

PAUL SIMON  
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:  
LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES  
JUDICIARY  
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 1, 1985

Dear Colleague:

Attached you will find the Zunshine Papers, correspondence from Soviet dissident and prisoner-of-conscience, Zachar Zunshine, to his wife, Tatyana, and various Soviet officials.

These letters depict the anguish that one man, convicted to prison merely for expressing his desire to emigrate, is currently enduring. Zachar represents the struggle of Soviet Jewry. To want one's freedom is not a crime- it should be a given right.

On Paul's trip to the Soviet Union last month, he had the fortunate opportunity to meet Tatyana Zunshine. John has spoken with Tatyana on the phone. Tatyana's courage and strength of conviction are impressive.

We share with you the Zunshine papers with the knowledge that Western interest makes a difference.

Our best wishes.

Cordially,

  
John Porter  
U.S. Representative

  
Paul Simon  
U.S. Senator

THE ZUNSHINE PAPERS:  
PERSECUTION AND JEWISH RESISTANCE

Biographical Data and Correspondence  
of  
Prisoner-of-Conscience  
Zachar Zunshine

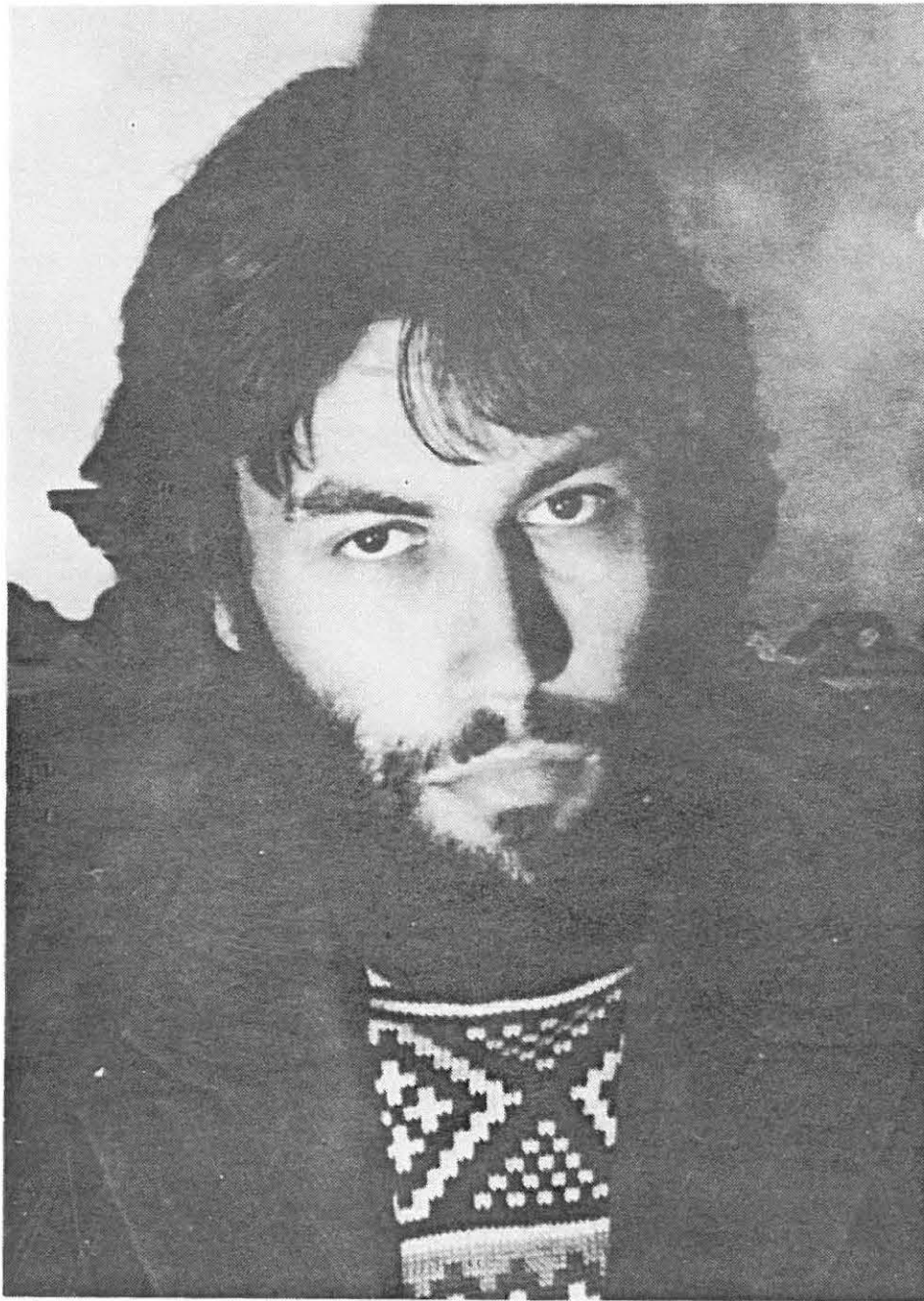
Published by:



**Chicago Action  
for Soviet Jewry**

1724 First Street • Highland Park, IL 60035

A Member of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews



Date of Birth: April 20, 1951  
Marital Status: Tatiana Zunshine, Kakhovaka 4, Apt. 131  
Riga, Latvian SSR, USSR  
Profession: Physics Teacher  
Date of Arrest: March 6, 1984

THE ZUNSHINE PAPERS

1981

Zachar Zunshine and his wife, Tatiana, applied for exit visas.

