement discovered in the possession of members of the Group are confiscated during searches, and the human rights activities of the Group are treated by the prosecuting organs and the KGB as anti-Soviet and deliberately discrediting to Soviet order.

Complaints, protests, and statements that Group members send to higher Soviet channels are not examined, but are returned to those whose highhandedness had evoked them.

The Ukrainian Public Group was formed in Kiev by people who, having verified the legality and absolute necessity of the Helsinki Accords, took upon themselves the noble task of promoting their implementation.

The Helsinki Accords were signed not only by the leaders of the USSR but also by representatives of thirty-four other countries participating in the Conference.

One would have expected that *all* of them would be interested in the implementation of the Helsinki Accords.

As a member of the Ukrainian Group who still has her freedom, I appeal to you not only for sympathy, but also for concrete help. Mykola Rudenko, Oleksa Tykhy, Mykola Matuskevych and Myroslav Marynovych should be released.

The activity of the Ukrainian Group must not be disrupted!

The absence of fundamental constitutional freedoms and guarantees (freedom of speech, press, assembly, and others) has been characteristic in our closed society even earlier, but everything that is happening today — the intensification of persecution, the eradication of any kind of political dissent, the repeated searches, arrests, firings, intimidation and sometimes outright blackmail — all of these attest that the signing of the Helsinki Accords by the Soviet Union did not promote a democratization of the country, but, to the contrary, led to even greater totalization of its national and social institutions.

If the Belgrade Conference changes nothing, then the results of this incongruity may well become irrevocable.

**Oksana MESHKO**

**June 3, 1977**

**Member of the Ukrainian Public Group to Promote the  
Implementation of the Helsinki Accords**

**Kiev-86, 252086**

**Verbolozna 16.**

**Meshko Oksana Yakivna**

**Date of birth — 1905**

*The minority, which is scorned by you, is tormented by superhuman pain for the fate of this boundless and disordered country. . .*

**Nina Strokata-Karavanska**



**Dr. Nina Strokata-Karavanska. 1978**

**When the new constitution was being discussed in the Soviet Union, Dr. Nina Strokata took an active part in these discussions, as her letter, printed on the next page, testifies.**

## **To the Authors of the draft of the Soviet Constitution-77.**

**To all who support this draft, whether knowingly, unwittingly, from indifference or inadvertence.**

Previous constitutions of the "Country of Soviets" already proclaimed all kinds of freedoms, even those which on the strength of their nature do not need the approbation of the state, and even less so the approbation of a party group.

Nevertheless, constitutional rights, the rights of the Fundamental Law, have been abolished by anticonstitutional lawmaking whose fruits are intended for everyday use, and, what is more, through such an invention of Soviet lawmaking as extralegal decrees.

Never announced to the people, these decrees are, in essence, above the law. Their black shadow has irreversibly covered the pages of the Constitution with solemn and deceptive promises to a people, who were accorded the strange label, formed from the definition of a system of state, of "the Soviet people."

A people who are given a name that goes against nature, but who are not inoculated with the Spirit of Law, are willing to applaud both the Constitution and the anthem. The new anthem will obviously accompany the life of the Soviet people until the final victory of communism, which should bring about death to the state, and this means also to its constitutions. The state, being an institution of earthly power, possibly will not wish to die away, but then whichever minority it may be -- religious, national-social, basically ideological -- it already dooms the Soviet state, with its Constitution-77, to destruction.

The idea of Liberty as a perceived necessity conceived under great-power pressure, has created a Soviet person who involuntarily and without any particular coercion, now votes with active passivity for whatever fundamental, secondary, legal or illegal decree. Furthermore, this majority is not falsified; trained from the first days of the history of the Country of Soviets, it baits those who belong neither to the administrative-bureaucratic minority nor to the majority that has accepted the nonsensical name "Soviet people," along with other nonsense of conformist parliamentarism. In the name of the unprecedented conformist Majority, the draft of the Soviet Constitution surely will be transformed into a unanimously approved law. But it seems that today is not yet too late to be imbued with the idea of improving a draft which is devoid of sublimity of Spirit and



Form, and completely devoid of an interest in the individual, in the guaranteed obligations of the State before every ward of Fundamental Rights. The bearers of the idea of improving the constitutional regime of the country long ago were given ostracism's marking label: "dissidents."

