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I. SOVIET WRITERS' UNION ACTION

NEW YORK TIMES
19 October 1969

Moscow Writers

Giovanni Grazzini, a well-known Italian journalist, recently visited the U.S.S.R. to study literary life there. His reports in Corriere della Sera, Italy's largest daily, greatly impressed Italian intellectuals, mainly those of Communist persuasion. Grazzini does not add anything new to what we know from other sources, but he paints a few colorful details. Like many other special travelers he was welcomed by the officials of the Writers' Union. They smiled, offered vodka and refreshments, but told the inquisitive guest that none of the poets and novelists he wished to interview were available: one was ill, the second on vacation, the third on a mission and the fourth did not answer the telephone. Grazzini, however, was offered the opportunity to converse with any of the 42 secretaries of the Union and particularly with Konstantin Voronkov, one of the leading members and as rumor goes the *eminence grise* of the Executive Board.

Through private channels Grazzini succeeded in gathering nonofficial information. The Writers Union, he reports, is a huge bureaucratic machine with 5,000 members. Only a third are party members, but the Union is controlled and maneuvered by the Central Committee of the party and supervised by security officials. It is one of the numerous Soviet superstructures congealed by immobility and torpor. It comes to life only when instructed to vilify some persona non grata and to inveigh against liberals. The latest example is the pressure exerted by the Board on Tvardovsky, editor of Novy Mir, urging him to resign. It reduced Solzhenitsyn to silence and in the past expelled from its ranks Akhmatova, Pasternak, Zoshchenko and other prominent writers.

No less interesting is Grazzini's disclosure of the methods used by the authorities to limit the distribution of works by the "undesirables." Last year leading bookshops in Moscow received but 30 copies of a collection of poems by the highly popular Okudzhava. They were not even put on sale, for the clerks grabbed them for themselves and friends. Censorship begins at the writer's desk: the author, living in the deadening atmosphere of restrictions wonders what he should cut or change to save his work from the claws of the authorities. Then come sessions with the editor of the magazine to which he brings his corrected manuscript for serialization, sessions of fighting and bargaining for adjectives, hidden meaning, negative characters and unsuitable, non-optimistic endings. When it comes to publishing the work in book form, the invisible censors of Glavlit (the Ministry of Culture and the Ideological Commission of the Party Central Committee which have their representatives on every editorial board) inform the author through intermediaries that his novel or poem is untimely and that it would be safer to postpone its printing—for months or for years. Very often books announced as being about to appear are stopped at the last moment and never reach the bookstores. This suspension is one of the most frequent and efficient devices used by the mysterious watchdogs—mysterious because the authors never meet them. ■

LITERARY GAZETTE, No. 46
Moscow, 12 November 1969

CHRONICLE

IN THE WRITERS' UNION OF THE RSFSR

A meeting of the Ryazan writers organization devoted to the tasks of strengthening ideological and educational work has been held. In their speeches the meeting participants emphasized that under the conditions of exacerbated ideological struggle in the modern world every Soviet writer had increased responsibility for his creativity and public behavior.

In this connection the meeting participants raised the question of Ryazan writers organization member A. Solzhenitsyn. The meeting unanimously noted that A. Solzhenitsyn's behavior was of an antisocial nature and fundamentally contradicted the principles and tasks formulated in the USSR Writers Union statute.

As is known, in recent years the name and works of A. Solzhenitsyn have been actively employed by inimical bourgeois propaganda for slanderous campaigns against our country. However, A. Solzhenitsyn not only did not express his attitude toward this campaign publicly but, in spite of the criticism of the Soviet public and the repeated recommendations of the USSR Writers Union, by certain of his actions and statements he essentially helped to inflate the anti-Soviet racket around his name.

Proceeding from this, the meeting of the Ryazan writers organization resolved to exclude A. Solzhenitsyn from the USSR Writers Union.

The RSFSR Writers Union board secretariat confirmed the decision of the Ryazan writers organization.

LITERATURNAYA GAZETA

12 November 1969

ХРОНИКА

В СОЮЗЕ ПИСАТЕЛЕЙ РСФСР

Состоялось собрание Рязанской писательской организации, посвященное задачам усиления идейно-воспитательной работы. Участники собрания в своих выступлениях подчеркивали, что в условиях обострившейся идеологической борьбы в современном мире возрастает ответственность каждого советского писателя за свое творчество и общественное поведение.

В этой связи участники собрания подняли вопрос о члене Рязанской писательской организации А. Солженицыне. Собрание единодушно отметило, что поведение А. Солженицына носит антиобщественный характер и в корне противоречит принципам и задачам, сформулированным в Уставе Союза писателей СССР.

Как известно, в последние годы имя и сочинения А. Солженицына активно используются враждебной буржуазной пропагандой для клеветнической кампании против нашей страны. Однако А. Солженицын не только не высказал публично своего отношения к этой кампании, но, несмотря на критику советской общественности и неоднократные рекомендации Союза писателей СССР, некоторыми своими действиями и заявлениями, по существу, способствовал раздуванию антисоветской шумихи вокруг своего имени.

Исходя из этого, собрание Рязанской писательской организации постановило исключить А. Солженицына из Союза писателей СССР.

Секретариат правления Союза писателей РСФСР утвердил решение Рязанской писательской организации.

NEW YORK TIMES

11 November 1969

Solzhenitsyn Is Reported Expelled by Writers Union of the Russian Republic

By JAMES F. CLARITY

Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, Nov. 10 — Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, the author of "The First Circle" and "The Cancer Ward," was reliably reported to have been expelled today from the writers union of the Russian Republic.

The reported expulsion is not expected to affect Mr. Solzhenitsyn's professional life since his works have been barred in the Soviet Union in any case since 1966 on the ground that they are hypercritical of Soviet life.

However, the step is certain to be interpreted in literary circles as an additional effort by conservatives in the writers union to intensify their struggle against liberals. Mr. Solzhenitsyn, whose works circulate in illegally reproduced manuscript form, is the hero of many intellectuals and liberal writers.

Essentially, the conservative-liberal struggle centers on how Soviet life should be presented by a writer. The conservatives emphasize the need for constructive idealization of life while the liberals insist that a writer must have freedom to criticize shortcomings in the system.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn's expulsion from the Russian Republic's union followed his reported removal a week ago from the membership of the union local in the city of Ryazan, where he lives.

Removed From His Local

Reliable sources said the expulsion by the union of the Russian Republic would be officially announced later this week.

The reasons for Mr. Solzhenitsyn's reported expulsion from the Ryazan local were said to include publication of his works abroad, failure to help young writers and a negative portrayal of Soviet life in his writing.

The novelist assailed the writers union in 1967 for allegedly blocking publication of "The Cancer Ward" in the Soviet Union. He said that novel and "The First Circle" had subsequently been published in the West without his permission.

In 1967, Mr. Solzhenitsyn also called on the fourth Congress of Soviet Writers to approve a resolution calling for the end of literary censorship.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn wrote to the congress that censorship "imposes a yoke on our literature and gives people unversed in literature control over writers."

"Literature that is not the breath of contemporary society, that dares not transmit the pains and fears of that society" has no value, he wrote. Because of censorship, he said later, "my work has been finally smothered, gagged and slandered."

He first appeared on the literary scene in 1962 with the publication of "A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich," which depicted life in a Stalinist labor camp. Subsequently he published a few short stores in Novy Mir, the liberal literary monthly.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn, who spent eight years in prison camps under Stalin, has drawn heavily on his experiences in his writing, which deals to a large extent with the Stalin era.

Although he has little hope of seeing his work published in the Soviet Union, he is said to have completed a sequel to "The First Circle," titled "The Archipelago of Gulag." Gulag is the acronym for the agency that supervised Soviet labor camps under Stalin.

The writer is known to be working on a new novel dealing with the period leading up to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

LE MONDE, PARIS
13 November 1969

Before Being Expelled from the Soviet Writers' Union

ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN REJECTED THE ARGUMENTS OF HIS ACCUSERS

Moscow--Literaturnaya Gazeta, weekly publication of the Writers' Union, confirmed Wednesday morning that the writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn has been expelled from that organization. The decision was made by the Ryazan branch. Solzhenitsyn found himself reproached for conduct "of an anti-social character radically opposed to the principles and to the tasks set forth in the statutes of the Writers' Union of the USSR. Literaturnaya Gazeta added that "his works have been used by bourgeois propaganda to lead a calumnious campaign against our country." The expulsion has been ratified by the Russian Republic (RSFSR) section of the Writers' Union.

It is known that the campaign to expel Solzhenitsyn began during a meeting in Moscow of the party cell of the Soviet Writers' Union (Le Monde, 7 November). On 4 November, in the afternoon, the Ryazan section met in the presence of the writer. The latter was summoned to Moscow for a meeting of the RSFSR section of the Writers' Union two days later. Notified at the last minute, he was not able to attend and the decision to confirm his expulsion was therefore taken in his absence. It is known only that Mr. Alexander Tvardovsky, editor in chief of the review Novy Mir, defended him.

It was therefore at Ryazan that the case was heard. No stenographic account was made during the meeting of 3 November. Nevertheless, very precise evidence is available which makes it possible to know fairly exactly what was said. Although the account which we report cannot be guaranteed to be the literal transcript of the words spoken by each of the participants, it may be considered as faithfully reproducing the substance of the principal statements. As may be seen, they need no commentary.

* * * * *

The novelist Franz Taourine, representing the Writers' Union of the Russian Republic (RSFSR), opened the debate by reporting to those present on the decisions of his organization concerning the reinforcement of ideological educational work in connection, he particularly noted, with the defection of Anatoly Kuznetsov. He cited the cases of the writers Kopeliev, Lydia Chukovskaya, the poet-singer Bulat Okudzhava and Solzhenitsyn. Since the latter is a member of the Ryazan section, it is his case which was to be especially examined. Six members out of seven were present at the meeting. Several local writers spoke. We summarize their statements.

FIRST WRITER: "We must make our self-criticism. It is I who recommended Solzhenitsyn. However, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich aroused my suspicions.

"After the reviews by Simonov and Tvardovsky, we ceased to discuss it. We hoped that Solzhenitsyn would become the ornament of our Ryazan branch. This hope was disappointed. He has not taken part in our work, has not helped the young authors, has not attended our meetings; he cut himself off from us. Of course, we do not know his latest works; we have not read them. But they go against what we write ourselves."

SECOND WRITER: "I agree entirely. The preceding speaker spoke well."

THIRD WRITER: "If it is not to help the young people, what good is it to belong to the Writer' Union? The story One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich is written in black colors. And Matryona's Home? Where did he see this solitary woman whom nobody helps? Where does he publish his works? What are they about? We know nothing about it."

FOURTH WRITER: "I hesitate. There is a pendulum swinging. It goes from one extreme to the other. Once Yesenin was thus vilified; then he was praised to the skies. Remember 1946 [the time of Zhdanovism]. It is difficult for me to sort out; today Solzhenitsyn is expelled and afterwards he will be reintegrated. I do not want to participate in that."

FIFTH WRITER: "If my work was utilized abroad as a weapon, what would I do? I would go ask for advice from the organization of writers. But Solzhenitsyn has isolated himself."

BLACK COLORS

THE DIRECTOR OF LOCAL PUBLICATIONS: "Solzhenitsyn blackens everything. He has a black inside."

Then Alexander Solzhenitsyn gets the floor: "Regarding help to the young writers: no one has ever submitted manuscripts to me for review. There is no stenographic record of this meeting, notes are being taken catch as catch can.

"I wish to relieve the conscience of the first speaker: he did not recommend me; he only gave me a questionnaire to fill out.

"I have always kept the Ryazan branch informed about my letters: to the Writers' Union, to the Writers' Congress in May 1967, etc. I even proposed that it discuss Cancer Ward. It did not wish to. I have proposed public readings; they were not authorized. My absence from meetings? I live in a dacha in the suburbs of Moscow and it is not always convenient for me to come. After the publication of One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich it was suggested that I move to Moscow; I refused: the noise of the capital could disturb me in my work. Recently I asked to move to Moscow; Ilyin, secretary of the Moscow section, did not assent.

"What haven't I answered? The article in Literaturnaya Gazeta which contrasted Kuznetsov to me as an example of good behavior? [Footnote: On 26 June 1968 the Literaturnaya Gazeta cited as an example Anatoly Kuznetsov, who sued a French translator of Continuation of a Legend, and who fled last summer to London.] It was an anonymous article and I did not need to reply. It called into question even my rehabilitation, it told lies about my novels. It claimed that The First Circle was a virulent calumny of our reality. But who has proved this? People have not read this novel and yet they speak of it.... How did Literaturnaya Gazeta know The Feast of the Conquerors [a play written by Solzhenitsyn when he was in a concentration camp]? How did it hear about this play when the sole copy was taken from my office by the security service?"

Confiscated Letters

"I reject certain of my works. It is about those that you are speaking. There are others which I ask to be published; you do not mention them.

"Should I reply to the secretariat of the Wirters' Union? I have answered all its questions. It has not answered any of mine, not even after my letter to the congress. They hid it under a bushel basket.

"Let us speak of Cancer Ward. In September 1967 I warned the secretariat of the Union that the novel was circulating in the country and could get abroad. I asked that it be quickly published in Novy Mir. The secretariat preferred to wait. In the spring of 1968 I wrote to Literaturnaya Gazeta, to Le Monde and to l'Unita to forbid the publication of Cancer Ward and to deny all rights to western editors. The letter was not permitted to go to Le Monde, although it was registered. I had entrusted the letter to l'Unita to the Italian critic

Vittorio Strada. The customs confiscated it; but I managed to convince the customs officers to send it to l'Unita for publication. Which l'Unita did in June. The Literaturnaya Gazeta was still waiting. For nine weeks, from 21 April to 26 June, it hid my letter from the public. It was waiting until Cancer Ward was published in the West. When the book was published by Mondadori, the Milan editor, in a horrible Russian edition, then Literaturnaya published my letter, accusing me of not having protested sufficiently energetically. If it had made my letter known in time that démarche might have been useful. The proof is that the American editors refused to bring out the book when they became aware of my refusal."

THE CHAIRMAN: "Your speaking time is up."

ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN: "It is not a matter of my speaking time, but of my life."

THE PRESIDENT: "How much time do you want?"

Solzhenitsyn asks for ten minutes. He is given three. He continues:

"I asked the Ministry of Communications to put an end to this banditry. The secretariat did not forward to me any of the messages of felicitations which it received from abroad for me on fiftieth birthday. My mail is used with cynicism. I am accused of blackening reality, but in what theory of knowledge is the reflection more important than the object reflected? Perhaps in a philosophy of fantasy, but not in dialectical materialism. What is becoming important is not what we do, but what people say about it.

"Someone spoke about the swing of the pendulum. Its oscillations from one extreme to another do not concern me alone. They will not succeed indefinitely in hushing up the crimes of Stalin, in going against the truth. Because these are crimes committed against millions of human beings and they demand exposure. What moral influence on the youth is exercised by the fact of dissimulating them? Youth is not stupid, it understands.

"I do not disavow one line, not one word, of my letter to the Congress of Writers [in May 1967]. In it I said: 'I am at peace; I know that I will fulfill my duty as a writer in every circumstance and perhaps after my death with more success, more authority than during my lifetime. No one will succeed in barring the road to truth and I am ready to die in order that it may go forward.' Yes, I am ready to die, not merely to be expelled from the Union of Writers. Vote. You are the majority, but don't forget that the history of literature will be interested in today's meeting."

"Why are you published abroad?" he was asked.

ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN: "Tell me first: why am I not published at home?"

THE REGIONAL SECRETARY OF THE PARTY FOR PROPAGANDA: "Let us drop the discussion there. You deny the leading role of the party. Everybody is in step with it but you."

THE WRITER FRANZ TAOURINE: "The secretariat of the Union for the RFSFR is going to examine your case. The important thing is that you have not struck back at the enemy. No one can bring you to your knees. This meeting is an attempt to help you to free yourself from all that which the West has loaded upon you. The writer Fedin has moreover implored with all the authority of his great age: give in, strike back at the West."

At the end of the meeting the expulsion was decided upon. It was adopted by five votes for, one (Solzhenitsyn) against.

Alain Jacob

De notre corresp. partic.
ALAIN JACOB

AVANT D'ÊTRE EXCLU DE L'UNION DES ÉCRIVAINS SOVIÉTIQUES

Alexandre Soljenitsyne a rejeté les arguments de ses accusateurs

Moscou. — La « Literatournaya Gazeta », hebdomadaire de l'Union des écrivains, confirme mercredi matin que l'écrivain Alexandre Soljenitsyne a été exclu de cette organisation. La décision a été prise par la section de Riazan. Soljenitsyne s'est vu reprocher une conduite « de caractère antisocial radicalement opposée aux principes et aux tâches formulées dans les statuts de l'Union des écrivains d'U.R.S.S. ». La « Literatournaya Gazeta » ajoute que « ses œuvres ont été utilisées par la propagande bourgeoise pour mener une campagne calomnieuse contre notre pays ». L'expulsion a été ratifiée par la section de l'Union des écrivains de la République russe (R.S.F.S.R.).

On sait que la campagne pour l'exclusion de Soljenitsyne a commencé lors d'une réunion à Moscou de la cellule du parti de l'Union des écrivains d'U.R.S.S. (« le Monde » du 7 novembre). Le 4 novembre, dans l'après-midi, se réunit la section de Riazan, en présence de l'écrivain. Celui-ci fut convoqué le surlendemain à Moscou pour la réunion de la section de l'Union des écrivains de la R.S.F.S.R. Prévenu au dernier moment, il ne put y assister et la décision de confirmer son exclusion fut donc prise en son absence. On sait seulement que M. Alexandre Tvardovsky, rédacteur en chef de la revue « Novy Mir », prit sa défense.

C'est donc à Riazan que la cause fut entendue. Aucun compte rendu sténographique ne fut établi au cours de la réunion du 4 novembre. On dispose néanmoins à son sujet de témoignages très précis qui permettent de savoir assez exactement ce qui fut dit. Bien que les propos que nous rapportons ne puissent être garantis comme la transcription littérale des paroles prononcées par chacun des participants, ils peuvent être considérés comme reproduisant fidèlement la substance des principales interventions. On verra qu'ils peuvent se passer de commentaires.

Le romancier Franz Taourine, représentant l'Union des écrivains de la R.S.F.S.R., ouvre le débat en informant l'assistance des décisions de son organisation sur le renforcement du travail d'éducation idéologique en liaison, explique-t-il notamment, avec la défection de l'écrivain Anatole Kouznetsov. Il cite les cas des écrivains Kopelev, Lydia Tchoukovskaïa, du poète chansonnier Boulat Okoudjava et de Soljenitsyne. Comme celui-ci est membre de la section de Riazan, c'est son cas qui va être spécialement examiné. Six membres sur sept de la section assistent à la séance. Plusieurs écrivains locaux prennent alors la parole. Nous résumons leurs interventions.

PREMIER ECRIVAIN. — « Nous devons faire notre autocritique. C'est moi qui ai recommandé Soljenitsyne. *Une journée d'Ivan Denissovitch* avait pourtant éveillé mes soupçons.

Après les comptes rendus de Simonov et Tvardovsky, nous avons cessé d'en discuter. Nous espérions que Soljenitsyne deviendrait l'ornement de notre section de Riazan. Cet espoir a été déçu. Il n'a pas pris part à nos travaux, n'a pas aidé les jeunes auteurs, n'assistait pas à nos réunions ; il s'est coupé de nous. Nous ne connaissons certes pas ses dernières œuvres ; nous ne les avons pas lues. Mais elles vont à l'encontre de ce que nous écrivons nous-mêmes.

SECOND ECRIVAIN. — Je suis tout à fait d'accord. Le précédent orateur a bien parlé.

TROISIEME ECRIVAIN. — Si ce n'est pour aider les jeunes, à quoi bon appartenir à l'Union des écrivains ? Le récit *Une journée d'Ivan Denissovitch* est écrit avec des couleurs noires. Et *la Maison de Matriona* ? Où a-t-il vu cette femme solitaire que personne n'aide ? Où publie-t-il ses œuvres ? De quoi y est-il question ? Nous n'en savons rien.

QUATRIEME ECRIVAIN. — J'hésite. Il y a un mouvement de balancier. On va d'un extrême à l'autre. Jadis, on a ainsi créé la tendance Essenine ; puis on l'a portée aux nues. Rappelez-vous encore 1946 (l'époque du jdanovisme). Il m'est difficile de démêler ; aujourd'hui on exclut Soljenitsyne, et après on va le réintégrer. Je ne veux pas participer à cela.

CINQUIEME ECRIVAIN. — Si mon œuvre était utilisée comme arme par l'étranger, comment me conduirais-je ? J'irais demander conseil à l'organisation des écrivains. Or Soljenitsyne s'est isolé.

Des couleurs noires

LE DIRECTEUR DES EDITIONS LOCALES. — Soljenitsyne hoircit tout. Il a l'intérieur noir. *(Sic.)*

Alexandre Soljenitsyne obtient alors la parole : « A propos de l'aide aux jeunes : on ne m'a jamais soumis de manuscrits pour en rendre compte. Il n'y a pas de sténographie de la présente réunion, on prend des notes vaille que vaille.

Je veux soulager la conscience du premier orateur : il ne m'a pas recommandé : il m'a seulement donné un questionnaire à remplir.

J'ai toujours mis la section de Riazan au courant de mes lettres : à l'Union des écrivains, au congrès des écrivains en mai 1967, etc. Je lui ai proposé même de discuter du *Pavillon des cancéreux*. Elle n'a pas voulu. J'ai proposé des lectures publiques ; on ne les a pas autorisées. Mon absence aux réunions ? J'habite une datcha dans la banlieue de Moscou et il ne m'est pas toujours commode de venir. Après la publication d'*Une journée d'Ivan Denissovitch*, on m'a proposé de déménager à Moscou ; j'ai refusé : le bruit de la capitale pouvait me gêner dans mon travail. Récemment, j'ai demandé à m'installer à Moscou ; Iline, secrétaire de la section de Moscou, n'a pas accepté.

A quoi n'ai-je pas répondu ? A l'article de la *Literatournaya Gazeta*, qui m'opposait Kouznetsov comme exemple de bonne conduite ? (1). C'était un article anonyme et je n'avais pas à répondre. On y mettait en doute jusqu'à ma réhabilitation, on y écrivait des mensonges sur mes romans. On y racontait que *le Premier cercle* était une virulente calomnie de notre réalité. Mais qui l'a démontré ? On n'a pas lu ce roman et on en parle... Comment la *Literatournaya Gazeta* connaît-elle *le Festin des vainqueurs* (pièce écrite par Soljenitsyne quand il était en camp de concentration) ? Comment a-t-elle eu communication de cette pièce alors que l'unique exemplaire a été pris dans mon bureau par la sûreté ?

