

Subject:INFO-RUSS:Seven in Red Square

Date: Wed, 25 Aug 93 04:22:18 EDT

From: sasha@smarty.ece.jhu.edu (Alexander E. Kaplan)

To: info-russ@smarty.ece.jhu.edu

"Какая вас нелегкая
на площадь погнала,
Какая даль далекая
на помощь позвала?..."

.....

"Словно семь богатых лун
на пути моем встает.
Это птица Гамаюн
надежду подает!"

.....

On August 22'68, 600,000 troops of Warsaw Pact, 500,000 of them -- Soviets, rolled into Czechoslovakia on tanks to crash the "Prague Spring". The event was well expected by some; on the next day at every factory in the USSR, kolkhoz, university, research labs, etc., there were "workers' meetings" supposed to approve the action of sov-government by open voting. They approved it, all right, as usual, by 99.99**% of votes...

"Сколько раз мы молчали -- по разному,
но не против, конечно, а за..."

Not all of them, though...

Ты, что, не видишь капитан,
ты разве сам не видишь,
В такую бурю, капитан,
не выплыть никому!
Ведь ты же враз пойдешь ко дну,
как только в море выйдешь...
"Там крик о помощи, милорд,
я слышал, крик расстался,
Милорд, я слышал этот крик! --
мой долг -- откликнуться ему..."

25 years ago, today, on the August 25'68, Sunday, seven people gathered on the Red Square near the Execution Place (Лобное Место). Suddenly, they reached under their shirts, or into their bags, pulled out towels and pieces of linen, and raised them above their heads.

"Им не знамя жребий выкинул --
носовой платок в крови..."

For a few brief moments everyone could see what was written on those pieces:

"Свободу Чехословакии!", "Долой оккупантов!", "За вашу и нашу свободу!"...

Here are their names:

Konstantin Babitsky -- Костя Бабитский, math-linguist
Larisa Bogoraz -- Лара Богораз, linguist

Vadim Delone -- Вадик Делоне, poet
Vladimir Dremlyuga -- Володя Дремлюга, construction worker
Victor Fainberg -- Витя Фаинберг, mathematician
Natalia Gorbanevskaya -- Наташа Горбаневская, poet and writer,
Pavel Litvinov -- Паша Литвинов, math&physics teacher

Did I say -- seven? Sorry, wrong, there was a little bit more: Natalia Gorbanevskaya came to the Red Square with her newly born baby-boy, Iosya -- Ося, about two month old... ("И холодно было младенцу в пещере на склоне холма...").

The police and plainclothes got stunned and lost for a few minutes. They frantically phoned their superiors; the order for action came in soon. Suddenly, the crowd of gawkers split off and gave way to a gang of "возмущенных граждан" в штатском who torn down the linen posters and started severely beating the participants of that little demonstration. One of the politically correct ladies hit Pavel Litvinov over his head with her heavy lady-bag; the bag opened up, and a military handgun flew out of it. (Beware of politically correct ladies...). Viktor Fainberg got all his teeth knocked out of his mouth. The black cars pulled in, and the KGB people stuffed the demonstrators into them. A KGB plainclothe pulled baby-Iosya out of his baby-carriage, lifted him up and was about to throw the baby into the car with all his force; only a horrified and deafening scream of many women in the crowd stopped him from doing that.

Only five of them made it to the trial. KGB put Victor Fainberg into psycho-ward, psihushka (with his teeth knocked out, how could a man be sane?), and let Gorbanevskaya go (even for them it was not in a good taste to put a mather & baby on trial especially considering her hungry strike; but KGB made it up to her later, when they put her into the prison in 1970). The charge for the seven: violation of the chapter 190' of the sov-criminal code ("распространение заведомо ложной и клеветнической информации или пропаганды против сов-власти") and 190"" ("нарушение работы общественного транспорта на проезжей части..."; sure, the nearest trolley was 500 meters away, behind the corner...). A fair sov-judge sent three of them into exile for 1-3 years (they were sent out into places like Chita, Tumen', and Narian Mar), and two (Delone and Dremlyuga) -- to a jail. The toughest luck in the store was for Vladimir Dremlyuga, who spent six years in prizon near Murmansk (they added him an extra term while in prizon).

Long ago and far away... After that, their trails split off and some faded away... A few years after getting out of prizon, Vadik Delone died in Paris, while in forced exile;

"Все пожег закат...
угольки окон
тлеют как обряд
тусклых похорон..."

He was only 35 year old...

"Ах кивера да ментики,
пора бы выйти в знать,
но этой арифметики
поэтам не узнать..."