1983

- July Despite Zachar's efforts to keep his place of work secret from the KGB, they found out and arranged for his dismissal.
- December 26 Zachar was arrested and received 15 days administrative detention for so-called "hooliganism."

1984

- March 4 On Sunday afternoon, near the Karl Marx monument in Moscow, Zachar carried a placard which read, "We demand to give up our citizenship."
- Both Zachar and Alexander Balter were arrested after the demonstration and taken back to Riga. Chief Investigator Grutup reported to them that their apartments, and that of Alexander's mother, Svetlana, were being searched.
- March 6 Zunshine was charged under Article 183/1 of the Latvian Criminal Code and Article 190/1 of the Russian Criminal Code for "spreading anti-Soviet propaganda and defamation of the Soviet State." Zachar was taken to prison with a fever of 104 degrees due to influenza.
- March 14 Zachar began a hunger strike to protest deprivation of medical treatment.
- March 21 Tatiana and Alexander Balter were victims of a vicious street attack by an "unknown" assailant who, after beating and throwing Alexander to the ground, snatched Tatiana's handbag and ran off. A week earlier, Tatiana had her passport taken away by the militia, making it impossible for her to get a job, laying her open to a charge of "Parasitism," and preventing her from traveling to other cities.



Letter No. 1, from Riga Prison

March 14, 1984

To: The Procurator's Office of the Latvian Republic

From: Mr. Zachar Zunshine

On March 13, I was summoned to the Investigator Grutup. I informed him that from March 6, that is, from the date of arrest till March 12, I was at the Prison Hospital. From March 8, the provision of the medicine in medical treatment was stopped and a duty man of that block threatened me that he might transfer me to the Special Security Ward, when I asked him to be more civilized and to refrain from insults which were addressed to me.

On March 12, I was discharged with a temperature around 38 degrees Celsius from the Prison Hospital. Furthermore, I got only denials from the authorities when I requested they provide me with some ink and paper in order to present a complaint on the illegal action of the prison administration.

In addition, on March 12, I was thrown into a common cell, as it was later revealed, by mistake. There were sixty men in the cell. I asked Investigator Grutup to inform the officials of the shadow organization which stood behind this frame-up. I did it because if their designs did not go so far to murder me, I request that they not repeat such mistakes in the future and to take appropriate measures to provide at least minimum security. To put me into the common cells where "fresh fish" are stripped of their clothes; when a prison custom of initiation of "proprska" - a most humiliating and depressing procedure, "to bottle a person out"; where people from Sonder Commando,\* for my refusal to accept the law of the wolf packs, beat me to the ground, damaging my kidneys and liver: it means to prepare me for inevitable death.

It became clear, a long time ago, that life does not constitute a primary value in itself. There are more important things in the world than life itself and in some cases, it is not worth the effort to cling to it very strongly...or maybe somebody out there proposing that "jailbirds will straighten me out" and I, according to their will, will "catch flies" and "get down on my knees to get some prison privileges".

On March 14, I was summoned to Investigator Grutup. I informed him that from March 14, I declared a hunger strike because I was deprived of the right to medical treatment. Since March 6, I had a high temperature and an inflammation of my throat has been rapidly developing to the extent that when I drink, some

liquid bursts out from my nose. I asked Investigator Grutup to get me several aspirins, not any other drug or even vodka, just plain aspirin. How do you think Investigator Grutup responded to my request for aspirin? Very simply, he said: "I haven't got any aspirin, I cannot influence the prison administration; concerning the common cell, it is not all that bad - after all, nobody is killed there and order is being maintained at a satisfactory level." But it's too bad that Sonder Commando is always ready for an Aktion\*\* (action).

I want to let you know that I intend no further communication, either verbally or in writing, with the Investigator on Special Affairs of the Procurator's Office of Latvian Republic, Mr. Grutup, whether...solicitations will be approved or not.

You should not misinterpret me - that this solicitation has the objective as being the refusal, on my part, to cooperate with the Procurator's Office of the Latvian Republic in order to define the true circumstances of these proceedings in custody.

\*Refers to a group of criminals in every cell, supported by prison administration, whose duty is to beat "fresh fish."

\*\*Nazi term is not accidental reference.

Letter No. 2, from Riga Prison

March 27, 1984

To: The Procurator's Office of the USSR

From: Zachar Zunshine

#### APPLICATION

On March 6, the Procurator's Office of the Latvian Republic instituted criminal prosecution on charges stipulated in the Article No. 183/1 of the Criminal Law of the Latvian Republic, namely: dissemination of deliberately false information defaming the Soviet State and Social System.

