



# NEWS FROM UKRAINE

Information About the Current Struggle for National Independence and Human Rights

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## *New Wave of Persecution As Ukraine Becomes "Testing Ground"*

Exactly a decade later, Ukraine is once again being swept by a new and severe wave of persecution aimed at stamping out all opposition to the denationalization and russification policies of the regime. A document recently made available in the West describes the current situation in Ukraine, calling it an artificially created "testing ground" where new forms of communism are being tried out. Written anonymously and titled "Situation in Ukraine," the document lists various directions that the "experiment" is taking:

- The old Stalinist trick of calling opponents of the regime "criminals" has been revived, partially in an attempt to confuse Western public opinion. As the head of the Ukrainian KGB, Fedorchuk, stated last April: "In the last year much work was done: 40 Ukrainian nationalists were rendered harmless. To avoid any international rumblings, most of them were sentenced for criminal acts."

- Not only are the wives of dissidents persecuted but also any family member who refuses to denounce the activities of his relatives. Volodymyr Sichko, for example, was expelled from a university because his father and brother were imprisoned and he refused to compromise with the government.

- Action against any kind of religious expression has been intensified: church choirs have been disbanded, church premises searched for no reason, monasteries isolated and monks physically abused.

- The KGB attempts to terrorize Ukrainians into desisting from any sort of dissident activity by threats, blackmail, harassment. Ukraine has been turned into a Stalinist variant of communism, with Ukrainians discouraged from helping, calling, or visiting one another. Mykola Horbal was arrested after wanting to emigrate. Olha Matusevych was blackmailed after her husband's arrest and later arrested herself. Raisa Rudenko, after years of being followed and spied upon, was also arrested and sentenced to a labor camp. Other women dissidents live in constant fear of arrest, searches, and threats.

- The KGB keeps close watch on Ukrainian political prisoners. Surveillance is implemented on the barest suspicion. Prisoners are also being subject to physical torture. One prisoner was reportedly sealed in a coffin-like box, a method

Ukraine today has been transformed into a testing ground where communism tries to find new forms of existence in order not to destroy itself while it is destroying and stamping out everything that lives. It is searching for a form in which it can exist forever, a form of death and dying that is stretched out over centuries. And if such a form is found (if it exists at all), then it will be an event comparable to the revolution of 1917. That is why events that are now taking place are important not only for Ukraine or Russia but for the whole world.... We appeal to everyone to defend those who find themselves on this new testing ground and are being destroyed. What is now happening in Ukraine is an attempt to change the moral climate in Ukraine, Russia and the world. That is why the participation of free people is so important to the fate of those who are perishing.

so far unused in the camps and unreported by dissidents in non-Ukrainian republics.

- As a warning to others, prisoners are given consecutive sentences (a practice only now sporadically introduced into the Russian republic). Such prisoners include Ivan Hel, Mykola Horbal, Ivan Kandyba, Yury Lytvyn, Lev Lukyanenko, Vasy! Stus, Vyacheslav Chornovil and others. Some prisoners have been given their third consecutive term.

- The least attempt to publish or circulate any material leads to immediate arrest. Freedom of the press in Ukraine is non-existent. The Ukrainian samizdat has been stifled.

- Since 1976, Ukraine has been the stage for a special effort (backed by government subsidies) to recruit KGB personnel, especially from among youth and intellectuals. These efforts are often connected with the call-up to military duty.

- The regime is trying to solve experimentally the problem of Ukrainian emigration. In this respect Ukraine is isolated from the rest of the USSR. Officials have orders not to permit Ukrainians to emigrate from Ukraine. Those in other republics, however, are free to do so. As in all experiments, it is necessary to control the environment. Thus people are cut off from appeal to the central union ministries and left to the manipulations of their governments, that is, precisely to those who are conducting the experiment.

## Arrests and Sentencings

The suppression of the clandestine *Ukrainian Herald* and the imprisonment of its compilers have made detailed information about the situation in Ukraine slow to emerge in the West. Nevertheless, the following is a brief sample of the more recent victims of the regime's crackdown:

Sergei Paradjanov. Film director of Armenian descent whose *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, based on a classic Ukrainian novel, won several international awards in the 60's. Paradjanov has been living in Tbilisi (Georgia), destitute and unable to find work. In the late 60's he fell out of favor with authorities and was accused of Ukrainian nationalism. Sentenced in 1974 to 5 years in a labor camp, he was spared a further 10-year sentence as a result of petitions by leading European filmmakers. Arrested on February 11 for associating with "undesirable persons," probably foreign visitors.

