

THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO

THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO

Also by Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn

The Nobel Lecture on Literature

August 1914

A Lenten Letter to Pimen, Patriarch of All Russia

Stories and Prose Poems

The Love Girl and the Innocent

The Cancer Ward

The First Circle

For the Good of the Cause

We Never Make Mistakes

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn

THE GULAG
ARCHIPELAGO

1918–1956

An Experiment in Literary Investigation

I-II

Translated from the Russian by Thomas P. Whitney

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I dedicate this to all those who did not live
to tell it. And may they please forgive me
for not having seen it all nor remembered it all,
for not having divined all of it.

Authors Note

For years I have with reluctant heart withheld from publication this already completed book: my obligation to those still living outweighed my obligation to the dead. But now that State Security has seized the book anyway, I have no alternative but to publish it immediately.

In this book there are no fictitious persons, nor fictitious events. People and places are named with their own names. If they are identified by initials instead of names, it is for personal considerations. If they are not named at all, it is only because human memory has failed to preserve their names. But all took place just as it is here described.

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Preface

In 1949 some friends and I came upon a noteworthy news item in Nature, 21 magazine of the Academy of Sciences. It reported in tiny type that in the course of excavations on the Kolyma River

subterranean ice lens had been discovered which was actually a frozen stream—and in it were four frozen specimens of prehistoric fauna some tens of thousands of years old. Whether fish or salamander, these were preserved in so fresh a state, the scientific correspondent reported, that those present immediately broke open the ice encasing the specimens and devoured them with relish on the spot.

The magazine no doubt astonished its small audience with the news of how successfully the flesh of fish could be kept fresh in a frozen state. But few, indeed, among its readers were able to decipher the genuine and heroic meaning of this incautious report.

As for us, however—we understood instantly. We could picture the entire scene right down to the smallest details: how those present broke up the ice in frenzied haste; how, flouting the higher claims of ichthyology and elbowing each other to be first, they tore off chunks of the prehistoric flesh and hauled them over to the bonfire to thaw them out and bolt them down.

We understood because we ourselves were the same kind of people as those present at that event. We, too, were from that powerful tribe of zeks, unique on the face of the earth, the only people who could devour prehistoric salamander with relish.

And the Kolyma was the greatest and most famous island, the

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pole of ferocity of that amazing country of Gulag which, though scattered in an Archipelago geographically, was, in the psychological sense, fused into a continent—an almost invisible, almost imperceptible country inhabited by the zek people.

And this Archipelago crisscrossed and patterned that other country within which it was located like a gigantic patchwork, cutting into its cities, hovering over its streets. Yet there were many who did not even guess at its presence and many, many others who had heard something vague. And only those who had been there knew the whole truth.

But, as though stricken dumb on the islands of the Archipelago, they kept their silence.

By an unexpected turn of our history, a bit of the truth, an insignificant part of the whole, was allowed out in the open. But those same hands which once screwed tight our handcuffs now hold our palms in reconciliation: "No, don't! Don't dig up the past! Dwell on the past and you'll lose an eye."

But the proverb goes on to say: "Forget the past and you'll lose both eyes."

Decades go by, and the scars and sores of the past are healing over for good. In the course of this period some of the islands of the Archipelago have shuddered and dissolved and the polar sea of oblivion rolls over them. And someday in the future, this Archipelago, its air, and the bones of its inhabitants, frozen in a lens of ice, will be discovered by our descendants like some improbable salamander.

I would not be so bold as to try to write the history of the Archipelago. I have never had the chance to read the documents. And, in fact, will anyone ever have the chance to read them? Those who do not wish to recall have already had enough time—and will have more—to destroy all the documents down to the very last one.

I have absorbed into myself my own eleven years there not as something shameful nor as a nightmare to be cursed: I have come almost to love that monstrous world, and now, by a happy turn of events, I have also been entrusted with many recent reports and letters. So perhaps I shall be able to give some account of the bones and flesh of that salamander—which, incidentally, is still alive.

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This book could never have been created by one person alone. In addition to what I myself was able to take away from the Archipelago—on the skin of my back, and with my eyes and ears—material for this book was given me in reports, memoirs, and letters by 227 witnesses, whose names

were to have been listed here.

~~What I here express to them is not personal gratitude, because this is our common, collective monument to all those who were tortured and murdered.~~

From among them I would like to single out in particular those who worked hard to help me obtain supporting bibliographical material from books to be found in contemporary libraries or from books long since removed from libraries and destroyed; great persistence was often required to find even one copy which had been preserved. Even more would I like to pay tribute to those who helped me keep this manuscript concealed in difficult periods and then to have it copied.

But the time has not yet come when I dare name them.

The old Solovetsky Islands prisoner Dmitri Petrovich Vitkov-sky was to have been editor of the book. But his half a lifetime spent there —indeed, his own camp memoirs are entitled "Half a Lifetime"—resulted in untimely paralysis, and it was not until after he had already been deprived of the gift of speech that he was able to read several completed chapters only and see for himself that everything will be told.

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And if freedom still does not dawn on my country for a long time to come, then the very reading and handing on of this book will be very dangerous, so that I am bound to salute future readers as well —on behalf of those who have perished.

When I began to write this book in 1958,¹ I knew of no memoirs nor works of literature dealing with the camps. During my years of work before 1967 I gradually became acquainted with the Kolyma Stories of Varlam Shalamov and the memoirs of Dmitri Vitkovsky, Y. Ginzburg, and O. Adamova Sliozberg, to which I refer in the course of my narrative as literary facts known to all (as indeed they someday shall be).

Despite their intent and against their will, certain persons provided invaluable material for the book and helped preserve many important facts and statistics as well as the very air they breathed: M. I. Sudrabs-Latsis, N. V. Krylenko, the Chief State Prosecutor for many years, his heir A. Y. Vyshinsky, and those jurists who were his accomplices, among whom one must single out in particular I. L. Averbakh.

Material for this book was also provided by thirty-six Soviet writers, headed by Maxim Gorky, authors of the disgraceful book on the White Sea Canal, which was the first in Russian literature to glorify slave labor.

PART I

The Prison Industry

"In the period of dictatorship, surrounded on all sides by enemies, we sometimes manifest unnecessary leniency and unnecessary softheartedness."

Krylenko,

speech at the Promparty trial



Aleksandr Isayevich Solzhenitsyn—in the army

... in detention



... after his release from camp



Chapter 1

Arrest

How do people get to this clandestine Archipelago? Hour by hour planes fly there, ships steer the course there, and trains thunder off to it—but all with nary a mark on them to tell of their destination. And at ticket windows or at travel bureaus for Soviet or foreign tourists the employees would be astounded if you were to ask for a ticket to go there. They know nothing and they've never heard of the Archipelago as a whole or of any one of its innumerable islands.

Those who go to the Archipelago to administer it get there via the training schools of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Those who go there to be guards are conscripted via the military conscription centers.

And those who, like you and me, dear reader, go there to die, must get there solely and compulsorily via arrest.

Arrest! Need it be said that it is a breaking point in your life, a bolt of lightning which has scored a direct hit on you? That it is an unassimilable spiritual earthquake not every person can cope with, as a result of which people often slip into insanity?

The Universe has as many different centers as there are living beings in it. Each of us is a center of the Universe, and that Universe is shattered when they hiss at you: "You are under arrest"

If you are arrested, can anything else remain unshattered by this cataclysm?