On the morning of March 6, when we were brought from Moscow (we, that is: my friend Alexander Balter, my wife, Tatiana Zunshine and myself) by the agents of the Latvian KGB, at my apartment, a search was conducted with the subject matter of withdrawal of all materials defaming the Soviet State and Social System and, also, of means of their production and dissemination. After the conclusion of the search, on the basis of the decree of the First Deputy of the Latvian Procurator, Senior Advisor of Justice, Mr. Towkshin, I was arrested and placed into Riga's Prison. Until now, despite the fact that 20 days have passed since the day of the arrest, the Procurator's Office has not put forward any indication of a crime.

1984

- April 10      Tatiana and three other women were arrested after holding up banners outside the Riga Procurator's Office, calling for Zachar's release. They were arrested for 15 days.
- May 5          Upon entering an apartment in Leningrad where she was visiting a friend, Tatiana was taken by KGB officers to the train returning to Riga and ordered not to come back to Leningrad.
- Zachar's mother, Dora, was called for interrogation, but refused to go.
- May 18        Tatiana sent an appeal to the United Nations Human Rights Commission on behalf of her husband.
- May 22        Tatiana went on hunger strike because she had not received an answer to her inquiry about the health of her husband who had gone on hunger strike on April 11. During the two months he spent in prison, Zachar was in solitary confinement for 25 days and on hunger strike for two weeks.



Letter No. 3, from Riga Prison

To: The First Deputy of the Procurator of the Latvian  
Soviet Socialist Republic

May 21, 1984

#### REJECTION TO GIVE FURTHER TESTIMONY

On May 16th, after two days and three months' absence, the investigator "Redbeard", who seemed to vanish in the haze forever, immediately took to his business. All the while, the interrogation was carefully prepared and had been already immaculately typed in the form of Record of Evidence and some blank spaces were allocated for the answers. The list was left to be done -- that was, to obtain answers. But even before the answers, the investigator refused to accept and wouldn't take my application dealing with the proceedings. Since the first question was incongruous, nonessential and completely out of place, as well as all these proceedings, I asked the investigator for the reasons why the Ministry of Interior had refused to let my wife and me leave the USSR for a number of years.

After reading the questions and declining to offer me a pen and to hand me the protocol form so that I could write down an answer, the investigator with an increasingly confident voice began his well-planned incantations -- to harp on one string, "I'm listening for the answer to my questions, I'm listening for the answer to my questions," and so forth, so many times. Out of feeling of the other worldliness and unreality, out of deception of theatrical effect, I became suddenly elated and I began to talk and the investigator was following me. His task was a formidable one, but he talked with me alright; and after the question appeared his first entry, which was one more incantation; Mr. Zunshine refused to supply answers for further questions.

In total there were two, two incantations, made by the investigator so craftily, so professionally and the investigator himself was so fine that I felt sorry to bother him with my questions. I offered him an opportunity to enjoy himself at his professional field -- designed to be his last vacation.

The going was good for him as the ball began to roll and other typed questions appeared more and more, the similar short and simple incantations and entries. In no time, all the spaces in the form were filled and our conversation took another direc-

tion, namely, complexion of the proceedings in custody, in the court trial, and certainly the question of the impending sentence. In some very elaborate and crafty manner, the investigator led me to the consideration of the fact that the court (and my case was not an exception) was ready to make a very compassionate allowance for me if I would accept my guilt and realize how I erred, being under delusions, and would stop insisting on my precepts. In other words, one who said "A" should say "B". The investigator then described his "B" which was also incongruous and nonessential, as everything that was happening. And it came to that, that if I would accept my guilt, that the court would appreciate it and would sentence me only to corrective labor instead of labor camp imprisoning.

The office in which the questioning took place was small, there were no windows in it. The only light bulb was shedding its bright light and the investigator, a corpulent, stout person, age about 50 whose habitual gesture was fixing glasses on his nose and lifting pages of the examination. From time to time, he stood up to give vent to his feelings and began to walk back and forth so that the office seemed even smaller.

Every day, every hour, every moment Nature creates and observes its sacrament. I guess it is a sacrament, it is a miracle if the investigator were in my shoes, he would be complacent and happy to end up with a sentence to corrective labor but to me...why the devil should I take this bait? A professor from Novosibirsk and the member of Amnesty International from Moscow, -- both on the same charges, were sentenced to two and a half years each. Why am I worse?

In one of my solicitations, in Solicitation No. 1 it was stated that I am ready to cooperate with the Procurator's Office in order to elucidate the true circumstances of this case. I have not changed my mind; nevertheless, the conditions of my confinement in the prison, absence of official replies to my solicitations, and complete deprivation of judicial rights compels me to reject to give further testimony which I shall do now. It must be understood that my rejection to give further testimony will be annulled as soon as I mention reasons for it, it will be eliminated.

Signed,

Zachar Zunshine

1984

June 28

The trial of Zachar Zunshine was heard in the Leningrad District Peoples Court in Riga, in violation of the Law, which states that cases under Article 183/1 of the Latvian Criminal Code (Article 190/1 of the Russian Criminal Code) fall under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of the Republic, not under that of a District Court. The trial lasted approximately two and one-half hours and Zachar was sentenced to three years forced labor camp. This sentence is the maximum term for his so-called crime.

