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# **Political Abuse of Psychiatry in the USSR**

## **An Amnesty International Briefing**



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POLITICAL ABUSE OF PSYCHIATRY IN THE USSR

An Amnesty International Briefing

FOREWORD

Over many years Amnesty International has learned of cases in which Soviet citizens have been put in psychiatric institutions against their will for peacefully exercising their human rights in ways disapproved of by the Soviet authorities, and not for genuine medical reasons.

In a report published in 1975 called Prisoners of Conscience in the USSR: their Treatment and Conditions Amnesty International said that it knew in detail of some 120 cases of such psychiatric abuse since January 1969. In 1980 Amnesty International issued a second, completely revised edition of the above report in which it referred to a further 100 individuals who were known to have been forcibly confined for political and not genuine medical reasons, between June 1975 and May 1979. As of January 1983 Amnesty International had learned of another 85 cases of Soviet psychiatric abuse since May 1979.

The attached briefing paper documents developments in the Soviet use of psychiatry for political purposes over the last five years.

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the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes has also been a target for official suppression. By February 1981 all six of its active members, including the psychiatrist Dr. Anatoly Koryagin, had been arrested. The six are now serving terms of up to 12 years' imprisonment and internal exile on charges of "circulating anti-Soviet slander" and "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" and Amnesty International has adopted them as prisoners of conscience.

Official Procedures for Confining Soviet Citizens to Psychiatric Hospitals against their Will

Two formal procedures are most commonly used to commit individuals to mental hospitals against their will: the civil and the criminal. There is also a third procedure whereby individuals convicted of a criminal offence may be transferred from their place of imprisonment to a psychiatric hospital.

Most of the 110 individuals forcibly confined since August 1977, whom Amnesty International has identified as prisoners of conscience, were confined under the civil procedure to ordinary psychiatric hospitals, sometimes on more than one occasion during this period. Nineteen were committed under the criminal procedure to special psychiatric hospitals, which constitute the most severe form of psychiatric detention and are intended for people who "represent a special danger to society".

Both the civil and the criminal commitment procedures make it easy for dissenters to be confined arbitrarily, and difficult for them to defend themselves through legal means.

The civil commitment procedure is applicable to people who have not committed criminal offences. It is laid down in a directive called "On Emergency Confinement of Mentally Ill Persons who Represent a Social Danger", issued on 26 August 1971 by the USSR Ministry of Health. The text of this directive is not published in any easily available Soviet publication.

The directive states that mentally ill people may be confined to a psychiatric hospital without their permission or that of their family if they are an "evident danger" to themselves or to others. The police are authorised to assist with an emergency confinement if there is a "possibility" that the individual will resist, or if his or her family opposes confinement.

The directive lists a number of symptoms which are to serve as criteria for forcible confinement. This list has been criticised by foreign psychiatrists and opponents of psychiatric abuse within the USSR because of the obscurity and lack of medical precision of the symptoms listed. The terms are so elastic as to cover almost any non-conformist behaviour. The directive does not give even a rough explanation of what is meant by "social danger". Moreover, it advises those applying the procedure that any of the listed conditions of mental illness "may be accompanied by externally correct behaviour and dissimulation". This gives added scope for the wrongful confinement of peaceful citizens.

According to this procedure the doctor who first orders the confinement must send a report to the psychiatric hospital and within one day of being confined the individual must be examined by a commission of three psychiatrists who decide whether the confinement should be prolonged. On being discharged the released person must be put on a "special list" and receive "systematic preventive treatment" from the local psychiatric dispensary.

Violations of these regulations are common. Frequently the relatives of the confined person have not been informed within 24 hours of what has happened. Often the individuals have been confined after being picked up in the street or at their place of work, without first being examined by a psychiatrist. In many cases dissenters have not been examined by a psychiatric commission within one day of being detained; in a number of cases they have not had any psychiatric examination at all.

Neither the courts nor any other judicial agency is involved in the civil commitment procedure. The regulations do not indicate any right of the confined person to have access to a lawyer. Amnesty International knows of no case in which a dissenter confined in this way has been permitted to see a lawyer. Outside the psychiatric service only the police are given a formal role under these procedures and they are administered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Moreover, retention on the lists of local psychiatric dispensaries makes dissenters particularly vulnerable to re-confinement.

The criminal procedure for compulsory confinement is applicable to those who have been accused of a criminal offence, and whose mental health is called into question. The procedure is laid down in the code of criminal procedure of each union republic of the USSR.

Under this procedure the accused loses virtually all of his or her procedural rights and is left only with the passive right to an honest psychiatric examination and a fair court hearing.

It is the investigator (who may be from the Procuracy, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, or the Committee of State Security) who decides whether the accused should undergo psychiatric examination. The accused is then sent for examination by a forensic psychiatric commission. If the commission finds that for reasons of mental illness the suspect is "not accountable" for his or her offence, it submits this finding to a court together with a recommendation as to what medical measures should be taken with regard to the individual. Instead of a trial there is a court hearing in which the court decides three questions: (a) whether the individual has committed a socially dangerous action; (b) whether to accept the commission's findings on the individual's "accountability"; and (c) what measures to apply.

Throughout these stages of the procedure the accused need not be informed that an examination is to be carried out "if his mental state makes this impossible". The accused also has no right to know the results of the examination or the recommendations of the psychiatrists.

Furthermore the accused loses the right to be informed of any fresh charges brought against him or her, to be told the results of the criminal investigation of the case or to be shown the materials compiled in the investigation. Nor does the accused have any special right to have visits from relatives. Normally dissenters undergoing psychiatric examination have no visits from their families until after the cases have been heard in court, usually between six and 12 months after the arrest. Lastly, the accused has no right to be present at the court hearing of his or her case. This is left to the discretion of the court. In very few cases have prisoners of conscience been permitted to attend the hearing which ruled on whether or not they were accountable.

In one of the few procedural guarantees given to the accused person whose mental health is in question, the law states that participation of a defence counsel is "mandatory" at the court hearing. However, this provision of the law is often violated. It is common for prisoners of conscience who have undergone psychiatric diagnosis, and their families to be denied access to their lawyers and to have no say in their selection.

Soviet courts in political cases almost invariably accept not only the findings of the forensic psychiatric commissions, but also their recommendations as to what should be done with the accused.