I know that for you they are not the Soviet people, not the majority about whom it can be said that they represent the people; they are — as they were meant to be — the smallest minority. This minority, which is scorned by you, is tormented by superhuman pain for the fate of this boundless and disordered country. It is no wonder that the voice of this vigilant minority is imposing; it gathers ever greater strength because it is the Voice of Conscience, a Voice bringing forth primordial and sacred ideas. The Soviet person will ultimately respond to the call of this voice.

As a person belonging at this time to a minority that is not covered by constitutional guarantees, I demand that I be given opportunity to leave the Soviet Union for any country that I may choose, guided by my personal and independent appraisal of the constitutional guarantees of the chosen country of immigration.

I want to expect that I will be granted the opportunity to leave the Soviet Union together with my husband, Svyatoslav Yosypovych Karavansky, who is entering the 29th year of imprisonment for nonviolent deeds with regard to the governing minority of the Soviet Union.

**September, 1977.**

**NINA STROKATOVA—KARAVANSKA**, a political prisoner of the Soviet Union, 1971-1975; wife of a Ukrainian poet-prisoner; physician; member of the American Association for Microbiology; member of the Ukrainian Public Group to Promote the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords.

**From the place of forced settlement: Tarusa, Kaluga Region, 39 Lunacharsky [Street].**

***She is incapable of working and at any time  
could lose her mobility. . .***

***Stefaniya Shabatura***



**Iryna Senyk.**

**Iryna Senyk, born in 1926, is a former political prisoner of the Stalin-Beria concentration camps; she was imprisoned again during the mass arrests in Ukraine in 1972. She is unable to work due to the state of her health. In accordance with the penal legislation of the USSR, she could have been released from the appointed term of exile after completing her term of imprisonment. The following appeal of S. Shabatura is in accordance with the principles of the corrective-labor legislation of the USSR, and yet it was not granted.**

**Iryna Senyk remains exiled from Ukraine; she is often ill and deprived of qualified medical care.**

**To the Head of the GUITU  
Copy: Head of ITK 385/3  
(from) Citizen Shabatura S.M.  
641610 Kurgansk Region, city of Makushino  
D. Byedny Street 76, Apt. 12**

### **STATEMENT**

In this year 1979, the prisoner Iryna Mykhaylivna Senyk will complete her camp term. Born in 1926, she was arrested in 1972 and sentenced by the Ivano-Frankivsk court under Article 62 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR to six years of strict-regime camp and five years' exile.

During her first incarceration in the 1950s, she was gravely ill. After this illness, she underwent very complex spinal surgery, as well as other, no less complicated operations. As a result of this, Iryna Senyk became an invalid of the 2nd category. She is incapable of working and at any time could lose her mobility. At present, Iryna Senyk is incarcerated where she has a daily slice of bread and a roof over her head. In exile she will have neither one nor the other, since as an invalid she is incapable of earning a living.

Hopefully, the medical commission will take this into account and will raise the question of releasing I. M. Senyk from exile. Should this not happen, I ask you to send Iryna Senyk to exile to the town of Makushino in Kurgansk Region.

I take upon myself the obligation of making I. M. Senyk secure materially and providing for her care.

I work in an art studio shop, where I can earn up to 200 rubles a month, and these earnings can suffice for two women.

I am sure that my appeal does not conflict with the principles of regimen and the possibility of granting it depends only on the moral outlook of the administration.