The court turned down the request made by Yakov Gorodetsky and Tatiana Zunshine to represent Zachar at the trial; and instead, appointed a defense attorney. (Gorodetsky was prevented from coming into the town of Riga. When Gorodetsky, Mikhail Tzivin and Nadezhda Fradkova arrived at the Riga Station, they were detained for several hours and then taken to the police station.) Zachar declined the services of the court appointed attorney, however, the court paid no attention to this. Zachar then declared he would continue his hunger strike until justice could be assured. Zachar's parents, sister and wife were allowed in the courtroom, while 17 of his friends were ejected. He was accused of writing letters and statements to official organs, including a letter to the Newspaper, "Izvestiya."

June 29

Tatiana and Yakov Gorodetsky returned from Riga to Leningrad and were openly followed. The appeal on behalf of Zachar was due to be heard on July 24. Zachar had been on hunger strike since his sentence and was being held in solitary confinement. His wife had been told that neither he nor she would be permitted to attend the appeal hearing. The camp commandant, a sadist according to Tatiana, had stated that "they" will finish her husband off. Since his arrest, Zachar has lost approximately 40 pounds.

July 19

Nadezhda Fradkova, also on protest hunger strike for Zachar, was picked up by the militia and taken to No. 2 Psychiatric Hospital in Leningrad where she continued her hunger strike. (This was the third time she had been taken to this hospital and ultimately, was tried herself.)

About 100 activists including Zachar's own family, staged hunger strikes in Riga and Leningrad.

1984

Tatiana has been severely harassed on several occasions, since her return from the trial. Several times she was called to the public telephone but when she reached the telephone booth, "unknown" persons prevented her from entering by attacking her physically.

- July 27 Zachar began his long journey from Riga to Bazoi Prison by prison transport.
- August Tatiana was under constant KGB surveillance. When she attempted to go to Tallin in Estonia, she was prevented from boarding the train. She sent a letter of complaint to the Ministry of the Interior.
- Zachar's friends in Riga, Leningrad and Odessa were so incensed at the injustice towards this innocent man that they organized a rotational one-day fast among themselves until such time as Zachar is freed.
- September 27 Zachar reached Bazoi, the prison camp near the Siberian City of Irkutsk, where he will serve his sentence, after a two month trip.
- Zachar was savagely beaten upon his arrival.
- September 30 Zachar's father telephoned the camp and was informed that his son had lost 44 pounds in weight during his journey. The camp authorities added that Zachar was still a Zionist, he had not mended his ways and, therefore, he might be sent to work down in a mine or in a chemical plant where prisoners' health is at risk, as normal industrial safeguards are totally lacking.
- The information from the camp was passed on to Zachar's mother, Dora, who immediately suffered a fatal heart attack.
- Tatiana promptly made an attempt to visit her husband at the camp.
- October 4 Tatiana reported, after visiting her husband, that he was beaten by his fellow inmates because he refused to take part in a political re-education program. He suffered damage to his ribs and to one of his kidneys and was not able to work the following day. He was reprimanded and one of the guards said, "It is a pity that Hitler did not finish his job." The guard then told two other guards, "If that Jew tries to escape, shoot him."

Letter No. 4, from Bazoi Prison

EXCERPT FROM LETTER DATED OCTOBER 1, 1984

Dear Tatiana:

I'm in the labor camp. I was brought here on the 27th of September. My address is on the envelope. As soon as I was brought here I was beaten very severely. It happened in the camp headquarters. The people who did the beatings were "camp activists", that is, the camp inmates who serve as the right hand of the prison administration. I was beaten and kicked by camp boots in the Department of Crime Prevention. I was kicked all over my body - my chest and face were hit. They tried to force me to become a "social obligation activist and to submit the application of agreement". What about me? I submitted my complaints to the Procurator's Office of the Irkutsk Region in which I request to institute a legal prosecution on the basis of the fact of this brutal beating.

Only know - take it easy and remember that one who is beaten is worse than two unbeaten ones. My chest still aches and the pain is formidable. The next day I was seen by a physician. He offered me some ointment to rub into my sores and lesions and that's all. The idea of having an X-ray examination seems to be laughable in such conditions.

Signed,

Zachar Zunshine



Letter No. 5, from Bazoi Prison, after learning  
of Mother's death.

October 7, 1984

Hello Dears,

I don't know even how to begin. I simply cannot fathom it. For several days I could not pull myself together to write you a letter. It was merely impossible. I just feel like crying out, "take a look at what you are doing!" It is all in earnest. For God's sake, why did she have to die? Why? Everything had been alright.

For me, everything was going really good. IT WAS the way it should be with me. IT WAS, IT IS, and IT WILL BE well with me. It was just the normal situation which concerns me. For sure, for many, IT MIGHT BE TERRIBLE, but for me, I am up to par. Tanya could be a witness to my state of well-being before I found out about it. It has been alright.

