

Soviet human rights

From Mrs Lyudmila Alexeyeva and others

Sir, The Soviet authorities have arrested seven members of the Group to Promote the Observance of the Helsinki Agreement in the USSR. They are: Yuri Orlov (physicist, aged 52), Aleksandr Ginzburg (manager of the Solzhenitsyn Fund in Aid of Political Prisoners in the USSR, aged 40), Anatoliy Shcharansky (physicist, 29), Mikola Rudenko (writer, 55), Oleksa Tikhiy (teacher, 50), Zwiad Gamsakhurdiya (philologist) and Mirab Kostava (philologist).

The Group was formed last May to promote implementation of the humanitarian provisions of the Helsinki Agreement. It has distributed its material on violations of human rights in the USSR to the governments of all countries signatory to the Helsinki Agreement, including the Soviet Government.

The arrest of the seven members of the Group, headed by Professor Orlov, shows that the Soviet authorities have no intention of

fulfilling the Helsinki Agreement or of letting the Soviet public monitor their actions. They intend to use the arrested persons as hostages in their campaign against dissidents and in their negotiations with the West.

As overseas representatives of this Group we appeal to the public in those countries which subscribed to the Helsinki Agreement to press for the release of those arrested. Genuine security in the world is impossible without the observance of human rights, and the violation of these rights in the USSR is a threat to the whole world.

The Soviet authorities are compelled to reckon with world public opinion, and if your readers give us their support the seven arrested Soviet hostages may be released.

Yours faithfully,

LYUDMILA ALEXEYEVA,

ANDREY AMALRIK,

VLADIMIR BUKOVSKY,

Post Office Box 90,

Bromley,

Kent.

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