**February 24, 1978**

**S. SHABATURA**

**The answer to this humane intercession by a Ukrainian political prisoner was as follows: in the spring of that same year, 1978, Iryna Senyk was transferred under guard from the concentration camp to**

one of the farther regions of Kazakhstan. She was in transit for so long and under such circumstances that she arrived barely alive. For several weeks after the transit, Iryna Senyk was bedridden, without the strength even to secure for herself the minimum daily food ration, with money that friends and relatives had hastened to send to her. In time, she had to get up and go to work. At the moment she—a nurse, a poetess and a talented embroiderer—is working as a maid in a hotel. She is often sick. Appropriate medical aid is unavailable, since the small town lacks qualified doctors, and her status as an exile deprives her of the possibility to travel for medical help to such places where it is available.

Iryna Senyk's address in exile: Ush-Tobe, Karatalsky District. Galdy-Kurgansk Region, Kazakh SSR, USSR, General Deliver.

*Notes on the text:*

GUIITU—Main Administration of Corrective Labor Institutions, corresponding to the former name GULAG.

ITK—Corrective Labor Colony—the fixed, official name for concentration camps in the USSR.

ITK 385/3—A system of concentration camps in Barashevo in the Mordovian SSR. Part of this system is ITK 385/3-4, where women sentenced for political reasons are kept. At the time of Stefaniya Shabatura's declaration, the administrators of ITK 385/3-4 were Major Shorin and Captain Zubkova.

Art. 62 CC Ukr SSR—An Article of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR, which is applied to persons persecuted for political reasons (anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda). This article provides for the following punishment: 1) for first offenders—from three months to seven years strict-regime camp with subsequent exile for three to five years, or no exile; 2) for second offenders—from six months to ten years strict-regime camp (for women!) with subsequent exile for up to five years.

Second offenders are given the label "especially dangerous state criminals." Iryna Senyk and Oksana Popovych were so labeled by the verdict of the court. The concentration camp where those sentenced under Article 62 CC Ukr SSR serve their terms is located outside the boundaries of Ukraine—in Mordovia. Places of exile are also far outside the boundaries of Ukraine: Siberia, Kazakhstan. After 1972 there was not one case in Ukraine where those sentenced under Article 62 were punished by less than four years imprisonment. As for women, exile was not mandated in only two cases: Nina Strokata's and Nadiya Svitlychna's. However, after their release from prison, administrative (police) surveillance was established over them, which placed them in the same legal position as that of any exile. The system of continuous persecution, legalized through the "regulations" of police surveillance, pushed both of these women on the road to emigration from the USSR. And Stefaniya Shabatura, who had completed both her camp term and term of exile (eight years altogether), made an attempt to return to Ukraine; however, they would not register her there, that is, they would not give her the right to settle where she desires. Administrative (police) surveillance has been established over S. Shabatura, continuing her status as an exile beyond the term established by the sentence.

***For God's sake, for the sake of justice,  
humaneness and compassion, we plead—save  
us! . . .***

***Valentyna Sira***



**Valentyna Sira with her husband Leonid and their children. From left to right: Edvard, Marharyta, Vladyslav, Oksana, Viktoriya, Larysa.**

**Valentyna Sira is the mother of eight children and wife of Leonid Siry, a laborer active in unofficial community life. The father of the family is systematically being denied the opportunity to earn an acceptable salary, and thus the large family is constantly going hungry. For several years Valentyna Sira has been demanding the right to emigrate for economic reasons. Valentyna Sira and her husband Leonid are continually persecuted and face the threat of arrest. They are also threatened with deprivation of their parental rights for their participation in unsanctioned community activities.**

**Honored Citizens of the West and all who wish to participate in our defense.**

**Honored Members of Committees in Defense of Human Rights.**

The large Siry family — eight children and two parents — appeals to you with a great request, so important to us. Defend us from our rulers' attempt on our freedom and our family. Briefly, I will relate how it all started:

1. We were supposed to be given an apartment, but were constantly deceived—we were not given that to which the law entitled us (the apartment lacked even the most rudimentary facilities, its area was 1½ times larger on paper than in reality, etc.). When we began to speak out about this, the meager salary of the family's father was cut considerably.