I feel like crying out. Why did she have to die? Why? It will be a long time until we can come to our senses and deeply comprehend what this loss was worth.

God damned this day, September 30. Dora had often been telling us that only after her death would we comprehend that she was ill; comprehend and come to believe. Yes, there was not a lack of resources in her body, but there is no point in physical resources. She simply could not bear it all. It appeared beyond her power. I detected this happening already on July 5, during our meeting in jail. She was strong on the outside of the tracks, but who could imagine the extent of this grief and the calamities.

Yes, there is no sense in talking about it now, to try to explain something. It is clear as rain that life is a cruel thing and it is not in our power to bring Dora back. We are simply obliged to her memory to behave as it is decent and appropriate, according to the call of our conscience. And put it in your minds and hearts that the going was, is, and will be good for me. I only beg that you behave yourselves accordingly.

Signed,

Zachar Zunshine



1984

November

Zachar's wife and Alexander Balter were going to Odessa to visit friends when they were turned back on arrival at the airport and threatened by an official who said, "If you come again, you will be charged with possessing drugs."

Zachar went on hunger strike to protest the vicious beating and the camp management's refusal to take action.

Zachar was taken to the camp hospital. His wife went to the camp in the hopes of being allowed to see her husband and to find out why he needed hospital treatment. She was refused a meeting.

A delegation was sent to the camp to investigate Zachar's many complaints. They decided that certain rules had been breached and they promised Zachar that they would help make the authorities observe their own rules and to allow him to receive his correspondence.

After speaking to the Head of the Camp, Tatiana had the impression that the outcry in the West was having some effect and the prison authorities' attitude towards her husband had improved a little. Tatiana was asked if the outcry could be stopped; but replied that protests would continue until her husband's release

December 10

Tatiana took part in a demonstration in Pushkin Square, the center of Moscow, to coincide with Human Rights Day, when she told press men that her husband was being singled out for vicious and discriminatory treatment in the camp so that she feared for his life. As police and KGB men hustled her away, she continued to call, in English, that her husband was not guilty.

Zachar conducted another hunger strike from December 17 to December 25 to respond to the authorities' attempt to make him work in an area usually reserved for labor camp collaborators. He was put into an isolation cell twice for refusal to work in this "special" zone.

1985

January

Out of the 144 days Zachar has spent in camp, 58 days were spent in a punishment cell. He had lost over 20 kilos and there was no news as to whether he was still on hunger strike. A request was made for Russian speakers to contact Mr. F. Katyutin (Irkutsk 996523) who is Director of the Department in charge of Order and Discipline in the Irkutsk camps.

Zachar was sentenced to six months of internal prison in the labor camp on the pretext of his "behavior." This sentence is a prerequisite for the extension of his prison sentence according to the new changes in Soviet law.

Letter No. 6, in transport.

Tanya:

Today is February 4, 1985, and I am being transferred to another labor camp also in the Irkutsk Region, Institution 272/23, Township of Octyabrsky Chumuski of the Irkutsk District. The Stolypin carriage is floating along the track. It is growing light through the carriage window and I am writing you a letter. The labor camp administration in the Township of Bazoi, where I was previously held, is faring well now and breathes cool -- they are rid of me.

My first appeal to Procurator Maslov, dated September 30, 1984, was thrown out. In this appeal, I described the beatings and anti-Semitic activity against me in the camp. I wrote this appeal in order to make a stand on these points.

So, I held a two day hunger strike in protest from November 17, to November 18. In the beginning of December obviously as a counter measure, the camp administration swung into attack. They forced me to work on a job which is considered shameful: building a fence in a forbidden zone, and by these actions provoking other inmates against me to undermine my security in the camp. In the camp, it is considered that work that is carried out in the forbidden zone is done only by stool pigeons. I had to refuse -- what should I have done? For refusing to do this job, I was punished with two terms in the special Security Ward from December 4, to December 7, and from December 13, to December 20. I had to prolong my hunger strike to eight days, from December 17 to December 25. The hunger strike bore fruit: the administration had to withdraw its punitive measures.

On December 26, I was given a job with a specific output -- the weaving of mesh baskets. The first month I was considered to be an apprentice. On January 26, 1985, with no substantial basis, they put me into the Special Security Ward for a ten day term, for alleged "non-fulfillment of the estimated output".

On the morning of January 31, I was informed of the decree to intern me into the interior labor camp prison for a six month term. In the aftermath, I was transferred from Bazoi to the prison of Irkutsk and then on to Labor Camp No. 23. I will reach Khanyahki tomorrow, February 5. This name has Japanese origins: it derived its name from the Japanese expression "Black Hole", named among the Japanese inmates placed there after World War II.

There were a lot of investigation commissions in Bazoi. I was issued the formal replies by Mr. Bolangan, the Head of the Management of the Labor Camps, which were forwarded to

you, too. It is an outrageous lie from the first line to the last. The conditions in Bazoi were unbelievably terrible. Fresh underwear is not issued for 20 days at a time. The labor camp inmates are being starved. The interior walls of the bathhouse are covered with snow and ice. To degrade us further, spoons are denied to prisoners in the Special Security Ward. Urmaev, the Head of the Regional Department of the Labor Camp in Bazoi, wrote that in accordance with Soviet Law, spoons in the Special Security Ward are not allowed. Terrible cold forced all the inmates to cling to the heating batteries. The terrible situation is exacerbated with filth and lice. For three days in a row, the central heating does not function, only steam comes up out of the mouth of the heater. We're frozen to the bone in 19 below zero weather.