The court has three options open to it: it may order that the accused be put in the care of a guardian; that he or she be confined for an indefinite period to an ordinary psychiatric hospital; or that he or she may be confined indefinitely to a special psychiatric hospital.

Putting the accused in the care of relatives or a guardian does not involve incarceration. In no political case known to Amnesty International has a court exercised this option. This is especially significant when the subject is not even accused of a violent offence - as in virtually all the cases cited in this report. The other two alternatives involve compulsory in-patient confinement. According to the RSFSR Criminal Code, ordinary psychiatric hospitals are intended for those who have not committed especially dangerous crimes; special psychiatric hospitals are designated for people who "represent a special danger to society". It has been common for Soviet courts to order that dissenters be confined to special psychiatric hospitals even when there is no record of violence on their part, and no evidence has been produced by psychiatrists or the courts to show that they represented a "special danger" to society.

#### "Social Danger" as a Prerequisite for Compulsory Confinement

Despite the lack of safeguards implicit in the civil and criminal commitment procedures, in one important respect they both offer a protection which, if respected by the authorities, would at least make wrongful confinement of political and religious dissenters rare. Under both procedures, even if individuals are diagnosed as mentally ill they may be confined only if they are shown to be dangerous to themselves or to others.

In hundreds of cases of forcible confinement of dissenters to psychiatric hospitals there has been no suggestion, even by the authorities, that the subjects were physically violent or dangerous to themselves or others. In their persistent denials of political abuses of psychiatry Soviet officials, propagandists and spokesmen for the psychiatric profession have not addressed themselves to this elementary principle of psychiatric practice, insisting invariably that well-known non-conformists who had been confined were mentally ill but rarely attempting to show that they were in any way "violent" or "dangerous".

Dr Anatoly Koryagin, a Soviet psychiatrist who has actively opposed the political abuse of psychiatry in his country, addresses this question in an article called "Unwilling Patients", published in The Lancet (London) in April 1981. From December 1979 to February 1981, Dr Koryagin worked as a consultant to the unofficial Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes, based in Moscow. During that time he examined 15 people of known non-conformist views who had been forcibly confined to psychiatric hospitals, and concluded that in no case was compulsory confinement justified on medical grounds. In February 1981 he was imprisoned on a charge of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". In his article he writes:

"The clinical meaning of the term 'socially dangerous' is that the person is in danger of committing acts which endanger his own health or that of people around him (such as murder, suicide, and personal injury). There was no question of the people I examined being dangerous in this sense. It must be clearly stated that each time a decision was taken to put into hospital the people under discussion, the clinical meaning of "socially dangerous" was replaced (consciously or unconsciously?) by its judicial meaning - i.e. that the patient was capable of harming the social system as a whole."

#### Recent Evidence of Political Abuse of Psychiatry in the USSR

Since the Sixth Congress of the WPA met in 1977 allegations of Soviet psychiatric abuse have been substantiated by a number of victims of the practice who have emigrated from the USSR. Some have been met by foreign psychiatrists and given detailed accounts of their treatment. In 1979, for example, Major General Petro Grigorenko underwent psychiatric examination in New York.

Petro Grigorenko, who was formerly a commanding officer in the Soviet Army, was arrested in 1969 following public speeches he made in support of the movement of Crimean Tatars deported during the Second World War to return to the Crimea. He was ruled not responsible and then spent five years forcibly confined to special psychiatric hospitals under criminal procedures, until he was released in 1974. One Soviet psychiatrist who challenged the official diagnosis made of Grigorenko's mental condition, Dr Semyon Gluzman, was himself arrested in 1972 and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and internal exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda".

The team of psychiatrists and psychologists who examined Major General Grigorenko in New York in 1979 included the President of the American Psychiatric Association, Professor Alan Stone. The team concluded:

"In reviewing our tests, interviews and examinations, we could find no evidence of mental illness in Grigorenko ... Nor could we find evidence in 'his' history consistent with mental illness in the past." (New York Times Magazine 13 May 1979).

In 1980 another former victim of psychiatric abuse emigrated from the USSR. He was Evgeny Nikolaev, a 43-year-old linguist. During the ten years leading up to his emigration he had been forcibly confined to psychiatric hospitals on five separate occasions, in the absence of any evidence that he was "socially dangerous". After his fourth confinement he voluntarily underwent an independent examination in 1977 by the Moscow psychiatrist Dr Alexander Voloshanovich, an active opponent of psychiatric abuse. Dr Voloshanovich concluded that there were no medical grounds to justify his forcible confinement either then or previously. Nevertheless, in February 1978 Evgeny Nikolaev was taken from his home and re-confined under civil procedures to Moscow's Kashchenko ordinary psychiatric hospital, for a period of seven months. His confinement took place one month after he had helped form an unofficial trade union in Moscow. Contrary to the regulations governing compulsory confinement, he was given no preliminary psychiatric examination; no team of doctors visited him within 24 hours to decide whether prolongation of confinement was justified; and he was not examined by a monthly medical commission. While in the hospital Evgeny Nikolaev reports that he was treated with tablets of aminazin and haloperidol, and after an exercise book of his hospital diary notes had been confiscated, he was punished with injections of stelazin and cycladol. Doctors in charge of his case reportedly asked him if he "still had ideas about reforming society?" and told him "You can forget about Honolulu and Helsinki". Throughout his confinement, members of the unofficial Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes and of the Moscow Helsinki monitoring group addressed appeals for his immediate release to the director of the hospital, and visited hospital staff to discuss his case. On 29 May 1978 Evgeny Nikolaev's wife appealed to the World Psychiatric Association to intervene and secure his release. Mr Nikolaev was let out of the Kashchenko hospital on 12 September 1978.

Since he left the Soviet Union Evgeny Nikolaev has compiled a 54 page account of his psychiatric confinements, partly based on contemporaneous notes he made in the Kashchenko psychiatric hospital in 1978. He was first confined in September 1970 when, as a researcher in the All-Union Institute for Scientific Research into Disinfection and Sterilisation, he refused to take part in compulsory political meetings to honour the one hundredth anniversary of Lenin's birth. He was committed under civil procedures to Moscow's ordinary psychiatric hospital No. 15 where he remained until January 1971. On his release he was retained on the list of a psychiatric dispensary. One month later he was re-confined under the civil procedure and remained in ordinary psychiatric hospitals in Moscow region for 17 months, with only a six week interval, when he was temporarily discharged. He was finally released in July 1972. During these two confinements Evgeny Nikolaev reports that his examining doctors questioned him about his political beliefs and urged him to change his opinions. In February 1974 Evgeny Nikolaev was once again arrested, two days after a group of Soviet Germans who had come to Moscow to demonstrate for their right to emigrate had spent the night at his flat. He was put in the Kashchenko psychiatric hospital and released after three months.