Two of them came to the US a long while ago (Pasha Litvinov teaches physics in private school in the New York state, and Volodya Dremlyuga survives as a home-repair contractor in New Jersey).

Natasha Gorbanevskaya

("Расти костер. Гори, дуга залива.
Сияй впотьмах, безумный мотылек...")

lives in Paris; she used to work in "Continent" (a former baby Iosya is there too); Vitya Fainberg, "a wandering Jew", is somewhere between England, France, and Israel...

"Где теперь крикуны и печальники?
Отшумели и сгнули смолоду...
А молчальники вышли в начальники,
потому что молчание -- золото..."

Two of them are still in Russia : Lara Bogoraz and Kostya Babitsky...

"Отвечаю я цыганкам -- мне то по сердцу,
к вольной воле заповедные пути...
Но не кинуться, не двинуться, не броситься,
видно крепко я привязан, не уйти..."

.....

"Словно семь заветных струн
зазвенели в свой черед,
Это птица Гамаюн
надежду подает!"

.....

[So few for the entire Russia... "Так что же я смею? и что я могу?" There were others, but then again, too few. At least one event was well known to me (for a good reason:-). On the next date after sov-intervention to Czechoslovakia, i.e. on Aug. 23'68, one of those "собраний трудящихся" was summoned by the administration of the Institut Radiotekhniki i Elektroniki (in Fryazino, near Moscow) of the USSR Academy of Sciences and was attended by about 200 people; it was supposed to "approve the action by Sov. government". One of the research staff member went to the podium and spoke about 15 minutes (you think, they were quietly listening?). He called the invasion a crime and sov-information a lie and a bluff; he told people that their "yes" vote would be a vote for a noose on their own neck; he called on them to vote "no". What followed, was a chaotic and noisy chain of events (one of which was a vote whether they should vote at all; 60% for, 40% against), with a culminating vote on approval of sov-action: almost all "yes" and two - "no" (to the surprise and horror of the "no"-speaker, one more staff member seconded him).]

The Red Square demonstration was the peak of dissident movement. Many people actually were involved in that movement, and the seven were some of the bravest. They also were responsible people and took a special care that none of other people get involved; they wanted to put only their own fate on the burner, not that of others.

The dissident movement brought together different, but bright and spirited people. That spirit of liberty, "вашей и нашей свободы" above all, and camaraderie of lonely fighters с открытым забралом, kept burning in each of them for many years to come. The movement as a whole was crushed by KGB in the seventies and eighties. Many of those dissies got scattered all over the world; what they felt and remembered?...

"Я всадник. Я воин. Я в поле один.
Последний династии вольной орды..."

Many paid dearly for a brief moment of freedom. Many died, some of them in the prizon, like Anatoly Marchenko and Yuri Galanskov. None of them did what he or she did, for glory or for the gratitude of future generations. They did it for their own ... what? Call it conscience or совесть or soul or whatever... Yet, please remember them... They did it for you too...

I started with the Yuly Kim's song. He was the bard of that movement. Let me conclude with his song too:

"О, как жестока,
 темна и безумна
наша дорога
 к свету дневному.
Но терпеливо
 и неуклонно
С каждой утратой
 все ближе заря.
Вечная память,
 вечная память,
Вечная память
 во веки веков..."

--Alex (Sasha) Kaplan
INFO-RUSS owner/coordinator

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Subject:INFO-RUSS:dissidents of 1960th

From: sasha@smarty.ece.jhu.edu (Alexander E. Kaplan)
Date: Fri, 27 Aug 93 19:47:23 EDT
To: info-russ@smarty.ece.jhu.edu

Dear IR-folks,

After my posting on the Red Square demonstration on August 25'68, I've got quite a few msgs from the IR-subscribers with their thanks and with great appreciation of the act of courage by those seven dissies. My friends, my thanks to you for your warm words, especially those addressed to the "seven".

Quite a few people also asked me for more names and details in addition to those mentioned by me in the previous posting about the dissident movement. The posting below was prepared by me very hastily, and in no way is to be regarded as to any extend comprehensive document or anything like that; it is just a brief and random burst of memory. I apologize in advance for any factual errors that are more than likely to appear in a text like that. And I am not going to bother you with the subject anymore (at least in the near future:-).

As I've said, the Red Square demonstration was the peak of dissident movement. 1968 was a hot year: the first issue of underground "Хроника текущих событий" ("Chronicals of Current Events") was out in April, Sakharov's essay was out in May, a lot of other things, and all this on the background of sparks flying out of Czechoslovakia.