2. The father of the family is not allowed into navigation (he is a sailor) where he would be able to earn money and provide security for his family. The job at which he is presently employed is very low-paying and we do not even have the minimum means of livelihood.

3. In addition to this there is a scarcity of products in the stores and those that do appear temporarily are distributed in small portions, completely insufficient for our large family. Because of continual malnutrition we are all anemic and weak (I alone, in the past four months, have lost 17 kg., and my hemoglobin count is at 50%).

4. In school, our children are not given proper meals. We have written pleas-letters, petitions. But instead of receiving aid, we began to suffer persecution and our children were insulted and harassed, physically and morally. The children are deluged with rebuke, insulted, called "anti-Soviet" and told that there is no place for them on this earth.

5. My mother, sister, and brother began to be called in for questioning by the KGB.

6. The father of the family began to be pressured at work, spattered with scum, deprived of comfortable work, and summoned for inquests.

7. During travel to other cities, we were removed from the train (without presentation of warrants), searched and even beaten, etc.

On July 18, 1979, a search was conducted of our home, concerning the matter of a certain Monakov (later we found out that Monakov was a teacher in the school attended by our younger daughter). But the



KGB interrogation, the questions, were not related to Monakov. We were asked about papers confiscated from us, about letters from friends, their photographs, and demands were made that we recant and produce the necessary evidence.

Now, we are faced with a terrible danger. During the last KGB interrogation, Lieutenant Colonel Volopyanov, of the KGB investigative section told me that I would be taken for a psychiatric examination, and later sent for treatment to a psychiatric institution (I was threatened earlier, that no matter what the state of my health, I would be put away there anyway). The father of the family, Leonid, was told by KGB investigator Shumylo that he would be sent up North to cut timber; the children would be taken away and raised in the Soviet way, and the parents would be deprived of all parental rights.

We request permission to emigrate from the USSR to Australia — we have an invitation from there — but KGB agents continually declare that we will not be allowed to go anywhere. For God's sake, for the sake of justice, humaneness and compassion, we plead — save us! Do not let us die and leave the children orphaned. We want to emigrate. Help us, if you can.

**August 28, 1979**

**VALENTYNA SIRA  
USSR, Odessa, 2710010  
Geraniyeva Street 12, Apt. 53**

***In despair we, women, appeal to the entire progressive world community — perhaps for the last time. . .***

***Oksana Meshko, Nina Strokata, Iryna Senyk***



**Stefaniya Sichko with her daughter Oksana, member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group Oksana Meshko, husband Petro Sichko and son Vasyl, both members of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group and presently imprisoned.**



**Olena Terelya with daughter Maryanna.**

**Olena Terelya, physician, born in 1943, wife of Yosyp Terelya, Ukrainian political prisoner in the USSR since 1962.**

**Yosyp Terelya, also born in 1943 is imprisoned in a psychiatric hospital for his national convictions and religious beliefs. His wife Olena is continually persecuted and faces the threat of arrest.**

## LAMENTATION

The escalation of state terror and slander testify to the authorities' intent eventually to liquidate the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, to stifle the movement in defense of rights in Ukraine.

As we have already informed, the authorities now consider it better to try Ukrainian dissidents not under the political articles of the Criminal Code, but on fabricated charges of actual criminal offenses.

On October 25, 1979, yet another member of the Group, Vasyl Striltsiv, was arrested in Dolyna, Ivano-Frankivsk Region, for "violation of passport regulations"; in fact, he had been registered, lived and worked in Dolyna for many years. The legal bond for the accusation was V. Striltsiv's lack of a passport: he had handed it over to the militia in Dolyna two years ago, renouncing Soviet citizenship and had demanded — in circumstances of large-scale terror against him — /leave to/emigrate abroad.