(1) Le 26 juin 1968, la *Literatournaya Gazeta* citait en exemple Anatole Kouznetsov, qui avait poursuivi en justice un traducteur français de *Suite d'une légende*, et qui s'est réfugié l'été dernier à Londres.

Les lettres confisquées

Je rejette certaines de mes œuvres. C'est d'elles que l'on parle. Il y en a d'autres que je demande de publier ; on les passe sous silence.

Devais-je répondre au secrétariat de l'Union des écrivains ? J'ai répondu à toutes ses questions. Il ne l'a fait pour aucune des miennes, pas même après mon lettre au congrès. On l'a mise sous le boisseau.

Parlons du *Pavillon des cancéreux*. En septembre 1967, j'ai prévenu le secrétariat de l'Union que le roman circulait dans le pays et pouvait passer à l'étranger. J'ai demandé qu'on le publie rapidement dans *Novy Mir*. Le secrétariat a préféré attendre. Au printemps de 1968, j'ai écrit à la *Literatournaya Gazeta*, au *Monde* et à *l'Unita* pour interdire la publication du *Pavillon des cancéreux* et dénier tous droits aux éditeurs occidentaux. On n'a pas laissé passer la lettre au *Monde*, alors qu'elle était recommandée. J'avais confié au critique italien Vittorio Strada la lettre à *l'Unita*. La douane l'a confisquée, je suis parvenu à convaincre les douaniers de l'envoyer à *l'Unita* pour publication. Ce que *l'Unita* a fait en juin. La *Literatournaya Gazeta* attendait toujours. Pendant neuf semaines, du 21 avril au 26 juin, elle a caché ma lettre au public. Elle attendait que *Pavillon des cancéreux* fût publié en Occident. Lorsque le livre est sorti chez Mondadori, l'éditeur milanais, dans une horrible édition russe, alors la *Literatournaya Gazeta* a publié ma lettre, en m'accusant de n'avoir pas assez énergiquement protesté. Si elle avait fait connaître ma lettre à temps, cette démarche aurait pu être utile. La preuve en est que les éditeurs américains ont renoncé à sortir le livre quand ils ont eu connaissance de mon refus.

LE PRESIDENT DE SEANCE. — Votre temps de parole est épuisé.

ALEXANDRE SOLJENITSYNE. — Il ne s'agit pas de temps de parole mais de la vie.

LE PRESIDENT. — Combien de temps demandez-vous ?

Soljenitsyne demande dix minutes. On lui en accorde trois. Il poursuit :

— J'ai demandé au ministère des communications de mettre un terme à ce brigandage. Le secrétariat ne m'a transmis aucun des messages de félicitations qu'il avait reçus de l'étranger à mon nom pour mon cinquantième anniversaire. Ma correspondance est utilisée avec cynisme. On m'accuse de noircir la réalité, mais dans quelle théorie de la connaissance le reflet a-t-il plus d'importance que l'objet reflété ? Peut-être dans une philosophie du fantasme mais pas dans le matérialisme dialectique. Ce qui devient important ce n'est pas ce que nous faisons, mais ce qu'on en dit.

On a parlé de mouvement de balancier. Ses oscillations d'un extrême à l'autre ne me concernent pas seul. On ne réussira pas indéfiniment à taire les crimes de Staline, à aller à l'encontre de la vérité. Car ce sont des crimes commis sur des millions d'êtres, et ils exigent la lumière. Quelle influence morale exerce sur la jeunesse le fait de les dissimuler ? La jeunesse n'est pas stupide, elle comprend.

Je ne renie pas une ligne, pas un mot de ma lettre au congrès des écrivains (en mai 1967). J'y disais : *« Je suis tranquille ; je sais que je remplirai mon devoir d'écrivain en toutes circonstances et peut-être après ma mort avec plus de succès, plus d'autorité que de mon vivant. Personne ne parviendra à barrer la route à la vérité, et je suis prêt à mourir pour qu'elle avance. »* Oui, je suis prêt à mourir, et pas seulement à être exclu de l'Union des écrivains. Votez. Vous êtes la majorité, mais n'oubliez pas que l'histoire de la littérature s'intéressera à la séance d'aujourd'hui.

— Pourquoi vous publie-t-on à l'étranger ?, lui demande-t-on.

ALEXANDRE SOLJENITSYNE. — Répondez d'abord : pourquoi ne me publie-t-on pas chez moi ?

LE SECRETAIRE REGIONAL A LA PROPAGANDE DU PARTI. — Laissons-là la discussion. Vous niez le rôle dirigeant du parti. Tous marchent du même pas que lui, et pas vous.

L'ECRIVAIN FRANZ TAOURINE. — Le secrétariat de l'union de la R.S.F.S.R. va examiner votre cas. L'essentiel, c'est que vous n'ayez pas riposté à l'ennemi. Personne ne veut vous mettre à genoux. Cette réunion est une tentative pour vous aider à vous délivrer de tout ce dont l'Occident vous a chargé. L'écrivain Fédine vous a pourtant imploré avec l'autorité de son grand âge : cédez, ripostez à l'Occident.

A l'issue de la réunion, l'exclusion est décidée. Elle est adoptée par cinq voix pour, une (Soljenitsyne) contre.

NEW YORK TIMES
15 November 1969

Solzhenitsyn, in Protest Letter, Terms Soviet a 'Sick Society'

By JAMES F. CLARITY
Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, Nov. 14 — Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, the author of "The First Circle" and "The Cancer Ward," has bitterly described the Soviet Union as a "sick society."

The 51-year-old Soviet author, who was expelled from the writers union four days ago also castigated those who expelled him for their "hate-vigilance." In a leter writen Monday to the writers union of the Russian Federated Republic and made available today by acquaintances, Mr. Solzhenitsyn said that his expulsion from the local writers union in Ryazan had been approved by the parent writers union before he had a chance to defend himself.

"The blind lead the blind," Mr. Solzhenitsyn said in the letter. "In this time of crisis of our seriously sick society, you are not able to suggest anything constructive, anything good, only your hate-vigilance. Shamelessly flouting your own constitution you expelled me in feverish haste and in my absence, without even sending me a warning telegram, without even giving me the four hours to travel from Ryazan [to Moscow] to be present."

"Was it more convenient for you to invent new accusations against me in my absence? " The leter continued. "Were you afraid that you would have to give me 10 minutes to reply? Your watches are behind the times. The time is near when every one of you will try to find out how you can scrape your signatures off today's resolution.

The letter marked the first time Mr. Solzhenitsyn, considered by many literary critics as the greatest living Soviet novelist, has answered his enemies or criticized the Soviet Union in two years. In 1967, he proposed that the writers union ban literary censorship and attacked union officials for blocking the publication of his works in the Soviet Union.

Neither "The Cancer Ward" nor "The First Circle" has been published here. Both books became best sellers in the West. The last Solzhenitsyn work published here was a short story in the magazine Novy Mir in January, 1966.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn was expelled from the local union in Ryazan, 110 miles southeast of Moscow, last week during a meting at which he was present. On Monday, the action was approved by the secretariat of the Russian Republic union, in effect stripping him of official status as a writer. Literaturnaya Gazeta, the union's official newspaper, said the expulsion was the result of the author's failure to stem anti-Soviet criticism centering around his name and works.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn became the hero of many Soviet liberals and intellectuals in 1962 with the publication of his short novel, "A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich," which depicted life in a Stalinist prison camp. "The Cancer Ward" and "The First Circle" are caustically critical of Stalin and authoritarian aspects of the Soviet political system.

Since his 1967 attack on censorship and on certain union officials, however, he had remained silent. He continued to write, but without serious hope, according to friends, that his work would be published here.

In his letter to the writers union, Mr. Solzhenitsyn also defended two writers, whose expulsions are reportedly being considered by the union. They are Lev Kopolev, a critic who specializes in foreign literature, and Lydia Chukovskaya, the daughter of Kornei Chukovsky, the translator and writer of children's books who died two weeks ago.

Both have signed protests against official harassment and the imprisonment of Soviet writers. In 1967, Mr. Solzhenitsyn reportedly wrote his anti-censorship appeal in Mr. Chukovsky's home. In the letter to the writers union, Mr. Solzhenitsyn said Mr. Kopolev was apparently threatened with expulsion because he had disclosed the proceedings of a secret meeting.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn asked the union why such meetings were necessary.

"The enemy is listening, that's your answer," Mr. Solzhenitsyn said in the letter. "These eternal enemies are the basis of your duties and of your existence. What would you do without your enemies? You would not be able to live without enemies. Hate, hate no less evil than racism, has become your sterile atmosphere."

"Just the same," the letter continues, "it is time to remember that the first thing to which we belong is humanity, and humanity is separated from the animal world by thought and speech, and they should naturally be free. If they are fettered, we go back to being animals.

New York Times
15 November 1969

Letter of Soviet Writer

Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, Nov. 14—Following is the text of a letter sent on Monday to the writers union of the Russian Republic by the author Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn after his expulsion from the organization. The letter was made available here by acquaintances of the author.

Shamelessly flouting your own constitution, you have expelled me in feverish haste and in my absence, without even sending me a warning telegram, without even giving me the four hours to travel from Ryazan to be present. You have demonstrated openly that the decision preceded the deliberations. Was it more convenient for you to invent new accusations against me in my absence? Were you afraid that you would have to give me ten minutes to reply? I am forced to substitute this letter.

Your watches are behind the times. They are running centuries slow. Open your heavy expensive curtains. You do not even suspect that dawn has risen outside. It is no longer that deaf, dim time of no exit that it was when you expelled [Anna] Akhmatova. It is not even that timid, frigid time when you shouted [Boris] Pasternak out. Wasn't that shameful enough for you?

Do you want to compound it? The day is near when every one of you will try to find out how you can scrape your signatures off today's resolution. The blind lead the blind. You don't even notice that you are cheering for the side you have declared yourself against. In this time of crisis of our seriously sick society you are not able to suggest anything constructive, anything good, only your hate-vigilance. Your obese articles crawl about. Your mindless works more flabbily. But there are no arguments. Only voting and administration.

Another Letter

Thus neither[Mikhail] Sholokov nor all of you put together dared to answer the famous letter of Lidiya Chukovskaya, pride of Russian essayists.

[Miss Chukovskaya, wrote the novel "The Deserted House," describing life in the Stalin era. Her letter to Izvestia, on the 15th anniversary of Stalin's death in 1953, called for an end to "the conspiracy of silence."]

For her the administrative pincers are being prepared. How could she dare to allow her unpublished book to be read? Since the higher levels have decided not to print you, crush yourself, choke yourself. Don't exist. Don't let anyone read you.

They are also driving Lev Koplov [a critic specializing in foreign literature] to expulsion — a front-line war veteran, already having served a 10-year jail term although innocent. Now, if you please, he is guilty of standing up for those who are hounded, of going around talking about a holy secret of violating a cabinet confidence with an influential person.

Why do you conduct such conversations which you have to hide from the people? Were we not promised 50 years ago that there would never again be secret diplomacy? Secret talks, secret incomprehensible appointments and reshuffles, that the masses would know and judge everything openly?

A Sterile Atmosphere

"The enemy is listening," That's your answer. These eternal enemits are the basis of your existence, What would you do without your enemies? You would not be able to live without your enemies. Hate, hate no less evil than racism, has become your sterile atmosphere. But in this way the feeling of a whole and single mankind is being lost and its perdition is being accelerated.

And if tomorrow the ice of the Antarctic melted and all of us were transformed into drowning mankind, then into whose nose would you stuff the class struggle? Not to mention even when the remnants of two-legged creatures will roam the radioactive earth and die.

Just the same, it is time to remember that the first thing we belong to is humanity. And humanity is separated from the animal world by thought and speech and they should naturally be free. If they are fettered, we go back to being animals.

Publicity and openness, honest and complete—that is the prime condition for the health of every society, and ours too. The man who does not want them in our country is indifferent to his fatherland and thinks only about his own gain. The man who does not want publicity and openness for his fatherland does not want to cleanse it of its disease, but to drive them inside, so they may rot there.

LOS ANGELES TIMES
16 November 1969

Russia: New Assault on Men Who Think

RICHARD RESTON

MOSCOW

The question in this country is, to think or not to think.

Russians like to believe they are creating a new breed of man, and maybe they are. If they succeed, this system may yet perfect the absence of thought, the world's first non-thinking human being.

No doubt the task will be difficult. But the Russians have long shown a persistence that is sometimes ...fying.

Unfortunately for those who rule this "progressive revolution," there are still men with the talent, the courage and the intellect of Alexander I. Solzhenitsyn, Russia's most famous contemporary novelist.

Solznenitsyn and other doubting intellectuals present a problem in a society of right-thinkers. And when the Soviet state has a problem, it works hard to climinate it.

Solzhenitsyn was tried and found guilty at an inquisition conducted by his own colleagues in recent days. The sentence was expulsion from the Soviet Writers Union, a move that insures the indefinite suppression of his works. His only crime was to have written about post and present wrongs in a country he loves and wishes to improve.

For this, his accusers charged him with a "black" and "antisocial" attitude. After serving 12 years in forced labor camps and exile, Solzhenitsyn must wonder at the cruelty of a system that requires military and political power to deal with the minds of men.

The question is, why? Why must this country crush its most celebrated writer in a manner similar to the way Soviet tanks flattened the reformist ideas of Prague more than a year ago?

The answer lies in the enormous insecurity of a Communist dictatorship. Like any other authoritarian regime, it thrives on mental obedience, on a docile intellectual community, on a lack of personal initiative and on the police power necessary to work the rigid will of a few at the top.

The Solzhenitsyn case proves the weakness, not the strength, of Soviet society. It reveals a crisis of confidence in a system frightened of any dissenting idea that might prove contagious. Such ideas and the people behind them must be muzzled and squashed. This country would rather suppress its problems than debate them.

What the system has done to Solzhenitsyn—and worse to many others like him—perpetuates not a revolutionary philosophy, but a reactionary one.

To his accusers, the 51-year-old author said he is prepared to accept death in defense of the truth. He conceded that his fellow writers were in the majority, but reminded them that the history of literature will record their vote to censor the beliefs of others.

The author's eloquence clearly had little effect on those who sat in judgment.

Solzhenitsyn's two latest novels, "Cancer Ward" and "The First Circle," have never been published in the Soviet Union. They are both best sellers in the West. He has had virtually nothing published in this country since 1962, when he rose to fame with "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich," a savage condemnation of life in a Stalinist labor camp.

The West thinks of modern Russia as a changing society and nation. The physical changes are here. It is another kind of change that is missing. Where are the changes that have to do with the spirit and character of a country and system such as this?

"In Russia, the ruling power, unlimited as it is, has an extreme fear of censure, or of extreme frankness.

"All Russians and all who wish to live in Russia impose on themselves unconditional silence. Here, nothing is said, but everything is known . . . to think, to discern, is to become suspect."

The words were written July 12, 1839, in the book "Journey for Our Time," based on the Russian journals of the Marquis de Custine.

They fit Russia today perfectly and, after Solzhenitsyn, one wonders whether the difference of centuries means very much in this country.

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH, London
16 November 1969

Solzhenitsyn in danger

By
STEPHEN CONSTANT
Communist Affairs Staff

ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN, generally considered Russia's greatest living writer, is believed to be in imminent danger of arrest and trial.

This follows his courageous letter to the official Soviet Writers' Union protesting against his unconstitutional expulsion from the organisation last week.

The letter said the Soviet Writers' Union was part of a "very sick society." Copies of the letter were circulated among Mr. Solzhenitsyn's friends in Moscow and were seen by Western newspaper correspondents.

Notwithstanding the bitter, noble passion in defence of freedom conveyed by his letter, Mr. Solzhenitsyn's persecutors, led by the K.G.B. (Soviet secret police), may now push their vindictiveness so far as to accuse him of spreading anti-Soviet propaganda.

Heavy sentences

Article 70 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation makes it possible for anyone who writes or says anything even mildly critical of the Soviet system to be sentenced to a maximum of seven years in labour camp, then five years in exile.

The notorious Article provides a thin legal disguise for the suppression of anyone who thinks differently from the regime. The main and most famous victims of this barbarous Article are the writers Sinyavsky and Daniel.

Both are serving labour camp sentences, of seven and five years respectively. Other recent victims are Mr. Yuri Galanskov (seven years labour camp) and Mr. Alexander Ginzburg (five years labour camp).

Both were accused of slandering the regime, whereas they had merely distributed mildly liberal writings.

Appalling conditions

If Mr. Solzhenitsyn were to be sent to a concentration camp it would amount to murder. At 51 his health is extremely delicate, mostly because he suffered severely during his eight years in a hard labour camp in Stalin's time.

Few of his friends believe he could survive the appalling conditions of the Potma camp, 300 miles east of Moscow. Mr. Gerald Brooke, the London lecturer, was there. The conditions were described recently in "My Testimony," by Mr. Anatoly Marchenko.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn knew what risks he was running in writing his letter. The courage he displayed was such that observers at first thought the letter was a provocation by the K.G.B., circulated to provide it with a flimsy excuse for "legal action."

But the letter, in its passion, sincerity and sophistication, clearly exceeds the capacity of the average K.G.B. mind.

Conference defied

Mr. David Whittaker, a former chairman of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain, said in London yesterday the Soviet Writers' Union had gone against a unanimous resolution of the International Writers' Guild July Conference in Moscow.

All delegates at the conference, including the Soviet representative, declared they were "opposed to any form of suppression of humanist and democratic ideas expressed by a writer in accordance with his conscience."

Mr. Whittaker, who was at the conference, considers the Soviet Writers' Union must reinstate Mr. Solzhenitsyn, or cease to belong to the International Writers' Guild.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR
18 November 1969

Cultural reformers' ideas stifled

By Eric Bourne
Special correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Prague

Alexander Solzhenitsyn has joined Milovan Djilas as a prominent literary figure internationally recognized but expelled from the cultural life of his own Communist-governed country.

His expulsion from the Soviet Writers' Union was not unexpected. Since 1962, when his celebrated novel about Russian prison camps came out, he has not been allowed to publish anything of note.

Two subsequent novels were printed in the West, happenings which formed the basis for the charges on which he was expelled.

For Mr. Djilas it is also anything but new to have his work ostracized at home. But, in the Yugoslav case, the latest move against his writing sits ill in the one Communist state which has an established role of consistent liberalization.

Views confirmed

In its effect, it is a confirmation of Mr. Djilas's view—set forth in his latest book, "The Unperfect Society"—of the latter-day problems of the Communist world whose predominantly "old guard" conservative leaders comprehend no other remedy but a blind tightening up of cultural controls against the forces striving for reform.

Since the Russians' fright over the turn of events here in the early part of last year, the return to unequivocal control has been evident in Russia and in all the states of the Communist area.

Outside the Soviet Union it has been most marked in Czechoslovakia in the year now elapsed since the 1968 invasion.

At the Soviets' behest, all the new freedoms of expression briefly installed during the Czechoslovak "spring" were annulled.

Eight months of freedom of the press was ended.

Since the complete take-over by the mainly "conservative" leadership last September, party policy in culture and the creative arts has become as sternly uncompromising as it now is in the Soviet Union.

At least one well-known writer identified with the Dubcek reform movement has been told that a recently completed book cannot be published. A Polish play has just been taken off as an "incitement" to dissenting opinion. Distinguished Czech films of last year have been quietly removed from distribution, though still being screened before capacity audiences.

In some cases awards for liberally minded film work picked out by film and television critics has been officially repudiated.

Weeklies suppressed

Government recognition (on which state subsidies and other benefits vital to many writers' and artists' livelihoods depend) is to be withdrawn from the artistic unions because of their continued refusal to rescind last year's statements denouncing the Soviet invasion.

The lively literary and political weeklies of 1968 remain suppressed. Their staffs are among the several hundred journalists dismissed — and in some cases still languishing without other employment — in the total purge of the information and cultural media.

[Seven prominent journalists were expelled from the Czechoslovak Communist Party Nov. 14 for breach of party statutes, Reuters reports.

[The seven, all well-known reformist columnists during the 1968 liberalization era, were expelled following a meeting of the disciplinary commission of the party central committee.

[The party decision said the journalists gravely threatened the international policy of the party and by their activities contributed to the deterioration of relations with socialist countries.

[Meanwhile, Czechoslovak television formally announced that the entire Communist Party organization in its studios has been replaced. Commentators in both radio and television played a big role in promoting the liberalization program under former party leader Alexander Dubcek. Most of them have lost their jobs or are working behind the scenes.]

Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, literature, film, and theater have all tended to show more circumspection since Russia's intervention against the "liberal" movement here.

Even in Romania, where only the most modest trends to more freedom of expression had begun to emerge, the party line on culture and ideology has been stiffened again in recent months.

The latest sign of this was the abrupt termination last month of a series of outspoken articles in a Romanian weekly.

Brakes applied

The closure followed a warning from Romanian party leader Nicolae Ceausescu in September, aimed at writers and editors who were allegedly paying insufficient attention to ideology.

But Romania is to some extent an evolving society, however slowly it goes. In the present circumstances it seems natural for its leaders to proceed cautiously.

Yugoslavia is already a highly evolved society where, from time to time—usually because of the requirements of Belgrade's sensitive relations with Moscow—Marshal Tito has tried to put the brake on.

Such is the case now, begun with an untimely "anti-Soviet" article (against the invasion here) printed in a Belgrade fortnightly on the very eve of Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko's September visit to Yugoslavia.

LE MONDE, Paris
19 November 1969

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF FRENCH WRITERS PUBLISHES
A DECLARATION ON THE SOLZHENITSYN AFFAIR

"The exclusion of Solzhenitsyn from the Union of Soviet Writers ... constitutes in the eyes of the entire world a monumental error which is not limited to harming the Soviet Union but helps confirm the opinion of socialism which its enemies propagate," the directing committee of the National Committee of Writers (C.N.E.) states in a communique.

In this protest, signed notably by Jean-Paul Sartre, Elsa Triolet, Vercors, Jacques Madaule, Arthur Adamov, Aragon, Jean-Louis Bory, Michel Butor and Christiane Rochefort, the CNE poses a question: "Is it really necessary that the great writers of the USSR be treated like noxious beings? This would be completely unbelieveable if it were not clearly evident through their example that, with the singular complicity of certain of their colleagues, it is not only the writers as a whole, but in a more general way the intellectuals that they are trying to terrify, to dissuade from being anything other than soldiers marching in step.... How could we have believed that today, in the homeland of triumphant socialism, that that which not even a Nicolas II would have thought of doing to Chekhov, when he freely published his Sakhalin, would be the fate of a writer who is the most characteristic of the great Russian tradition, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, once already a victim of the Stalinist repression and whose essential crime is to have survived?

"Is it necessary to tell our Soviet confreres ... that they should recall that the signature of certain of their predecessors confirming similar expulsions was too often a blank check given to the hangman? We still wish to believe, as in the time of the furies unleashed by a jury which dared crown the greatest Russian poet then living (Pasternak -Ed.), in the top leadership of this people to whom we owe the dawn of October and the defeat of Hitlerian fascism, there will be found persons capable of understanding the evil being done and of not letting it be carried out," concluded the statement.