The Procurator's office does nothing. Procurator Varchashin makes visitations once a month, looks around and heads home. In all probability our pressure should grind them to the ground and make matters difficult for them. You have explicit information about me so they decided to hide me away and put me into the interior labor camp prison.

The last two months water supply is cut off in Bazoi. Water is being obtained from the central heating battery. It is being poured into the drinking cans and we have to drink out of them. When I was in Irkutsk, I was placed in cell No. 25. Bedding is not provided. For 35 persons, they allocated 27 blankets. The spoon situation there is the same. Moreover, they take spoons away from us and throw them away. For 35 persons, there are only seven or eight spoons. The "fresh fish" (new prisoners) in Bazoi Camp were beaten up, but after we attracted attention to this practice, the beatings were stopped. One of those inmates who beat me, his name is Zuov, is double-dealing. He was released prematurely for such a "heroic deed".

What is known about Khanyahki? The camp is cramped with prisoners. There are more than 2,000 prisoners. Five people have to sleep on two plank beds. The inmates who are forcefully being treated for alcoholism will be put with me. The level of food provision there is being kept so low as only to sustain the level between life and death. The norms of food provision, even concerning bread, are not observed. They say that sometimes bread is not being brought to the prisoners for several days. Beside me, there is a man who has served his time there for a month and now is being returned. I do not even know if there is a bathhouse. In the camp to which I am being sent to do my time, like in Bazoi, the inmates are being forced to sign a routine agreement to collaborate with the prison administration. If the inmate refuses to observe this

procedure, he is threatened that he will be sentenced to Unit No. 11 (like No. 5 in Bazoi), where homosexual inmates are kept. It is very likely that I will be locked in the interior camp prison from the very beginning.

My weight now is 73 kilograms. You must know that I informed them that I want to play it cool, that I will do the necessary work, that I am not going to break the camp regime. I am not intending to make complaints about my situation as long as they provide the appropriate and legal conditions of my term.

The Bazoi Administration did not provide me with my personal clothes. I have a hunch that they simply stole them. You know that I had clothes before my arrest. So, please bring this point into the court.

Signed,

Zachar Zunshine

1985

March 4

Tatiana immediately traveled to Octyabrsky District, to the camp called Khanyahki - the "Black Hole" - in her continuing struggle to receive information about her husband.



Letter No. 7, from Tanya to Chicago Action For Soviet Jewry

TO: Chicago Action For Soviet Jewry

March 10, 1985

Dear Ones,

I returned to Sverdlovsk on March 9. Here are the events which occurred while I was in Siberia:

I was there for a week beginning on March 4. I was trying to get information about my husband, Zachar Zunshine. What I learned is that they are trying not to tell me anything about him.

First, I had a three hour meeting with the Head of the Camp Department, Bolshakov, at the Procurator's Office in the Irkutsk Region. I wrote him a complaint about the terrible conditions in the Bazoi Camp, according to Zachar's letter, and about the illegal reasons for Zachar's imprisonment in the internal prison in the labor camp. He told me only one thing: "We will take this matter into our consideration and give you a written answer." However, they told me that there is no violation of the law and that will be the text of their letter to me. He was very interested in the source of my information, how I know so many details about my husband's life in labor camp - that is the special thing that interested him.

Afterwards, I had a talk with the Head of the Operative Department of the Gulag Office, Major Kovalov (this department is the equivalent of the KGB in the camps.) Also present at the meeting was a representative of the Regime Department, Gusarov. Again, they tried not to say anything about Zachar. The only thing they said was that Zachar was moved to Khanyahki only for one-half of a year term of his imprisonment because the internal labor camp in Bazoi does not function. They said he will return to Bazoi again. They said, "of course it is a very terrible term for him - this one-half year imprisonment - because he did nothing illegal." This was said specifically by Kovalov. He also said that a month or two would have been enough for him.

By that statement, it became absolutely clear to me that they needed only the fact of his imprisonment to give Zachar an additional sentence. They did not even try to conceal it. You see, two terms of Special Security Ward (or even one term) in any prison is enough to give him an additional sentence... and Zachar has already had three terms in the Special Security Ward in Bazoi Camp. So they said, of course, it is hard but the administration of the camp has the right to give another term of up to half a year, so they prefer the maximum time.

They told me that for him it would be too bad if he should do something again - alluding to his refusal to perform shameful chores - because they will continue to try to give him these jobs again and again, in spite of all his and my protests.

They want me not to support Zachar. They told me that I should behave in another way. That I should not write supportive letters to him...instead, I should write advising him to do anything the camp authorities want and then everything will be alright. It became clear that Zachar's and my letters are read not only by the camp censors, which is according to the law, but also by Kovalov since he knew what I had written to Zachar and what Zachar had answered. He is the Head of the Gulag Office in all of the Irkutsk Region and he is reading Zachar's letters personally!

