

# Soviet to Free Leading Dissident In Trade for Chilean Communist

By **CHRISTOPHER S. WREN**

Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, Dec. 17—The Soviet Union's most prominent imprisoned dissident, Vladimir K. Bukovsky, is being freed in exchange for the release by Chile of the jailed chief of the Chilean Communist Party, Mr. Bukovsky's mother reported today.

[The exchange was arranged in negotiations over the last six weeks with the United States acting as intermediary between Chile and the Soviet Union, according to officials in Washington.]

Nina I. Bukovsky said that two officers of the K.G.B., the security police, appeared at her apartment Tuesday afternoon to inform her of the exchange. Since then, she said, she has also been informed that her son would be taken tomorrow morning to a Moscow airport.

From there he is to fly with his mother, sister and nephew, who is ill, to Switzerland where the exchange for the Chilean Communist Party leader, Luis Corvalán Lepe, is to take place.

Mr. Bukovsky, who will be 34 years old Dec. 30, had been in Vladimir Prison east of Moscow serving a seven-year sentence on charges of anti-Soviet agitation.

Mr. Bukovsky became known in the West mainly for having smuggled abroad evidence documenting that sane nonconformists were being sent to Soviet psychiatric hospitals. He was arrested in March 1971 and sentenced after a one-day trial the following January. At the time, Mr. Bukovsky had already spent six years in prisons and mental institutions.

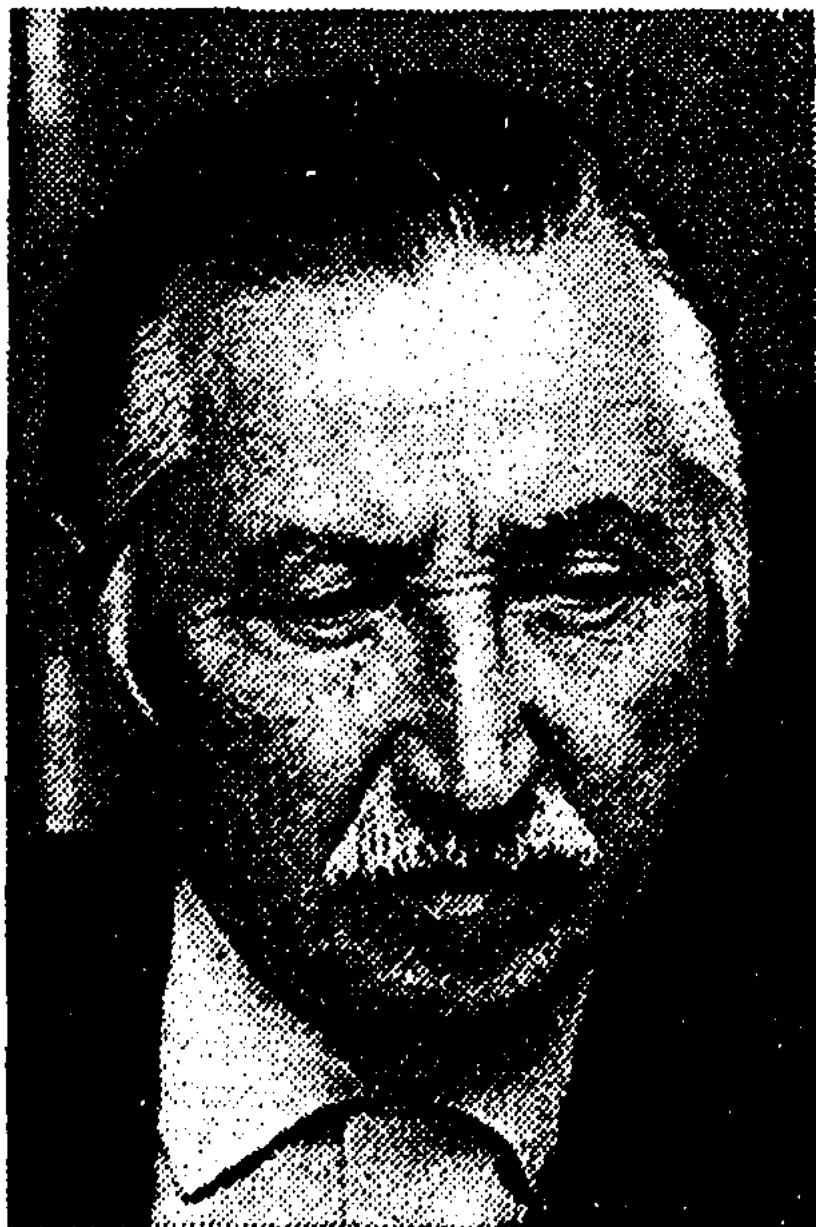
He is the second imprisoned Soviet dissident to be freed and sent abroad this year. In January, Leonid Plyushach, a Ukrainian, was released from a psychiatric hospital after the French Communist Party had intervened on his behalf.