But the darkened mind is incapable of embracing these displacements in our universe, and both the most sophisticated and

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the veriest simpleton among us, drawing on all life's experience, can gasp out only: "Me? What for?"

And this is a question which, though repeated millions and millions of times before, has yet to receive an answer.

Arrest is an instantaneous, shattering thrust, expulsion, somersault from one state into another.

We have been happily borne—or perhaps have unhappily dragged our weary way—down the long and crooked streets of our lives, past all kinds of walls and fences made of rotting wood, rammed earth, brick, concrete, iron railings. We have never given a thought to what lies behind them. We have never tried to penetrate them with our vision or our understanding. But there is where the Gulag country begins, right next to us, two yards away from us. In addition, we have failed to notice an enormous number of closely fitted, well-disguised doors and gates in these fences. All those gates were prepared for us, every last one! And all of a sudden the fateful gate swings quickly open, and four white male hands, unaccustomed to physical labor but nonetheless strong and tenacious, grab us by the leg, arm, collar, cap, ear, and drag us in like a sack, and the gate behind us, the gate to our past life, is slammed shut once and for all.

That's all there is to it! You are arrested!

And you'll find nothing better to respond with than a lamblike bleat: "Me? What for?"

That's what arrest is: it's a blinding flash and a blow which shifts the present instantly into the past and the impossible into omnipotent actuality.

That's all. And neither for the first hour nor for the first day will you be able to grasp anything else.

Except that in your desperation the fake circus moon will blink at you: "It's a mistake! They'll set things right!"

And everything which is by now comprised in the traditional, even literary, image of an arrest will pile up and take shape, not in your own disordered memory, but in what your family and your neighbors in your apartment remember: The sharp nighttime ring or the rude knock at the door. The insolent entrance of the unwiped jackboots of the unsleeping State Security operatives. The frightened and cowed civilian witness at their backs. (And what function does this civilian witness serve? The victim doesn't even dare think about it and the operatives don't remem-

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ber, but that's what the regulations call for, and so he has to sit there all night long and sign in the morning. 1 For the witness, jerked from his bed, it is torture too—to go out night after night to hear arrest his own neighbors and acquaintances.)

The traditional image of arrest is also trembling hands packing for the victim—a change underwear, a piece of soap, something to eat; and no one knows what is needed, what is permitted, what clothes are best to wear; and the Security agents keep interrupting and hurrying you:

"You don't need anything. They'll feed you there. It's warm there." (It's all lies. They keep hurrying you to frighten you.)

The traditional image of arrest is also what happens afterward, when the poor victim has been taken away. It is an alien, brutal, and crushing force totally dominating the apartment for hours on end, a breaking, ripping open, pulling from the walls, emptying things from wardrobes and desks onto the floor, shaking, dumping out, and ripping apart—piling up mountains of litter on the floor—and the crunch of things being trampled beneath jackboots. And nothing is sacred in a search! During the arrest of the locomotive engineer Inoshin, a tiny coffin stood in his room containing the body of his newly dead child. The "jurists" dumped the child's body out of the coffin and searched it. They shake sick people out of their sickbeds, and they unwind bandages to search beneath them. 2

Nothing is so stupid as to be inadmissible during a search! For example, they seized from the antiquarian Chetverukhin "a certain number of pages of Tsarist decrees"—to wit, the decree on ending the war with Napoleon, on the formation of the Holy Alliance, and a proclamation of public prayer against cholera during the epidemic of 1830. From our greatest expert on Tibet, Vostrikov, they confiscated ancient Tibetan manuscripts of great value; and it took the pupils of the deceased scholar thirty years to wrest them from the KGB! When the Orientalist Nevsky was

1. The regulation, purposeless in itself, derives, N.M. recalls, from that strange time when the citizenry not only was supposed to but actually dared to verify the actions of the police.

2. When in 1937 they wiped out Dr. Kazakov's institute, the "commission" broke up the jars containing the lysates developed by him, even though patients who had been cured and others still being treated rushed around them, begging them to preserve the miraculous medicines. (According to the official version, the lysates were supposed to be poisons; in that case, why should they not have been kept as material evidence?)

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arrested, they grabbed Tangut manuscripts—and twenty-five years later the deceased victim was posthumously awarded a Lenin Prize for deciphering them. From Karger they took his archive of the Yenisei Ostyaks and vetoed the alphabet and vocabulary he had developed for this people—and a small nationality was thereby left without any written language. It would take a long time to describe all this in educated speech, but there's a folk saying about the search which covers the subject: They are looking for something which was never put there. They carry off whatever they have seized, but sometimes they compel the arrested individual to carry it. Thus Nina Aleksandrovna Pal-chinskaya hauled over her shoulder a bag filled with the papers and letters of her eternally busy and active husband, the late great Russian engineer, carrying it into their maw—once and for all, forever.

For those left behind after the arrest there is the long tail end of a wrecked and devastated life. And the attempts to go and deliver food parcels. But from all the windows the answer comes in barking voices: "Nobody here by that name!" "Never heard of him!" Yes, and in the worst days in Leningrad it took five days of standing in crowded lines just to get to that window. And it may be only after half a year or a year that the arrested person responds at all. Or else the answer is tossed out: "Deprived of the right to correspond." And that means once and for all. "No right to correspondence"—and that almost for certain means: "Has been shot." 3

That's how we picture arrest to ourselves.

The kind of night arrest described is, in fact, a favorite, because it has important advantages. Everyone living in the apartment is thrown into a state of terror by the first knock at the door. The arrested person is torn from the warmth of his bed. He is in a daze, half-asleep, helpless, and h

judgment is befogged. In a night arrest the State Security men have a superiority in numbers; there are many of them, armed, against one person who hasn't

3. In other words, "We live in the cursed conditions in which a human being can disappear into the void and even his closest relatives, his mother and his wife ... do not know for years what has become of him." Is that right or not? That is what Lenin wrote in 1910 in his obituary of Babushkin. But let me speak frankly: Babushkin was transporting arms for an uprising, and was caught with them when he was shot. He knew what he was doing. You couldn't say that about helpless rabbits like us.

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even finished buttoning his trousers. During the arrest and search it is highly improbable that a crowd of potential supporters will gather at the entrance. The unhurried, step-by-step visits, first to one apartment, then to another, tomorrow to a third and a fourth, provide an opportunity for the State Security operations personnel to be deployed with the maximum efficiency and to imprison many more citizens of a given town than the police force itself numbers.

In addition, there's an advantage to night arrests in that neither the people in neighboring apartment houses nor those on the city streets can see how many have been taken away. Arrests which frighten the closest neighbors are no event at all to those farther away. It's as if they had not taken place. Along that same asphalt ribbon on which the Black Marias scurry at night, a tribe of youngsters strides by day with banners, flowers, and gay, untroubled songs.