Yaroslav Lesiv. Member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, first sentenced in 1967 to 6 years in a labor camp for belonging to a group advocating the secession of Ukraine from the USSR. In 1979 sentenced on trumped-up charges of possessing narcotics to 2 years of labor camps. Now sentenced to 5 years imprisonment on unknown charges. Lesiv's declaration (see box) in which he states his decision to join the Ukrainian Helsinki Group and in which he describes his postwar "childhood among fresh graves" in Western Ukraine reached the West last fall. He is in poor health and has lost almost all sight as a result of imprisonment.

Mykola Plakhotnyuk. 46-year-old physician first arrested in 1972 during mass arrests of Ukrainian intellectuals and who spent 8 years in a psychiatric hospital for his human rights activities. Arrested on September 6 on trumped-up criminal charges of homosexuality and corrupting the character of minors. All evidence so far indicates that Plakhotnyuk was framed by the KGB who had harassed him ever since his release. At one point he was attacked by "unknown" assailants on a Kiev street, a city in which he was not permitted to live. His arrest on charges of homosexuality, which is considered a form of mental deviance in the USSR, puts him in danger of being recommitted to a mental institution. The charges against him also point to a relatively recent pattern in the persecution of Ukrainian dissidents in which arrests are made on the basis of a criminal rather than overtly political pretext. In 1980, for example, Vyacheslav Chornovil was sentenced to 5 years of prison on a phony rape charge, and Yaroslav Lesiv (see above) was sentenced for allegedly possessing drugs. In 1979 Mykola Horbal, a member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, was arrested for attempted rape and for supposedly resisting arrest. He was later sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment.

Pavlo Kampiv. Native of Uzhorod in Carpathian Ukraine and a mathematician by profession. First arrested in 1970 and sentenced to 10 years of prison. Released in 1978 because of failing eyesight. Subsequently harassed by the KGB in connection with his ties to members of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group. Sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.

### *"I cannot make peace with the situation in Ukraine."*

The question of human rights draws the attention of many nations. Some react sincerely and some hypocritically. Either way, no nation, no government, no serious political leader can ignore, or fail to deal with, this question.

The problem of human rights has now become a universal problem of all humanity. This problem especially concerns me.

I live in a country where human individuality is *de facto* only a cog in the state mechanism and its rights and duties are to approve of the activities of the party and government and to work, regardless of whether the work guarantees a level of subsistence. The least attempt to defend one's native language, culture, national and human rights is seen as an anti-state, anti-government act.

It is not possible to make peace with the fact that such talented people and such outstanding patriots as Levko Lukyanenko, Yevhen Sverstyuk, Vyacheslav Chornovil, Ihor Kalynets, Ivan Svitlychny, Mykola Rudenko, Oles Berdnyk, Oleksa Tykhy, the Sichkos, and such daughters of the Ukrainian nation as Stefa Shabatura, Iryna Kalynets, Irena Senyk, Oksana Popovych, and many, many others, are, for no reason at all, seized, falsely accused, and locked away for long years behind iron bars and barbed wire.

I cannot make peace with the situation now existing in Ukraine: russification, the destruction of historical monuments, the eradication of national traditions, the suppression of the Greek-Catholic Church, the persecution of believers, the absence of all political freedoms, national rights, human rights, the persecution of dissidents, the unprecedented practice of closed trials, forced labor in camps under conditions of near starvation, even the exile of political prisoners to the far corners of the country.

There are many more pressing and painful problems that we must solve today, and it would be a crime to ignore them and leave them to our children because of the fear of punishment.

— Yaroslav Lesiv  
A Declaration

Vasyl Ovsyienko. Charged with "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda," the 33-year-old member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group faces a 10-year prison sentence to a labor camp. A teacher of Ukrainian language and literature, Ovsyienko was first arrested in 1973 and sentenced to 4 years of strict-regime labor camp. After his release he was unable to find work and was kept under KGB administrative surveillance, that is, virtual house arrest. In 1978 he appealed for permission to emigrate from the USSR. In 1979 he was sentenced to 3 years of labor camps for his activities in the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, which he joined in 1977. The current procedures against him are part of a new KGB practice of dealing out second, and even third, sentences to political prisoners who have just finished their prison terms.

