

*Helsinki Human Rights Day*

Vins, Levko Lukyanenko, Shagen and Eduard Arutyunyan, Robert Nazarym, Viktor Rtskhiladze, Anatoly Shcharansky, Viktor Nekipelov, Yaroslav Lesiv, Vasyl Striltsir, Vitaly Kalynychenko, Yuri Lytvyn, Oles Berdnyk, Petro and Vasyl Sichko, and Grigory Goldshtein.

The persecution of these individuals for their brave actions has been amply documented, and their sacrifice represents a trust and obligation on the part of western democracies to fulfil the trust imparted by the Helsinki monitors, and to ensure that their sacrifices have not been in vain by using every possible means to ensure that the Eastern Bloc nations live up to the commitments they agreed to in the Final Act.

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Once again, the importance of this document has been demonstrated by the willingness of these individuals to undergo persecution, arrest and imprisonment in the cause of the Helsinki Accords principles.

Of course, no discussion or debate of the importance of the Final Act would be complete without discussion of the reasons for the necessity of such an agreement. In the time available to me I could not begin to delve with any depth into the morass of human rights violations which occur behind the Iron Curtain, in Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, as well as the absolute atrocities committed in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan.

I cannot begin to describe the persecution and repression suffered by the Ukrainian Catholic Church. The Church has some four million followers in Ukraine yet has been outlawed. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church has also suffered from such repression and has been forced to become part of the Russian Orthodox Church which is under state control. But to attempt to detail the extent of that persecution in the time available would be impossible.

Some specific cases of human rights violations include: Vera Lipinskaya and Anatoly Ponomaryov, who dared to write complaints to government authorities; Teovils Kuma, who handed out religious leaflets and Anatoly Lupynos, who read his poetry at a public meeting honouring a Ukrainian national poet. All of these acts were labelled "socially dangerous", and were grounds for the commitment of these individuals to the Gulag or psychiatric hospitals.

Then there is Alexei Nikitin, a coal miner in the City of Donetsk, in Ukraine, a hard worker and popular with his co-workers. Nikitin took the complaints of his co-workers to his trade union leadership and to the director of the mine. These complaints were rejected, and Nikitin was eventually incarcerated in a local mental hospital, even though he had no history nor signs of psychiatric illness. Later, a mine explosion occurred, and several miners were killed. When Nikitin was released, in desperation he spoke to American journalists about the problems of Soviet coal miners, and within days, Nikitin was again incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital and

eventually was transferred to a special psychiatric hospital near the Chinese-Afghanistan border. He is still there.

At this point it is important to note the extent to which the Soviet Union uses the psychiatric commitment as a convenient instrument of policy. It enables Soviet authorities to substitute psychiatrists' judgment for sentencing in a trial or to avoid a trial altogether. It enables the Government to keep dissidents incarcerated for an indefinite length of time and allows the regime to claim that Soviet citizens who express dissatisfaction with the system are simply mentally ill.

It would be forgivable if those of us who are uninitiated to the Soviet system assumed that when dissidents were committed on psychiatric grounds they were merely incarcerated indefinitely. However, the true facts are much more horrifying. Many dissidents must undergo what amounts to torture while in such hospitals. Dissenters are often given insulin shock therapy or the drug Sulfazin, which causes great physical discomfort, a raging fever so intense that the patient is virtually incapacitated for up to three days after the injection. Any psychiatrist who might dare to rebel against such abuse has all the incentive, he or she needs to stay in line when they contemplate the example of Dr. Anatoly Koryagin of Karkow. Koryagin was a consultant to a committee formed several years ago to fight psychiatric abuse. He had the opportunity to examine Alexei Nikitin, whom I discussed earlier, and published his findings in a British medical journal. He was subsequently arrested and sentenced to a work camp. He was then transferred to Christopol Prison, where he remains today.

This is the battle we are fighting and the Helsinki Accord have provided us with a forum, in the CSCE conferences, to focus world attention and international pressure on those who are responsible for these acts of persecution and repression. The Helsinki monitoring groups through their reports have provided and continue to supply the West with ammunition in the form of substantiated human rights violations. They must never be betrayed by failure on the part of the western democracies to use this hard-won information to pressure the offending Governments at every opportunity and with every means at our disposal to comply with the commitment they made in the Final Act of the conference on security and co-operation in Europe. It is our duty, as a free and democratic society, to speak out for those who cannot be heard through the blanket of silence imposed by the Iron Curtain. I believe the importance of the accords have been clearly established, both in the history of the human rights movement, and the catalyst they have provided to oppressed peoples.

The next step is to strengthen the CSCE process by every means available in order to increase pressure for reform in those nations which have ignored their commitments. By designating August 1 as Helsinki Human Rights Day, we will send a clear message of Canada's commitment to the accords and to the principles embodied in that agreement. It will put those countries who have a record of human rights abuses on notice that Canada will continue to press for compliance with the Final Act commitments. Finally, it will help to raise public