In the summer of 1980 Vladimir Borisov, another victim of the political abuse of psychiatry, was expelled from the Soviet Union. Before his emigration Vladimir Borisov, an electrician and campaigner against violations of human rights, had spent a total of nine years in forcible psychiatric confinement, despite protests from his wife and family that he was not mentally ill. Borisov, who is now 49 years old, was first arrested in Leningrad in 1964 in connection with organising an unofficial group of young socialists. He was charged with "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" but was ruled not-responsible for his actions. A court ordered him to be forcibly confined to a special psychiatric hospital, where he remained for three years. After he was released, he became a founding member of the unofficial Initiative Group for the Defence of Human Rights in the USSR, in 1969, and was a signatory to a letter which the group sent to the United Nations appealing for the release of victims of psychiatric abuse, in particular Major General Petro Grigorenko referred to above, who at that time was forcibly confined in a special psychiatric hospital. Seven of the Initiative Group's members were arrested on a charge of "circulating anti-Soviet slander", among them Vladimir Borisov. He was subsequently ruled not-responsible and despite the lack of any evidence to show that he was socially dangerous, re-confined to Leningrad Special Psychiatric hospital under the criminal procedure, where he remained for five years until his release in 1974. At the time of his second confinement his wife, Irina Kaplun, herself a prominent campaigner against the violation of human rights, protested to a psychiatrist that Borisov was not mentally ill. She was told: "Maybe, he was unlucky; he is down on our register. What may be a symptom of opinions in a normal person is a sign of illness in your husband". Vladimir Borisov himself was told by a psychiatrist: "Listen Borisov, you're a normal fellow and I am sure that you don't want to be sent to a madhouse. Why don't you change your views?" At the end of March 1980 Vladimir Borisov was once again committed to a psychiatric hospital in Leningrad, on this occasion under the civil procedure. He was discharged on 3 May and one month later was arrested and deported from the country.

In April 1978 a member of the British Royal College of Psychiatrists, Dr. Gary Low-Bear, visited Moscow and at their own request examined nine Soviet citizens of known non-conformist views, who feared that the authorities might put them in psychiatric hospitals against their will. Eight of the group had already been forcibly confined on previous occasions. Dr. Low-Bear was denied access to a tenth individual, Evgeny Nikolaev, who had also requested an independent examination. Mr Nikolaev was at that time confined to the Kashchenko ordinary psychiatric hospital in Moscow. In a report made to the British Royal College of Psychiatrists in May 1978, after his visit, Dr Low-Bear said:

"I examined the nine cases in the course of three days. In my opinion none of these cases showed any evidence of mental illness. Five of them were completely healthy. Four showed minor abnormalities only. The criteria for normality were unusually high: minor depression or gestures of despair due to family separation of long-standing being considered 'abnormal'. In no cases were these abnormalities sufficiently pronounced to justify compulsory treatment either at the time of examination or at any previous time. In my professional opinion, therefore, these people must have been detained in psychiatric hospitals for reasons other than psychiatric illness."

Three of those examined by Dr. Low-Bear; - Yury Belov, Vladimir Borisov and Vladimir Gershuni, - were all re-confined in ordinary psychiatric hospitals for several weeks in 1979 and 1980. Yury Belov and Vladimir Borisov have subsequently emigrated from the Soviet Union. Vladimir Gershuni, 52, who is an editor of an unofficial cultural journal, Poiski (Searches), and a member of SMOT, an independent trade union grouping in the Soviet Union, was re-arrested on 16 June 1982. He is currently awaiting trial on a charge of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda".

Since 1977 fresh evidence about the political abuse of psychiatry has come not only from former victims and foreign psychiatrists, but also from members of the Soviet psychiatric profession. One psychiatrist who has spoken out against such practices is Dr. Yury Novikov, who, until he left the USSR in June 1977, was the first secretary of the Association of Soviet psychiatrists, and for six years headed a section of the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry in Moscow. In 1978 he made a public statement in which he said:

"Political abuses of psychiatry take place in the USSR. It is not the scale of this that matters, but the fact that it exists. The abuse of psychiatry for political purposes is a horrible and brutal practice, even were it limited to one person. There can be no doubt that psychiatric knowledge is abused in the USSR. There have been so many witnesses to this before me. I can only confirm that this is so."

Dr. Novikov also stated that the psychiatric diagnoses of certain prominent prisoners of conscience, including Major General Pyotr Grigorenko, had been falsified in the early 1970's in order to conceal the fact of their wrongful confinement from foreign psychiatrists and journalists visiting the Serbsky Institute.

In February 1980 another Soviet psychiatrist, Dr. Alexander Voloshanovich, emigrated from the Soviet Union. Dr. Voloshanovich was a member of the All-Union Society of Neurologists and Psychiatrists and had practised in hospitals in the Moscow region for 10 years, until he resigned from his post in 1979 in protest against instances of the political abuse of psychiatry which he had witnessed. During the three years leading up to his emigration Dr. Voloshanovich collaborated with the unofficial Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes, which was formed in Moscow in 1977. From January 1977 until February 1980 Dr Voloshanovich personally examined 40 Soviet citizens of known non-conformist views who feared that the authorities might intern or re-intern them in psychiatric hospitals. The 40 included members of unofficial trade union groups, a "dissenting" Baptist, members of the Russian Orthodox Church and others. He concluded that none was in need of compulsory confinement and publicised his conclusions at a press conference in Moscow in August 1978.