But those who take, whose work consists solely of arrests, for whom the horror is boringly repetitive, have a much broader understanding of how arrests operate. They operate according to a large body of theory, and innocence must not lead one to ignore this. The science of arrest is an important segment of the course on general penology and has been propped up with a substantial body of social theory. Arrests are classified according to various criteria: nighttime and daytime; at home or at work, during a journey; first-time arrests and repeats; individual and group arrests. Arrests are distinguished by the degree of surprise required, the amount of resistance expected (even though tens of millions of cases no resistance was expected and in fact there was none). Arrests are also differentiated by the thoroughness of the required search; 4 by instructions either to make out or not

4. And there is a separate Science of Searches too. I have had the chance to read a pamphlet on the subject for correspondence-school law students in Alma-Ata. Its author praises highly those police officials who in the course of their searches went so far as to turn over two tons of manure, eight cubic yards of firewood, or two loads of hay; cleaned the snow from an entire collective-farm vegetable plot, dismantled brick ovens, dug up cesspools, checked out toilet bowls, looked into doghouses, chicken coops, birdhouses, tore apart mattresses, ripped adhesive tape off people's bodies and even tore out metal teeth in the search for microfilm. Students were advised to begin and to end with a body search (during the course of the search the arrested person might have grabbed up something that had already been examined). They were also advised to return to the site of a search at a different time of day and carry out the search all over again.

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make out an inventory of confiscated property or seal a room or apartment; to arrest the wife after the husband and send the children to an orphanage, or to send the rest of the family into exile, or to send the old folks to a labor camp too.

No, no: arrests vary widely in form. In 1926 Irma Mendel, a Hungarian, obtained through the Comintern two front-row tickets to the Bolshoi Theatre. Interrogator Klegel was courting her at the time and she invited him to go with her. They sat through the show very affectionately, and when it was over he took her—straight to the Lubyanka. And if on a flowering June day in 1927 on Kuznetskiy Most, the plump-cheeked, redheaded beauty Anna Skripnikova, who had just bought some navy-blue material for a dress, climbed into a hansom cab with a young man-about-town, you can be sure

wasn't a lovers' tryst at all, as the cabman understood very well and showed by his frown (he knew the Organs don't pay). It was an arrest. In just a moment they would turn on the Lubyanka and enter the black maw of the gates. And if, some twenty-two springs later, Navy Captain Second Rank Boris Burkovsky, wearing a white tunic and a trace of expensive eau de cologne, was buying a cake for a young lady, do not take an oath that the cake would ever reach the young lady and not be sliced up instead by the knives of the men searching the captain and then delivered to him in his first cell. No one certainly cannot say that daylight arrest, arrest during a journey, or arrest in the middle of a crowd has ever been neglected in our country. However, it has always been clean-cut—and, most surprising of all, the victims, in cooperation with the Security men, have conducted themselves in the noblest conceivable manner, so as to spare the living from witnessing the death of the condemned.

Not everyone can be arrested at home, with a preliminary knock at the door (and if there is no knock, then it has to be the house manager or else the postman). And not everyone can be arrested at work either. If the person to be arrested is vicious, then it's better to seize him outside his ordinary milieu—away from his family and colleagues, from those who share his views, from any hiding places. It is essential that he have no chance to destroy, hide, or pass on anything to anyone. VIP's of the military or the Party were sometimes first given new assignments, ensconced in a private railway car, and then arrested en route. Some

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obscure, ordinary mortal, scared to death by epidemic arrests all around him and already depressed for a week by sinister glances from his chief, is suddenly summoned to the local Party committee where he is beamingly presented with a vacation ticket to a Sochi sanatorium. The rabbit is overwhelmed and immediately concludes that his fears were groundless. After expressing his gratitude, he hurries home, triumphant, to pack his suitcase. It is only two hours till train time, and he scolds his wife for being too slow. He arrives at the station with time to spare. And there in the waiting room or at the bar he is hailed by an extraordinarily pleasant young man: "Don't you remember me, Pyotr Ivanich?" Pyotr Ivanich has difficulty remembering: "Well, not exactly, you see, although ..." The young man, however, is overflowing with friendly concern: "Come now, how can that be? I'll have to remind you. . . ." And he bows respectfully to Pyotr Ivanich's wife: "You must forgive us. I'll keep him only one minute." The wife accedes, and trustingly the husband lets himself be led away by the arm—forever or for ten years!

The station is thronged—and no one notices anything. . . . Oh, you citizens who love to travel! Do not forget that in every station there are a GPU Branch and several prison cells.

This importunity of alleged acquaintances is so abrupt that only a person who has not had the wolfish preparation of camp life is likely to pull back from it. Do not suppose, for example, that if you are an employee of the American Embassy by the name of Alexander D. you cannot be arrested in broad daylight on Gorky Street, right by the Central Telegraph Office. Your unfamiliar friend dashes through the press of the crowd, and opens his plundering arms to embrace you: "Saaasha!" He simply shouts at you, with no effort to be inconspicuous. "Hey, pal! Long time no see! Come on over, let's get out of the way." At that moment a Pobeda sedan draws up to the curb. . . . And several days later TASS will issue an angry statement to all the papers alleging that informed circles of the Soviet government have no information on the disappearance of Alexander D. But what's so unusual about that? Our boys have carried out such arrests in Brussels—which was where Zhora Blednov was seized—not just in Moscow.

One has to give the Organs their due: in an age when public

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speeches, the plays in our theaters, and women's fashions all seem to have come off assembly lines, arrests can be of the most varied kind. They take you aside in a factory corridor after you have

had your pass checked—and you're arrested. They take you from a military hospital with a temperature of 102, as they did with Ans Bernshtein, and the doctor will not raise a peep about your arrest—just let him try! They'll take you right off the operating table—as they took N. M. Vorobyev, school inspector, in 1936, in the middle of an operation for stomach ulcer—and drag you off to a cell, as they did him, half-alive and all bloody (as Karpunich recollects). Or, like Nadya Levitskaya, you try to get information about your mother's sentence, and they give it to you, but it turns out to be a confrontation—and your own arrest! In the *Gastronome*—the fancy food store—you are invited to the special-order department and arrested there. You are arrested by a religious pilgrim whom you have put up for the night "for the sake of Christ." You are arrested by a meterman who has come to read your electric meter. You are arrested by a bicyclist who has run into you on the street, by a railway conductor, a taxi driver, a savings bank teller, the manager of a movie theater. Any one of them can arrest you, and you notice the concealed maroon-colored identification card only when it is too late.

Sometimes arrests even seem to be a game—there is so much superfluous imagination, so much well-fed energy, invested in them. After all, the victim would not resist anyway. Is it that the Security agents want to justify their employment and their numbers? After all, it would seem enough to send notices to all the rabbits marked for arrest, and they would show up obediently at the designated hour and minute at the iron gates of State Security with a bundle in their hands—ready to occupy a piece of floor in the cell for which they were intended. And, in fact, that's the way collective farmers are arrested. Who wants to go all the way to a hut at night, with no roads to travel on? They are summoned to the village soviet—and arrested there. Manual workers are called into the office.

Of course, every machine has a point at which it is overloaded, beyond which it cannot function. In the strained and overloaded years of 1945 and 1946, when trainload after trainload poured in from Europe, to be swallowed up immediately and sent off to

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Gulag, all that excessive theatricality went out the window, and the whole theory suffered greatly. All the fuss and feathers of ritual went flying in every direction, and the arrest of tens of thousands took on the appearance of a squalid roll call: they stood there with lists, read off the names of those on one train, loaded them onto another, and that was the whole arrest.