* * * * * * * *

In the issue of Lettres Françaises which contains this statement, Mr. Pierre Daix, editor-in-chief of the weekly, reports a conversation he had at the beginning of the month with the Czech writer Vladimir Brett. The latter wished to protest against the aricles by Aragon on the situation in Prague. Mr. Daix replied that his publication did not want to meddle in the internal affairs of a foreign country, but for reasons of principle he pointed out that the questionnaire of the Ministry of Education organizing systematic informing did the greatest harm to the movement. His interlocutor indicated that he had learned of the existence of this questionnaire through the article by Aragon, which did not prevent him from claiming that Lettres Françaises was very badly informed by the emigres. Mr. Daix concluded the conversation with these words:

"We are well informed in the West by the different newspapers and the radios on what goes on in your country. We can compare the different reports and verify them with a critical spirit. If your comrades still think that the news of what goes on in your country is a matter of personal and private relations and -- why not? -- of secret services, then it is because they have a very narrow, backward conception of news, (to say the least), which had well-known consequences in the 1950's."

LE MONDE, Paris
19 November 1969

Le Comité national des écrivains français publie une déclatation sur l'affaire Soljenitsyne

« *L'exclusion de Soljenitsyne de l'Union des écrivains soviétiques (...) constitue aux yeux du monde entier une erreur monumentale qui ne se borne pas à nuire à l'Union soviétique mais contribue à confirmer l'opinion du socialisme qu'en propagent ses ennemis* », affirme dans un communiqué le comité directeur du Comité national des écrivains.

Dans cette protestation, signée notamment par Jean-Paul Sartre, Elsa Triolet, Vercors, Jacques Madaule, Arthur Adamov, Aragon, Jean-Louis Bory, Michel Butor et Christiane Rochefort, le C.N.E. pose la question : « *Faut-il vraiment que les grands écrivains de l'U.R.S.S. soient traités comme des êtres nuisibles? Cela serait parfaitement incompréhensible si l'on ne voyait d'évidence qu'en eux, avec la complicité singulière de certains de leurs confrères, ce sont non seulement les écrivains dans leur ensemble mais de façon plus générale les intellectuels quo'n cherche à épouvanter, à dissuader d'être autre chose que des soldats marchant au pas de parade (...). Comment aurions-nous pu croire qu'aujourd'hui, dans la patrie du socialisme triomphant, ce que n'avait même pas songé à faire un Nicolas II contre Tchekhov, publiant livrement son* Sakhaline, *serait le sort de l'écrivain le plus caractéristique de la grande tradition russe, Alexandre Soljenitsyne, une fois déjà victime de la répression stalinienne et dont le crime essentiel est d'y avoir survécu?*

» *Faut-il dire à nos confrères soviétiques (...) qu'ils devraient se rappeler que la signature de certains de leurs devanciers confirmant des exclusions semblables a été trop souvent le blanc-seing donné au bourreau? Nous voulons encore croire que, comme au temps des colères déchaînées par un jury qui avait osé couronner le plus grand poète russe alors vivant* (1), *dans les hauts conseils de ce peuple à qui nous devons l'aurore d'Octobre et la défaite du fascisme hitlérien, il se trouvera des gens capables de comprendre le mal fait et de ne pas le laisser s'accomplir* », conclut la déclaration.

***

Dans le numéro des *Lettres françaises* qui contient cette déclaration, M. Pierre Daix, rédacteur en chef de l'hebdomadaire, rend compte d'une conversation qu'il a eue au début du mois avec l'écrivain tchèque Vladimir Brett. Celui-ci entendait protester contre les articles d'Aragon sur la situation à Prague. M. Daix a répondu que son journal ne voulait pas se mêler des affaires intérieures d'un pays étranger, mais que pour des raisons de principe il relevait que le questionnaire du ministre de l'éducation organisant la délation systématique faisait le plus grand tort au mouvement. Son interlocuteur a indiqué qu'il avait appris par l'article d'Aragon l'existence de ce questionnaire, ce qui ne l'a pas empêché d'affirmer que *les Lettres françaises* étaient très mal informées par des émigrés. M. Daix a conclu la conversation par ces mots :

« *Nous sommes bien informés en Occident par les différents journaux et les radios sur ce qui se passe dans votre pays. Nous pouvons comparer les différentes informations et les vérifier avec esprit critique. Si vos camarades en sont encore à s'imaginer que l'information sur ce qui se passe chez vous est affaire de relations personnelles et privées et, pourquoi pas? de services secrets, alors c'est qu'ils ont de l'information la conception étroite, arriérée, pour ne pas dire plus, qui a eu les conséquences qu'on sait dans les années 50.* »

(1) Il s'agit de Pasternak (N.D. L.R.).

DAILY TELEGRAPH, London
20 November 1969

PEN ASKS FOR SOLZHENITSYN'S RESTORATION

By Our Communist Affairs Correspondent

M. Pierre Emmanuel, president of the international writers' organisation, P.E.N., yesterday appealed to Mr. Konstantin Fedin, secretary of the Soviet Writers' Union, to restore the writer, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, to membership of the union. His expulsion from the union was announced last week.

In a cable sent yesterday to Moscow, M. Emmanuel said he was "appalled and shocked" at the treatment of Mr Solzhenitsyn whom he described as "that great and universally respected writer.

"We beg you to intervene personally and restore him to membership, thus combating the much deplored and prolonged persecution of one of our most eminent colleagues," the message said. Mr Roger Fernay, executive vice-president of the International Writers' Guild, also cabled Moscow yesterday appealing for Mr Solzhenitsyn's restoration to membership.

NEW YORK TIMES
23 November 1969

7 IN SOVIET PROTEST SOLZHENITSYN CURB

MOSCOW, Nov. 22 (UPI)—Seven of his colleagues have asked the Soviet writers' union to reconsider its expulsion of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the Russian author.

The union expelled him two weeks ago on the ground that his writings were too critical of Soviet life and his refusal to dissociate himself from the furor his novels "The Cancer Ward" and "The First Circle" created in the West.

Literary sources said seven writers had made individual representations to the union leadership. The included Bulat Okudzhava, Yuri V. Trifonov, Vladimir F. Tendryakov and Grigory Y. Baklanov, the sources said.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn has the right to appeal the expulsion but has been reluctant to do so because of the likelihood of rejection. He has filed a letter of protest pleading for freedom of expression in the Soviet Union and calling Soviet society "gravely sick."

WASHINGTON POST
26 November 1969

Prison or Exile Threat Hinted For Red Author

By Anthony Astrachan
Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, Nov. 25—Threats of exile and jail were visible between the lines of a new Writers' Union attack on novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn today.

Tass, the Soviet news agency, published a reply from the secretariat of the Russian Federation Writers' Union to an open letter by Solzhenitsyn that reached the West ten days ago but has not been published here.

The secretariat's "report" will appear in the new issue Wednesday of Literaturnaya Gazeta, the organ of the parent-Soviet Writers' Union.

The report says Solzhenitsyn lied when he claimed he had neither been invited nor been sent a telegram summoning him to the meeting of the secretariat that confirmed his expulsion from the union.

It escalates the attack on Solzhenitsyn. Formerly, he was charged with refusing to disassociate himself from "the anti-Soviet fuss around his name" abroad. Now, it is suggested that he and his work themselves are anti-Soviet.

This could open the novelist to prosecution under Article 70 of the Russian Republic's criminal code, which gives a maximum sentence of seven years in prison followed by five years' exile (from the home district) to persons convicted of anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda.

Solzhenitsyn, 51, wrote "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch," which gave Soviets their first picture of life in a Stalin prison camp—a life Solzhenitsyn knew from years inside. It was published with Nikita Khrushchev's blessing. Solzhenitsyn's "The First Circle" and "Cancer Ward," published in the West, are known here only through the underground circulation of typed copies.

The novelist was expelled from the Writers' Union Nov. 10 and wrote his open letter a few days later.

The secretariat reply said the novelist "did not stand up against the use of his name and his works by bourgeois propaganda for a campaign of slander against our country . . . Moreover, in his actions and statements he actually joined hands with those who are coming out against the Soviet social system."

The report also called his open letter "a proof of his . . . direct transition to positions hostile to the cause of socialism."

Finally, the report said, "Nobody is going to hold Solzhenitsyn and prevent him from going away even if he desires to go where his anti-Soviet works and letters are received such delight."

Solzhenitsyn has never shown any desire to go anywhere except "some quiet corner of Russia." His love for his country is apparent to Western readers in every work. His determination to stay seems to contrast with the defection of Anatoly Kuznetsov in the eyes of some Russians and many foreigners. Kuznetsov went to Britain on a pretext, defected and has since been fiercely critical of the Soviet Union.

Solzhenitsyn's apparent thirst for Russia makes some observers link him to Boris Pasternak, a writer of different style and subject. Khrushchev threatened Pasternak with expulsion from the Soviet Union. Pasternak replied that exile would be worse for him than death, and was allowed to stay until he died.

Solzhenitsyn's open letter referred to the time the Writers' Union expelled Pasternak and asked, "Was that not shame enough for you?"

The last writer to be expelled from the Soviet Union, fulfilling his own desires, was Valery Tarsis, a writer of lesser stature. He was allowed to leave in February, 1966.

In a related development today, Konstantin Fedin, first secretary of the Soviet Writers' Union, sent this reply to David Carver, General Secretary of the PEN club, who had cabled him about Solzhenitsyn's expulsion from the union:

"I regard your telegram as unprecedented interference in the internal affairs of the Writers' Union of the USSR for which the observance of its rules lies exclusively within its competence."

The Soviet Union is not a member of PEN.

THE WASHINGTON POST Friday, Nov. 28, 1969

Soviets Imprison Signer of Rights Appeal

Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, Nov. 27—A Soviet engineer was sentenced to three years in prison yesterday on charges that included his signing an appeal to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights last May, it was learned today.

Genrikh Altunyan was formally convicted of diffusing fabrications defaming the Soviet state and social system, dissident sources said in a new letter to U.N. Secretary General U Thant.

The maximum sentence on that charge is three years. The indictment was switched from a more serious original accusation of making anti-Soviet propaganda and causing agitation, which carries a seven-year maximum sentence. The sources offered no explanation of this.

They did say the charge covered three specifications: Signing the May appeal to the U.N., which charged that the Soviet government violated human rights; protesting the treatment of former Maj. Gen. Pyotr Grigorenko, arrested last May in Tashkent and later sent to a psychiatric institution, and saying publicly that anti-Semitism existed in the Soviet Union. The one-day trial was held in Kharkov.

An earlier dissident letter described Altunyan as a man whose main goal in life was to be readmitted to the Communist party, from which he was expelled two years ago, "because Leninist principles and ideas are his life's driving force."

The new letter to Thant was signed by nine members of the Initiative Group for the Defense of Civil Rights in the Soviet Union. The group found 54 signers for its May appeal and 46 for the one in September. Its existence is known to only a handful of Soviet citizens.

Dissident sources said four of the group's original 15 members are in prison or mental homes, while two more—mathematician Alexander Lavut and biologist Sergei Kovalev—were dismissed Tuesday from their Moscow University teaching posts.

Soviet authorities are presumed to have other ways of showing their concern with dissidents besides arrests, psychiatric commitments and dismissals. Western newsmen wondered this week if an example of one of those ways had surfaced.

A letter appeared in some mailboxes purporting to come from one A. Rozen, addressed to Pyotr Yakir, the best-known member of the initiative group.

The letter said the writer had refused to sign a letter originated by Yakir on the eve of the 23d congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1966 and addressed to the Central Committee. It said Rozen had refused to sign other letters in defense of protesters Yuri Galanskov, Alexander Ginsburg and Anatoly Marchenko, all serving prison terms.

It then blamed Yakir for allowing the underground Chronicle of Current Events and letters and appeals to be published abroad, without the consent of the signers. It particularly mentioned publication in the emigre journal Posev, which it called "a loudspeaker of the notorious NTS." NTS is an anti-Soviet organization in Western Europe.

The letter also said the writer had first disbelieved, but later come to believe, stories about Yakir's drinking, philandering and leading a colleague's daughter into orgies. It also called Yakir's associate, Alexander Yesenin-Volpin (son of the late Soviet poet Sergei Yesenin), a victim of serious mental disease.

The letter may, of course, be genuine.

But it reminded some observers of earlier attempts to confuse the readers of Samizdat, an underground typed publication, with documents emanating not from dissidents or bona fide writers but from sources linked to the secret police. Such papers do not usually go direct to Western correspondents, however, as this one did.

NEW YORK TIMES
5 December 1969

16 Western Intellectuals Score Soviet Attacks on Solzhenitsyn

A letter condeming the expulsion of Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn from the Soviet writers union is being sent to Moscow over the signatures of 16 intellectuals, including Arthur Miller, Jean-Paul Sartre and Carlos Fuentes.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn has been under attack in the Soviet union, where his works have not been published since 1966. Two of his books, "The First Circle" and the Cancer Ward," have been published in the West. Both have been banned in te Soviet Union.

The letter was framed by Mr. Miller, who is the vice president of PEN, the international writers organization. It said in part:

"We reject the conception that an artist's refusal to humbly accept state censorship is in any sense criminal in a civilized society, or that publication by foreigners of his books is ground for persecuting him.

It also said: "We sign our names as men of peace declaring our solidarity with Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's defense of those fundamental rights of the human spirit which unite civilized people everywhere."

The other signatories to the letter selected because of their acceptance and popularity within the Soviet Union, included the following American writers:

Charles Bracelen Flood, John Updike, John Cheever, Truman Capote, Richard Wilbur Mitchell Wilson, Kurt Vonnegut and Harrison E. Salisbury.

The other signers were Igor Stravinsky, Yukio Mischima, Günter Grass, Heinrich Böll and Friederich Dürrenmatt.

In a letter last week to Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin, Bertrand Russell said that the expulsion "is in the interest of neither justice nor the good name of the Soviet Union."

PROBLEMS OF COMMUNISM
September/October 1968

EDITORS' NOTE: Soviet writers and intellectuals have long struggled for a relaxation of the stringent censorship laws under which they have labored ever since Glavlit (Main Administration for Literary Affairs and Publishing) was established on June 6, 1922. But not until May 1967 were the Soviet authorities presented with a demand for the total and unqualified abolition of this reprehensible institution. The demand came from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, author of One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, *in the form of an open letter to the Fourth USSR Writers' Congress, and its repercussions—overwhelming support from fellow-writers and a concerted campaign of harassment launched against Solzhenitsyu by the regime in collaboration with bureaucrats from the Union of Writers—are traced in the documents reproduced below. The documents tell a remarkable story of a distinguished writer and free human spirit refusing to bow to the pressures, the cajolements, the abuse, the threats and intimidations of a police regime. His novel* The First Circle *(now published in English, German, and Italian), which deals with the special penal institutions provided by Stalin for politically objectionable members of the technical intelligentsia, has been suppressed, as well as his other novel dealing with the Stalinist era,* Cancer Ward *(recently printed in English by two publishers). On June 26, 1968,* Literaturnaia gazeta *denounced him for his "demagogic behavior," for "attacking the fundamental principles that guide Soviet literature," and for "maliciously slandering the Soviet system," warning him—and one of his supporters, the venerable writer V. Kaverin (see Doc. 67)—to cease their "anti-Soviet" activities. But Solzhenitsyn remains unmoved, his behavior serving as an inspiration to many others in the literary community—as borne out by Documents 71and 72. The address by Svirsky refers explicitly to Solzhenitsyn; and it surely is significant that Voznesensky's bold attack on what may be termed the "literary bureaucracy" came shortly after Solzhenitsyn's plea for the abolition of censorship. The final document (No. 73) is an impassioned defense of underground literature and underground writers in general. It was written in 1966 by Yuri Galanskov, whose long record of activities (including the drafting of a program for a "World Union of Partisans of General Disarmament" in 1961, an attempt to organize an apolitical youth club in 1962, and a unique one-man demonstration three years later in front of the US Embassy in Moscow against American intervention in the Dominican Republic) ended in January 1968, when he was imprisoned for "subverting Soviet authority."*

A. *L'Affaire* Solzhenitsyn

Solzhenitsyn to the Fourth Congress of Soviet Writers

To the Presidium and the delegates to the Congress, to members of the Union of Soviet Writers, and to the editors of literary newspapers and magazines:

Not having access to the podium at this Congress, I ask that the Congress discuss:

I. The no longer tolerable oppression, in the form of censorship, which our literature has endured for decades, and which the Union of Writers can no longer accept.

Under the obfuscating label of Glavlit, this censorship—which is not provided for in the Constitution and is therefore illegal, and which is nowhere publicly labeled as such—imposes a yoke on our literature and gives people unversed in literature arbitrary control over writers. A survival of the Middle Ages, the censorship has managed, Methuselah-like, to drag out its existence almost to the 21st century. Of fleeting significance, it attempts to appropriate to itself the role of unfleeting time—of separating good books from bad.

Our writers are not supposed to have the right, are not endowed with the right, to express their cautionary judgments about the moral life of man and society, or to explain in their own way the social problems and historical experience that have been so deeply felt in our country. Works that might express the mature thinking of the people, that might have a timely and salutary influence on the realm of the spirit or on the development of a social conscience, are proscribed or distorted by censorship on the basis of considerations that are petty, egotistical, and—from the national point of view—shortsighted. Outstanding manuscripts by young authors, as yet entirely unknown, are nowadays rejected by editors solely on the ground that they "will not pass." Many members of the [Writers'] Union, and even many of the delegates at this Congress, know how they themselves have bowed to the pressures of the censorship and made concessions in the structure and concept of their books—changing chapters, pages, paragraphs, or sentences, giving them innocuous titles—just for the sake of seeing them finally in print, even if it meant distorting them irremediably. It is an understood quality of literature that gifted works suffer [most] disastrously from all these distortions, while untalented works are not affected by them. Indeed, it is the best of our literature that is published in mutilated form.

Meanwhile, the most censorious labels—"ideologically harmful," "depraved," and so forth—are proving short-lived and fluid, [in fact] are changing before our very eyes. Even Dostoevsky, the pride of world literature, was at one time not published in our country (still today his works are not published in full); he was excluded from the school curriculum, made unacceptable for reading, and reviled. For how many years was Yesenin considered "counterrevolutionary"?—he was even subjected to a prison term because of his books. Wasn't Maiakovsky called "an anarchistic political hooligan"? For decades the immortal poetry of Akhmatova was considered anti-Soviet. The first timid printing of the dazzling Tsvetaeva ten years ago was declared a "gross political error." Only after a delay of twenty to thirty years were Bunin, Bulgakov, and Platonov returned to us. Inevitably, Mandelshtam, Voloshin, Gumilev and Kliuev will follow in that line—not to mention the recognition, at some time or other, of even Zamiatin and Remisov.

A decisive moment [in this process] comes with the death of a troublesome writer. Sooner or later after that, he is returned to us with an "explanation of [his] errors." For a long time the name of Pasternak could not be pronounced out loud; but then he died, and since then his books have appeared and his verse is even quoted at ceremonies.

Pushkin's words are really coming true: "They are capable of loving only the dead."

But the belated publication of books and "authorization" [rehabilitation] of names does not make up for either the social or the artistic losses suffered by our

people as a consequence of these monstrous delays and the suppression of artistic conscience. (In fact, there were writers in the 1920's—Pilniak, Platonov, Mandelshtam—who called attention at a very early stage to the beginnings of the cult [of personality] and the peculiar traits of Stalin's character; but these writers were silenced and destroyed instead of being listened to.) Literature cannot develop in between the categories of "permitted" and "not permitted," "about this you may write" and "about this you may not." Literature that is not the breath of contemporary society, that dares not transmit the pains and fears of that society, that does not warn in time against threatening moral and social dangers—such literature does not deserve the name of literature; it is only a facade. Such literature loses the confidence of its own people, and its published works are used as waste-paper instead of being read.

Our literature has lost the leading role it played at the end of the last century and the beginning of this one, and it has lost the brilliance of experimentation that distinguished it in the 1920's. To the entire world the literary life of our country now appears immeasurably more colorless, trivial and inferior than it actually is—[for] than it would be if it were not confined and hemmed in. The losers are both our country—in world public opinion—and world literature itself. If the world had access to all the uninhibited fruits of our literature, if it were enriched by our own spiritual experience, the whole artistic evolution of the world would move along in a different way, acquiring a new stability and attaining even a new artistic threshold.

I propose that the Congress adopt a resolution which would demand and ensure the abolition of all censorship, open or hidden, of all fictional writing, and which would release publishing houses from the obligation to obtain authorization for the publication of every printed page.

II. The duties of the Union towards its members.

These duties are not clearly formulated in the statutes of the Union of Soviet Writers (under "Protection of copyrights" and "Measures for the protection of other rights of writers"), and it is sad to find that for a third of a century the Union has not defended either the "other" rights or even the copyrights of persecuted writers.

Many writers have been subjected during their lifetime to abuse and slander in the press and from rostrums without being afforded the physical possibility of replying. More than that, they have been exposed to violence and personal persecution (Bulgakov, Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Pasternak, Zoshchenko, Platonov, Aleksandr Grin, Vassili Grossman). The Union of Writers not only did not make its own publications available to these writers for purposes of reply and justification, not only did not come out in their defense, but through its leadership was always first among the persecutors. Names that adorned our poetry of the 20th century found themselves on the list of those expelled from the Union or not even admitted to it in the first place. The leadership of the Union cravenly abandoned to their distress those for whom persecution ended in exile, labor camps, and death (Pavel Vasilev, Mandelshtam, Artem Vesely, Pilniak, Babel, Tabidze, Zabolotsky, and others). The list must be cut off at "and others." We learned after the 20th Party Congress that there were more than 600 writers whom the Union had obediently handed over to their fate in prisons and camps. However, the roll is even longer, and its curled-up end cannot and will not ever be read by our eyes. It contains the names of young prose-writers and poets whom we may have known only accidentally through personal encounters and whose talents were crushed in camps before being able to blossom, whose writings never got further than the offices of the state security service in the days of Yagoda, Yezhov, Beria and Abakumov.

There is no historical necessity for the newly-elected leadership of the Union to share with its predecessors the responsibility for the past.

I propose that all guarantees for the defense of Union members subjected to slander and unjust persecution be clearly formulated in Paragraph 22 of the Union statutes, so that past illegalities will not be repeated.

If the Congress does not remain indifferent to what I have said, I also ask that it consider the interdictions and persecutions to which I myself have been subjected.

1) It will soon be two years since the state security authorities took away from me my novel, *The First Circle* (comprising 35 authors' sheets [*avtorskie listy*]),[1] thus preventing it from being submitted to publishers. Instead, in my own lifetime, against my will and even without my knowledge, this novel has been "published" in an unnatural "closed" edition for reading by an unidentified select circle. My novel has [*thus*] become available to literary officials but is being concealed from most writers. I have been unable to obtain open discussion of the novel within writers' associations and to prevent misuse and plagiarism.