He was joined as a consultant to the Working Commission in December 1979 by a psychiatrist from the Kharkov Regional Psycho-Neurological Clinic in the Ukraine, Dr. Anatoly Koryagin. In the next twelve months Dr. Koryagin examined at their own request a further 15 victims of psychiatric abuse, who included a citizen who had tried to cross the Soviet border without official permission; individuals who had renounced their Soviet citizenship; and an individual who was put in mental hospital after complaining about his dismissal from work on a collective farm. In an article entitled "Unwilling Patients" which was published abroad in the British medical journal The Lancet in April 1981, Dr. Koryagin wrote:

"All the people I examined had joined the ranks of the mentally ill because they did or said things which in our country are considered 'anti-Soviet' ... These people were involved with the psychiatric service, although when I examined them they showed no signs of psychiatric illness, psychic defects or psychopathy."

Dr Koryagin publicised the conclusions of his examinations at a press conference in Moscow in January 1981, and was arrested the following month. He was subsequently sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment and internal exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda".

The principles established by the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry in Moscow have an important place in Soviet psychiatric method. Particularly relevant to psychiatric abuse are the theories of Dr. A. V. Snezhnevsky, a leading psychiatrist at the Institute and a member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Dr Snezhnevsky's concept of "sluggish schizophrenia" - a mental illness with no visible symptoms - has been used in psychiatric diagnoses which have secured the compulsory confinement of scores of known dissenters since the 1960's. Dr. Snezhnevsky has repeatedly denied that Soviet citizens have been wrongfully confined for political or any other reasons. In August 1973 he said in response to complaints of psychiatric abuses that "In 50 years of work in the Soviet public health service I know of no case in which a healthy man was put in a psychiatric hospital."

A statement which tended to corroborate the complaints, however, was made by the Chief Psychiatrist of the Soviet Ministry of Health, Dr. Zoya Serebryakova. Speaking at a congress of Soviet psychiatrists in Moscow in May 1981, she presented statistics about the inmates of one unidentified psychiatric hospital in the capital. According to her report, which was circulated in advance of the congress, around 90% of the inmates were confined because of "worsening long-term mental illnesses". Another 8% had been committed because they had shown themselves to be socially dangerous. In this category were classed individuals with suicidal tendencies, those who threatened others, or those who had shown "lapses of sexual restraint". 1.2% of the hospital inmates, however, were confined because they had presented "groundless" and "slanderous" complaints against the Government. The report gave no indication that these individuals had shown themselves to be mentally ill or socially dangerous before confinement.

In recent years there has also been evidence that Dr. Snezhnevsky's theories are being challenged within the Soviet psychiatric profession on the grounds that they open the door to abuses. In 1979 an article written by Dr. Eteiy Kazanets, a colleague of Dr. Snezhnevsky's at the Serbsky

Institute, was published by the American Medical Association in Archives of General Psychiatry in which the author said that "the criteria of the Snejhevsky school are over-extended". Upon analyzing the case histories of 300 psychiatric patients, Dr. Kazanets concluded that many were "incorrectly diagnosed" or "over-diagnosed". He went on to suggest that "many long-standing diagnoses need revision" and concluded that "over-diagnosis" and long retention of patients on psychiatric out-patient lists "constitute a real threat to their individual rights". After his article was published abroad Dr. Kazanets was dismissed from his post at the Serbsky Institute. His article is not known to have been published officially in the Soviet Union.

By far the most prolific new evidence of political abuse of psychiatry has come from individuals within the USSR concerned with the protection of human rights. Since 1977 the reporting of A Chronicle of Current Events and other individual human rights' activists has been supplemented by detailed documentation produced by the Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes, formed in January 1977. The Working Commission was set up as a branch of the unofficial Moscow Helsinki monitoring group, and had as one of its founding members Alexander Podrabinek, who was then a 23-year-old medical assistant in Moscow's public ambulance service. (The ambulance service frequently carries out forcible confinements under civil procedures.) Before joining the Commission Mr Podrabinek had made a three year independent study of allegations of psychiatric abuse, in the course of which he travelled to psychiatric hospitals in various republics of the Soviet Union, interviewed staff and spoke with former patients. Part of his study was confiscated by KGB officials in March 1977, but the remainder was published in samizdat form in May 1977 under the title Punitive Medicine. The book, which is 265 pages long, is based on material collected from more than 200 victims of psychiatric abuse, confined for political rather than genuine medical reasons since the 1950's. It also includes a "Black List" of 102 Soviet doctors whom the author said had participated in psychiatric abuse, and analyzes aspects of the official confinement procedures which facilitate abuse.

The other founding members of the Working Commission were Vyacheslav Bakhmin, a computer specialist; Dr. Leonard Ternovsky, a radiologist at Moscow's Sechonov clinic; Felix Serebrov, a skilled metal-worker; and two long-standing campaigners against the abuse of human rights: Irina Kaplun (the wife of Vladimir Borisov, whose repeated confinements are mentioned above), and Dzhemma Babich from Leningrad. Within a year of its formation Irina Kaplun and Dzhemma Babich left the group. In 1980, another computer specialist from Moscow, Irina Grivnina, joined it.

The group outlined its threefold task as follows:

- "1. To publicise those cases where people are wrongfully confined in mental hospitals against their will, and to aid their speedy release.
2. To give help to people wrongfully put into mental hospitals and also to their families.
3. To assist in the general humanisation of conditions for people in psychiatric hospitals."

The group explained further:

"Here it is necessary to emphasise that the Commission does not claim that all the people whose release it is seeking have no psychic abnormalities and are completely healthy. (Working Commission's own emphasis - AI). The important thing is that they are in psychiatric hospitals for ideological reasons and not on the basis of medical evidence. The Commission considers compulsory confinement and forcible treatment as justified only in regard to people who have committed aggressive acts, or ill people whose psychic condition gives grounds for a doctor to presume they may commit acts dangerous to themselves or to others."

The Working Commission aims were stated in their Information Bulletin Number 9 (dated 9 June 1978). In its three years' existence the group produced 24 of these Information Bulletins, consisting of over 700 pages, in which they chronicled the cases of over 70 victims of psychiatric abuse; reported 260 further allegations of political abuse of psychiatry and highlighted the procedures involved in the punitive use of psychiatry. The group also wrote appeals to Soviet officials on behalf of individual people who had been confined, and published letters and accounts of their confinement written by victims who had been released. Friends and relatives of victims came frequently to Moscow to inform members of the Commission about individual cases, and the Commission's members supplemented this flow of information by trips to the provinces and visits to hospitals and courtrooms, in order to obtain information on the spot.