If defined as OPEN civil (and lawful!) protest against sov-government, it started a while before that. I don't know where start to count. Could start with that demonstration (was it at Pushkin Square?) in 1965 that demanded an OPEN trial for the fiction writers Daniel and Sinyavsky (who passed their short stories to the West under assumed names and were arrested by KGB for that). The slogans were "Uvazhaite svoyu konstitutsiyu", "Svobodu Danielyu and Sinyavskomu", etc; I believe Vladimir Bukovsky, Yura Galanskov, and many others were there. The Daniel's and Sinyavsky's trial became a good illustration of the revival of stalinism; the first open protest letter signed by Petr Yakir, Ilya Gabai, and Yuli Kim, was broadcasted by the "Voice of America" with their addresses and phone numbers openly announced. This triggered a movement called first "podpisanty", then "democrats", then "dissidents".

[There were other, much earlier isolated incidents, e.g. open protest by a physicist Yury Orlov in 1956 against

too "soft" description of Stalin's activity in the Khrushchev's speech. He was a fiztech alumnus of the very first graduation class, who much later, in 1974, became famous as one of the organizers of Helsinki Watch Group in Moscow, along, I believe, with Valentin Turchin (remember, "Физики шутят"?; he is a veteran emigre in the States) and Anatoly Scharansky (who in 1978 was thrown into the prison for 10 years for his zionism activity with official charge of "измена родине"--high treason-- chapter 64 of sov-criminal code, and was later on exchanged for some real sov-spy). Yury Orlov was thrown into the prison for 7 years in 1978, few months before Scharansky, on the charges of violation of chapter 70 (antisoviet agitation and propaganda), and "did his time" on all of them, "от звонка до звонка". In the same summer Alik Ginzburg was put into prison for a long term, too. Orlov is in the States now, Ginzburg - in Paris, and Scharansky -- in Israel.]

The people of that loosely defined movement came from all walks of life, most of them were so brilliant, multi-talented, and spirited individuals... There were no declared party or program or anything of this sort, just write or sign any letter you want, come to the court building where yet another political trial was held, and show your support; or come to the "moment of silence" at the Pushkin Square in the memory of that first demonstration; or write an article for samizdat, or type samizdat, or distribute it, or bring a pair of winter shoes for a polit-zeka, or help a guy just from the labor camp, find a doctor for him; or find a defense lawyer for your arrested friend, and get money for his family, and try to find somebody in the establishment or anybody else to somehow help him (and quite a few people although not directly involved were helping them: friends, people compassionate to the cause, doctors and lawyers, sometimes even people in the street...), and learn how not to get into a trap at a KGB interrogation, and.... Or be a leader, and face a burning responsibility not only for your own fate but for those who followed you even if they didn't ask you about that... And as a reward of a kind, there were those great fierce evenings with all those crazies at any of those notorious Moscow dissy-kitchens (and most remarkably at that one, at Avtozavodskaya) packed to the last square inch with people, talking, drinking, and arguing about everything in the world, but most of all about that damned and crazy country and "что делать" and "как начать"... And listening to those enchanted strings, seven as in any Russian guitar...

A few other names out of many, on random: Valery Chalidze, ("Knyaz", i. e. "Count":-), phys-chemist, organizer of the "Human Rights Committee" in Moscow in the beginning of the seventies, after coming to the US a long while ago -- a publisher of "Chronicles". Andrey Tverdokhlebov, the organizer of Moscow Amnesty International, (now in the US); Shura Shuster (both fiztechs, 1962); Yulya Zaks (relative of both of them), one of the veterans (now in the US, veteran emigre too); Valery Sanderov ("Nitshe"), mathematician, fiztech (alumni of the math-school #2 should know him as a math-instructor), the guy who in the sixties greeted even unfamiliar persons with "Down with commies"; was thrown into prison in the beginning of eighties; he is now in Moscow. Nad'ya Emel'kina, one of first typist of samizdat (ten copies в одной закладке на курительной бумаге...), Anatoly Krasnov-Levitin, an orthodox priest, jails and camps; Ira-"Yakirka", daughter of Petr and Valya Yakir and wife of Yuly Kim, an acid-smart lady of dissident house; Ira Belogorodskaya, two arrests and jail, Vadik Delone's widow, is now in Paris as well as Olya Ioffe (see below about her mom, "Dissya"). Tata Baeva, a veteran-dissy; Yura Gastev, math-logician (he praised "Chein-Stokes" in his old sov-math-monograph: when Stalin was dying, the medics reported his symptomatic "Chein-Stokes breathing"); Sergey Genkin, a mathematician; Vladimir Miloshevich ("Micha"), veteran-podpisant, hydrologist (all now in the States). Ivan Rudakov (Moscow) and Zhenya Kushev (Germany) -- my fellow carpenters on dissy-shabashkah building saw-barns a long while ago; Alik and Arina Ginzburg -- Alik being one of the very first samizdat-compilers ("White Book" about the Daniel& Sinyavsky trial; he also used to be in charge of the so called Solzhenitsyn's fund designed to help polit-zeka), jails and exiles; now both are editors of "Russkaya Mysl" in Paris... Alexander Podrobennik, who wrote a book describing in detail the KGB practice of using psycho-wards as a tool of suppression of any political activity against sov-government. Luda Alekseeva, a saint in a true Christian sense, jail and exile; now in Moscow; Sergey Kovalyov, who was for a while in charge of Solzhenitsyn's fund; many years in jail; he is now a People's Deputy in Russian (?) parliament. And Vladimir Bukovsky, two prison terms, exchanged by KGB to Chily commy, Korvalan ("Обменяли хулигана на Луиса Корвалана..."), now in England.