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## UPA, OUN Members Executed

Sources in Ukraine have informed the West that last autumn Soviet authorities executed five persons accused of being members during World War II of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). Three men from the city of Lutsk in Volhynia in Western Ukraine were sentenced to death by the Ukrainian Supreme Court. The appeal for commutation of the sentence was rejected. Two men in the city of Horodenko in the Ivano-Frankivsk oblast in Western Ukraine were similarly sentenced. Formed in 1942, the UPA defended the Ukrainian population during the war and at the same time carried on an armed struggle against the Red Army. It survived into the fifties; its leader, General Taras Chuprynka, was killed by MVD troops in 1950. His son is presently in a labor camp.

## Urge to Mark Solidarity Day

Information from Ukraine received at the end of last year concerned the arrest and sentencing in Kiev of four persons accused of posting leaflets which urged their countrymen to observe the Day of Solidarity with Ukrainian Political Prisoners, which falls on January 12. The leaflets read simply: "Countrymen! January 12—Day of the Ukrainian Political Prisoner. Observe it." The four defendants were Serhy Naboka, a journalist, accused of writing and disseminating "slandorous" poetry and articles; Leonid Milyavsky, a translator, accused of disseminating the leaflets and other litera-

COUNTRYMEN! JANUARY 12—DAY OF THE UKRAINIAN  
POLITICAL PRISONER. OBSERVE IT.

—Leaflet in Kiev

ture; Larysa Lohvytska, a mathematician, accused of writing articles and keeping a diary of slanderous contents, as well as praising the activity of the Polish Solidarity union and of criticizing Soviet involvement in Afghanistan; Inna Chernyavska, indoctrinologist, accused of co-authoring with Miss Lohvytska an article with unacceptable views to the authorities. The four were also accused of preparing a manifesto about the Soviet Union's internal policies and titled "Perspectives on Filling the Spiritual Vacuum of Soviet Society." At the trial Naboka requested that the proceedings be conducted in Ukrainian, but his request was rejected. All four pleaded not guilty and defended their actions: they refused to appeal the verdict. Milyavsky is confined in a camp in the Kherson oblast in southern Ukraine. (This particular camp was recently the scene of an inmate revolt to protest the poor quality of the food and the brutalities of the administration; several buildings were set on fire and one guard was killed. Army units were called in and eventually crushed the revolt.) The other three prisoners are in other camps in various parts of Ukraine. The KBG has begun harassing their families and witnesses at their trial who spoke up for the defendants. In related news, authorities in Kiev have launched a campaign of mass recruitment of police informers among the population. Residents of the city have received postcards asking them to report anonymously any violations of public order or "rules of socialist life." The appeal to inform on fellow citizens recalls Stalinist practices.

## Appeals and Protests

Writings of political prisoners protesting their sentences, treatment in the camps, and the national and political situation in Ukraine continue to arrive in the West. The following is a brief sample:

Yury Badzyo. Serving a 7-year prison sentence for writing a lengthy theoretical analysis of Soviet policies in Ukraine. Last year on the occasion of the elections in France, Badzyo sent a letter to French communist party leaders, pointing out the deceit of Soviet "democracy" and calling attention (see below) to the total absence of political freedoms in the USSR. The letter also announced Badzyo's three-day hunger strike in protest against such policies.

I am announcing a three-day hunger strike to call to the attention of the communists and workers of France and of all of French society the absence of political freedoms in the Soviet Union, the violation of human rights and the right of nations to self-determination, the cruel persecution of persons for criticizing party policies—especially for criticizing the great-power policy of russification—and to the total undermining of the historical, national, and political individuality of the non-Russian nations of the USSR.

Vyacheslav Chornovil. Serving a 5-year prison term, the famous Ukrainian dissident continues to turn out protests and appeals calling attention to his treatment by authorities and to the lawlessness pervading the Soviet legal and political system. In 1981 he sent a letter to the Communist Party Congress, in which he admits being the editor of the clandestine *Ukrainian Herald* in the early 70's and defends his joining the Ukrainian Helsinki Group. He accuses the Soviet regime of persecuting Ukrainian patriots and writes:

"Having devoted 20 years of my life to legal opposition to the social and national policies of the Soviet Communist Party and having, consequently, endured extreme hardship, I now find myself in the position of an eternal prisoner beyond the pale of the law. Under present conditions I can find no other way out but to demand my release and the permission to emigrate from the USSR, where not even the slightest possibility for literary creativity or political activity exists for me."