The scope and accuracy of the research carried out by the Working Commission was strengthened by the close collaboration of the psychiatrists, Dr. Alexander Voloshanovich and Dr. Anatoly Koryagin, and also of a lawyer, Sofia Kalistratova. Sofia Kalistratova, who is now 75 years old, was also a member of the now defunct Moscow Helsinki monitoring group. In the 1960's and early 1970's she acted as defence counsel in numerous political trials, and in 1970 defended Major General Grigorenko and the poet Natalya Gorbanevskaya at two separate trials. Both were subsequently confined to psychiatric hospitals against their will.

#### Recent Cases of Political Abuses of Psychiatry

Since August 1977 Amnesty International has learned of 110 persons who have been put in Soviet psychiatric hospitals against their will, in the absence of any evidence that they were dangerous or posed a physical threat to themselves or to others. The common feature of their forcible confinement is the direct link between their exercise of their human rights and the official decision to put them in a mental hospital. In many cases they were forcibly confined only after the authorities had tried to stop their activities by other means. Often their peaceful attempts to exercise their rights were in themselves officially interpreted by psychiatrists as symptoms of mental illness. Amnesty International regards these people as prisoners of conscience.

The following is a sample of the activities which led to their forcible confinement: renouncing Soviet citizenship (Mikhail Berozashvili, 1980); sending one's passport to President Brezhnev in

protest against official emigration procedures (Mikhail Uremov, 1981); holding a placard in Red Square, saying "I demand the right to emigrate" (Zita Salaseviciute, 1981); trying to cross the border out of the USSR without permission (Gerhard Buteris, 1979); arranging to meet a Swedish journalist (Yury Ternopolsky, 1981); preaching about the rational tradition of the Estonian Church (the pastor Vello Salum, 1981); distributing religious leaflets (the Seventh Day Adventist Anna Lapaeva, 1980); complaining to high officials about the standard of medical treatment given to her for chronic nephritis (Zita Kirsnauskaite, 1978); joining an unofficial Helsinki monitoring group (the Lithuanian psychiatrist Dr. Algirdas Statkevicius, 1980).

In some cases individuals who were known to have expressed dissenting views were put into mental hospitals for the duration of important public occasions. One such occasion was the staging of the Olympic Games in Moscow in the summer of 1980. Shortly before foreign visitors arrived to attend the Games in July, at least 10 known dissenters were forcibly confined to ordinary psychiatric hospitals for brief periods under civil procedures. All were released shortly after the Games were over. They included Valentin Smirnov, a non-conformist artist, who was put in Leningrad ordinary psychiatric hospital No. 5 on 1 June 1980 half an hour before an unofficial exhibition of his paintings opened, and Oksana Meshko, a 77-year-old member of the unofficial Ukrainian Helsinki monitoring group, and the mother of a former prisoner of conscience Oleksander Serhiyenko. Although she had no history of mental illness Oksana Meshko was forcibly confined to the psychiatric wing of a prison in the Ukrainian capital of Kiev on 12 June 1980 and told she would undergo "two months' examination". She was ruled to be responsible for her actions and released in September. One month later she was arrested on a charge of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" and is now serving a five year sentence of internal exile.

Other prisoners of conscience already in psychiatric institutions had their confinement prolonged until after the Games was over. One such was the Ukrainian Dr. Mykola Plakhotnyuk. He was arrested in Kiev in January 1972 on a charge of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" after he had written three open letters to high officials calling for the release of prominent Ukrainian prisoners of conscience who had recently been arrested. Psychiatrists diagnosed him as suffering from "schizophrenia and delusions of persecution" and for six years he was forcibly confined to special psychiatric hospitals. In 1978 he was transferred to an ordinary psychiatric hospital in the Ukrainian town of Smela, where at a regular examination in early 1979 doctors told him that "until the Olympic Games have taken place, there can be no rush [to discharge you]." Dr Plakhotnyuk was released in December 1980.

A simple indication of how psychiatric diagnoses have been used for political persecution is that often when Soviet citizens have associated together in activities which, though not illegal, were not approved of by the authorities, several of the participants have been officially diagnosed as mentally ill and forcibly confined to psychiatric hospitals - as though the group's participants were mentally ill en masse. The following are cases in point:

In autumn 1978 an unofficial trade union grouping called "SMOT" was formed in Moscow. Within three weeks one of its founding members, Valeria Novodvorskaya, was taken from her place of work and put in a psychiatric hospital. Since then, four more members have been confined under the civil procedure: Vladimir Borisov, Vladimir Gershuni, Alexander Vorona and Mikhail Zotov. (Four others were arrested, tried and sentenced to imprisonment or internal exile. Another five are currently awaiting trial.)

In October 1978 a commune of socialists calling itself the "Left Opposition Group" arranged to hold an unofficial youth congress in Leningrad. Three of the group's members were arrested, two of whom were sent for psychiatric examination. Arkady Tsurkov was ruled accountable for his actions and was later sentenced to seven years' imprisonment and internal exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". The leader of the group, Alexander Skobov, was ordered to be forcibly confined in a special psychiatric hospital.

In November 1978 Vladislav Bebko, a student, was arrested in Kuibyshev and charged with tearing down an official poster celebrating the October Revolution. He was later charged with "anti-Soviet slander" as well, after police confiscated tape recordings of foreign radio broadcasts and documents of the Czechoslovak human rights' group Charter 77. In March 1979 a court ordered him sent for an in-patient psychiatric examination. Later in the same month Anatoly Sarbayev and Viktor Ryzhov, two of Bebko's associates who had appeared as witnesses at the court hearing, were also confined to psychiatric hospitals in Kuibyshev.

In December 1981 two Estonian workers, Aiar Kume and Jaanus Pihelgas, were arrested while attempting to cross the Soviet border into Norway without official permission. Both men were subsequently ruled mentally ill and ordered to be confined to Leningrad special psychiatric hospital.