Mr. Bukovsky's problems with Soviet



Associated Press

**Vladimir K. Bukovsky**



ABC News

**Luis Corvalán Lepe**

Continued on Page 6, Column 1

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Continued From Page 1

authorities date back to 1961, when he was expelled from Moscow University for having distributed copies of "The New Class," the book by Milovan Djilas criticizing Communist society.

The report that Mr. Bukovsky was about to be freed in exchange for the release of Mr. Corvalán by Chile came as a surprise to diplomats here. Last month the Chilean military Government offered to release the 60-year-old Communist leader if the Soviet Union would let Mr. Bukovsky and his mother, a 56-year-old widow, leave for the West. At the time, Moscow seemed to dismiss the proposal as a propaganda ploy.

Mr. Corvalá has been held in Chile since the military seized power from the Government of President Salvador Allende Gossens in September 1973. [The Communist leader was freed on Friday and put aboard a plane for Europe, according to radio reports in Santiago, Chile, as quoted by United Press International.]

There seemed no recent precedent for the Soviet Union to barter political prisoners, though captured spies have been traded in the past. It was not known why Moscow had agreed to the deal, which could open it to pressure for the exchange of other political prisoners, unless it felt that the release of Mr. Corvalán would enhance the stature of Leonid I. Brezhnev in the Communist world. Mr. Bukovsky's role in the affair was expected to be downplayed or ignored altogether in the publicity given here to Mr. Corvalán's release.

## As Many as 10,000 Held

Moscow has contended that it has no political prisoners, though activities considered anti-Soviet are subject to criminal prosecution. The human rights organization Amnesty International estimated in its report last year that up to 10,000 political and religious "prisoners of conscience" were held in Soviet prisons, labor camps and mental institutions.

Mrs. Bukovsky, a pleasant and graying woman aged beyond her years by the strain of her son's imprisonment, suggested that "I think it is only because they want to free Luis Corvalán. If there were not such an exchange, they couldn't free my son."

But she also credited public pressure from the West with having promoted her son's release. Mr. Bukovsky, by one friend's reckoning, has already spent 11 of his 33 years in Soviet jails and mental institutions for dissident activities. When Mrs. Bukovsky visited him in prison last August, she said she had found him "terribly emaciated, like a concentration camp victim."

Word of his ill health sparked a Western drive for his release that was joined by some West European Communists. At the same time, the Soviet Union led a Communist campaign to free Mr. Corva-

lán, who was also reported in poor health.

The release of Mr. Bukovsky for Mr. Corvalán has been proposed earlier this fall in a human rights committee in Copenhagen named after the dissident Soviet physicist, Andrei D. Sakharov. Today, Dr. Sakharov expressed happiness with the news and hoped that it might lead to a broader amnesty of political prisoners.

Following the visit by a man and woman from the K.G.B. on Tuesday, Mrs. Bukovsky said, the security agency was making all the arrangements for their departure, even driving her to have her passport picture taken. "I haven't had to spend a single kopeck," she commented.

Her divorced daughter, Olga, and her grandson, Mikhail, who has been hospitalized for three weeks with suspected cancer of the lymph glands, will leave on the same flight with Mr. Bukovsky and his mother.