Then I went from the Irkutsk District to Khanyahki, to this "Black Hole." To get to Khanyahki, you have to go by passenger train Northwest from Irkutsk for 23 hours. (It is 90 kilometers from the town of Pieshet and is in the Region of Bahn.) Then, you take a bus 10 or 12 kilometers along the Township of Octyabrsky and get out and cross a river, by foot, to reach Khanyahki. It looks so awful. It really looks like a black hole. It is grey and even has black houses. There are no streets. It is a very poor township. I met no people there. There are only soldiers and dogs. I saw only one gloomy old woman and I asked her where the Post Office was. She told me that there is no Post Office here. I saw an awful and dirty truck with big letters written "PEOPLE" - but this truck is fit only for animals, not people. It is such an awful place that I could hardly keep from crying.

In the camp in Khanyahki, I met with the Chief of the Camp, Colonel Valiulin, and again, he didn't want to answer any of my questions. I understand that it is a common policy not to give me any information about my husband, in spite of the fact that I am his wife and have a right to know about him.

So, I had to speak with the "natives" because not one of the officials would speak with me. I spoke with people from the Township of Octyabrsky (those who would speak to me) and they said the winter there is terrible and that all of February the temperature was 40 to 50 degrees below zero and they even had a day where the temperature was 53 degrees below zero. They told me that the inmates there work as wood loaders.

I have learned dreadful details about the Special Security Ward there: it is special premises which is not heated at all - not heated in spite of the fact that it's 50 degrees

below zero in the winter. It is made of concrete and the most awful thing is, that there are no cots at all! No cots during the day or during the night. They have to sleep on the concrete floor. I was told that after three terms there nobody can survive. One man told me that after three terms they either get tuberculosis, agree to do everything the administration wants from them, or die. It is murder. You see, nobody can survive these conditions.

Zachar already had three terms in the Special Security Ward in Bazoi. He could be put into this Special Security Ward at any time, not only from the labor camp but from this internal labor camp prison. I know very well that he will not be broken but that he will lose his health.

I spoke with a man who worked in this labor camp in Khanyahki. He said the food provisions in the camp are reduced like in the Special Security Ward. They are allowed to walk for one-half hour per day, the rest of the time is spent in their cell. Zachar will be allowed to write one letter every two months. There is a plank cot affixed to the wall during the day, but the administration places it down during the night. All day long there they have to stand on their feet. The cells are filled with from 6 to 15 men. I know that Zachar would rather be alone than to be together with criminals. It is very hard in these conditions - all day long standing on your feet - it is very difficult to spend half a year.

We need everything as before: letters to Moscow, to Irkutsk, to camp officials, showing your outrage at these terrible conditions. Please, continue calling the government, the officials, the heads of organizations to ask them to call the Soviet Union about the situation. We would like Congressmen and Senators to write and ask for a meeting with Zachar. My husband needs juridical aid, we would like to have a group of attorneys ask for a meeting with Zachar as his personal attorneys. Please send spoons and cups to the Gulag Office in Irkutsk and Moscow.

Gulag Office of the USSR  
Bolshaya Brommaja 23  
Moscow

Signed,

Tatiana Zunshine

Letter No. 8, delivered personally to Secretary of State George Shultz.

April 15, 1985

The Honorable George Shultz  
Secretary of State  
Washington, D. C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary of State:

Bearing the great burden of responsibility for the foreign affairs of the United States, you could not be indifferent to the problems of human rights and freedoms of human beings, as they are being declared the basic platform of the political cause of the USA. We're on the eve of the celebration of the greatest victory of civilized humankind in the war against fascism, but not only wars are destroying human lives and not only on the battlefield do people die.

My husband, Zachar Zunshine, together with me, desired to leave the USSR. He was carrying out his fight to realize his right to leave from the USSR and so now, he's in prison and shares the hard fate of many Soviet Jews who are kept in confinement for their fight for repatriation to Israel and reunification with their families. Still arrested severely, on false charges, for the "dissemination of anti-Soviet information," more than a year ago, Zachar Zunshine was deprived of his right for legal and judicial procedures of the camp. For two months he was kept in the Special Security Ward confinement under terrible conditions; therefore, he appealed before the court in trial. His defendants, relatives, friends, co-thinkers, and my friends were not allowed to be present during the court trial. Bereft of the very basis of medical aid required after his hunger strikes, having lost one-quarter of his original body weight during his term in custody, having to be face-to-face with people who were trying to break his will, Zachar Zunshine found himself power to fight for his honor and dignity.

Inhuman conditions in the prison did not break him, despite the fact that his situation was deteriorating. The sudden death of his mother, who was carried to the brink of ruin by horrifying details of his beatings in the prison. At the first labor camp in Siberia, cruel beatings, special solitary confinement, mockery -- existence in conditions which are unbearable even for animals, could not trample underfoot his feelings of honor and self-dignity. That is why he has been deprived of any contacts with me. For several months, I have not heard anything from and about him.