Unofficial human rights' groups in the USSR and former victims of psychiatric abuse have repeatedly complained that prisoners of conscience are exposed to harmful conditions when they are confined in psychiatric hospitals. Some are reported to have been treated with powerful neuroleptic drugs; in particular haloperidol, aminazin, and triflazin. In some cases these drugs have been given in excessive quantities without the necessary correctives and in disregard of contra-indications in the patient. In 1980 Vladimir Tsurikov, a 35-year-old worker from Krasnoyarsk circulated an account of his treatment in psychiatric hospital. Mr Tsurikov said that he was treated with two tablets of triflazin and aminazin three times a day, as well as five injections of sulfazin, after he was committed under the civil procedure to Krasnoyarsk ordinary psychiatric hospital in 1980, allegedly suffering from "emigrational delusions". Vladimir Tsurikov has been applying unsuccessfully to emigrate since 1974. After officials failed to persuade him to withdraw his application he was forcibly confined to Krasnoyarsk ordinary psychiatric hospital for three months of that year and reportedly treated with insulin, aminazin and sulfazin. In February 1979 he was reconfined for two and a half months after he had proposed Academician Andrei Sakharov as a candidate for the Supreme Soviet. On his release he underwent a voluntary psychiatric examination by Dr. Voloshanovich and Dr. Koryagin of the unofficial Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes. Both doctors concluded that he was not in need of compulsory confinement.

Nevertheless he was re-confined in the summer of 1980 in connection with his peaceful attempts to emigrate and was released on 4 August 1980, the day after the Olympic Games ended. He has described the treatment he received during his third confinement as follows:

"The triflazin made me writhe, and my legs began to twist about in a ridiculous way. I lost the ability to walk, while simultaneously feeling very restive and also feeling sharp pains in my buttocks at any movement - a result of the sulfazin. Fainting fits began, recurring very often: I fell and hit my head on the floor and on the brick walls. The pain prevented me sleeping or eating. The sulfazin made my temperature rise, and it then stayed around 40 degrees centigrade. Sometimes I experienced slight shivering and my tongue hung out ... This nightmare lasted a week, until I was invited to chat with some medical students. I couldn't walk, so I was carried. In the auditorium it turned out that I couldn't move my tongue. I was taken back and they began to give me anti-Parkinsonian drugs, which made me feel a bit better. I was still suffering from the sulfazin, and I had got much thinner, but at the next meeting with the students I was able to talk with them."

Some doctors are also reported to have administered drugs to prisoners of conscience in psychiatric hospitals as a form of punishment. For example, in December 1979 after a foreign radio station had publicised the case of 44-year-old Ivan Kareish who was forcibly confined in November 1979 after he had complained to high officials about his dismissal from work in a collective farm, doctors in Vitebsk Regional Psychiatric hospital reportedly subjected him to an intensive course of injections with neuroleptic drugs for a week. Other forms of punishment have included insulin-shock therapy and various forms of fixation and immobilisation. Some prisoners of conscience are reported to have been subjected to beatings, often severe ones. Reports of this form of punishment most often relate to special psychiatric hospitals, where convicted criminals serve as ward orderlies. In autumn 1980, for instance, Nikolai Baranov was incapacitated and confined to his bed for two months after a beating he received from hospital staff in Alma-Ata special psychiatric hospital. Nikolai Baranov, who is now in his forties, is a worker from Leningrad. He has been forcibly confined to special psychiatric hospitals for 14 years since he was arrested in 1968 on a charge of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" in connection with an appeal he wrote to the Swedish embassy, asking for help to emigrate.

Soviet prisoners of conscience are also known to have been pressurised by psychiatrists to renounce their beliefs as a condition for their release. In early 1979, for instance, doctors promised to transfer Voldemaras Karoliunas from Chernyakhovsk special psychiatric hospital to a less severe form of confinement in an ordinary psychiatric hospital. This transfer, however, did not take place. Doctors told his relatives that they were not satisfied with his behaviour, since Karoliunas, a Lithuanian Catholic, "is always praying and says he will live as God wants him to".

In 1980 Amnesty International received information that patients in Section 4 of the special psychiatric hospital in Chernyakhovsk had staged a revolt against medical staff. They were reportedly protesting against their treatment with heavy doses of neuroleptic drugs. The patients are

said to have seized members of the staff as hostages and barricaded themselves in a block. They released the hostages after a psychiatrist, Colonel Rybkin, had promised to investigate their complaints. Hospital orderlies are then reported to have burst into the block and beaten the patients as a result of which one patient lost an eye. Amnesty International knows of a number of prisoners of conscience who are confined in Chernyakhovsk special psychiatric hospital. None is reported to have been involved in the revolt.

Official Suppression of Evidence about Psychiatric Abuse

Since 1977, as before then, the Soviet authorities have imprisoned many people for the non-violent exercise of their human rights. Between October 1979 and October 1981 alone more than 500 Soviet citizens are known by Amnesty International to have been arrested in connection with the peaceful exercise of their human rights. A significant number of these prisoners of conscience were individuals who had independently monitored violations of human rights in their country and attempted to publicise their findings. At the time of writing this paper, for example, 32 members of unofficial Helsinki monitoring groups are currently serving terms of imprisonment or internal exile on account of these activities. Another one, the psychiatrist Dr. Algirdas Statkevicius who is a member of the Lithuanian Helsinki monitoring group, has been forcibly confined to Chernyakhovsk special psychiatric hospital since February 1980. In September 1982 the Moscow Helsinki monitoring group announced that it was closing down, explaining this by the arrests of so many of its members.

Among the targets of arrests have been individuals and groups who have specifically highlighted the continuing use of psychiatry for political purposes, which was condemned by the World Psychiatric Association in 1977. The unofficial Working Commission in Moscow, for example, became a target of official persecution within one month of its formation. In February 1977 one of its founding members, 52-year-old Felix Serebrov, was demoted from his job as a skilled lathe operator at the "Rassvet" factory. In April of that year he was informed that a criminal charge had been brought against him in connection with an alleged forgery in his work-book. He was tried in October and sentenced to one year's imprisonment under Article 196 of the RSFSR Criminal Code. The evidence available on his case indicates clearly that the charge against him was fabricated and that Felix Serebrov was imprisoned in connection with his involvement with the Working Commission. Amnesty International therefore adopted him as a prisoner of conscience.

The official harassment and arrest of the other members of the Working Commission swiftly followed Felix Serebrov's first imprisonment. In March 1977 KGB officials searched the Moscow flat of Alexander Podrabinek, another of the group's founding members, and confiscated the manuscript of his book Puritive Medicine. Nevertheless an incomplete version of the manuscript was sent abroad in the summer of that year, which included a postscript by Mr Podrabinek, calling on the Sixth Congress of the WPA to establish an international committee to investigate

individual cases of political abuse of psychiatry. In May 1978 Alexander Podrabinek was arrested in connection with circulating this manuscript, and was charged with "circulating anti-Soviet slander". In August of that year a Moscow court sentenced him to five years' internal exile.

