

Ida Nudel

Ida Nudel's story was told to us by Genya Intrator. Genya is a Canadian activist on behalf of Soviet Jewry. She has been consistently in touch — by telephone — with the *refuseniks* in the Soviet Union for the past 10 years. Genya is committed to bringing the protests of these political prisoners to world notice so that we may all 'stand up and be counted' on their behalf.

Ida Nudel was sent into exile in Siberia because she hung a banner outside her flat saying, 'KGB Give Me My Visa.' On trial for this 'vandalism and malicious hooliganism' in a Moscow court, she was allowed no legal representation and no witnesses were allowed to testify on her behalf.

What action led up to that courtroom appearance? In a 'Letter from Exile' (May 15-23, 1979) Ida Nudel recalls the incident that led to her jailing. She said: 'The 1st of June is the International Day for Protection of Children. A long time before that day, Jewish women-refuseniks in Moscow agreed on the conduct of a demonstration with their children participating in it.

'A lot of preparation work was done and there had been long discussions on how, when and where the demonstration should be conducted.

'I did not share the women's idea to go up to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet together with their children. My experience of being a refusenik for many years told me that the task was an impossible one. It would be naive to hope for success knowing that the KGB knows about the plan to hold a demonstration and has a list of the participants. The majority of the women participants would be detained near their homes and would spend a useless day in militia offices or the offices of the public order units.

'I, therefore, suggested another plan — not to go anywhere, to gather in groups in different apartments, to lock ourselves inside and to hang out our placards in the windows. The plan was accepted. The women were divided into five groups and each group had a program of its own. The program resulted in the shock received by the KGB and the unprecedented statement by TASS of the 2nd of June 1978 which followed it.



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'The KGB spent this day under the windows of my apartment, a noisy day which included broken windows, a militia unit and a unit of KGB cadets who surrounded my house. The success of the "operation" was tremendous and I am using this word without irony. It was I who have been charged with malicious hooliganism.'

It is important for us to realize that this courageous demonstration was carried out by women. They took complete responsibility for organizing the protest and for suffering the consequences of their actions. Ida Nudel was their leader on that day which led to her exile. These are her words from her 'trial':

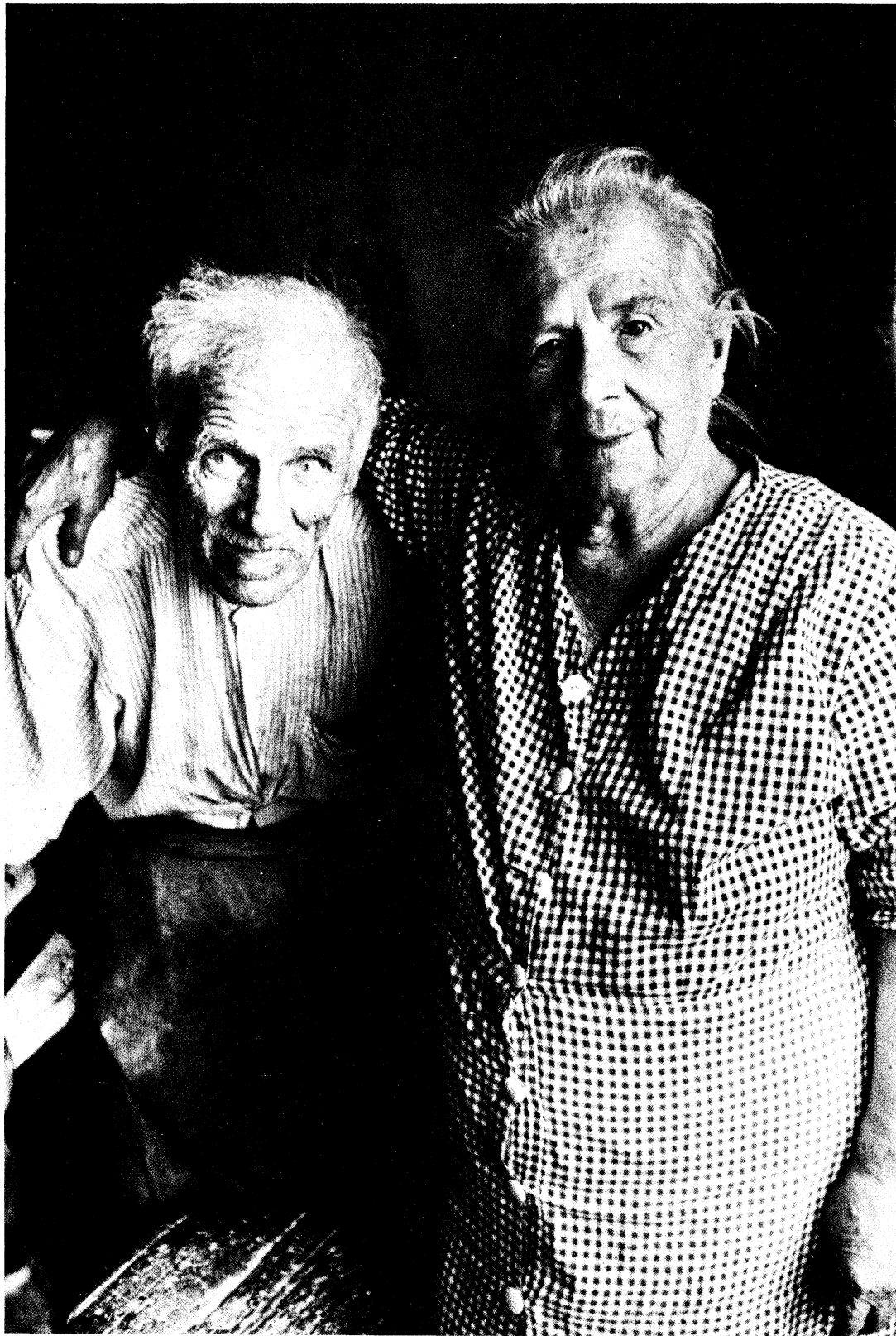
'True, I did something on July 1st. Out of desperation I determined upon my right to protest. But I am not being tried for that. I am being tried for the previous seven years. The most beautiful years of my life. And if, years hence, I am again called upon to say a final word, I am absolutely certain that then also I will say that these seven years of my life, for which I now sit accused, were the most difficult and beautiful of my life.'

'During these years I learned to hold my head high with pride, as a woman and as a Jew. These years were filled with continuous struggle

for myself and for others. And every time I succeeded in saving the life of another victim, my heart was filled with an incomparable uplifting feeling. Perhaps it is akin to the feelings of a woman bringing forth new life. Even if all the rest of my life is grey and monotonous, these seven years will warm my soul and vouchsafe that my life was not in vain. Not one of you, my judges, can pass a sentence that will erase the triumph and victory of these years.'

Ida Nudel has been jailed. Why? Because she 'determined her right to protest.' A right that most of us consider as basic. How can we help this 48-year-old woman — a sister who is a prisoner of conscience?

1. Send Ida the enclosed card to encourage her.
2. Write letters of protest to the Soviet government (by registered mail)
U.S.S.R.
Moscow
Kremlin
L.I. Brejnev
3. Contact members of Parliament and people in influential positions by writing and speaking to them and enlisting them in this cause.
4. Get your friends to do the same, and keep doing it until public opinion is so roused that Ida is released.⑥



Ellen A. Spitz, from *Women See Woman*