For several decades political arrests were distinguished in our country precisely by the fact that the people were arrested who were guilty of nothing and were therefore unprepared to put up any resistance whatsoever. There was a general feeling of being destined for destruction, a sense of having nowhere to escape from the GPU-NKVD (which, incidentally, given our internal passport system, was quite accurate). And even in the fever of epidemic arrests, when people leaving for work said farewell to their families every day, because they could not be certain they would return at night, even then almost no one tried to run away and only in rare cases did people commit suicide. And that was exactly what was required. A submissive sheep is a find for a wolf.

This submissiveness was also due to ignorance of the mechanics of epidemic arrests. By and large the Organs had no profound reasons for their choice of whom to arrest and whom not to arrest. They merely had over-all assignments, quotas for a specific number of arrests. These quotas might be filled on an orderly basis or wholly arbitrarily. In 1937 a woman came to the reception room of the Novocherkassk NKVD to ask what she should do about the unfed unweaned infant of a neighbor who had been arrested. They said: "Sit down, we'll find out." She sat there for two hours—whereupon they took her and tossed her into a cell. They had a total plan which had to be fulfilled in a hurry, and there was no one available to send out into the city—and here was this woman already in their hands!

On the other hand, the NKVD did come to get the Latvian Andrei Pavel near Orsha. But he didn't open the door; he jumped out the window, escaped, and shot straight to Siberia. And even though he lived under his own name, and it was clear from his documents that he had come from Orsha, he was

never arrested, nor summoned to the Organs, nor subjected to any suspicion whatsoever. After a search for wanted persons falls into three categories: Ail-Union, republican, and provincial. And the pur-

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suit of nearly half of those arrested in those epidemics would have been confined to the province. A person marked for arrest by virtue of chance circumstances, such as a neighbor's denunciation, could be easily replaced by another neighbor. Others, like Andrei Pavel, who found themselves in a trap or an ambushed apartment by accident, and who were bold enough to escape immediately, before they could be questioned, were never caught and never charged; while those who stayed behind to await justice got a term in prison. And the overwhelming majority—almost all—behaved just like that: without any spirit, helplessly, with a sense of doom.

It is true, of course, that the NKVD, in the absence of the person it wanted, would make his relatives guarantee not to leave the area. And, of course, it was easy enough to cook up a case against those who stayed behind to replace the one who had fled.

Universal innocence also gave rise to the universal failure to act. Maybe they won't take you. Maybe it will all blow over? A. I. Ladyzhensky was the chief teacher in a school in remote Kolo-gri. In 1937 a peasant approached him in an open market and passed him a message from a third person: "Aleksandr Ivanich, get out of town, you are on the list!" But he stayed: After all, the whole school rests on my shoulders, and their own children are pupils here. How can they arrest me? (Several days later he was arrested.) Not everyone was so fortunate as to understand at the age of fourteen, as did Vanya Levitsky: "Every honest man is sure to go to prison. Right now my papa is serving time, and when I grow up they'll put me in too." (They put him in when he was twenty-three years old.) The majority sit quietly and dare to hope. Since you aren't guilty, then how can they arrest you? It's a mistake! They are already dragging you along by the collar, and you still keep on exclaiming to yourself: "It's a mistake! They'll set things straight and let me out!" Others are being arrested en masse, and that's a bothersome fact, but in those other cases there is always some dark area: "Maybe he was guilty... ?" But as for you, you are obviously innocent! You still believe that the Organs are humanly logical institutions: they will set things straight and let you out.

Why, then, should you run away? And how can you resist right then? After all, you'll only make your situation worse; you'll

make it more difficult for them to sort out the mistake. And it isn't just that you don't put up any resistance; you even walk down the stairs on tiptoe, as you are ordered to do, so your neighbors won't hear. 5

At what exact point, then, should one resist? When one's belt is taken away? When one is ordered to face into a corner? When one crosses the threshold of one's home? An arrest consists of a series of incidental irrelevancies, of a multitude of things that do not matter, and there seems no point in arguing about any one of them individually—especially at a time when the thoughts of the person arrested are wrapped tightly about the big question: "What for?"—and yet all these incidental irrelevancies taken together implacably constitute the arrest.

Almost anything can occupy the thoughts of a person who has just been arrested! This alone would fill volumes. There can be feelings which we never suspected. When nineteen-year-old

5. And how we burned in the camps later, thinking: What would things have been like if ever a Security operative, when he went out at night to make an arrest, had been uncertain whether he would return alive and had to say good-bye to his family? Or if, during periods of mass arrests, as for example in Leningrad, when they arrested a quarter of the entire city, people had not simply sat there in their lairs, paling with terror at every bang of the downstairs door and at every step on the staircase but had understood they had nothing left to lose and had boldly set up in the downstairs hall a

ambush of half a dozen people with axes, hammers, pokers, or whatever else was at hand? After all, you knew ahead of time that those bluecaps were out at night for no good purpose. And you could be sure ahead of time that you'd be cracking the skull of a cutthroat. Or what about the Black Maria sitting out there on the street with one lonely chauffeur—what if it had been driven off or its tires spiked? The Organs would very quickly have suffered a shortage of officers and transport notwithstanding all of Stalin's thirst, the cursed machine would have ground to a halt!

If . . . if . . . We didn't love freedom enough. And even more—we had no awareness of the real situation. We spent ourselves in one unrestrained outburst in 1917, and then we hurried to submit. We submitted with pleasure! (Arthur Ransome describes a workers' meeting in Yaroslavl in 1921. Delegates were sent to the workers from the Central Committee in Moscow to confer on the substance of the argument about trade unions. The representative of the opposition, Y. Larin, explained to the workers that their trade union must be their defense against the administration, that they possessed rights which they had won and upon which no one else had any right to infringe. The workers, however, were completely indifferent, simply not comprehending whom they still needed to be defended against and why they still needed any rights. When the spokesman for the Party line rebuked them for their laziness and for getting out of hand, and demanded sacrifices from them—overtime work without pay, reductions in food, military discipline in the factory administration—this aroused great elation and applause.) We purely and simply deserved everything that happened afterward.

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Yevgeniya Doyarenko was arrested in 1921 and three young Chekists were poking about her body and through the underwear in her chest of drawers, she was not disturbed. There was nothing there and they would find nothing. But all of a sudden they touched her personal diary, which she would not have shown even to her own mother. And these hostile young strangers reading the words she had written was more devastating to her than the whole Lubyanka with its bars and its cellars. It is true for many that the outrage inflicted by arrest on their personal feelings and attachments can be far, far stronger than their political beliefs or their fear of prison. A person who is not inwardly prepared for the use of violence against him is always weaker than the person committing the violence.

There are a few bright and daring individuals who understand instantly. Grigoryev, the Director of the Geological Institute of the Academy of Sciences, barricaded himself inside and spent two hours burning up his papers when they came to arrest him in 1948.