2) Together with this novel, my literary papers dating back 15-20 years, things that were not intended for publication, were taken away from me. Now, tendentious excerpts from these papers have also been covertly "published" and are being circulated within the same circles. The play, *Feast of the Conquerors*, which I wrote in verse from memory in camp, where I went by a four-digit number—and where, condemned to die by starvation, we were forgotten by society, no one outside the camps coming out against [such] repressions—this play, now left far behind, is being ascribed to me as my very latest work.

3) For three years now, an irresponsible campaign of slander has been conducted against me, who fought all through the war as a battery commander and received military decorations. It is being said that I served time as a criminal, or surrendered to the enemy (I was never a prisoner-of-war), that I "betrayed" my country and "served the Germans." That is the interpretation being put now on the eleven years I spent in camps and in exile for having criticized Stalin. This slander is being spread in secret instructions and meetings by people holding official positions. I vainly tried to stop the slander by appealing to the Board of the Writers' Union of the RSFSR and to the press. The Board did not even react, and not a single paper printed my reply to the slanderers. On the contrary, slander against me from rostrums has intensified and become more vicious within the last year, making use of distorted material from my confiscated papers, and I have no way of replying.

4) My novel, *Cancer Ward* (comprising 25 author's sheets), the first part of which was approved for publication by the prose department of the Moscow writers' organization, cannot be published either by chapters—rejected by five magazines—or in its entirety—rejected by *Novyi mir*, *Zvezda*, and *Prostor*.

5) The play, *The Reindeer and the Little Hut*, accepted in 1962 by the Sovremennik Theater, has thus far not been approved for performance.

6) The screen play, *The Tanks Know the Truth*; the stage play, *The Light That is in You*; [a group of] short stories entitled *The Right Hand*; the series, *Small Bite*—[all these] cannot find either a producer or a publisher.

7) My stories published in *Novyi mir* have never been reprinted in book form, having been rejected everywhere—by the Soviet Writer Publishers, the State Literature Publishing House, and the *Ogoniok* Library. They thus remain inaccessible to the general reading public.

8) I have also been prevented from having any other contacts with readers [either] through public readings of my works (in November 1966, nine out of eleven scheduled meetings were cancelled at the last moment) or through readings over the radio. Even the simple act of giving a manuscript away for "reading and copying" has now become a criminal act (ancient Russian scribes were permitted to do this five centuries ago).

Thus my work has been finally smothered, gagged, and slandered.

In view of such flagrant infringements of my copyright and "other" rights, will the Fourth Congress defend me—yes or no? It seems to me that the choice is also not without importance for the literary future of several of the delegates.

I am of course confident that I will fulfill my duty as a writer under all circumstances—even more successfully

and more unchallenged from the grave than in my lifetime. No one can bar the road to truth, and to advance its cause I am prepared to accept even death. But may it be that repeated lessons will finally teach us not to stop the writer's pen during his lifetime?

At no time has this ennobled our history.

A. I. SOLZHENITSYN

May 16, 1967.

[1] "Author's sheets" are printed pages, each containing 40,000 typographical characters, used in the Soviet Union for computing the author's fee.—Ed.

Antokolsky to Demichev

To Comrade P. N. Demichev, Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee

Dear Piotr Nilych!

Like other delegates to our congress, I too have received the famous letter written by Aleksandr Isaevich Solzhenitsyn, and it has perturbed me, as it has several other comrades.

As an old writer and a Communist, I feel obliged to share my feelings with you.

I consider Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn a writer endowed with rare talent, a rising hope of our realistic literature, an heir to the great and humanistic traditions of Gogol, Lev Tolstoy and Aleksei Maksimovich Gorky. We ought to cherish such contributors to our culture. Criticism of those works of Solzhenitsyn which have been published has shocked me because it is biased, unjust and unconvincing.

The ban on Solzhenitsyn's manuscripts, described in detail in his letter, strikes one as an incredible occurrence unworthy of our socialist society and our Soviet state. It is all the more dreadful in view of the fact that the same thing happened several years ago to the manuscript of the second part of the novel by the late Vassili Grossman.

Is it possible that such reprisals against the manuscripts of our writers are threatening to become a custom sanctioned by law in our country?

This cannot and must not happen!

Such savagery toward works of art is incompatible with our fundamental laws and unthinkable in any normal human community.

If Solzhenitsyn's works contain controversial and unclear elements, if political mistakes have been discovered in them, they should be submitted to the public for open discussion. Writers have many opportunities to do this.

I have worked in the field of literature for 50 years. I have written many books and lived out my life, a life full of vicissitudes. I have experienced periods of burning anxiety for the fate of our entire literature, and sometimes for various comrades: Bulgakov, Pasternak, Titsian Tabidze. I recall the names of those who were close to me.

Having lived out my life, I would never have thought that such anxiety would recur in the evening of my days, and on the eve of the great and glorious anniversary!

If a Soviet writer is compelled to turn to his fellow writers with a letter like Solzhenitsyn's, this means that we are all morally responsible to him and to our own readers. If he cannot tell his readers the truth, then I too, old writer that I am, have no right to look my readers straight in the eye.

[n.d.] PAVEL ANTOKOLSKY

Solzhenitsyn to Writers' Union

To the Secretariat of the Board of the Union of Writers of the USSR—All Secretaries

Even though supported by more than a hundred writers, my letter to the Fourth Congress of the Union of Writers has been neither published nor answered. The only thing that has happened is that rumors are being spread in order to assuage public opinion. These rumors—highly uniform and evidently coming from a centralized source—aver that *Cancer Ward* and a book of [my] stories are being printed. But as you know, this is a lie.

In a conversation with me on June 12, 1967, [some of the] secretaries of the Board of the Union of Writers of the USSR—G. Markov, K. Voronkov, S. Sartakov, and L. Sobolev—declared that the Board of the Union of Writers deemed it a duty to refute publicly the base slander that has been spread about me and my military record. However, not only has this refutation failed to materialize, but the slanders continue: at instructional meetings, at activist meetings, and at seminars, a new batch of fantastic nonsense is being disseminated about me—[*e.g.*,] that I have run off to the Republic of Arabia or to England (I would like to assure the slanderers that it is rather they who will be doing the running). Prominent persons persistently express their regret that I did not die in the camp, that I was liberated. (Incidentally, immediately following *Ivan Denisovich*, the same regret was voiced. This book is now being secretly withdrawn from circulation in [public] libraries.)

These same secretaries of the Board promised at least to "examine the question" of [approving] publication of my latest novel, *Cancer Ward*. But in the space of three months—one-fourth of a year—no progress has been made in this direction either. During these three months, 42 secretaries of the Board have been unable to make an evaluation of the novel or to make a recommendation as to whether it should be published. The novel has been in this same strange and equivocal state—no direct prohibition, no direct permission—for over a year, since the summer of 1966. While the journal *Novyi mir* would now like to publish the story, it lacks the permission to do so.

Does the Secretariat believe that my novel will silently disappear as a result of these endless delays, that I will cease to exist, and that [therefore] the Secretariat will not have to decide whether to include it or exclude it from Soviet literature? While this is going on, the book is being read avidly everywhere. At the behest of the readers, it has already appeared in hundreds of typewritten copies. At the June 12 meeting I apprised the Secretariat that we should make haste to publish the novel if we wish to see it appear first in Russian, that under the circumstances we cannot prevent its unauthorized appearance in the West.

After the senseless delay of many months, the time has come to state that if the latter does happen, it will clearly be the fault (or perhaps the wish?) of the Secretariat of the Board of the Union of Writers of the USSR.

I insist that my story be published without delay.

SOLZHENITSYN

September 12, 1967

63. Secretariat Meeting with Solzhenitsyn

Proceedings of a Session of the Secretariat of the Union of Soviet Writers, September 22, 1967

The session was attended by approximately 30 secretaries of the Union of Writers and by Comrade Melentiev of the Cultural Department of the Central Committee. K. A. Fedin was chairman. The session, which discussed letters written by Solzhenitsyn, started at 1:00 p.m. and ended after 5:00 p.m.

FEDIN: I have been shaken by Solzhenitsyn's second letter. His claim that things have come to a standstill seems to me to be without foundation. I feel that this has been an insult to our collective. By no means is three and a half months a long time to spend examining his manu-

script. I have sensed something in the nature of a threat [in the letter]. This strikes me as offensive! Solzhenitsyn's second letter seems to urge us to take up his manuscripts in all haste and to publish them immediately. The second letter continues the line of the first, but the first letter spoke more concretely and with more fervor about the fate of the writer, while the second, I feel, was offensive. Where do we stand with regard to the complex question of publishing Solzhenitsyn's things? None of us denies that he is talented. [Yet] the tenor of the letter veers in an impermissible direction. His letter is like a slap in the face: it is as if we are reprobates and not representatives of the creative intelligentsia. In the final analysis, he himself is slowing down the examination of the question with these demands. I did not find the idea of literary comradeship in his letters. Whether we want to or not, today we must get into a discussion of Solzhenitsyn's works, but it seems to me that generally speaking we should discuss the letters.

Solzhenitsyn requests permission to say a few words about the subject of discussion. He reads a written statement:

It has become known to me that in preparation for the discussion of *Cancer Ward*, the secretaries of the Board were instructed to read the play, *Feast of the Conquerors*, which I myself have long since renounced; I have not even read it for ten years. I destroyed all copies of it except the one that was confiscated and that has now been reproduced. More than once I have explained that this play was written not by Solzhenitsyn, member of the Union of Writers, but by nameless prisoner Sh-232 in those distant years when there was no return to freedom for those arrested under the political article, at a time when no one in the community, including the writers' community, either in word or deed spoke out against repression, even when such repression was directed against entire peoples. I now bear just as little responsibility for this play as many other authors bear for speeches and books they wrote in 1949 but would not write again today. This play bears the stamp of the desperation of the camps in those years when man's conscious being was determined by his social being and at a time when the conscious being was by no means uplifted by prayers for those who were being persecuted. This play bears no relationship whatsoever to my present works, and the critique of it is a deliberate departure from a businesslike discussion of the novel, *Cancer Ward*.

Moreover, it is beneath a writer's ethics to discuss a work that was seized in such a way from a private apartment. The critique of my novel, *The First Circle*, is a separate matter and should not be substituted for a critique of the story, *Cancer Ward*.

KORNEICHUK: I have a question to put to Solzhenitsyn. How does he regard the licentious bourgeois propaganda that his [first] letter evoked? Why doesn't he dissociate himself from it [the propaganda]? Why does he put up with it in silence? How is it that his letter was broadcast over the radio in the West even before the congress started?

Fedin calls upon Solzhenitsyn to reply. Solzhenitsyn replies that he is not a schoolboy who has to jump up to answer every question, that he will deliver a statement like the others. Fedin says that Solzhenitsyn can wait until there are several questions and then answer them all at the same time.

BARUZDIN: Even though Solzhenitsyn protests against the discussion of *Feast of the Conquerors*, we shall have to discuss this play whether he wants to or not.

SALYNSKY: I would like Solzhenitsyn to tell us by whom, when, and under what circumstances these materials were removed. Has the author asked for their return? To whom did he address his request?

Fedin asks Solzhenitsyn to answer these questions. Solzhenitsyn repeats that he will answer them when making his statement.

FEDIN: But the Secretariat cannot begin the discussion until it has the answers to these questions.

VOICES: If Solzhenitsyn wants to refuse to talk to the Secretariat at all, let him say so.

SOLZHENITSYN: Very well, I shall answer these questions. It is not true that the letter was broadcast over the radio in the West before the congress: it was broadcast *after* the congress closed, and then not right away. (*The following is verbatim:*) Very significant and expressive use is made here of the word "abroad," as if it referred to some higher authority whose opinion was very much cherished. Perhaps this is understandable to those who spend much creative time traveling abroad, to those who flood our literature with sketches about life abroad. But this is alien to me. I have never been abroad, but I do know that I don't have time enough left in my life to learn about life there. I do not understand how one can be so sensitive to opinion abroad and not to one's own country, to pulsing public opinion here. For my entire life I have had the soil of my homeland under my feet; only *its* pain do I hear, only about *it* do I write.

Why was the play, *Feast of the Conquerors*, mentioned in the letter to the congress? This is apparent from the letter itself: in order to protest against the illegal "publication" and dissemination of this play against the will of the author and without his consent. Now, concerning the confiscation of my novel and archives. Yes, I did write several times beginning in 1965 to protest this matter to the Central Committee. But in recent times a whole new version of the confiscation of my archives has been invented. The story is that Teush, the person who was keeping my manuscripts, had some tie with another person who is not named, that the latter was arrested while going through customs (where is not mentioned), and that something or other was found in his possession (they do not say what); it was not something of mine, but they decided to protect me against such an acquaintanceship. All this is a lie. Teush's friend was investigated two years ago, but no such accusation was made against him. The items I had in safekeeping were discovered as a consequence of [police] surveillance, wiretapping, and an eavesdropping device. And here is the remarkable thing: barely does the new version [of the confiscation] appear than it crops up in various parts of the country. Lecturer Potemkin has just aired it to a large assemblage in Riga; and one of the secretaries of the Union of Writers has passed it on to writers in Moscow, adding his own invention—that I supposedly acknowledged all these things at the last meeting at the Secretariat. Yet not a single one of these things was discussed. I have no doubt that I will soon start getting letters from all parts of the country about the dissemination of this version.

VOICE: Has the editorial board of *Novyi mir* rejected or accepted the novel, *Cancer Ward?*

ABDUMOMUNOV: What kind of authorization does *Novyi mir* require to print a story, and from whom does it come?

TVARDOVSKY: Generally, the decision to print or not to print a particular thing is a matter for the editorial board to decide. But in the situation that has developed around this author's name, the Secretariat of the Union must decide.

VORONKOV: Not once has Solzhenitsyn appealed directly to the Secretariat of the Union of Writers. After Solzhenitsyn's letter to the congress, some of the comrades in the Secretariat, expressed the desire to meet with him, to answer questions, to talk [with him] and help. But after the letter appeared in the dirty bourgeois press and Solzhenitsyn did not react in any way. . .

TVARDOVSKY [*interrupting*]: Precisely like the Union of Writers!

VORONKOV: . . . this desire died. And now the second letter has come. It is written in the form of an ultimatum; it is offensive and a disrespect to our writers' community. Just now Solzhenitsyn referred to "one of the secretaries" who addressed a party meeting of Moscow writers. I was that secretary. [*To Solzhenitsyn*]: People were in a hurry to inform you but they did a bad job of it. As to the confiscation of your things, the only thing I mentioned was that you had admitted at the last meeting that the confiscated items were yours and that there had been no search made of your house. Naturally, after your letter to the Congress, we ourselves asked to read all your

works. But you should not be so rude to your brothers in labor and writing! And you, Aleksandr Trifonovich [Tvardovsky], if you consider it necessary to print this story, and if the author accepts your corrections, then go ahead and print it yourself: why should the Secretariat be involved?

TVARDOVSKY: And what happened in the case of Bek?[1] The Secretariat was also involved then and made its recommendations, but all the same nothing was published.

VORONKOV: What interests me most of all now is the civic person Solzhenitsyn: Why doesn't he give answer to the malicious bourgeois propaganda? And why does he treat us as he does?

MUSREPOV: I have a question, too. How can he possibly write in his letter: "Prominent persons persistently express regret that I did not die in the camp? What right does he have to write such a thing?

SHARIPOV: And by what channels could the letter have reached the West?

Fedin asks Solzhenitsyn to answer these questions.

SOLZHENITSYN: What other things have been said about me? A person who right now occupies a very high position publicly declared that he is sorry he was not one of the triumvirate that sentenced me in 1945, that he would have sentenced me to be shot then and there! Here [at the Secretariat] my second letter is interpreted as an ultimatum: either print the story, or it will be printed in the West. But it isn't *I* who presents this ultimatum to the Secretariat; life presents this ultimatum to you and me both. I write that I am disturbed by the distribution of the story in hundreds—this is an approximate figure—in hundreds of typewritten copies.

VOICE: How did this come about?

SOLZHENITSYN: My works are disseminated in one way only: people persistently ask to read them, and, having received them to read, they either use their spare time or their own funds to reprint them and then give them to others to read. As long as a year ago the entire Moscow section [of the Writers' Union] read the first part of the story, and I am surprised that Comrade Voronkov said here that they didn't know where to get it and that they asked the KGB. About three years ago my "short stories" or poetry in prose were disseminated just as rapidly: barely had I given them to people to read when they quickly reached various cities in the Union. And then the editors of *Novyi mir* received a letter from the West from which we learned that these stories had already been published there.[2] It was in order that such a leak might not befall *Cancer Ward* that I wrote my insistent letter to the Secretariat. I am no less astonished that the Secretariat could fail to react in some way to my letter to the congress before the West did. And how could it fail to respond to all the slander that surrounds me? Comrade Voronkov used here the remarkable expression "brothers in writing and labor." Well, the fact of the matter is that these brothers in writing and labor have for two and a half years calmly watched me being oppressed, persecuted, and slandered. . .

TVARDOVSKY: Not everyone has been indifferent.

SOLZHENITSYN: . . . and newspaper editors, also like brothers, contribute to the web of falsehood that is woven around me by not publishing my denials. (*Verbatim*): I'm not speaking about the fact that people in the camps are not allowed to read my book. It was banned in the camps, searches for it were conducted, and people were put in punishment cells for reading it even during those months when all the newspapers were loudly acclaiming *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and promising that "this will not happen again." But in recent times, the book is secretly being withdrawn from libraries outside [the camps] as well. I have received letters from various places telling me of the prohibition against circulating the book: the order is to tell the readers that the book is in the bindery, that it is out, or that there is no access to the shelves [where the book is kept], and to refuse to circulate it. Here is a letter recently received from the Krasnogvardeiskii Region in the Crimea:

In the regional library, I was confidentially told (I am an activist in this library) of an order that your books be removed from circulation. One of the women workers in the library wanted to present me with *A Day* in a journal-newspaper as a souvenir, since the library no longer needs it, but another woman immediately stopped her rash girl friend: "What are you doing, you mustn't! Once the book has been assigned to the Special Section, it is dangerous to make a present of it."

I am not saying that the book has been removed from *all* libraries; here and there it can still be found. But people coming to visit me in Riazan were unable to get my book in the Riazan Oblast Reading Room! They were given various excuses but they did not get the book. . . .

The circle of lies becomes ever wider, knowing no limits, even charging me with having been taken prisoner and having collaborated with the Germans. But that's not the end of it! This summer, in the political education schools, *e.g.*, in Bolshevo, the agitators were told that I had fled to the Republic of Arabia and that I had changed my citizenship. Naturally, all this is written down in notebooks and is disseminated one hundred times over. And this took place not more than a few miles from the capital! Here is another version. In Solikamsk (PO Box 389), Major Shestakov declared that I had fled to England on a tourist visa. This is the deputy for political affairs—who dares disbelieve him? Another time, the same man stated: "Solzhenitsyn has been *forbidden* to write officially." Well, at least here he is closer to the truth.

The following is being said about me from the rostrums: "He was set free ahead of time, for no reason." Whether there was any reason can be seen in the court decision of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court, Rehabilitation Section. It has been presented to the Secretariat. . . .

TVARDOVSKY: It also contains the combat record of Officer Solzhenitsyn.

SOLZHENITSYN: And the expression "ahead of time" is used with great relish! After the eight-year sentence, I served a month in deportation prisons, but of course it is considered shameful to mention such a petty detail. Then, without being sentenced, I was permanently exiled. I spent three years in exile with that eternal feeling of doom. It was only because of the 20th Congress that I was set free—and this is called "ahead of time!" The expression is so typical of the conditions that prevailed in the 1949-53 period: If a man did not die beside a camp rubbish heap, if he was able even to crawl out of the camp, this meant that he had been set free "ahead of time"—after all, the sentence was for eternity and anything earlier was "ahead of time."

Former Minister Semichastny, who was fond of speaking on literary issues, also singled me out for attention more than once. One of his astonishing, even comical accusations was the following: "Solzhenitsyn is materially supporting the capitalist world; else why doesn't he claim his rights [*i.e.*, collect his fee] from someone or other for his well-known book?" Obviously, the reference was to *Ivan Denisovich*, since no other book of mine had been published [at that time]. Now if you knew, if you had read somewhere that it was absolutely necessary for me to wrest the money from the capitalists, then why didn't you inform me about it? This is a farce: whoever collects fees from the West has sold out to the capitalists; whoever does not take the fees is materially supporting them. And the third alternative? To fly into the sky. While Semichastny is no longer a minister, his idea has not died: lectures of the All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Scientific Information have carried it further. By way of example, the idea was repeated on July 16 of this year by Lecturer A. A. Freifeld at the Sverdlovsk Circus. Two thousand persons sat there and marveled: "What a crafty bird, that Solzhenitsyn! Without leaving the Soviet Union, without a single kopek in his pocket, he contrived to support world capitalism materially." This is indeed a story to be told at a circus.

We had a talk on June 12, right here, at the Secretariat. It was quiet and peaceful. We seemed to make some progress. A short time passed, and suddenly rumors were rampant throughout all of Moscow. Everything that actually took place was distorted, beginning with the fabrication that Tvardovsky had been shouting and waving his fist at me. But everyone who was there knows that nothing like that took place. Why these lies, then? And right now we are all simultaneously hearing what is said here, but

where is the guarantee that after today's meeting of the Secretariat everything will not be distorted again? If you really are "brothers in writing and work," then my first request is that when you talk about today's session, don't fabricate and distort things.

I am one person; my slanderers number in the hundreds. Naturally I am never able to defend myself, and I never know against whom I should defend myself. I wouldn't be surprised if I were declared to be an adherent of the geocentric system and to have been the first to light the pyre of Giordano Bruno.[8]

SALYNSKY: I shall speak of *Cancer Ward*. I believe that it should be printed—it is a vivid and powerful thing. To be sure, it contains descriptions of diseases in pathological terms, and the reader involuntarily develops a phobia about cancer—a phobia which is already widespread in our century. Somehow this [aspect of the book] should be eliminated. The caustic, topical-satirical style should also be eliminated. Another negative feature is that the destinies of almost all the characters are connected with the camp or with camp life in one form or another. This may be all right in the case of Kostoglotov or Rusanov, but why does it have to be applied to Valim, to Shulubin, and even to the soldier? At the very end we learn that he is no ordinary soldier from the army, that he is a camp guard. [Still] the basic orientation of the novel is to discuss the end of the difficult past. And now a few words about moral socialism [a concept expounded in the novel]. In my opinion, there is nothing so bad about this. It would be bad if Solzhenitsyn were preaching *a*moral socialism. If he were preaching national socialism or the Chinese version of national socialism—it would be bad. Each person is free to form his own ideas on socialism and its development. I personally believe that socialism is determined by economic laws. But of course there is room for argument. Why not print the story then? (*He subsequently calls upon the Secretariat to issue a statement decisively refuting the slanders against Solzhenitsyn.*)

SIMONOV: I do not accept the novel, *The First Circle*, and oppose its publication. As for *Cancer Ward*, I am in favor of publishing it. Not everything in the story is to my liking, but it does not have to please everyone. Perhaps the author should adopt some of the comments that have been made, but naturally he cannot adopt all of them. It is also our duty to refute the slander about him. Further, his book of stories should be published. The foreword to the latter book would be a good place in which to publish his biography, and in this way the slander would die out of its own accord. Both we and he himself can and must put an end to false accusations. I have not read *Feast of the Conquerors*, nor do I desire to do so, since the author doesn't wish it.