On October 23, 1979, member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group Mykola Horbal was arrested in Kiev; charges of attempted rape were fabricated against him. One evening four men fell upon him, breaking his arms, led him up to a woman standing nearby, beat him and drove him to the militia. Two years before, Mykola Horbal had returned after serving a seven-year term for political motives (for writing a poem; he is also known as a writer of lyrical poetry, which was disseminated in *samvydav*.)

In Odessa at the end of September of this year, /the following/ searches by the KGB were revealed: at Valentyna Barladyanu's — wife of Vasyl Barladyanu, sentenced for political matters; at Leonid Tymchuk's, at teacher Hanna Golumbiyevskaya's and at Hanna Mykhaylenko's; that is, people close to the movement in defense of rights. Not just once have they been threatened with criminal prosecution.

According to the latest news Mykhaylenko has already been sentenced to one and one-half years of forced labor. H. V. Mykhaylenko, a specialist in Ukrainian philology, was forced in recent years to work in unskilled labor. . . she has undergone a complicated oncological operation.

News of previous persecutions and arrests were set out in two documents of the Group:

1. A report of the Group, August, 1979.
2. An appeal to the Helsinki groups of the USSR and USA and to groups in defense of rights of Poland and Czechoslovakia, October 6, 1979.

They were confiscated during searches at T. Osipova's in Moscow and . . . probably never reached the public.

The events are outrunning the information. It is necessary to hurry. The Ukrainian Helsinki Group finds itself in danger of total physical suffocation.

Along with all of our readiness to counter terror and to work in uncovering and transmitting publicly instances of violations of human rights in Ukraine, a situation is coming about in which there is in fact no one to carry on this activity.

In the period between the Belgrade and Madrid conferences, we did not receive the aid of the 35 European nations, on which we counted at least some. Without this help the existence of the Group is an impossibility.

In other words, the Ukrainian Helsinki Group stands before threat of liquidation, having in recent times found itself behind bars as a body.

In despair we, women and members of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, appeal to the entire progressive world community and, especially, to international women's organizations — perhaps for the last time.

**October 30, 1979**

**Oksana Meshko  
Nina Stokratova  
Iryna Senyk**

*Tragic is the fate of a person whose life is passing without the possibility of self-realization. . .*

**Svitlana Kyrychenko**



**Svitlana Kyrychenko with her husband, political prisoner Yuriy Badzyo.**

Svitlana Kyrychenko is the wife of Yuriy Badzyo, author of the unpublished monograph *The Right to Live*, which was destroyed by the KGB. During the judicial proceedings against Badzyo (in 1980), the court also implicated S. Kyrychenko in the research activities of her husband. This places her under threat of judicial and extrajudicial repressions.

**To the International Association of Lawyers,  
Amnesty International,  
Pen Club and Heinrich Boell**

Already in May, 1979, I turned to people of good will following the arrest of my husband, Yuriy Badzyo. My thanks to all who answered this appeal. Now the trial is behind him — before him lie twelve years of camps and exile. A prestigious sentence. One can be proud of it. It attests not so much to the influence of the wrongdoer, as it does to the person's uncompromising belief in his ideas and in his words — words still unspoken, unheard by anybody, yet in this not any less terrible to his judges. Twelve years loss of freedom for an unfinished manuscript, for an analysis of the theory and practice of Soviet socialism, conducted from a position of a scientific socialist idea. Possibly the "special danger," lies in that it is from *these* positions that the myth begins to unravel at the core.