Sometimes the principal emotion of the person arrested is relief and even happiness! This is another aspect of human nature. It happened before the Revolution too: the Yekaterinodar schoolteacher Serdyukova, involved in the case of Aleksandr Ulyanov, felt only relief when she was arrested. But this feeling was a thousand times stronger during epidemics of arrests when all around you they were hauling in people like yourself and still had not come for you; for some reason they were taking their time. After all, that kind of exhaustion, that kind of suffering, is worse than any kind of arrest, and not only for a person of limited courage. Vasily Vlasov, a fearless Communist, whom we shall recall more than once later on, renounced the idea of escape proposed by his non-Party assistants, and pined away because the entire leadership of the Kady District was arrested in 1937, and they kept delaying and delaying his own arrest. He could only endure the blow head on. He did endure it, and then he relaxed, and during the first days after his arrest he felt marvelous. In 1934 the priest Father Irakly went to Alma-Ata to visit some believers in exile there. During his absence they came three times to his Moscow apartment to arrest him. When he returned, members of his flock met him at the station and refused to let him go home,

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and for eight years hid him in one apartment after another. The priest suffered so painfully from this harried life that when he was finally arrested in 1942 he sang hymns of praise to God.

In this chapter we are speaking only of the masses, the helpless rabbits arrested for no one knows what reason. ~~But in this book we will also have to touch on those who in postrevolutionary times remained genuinely political.~~ Vera Rybakova, a Social Democratic student, dreamed when she was in freedom of being in the detention center in Suzdal. Only there did she hope to encounter her old comrades—for there were none of them left in freedom. And only there could she work out her worst outlook. The Socialist Revolutionary—the SR—Yekaterina Olitskaya didn't consider herself worthy of being imprisoned in 1924. After all, Russia's best people had served time and she was still young and had not yet done anything for Russia. But freedom itself was expelling her. And so both of them went to prison—with pride and happiness.

"Resistance! Why didn't you resist?" Today those who have continued to live on in comfort scorn those who suffered.

Yes, resistance should have begun right there, at the moment of the arrest itself.

But it did not begin.

And so they are leading you. During a daylight arrest there is always that brief and unique moment when they are leading you, either inconspicuously, on the basis of a cowardly deal you have made, or else quite openly, their pistols unholstered, through a crowd of hundreds of just such doomed innocents as yourself. You aren't gagged. You really can and you really ought to cry out—to cry out that you are being arrested! That villains in disguise are trapping people! That arrests are being made on the strength of false denunciations! That millions are being subjected to silent reprisals! If many such outcries had been heard all over the city in the course of a day, would not our fellow citizens perhaps have begun to bristle? And would arrests perhaps no longer have been so easy?

In 1927, when submissiveness had not yet softened our brains to such a degree, two Chekists tried to arrest a woman on Serpukhov Square during the day. She grabbed hold of the stanchion of

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a streetlamp and began to scream, refusing to submit. A crowd gathered. (There had to have been that kind of woman; there had to have been that kind of crowd too! Passers-by didn't all just close their eyes and hurry by!) The quick young men immediately became flustered. They can't work in the public eye. They got into their car and fled. (Right then and there she should have gone to a railroad station and left! But she went home to spend the night. And during the night they took her off to the Lub-yanka.)

Instead, not one sound comes from your parched lips, and that passing crowd naively believes that you and your executioners are friends out for a stroll.

I myself often had the chance to cry out.

On the eleventh day after my arrest, three SMERSH bums, more burdened by four suitcases full of war booty than by me (they had come to rely on me in the course of the long trip), brought me to the Byelorussian Station in Moscow. They were called a Special Convoy—in other words, a special escort guard—but in actual fact their automatic pistols only interfered with their dragging along the four terribly heavy bags of loot they and their chiefs in SMERSH counterintelligence on the Second Byelorussian Front had plundered in Germany and were now bringing to their families in the Fatherland under the pretext of convoying me. I myself lugged a fifth suitcase with no great joy since it contained my diaries and literary works, which were being used as evidence against me.

Not one of the three knew the city, and it was up to me to pick the shortest route to the prison. I had personally to conduct them to the Lubyanka, where they had never been before (and which, in fact, I confused with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

I had spent one day in the counterintelligence prison at army headquarters and three days in the counterintelligence prison at the headquarters of the front, where my cellmates had educated me in the deceptions practiced by the interrogators, their threats and beatings; in the fact that once a person was

arrested he was never released; and in the inevitability of a tenner, a ten-year sentence; and then by miracle I had suddenly burst out of there and for four days had traveled like a free person among free people, even though my flanks had already lain on rotten straw

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beside the latrine bucket, my eyes had already beheld beaten-up and sleepless men, my ears had heard the truth, and my mouth had tasted prison gruel. So why did I keep silent? Why, in my last minute out in the open, did I not attempt to enlighten the hoodwinked crowd?

I kept silent, too, in the Polish city of Brodnica—but maybe they didn't understand Russian there; I didn't call out one word on the streets of Bialystok—but maybe it wasn't a matter that concerned the Poles. I didn't utter a sound at the Volkovysk Station—but there were very few people there. I walked along the Minsk Station platform beside those same bandits as if nothing at all were amiss—but the station was still a ruin. And now I was leading the SMERSH men through the circular upper concourse of the Byelorussian-Radial subway station on the Moscow circle line, with its white-ceilinged dome and brilliant electric lights, and opposite us two parallel escalators, thickly packed with Muscovites rising from below. It seemed as though they were all looking at me! They kept coming in an endless ribbon from down there, from the depths of ignorance—on and on beneath the gleaming dome—reaching toward me for at least one word of truth—so why did I keep silent?

Every man always has handy a dozen glib little reasons why he is right not to sacrifice himself.

Some still have hopes of a favorable outcome to their case and are afraid to ruin their chances by an outcry. (For, after all, we get no news from that other world, and we do not realize that from the very moment of arrest our fate has almost certainly been decided in the worst possible sense and that we cannot make it any worse.) Others have not yet attained the mature concepts on which a shout of protest to the crowd must be based. Indeed, only a revolutionary has slogans on his lips that are crying to be uttered aloud; and where would the uninvolved, peaceable average man come by such slogans? He simply does not know what to shout. And then, last of all, there is the person whose heart is too full of emotion, whose eyes have seen too much, for that whole ocean to pour forth in a few disconnected cries.

As for me, I kept silent for one further reason: because those Muscovites thronging the steps of the escalators were too few for

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me, too Jew! Here my cry would be heard by 200 or twice 200, but what about the 200 million? Vaguely, unclearly, I had a vision that someday I would cry out to the 200 million.

But for the time being I did not open my mouth, and the escalator dragged me implacably down into the nether world.

And when I got to Okhotny Ryad, I continued to keep silent.

Nor did I utter a cry at the Metropole Hotel.

Nor wave my arms on the Golgotha of Lubyanka Square.

Mine was, probably, the easiest imaginable kind of arrest. It did not tear me from the embrace of kith and kin, nor wrench me from a deeply cherished home life. One pallid European February it took me from our narrow salient on the Baltic Sea, where, depending on one's point of view, either we had surrounded the Germans or they had surrounded us, and it deprived me only of my familiar artillery battery and the scenes of the last three months of the war.

The brigade commander called me to his headquarters and asked me for my pistol; I turned it over without suspecting any evil intent, when suddenly, from a tense, immobile suite of staff officers in the corner, two counterintelligence officers stepped forward hurriedly, crossed the room in a few quick bounds, their four hands grabbed simultaneously at the star on my cap, my shoulder boards, my officer's belt, my map case, and they shouted theatrically:

"You are under arrest!"

Burning and prickling from head to toe, all I could exclaim was:

"Me? What for?"