TVARDOVSKY: Solzhenitsyn's position is such that he cannot issue a statement. It is we ourselves, the Union, who must make a statement refuting the slander. At the same time, we must sternly warn Solzhenitsyn against the inadmissible, unpleasant way in which he addressed the congress. The editorial board of *Novyi mir* sees no reason why *Cancer Ward* should not be printed, naturally with certain revisions. We only wish to receive the Secretariat's approval or at least word that the Secretariat does not object. (*He asks Voronkov to produce the Secretariat's draft communique which was prepared back in June.*)

Voronkov indicates that he is in no hurry to produce the communique. During this time voices are heard: They still haven't decided. There are those who are opposed!

FEDIN: No, that isn't so. It isn't the Secretariat that has to print or reject anything. Are we really guilty of anything? Is it possible, Aleksandr Trifonovich, that you feel guilty?

TVARDOVSKY (*quickly, expressively*): I?? No.

FEDIN: We shouldn't search for some trumped-up excuse to make a statement. Mere rumors don't provide sufficient grounds for doing so. It would be another matter if Solzhenitsyn himself were to find a way to resolve the situation. What is needed is a public statement by Solzhenitsyn himself. [*To Solzhenitsyn:*] But think it over, Aleksandr Isaevich—in the interest of *what* will we be publishing your protests? You must protest above all against the dirty use of your name by our enemies in the West. Naturally, in the process you will also have the opportunity to give voice to some of the complaints you've uttered here today. If this proves to be a fortunate and tactful document, we will print it and help you. It is precisely from this point that your acquittal must proceed, and not from your works, or from this bartering as to how many months we are entitled to examine your manuscript—three months? four months? Is that really so terrible? It is far more terrible that your works are used there, in the West, for the basest of purposes.

(*Approval expressed among members of the Secretariat.*)

KORNEICHUK: We didn't invite you here to throw stones at you. We summoned you in order to help you out of this trying and ambiguous situation. You were asked questions but you declined to answer. By our works we are protecting our government, our party, our people. Here you have sarcastically referred to trips abroad as if they were pleasant strolls. We travel abroad to wage the struggle. We return home from abroad, worn out and exhausted but with the feeling of having done our duty. Don't think that I was offended by the comment concerning travel sketches. I don't write them. I travel on the business of the World Peace Council. We know that you suffered a great deal, but you are not the only one. There were many other comrades in the camps besides you. Some were old Communists. From the camps they went to the front. Our past consists not of acts of lawlessness alone; there were also acts of heroism—but you didn't notice the latter. Your works consist only of accusations. *Feast of the Conquerors* is malicious, vile, offensive! And this foul thing is disseminated, and the people read it! When were you imprisoned? Not in 1937. In 1937 *we* went through a great deal, but nothing stopped us! Konstantin Aleksandrovich was right in saying that you must speak out publicly and strike out against Western propaganda. Do battle against the foes of our nation! Do you realize that thermonuclear weapons exist in the world and that despite all our peaceful efforts, the United States may employ them? How then can we, Soviet writers, not be soldiers?

SOLZHENITSYN: I have repeatedly declared that it is dishonest to discuss *Feast of the Conquerors*, and I demand that this argument be excluded from our discussion.

SURKOV: You can't stop everyone from talking.

KOZHEVNIKOV: The long time lapse between the receipt of Solzhenitsyn's letter and today's discussion is in fact an expression of the *seriousness* with which the Secretariat approaches the letter. If we had discussed it at the time, while the impact was still hot, we would have treated it more severely and less thoughtfully. We ourselves decided to find out just what kind of anti-Soviet manuscripts these were, and we spent a good deal of time reading them. The military service of Solzhenitsyn has been confirmed by relevant documents; yet we are not now discussing the officer but rather the writer. Today, for the first time, I have heard Solzhenitsyn renounce the libelous depiction of Soviet reality in *Feast of the Conquerors*, but I still cannot get over my first impression of this play. For me, this moment of Solzhenitsyn's renunciation of *Feast of the Conquerors* still does not jibe with my perception of the play. Perhaps this is because in both *The First Circle* and *Cancer Ward* there is a feeling of the same vengeance for past suffering. And if it is a question of the fate of these works, the author should remember that he is indebted to the organ that discovered him. Some time ago, I was the first to express apprehension concerning "Matriona's House."[9] We spent time reading your gray manuscript, which you did not even venture to give to any editorial board. *Cancer Ward* evokes revulsion from the abundance of naturalism, from the surfeit of all manner of horrors. All the same, its basic orientation is not medical, but rather social. . . . And it is apparently from this that the title of the work is derived. In your second letter, you demand the publication of your story, which still requires further work. Is such a demand worthy of a writer? All of our writers willingly listen to the opinions of the editors and do not hurry them.

SOLZHENITSYN: (*Verbatim.*) Despite my explanations and objections, despite the utter senselessness of discussing a work written 20 years ago, in another era, in an incomparably different situation, by a different person—a work,

moreover, which was never published or read by anyone, and which was stolen from a drawer—some of the speakers have concentrated their attention on this very work. This is much more senseless than—*e.g.*, at the First Congress of Writers—rebuking Maksim Gorky for "Untimely Thoughts" or Sergeev-Tsensky for the *ostagovskie* correspondence,[5] which had been published a good 15 years earlier. Korneichuk has stated here that "such a thing has never happened and will not happen in the history of Russian literature." Precisely!

OZEROV: The letter to the Congress proved to be a politically irresponsible act. First of all, the letter reached our enemies. It contained things that were incorrect. Zamiatin was put in the same heap together with unjustly repressed writers. As regards the publication of *Cancer Ward*, we can make an agreement with *Novyi mir* that the thing be printed only if the manuscript is corrected and the corrections are discussed. There remains some other very important work to be done. The story is uneven in quality. There are good and bad points in it. Most objectionable is the penchant for sloganeering and caricatures. I would ask that quite a number of things be deleted, things which we simply do not have time to discuss now. The philosophy of moral socialism does not belong merely to the hero. One senses that it is being defended by the author. This cannot be permitted.

SURKOV: I, too, have read *Feast of the Conquerors*. The mood of it is: "be damned, the whole lot of you!" The same mood pervades *Cancer Ward* as well. Having suffered so much, you had a right to be angry as a human being, Aleksandr Isaevich, but after all you are also a writer! I have known Communists who were sent to camps, but this in no measure affected their world-view. No, your story does not approach fundamental problems in philosophical terms, but in political terms. And then there is [the reference to] that idol in the theater square, even though the monument to Marx had not yet been erected at that time.

If *Cancer Ward* were to be published, it would be used against us, and it would be more dangerous than Svetlana's memoirs. Yes, of course it would be well to forestall its publication in the West, but that is difficult. For example, in recent times I have been close to Anna Andreevna Akhmatova. I know that she gave [her poem] "Requiem" to several people to read.[6] It was passed around for several weeks, and then suddenly it was printed in the West. Of course, our reader is now so developed and so sophisticated that no measly little book is going to alienate him from communism. All the same, the works of Solzhenitsyn are more dangerous to us than those of Pasternak: Pasternak was a man divorced from life, while Solzhenitsyn, with his animated, militant, ideological temperament, is a man of principle. We represent the first revolution in the history of mankind that has changed neither its slogans nor its banners. "Moral socialism" is a philistine [*burzhuaznyi*] socialism. It is old and primitive, and (*speaking in the direction of Salynsky*) I don't understand how anyone could fail to understand this, how anyone could find anything in it.

SALYNSKY: I do not defend it in the least.

RIURIKOV: Solzhenitsyn has suffered from those who have slandered him, but he has also suffered from those who have heaped excessive praise on him and have ascribed qualities to him that he does not possess. If Solzhenitsyn is renouncing anything, then he should renounce the title of "continuer of Russian realism." The conduct of Marshal Rokossovsky and General Gorbatov is more honest than that of his heroes.[7] The source of this writer's energy lies in bitterness and wrath. As a human being, one can understand this. [*To Solzhenitsyn:*] You write that your things are prohibited, but not a single one of your novels has been censored. I marvel that Tvardovsky asks permission from us. I, for example, have never asked the Union of Writers for permission to print or not to print. (*He asks Solzhenitsyn to heed the recommendations of* Novyi mir *and promises page-by-page comments on* Cancer Ward *from "anyone present."*)

BARUZDIN: I happen to be one of those who from the start has not been captivated by the works of Solzhenitsyn. "Matriona's House" was already much weaker than the first thing [*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*]. And *The First Circle* is much weaker, so pitifully naive and primitive are the depictions of Stalin, Abakumov and Poskrebyshev. But *Cancer Ward* is an antihumanitarian work. The end of the story leads to the conclusion that "a different road should have been taken." Did Solzhenitsyn really believe that his letter "in place of a speech" would be read [from the rostrum of] the congress? How many letters did the congress receive?

VORONKOV: About 500.

BARUZDIN: Well! And would it really have been possible to get through them in a hurry? I do not agree with Riurikov: it is proper that the question of permission be placed before the Secretariat. Our Secretariat should more frequently play a creative role and should willingly advise editors.

ABDUMOMUNOV: It is a very good thing that Solzhenitsyn has found the courage to repudiate *Feast of the Conquerors*. He will also find the courage to think of ways of carrying out the proposal of Konstantin Aleksandrovich [Fedin]. If we publish his *Cancer Ward*, there will be still more commotion and harm than there was from his first letter [to the Congress]. Incidentally what's the meaning of [the expression] "sprinkled tobacco into the eyes of the Rhesus monkey—just for the hell of it?" Why the "just for the hell of it"? This is against our entire style of narration. In the story there are the Rusanovs and the great martyrs from the camp—but is that all? And where is Soviet society? One shouldn't lay it on so thick and make the story so gloomy. There are many tedious passages, turns, and naturalistic scenes—all these should be eliminated.

ABASHIDZE: I was able to read only 150 pages of *Cancer Ward* and therefore can make no thoroughgoing assessment of it. Yet I didn't get the impression that the novel should not be published. But I repeat, I can't make a thorough assessment. Perhaps the most important things are farther on in the book. All of us, being honest and talented writers, have fought against embellishers even when we were forbidden to do so. But Solzhenitsyn tends to go to the other extreme: parts of his work are of a purely essayist, exposé nature. The artist is like a child, he takes a machine apart to see what is inside. But genuine art begins with putting things together. I have noticed him asking the person sitting next to him the name of each speaker. Why doesn't he know any of us? Because we have never invited him. The proposal of Konstantin Aleksandrovich was correct: let Solzhenitsyn himself answer, perhaps first of all for his own sake.

BROVKA: In Belorussia there are also many people who were imprisoned. For example, Sergei Grakhovsky was also in prison for 20 years. Yet he realized that it was not the people, not the party, and not Soviet power that were responsible for illegal acts. The people have already seen through Svetlana's notes—that fishwife twaddle—and are laughing at them. But before us stands a generally acknowledged talent, and therein lies the danger of publication. Yes, you feel the pain of your land, even to an extraordinary degree. But you don't feel its joys. *Cancer Ward* is too gloomy and should not be printed. (*Like all preceding and subsequent speakers, he supports Fedin's proposal that Solzhenitsyn himself speak out against the Western slander concerning his letter.*)

YASHEN: The author is not tortured by injustice; he is rather poisoned by hatred. People are outraged that there is such a writer in the ranks of the Union of Writers. I would like to propose his expulsion from the Union. He is not the only one that suffered, but the others understand the tragedy of the time better. The hand of a master is discernible in *Cancer Ward*. The author knows the subject better than any physician or professor. As for the siege of Leningrad, he now blames "still others" besides Hitler. Whom? We don't know. Is it Beria? Or today's outstanding leaders? He should speak out plainly. (*All the same, the speaker supports Tvardovsky's courageous decision to work on the story with the author,* [*remarking that*] *it can then be shown to a limited number of people.*)

KERBABAEV: I read *Cancer Ward* with a feeling of great

dissatisfaction. Everyone is a former prisoner, everything is gloomy, there is not a single word of warmth. It is downright nauseating to read. Vera offers the hero her home and her embraces, but he renounces life. And then there is [the remark,] "twenty-nine weep and one laughs" —how are we to understand this? Does this refer to the Soviet Union? I agree with what my friend Korneichuk said. Why does the author see only the black? Why don't I write about the black? I always strive to write only about joyful things. It is not enough that he has repudiated *Feast of the Conquerors*. I would consider it courageous if he would renounce *Cancer Ward*. Then I would embrace him like a brother.

SHARIPOV: I wouldn't make any allowances in his case—I'd expel him from the Union. In his play, not only everything Soviet but even Suvorov is presented negatively. I completely agree: let him repudiate *Cancer Ward*. Our republic has reclaimed virgin and disused lands and is proceeding to score one success after another.

NOVICHENKO: The letter with its inadmissible appeal was sent to the congress over the head of the formal addressee. I approve Tvardovsky's stern words that we should decisively condemn this kind of conduct. I disagree with the principal demands of the letter: it is impossible to let everything be printed. Wouldn't that also mean the publication of *Feast of the Conquerors*? Concerning *Cancer Ward*, I have complicated feelings. I am no child, my time will come to die, perhaps in an agony like that of Solzhenitsyn's heroes. But then the crucial issue will be: How is your conscience? What are your moral reserves? If the novel had been confined to these things, I would have considered it necessary to publish it. But there was the base interference in our literary life—the caricatured scene with Rusanov's daughter, which is not congruent with our literary traditions. The ideological and political sense of moral socialism is the negation of Marxism-Leninism. All these things are completely unacceptable to us, to our society and to our people. Even if this novel were put into some kind of shape, it would not be a novel of socialist realism, but only an ordinary competent work.

MARKOV: This has been a valuable discussion. (*The speaker notes that he has just returned from Siberia, where he spoke before a mass audience five times.*) I must say that nowhere did Solzhenitsyn's name create any particular stir. In one place only was a note submitted to me. I ask your forgiveness, but this is exactly the way it was written: "Just when is this Dolzhenitsyn [sic!] going to stop reviling Soviet literature?" We await a completely clear answer from Solzhenitsyn to the bourgeois slander; we await his statement in the press. He must defend his honor as a Soviet writer. As for his declaration with regard to *Feast of the Conquerors*, he took a load off my mind. I view *Cancer Ward* in the same light as Surkov does. After all, the thing does have some worth on some kind of practical plane. But the social and political settings in it are utterly unacceptable to me. Its culprits remain nameless. What with the excellent collaboration that has been established between *Novyi mir* and Aleksandr Isaevich, this story can be finished, even though it requires very serious work. But of course it would be impossible to put it into print today. So what next? [Let me suggest some] constructive advice: That Aleksandr Isaevich prepare the kind of statement for the press that we talked about. This would be very good just on the eve of the holiday.[8] Then it would be possible to issue some kind of communiqué from the Secretariat. All the same, I still consider him our comrade. But, Aleksandr Isaevich, it's your fault and no one else's that we find ourselves in this complicated situation. As to the suggestions concerning expulsion from the Union—given the conditions of comradeship that are supposed to prevail, we should not be unduly hasty.

SOLZHENITSYN: I have already spoken out against the discussion of *Feast of the Conquerors* several times today, but I shall have to do so again. In the final analysis, I can rebuke all of you for not being adherents of the theory of development, if you seriously believe that in twenty years' time and in the face of a complete change in all circumstances, a man does not change. But I have heard an even more serious thing here: Korneichuk, Baruzdin and someone else mentioned that "the people are reading *Feast of the Conquerors*, as if this play was being disseminated." I shall now speak very slowly; let my every word be taken down accurately. If *Feast of the Conquerors* is being widely circulated or printed, I solemnly declare that the full responsibility lies with the organization which had the only remaining copy—one not read by anyone—and used it for "publication" of the play during my lifetime and against my will; it is this organization that is disseminating the play! For a year and a half, I have repeatedly warned that this is very dangerous. I imagine that there is no reading room there, that one is handed the play and takes it home. But at home there are sons and daughters, and desk drawers are not always locked. I had already issued a warning before, and I am issuing it again today!

Now, as to *Cancer Ward*. I am being criticized for the very title [of the story], which is said to deal not with a medical case but with some kind of symbol. I reply that this symbol is indeed harmful, if it can be perceived only by a person who had himself experienced cancer and all the stages of dying. The fact is that the subject is specifically and literally cancer, [a subject] which is avoided in literature, but which those who are stricken with it know only too well from daily experience. This includes your relatives—and perhaps soon someone among those present will be confined to a ward for cancer patients, and then he will understand what kind of a "symbol" it is.

I absolutely do not understand why *Cancer Ward* is accused of being antihumanitarian. Quite the reverse is true—life conquers death, the past is conquered by the future. By my very nature, were this not the case I would not have undertaken to write it. But I do not believe that it is the task of literature, with respect to either society or the individual, to conceal the truth or to tone it down. Rather, I believe that it is the task of literature to tell people the real truth as they expect it. Moreover, it is not the task of the writer to defend or criticize one or another mode of distributing the social product, or to defend or criticize one or another form of government organization. The task of the writer is to select more universal and eternal questions, [such as] the secrets of the human heart and conscience, the confrontation between life and death, the triumph over spiritual sorrow, the laws in the history of mankind that were born in the depths of time immemorial and that will cease to exist only when the sun ceases to shine.

I am disturbed by the fact that [some] comrades simply did not read certain passages of the story attentively, and hence formed the wrong impressions. For example, "twenty-nine weep and one laughs" was a popular camp saying addressed to the type of person who would try to go to the head of the queue. Kostoglotov comes out with this saying only so that he may be recognized, that's all. And from this people draw the conclusion that the phrase is supposed to apply to the entire Soviet Union. Or the case of "the Rhesus monkey." She appears twice [in the story], and from the comparison it becomes clear that this evil person who spills tobacco in people's eyes is meant to represent Stalin specifically. And why the protest over my "just for the hell of it?" If "just for the hell of it" does not apply, does that mean that this was normal or necessary?

Surkov surprised me. At first I couldn't even understand why he was talking about Marx. Where does Marx come into my story? Aleksei Aleksandrovich, you are a poet, a man with sensitive artistic taste, yet in this case your imagination played a dirty trick on you. You didn't grasp the meaning of this scene. Shubin cites Bacon's ideas and employs his terminology. He says "idols of the market," and Kostoglotov tries to imagine a marketplace and in the center a gray idol; Shubin says "idols of the theater," and Kostoglotov pictures an idol inside a theater —but that doesn't work, and so it must be an idol in a theater square. How could you imagine that this referred to Moscow and to the monument to Marx that had not yet even been built? . . .

Comrade Surkov said that only a few weeks after [Akhmatova's] "Requiem" had been passed from hand to hand, it was published abroad. Well, *Cancer Ward* (Part I) has been in circulation for more than a year. And this is what concerns me, and this is why I am hurrying the Secretariat.

One more piece of advice was given to me by Comrade Riurikov—to repudiate Russian realism. Placing my hand on my heart, I swear that I shall never do it.

RIURIKOV: I did not say that you should repudiate Russian realism but rather [that you should repudiate] your role as it is interpreted in the West.

SOLZHENITSYN: Now concerning the suggestion of Konstantin Aleksandrovich. Well, of course I do not welcome it. Publicity is precisely what I am relentlessly trying to attain. We have concealed things long enough—we have had enough of hiding our speeches and our transcripts under seven locks. Now, we had a [previous] discussion of *Cancer Ward*. The Prose Section decided to send a transcript of the discussion to interested editorial boards. Some likelihood of that! They have hidden it; they barely agreed to give me, the author, a copy. As for today's transcript, Konstantin Aleksandrovich, may I hope to receive a copy?

Konstantin Aleksandrovich asked: "What interest would be served should your protests be printed?" In my estimation, this is clear: the interest of Soviet literature. Yet it's strange that Konstantin Aleksandrovich says that I should resolve the situation. I am bound hand and foot and my mouth is closed—how am I to resolve the situation? It seems to me that this would be an easier matter for the mighty Union of Writers. My every line is suppressed, while the entire press is in the hands of the Union. Still, I don't understand and don't see why my letter was not read at the congress. Konstantin Aleksandrovich proposes that the fight be waged not against the causes but rather against the effects and against the furor in the West surrounding my letter. You wish me to print a refutation—of what, precisely? I can make no statement whatsoever concerning an unprinted letter. And most important, my letter contains a general part and a personal part. Should I renounce the general part? Well, the fact is that I am still of the same mind as I was then, and I do not renounce a single word. After all, what is the letter about?

VOICES: About censorship.

SOLZHENITSYN: You haven't understood anything if you think it is about censorship. This letter is about the destiny of our great literature, which once conquered and captivated the world but which has now lost its standing. In the West, they say: the [Russian] novel is dead, and we gesticulate and deliver speeches saying that it is not dead. But rather than make speeches we should publish novels—such novels as would make them blink as if from a brilliant light, and then the "new novel" would die down and then the "neo-avantgardists" would disappear. I have no intention of repudiating the general part of my letter. Should I then declare that the eight points in the personal part of my letter are unjust and false? But they are all just. Should I say that some of the points [I protested about] have already been eliminated or corrected? But not one of them has been eliminated or corrected. What, then, can I declare? No, it is you who must clear at least a little path for such a statement: first, publish my letter, issue the Union's communiqué concerning the letter, and indicate which of the eight points are being corrected. Then I will be able to make my statement, willingly. If you wish, you can also publish my statement today concerning *Feast of the Conquerors*, even though I neither understand the discussion of stolen plays nor the refutation of unprinted letters. On June 12, here at the Secretariat, I was assured that the communiqué would be printed unconditionally, and yet today conditions are posed. What has changed [the situation]?

My book *Ivan Denisovich* is banned. New slanders continue to be directed at me. You can refute them, but I cannot. The only comfort I have is that I will never get a heart attack from this slander because I've been hardened in the Stalinist camps.

FEDIN: No, this is not the proper sequence. You must make the first public statement. Since you have received so many approving comments on your talent and style, you will find the proper form, you can do it. Your idea of our acting first, then you, has no sound basis.

TVARDOVSKY: And will the letter itself be published in this process?

FEDIN: No, the letter should have been published right away. Now that foreign countries have beat us to it, why should we publish it?

SOLZHENITSYN: Better late than never. So nothing will change regarding my eight points?

FEDIN: We'll see about that later.

SOLZHENITSYN: Well, I have already replied and I hope that everything has been accurately transcribed.