For several months he is confined in the Siberia Internal Labor Camp Prison, the condition of which bears a resemblance

of much cruelty. In one of his letters written in prison, my husband wrote, "It has become clear a long time ago that life does not constitute a primary value in itself. There are more important things in the world than life itself. And in some cases, it is not worth the thought to cling to it very strongly."

I do know, that although the danger of death is impending on him, he remained a man, even there. Even if the power of the spiritual might of human beings happens to be grandiose, there are still limits to our physical abilities.

Mr. Secretary of State, I desperately hope and rely on your personal help, on your practical steps with objectives of saving lives, and release from the prison of my husband, and an unhampered leave of our family from the USSR.

Gratefully,

Tatiana Zunshine, Kakhovaka 4, Apt. 131, Riga, Latvian SSR  
USSR.



Letter No. 9, delivered personally to President Ronald Reagan

April 15, 1985

President Ronald Reagan  
The White House  
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am appealing to you because I rely on your special help, because the greatness of a political leader is also being determined by how many lives he saves and how many people on earth he makes secure. We're on the eve of the celebration of the greatest victory of civilized humankind in the war against fascism, but not only wars are destroying human lives and not only on the battlefield do people die.

My husband, Mr. Zachar Zunshine, together with me, desire to leave the USSR. He was carrying out his fight to realize his right to leave from the USSR and so now, he's in prison and shares the hard fate of many Soviet Jews who are kept in confinement for their fight for repatriation to Israel and reunification with their families. Still arrested severely, on false charges, for the "dissemination of anti-Soviet information," more than a year ago, Zachar Zunshine was deprived of his right for legal and judicial procedures of the camp. For two months, he was kept in the Special Security Ward confinement under terrible conditions, therefore, he appealed before the court in trial. His defendants, relatives, friends, co-thinkers, and my friends, were not allowed to be present during the court trial. Bereft of the very basis of medical aid required after his hunger strikes, having lost one-quarter of his original weight during his term in custody, having to be face-to-face with people who were trying to break his will, Zachar Zunshine found in himself power to fight for his honor and dignity.

Inhuman conditions in the prison did not break him, despite the fact that his situation was deteriorating. The sudden death of his mother, who was carried to the brink of ruin by horrifying details of his beating in the prison. At the first labor camp in Siberia, cruel beatings, special solitary confinement, mockery -- existence in conditions which are unbearable even for animals, could not trample underfoot his feelings of honor and self-dignity. That is why he has been deprived of any contacts with the outside world for many months and any contacts with me. For several months, I have not heard anything from and about him.



For several months he is confined in the Siberia Internal Labor Camp Prison, the condition of which bears a resemblance of much cruelty. In one of his letters written in the prison, my husband wrote, "It has become clear a long time ago that life does not constitute a primary value in itself. There are more important things in the world than life itself. And in some cases, it is not worth the thought to cling to it very strongly."

I do know, that although the danger of death is impending on him, he remained a man, even there. Even if the power of the spiritual might of human beings happens to be grandiose, there are still limits to our physical abilities.

Mr. President, don't let my husband die. Help me to save his life and freedom.

Gratefully,

Signed: Tatiana Zunshine, Kakhovaka 4, Apt. 131, Riga,  
Latvian SSR, USSR

1985

May 4

Tatiana was detained by Major Kovalov, the Head of the Riga KGB "Jewish Department," who threatened her with reprisals for her activity on behalf of her husband.

Prison address:

Institution UK 272/23  
Township of Octyabrsky  
District of Irkutsky Region  
RSFSR

Letter No. 10, appeal from Tatiana Zunshine to Government Officials

May 23, 1985

To: Deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian Republic  
Deputies of the USSR  
Deputies of the Russian Republic

Dear Mr. Deputy:

On March 6, 1984, my husband, Mr. Zachar Zunshine, was arrested for his aspiration to leave the USSR, accused of anti-Soviet slander and sentenced to three years of imprisonment. On September 26, on the first day of his arrival to the Labor Camp No. 14, of the Irkutsk Region, my husband was brutally beaten in the camp headquarters. To provoke charges, he had been twice put into the Special Security Ward before. On January 31, he was transferred to the Labor Camp No. 23 of the same region and without any reason, put into the internal labor camp prison for one-half a year term.

The conditions in the labor camps of the Irkutsk Region threaten not only ones health, but one's life. Terrible cold, filth and lice, water is being obtained from the central heating batteries. In the Special Security Ward, one could fall ill with tuberculosis. The norms of food provision is not observed, spoons are not available. Moreover, they take spoons from those who have them. From December 1, I have no letters from my husband. The administration of the camp refuses to inform me the reason for this. I do not know what has been done with him; what is the state of his health -- if his health is good enough to write me a letter, why does the administration of the camp refuse to send it to me. Why do the officials of the Gulag Office and Procurator's Office of the Irkutsk Region keep silent on my request about no letters.

Dear Mr. Deputy, help me get letters from my husband. Help me save his life and health.

Signed,

Tatiana Zunshine