And even though there is usually no answer to this question, surprisingly I received one! This is worth recalling, because it is so contrary to our usual custom. Hardly had the SMERSH men finished "plucking" me and taken my notes on political subjects, along with my map case, and begun to push me as quickly as possible toward the exit, urged on by the German shellfire rattling the windowpanes, than I heard myself firmly addressed—yes! Across the sheer gap separating me from those left behind, the

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gap created by the heavy-falling word "arrest," across that quarantine line not even a sound dared penetrate, came the unthinkable, magic words of the brigade commander:

"Solzhenitsyn. Come back here."

With a sharp turn I broke away from the hands of the SMERSH men and stepped back to the brigade commander. I had never known him very well. He had never condescended to run-of-the-mill conversations with me. To me his face had always conveyed an order, a command, wrath. But right now it was illuminated in a thoughtful way. Was it from shame for his own involuntary part in this dirty business? Was it from an impulse to rise above the pitiful subordination of a whole lifetime? Ten days before, I had led my own reconnaissance battery almost intact out of the fire pocket in which the twelve heavy guns of his artillery battalion had been left, and now he had to renounce me because of a piece of paper with a seal on it?

"You have . . ." he asked weightily, "a friend on the First Ukrainian Front?"

"It's forbidden! You have no right!" the captain and the major of counterintelligence shouted at the colonel. In the corner, the suite of staff officers crowded closer to each other in fright, as if they feared to share the brigade commander's unbelievable rashness (the political officers among them already preparing to present materials against him). But I had already understood: I knew instantly I had been arrested because of my correspondence with a school friend, and understood from what direction to expect danger.

Zakhar Georgiyevich Travkin could have stopped right there! But no! Continuing his attempt to expunge his part in this and to stand erect before his own conscience, he rose from behind his desk—he had never stood up in my presence in my former life—and reached across the quarantine line that separated us and gave me his hand, although he would never have reached out his hand to me had I remained a free man. And pressing my hand, while his whole suite stood there in mute horror, showing that warmth that may appear in an habitually severe face, he said fearlessly and precisely:

"I wish you happiness, Captain!"

Not only was I no longer a captain, but I had been exposed

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as an enemy of the people (for among us every person is totally exposed from the moment of arrest). And he had wished happiness—to an enemy? 6

The panes rattled. The German shells tore up the earth two hundred yards away, reminding one that this could not have happened back in the rear, under the ordinary circumstances of established existence, but only out here, under the breath of death, which was not only close by but in the face of which all were equal.

This is not going to be a volume of memoirs about my own life. Therefore I am not going to recount the truly amusing details of my arrest, which was like no other. That night the SMERSH officers gave up their last hope of being able to make out where we were on the map—they never had been able to read maps anyway. So they politely handed the map to me and asked me to tell the driv-

how to proceed to counterintelligence at army headquarters. I, therefore, led them and myself to the prison, and in gratitude they immediately put me not in an ordinary cell but in a punishment cell. And I really must describe that closet in a German peasant house which served as a temporary punishment cell.

It was the length of one human body and wide enough for three to lie packed tightly, four at a pinch. As it happened, I was the fourth, shoved in after midnight. The three lying there blinked sleepily at me in the light of the smoky kerosene lantern and moved over, giving me enough space to lie on my side, half between them, half on top of them, until gradually, by sheer weight, I could wedge my way in. And so four overcoats lay on the crushed-straw-covered floor, with eight boots pointing toward the door. They slept and I burned. The more self-assured I had been as a captain half a day before, the more painful it was to crowd onto the floor of that closet. Once or twice the other fellows woke up numb on one side, and we all turned over at the same time.

6. Here is what is most surprising of all: one can be a human being despite everything! Nothing happened to Travkin. Not long ago, we met again cordially, and I really got to know him for the first time. He is a retired general and an inspector of the Hunters' Alliance.

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Toward morning they awoke, yawned, grunted, pulled up their legs, moved into various corners, and our acquaintance began.

"What are you in for?"

But a troubled little breeze of caution had already breathed on me beneath the poisoned roof of SMERSH and I pretended to be surprised:

"No idea. Do the bastards tell you?"

However, my cellmates—tankmen in soft black helmets—hid nothing. They were three honest, openhearted soldiers—people of a kind I had become attached to during the war years because myself was more complex and worse. All three had been officers. Their shoulder boards also had been viciously torn off, and in some places the cotton batting stuck out. On their stained field shirts light patches indicated where decorations had been removed, and there were dark and red scars on their faces and arms, the results of wounds and burns. Their tank unit had, unfortunately, arrived for repairs in the village where the SMERSH counterintelligence headquarters of the Forty-eighth Army was located. Still damp from the battle of the day before, yesterday they had gotten drunk, and on the outskirts of the village broke into a bath where they had noticed two raunchy broads going to bath. The girls, half-dressed, managed to get away all right from the soldiers' staggering, drunken legs. But one of them, it turned out, was the property of the army Chief of Counterintelligence, no less.

Yes! For three weeks the war had been going on inside Germany, and all of us knew very well that if the girls were German they could be raped and then shot. This was almost a combat distinction. Had they been Polish girls or our own displaced Russian girls, they could have been chased naked around the garden and slapped on the behind—an amusement, no more. But just because this one was the "campaign wife" of the Chief of Counterintelligence, right off some deep-in-the-rear sergeant had viciously torn from three front-line officers the shoulder boards awarded them by the front headquarters and had taken off the decorations conferred upon them by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. And now these warriors, who had gone through the whole war and who had no doubt crushed more than one

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line of enemy trenches, were waiting for a court-martial, whose members, had it not been for the tank, could have come nowhere near the village.

We put out the kerosene lamp, which had already used up all the air there was to breathe. A Judas hole the size of a postage stamp had been cut in the door and through it came indirect light from the

corridor. Then, as if afraid that with the coming of daylight we would have too much room in the punishment cell, they tossed in a fifth person. He stepped in wearing a newish Red Army tunic and cap that was also new, and when he stopped opposite the peephole we could see a fresh face with turned-up nose and red cheeks.

"Where are you from, brother? Who are you?"

"From the other side," he answered briskly. "A shhpy."

"You're kidding!" We were astounded. (To be a spy and to admit it—Sheinin and the brothers Tu had never written that kind of spy story!)

"What is there to kid about in wartime?" the young fellow sighed reasonably. "And just how else can you get back home from being a POW? Well, you tell me!"

He had barely begun to tell us how, some days back, the Germans had led him through the front lines so that he could play the spy and blow up bridges, whereupon he had gone immediately to the nearest battalion headquarters to turn himself in; but the weary, sleep-starved battalion command had not believed his story about being a spy and had sent him off to the nurse to get a pill. And at that moment new impressions burst upon us:

"Out for toilet call! Hands behind your backs!" hollered a master sergeant hardhead as the door sprang open; he was just built for swinging the tail of a 122-millimeter cannon.

A circle of machine gunners had been strung around the peasant courtyard, guarding the path which was pointed out to us and which went behind the barn. I was bursting with indignation that some ignoramus of a master sergeant dared to give orders to us officers: "Hands behind your backs! But the tank officers put their hands behind them and I followed suit.

Back of the barn was a small square area in which the snow had been all trampled down but had not yet melted. It was soiled

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all over with human feces, so densely scattered over the whole square that it was difficult to find a spot to place one's two feet and squat. However, we spread ourselves about and the five of us did squat down. Two machine gunners grimly pointed their machine pistols at us as we squatted, and before a minute had passed the master sergeant brusquely urged us on:

"Come on, hurry it up! With us they do it quickly!"