SURKOV: You should state whether you renounce your role of leader of the political opposition in our country—the role they ascribe to you in the West.

SOLZHENITSYN: Aleksei Aleksandrovich, it really makes me sick to hear such a thing—and from you of all persons: an artist with words and a leader of the political opposition? How does that jibe?

Several brief statements follow, demanding that Solzhenitsyn accept what was said by Fedin.

VOICES: Well, what do you say?

SOLZHENITSYN: I repeat once again that I am unable to provide such a statement, since the Soviet reader would have no idea as to what it is all about.

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[1] A novel by Aleksandr Bek was reportedly first approved, then rejected, for publication in the May 1968 issue of *Novyi mir*. (See Biographic Notes.)—Ed.

[2] Four prose poems by Solzhenitsyn were published in *The New Leader* (New York), Jan. 18, 1965.—Ed.

[3] A 16th-century philosopher, burned by order of the Inquisition for disputing a number of ecclesiastical dogmas, including the concept of a geocentric universe.—Ed.

[4] An English translation appeared in *Encounter* (London), May 1963.—Ed.

[5] Gorky's column, "Untimely Thoughts," which appeared in the paper *Novaia zhizn* (Petrograd) during 1917-18, criticized the Revolution as "premature" and warned that Lenin's policies could result in a return to "barbarism" and "oriental despotism." Sergeev-Tsensky also expressed initial misgivings about the Revolution, though in time he wrote with growing optimism of the Soviet era.—Ed.

[6] The poem was dedicated to the memory of Stalin's victims; it appeared in the Soviet Union in heavily-censored form.—Ed.

[7] General Gorbatov's memoirs have appeared in English under the title *Years of My Life*, New York, Norton, 1967.—Ed.

[8] A reference to the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution.—Ed.

Zimianin on Solzhenitsyn *et al.*

NOTE: The following are excerpts from remarks made by M. V. Zimianin, Editor-in-Chief of Pravda, *during a private meeting with Soviet journalists at Leningrad in October 1967.*

Recently there has been a great deal of slander in the Western press against several of our writers whose works have played into the hands of our enemies. The campaign by the Western press in defense of [Valeri] Tarsis ceased only when he went to the West, where it became evident that he was not in his right mind.

At the moment, [Aleksandr] Solzhenitsyn occupies an important place in the propaganda of capitalist governments. He is also a psychologically unbalanced person, a schizophrenic. Formerly he had been a prisoner and, justly or unjustly, was subsequently subjected to repressions. Now he takes his revenge against the government through his literary works. The only topic he is able to write about is life in a concentration camp. This topic has become an obsession with him. Solzhenitsyn's works are aimed against the Soviet regime, in which he finds only sores and cancerous tumors. He doesn't see anything positive in our society.

I have occasion to read unpublished works in the course of my duties, and among them I read Solzhenitsyn's play, *Feast of the Conqueror*. The play is about repressions against those returning from the front. It is genuine anti-Soviet literature. In the old days, people were even imprisoned for works of this kind.

We obviously cannot publish his works. Solzhenitsyn's demand that we do so cannot be honored. If he writes stories which correspond to the interests of our society, then his works will be published. He will not be deprived of his bread and butter. Solzhenitsyn is a teacher of physics; let him teach. He very much likes to make public speeches and often appears before various audiences to read his works. He has been given such opportunities. He considers himself a literary genius.

Among the other names which come up quite often in the Western press, one must not forget [Yevgeni] Yevtushenko and [Andrei] Voznesensky. We have beautiful poetry and a great many poets who write wonderful poems. But in the West they basically recognize only these two because they find in their works passages worth using in their propaganda. We, of course, cannot consider the works of these poets to be anti-Soviet like those of Solzhenitsyn. They write good patriotic works, too. They are not that young any longer, although everyone thinks of them as being young; their works, however, lack the necessary political maturity. That is why they sometimes play into the hands of our enemies. I know them and have spoken with them about this. But they also consider themselves geniuses.

Take Yevtushenko. Recently, during a closed meeting, he was criticized by [Sergei] Pavlov, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the VLKSM (Komsomol). So Yevtushenko replied in words which were four times more powerful, ten times more powerful. He made fun of Pavlov in a poem. In this way, he branded him forever.

Then there is the tale of Voznesensky. Last year he went to the USA; he read his poetry there in front of large audiences. He had a great success and also profited financially. He was getting ready to go on a tour of American cities again this year. His trip was already arranged; it was publicized in the USA, and his visa was reserved at the American Embassy. At this time the war in the Middle East broke out. Our relations with the USA deteriorated. The board of administration of the Writers' Union clearly hinted to Voznesensky that it would be better for him not to go to the USA at that time. Simultaneously, the administration told the American Embassy that the poet was ill.

What did Voznesensky do? I came to the office on Monday morning and glanced through my mail. There was a letter from Voznesensky accusing the Writers' Union. I telephoned him at home. I was told that he had left and that his destination was unknown. I telephoned the Central Committee. They answered that they, too, had received a letter from Voznesensky and that they also had telephoned him at home but had not been able to locate him. One day went by, then another. No Voznesensky. Then suddenly I learned that the BBC had broadcast Voznesensky's letter to *Pravda*. He did not appear until a week later. Apparently he had been sitting it out at a dacha on the outskirts of Moscow. I invited him to come and see me. He denied having given the letter to Western journalists.

I told him that he might get off with a reprimand the first time, but if he ever did it again, he would be ground to dust. I myself would see to it that not a trace of him remained.

Some thought that we should have published his letter and given him an answer. But why make this sordid story a topic of general discussion?

Writers' Union to Solzhenitsyn

[Letter] No. 3142
To: Comrade A. I. Solzhenitsyn
November 25, 1967

Dear Aleksandr Isaevich!

At the meeting of the Secretariat of the Board of the Union of Writers of the USSR on September 22 of this year, at which your letters were discussed, in addition to sharp criticism of your act, the comrades expressed the well-intentioned thought that you should have sufficient time to reflect carefully on all that was discussed at the Secretariat and only then make a public statement clarifying your position on the anti-Soviet campaign surrounding your name and your letters that has been launched by hostile foreign propaganda. Two months have passed.

The Secretariat would like to know what decision you have reached.

Respectfully,
N. VORONKOV

(On behalf of the Secretariat)
Secretary, Board of the Union
of Writers of the USSR

Solzhenitsyn to Writers' Union (2)

[There are a number of things] I am unable to understand from your (letter) No. 3142 dated November 25, 1967:

1) Does the secretariat intend to defend me against the slander (calling it unfriendly would be an understatement) which has been going on without interruption for three years in my homeland? (New facts: On October 5, 1967, at a very crowded assemblage of listeners at the House of the Press in Leningrad, the editor-in-chief of *Pravda*, Zimianin, repeated the tiresome lie that I had been a prisoner of war, and he also tried the old trick used against those who have fallen from grace in announcing that I am a schizophrenic, and that my labor camp past is an obsessive idea. The MGK (Ministry of State Control) also set forth new false versions to the effect that I allegedly "tried putting together in the army" either a "defeatist" or a "terrorist" organization. It is incomprehensible why the military collegium of the Supreme Court did not detect this in my case.)

2) What measures did the secretariat take to nullify the illegal ban on the use of my published works in libraries and the censorship decree prohibiting any mention of my name in critical articles? (*Voprosy literatury* applied this ban even to . . . a translation of a Japanese article. At the University of Perm, sanctions were invoked against a group of students who sought to discuss my published works in their academic review.)

3) Does the secretariat wish to prevent the unchecked appearance of *Cancer Ward* abroad, or does it remain indifferent to this menace? Are any steps being taken to publish excerpts from the novel in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, and (to publish) the whole novel in *Novyi mir?*

4) Does the secretariat intend to appeal to the government to join the International Copyright Convention? Doing so would enable our authors to obtain reliable means of protecting their works from foreign pirating and shameless commercial competition.

5) In the six months since I sent my letter to the [Writers'] Congress, has circulation of the unauthorized "edition" of excerpts from my papers been discontinued, and has this "edition" been destroyed?

6) What measures has the secretariat taken to return to me these papers and the novel, *The First Circle*, which they impounded, apart from giving public assurances that they already had been returned (Secretary Ozerov, for instance)?

7) Has the secretariat accepted or rejected K. Simonov's proposal to publish a volume of my stories?

8) Why is it that, to date, I have not received for my perusal the September 22 stenographic report of the meetings of the secretariat?

I would be very grateful to have an answer to these questions.

A. SOLZHENITSYN

December 1, 1967

Kaverin to Fedin

OPEN LETTER

To Konstantin Fedin:

We have known each other forty-eight years, Kostia. We were childhood friends. We have the right as friends to judge one another. It is more than a right, it is an obligation. Your former friends have pondered more than once what motives could have prompted your behavior in those unforgettable events in our literary life which strengthened some of us but transformed others into obedient bureacrats far removed from genuine art.

Who doesn't remember, for example, the senseless and tragic history of Pasternak's novel, which did a great deal of damage to our country? Your involvement in that affair went so deep that you were forced to pretend that you didn't know of the death of the poet who had been your friend and had lived alongside you for 23 years. Perhaps the crowd of thousands that accompanied him, that carried him on outstretched arms past your house, was not visible from your window. How did it happen that you not only did not support *Literaturnaia Moskva*, an anthology that was indispensable to our literature, but crushed it?[1] After all, on the eve of the meeting of 1500 writers in the cinema actors' building, you supported its publication. With an already prepared and dangerously treacherous speech in your pocket, you praised our work without finding even a trace of anything politically undesirable in it.

This is far from everything, but I do not propose in this letter to summarize your public activities, which are widely known in writers' circles. Not without reason, on the 75th birthday of Paustovsky, [the mention of] your name was greeted with complete silence. After the banning of Solzhenitsyn's novel *Cancer Ward*, which had already been set in type by *Novyi mir*, it will not surprise me if your very next appearance before a wide audience of writers is received with whistles and foot-stamping.

Of course, your position in literature should have prepared us to some degree for this staggering fact. One must go very far back to discover the very first point at which the process of spiritual deformation and irreversible change began. For years and years it went on beneath the surface and did not come into any striking contradiction to your position—a position which at times, although one could not exactly approve of it, could somehow be explained in historical terms. But what is pushing you along that path *now*, with the result that once again our literature will suffer gravely? Don't you understand that the mere act of publishing *Cancer Ward* would relieve the unprecendented tension in the literary world, break down the undeserved distrust of writers, and open the way for other books that would enrich our literature? A. Bek's superb novel, which was first authorized and then forbidden although unconditionally approved by the best writers in the country, just lies there in manuscript form. So do the war diaries of K. Simonov. One could scarcely find a single serious writer who does not have in his desk a manuscript that has been submitted, deliberated upon, and prohibited for unclear reasons that exceed the bounds of common sense. Thus, behind the scenes of the imaginary well-being proclaimed by the leadership, a strong, original literature is growing—the spiritual treasure of the country which it (the country) urgently and keenly needs. Don't you really see that our tremendous historical experience demands its own embodiment [in literature], and that you are joining forces with those who, for the sake of their own well-being, are trying to halt this inevitable process?

But let's return to Solzhenitsyn's novel. There is now no editorial board or literary organization where it is not being said that [Georgi] Markov and [Konstantin] Voronkov were *for* the publication of the novel, and that the typesetting was broken up only because you spoke out decisively against it. This means that the novel will remain in thousands of (separate) pages, passing from hand to hand and selling, it is said, for a good sum of money. It also means that it will be published abroad. We will be giving it away to the reading public of Italy, France, England and Western Germany; that is to say, the very thing that Solzhenitsyn himself repeatedly and energetically protested against will occur.

Perhaps there can be found in the leadership of the Writers' Union people who think that they will be punishing the author by giving his book away to foreign publishers. They will punish him by [giving him] a world-wide notoriety which our opponents will use for political ends. Or do they think that Solzhenitsyn will "mend his ways" and begin to write in another way? This is ridiculous in reference to an artist who is a rare example, who persistently reminds us that we are working in the literary tradition of Chekhov and Tolstoy.

But your path has still another meaning, too. You are taking upon yourself a responsibility, apparently without realizing its immensity and significance. A writer who throws a noose around the neck of another writer is one whose place in the history of literature will be determined not by what he himself may have written, but by what was written by his victim. Perhaps without even suspecting it yourself, you will become the focus of hostility, indignation and resentment in literary circles.

This can be altered only if you find in yourself the strength and courage to repudiate your decision.

You undoubtedly understand how difficult it is for me to write you this letter. But I do not have the right to keep silent.

V. KAVERIN

January 25, 1968

[1] Two volumes of the anthology *Literaturnaia Moskva* appeared in late 1956 and early 1957. See Hugh McLean and Walter N. Vickery (eds.), *The Year of Protest 1956*, New York, Vintage Russian Library, 1961, for translations of most of the contents.—Ed.

Solzhenitsyn to *Literaturnaia gazeta*

I have learned from a news story published in *Le Monde* on April 13 that extracts and parts of my novel, *Cancer Ward*, are being printed in various Western countries, and that the publishers—Mondadori (Italy) and The Bodley Head (England)—are already fighting over the copyright to this novel—since the USSR does not participate in the Universal Copyright Convention—despite the fact that the author is still living!

I would like to state that no foreign publisher has received from me either the manuscript of this novel or permission to publish it. Thus I do not recognize as legal any publication of this novel without my authorization, in the present or the future, and I do not grant the copyright to anyone. I will prosecute any distortion of the text (which is inevitable in view of the uncontrolled duplication and distribution of the manuscript) as well as any unauthorized adaptation of the work for the cinema or theater.[1]

I already know from my own experience that all the translations of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* were spoiled by haste. Evidently the same fate awaits *Cancer Ward* as well. But besides money, there is literature.

A. SOLZHENITSYN

April 21, 1968

[1] Before this letter was published in *Literaturnaia gazeta* on June 26, 1968, it had already appeared in *L'Unità* (Rome) on June 4. In the latter version, this particular sentence read as follows: "All distortions of the text (which are inevitable in view of the uncontrolled duplication and distribution of the manuscript) are harmful to me; I denounce and forbid any arbitrary adaptation of the work for the cinema or theater."

Solzhenitsyn to Writers and Newspapers

To: The Secretariat of the Union of Writers of the USSR
The journal *Novyi mir*
Literaturnaia gazeta
Members of the Union of Writers

At the editorial offices of *Novyi mir* I was shown the [following] telegram:

IMO177. Frankfurt-am-Main. Ch 2 9 16.20. Tvardovsky. *Novyi mir.* This is to inform you that the Committee of State Security, acting through Victor Louis, has sent one more copy of *Cancer Ward* to the West, in order thus to block its publication in *Novyi mir.* Accordingly we have decided to publish this work immediately. The editors of the journal *Grani.*

I should like to protest both against the publication [of the work] in *Grani* and against the actions of V. Louis, but the turbid and provocative nature of the telegram requires, first of all, the clarification of the following:

1) Whether the telegram was actually sent by the editors of the journal *Grani* or whether it was sent by a fictitious person (this can be established through the international telegraph system; the Moscow telegraph office can wire Frankfurt-am-Main).

2) Who is Victor Louis, what kind of person is he, of what country is he a citizen? Did he really take a copy of *Cancer Ward* out of the Soviet Union, to whom did he give it, and where else are they threatening to publish it? Furthermore, what does the Committee of State Security have to do with this?

If the Secretariat of the Writers' Union is interested in establishing the truth and in stopping the threatened publication of *Cancer Ward* in Russian abroad, I believe that it will help to get prompt answers to these questions.

This episode compels us to reflect on the terrible and dark avenues by which the manuscripts of Soviet writers can reach the West. It constitutes an extreme reminder to us that literature must not be brought to such a state where literary works become a profitable commodity for any scoundrel who happens to have a travel visa. The works of our authors must be printed in their own country and must not become the plunder of foreign publishing houses.

SOLZHENITSYN

April 18, 1968

Solzhenitsyn to Writers

To the Members of the Union of Writers of the USSR:

Almost a year has passed since I sent my unanswered question to the Writers' Congress. Since that time, I have written to the Secretariat of the Union of Writers and have been there three times in person. Nothing has changed to this very day: my archives have not been returned, my books are not being published, and my name is interdicted. I have urgently informed the Secretariat of the danger of my works being taken abroad since they have been extensively circulated from hand to hand for a long time. Not only did the Secretariat not assist in the publication of *Cancer Ward*, which had already been set up in type at *Novyi mir*, but it has stubbornly acted against such publication and even hindered the Moscow prose section from *discussing* the second part of the story.

A year has passed and the inevitable has happened: recently, chapters from *Cancer Ward* were published in the [London] *Times Literary Supplement.* Nor are further printings precluded—perhaps of inaccurate and incompletely edited versions. What has happened compels me to acquaint our literary community with the contents of the attached letters and statements, so that the position and responsibility of the Secretariat of the Union of Writers of the USSR will be clear.

The enclosed transcript of the Secretariat's meeting of September 22, 1967, written by me personally, is of course incomplete, but it is absolutely accurate and will provide sufficient information pending the publication of the entire transcript.

SOLZHENITSYN

Enclosures:
1. My letter to all (42) secretaries of the Writers' Union dated September 12, 1967.
2. Transcript of the session of the Secretariat, September 22, 1967.
3. Letter from K. Voronkov, February 25, 1967.
4. My letter to the Secretariat, December 1, 1967.

TIME
27 September 1969

THE WRITER AS RUSSIA'S CONSCIENCE

For a country to have a great writer is like having another government. That's why no regime has ever loved great writers, only minor ones.
—Alexander Solzhenitsyn, The First Circle

THE masters of the Kremlin have long been troubled by the challenge of great writers. When Tolstoy spoke out against famine or religious persecution in 19th century Russia, his voice so carried around the world that the czars took heed. In the early years of Communist rule, Maxim Gorky wielded his renown to save and protect people, until he died a mysterious death probably arranged by Stalin. Boris Pasternak constituted an invisible government that the regime could never quite overthrow. Khrushchev could make Pasternak give up his Nobel Prize, but no one could erase the protest he raised in his masterwork, *Doctor Zhivago:* "They only ask you to praise what you hate most and to grovel before what makes you most unhappy."

The authority of the writer has always been immense in Russia, particularly when his fame abroad was such that the Kremlin had to think twice before destroying him. Under despotism, the writer's voice can assume resonances unknown in the freer societies of the West. Without formal institutions through which protest can be expressed, it is often only the writer who can dare to ask the questions and articulate the agonies of millions. So long as he is not cut down, he contains in his own person the alternative to unthinking obeisance, the witness that conscience and courage still count.

The man who, above all others, fulfills this dangerous role in Soviet society today is Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Russia's greatest living prose writer. The world knows him largely through a single work, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,* his short, searing novel of life in Stalin's labor camps.

To his friends, he is a vigorous, burly, bearded man with a booming voice—possessed equally by his love for Russia and his passion for freedom. To the Stalinists, his enemies, he is the arch-accuser, the self-appointed prosecutor, blackening Russia's name abroad. His works blaze with the indignation of a man who knows his enemy: he spent eleven years in prison, slave-labor camps and exile. His books, as one of the establishment's tame writers once charged, are "more dangerous for us than those of Pasternak. Pasternak was a man detached from life, while Solzhenitsyn is combative, determined." In a time of unprecedented dissent in Russia, Sol-

zhenitsyn stands at the moral center of the movement to cleanse Russia of the spirit of Stalinism. His role is symbolic, since he himself is not an activist but a loner, aloof except where his own works are involved. But he understands as well as any of Russia's great writer-dissenters of the past what he is about. He could be speaking of himself: "One can build the Empire State Building, discipline the Prussian army, raise the official hierarchy above the throne of the Almighty, yet fail to overcome the unaccountable spiritual superiority of certain human beings."

Chain-Letter Effect. Those lines have not been published in the Soviet Union. But they are nonetheless read and passed from hand to hand in *samizdat*,* the readers' answer to Soviet censorship. Manuscripts are copied and recopied laboriously by typewriter, since any mechanical reproduction, even mimeograph, is illegal. Eventually the chain-letter effect produces literally thousands of surreptitious editions of a work. Such copies of the manuscripts of Solzhenitsyn's two most recent novels have inevitably reached the West.

This fall a flurry of competitive editions are coming out in Europe and the U.S., over Solzhenitsyn's bitter and repeated public protests and disavowals. One is his novel *The First Circle*, rushed into print by Harper & Row in a translation that is often unreadable and sometimes ludicrously inaccurate. It will also appear as a Book-of-the-Month Club selection in November. In the original, *The First Circle* is Solzhenitsyn's masterwork, a seathing, ironic portrayal of life in Russia in 1948 and its concentric circles of hell expanding out from Stalin, who has never been made so frighteningly real. Next month, Collins of London is bringing out a far better translation of *The First Circle*.†

The second novel is *Cancer Ward*, based on the author's own struggle with cancer. It employs the familiar device of the hospital as microcosm of a sick world. Versions are being published in Britain by the Bodley Head and in the U.S. by Farrar, Straus & Giroux and Dial Press. The appearance of these works is a literary event of the first magnitude—and inevitably a major political event as well.

Solzhenitsyn's role in the consciousness—and conscience—of Russia began with *One Day*, which was published in 1962 on Khrushchev's order, for political reasons of his own. The book quickly took on an independent life. In cutting away the barbed wire of myth, in piercing the silence around the Stalin era, the book opened up the first frank discussion not only of the Soviet past but its present and future.

Essentially, Freedom. That book, and all of Solzhenitsyn's life and work, place him at the passionate focal point of the major issue that inflames dissent and frightens the men in the Kremlin today. The issue is Stalinism, the "past that is clawing to pieces our present days," as Soviet Writer Lydia Chukovskaya expressed it in a letter which circulated underground earlier this year.

Russia's present masters do not rule like Stalin; the camps of which Solzhenitsyn writes are mostly gone. But more and more Russians are beginning to realize that these men did share complicity in Stalin's crimes. And thousands of ordinary Russians were touched by guilt, because they let friends, neighbors, and members of their own families be taken away in the night without protesting. Could anything have been done to stop Stalin's police? Probably not.

But there is the larger, guilt-laden problem of explaining to oneself how this could have happened in a revolutionary state created to end, in theory, the inhumanity of man to man. For this Russia, Solzhenitsyn's novels are both painful and healing. They expose every layer of Stalinist repression. And they are addressed, above all, to Russia and her people. Solzhenitsyn's world is one of almost private Russian concern and grief, which no Westerner may lightly enter or vulgarize in glib anti-Communist terms. Those who have not been through the agonies of the camps, the shocks of alternating liberalization and repression can scarcely pass judgment. This is why Solzhenitsyn did not want his work published abroad, lest it be abused for political purposes. But Solzhenitsyn brings the reader, any reader, closer to the truth. Essentially, his books are about freedom—including the freedom that sometimes can be found only when a man has been stripped of everything.