During the investigation, the manuscript of *The Right to Live* was never subjected to scientific evaluation. In fact, the court-appointed defense attorney could not familiarize himself with it, since he began to study up on the many-volumed case during the three working days preceding the trial. No one was informed of the beginning of the trial; I learned of it accidentally after having entered the premises of the Kiev Municipal Court. During the trial, in which Yuriy Badzyo lectured extensively on the contents of the book, demonstrating the scientific arguments for its concepts and the authenticity of its factual elements, not a single representative of the so-called "scientific humanitarian" community of Kiev was present. (Appointed as an "observer" on the first day of the trial, December 19, 1979, the party functionary of the literary institute, V. Shubravsky, did not stay even until the end of the first session). On the next day, even such "representation" was missing among a new group of "observers." None of the witnesses, including the son, were allowed to remain in the courtroom after their testimony. None of Yuriy Badzyo's friends and acquaintances were allowed even into the court corridor, while several rows were crowded with policemen and plainclothesmen. The over two-hour long summation of the accused was heard only by still another group allowed into the courtroom, a brigade of "secret strangers" of uncertain age and origin. In this same way, at every stage of the trial both the work and the words of the author himself were carefully concealed from the ears and eyes of outsiders.



Actually, I know almost nothing about the trial proceedings. I was not even allowed to hear the reading of the sentence! Three days I stood in the corridor, observing the cynical proceedings of an "open trial."

"Why are you always hanging around us? You should go and get a breath of fresh air," I was told by one of the plainclothesmen who constantly patrolled the narrow corridor which leads to the "hall" — a small, cramped room which barely fits seventeen or eighteen people.

When the observers left this room they were immediately taken into a tight circle of plainclothesmen, to prevent them from mingling with outsiders.

"I want to see what one of your open trials looks like."

"Well then, look, look," he magnanimously allowed.

When I was called to the witness stand, upon entering the courtroom I turned towards my husband; immediately an escort was formed — six soldiers who clustered around the defendant's dock and who stood there all the while I was in the courtroom. Before the questioning I asked the judge, V. I. Usatenko, to tell me what kind of trial this was, open or closed. Sensing that there might be complications with this witness, the judge decided on an immediate stormy psychological attack to break the "resistance." He obviously wanted to demonstrate his mastery of instilling fear in the chosen sacrificial lamb. He "destroyed" me with a sardonic, smiling grimace and with his cutting, poisonous tone. I replied that I would not utter one word, if I was going to be addressed in this manner.

"In your place, I would consider how your refusal threatens the accused."

"I think," I replied, "that the court takes into account the person and the actions of the accused, and not the behavior of his family."

"The Soviet court takes into account the environment which was influential in the formation of the crime."

Nevertheless, I again repeated my question.

"The judge is telling you — the court is open. Look about the courtroom and you will see this for yourself." I ran my eyes over the tired faces of the "observers," weakened by the stuffy air.

"Having looked over the courtroom and, mainly, having stood all these days in the corridor, I am convinced that my husband's trial is a closed one. At such a trial I refuse to give testimony as a witness. Please let the record show the motives behind my refusal."

"That will be our decision, what to enter into the record. You are free to go, leave the courtroom."

"Now I have the right to remain in the courtroom."

"I deprive you of that right!"

"Why?"

"Because you refused to give testimony! Take her out of the room!"

Almost by the very doors, through a narrow gap between some soldiers I saw the pale, anxious face of my husband. As I later learned, the motivation for my refusal was never entered into the record.

I also know the contents of the final indictment summary only in general outline. When it was related to me, I thought that the inventors

of this masterpiece, composed in the “judicial style,” could easily compete with the famous masters of the “literature of the absurd.” Its first point states (I repeat, I am not quoting, only relating the text):



**Bohdana and Serhiy Badzyo — children of Svitlana Kyrychenko and her husband, political prisoner Yuriy Badzyo.**

With the purpose of weakening and undermining Soviet authority (this is a general capstone for all the points — S.K.) the accused produced and disseminated anti-Soviet slanderous documents — his explanation to a party assembly in September 1965.”