Not far from me squatted one of the tankmen, a native of Rostov, a tall, melancholy senior lieutenant. His face was blackened by a thin film of metallic dust or smoke, but the big red scar stretching across his cheek stood out nonetheless.

"What do you mean, with us?" he asked quietly, indicating no intention of hurrying back to the punishment cell that still stank of kerosene.

"In SMERSH counterintelligence!" the master sergeant shot back proudly and more resonantly than was called for. (The counterintelligence men used to love that tastelessly concocted word "SMERSH," manufactured from the initial syllables of the words for "death to spies." They felt intimidated people.)

"And with us we do it slowly," replied the senior lieutenant thoughtfully. His helmet was pulled back, uncovering his still untrimmed hair. His oaken, battle-hardened rear end was lifted toward the pleasant coolish breeze.

"Where do you mean, with us?" the master sergeant barked at him more loudly than he needed to.

"In the Red Army," the senior lieutenant replied very quietly from his heels, measuring with his eyes the cannon-tailer that never was.

Such were my first gulps of prison air.

Chapter 2



The History of Our Sewage Disposal System

~~When people today decry the abuses of the cult, they keep getting hung up on those years which are stuck in our throats, '37 and '38. And memory begins to make it seem as though arrests were never made before or after, but only in those two years.~~

Although I have no statistics at hand, I am not afraid of erring when I say that the wave of 1929 and 1930 and 1938 was neither the only one nor even the main one, but only one, perhaps, of the three biggest waves which strained the murky, stinking pipes of our prison sewers to bursting.

Before it came the wave of 1929 and 1930, the size of a good River Ob, which drove a mere fifteen million peasants, maybe even more, out into the taiga and the tundra. But peasants are a silent people without a literary voice, nor do they write complaints or memoirs. No interrogators sweated out the night with them, nor did they bother to draw up formal indictments—it was enough to have a decree from the village soviet. This wave poured forth, sank down into the permafrost, and even our most active minds recall hardly a thing about it. It is as if it had not even scarred the Russian conscience. And yet Stalin (and you and I as well) committed no crime more heinous than this.

And after it there was the wave of 1944 to 1946, the size of a good Yenisei, when they dumped whole nations down the sewer pipes, not to mention millions and millions of others who

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(because of us!) had been prisoners of war, or carried off to Germany and subsequently repatriated. (This was Stalin's method of cauterizing the wounds so that scar tissue would form more quickly, and thus the body politic as a whole would not have to rest up, catch its breath, regain its strength.) But this wave, too, the people were of the simpler kind, and they wrote no memoirs.

But the wave of 1937 swept up and carried off to the Archipelago people of position, people with Party past, yes, educated people, around whom were many who had been wounded and remained in the cities . . . and what a lot of them had pen in hand! And today they are all writing, speaking, remembering: "Nineteen thirty-seven!" A whole Volga of the people's grief!

But just say "Nineteen thirty-seven" to a Crimean Tatar, a Kalmyk, a Chechen, and he'll shrug his shoulders. And what's 1937 to Leningrad when 1935 had come before it? And for the second-termers (i.e., repeaters), or people from the Baltic countries—weren't 1948 and 1949 harder on them? And sticklers for style and geography should accuse me of having omitted some Russian rivers, and of not yet having named some of the waves, then just give me enough paper! There were enough waves to use up the names of all the rivers of Russia!

It is well known that any organ withers away if it is not used. Therefore, if we know that the Soviet Security organs, or Organs (and they christened themselves with this vile word), praised and exalted above all living things, have not died off even to the extent of one single tentacle, but, instead, have grown new ones and strengthened their muscles—it is easy to deduce that they have had constant exercise.

Through the sewer pipes the flow pulsed. Sometimes the pressure was higher than had been projected, sometimes lower. But the prison sewers were never empty. The blood, the sweat, and the urine into which we were pulped pulsed through them continuously. The history of this sewage system is the history of an endless swallow and flow; flood alternating with ebb and ebb again with flood; waves pouring in, some big, some small; brooks and rivulets flowing in from all sides; trickles oozing in through gutters; and then just plain individually scooped-up droplets.

The chronological list which follows, in which waves made up

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of millions of arrested persons are given equal attention with ordinary streamlets of unremarkable handfuls, is quite incomplete, meager, miserly, and limited by my own capacity to penetrate the past. What is really needed is a great deal of additional work by survivors familiar with the material.

In compiling this list the most difficult thing is to begin, partly because the further back into the decades one goes, the fewer the eyewitnesses who are left, and therefore the light of common knowledge has gone out and darkness has set in, and the written chronicles either do not exist or are kept under lock and key. Also, it is not entirely fair to consider in a single category the especially brutal years of the Civil War and the first years of peacetime, when mercy might have been expected.

But even before there was any Civil War, it could be seen that Russia, due to the makeup of its population, was obviously not suited for any sort of socialism whatsoever. It was totally polluted. One of the first blows of the dictatorship was directed against the Cadets—the members of the Constitutional Democratic Party. (Under the Tsar they had constituted the most dangerous ranks in the revolution, and under the government of the proletariat they represented the most dangerous ranks in the reaction.) At the end of November, 1917, on the occasion of the first scheduled convening of the Constituent Assembly, which did not take place, the Cadet Party was outlawed and arrests of its members began. At about the same time, people associated with the "Alliance for the Constituent Assembly" and the students enrolled in the "soldiers' universities" were being thrown in the jug.

Knowing the sense and spirit of the Revolution, it is easy to guess that during these months such central prisons as Kresty in Petrograd and the Butyrki in Moscow, and many provincial prisons like them, were filled with wealthy men, prominent public figures, generals and officers, as well as officials of ministries and of the state apparatus who refused to carry out the orders of the new authority. One of the first operations of the Cheka was to arrest the entire committee of the All-Russian Union of Employees.

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One of the first circulars of the NKVD, in December, 1917, stated: "In view of sabotage by officials . . . use maximum initiative in localities, not excluding confiscations, compulsion, and arrests." 1

And even though V. I. Lenin, at the end of 1917, in order to establish "strictly revolutionary order" demanded "merciless suppression of attempts at anarchy on the part of drunkards, hooligans, counterrevolutionaries, and other persons" 2—in other words, foresaw that drunkards and hooligans represented the principal danger to the October Revolution, with counterrevolutionaries somewhere back in third place—he nonetheless put the problem more broadly. In his essay "How to Organize the Competition" (January 7 and 10, 1918), V. I. Lenin proclaimed the common, united purpose of "purging the Russian land of all kinds of harmful insects." 3 And under the term insects he included not only all class enemies but also "workers malingering at their work"—for example, the typesetters of the Petrograd Party printing shops. (That is what time does. It is difficult for us nowadays to understand how workers who had just become dictators were immediately inclined to malingere work they were doing for themselves.) And then again: "In what block of a big city, in what factory, in what village . . . are there not . . . saboteurs who call themselves intellectuals?" 4 True, the forms of insect-purging which Lenin conceived of in this essay were most varied: in some places they would be placed under arrest, in other places set to cleaning latrines; in some, "after having served their time in punishment cells, they would be handed yellow tickets"; in others, parasites would be shot; elsewhere you could take your pick of imprisonment "or punishment at forced labor of the hardest kind." 5 Even though he perceived and suggested the basic directions punishment should take, Vladimir Ilyich proposed that "communes and communities" should compete to find the best methods of purging.