Solzhenitsyn knows exactly that freedom: all his work is intensely autobiographical, and large parts were even composed in his head and memorized during the years that took him through every circle of the Stalinist hell before casting him loose, sick with cancer. Solzhenitsyn tells it photographically, with the careful interlocking of closely observed detail, and with total recall that stretches back to childhood.

Only Stalin Stood to Gain. Solzhenitsyn was born in 1918 in Kislovodsk, a spa in the mountains of the central Caucasus, when the Bolshevik revolution was barely a year old and civil war was raging. He grew up in South Russia, in Rostov-on-the-Don. His father, an office worker, died while Alexander was still a boy, as Stalin's repressions were beginning. Gleb Nerzhin, a prisoner who is a counterpart of Solzhenitsyn in *The First Circle*, recalls that "he had been twelve when he first opened the huge pages of Izvestia and had read about the trial of some engineers accused of sabotage. The young Gleb did not believe a word of it; he did not know why, but he saw quite clearly that it was all a pack of lies. Several of his friends' fathers were engineers and he simply could not imagine people like that sabotaging things; their job was building things."

Solzhenitsyn took a degree in mathematics and physics from the University of Rostov in 1941; during his last two years at the university, he was also taking a correspondence course at the Institute of Philosophy and Literature in Moscow. For a time he was stage-struck and wanted to become an actor. When he failed his tryouts, he then dreamed of being a playwright. Friends report that he still loves to do imitations—with uproarious gusto and very badly. His three plays, all unpublished, are said to be poor theater.

Master and Busybody. Solzhenitsyn and his wife Natalya had not long been married when war broke out. He joined the army in 1941, got himself transferred to artillery school, graduated in 1942 and was sent to the front.

Solzhenitsyn commanded a battery at the Leningrad front and was twice decorated. Near the end of the war, Solzhenitsyn and a friend in another unit discussed how badly Stalin was conducting the war—and how badly he wrote the Russian language. Foolishly they continued such comments in letters, lightly disguising their references to Stalin by calling him *khozyain* "master," or *balabos*, an Odessan Yiddish slang word meaning "busybody." SMERSH* read the letters. In February of 1945, having fought his way through Poland and into East Prussia, Solzhenitsyn was arrested, interrogated, beaten, and taken to the Greater Lyubyanka prison in Moscow.

Consigned to Limbo. Solzhenitsyn entered that hell whose torments his novels describe. One of Stalin's notorious three-man tribunals sentenced him without a hearing to eight years. He was first put to work laying the parquet flooring of a Moscow apartment building for secret police officials. Twenty years later, when some of the apartments had been turned over to high-ranking scientists, Solzhenitsyn was invited to visit a friend in that same building. He was proud to discover that his floors did not squeak.

Solzhenitsyn believes that his mathematics saved him: he was next sent to Mavrino, a prison research institute outside Moscow. Mavrino is the setting of *The First Circle*. The title comes from Dante's *Inferno*, where the first circle of hell is peopled by the great men of antiquity—Homer, Socrates, Plato—who, too valuable to be thrown into the pit, were consigned to limbo. Mavrino is an institute carrying out KGB research projects, and as a prison it is bearable. There is meat. There is some comfort. There are even women. Yet this is still slave labor of the mind, and transfer to the labor camps can happen at the whim of an "administrative decision."

Into four days at Mavrino a dozen parallel lives are laid. The characters are borne along on the conveyor belts of terror. They are tormented by problems of conscience, and by the knowledge that if they make the morally right choice—to support a friend, to op-

* Literally, "self-publishing," a pun on *Gosizdat*, the acronym for State Publishing House.

† TIME's quotations are taken from the Collins edition.

* The counterintelligence organization popularized by Ian Fleming. Its name is an acronym from the Russian words for "death to spies." The man who denounced Solzhenitsyn was Alexei Romanov, now chairman of the State Cinematography Committee.

pose a foolish order—they will be crushed in the machinery.

Innokenti Volodin, an effete young Russian diplomat, phones a warning to a friend, is tracked down by the secret police with the aid of a "voiceprinter" devised at the prison's laboratories. Aware that the police may be after him, he moves through the upper echelons of Moscow; his fears alternate with moments of euphoric hope, counterpointing the luxurious world around him. Seized and taken to Lyubyanka, in three brilliant matter-of-fact chapters he begins to be stripped down to the inner core of his being. Thus begins the process by which, in Solzhenitsyn's moral order, the most perceptive prisoners have learned to be free men.

The descriptions are chilling: "It was there, on the steps of the last flight of stairs, that Innokenti noticed how deeply the steps were worn. He had never seen anything like it in his life before. From the edges to the center they were worn down in oval concavities to half their thickness. He shuddered. How many feet must have trodden them in 30 years, how many footsteps must have scraped over them to wear out the stone to such a depth! Of every two who had passed that way one had been a warder, the other—a prisoner."

Another major protagonist is Lev Rubin, the philologist who develops the voiceprinter. Though a prisoner, he is still a convinced Communist. With sympathy and remarkable subtlety, Solzhenitsyn makes clear the process of self-brainwashing by which such a man can sustain such a moral paradox—and can even convince himself that it is right and his duty to help trap Volodin and condemn him to the labor camps.

Gleb Nerzhin, in many ways a stand-in for Solzhenitsyn himself, makes an opposite choice to Rubin's. By refusing to work on a new bugging device, he condemns himself to Siberia. He is the character most conscious of the paradox that pervades the novel: that in Stalin's Russia only those in prison are truly free to be honest with one another. "When you've robbed a man of *everything* he's no longer in your power —he's free again."

The prison themes that were presented with piercing simplicity in *One Day* here return with a sweep that the author himself has described as polyphonic. It is in its references to the labor camps, "the Auschwitzes without ovens" as Dissenter Alexander Ginzburg called them, that *The First Circle* is most harrowing. Solzhenitsyn writes of one of these camp complexes as "a kingdom bigger than France." Each camp bore a bucolic code name such as Lake Camp, Steppe Camp, Sandy Camp. "You'd think there must be some great, unknown poet in the secret police, a new Pushkin," writes Solzhenitsyn. "He's not quite up to a full-length poem, but he gives these wonderful poetic names to concentration camps." These passages obviously parallel Solzhenitsyn's own experiences; after his years in Mavrino, he was sent to such a camp in Kazakhstan, part of a complex called Karlag, which was indeed as large as France. So many prisoners were in the camps that it was widely fantasied among them that no free men were left outside.

The prisoners were not expected to survive. Yet Solzhenitsyn also knows, as he says in *The First Circle*, that "descriptions of prison life tend to overdo the horror of it. Surely it is more frightening when there are no actual horrors; what is terrifying is the unchanging routine year after year. The horror is forgetting that your life—the only life you have—is destroyed, is in your willingness to forgive even some ugly swine of a warder, is in being obsessed with grabbing a big hunk of bread in the prison mess or getting a decent set of underwear when they take you to the bathhouse."

Solzhenitsyn's account of the fate of prisoners' wives is the most sorrowing part of *The First Circle*. His cool realism is suffused with a rush of personal grief as he describes Gleb Nerzhin's Nadya: waiting outside prisons for a glimpse of her husband, allowed rare letters and rarer visits, herself persecuted whenever her relationship to a prisoner is discovered—and, finally, driven to divorce in self-defense. (Solzhenitsyn's own wife, Natalya, divorced him at his urging while he was in prison. She remarried and bore two children, but after his release she divorced her second husband and rejoined him in his Siberian exile.) The book's anger never falters, but there is control as well: Solzhenitsyn sees these characters with a cold and merciless clarity that lets each one burn in his own flame.

There is also some wild black humor, notably one episode that is a bitter comment on the outside world's long gullibility about Soviet Russia. Two prisoners invent a fantasy about a visit by Eleanor Roosevelt to Moscow's Butyrki Prison, just after the war. Inmates are washed in "Lilac Fairy" soap, offered wigs to cover their shaved heads. Their cells are temporarily transformed into elegant salons with foreign magazines on their coffee tables. When Mrs. Roosevelt picks out at random a man and asks what he is being punished for, the prison governor replies that he was a Gestapo agent who burned down a Russian village, raped Russian girls and murdered innumerable Russian babies. "Wasn't he sentenced to be hanged?" exclaims Eleanor. "No," is the straight-faced reply. "We hope to reform him."

To Banish *Kapitalizm*. Solzhenitsyn is a rare master of the Russian language —not the debased, impenetrably formula-ridden Russian produced by two decades of Stalinist newspapers, schoolbooks and speeches, but the rich mother Russian that calls on all the ancient, all the regional, and all the poetic resources of that difficult, plastic language. Ivan Denisovich's speech is essentially free of foreign-derived words, as is the entire book. One of the prisoner-scientists in *The First Circle* insists on attempting what he calls "plain speech," in which non-Russian words are banished, even if puzzling archaisms must be substituted. For example, he replaces the Latin-root word *kapitalizm* with the old Russian word for usury, *tolstosumstvo* (literally, "moneybaggism"). Solzhenitsyn himself has proposed that Russian be purified in this way. His strongly held views on language not only contribute great power and control to his writing but are also typical of other attitudes that pervade his work and his life: he is profoundly attached to all things traditionally Russian, is indeed a patriot of an old-fashioned kind, an instinctive Slavophile who distrusts all things Western.

Irreparably Deluded. Solzhenitsyn escaped his prison hell on March 5, 1953, when he was released after serving his eight-year sentence. On the first day of his freedom, the local radio carried the bulletin announcing Stalin's death. Even though out of the camp, he still had to live in exile in Siberia. He began putting down on paper the stories he had worked over in his mind during his imprisonment.

While in prison he had undergone a rough-and-ready operation for cancer. The disease now became acute again. Near death, he made his way to a hospital in Tashkent, where the tumor was arrested. The experience gave rise to *Cancer Ward*, a weaker book than his others. Yet the book rises toward the end to Solzhenitsyn's most direct statement of the complicity of everyone in the guilt of the past: "It's shameful, why do we take it calmly until we ourselves or those who are close to us are stricken? . . . If no one is allowed for decade after decade to tell it as it is, the mind becomes irreparably deluded, and finally it becomes harder to comprehend one's own compatriot than a man from Mars."

Though his cancer was arrested by modern methods, he has an abiding nostalgia for old Russian peasant remedies, and a distrust of medical intervention as destructive of the organic relation of man to nature. He was officially rehabilitated in 1957. He found a job teaching mathematics in Ryazan, 120 miles southeast of Moscow. It was harder finding a house. Finally he built one atop a garage, using three walls of surrounding buildings for his own walls and adding a front and a roof.

There he continued to write. *One Day* went through four drafts, becoming leaner and simpler in each. The agony of *One Day* comes from the spectacle of a simple man, laboring and suffering with naive good humor, and all for nothing. For Russian readers this agony is redoubled. Russians have always loved innocents in literature, and the carpenter Ivan is a peasant innocent in direct descent from Tolstoy's Platon Karataev in *War and Peace*. His meekness is in jarring contrast to the degradation of the camp—where an extra bowl of mush makes a day "almost happy," and where your most important possessions are your felt boots, a spoon you made from aluminum wire, a needle and thread hidden in your cap.

In the fall of 1962, an editorial associate put the manuscript of *One Day* in with a portfolio of others for the editor in chief of the literary magazine *Novy Mir*, the adept establishment liberal Alexander Tvardovsky. He took the manuscripts home to read in bed, tossed them one by one aside. Then he picked up Solzhenitsyn's novel and read ten lines. As he later told a friend, "Suddenly I felt that I couldn't read it like this. I had to do something appropriate

to the occasion. So I got up, I put on my best black suit, a white shirt with a starched collar, a tie, and my good shoes. Then I sat at my desk and read a new classic." Tvardovsky sent the manuscript to Khrushchev.

The Silence. No other first novel has ever had such an exclusive private printing, or such an exclusive first audience. Khrushchev wanted to use the book as a weapon in his own power struggle with the hard-liners, Mikhail Suslov and Frol Kozlov. By Khrushchev's order, the script was set in type and 20 copies were run off on the Swedish-built presses the Kremlin reserves for state documents. The copies were distributed to members of the Presidium. Then, at Khrushchev's summons, the Presidium met. The members sat at a long table, each with his copy of the novel in front of him. Khrushchev came in. He was greeted by silence.

"Comrades: it's a good book, isn't it!"

He was answered by silence.

"There's a Russian proverb, 'Silence is consent.'" He strode directly out.

The silence did not last. The top of the Soviet hierarchy erupted into controversy over Khrushchev's plan to publish the book, but at his direct authorization the novel appeared in the November issue of *Novy Mir*. The 95,000-copy press run sold out within days, as did the 100,000 copies in book form that quickly followed; by now, millions of Russians have read it, although it is no longer in bookstores and is gradually disappearing from library shelves.

Unmistakable Signal. *One Day* was the high point in a year of unparalleled triumph for Russia's liberals in all the arts. The euphoria came to an abrupt end soon after. The failure of Khrushchev's Cuban missile adventure was the last in a series of catastrophes in foreign and domestic policy that put him under increasing pressure from political opponents. Freeze-and-thaw was replaced by steadily deepening freeze. Khrushchev began a partial rehabilitation of Stalin that his successors continued and added to.

The unmistakable signal of what was in store for the liberals came in May of 1965, when Brezhnev cited Stalin, who had become virtually an unperson, favorably in a public speech. A day later, Stalin's picture flashed on Moscow television screens for the first time in nine years. The initial effect was to arouse and unify the liberal intelligentsia as never before, a unity that has largely managed to hold through the ensuing crackdown.

A large number of the dissenters are, like Solzhenitsyn, writers. But artists, critics, musicians, lawyers, mathematicians have also joined ranks with the writers to protest any return to the moral squalor of Stalinism. Particularly important has been the willingness of noted scientists, such as Andrei Sakharov, who helped build the Soviet H-bomb, to speak out (TIME, Aug. 2).

Among the dissenters and their audience there are, of course, all shades of protest. Some are mainly concerned with the quick elimination of censorship. At the other extreme, there are a few so dissatisfied with the entire Soviet Communist system that they want it overthrown. But in general, the dissenters share three basic aims. They want full exposure of the crimes against the Soviet people during the Stalin era. They want the regime to halt the rehabilitation of Stalin and the restoration of Stalinist methods. Finally, they are outraged at the illegality of the regime's tactics against them: the confinement of dissenters in lunatic asylums, the searches and seizures of private papers, the arrests for circulating manuscripts or for demonstrating peacefully in public assembly.

Their argument is that such things are a violation of the Soviet constitution. Their tactic is essentially an appeal to law, and that in itself represents an advance over the days of Stalin, when such a protest would have been meaningless. That it is not entirely meaningless now is demonstrated by the fact that the secret police are also concerned with fabricating cases that they can prop up in a Soviet court. The KGB effort to peddle Solzhenitsyn's manuscripts abroad is a search for a pretext to arrest him. Stalin's police never required pretexts for anything they did.

Throughout all this, Solzhenitsyn tried to get his works published in Russia. When, after a long battle, permission was refused to print *Cancer Ward*, he stormed furiously out of the *Novy Mir* office. A clerk who had helped him wrap up the huge manuscript reported his movements to the secret police, who later seized the book at the house of a friend to whom Solzhenitsyn had given it for safekeeping.

The first political show trial since Stalin's death took place in February of 1966. Two novelists, Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel, were charged with circulating "anti-Soviet" propaganda after they had sent their novels abroad to be published (under the pen names Abram Tertz and Nikolai Arzhak). They were condemned, under Article 70 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Republic, for "dissemination of slanderous inventions" with the purpose of "subverting the Soviet regime." Since then, an even more general law has been passed removing the need to prove subversive purpose. Sinyavsky got seven years' hard labor, Daniel five. Their judge later received the Order of Lenin. But petitions and letters in the writers' support were signed by hundreds of intellectuals.

The forces of repression counterattacked. The then head of the KGB Vladimir Semichastny told a meeting of the Central Committee: "If you will permit me to arrest 1,000 to 1,200 of the most active members of the intelligentsia, I will guarantee absolute tranquillity within the country." He was given at least a partial mandate. A few months later, his men quietly rounded up some 150 to 300 intellectuals in Leningrad. A new, sinister note crept into the charges: "Conspiracy to armed rebellion." The secret police claimed to have smashed an underground terrorist network, extending to arrests of related groups in Sverdlovsk and several towns in the Ukraine.

In September 1967, Solzhenitsyn had a direct confrontation with about 30 functionaries of the Writers' Union, headed by the regime's literary spokesman, Konstantin Fedin. Solzhenitsyn charged anew that his manuscripts had been stolen by the KGB, that publication of *Cancer Ward* in *Novy Mir* had been held up so long that there was danger of *samizdat* copies making their way West. "All my life is here," he said, "the homeland—I listen only to its sadness, I write only about it."

Fedin demanded that "you must, above all, protest against the dirty use of your name by our enemies in the West." One writer told Solzhenitsyn to his face that "*Cancer Ward* makes you throw up when you read it," and urged Solzhenitsyn to follow the critic's own example: "I always try to write only about happy things." Replied Solzhenitsyn: "The task of the writer is to treat universal and eternal themes: the mysteries of the heart and conscience, the collision between life and death, the triumph over spiritual anguish." He told his accusers with bitter humor that he knew very well what such views could mean for him. "I am alone, my slanderers are hundreds," he said. "Naturally I will never succeed in defending myself, and I cannot know in advance of what I will be accused. If they say I am a supporter of Copernicus' solar system, and that I set the fire that burned Giordano Bruno at the stake, I will not be very surprised."

In the next Moscow trial, four young people, including Intellectual Alexander Ginzburg, were charged with circulating underground publications. "I love my country," Ginzburg said, "and I do not wish to see its reputation damaged by the latest uncontrolled activities of the KGB." During the five-day trial, sympathizers gathered outside the courtroom. A letter to "world public opinion" condemning the "witch trials" as "a wild mockery of justice no better than the purge trials of the 1930s" was circulated by Mrs. Yuli Daniel and Pavel Litvinov, grandson of Stalin's Foreign Minister and one of the most daring of the dissidents. Shivering so badly in the January weather that her friends had to hold her to keep her warm, Larisa Daniel was asked why, when her husband was already in a labor camp, she was there. Said she: "I cannot do otherwise." Ginzburg got five years' hard labor; as the defense lawyers left the courtroom for the last time, people in the crowd pinned red carnations on them.

Then, on March 29, in the first pronouncement on cultural policy by a top leader since Khrushchev's fall, Brezhnev attacked "the abominable deeds of these double-dealers," the intellectuals who had protested the writers' trials, and promised that "these renegades" would be punished. Another trial was held in Leningrad, with 17 intellectuals convicted on the bizarre and clearly fabricated charge of conspiracy to replace the Soviet government with a democracy under the Russian Orthodox Church. Mass expulsions from the Writers and Artists Unions began; this meant loss of jobs and apartments. Among those expelled was Solzhenitsyn's close friend from camp days, the critic Lev Kopelev. Even scientists were suddenly no longer immune. Some top mathematicians who signed petitions were thrown out of the party. In the Soviet Union's finest research center, the largely self-governing scientific city of Akademgorodok in Siberia, there has been a threatening crackdown on mod-

ern art.

In the 20-month wave of protests, many dissidents had exposed themselves to view while the KGB waited and watched. In April the roundup began. Several hundred protesters were pulled in and interrogated. Some were put into asylums and jails. On Aug. 25, in what may well be the last public demonstration of its kind, a small group unfurled banners on Red Square, demanding HANDS OFF CZECHOSLOVAKIA and declaring SHAME ON THE OCCUPIERS. They were arrested. Among them: Pavel Litvinov and Larisa Daniel.

Plausible Case. Last week Alexander Solzhenitsyn was still a free man. He is rarely glimpsed in Moscow. He is an irreverent individualist. He wears good clothes, bought with the East European royalties of *One Day*, but in haphazard combinations: round fur hat, shiny green Finnish car coat, smart imported trousers and enormous Soviet-made leather clodhoppers. At a bus stop in Moscow, where people are chronically short of small coins for the ticket machines, he will give out dozens of five-kopeck pieces, laughing exuberantly. But at his back, the shadow of the camps lingers. Once, after handing in his coat at a Moscow restaurant, he showed the claim check sadly to his companion. "I shall never escape that number." It was 232, the same number he had borne in the labor camps.

The appearance of his books in the West has put him in an extremely dangerous position. KGB agents have peddled some of his manuscripts. If the KGB were to fabricate a plausible case that Solzhenitsyn has had a part in getting the works abroad, he might be tried on the same charge of distributing "anti-Soviet literature" that was used against Sinyavsky and Daniel.

As recently as April 21, Solzhenitsyn again protested against the publication of his banned works abroad. This time he singled out the British publisher, the Bodley Head, which together with Farrar, Straus & Giroux had publicly claimed that they had authorization from an "accredited representative" of the author. Harper & Row has made a similar claim for *The First Circle*. In a letter to Moscow's *Literaturnaya Gazeta* and to French and Italian newspapers, Solzhenitsyn denied that any foreign publishers obtained the manuscript of *Cancer Ward*, or authorization to publish it, from him. "I have already seen how all the translations of *One Day* were spoiled because of haste. Evidently this fate also awaits *Cancer Ward*. But over and above money, there is literature too."

Professor Kathryn Feuer, head of the Slavic department at the University of Toronto, has put the case most tactfully against those Western publishers who are claiming authorization. "How tragic, if accustomed to operating in a free society, they have misjudged the situation and are playing into the hands of Solzhenitsyn's enemies while thinking to serve freedom and literature. Solzhenitsyn has already done more than most men for both causes. If he must be sacrificed, we in the West should at least leave him free to choose his own martyrdom." To which can be added only the hope that the worldwide respect for his work, and attention to his danger, will help somewhat to protect Alexander Solzhenitsyn—as Pasternak was similarly protected—from the Stalinists' determination to punish him for his great talent and raw courage.

The intellectuals' dissent should not be overestimated. Russia's millions are by and large indifferent to the issues that unite the intelligentsia. Only a few hundred people at most have been bold enough to demonstrate; only a few thousand at most have written letters or signed petitions.

The Brutal Showdown. Recently, dissenters in Russia have sounded the alarm that a return to mass terror is at hand. So far, however, the leaders have confined themselves to selective terror in an attempt to silence the most outspoken writers and intellectuals and to curb their influence on public opinion. Still, the regime finds itself in an impossible dilemma. Without a return to mass police terror, new voices will be raised in dissent as soon as others are stilled. But the regime knows too that the cost of restoring Stalin's terror would be incalculably high. It would reverse the effect of all Soviet policies designed to bring Russia into competition with the modern world, by destroying the individual initiative of every Soviet citizen, from the simple worker to the great scientist who is crucial to the development of Soviet technology. And, perhaps most important, the powerful secret-police organization needed to impose terror might well devour the political leaders who had revived it.

NEW YORK TIMES
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Books of The Times

The Bars Are Never Invisible

By THOMAS LASK

THE FIRST CIRCLE. By Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn. Translated from the Russian by Thomas P. Whitney. 580 pages. Harper. $10.