He began his sentence in the Irkutsk region of eastern Siberia before being transferred in 1979 to Krasnoyarsk Autonomous Republic. While in internal exile he continued his work for the Commission, contributing appeals on behalf of individual prisoners of conscience confined in psychiatric hospitals against their will, and in November 1979 writing to the Minister of Internal Affairs for the USSR to ask that patients in special psychiatric hospitals be paid for their work at rates in keeping with the provisions of the Constitution of the USSR. In June 1980 Alexander Podrabinek was re-arrested in internal exile, once again on a charge of "circulating anti-Soviet slander". In January 1981 a court sentenced him to a further three years' imprisonment in a corrective labour colony. Mr Podrabinek is now confined in a corrective labour colony in the Yakutsk ASSR, and is reported to be suffering from active tuberculosis, rheumatism and a heart complaint. In June 1982 he was hospitalised, but against doctors' advice, he was once again returned to the camp in October. Alexander Podrabinek is now 29 years old.

In 1980 two more founding members of the Working Commission were arrested. They were Vyacheslav Bakhmin, a 34-year-old computer programmer and editor of the Information Bulletins, and Dr. Leonard Ternovsky, a 49-year-old radiologist. Both men were charged with 'circulating anti-Soviet slander' and were subsequently given a maximum sentence of three years' imprisonment in a corrective labour colony by a court in Moscow. Vyacheslav Bakhmin is serving his sentence in the Tomsk region of the Russian Republic and Dr. Leonard Ternovsky is imprisoned at Omsk.

Following the arrest of Vyacheslav Bakhmin in February 1980, his place on the Working Commission was taken by another computer-programmer, 35-year-old Irina Grivnina, who had assisted the group informally since 1978. Six months after she joined the group Irina Grivnina was herself arrested, also on a charge of "circulating anti-Soviet slander". During her six months' participation, she helped prepare Information Bulletins Nos. 21, 22 and 23, which reported on a total of 34 cases of psychiatric abuse and investigated seven more. Ms. Grivnina's arrest in September 1980 followed a search of her apartment during which materials relating to the Working Commission were confiscated.

Irina Grivnina was held in investigative detention in Moscow's Butyrka prison for ten months, although the maximum period of detention without trial permitted in the RSFSR Code of Criminal Procedure is nine months. At her trial in July 1981 she was sentenced to five years' internal exile, a sentence she is serving in the Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan. A report of her trial by the official Soviet news agency TASS accused her of preparing "deliberately mendacious fabrications" which she "processed in a slanderous spirit for use by anti-Soviet publishers and the imperialist propaganda media in ideological sabotage against the Soviet Union".

Three days after Irina Grivnina's arrest, Dr. Anatoly Koryagin, a consultant psychiatrist to the Working Commission, gave a press conference in Moscow, in which he defended her work and pointed to continuing psychiatric abuse. At the conference he announced the conclusions of his personal examinations of 15 former victims of psychiatric abuse, all of whom he considered had been confined for political and not genuine medical reasons. In December 1980 one of the individuals he had examined, the 44-year-old Donbass miner Alexei Nikitin, was re-arrested in the Ukrainian city of Donetsk, after he had met with foreign journalists to discuss working conditions in Soviet mines, and the attitudes of Soviet workers to events in Poland. He was ruled not-responsible for his actions and is now confined to Alma-Ata special psychiatric hospital for an indefinite period. At a second press conference in Moscow held in January 1981, Dr. Anatoly Koryagin spoke out against Nikitin's wrongful confinement. The following month Dr. Koryagin was himself arrested on a charge of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". In June 1981 he was tried and given the maximum sentence of 12 years' imprisonment and internal exile. He was sent to serve the first part of his sentence in a corrective labour colony in the Perm region. While he was there he sent out of the camp an open letter appealing for "people of good will" to help victims of the political abuse of psychiatry. In July 1982 he was officially stripped of his doctoral research degree and transferred from the corrective labour colony to a prison in Chistopol, in the Tatar Autonomous Republic. Prison is the harshest form of corrective labour institution authorised by the Corrective Labour Code of the RSFSR.

After his release in August 1978 Felix Serebrov had resumed his work for the Commission, and on 15 February 1979 he issued a successful protest against the restrictions on correspondence imposed on persons held in the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry in Moscow. By late September 1980 he was the only formal member of the Working Commission still at liberty. He collected and issued in samizdat the group's last document - Information Bulletin No. 24 - which documented 16 cases of psychiatric abuse and reported on a further 14 allegations of abuse. On 8 January 1981 Felix Serebrov was himself arrested on a charge of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". He was subsequently sentenced to a total of nine years' imprisonment and internal exile. He is currently serving the first part of his sentence in a labour colony in the Perm region near the Ural mountains.

All six convicted members of the Working Commission were sentenced on charges which proscribe the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression. Amnesty International has adopted them as prisoners of conscience.

In December 1981 Amnesty International received reports that Sofia Kalistratova, the Working Commission's consultant lawyer, had also been faced with a charge of "circulating anti-Soviet slander" - a charge which carries a maximum sentence of three years' imprisonment. Sofia Kalistratova had acted as defense counsel in several widely publicised political trials in the 1960's and early 1970's, as a result of which her official permission to participate in political trials was withdrawn by the authorities. In her work with the Working Commission she advised on legal aspects of psychiatric confinement, and in particular contributed to Information Bulletin No. 6 (dated 1 February 1978) which was devoted to an analysis of the wrongful confinement of Vladimir Rozhdestvov. Vladimir

Rozhdestvov, a 40-year-old worker from Tomsk region was arrested in September 1977 on a charge of "circulating anti-Soviet slander". He was accused of listening to foreign radio broadcasts, circulating an anti-Soviet poem, and praising Western economies in conversations with friends at his hostel. He was ruled not-responsible for his actions, and at a court hearing in November 1977, which was attended by members of the Working Commission and the Moscow Helsinki monitoring group, he was sent for compulsory confinement in Tashkent special psychiatric hospital, where he now remains. There was no evidence to show that Vladimir Rozhdestvov represented a physical danger to himself at the time of his arrest, or previously.