Nobody ever saw this document (this is confirmed even by those who witnessed the indictment proceedings). Neither is it mentioned in the records. There is only a record of his appearance in the records of the party assembly, in which it (his appearance) is qualified as “ideologically immature” (fourteen years later it has become “anti-Soviet!”). And there is only the testimony of the accused: on the demands of the assembly that he explain his behavior in the “Ukrayina” cinema theatre on September 4, 1965, he stepped forth and *read* his explanation. This same spirit of Kafka’s *Trial* is sustained by that point of the indictment which addresses itself to the *production* of an anti-Soviet document, the first version of the work, *The Right to Live*. The thieves who stole this manuscript did not admit their thievery. None of the witnesses knows anything about it. No traces of this “document” exist anywhere, neither in the records nor in the testimony. Again, there is only the statement of Yuriy Badzyo that such a manuscript existed.

The next point is based on the testimony of only one witness, Ihor Buchynsky, who has collaborated with the KGB since 1974. He stated that ten years ago, happening somehow to visit us, he saw on the table I. Dzyuba's work, *Internationalism or Russification?* and began to read it on the advice of Yuriy Badzyo. Badzyo declared that this was perjury. Nobody else saw the work in our house nor was it there during the search in 1972. There is no other testimony on this point. Nevertheless "the possession and dissemination of Ivan Dzyuba's anti-Soviet document" was added to the charges in the indictment, and a copy of this work, kept in stock by the KGB, was placed into the case file.

Yuriy Badzyo's already famous letter to the Sixth Ukrainian Writers' Conference (1971), which he sent to the leading writers' organizations, also became part of the indictment as "the production, duplication, and dissemination of documents of an anti-Soviet nature." The KGB confiscated a copy of this letter from us during the search in 1972. For eight years no importance was attached to the letter, and suddenly it becomes a particularly dangerous anti-Soviet document whose anti-Soviet nature is confirmed by the fact that it had been broadcast by Radio Liberty and that it mentions future (!) "anti-Soviets" I. Svitlychny and V. Stus.

The showpiece of the indictment is the point which deals with the confiscation during the last search of a brochure entitled "The Denationalization of Ukrainians and Byelorussians by the Poles" (Lviv, 1937). It had been ignored in two searches — 1972 and 1979 until an astute KGB investigator, V. I. Sanko, finally perceived how it could be used to advantage. Obviously, the first step is to show the source of the "influence. . ." I am reminded of an interrogative letter from the investigative committee, shown to the Decembrist Lunin, in which under point 7 appeared: "under whose influence did you become infected with free-thinking and who helped reinforce it?" One hundred and fifty years have passed and the logic of our investigators and their conception of the human mind remain the same. Badzyo's investigators probed assiduously. More accurately, they twisted the facts to fit the same basic concept: who abetted and under whose influence. In the indictment, have no doubt, is proclaimed the fact that Badzyo copied all his "slander" of the nationalities policies of the CPSU from the above-named brochure, which deals with the assimilation politics of the Polish chauvinists. Even the title of the work, it seems, could in no way spring independently into the mind of the accused; he had to copy that too. Badzyo showed that he acquired this brochure in the early 1960's, but did not read it, having forgotten about its existence. In his work there is no reference to, nor quote from it. But surely today's assimilators are no longer such a select breed, if their own methods, analyzed in the work *The Right to Live*, appear to them to have been copied from a 1937 Polish model. As for the title, those in whose safes the manuscript and versions of the work lie preserved (assuming they have not been burned), can see for themselves: on the first page

following the title is an epigraph from P. Tychna: "To life — I ask no man the right . . ." This right to an individual life and a national life, stolen from us, cries out in the soul of each of us; we do not need to search for it in old brochures.

And finally, the two last points are based on a typewritten copy of M. Rudenko's *Economic Monologues* (safeguarding for distribution), found at our place, which Badzyo had not had a chance to read before the search, and the second version of the *The Right to Live*, a manuscript confiscated in April 1979; this time, "production," "duplication" (fifty typewritten pages) and "dissemination" figure in — the wife and a friend knew in whose homes the folders were kept. (This friend proved that he knew only the covers of the folders, never saw the work and does not know its contents.) All the same he saw the covers, thus, clearly, there was "dissemination." The typist who typed the fifty pages was also proof of "dissemination."