It is not possible for us at this time fully to investigate exactly

1. Vestnik NKVD (NKVD Herald), 1917, No. 1, p. 4.

2. Lenin, *Sobrannye Sochineniya* (Collected Works), fifth edition, Vol. 35, p. 68.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 204.

4. *Ibid.*

who fell within the broad definition of insects', the population of Russia was too heterogeneous and encompassed small, special groups, entirely superfluous and, today, forgotten. The people in the local zemstvo self-governing bodies in the provinces were, of course, insects. People in the cooperative movement were also insects, as were all owners of their own homes. There were not a few insects among the teachers in the gymnasiums. The church parish councils were made up almost exclusively of insects, and it was insects, of course, who sang in church choirs. All priests were insects—and monks and nuns even more so. And all those Tolstoyans who, when they undertook to serve the Soviet government on, for example, the railroads, refused to sign the required oath to defend the Soviet government with gun in hand thereby showed themselves to be insects too. (We will later see some of them on trial.) The railroads were particularly important, for there were indeed many insects hidden beneath railroad uniforms, and they had to be rooted out and some of them slapped down. And telegraphers, for some reason, were, for the most part, inveterate insects who had no sympathy for the Soviets. Nor could you say a good word about Vikzhel, the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Union of Railroad Workers, nor about the other trade unions, which were often filled with insects hostile to the working class.

Just those groups we have so far enumerated represent an enormous number of people—several years' worth of purge activity.

In addition, how many kinds of cursed intellectuals there were—restless students and a variety of eccentrics, truth-seekers, and holy fools, of whom even Peter the Great had tried in vain to purge Russia and who are always a hindrance to a well-ordered, strict regime.

It would have been impossible to carry out this hygienic purging, especially under wartime conditions, if they had had to follow outdated legal processes and normal judicial procedures. And so an entirely new form was adopted: extrajudicial reprisal, and this thankless job was self-sacrificingly assumed by the Che-ka, the Sentinel of the Revolution, which was the only punitive organ in human history that combined in one set of hands investigation, arrest, interrogation, prosecution, trial, and execution of the verdict.

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In 1918, in order to speed up the cultural victory of the Revolution as well, they began to ransack the churches and throw out the relics of saints, and to carry off church plate. Popular disorders broke out in defense of the plundered churches and monasteries. Here and there the alarm bells rang out, and the true Orthodox believers rushed forth, some of them with clubs. Naturally, some had to be expended right on the spot and others arrested.

In considering now the period from 1918 to 1920, we are in difficulties: Should we classify among the prison waves all those who were done in before they even got to prison cells? And in what classification should we put those whom the Committees of the Poor took behind the wing of the village soviet or to the rear of the courtyard, and finished off right there? Did the participants in the clusters of plots uncovered in every province (two in Ryazan; one in Kostroma, Vyshni Volochek, and Velizh; several in Kiev; several in Moscow; one in Saratov, Chernigov, Astrakhan, Seliger, Smolensk, Bobruisk, the Tambov Cavalry, Chembar, Velikiye Luki, Mstislavl, etc.) at least succeed in setting foot on the land of the Archipelago, or did they not—and are they therefore not related to the subjects of our investigations? Bypassing the repression of the now famous rebellions (Yaroslavl, Murov, Rybinsk, Arzamas), we know of certain events only by their names—for instance, the Kolpin executions of June, 1918. What were they? Who were they? And where should they be classified?

There is also no little difficulty in deciding whether we should classify among the prison waves on the balance sheets of the Civil War those tens of thousands of hostages, i.e., people not personally accused of anything, those peaceful citizens not even listed by name, who were taken off and

destroyed simply to terrorize or wreak vengeance on a military enemy or a rebellious population. After August 30, 1918, the NKVD ordered the localities "to arrest immediately all Right Socialist Revolutionaries and to take a significant number of hostages from the bourgeoisie and military officers." 6 (This was just as if, for example, after the attempt of Aleksandr Ulyanov's group to assassinate the Tsar, not only its members but all the students in Russia and a significant number of zemstvo officials had been arrested.) By

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a decree of the Defense Council of February 15, 1919—apparently with Lenin in the chair—the Cheka and the NKVD were ordered to take hostage peasants from those localities where the removal of snow from railroad tracks "was not proceeding satisfactorily," and "if the snow removal did not take place they were to be shot." 7 (At the end of 1920, by decree of the Council of People's Commissars, permission was given to take Social Democrats as hostages too.)

But even restricting ourselves to ordinary arrests, we can note that by the spring of 1918 a torrent of socialist traitors had already begun that was to continue without slackening for many years. All these parties—the SR's, the Mensheviks, the Anarchists, the Popular Socialists—had for decades only pretended to be revolutionaries; they had worn socialism only as a mask, and for that they went to hard labor, still pretending. Only during the violent course of the Revolution was the bourgeois essence of these socialist traitors discovered. What could be more natural than to begin arresting them! Soon after the outlawing of the Cadets, the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly, the disarming of the Preobrazhensky and other regiments, they began in a small way to arrest, quietly at first, both SR's and Mensheviks. After June 14, 1918, the day members of these parties were excluded from all the Soviets, the arrests proceeded in a more intensive and more coordinated fashion. From July 6 on, they began to deal with the Left SR's in the same way, though the Left SR's had been cleverer and had gone on pretending longer that they were allies of the one and only consistent party of the proletariat. From then on, it was enough for a workers' protest, a disturbance, a strike, to occur at any factory or in any little town (and there were many of them in the summer of 1918; and in March, 1921, they shook Petrograd, Moscow, and then Kronstadt and forced the inauguration of the NEP), and—coinciding with concessions, assurances, and the satisfaction for the just demands of the workers—the Cheka began silently to pick up Mensheviks and SR's at night as being the people truly to blame for these disorders. In the summer of 1918 and in April and October of 1919, they jailed Anarchists right and

7. Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti {Decrees of the Soviet Regime), Vol. 4, Moscow, 1968, p. 627.

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left. In 1919 they arrested all the members of the SR Central Committee they could catch—and kept them imprisoned in the Butyrki up to the time of their trial in 1922. In that same year, Latsis, a leading Chekist, wrote of the Mensheviks: "People of this sort are more than a mere hindrance to us. That is why we remove them from our path, so they won't get under our feet. . . . We put them away in a secluded, cozy place, in the Butyrki, and we are going to keep them there until the struggle between capital and labor comes to an end." 8 In 1919, also, the delegates to the Non-Party Workers Congress were arrested; as a result, the Congress never took place. 9

In 1919, suspicion of our Russians returning from abroad was already having its effect (Why? What was their alleged assignment?)—thus the officers of the Russian expeditionary force in France were imprisoned on their homecoming.

In 1919, too, what with the big hauls in connection with such actual and pseudo plots as the "National Center" and the "Military Plot," executions were carried out in Moscow, Petrograd, and other cities on the basis of lists—in other words, free people were simply arrested and executed immediately, and right and left those elements of the intelligentsia considered close to the Cade

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