Dr Alexander Voloshanovich, the eighth member of the Working Commission, who had been a consultant psychiatrist to the group since it began, was forced to emigrate from the Soviet Union in February 1980, in the face of official harassment. During his three-year involvement with the group he examined 40 individuals of known non-conformist views, who feared the authorities might confine or re-confine them in mental hospitals and concluded that there was no medical justification for their forcible confinement. After he had spoken about his first examinations at a press conference in Moscow in August 1978, he was notified that an official commission had been set up in the Ukrainian city of Dnepropetrovsk under the auspices of the All-Union Society of Psychiatrists and Neuropathologists, to investigate his allegations of abuses. In October Dr. Voloshanovich was invited to attend. His meeting with the official commission, headed by the vice-president of the department of psychiatry of the All-Union Society of Psychiatrists and Neuropathologists, Dr. Vladimir Kovalyov, is reported in the Working Commission's Information Bulletin No. 13 (dated 20 November 1978). The report says that Dr. Voloshanovich was asked to discuss a case he had diagnosed several years previously, but was denied access to any of his materials relating to the case. The commission did not address his specific complaints that the rules for compulsory confinement had been violated in regard to that case. Dr. Voloshanovich then wrote to the Dnepropetrovsk commission expressing his willingness to continue collaboration, only on condition that an independent psychiatrist from the WPA be included on the team. His letter did not receive a reply, and the official commission is not reported to have taken further steps to investigate allegations of psychiatric abuse. In its report of the incident the Working Commission expressed the fear that the official commission's aim was to discredit Dr. Voloshanovich. On 4 October 1979 Dr. Voloshanovich was detained at a railway station in the city of Gorky as he returned from examining a number of former victims of psychiatric abuse. He was searched without a warrant, and his medical notes and some books, including one on psychiatry written in English, were confiscated. Dr. Voloshanovich emigrated four months later.

Since the WPA met in 1977 other people who exposed the political abuse of psychiatry in the USSR have also been punished. Some were former victims of psychiatric abuse who had reported on their treatment to the Working Commission after their release. For example, Arvydas Cekanavicius, a 31-year-old Lithuanian medical student, wrote a letter to the Working Commission in April 1979 after he was released from six years' psychiatric confinement. He was first arrested in 1973 after poems and tape-recordings of foreign radio broadcasts were confiscated during a search of his flat. In June 1979 shortly after he wrote the letter, he was once again confined and injected with powerful neuroleptic drugs. He was released in

August 1979, but re-arrested in November for "installing a telephone under a false name eight years previously". He is now confined for an indefinite period in Chernyakhovsk special psychiatric hospital. Another such case is that of Yury Valov, a 40-year-old campaigner for improved conditions for disabled people in the USSR. In 1978 Mr Valov voluntarily underwent examination by Dr. Alexander Voloshanovich, who concluded that he was not in need of compulsory confinement. Nevertheless in October 1978 he was forcibly confined in an ordinary psychiatric hospital in Moscow for four months, during which time the Working Commission and Dr. Voloshanovich appealed to hospital authorities for his release. After he was released in 1979 he addressed a letter of gratitude to the Working Commission in which he described the conditions of his confinement, and he was re-confined for a brief period shortly afterwards. Yury Valov is now confined for a fourth time, this time to an ordinary psychiatric hospital in Gorky, where he was committed against his will in February 1981.

Other individuals have been arrested who gathered information on psychiatric abuse to forward to the Working Commission. On 8 December 1978, for example, Iosif Zisels, a 32-year-old engineer in a broadcasting studio, was arrested in the Ukrainian town of Chernovtsi. His card index on 100 alleged political prisoners in Dnepropetrovsk special psychiatric hospital was confiscated, and he was later sentenced to three years' imprisonment for "circulating anti-Soviet slander". The same sentence was passed in 1981 on a 45-year-old Ukrainian from Kiev region, Anna Shevchuk, who had collected information on psychiatric abuse and appealed for the release of individual prisoners of conscience confined in mental hospitals against their will.

Sometimes friends and relatives who tried to make contact with victims in hospital have faced reprisals. In 1978, for example, Anatoly Pozdnyakov, a member of a recently established independent trade union group, was beaten up by an orderly outside Moscow's psychiatric hospital No. 1, after he tried to speak to his colleague Evgeny Nikolaev, through a window. He was reportedly warned that if he complained about the beating he would "end up here with us". In autumn 1980 the wife of Arkady Stapanchuk, a Ukrainian worker confined after he sought asylum in the British embassy in Moscow, was herself forcibly confined for 21 days when she attempted to visit her husband in hospital.

#### The Soviet Response to Allegations of Psychiatric Abuse

Since it met in 1977 the WPA has established a Committee to Review the Abuse of Psychiatry for Political Reasons, whose brief is to monitor individual cases. Over the past five years this committee has submitted to the All-Union Society of Neurologists and Psychiatrists of the USSR more than 20 documented requests for information on 11 individual cases. The All-Union Society has refused to recognise the authority of this committee, but in early 1982 it promised replies to the Executive Committee of the WPA on six of the cases raised. By January 1983 only two replies had been sent. One concerned the Ukrainian Uniate Catholic believer, Iosif Terelya, who was released after over 8 years' confinement as a prisoner of conscience in November 1981. Terelya, who is now 40 years old, was first forcibly confined to a special psychiatric hospital under the criminal procedure in 1972, after he had been arrested on a charge of "anti-Soviet agitation and

propaganda". He was let out in 1976, but re-confined in April 1977 after he had written an Open Letter to the then-head of the KGB, Yury Andropov, protesting against the illegality of his confinement. The other reply concerned a Leningrad engineer, Anatoly Ponomaryov, who is still confined to a psychiatric hospital. Anatoly Ponomaryov has been confined on six separate occasions, for a total of 12 years. He was first put in a mental hospital against his will in 1970, after being arrested for circulating a copy of Solzhenitsyn's letter to the All-Union Writers' Congress. The content of the replies from the All-Union Society has not been published.

The Soviet authorities and spokesmen for the Soviet psychiatric profession have continued to dismiss allegations made by foreign psychiatrists and human rights' organisations as politically-motivated "slander". In February 1983 the All-Union Society resigned its membership of the WPA, five months before the Seventh Congress of the world body was due to meet in Vienna.