The myth-making talents of the KGB are to be envied.

I appeal to the International Association of Jurists to take note of the court case of Yuriy Badzyo and of his indictment, and, if possible, to appoint lawyers who will demand access to the facts of the case and who could conduct a new judicial review.

I appeal to Amnesty International to take my husband under its protection and to do everything possible to shorten his term of incarceration.

I turn to the members of the PEN Club and particularly to you, Mr. Heinrich Boell, with a plea for help. The first books my husband and I read together were your books. The sad eyes of your jester, the defenselessness of your heroes in a cruel world of violence and indifference, accompanied us during the formation of our inner world. Your humane writings became an important guidepost in our formation.

I appeal to scholars — philologists, historians, philosophers. My husband is forty-four years old. Because of twelve years of inhuman conditions in the GULAG, he will no longer be able to carry on scientific work. Tragic is the fate of a person whose life is passing without the possibility of self-realization. Before 1972, Yuriy Badzyo seriously prepared himself for the realization of his life's dream — to present his own interpretation of the history of Ukrainian literature as a component element in the world literary process. The political reaction of 1972 destroyed those plans. He could not devote himself to literature or to esthetics when the very existence of his nation and his culture was threatened.

I appeal to the democrats and humanists of the world: only with our active support, only with our help, can Yuriy Badzyo win his freedom.

January 5, 1980

SVITLANA KYRYCHENKO

Kiev, Chervonoarmiyska Street 93, Apt. 16

***Each day, year in, year out, you, my sisters,  
hide your tears from your children . . .***

***Iryna Zisels***



**Relatives of Ukrainian political prisoners.**

**From left to right: Dr. Olena Antoniv, wife of political prisoner Zinovi Krasivsky (standing on the far right); Oksana Osadcha, wife of writer and political prisoner Mykhaylo Osadchy (who, after serving a prison term, is in exile in Siberia), with her daughter Olenka; Lyuba Popadyuk, mother of student and political prisoner Zoryan Popadyuk (who is in exile in Siberia).**

## **An Open Letter to the Wives of Political Prisoners**

I have borne the heavy burden of the wife of a political prisoner for only one year. I have not yet drained the bitter cup, as yet I only see the brim, and the bottom — where is it?! Just a year behind us and only two ahead. After all, we have terms of five, seven, fifteen (years) often followed by exile. I bow down before all my sisters, the wives of political prisoners. For many years, it has been you, with your letters, your packages, your faith and your faithfulness, your warmth and your care, who have been the support of your husbands, the finer individuals of a country surrounded with barbed wire. Each day, year in, year out, you, my sisters, hide your tears from your children. You suffer injustices at work, where they are happy to stab callously the disenfranchised and the helpless. You endure it all so as to have at least some kind of livelihood, so as to be given a few days leave when — o joy — you are finally permitted a visit. You become lawyers and publicists, writing declarations and complaints, protests and petitions. You must know how to find happiness in each single day, in each line of a letter, and in a child's smile, so as not to grow calloused nor to give way to anger. Otherwise you will break, to the joy of the unthinking punitive machine that exists just for this reason.

I bow low before you, sisters. May you be blessed!

**IRYNA ZISELS**

**Iryna Zisels, wife of political prison Yosyp Zisels, wrote an appeal to the wives of political prisoners on the first anniversary of her husband's imprisonment; the full text of her letter is printed above.**

**Yosyp Zisels, born in 1947, a Jewish activist in Ukraine and member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, was arrested December 8, 1978 and sentenced April 5, 1979 to 3 years imprisonment. He is serving his sentence in a concentration camp for common criminals in the Chernivtsi Region in Ukraine.**