Elsewhere in the letter Chornovil calls himself a "hostage" of the Communist Party of the USSR and announces a hunger strike to protest his status.

In another protest Chornovil describes the forcible termination of his hunger strike by camp authorities and ironically states his envy of IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands:

"I envy Robert Sands. Under "socialist democracy" the world's press would have had no chance to report his hunger strike. He would have had his wrists tied together and a rubber tube put down his throat. And if, despite all this, he would have died, they would have buried him without a word, like an unknown man."

Ivan Hel. Serving a 15-year prison sentence in a Perm camp, the 45-year-old dissident last year sent an appeal to the UN Commission on Human Rights discussing the violations in Ukraine. In the appeal Hel states that Ukraine is a colony of Russia, lacking sovereignty, where even such matters as the transfer of prisoners is referred to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Moscow. Hel describes his longing to be in Ukraine and the psychological torture of being deprived of his homeland and of any contact with his countrymen.

- The banned traditional blue-and-yellow Ukrainian flag flew from the Communist Party office in Dnipropetrovsk last November. Dissidents had unfurled the flag along with a poster which read: "We are in solidarity with all those who are against you." The poster and banned flag were on display overnight and then removed in the morning by officials. A massive police investigation was subsequently conducted with special KGB squads sent from Kiev.

- Literary critic and scholar Ivan Svitlychny, currently in internal exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda," suffered a stroke last December just four months after surgery to remove a blood clot in his brain, leaving his left side partially paralyzed. Following the stroke he underwent emergency brain surgery and several of his fingers had to be amputated. Amnesty International has called for his immediate release, so has the Canadian House of Commons in a May 20 resolution. Svitlychny was one of a group of intellectuals who headed the revival of public and cultural life in Ukraine in the 60's. He was arrested in 1972 and sentenced to 7 years of labor camps.

- For the last year reports of workers' strikes in Ukraine continue to reach the West. Strikes occurred last year for almost two days at a machine construction plant in Kiev and at a nearby water main plant. In both cases the workers returned to their jobs after the administration satisfied their demands. In August workers at a Kiev motorcycle plant struck to protest cuts in piecework rates and bonuses. After the existing wage rates were restored, the workers returned to their jobs. Disturbances throughout Ukraine have also been reported in connection with food shortages and rationing. One such mass disturbance reportedly occurred in Ivano-Frankivsk and in a city near Kiev at the beginning of last year. In Ivano-Frankivsk several thousand people marched in the streets demanding availability of food products. The next day officials promised that more food would be available in city stores.

- Excerpts from the Lithuanian underground newsletter *Morning Star*: "Toil, misery, eternal cold and hunger, endless degradation have brought closer together the fighters of both nations. Even today former Lithuanian prisoners who have remained alive recall with kind words their Ukrainian brothers in suffering. Ukrainians have also not forgotten Lithuanians. A common struggle against a common enemy, a common lack of freedom has brought our peoples closer together than any Soviet political propaganda with its 'friendship of Soviet people.'"

- Ukrainian representatives of the only existing Ukrainian cultural organization in Poland have been demanding more rights from the Warsaw government. In the framework of the general political crisis in Poland, Ukrainians, who constitute the largest national minority in Poland, have demanded more cultural rights, such as an increase in Ukrainian choral and dance ensembles and increased circulation of Ukrainian publications. In March the Ukrainian-language weekly *Nashe Slovo* resumed publication after a 12-week interruption of activities by the military regime.

- Reliable information from Ukraine states that Yury Shukhevych, son of UPA General Taras Chuprynka who died in battle with Russian MVD troops in 1950, has become blind while serving his 11-year prison sentence...Ukrainian Orthodox priest Vasyl Romanyuk has written to the Archbishop of Canterbury asking him for help in emigrating from the USSR...Staunch Ukrainian nationalist and former political prisoner Bohdan Rebyk has thanked the Denver chapter of Amnesty International for letters of support. Almost blind, he is in need of a pair of reading glasses...In March a young Ukrainian couple rammed their car through the gates of the American Embassy in Moscow. Consular officers later persuaded the couple, who were from Lviv in Western Ukraine, to take their grievance to the Soviet prosecutor general's office. Their names and grievances were not disclosed.



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P. O. Box 142M22  
Ijamsville, Md. 21754  
U.S.A.