There were many, many other names... Those whom I used to know and who are not mentioned here, please forgive me; this is just a hastily prepared posting; my memory is not quite helpful on such a short notice.

Иных уж нет, а те далече... Yury Galanskov, one of those who compiled samizdat magazine "Feniks-66", died in jail in 1972. Anatoly Marchenko: a worker, a zeka (four terms, about 20 years in prison and exile; spent some time in the same camp with Daniel), a fighter, a writer ("Мои показания"); died in 1986 (!) in Chistopol prison. Ilya Gabai, high-school history teacher and poet, two times in jail, burnt down with KGB threats against him and his family, killed himself in 1973. Grisha Pod'yapol'sky, a scientist, died in the end of seventies; everyone among dissies new him and his wife, Masha. Tosha Yakobson, poetry critic and historian; died of depression shortly after emigrating from Moscow. "Dissya" Ioffe, who counted her "dissident" background starting from Nazi labor camps; died in Paris. Petr Yakir, historian (ironically, of sov-history) first arrested in the age of 14 by Stalin's chekists as a son of his father, the Stalin's General Yakir; Petr remembered by heart ALL the political trials and labor camps histories of their victims, he was one of the pioneers and first dissident leaders; his tragic miscalculation was used by KGB to deal a severe blow to the movement in the earlier seventies; died in Moscow in 1982. General Petr Grigorenko, a man with a sharp political vision, went through the entire war of 1941-45 as a field officer, grew up to a General after that, become a dissy sometime in the end of sixties, was arrested many times and put into psihushka, and eventually pushed out from the country, died in New York recently; was survived by his wife, Zinaida, a well known dissident in her own rights. Andrey Amalrik, author of the samizdat book "Will the USSR survive till 1984?" (written in the beginning of seventies!); died in Spain in 1980. Ira Kaplun, one of those who worked to expose the sov-practice of using psycho-wards as worst kind of jail; died in 1980. Gera Kopylov, a high-energy theorist (and a good poet) from Dubna, died in seventies. Yuli Daniel who got out of prison at the same time as Sinyavsky (I believe, around 1973), died in Moscow a few years ago (Sinyavsky lives now in Paris; the KGB bastards delayed a entry visa for him, and he arrived only after the Daniel's burial was over).

That era has passed; there is a new country out there. I hope that somebody makes a good and really comprehensive book or something on the history of dissident movement of 1965-1985. However, although I wish the new Russia best, I frankly doubt they want to remember anything; by now very few people give a damn (for possible exception of small number of the same "intelligentsia")... The new masters of Russia are essentially the old ones: the same commies and KGBs, thieves and looters, and their "шестерки", under a very thin disguise of "democrats"; a tragic mockery on those who sacrificed a lot in the name of real democracy. Who cares, right? And for those who do, there is always that fading zvon Okudzhavskoi gitary:

"Среди совсем чужих пиров
и слишком ненадежных истин,
не дожидаясь похвалы,
мы перья белые свои почистим..."

Когда придет дележки час,
не нас калач ржаной поманит,
и рай начнется не для нас,
зато Офелия всех нас помянет..."

--Alex (Sasha) Kaplan
INFO-RUSS owner/coordinator

P.S. The poets whose lines were used in my "7 in Red Square" posting are: Yulik Kim, Vadik Delone, Natasha Gorbanevskaya, Yuli Daniel', Vladimir Vysotsky, Alexander Galich, Bulat Okudzhava, Boris Pasternak, and Victor Sosnora. Out of these nine, five "were".