FOR his second novel to appear in English, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn has returned to that unique institution that Soviet Russia has bequeathed to 20th-century civilization: the penal slave labor camp. But the difference between his current book and "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" is profound. In scale alone it is the difference between Tolstoy's "Death of Ilyitch" and "War and Peace."

In the earlier book, Mr. Solzhenitsyn condemned a system; in this one he condemns a society. The reader of "One Day" almost felt that matters could be better if conditions were not so harsh, if the code were more humane. "The First Circle" he leave no doubt [illegible] order of society that breeds the evil he is describing.

They Are All Equal

It does not matter one whit whether the overseer is decent and well-intentioned like Roitman or petty and insecure like Shikin or high up in the Soviet heirarchy like Abakumov or a lowly informer like Siromkha, the system grinds them all down.

Those who confess and collaborate with their accusers, those who hold out because they have nothing to confess, the innocent and the guilty are all equal in this chain-mail jurisprudence. Men are imprisoned for "intent" to betray or "failure" to inform. The aim of such a system is not justice but order.

The time of the novel is December, 1949 and some will say that all this is due to one man, Stalin. But a system that allows no dissent, no opening for redress or appeal, that allows the scum of humanity to come to the top, that depends for justice on the whim and stability of one man is a monstrous horror to contemplate. Solzhenitsyn, though his contempt for Stalin cannot be measured, suggests himself that it is the structure of society that is rotten, not one strand in it.

One of the most sympathetic characters in the book is a peasant whose allegiance is neither to governments nor leaders but to his own kin and to the land. And the central character, Gleb Nerzhin, asking himself in the depths of his despair what he can do, answers, "One must try to temper, to cut, to polish one's soul as to become a human being."

A Place of Humiliation

"The First Circle," not yet published in Russia and not likely to be very quickly, keeps a middle voice throughout. It is full of the most delicate nuance and shading, yet it is of a contrapuntal richness. it is a book of great sadness with deep veins of humor. In one chapter, in a mock trial, Prince Igor of Borodin's opera is dealt Soviet justice after returning from the camp of the Polovtsians. Another describes the visit of a famous American lady to a Potemkin village prison.

What helps make the book so moving and effective is that the camp he describes is not one that abuses the prisoners physically or one in which conditions are on the surface intolerable. It is a special camp for men of intellect: scientists, mathematicians, technicians of great skill. And they are brought together in a suburb of Moscow, along with other prisoners and civilians to work at specified projects. A man who makes a special contribution might even be freed.

Yet it is a prison still because the men are humiliated psychologically in dozens of ways; they are subjected to the petty tyranny of every sadist-minded supervisor, and they know in their hearts that they never will be freed.

The abuses may seem small but they are abrasive. Letters are held back or allowed be read only, no retained; no intimate word is allowed to come from the outside. At most one visit a year of thirty minutes' duration is allowed. At the meeting, holding hands or kissing is not permitted.

In a heart-searing chapter in as great a piece of writing as this reviewer has come across Nerzhin and his wife sit apart in the presence of a guard and try to convey their thoughts and feelings by talking commonplaces. Solzhenitsyn's iron control over this chapter would be enough to indicate the high level of his talent.

Security-Ridden Bosses

The system itself battles against success. Impossible target dates are set because each man wants to please his superior. The administrators are so security-ridden that the smooth operation of every project is halted by an insane but unrelenting search for saboteurs and enemies of the state and fatherland. In this maelstrom of incompetence, mistrust and petty cruelty, each man tries to mark off his corner of peace.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn's characterizations are peerless: a philologist, who thinks himself a communist still and justifies his incarceration, but who thinks all the others are guilty; a mathematician of the highest achievement who denounced Stalin and had become a special ward of the secret police; a physicist, specializing in optics, who refuses to work on a secret camera because he will not work on anything that puts more people into jail. There are assorted guards, informers, secret police, civilian workers—all caught up in the fate of the special camp.

In its humanity and knowledge of human suffering, "The First Circle" does not admit of criticism. Anything one could say would be paltry. It is the fate of Russian novels to be political. And "The First Circle" is overwhelmingly so. But it is also a compassionate commentary on the human condition. It is at once classic and contemporary. Reading it we know that it has been with us for years, just as we know that future generations will read it with wonder and with awe.

LONDON OBSERVER
10 November 1968

A masterpiece from Russia

by EDWARD CRANKSHAW

THE FIRST CIRCLE by Alexander Solzhenitsyn translated by Michael Guybon (Collins/Harvill 42s)

THIS immense epic of the dark side of Soviet life in Stalin's closing years is lighted for me by endlessly exploding flares of recognition. What has to be asked is whether the illumination is such that it illuminates and throws into a coherent pattern of relief the shapes of an unknown and fantastic world so that those who have not been that way may see. Does it, in a word, work as a novel? The opening is weak and ragged. But very soon the author collects his great forces and then there is no looking back. After two remarkable books from the depths of Stalin's Russia, Solzhenitsyn has produced an unqualified masterpiece.

The central truth of the book—the truth about a huge country dominated by the Kremlin and the Lubianka prison (a medieval fortress and a converted insurance building); a country with, at the relevant period, between 10 and 15 million souls in labour-camps; a landscape in which, over great areas, it was impossible to tell as one passed through it which of the ragged gangs labouring outside the wire fences were prisoners and which were free workers—is devastating in its effect.

But the centre is by no means the whole. That is to say, all Solzhenitsyn's characters, scores of them, are conditioned by this inhuman landscape; but for the duration of the narrative they are, prisoners and warders and their friends outside, partly insulated from it. They inhabit a special prison within a prison, or are in some way connected with it. All.

with a solitary exception, have come in from the great camps outside or may at any moment be thrown into them. The solitary exception is Stalin himself, ill and old on a sofa in the Kremlin. For Solzhenitsyn, bolder than Tolstoi with Napoleon, has dared to put this character, living, into the limbo he created. Dared not in face of Soviet authority: Solzhenitsyn, after years of prison, must be long past caring what happens to him at the hands of administration men. Dared, much more importantly, to go the whole hog in imagination, to seize the logic of his compulsion, to declare, in effect, that it is no good calling to life the ghosts of shattered and corrupted millions without unveiling the Medusa head—an old man on a sofa—and, in so doing, facing the risk of destroying the whole illusion.

It is not destroyed. And so we can return to our First Circle, the cosy First Circle of Dante's hell, where wise men and philosophers excluded from Grace drag out a secluded eternity. It is a special prison for scientists and technicians called in from the killing drudgery, hunger and cold of ordinary labour-camps and put to work on such projects as a special scrambling device for Stalin's personal use and a very special invention, a new toy for the MVD, to codify, or fingerprint, the human voice, so that a few words spoken on the telephone in a disguised tone may be taped and analysed, the speaker infallibly identified.

Indeed, the thread of the story, fragile, but armoured with irony, is provided by the furious enthusiasm of a small group of prisoners losing themselves in a scientific problem, the solution of which is to strengthen the weapons of their jailers and end in the undoing of a hopeful, normally selfish, normally corrupt, member of the new Soviet *élite* who yielded to an impulse of generosity and left his voice-prints. As the net closes in on him we are able to move outside the prison and penetrate into the self-regarding world of the post-war *haut bourgeoisie* which had so many shocks in store.

This is a far bigger canvas than anything Solzhenitsyn has so far attempted. It has all the qualities of that miniature masterpiece of ordinary labour-camp life, 'One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,' and of the sprawling 'Cancer Ward,' offers the same landscape of humanity which includes jailers as well as prisoners, police generals as well as cooks and floor-sweepers, privileged as well as outcasts, philosophers as well as simple souls, virtues and vices overlapping, yet in some miraculous way sorted out into an ordered spectrum. At each end of the spectrum, near-villains and near-saints; in between, in superabundant variety, the rest, all in the grand Russian manner, rather larger, more articulate, more demonstrative than life.

I have never gone along with what seems to be a widespread idea that the violences of the twentieth century forbid treatment by novelists, poets, painters: they are too big for the frame, it is said. It depends on the frame. All that has seemed to me to be lacking is genius. Here it comes to us from a country whose rulers have sought, who still half-heartedly seek, to destroy the mind.

A word about the translation. Max Guybon, like Solzhenitsyn himself, scratches around at the beginning, but as the narrative gathers strength so the translator rises to a great occasion.

BALTIMORE SUN
27 October 1968

Splendid Solzhenitsyn

THE FIRST CIRCLE. By Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn. 580 pages. Harper & Row. $10.

THE publication of this outstanding novel by a man whom the great poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko has called "the only living classic writer in Russia" is a literary and political event of the first magnitude.

In his compelling epic Solzhenitsyn, the author of "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich," takes on the whole of Stalinist Soviet society, using a penal institute as its microcosm. The First Circle of Dante's Hell here is the Mavrino Special Prison, a scientific research institute located in suburban Moscow, staffed by political prisoners singled out for their talents as physicists, mathematicians, electrical engineers, and other varieties of scientists and technicians.

This *sharashka*, which in prison jargon means "a sinister enterprise based on bluff or deceit," is luxurious in comparison to other prisons and the brutal labor camps of the North. The prisoners or "zekes" are fed, cleaned, bedded, and entertained just well enough to insure their productivity. But always they exist with the knowledge that a jailor's whim or an informer's greed can topple them from their perch on the edge of the abyss and propel them to the depths of the Inferno. So vividly and authentically does the author portray this latent terror that the reader himself cringes from the aura of sadism, corruption, and arbitrary injustice.

Brilliant Depiction

The time span of the novel is but a few days in December, 1949. The plot—the prisoners' rush against Stalin's deadline to invent a voice scrambler and voice-identification technique—is, although rich in dramatic suspense, secondary to the brilliant depiction of the characters, each so sharply realized that the guide to the *dramatis personae* at the beginning of the book proves to be unnecessary.

Among the memorable prisoners are *Lev Rubin*, a Jewish intellectual and Communist who, despite his unjust imprisonment, staunchly defends socialism and willingly contributes his talents to aid the system's nefarious ends; *Dmitri Sologdin*, *Rubin's* ideological antagonist, who is consumed with hatred for his jailors and determined to buy freedom with his scientific knowledge; the engaging and mischievous *Ruska Doronin*, a *naif* who is doomed as a double agent within the prison; *Illarion Gerasimovich*, who is tormented by his wife's decline, yet refuses the special job of developing a bugging device though it might have led to his freedom; and *Spiridon Yegorov*, the janitor, whose simplicity enables him to endure his lot.

The character of *Gleb Nerzhin*, however, commands our attention most, for not only is he Solzhenitsyn's fictional counterpart, but he crystallizes the paradox which is central to the book's theme: quite often lacking in freedom"; and conversely, "a (prisoner) you've taken everything away from is no longer in your power. He's free all over again." Although the brilliant mathematician is shipped off to an appalling labor camp in Siberia, he departs fearlessly, for "it's not the sea that drowns you, it's the puddle."

We see the roots of this particular kind of liberation in the tangential story of *Innokenty Volodin*, an effete young diplomat who is arrested for having phoned a warning to a friend.

As he makes his rounds through the upper echelons of hypocritical Moscow society *Volodin* is consumed with the fear of impending arrest. When it comes, he panics at the thought of torturous inquisitions. But after a horrifying night in the Lubyanka Prison, during which he is systematically, humiliatingly subjected to a series of will-breaking ignominies, *Volodin* emerges freer in mind and stronger in spirit than he has ever been in his life.

The Oppressed

Time and again Solzhenitsyn demonstrates that it is not the prisoners who are the oppressed, but the oppressors themselves. From the minor institute guards to the prison directors of security to the awesome Minister of State *Abakumov*—each guards his bailiwick fearfully, always conscious that he owes his life and soul to the next one up the pecking order.

[illegible] himself is perverse

here at the top of his pyramid of fear: paranoid, vengeful, and terrorized by approaching death. So, in his fortified windowless night workroom he plans new purges, new assassinations, greater monuments to himself.

Only a man who has himself experienced the repression and brutality of the Stalin era could write such an intense and scathing indictment. In 1945 Solzhenitsyn, then a twice-decorated 26-year-old artillery captain in East Prussia, with a university degree in mathematics and physics, was arrested and sentenced for derogatory remarks about "the man with the mustache" written in a letter to a friend. After eleven years of forced labor camps and exile, he was exonerated and freed.

Memorized Stories

In prison Solzhenitsyn mentally composed, edited, and memorized whole stories; only after his release was he able to put them down on paper. Except for "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" and three short stories, Solzhenitsyn's work has been banned by Soviet censorship.

Yet 5,000 copies of "The First Circle" and another novel, "Cancer Ward," are reputedly circulating through the Soviet Union. Entire manuscripts were painstakingly typewritten by dedicated anonymous readers. This phenomenon is potent testimony to the esteemed, albeit dangerous, position Solzhenitsyn holds as Russia's most vigorous writer in exile.

JUDITH C. WOLF.

WASHINGTON STAR
22 September 1968

Examining Prison Life in Moscow in 1949

By DAY THORPE
Book Critic of The Star

THE FIRST CIRCLE. A novel by Aleksandr I. Solzhenitzyn. Translated from the Russian by Thomas P. Whitney. Harper & Row. 550 pages; $10.

Hamlet was not the first or only man who thought of the world as a prison. But few people, I believe, have found prison a normal and even bearable domicile as have the Russians, before and after the revolution. "The First Circle" is a story of prison life in Moscow in 1949, written by a 50-year-old mathematician who spent the years from 1945 to 1956 in prison for the crime of having made a derogatory remark about Stalin in a letter to a friend.

Aleksandr Solzhenitzyn, thought by many Russians as their greatest living writer (Harrison Salisbury quotes the poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko as saying last summer that he "is our only living classic"), has written three novels, only one of which has been published in Russia, although the others circulate secretly in typewritten copies. "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" was published in 1962 on the intervention of Khrushchev as part of the official reaction against the Stalinist terror. But "The First Circle," also laid in the time of Stalin, is as anathema to the present regime as the books of Yuli Daniel and Abram Tertz. These two writers were instrumental in having their manuscripts smuggled out of Russia; there is no evidence that Solzhenitzyn was a party to the escape of his book. It is to be hoped that this technicality will keep him out of the labor camp in which Daniel and Tertz are incarcerated, but the Soviets, like most tyrants, find it incompatible to sterilize dissent by disregarding it.

The prison which is the locale of the novel is not a place of physical brutality or torture. It is a "sharashka," a word derived, the translator tells us, from a Russian slang expression meaning a sinister enterprise based on bluff or deceit. In the novel the genesis and general characteristics of this kind of prison are made clear: "All these sharashkas were started in 1930 when they sentenced the engineers of the 'Prompary' on the charge of conspiring with the British, and then decided to see how much work they'd produce in prison. The leading engineer of the first sharashka was Leonid Konstantinovich Ramzin. The experiment was successful. Outside prison it was impossible to have two big engineers or two major scientists in one design group. They would fight over who would get the name, the fame, the Stalin Prize, and one would invariably force out the other. That's why outside prison all design offices consist of a colorless group around one brilliant head. But in a sharashka? Neither money nor fame threatens anyone. Nikolai Nikolaich gets half a glass of sour cream and Pyotr Petrovich gets the same ration. A dozen academic lions live together peacefully in one den because they've nowhere else to go. It's a bore to play chess or smoke. What about inventing something? Let's. A lot has been created that way. That's the basic idea of the sharashka."

* * * *

So to the sharashka are sentenced all sorts of brilliant men, engineers and scientists, all essentially innocent of wrongdoing, as are inhabitants of Dante's first circle in hell. One, about whom the book centers, is, like his creator, a mathematician although only 30 years old.

The most cruel and ironic justification for imprisoning a man in a sharashka is that he was a Russian soldier captured by the Germans and a POW in Germany. Upon his release, why would he return to Russia if he were not an undercover agent for the capitalists?

Working with the prisoners are the "free" inmates of the prison. Although nominally fellow scientists and assistants they are in fact spies for the secret police. A police state depends upon its police to approximately the same extent as a democracy depends upon its voters. If people simply got tired of voting for one or another of indistinguishable candidates, the whole system would quickly disintegrate; if every inhabitant of a police state did not have a spy at his back a no less disastrous reaction would ensue.

Fear is ubiquitous, the universal emotion of everyone in the book. The prisoners suffer from it the least. Having lost hope, no longer with illusions, they can bear the incessant humiliations, the constant searching, the severings from all outside contact, somehow purged even of fear. But the rest of the hierarchy, from the informers, the spies, the guards, the jailers, up to Stalin himself, is always tormented by a very real fear of death. The system corrupts those in authority far more indelibly than the prisoners themselves.

The story concerns the state endeavor to invent a voice "fingerprinting" apparatus — a machine that can compare a taped telephone conversation with a filed record of millions of voices, classified as to pitch, inflection, and other characteristics, and so identify the speaker. Stalin has demanded it, and the scientists could produce it if they were not invariably hampered by the impossible deadlines and other interferences of the bureaucracy.

* * * *

Solzhenitzyn has been compared to Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky in the universality of his people and elemental power of his style. The comparison is by no means captious. Very few novels of the type of "The First Circle" escape the flaws of the angry and embittered writer; few do not seem stereotyped and propagandistic; few are not essentially elaborations of a theme the reader has memorized in the initial twenty pages. "The First Circle," on the contrary, is a masterpiece, a great work of art, the prose lean and polished, the dialogue always convincing. Solzhenitzyn does not try wildly to convince his reader of the truth of his picture—he paints almost dispassionately the picture and allows conviction to possess the reader unforced. Some fiction, no matter how true to fact, cannot be read as fiction but only as a thesis. "The First Circle" is not only an account of degraded humanity; it is also, abstractly considered, a great novel.

Three scenes are extraordinary even in a book of such a high level of magnificence. The meeting of Stalin with Abakumov, minister of State Security, is impregnated with the fright of both men — Abakumov fears Stalin, Stalin is prey to a scarcely less pervasive fear of his nemesis. There is a wonderful scene in which Nerzhim, the leading character of the novel, is granted a thirty-minute meeting with his wife. Though neither can talk about life inside or life outside, the two communicate by indirection and allusion. The greatest chapter of the book is an impromptu parody of a Soviet trial, in which the prisoners convict of treason the 12th-century national hero, Prince Igor. It is very funny, highly amusing. It is a fine example of how life follows art. Solzhenitzyn finished his book in 1964, but he found his material in the Daniel-Tertz trial of 1967.

TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT
London, 29 August 1968

MORTAL COILS

ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN: *Cancer Ward.* Translated by Nicholas Bethell and David Burg. 338pp. Bodley Head. 30s.

Cancer Ward is overwhelmingly—to the minutest clinical detail—a novel about cancer. Cancer dominates the life of every character—the patients, the patients' relatives, the doctors and nurses. Every character therefore is involved with the threat or presence of death, in impudent contradiction of the wide-eyed, immortal optimism of official Soviet ideology.

The cancer ward in which the hero, Oleg Kostoglotov, has been interned has six beds. In these beds there lie not so much people as sarcomas of the nasal cavity, tumours of the spinal medulla, hypernephromas, lethal melanoblastomas. The tumours sometimes attach themselves with sardonic aptness. A lecturer in philosophy has cancer of the larynx. An effusive ex-womanizer is attacked through the tongue that had "lied to hundreds of women scattered all over the place that he wasn't married, that he had no children, that he'd be back in a week and they'd start building a house". A tumour has assaulted the neck of perhaps the most infamous *apparatchik* to have appeared in Soviet fiction, Pavel Nikolayevich Rusanov. In the good old days, in 1937-38, Rusanov had not been above "denouncing" an innocent neighbour in order to get more room space: "The whole balcony would then be theirs . . . the children were growing up." It is for his children above all that Rusanov has schemed, cringed and fawned his way up all his life, but he has done it also for his lovingly devoted wife, always ready to help him wield such impressive self-delusion that he firmly believes himself to be an honourable and dutiful servant of the state. He is a man more meekly double-faced than aggressively cruel; but his brilliant career, with its solidly pompous middle-class pretensions, has led dozens of men, women and even children off to the concentration camps.

Up to a point, then, cancer in *Cancer Ward* has a function similar to that of Death in a medieval mystery play. In its own good time it strikes down the brazen optimists and the rotten bullies of Soviet society. But it strikes down the innocent too. A four-year-old child has no idea that on her tiny lip she might already be bearing the heavy mask of death . . . she chattered away like a bird, stretching out her hands to the nickel-plated parts of the [X-ray] apparatus and enjoying the shiny world around her.

In Oleg's ward there is one boy in his twenties, one in his teens. And Oleg himself, only thirty-four, came here straight from a labour camp where he had been interned for several years for not being "enthusiastic" about Stalin.

The only consolation for the carefree and innocent who are struck down by "the Crab"—or by the equally redoubtable Stalin for that matter—is one which is firmly rooted in Russian literature: that suffering (whether through illness or through injustice) makes a better man of you. The average Soviet citizen lives in an unthinking stupor, unaware not only of the tumorous skull beneath all men's skin but also of the real facts of Soviet life. Only Rusanov and Oleg know these; Rusanov because he knows how power is really manipulated in the Soviet Union, and Oleg because experience has taught him what its effect can be on innocent men. Camp and cancer, then, give you a dignified knowledge of what life's about.

It is no coincidence that many of the patients in the ward are reading a book of fables by Tolstoy. "What do men live by?" the title of the book asks. Rusanov answers like a parrot: "There's no difficulty about that . . . people live by their ideological principles and by the interests of their society." Yet even this Marxist adaptation of Tolstoy's maxim that men live by love has lost all meaning for people like Rusanov. In a socialist society collective interests are of course anyway just a rationalization of the personal interests of the capitalist structure that went before. Solzhenitsyn's book often outrageously attempts to suggest standards of behaviour where the whole concept of *interest* has ceased to exist, and where goodness comes naturally, with no thought of reward.

In some ways *Cancer Ward* is an example of what socialist realism might have become if it had been allowed to develop naturally from its roots in the nineteenth century, in Tolstoy in particular. In spite of the pervading gloom, a large proportion of its characters are in fact monumentally disinterested exponents of Soviet heroism. *Cancer Ward* is teeming with "positive characters". There's a twenty-seven-year-old geologist with a deadly melanoblastoma in his leg, still determined to prove in the eight months of life left to him that you can discover deposits of polymetallic ore by looking for radioactive water. Then there are Dr. Gangart and Dr. Dontsova, both outstanding examples of heroic Soviet womanhood, struggling, with no thought for themselves, to cope in the most appalling conditions. There are so few beds in the hospital that all incurable cases have to be mercilessly discharged; the corridors are almost impassable because they are packed with beds that don't fit in the wards—the doctors never take a lunch hour, expose themselves to many more X-rays than would be considered safe even for the patients, then return home to do the housework, waiting in arduous Soviet food queues on the way. Yet none of this appalling, usually anonymous and unrewarded sacrifice is made to appear false.

"If a man never became ill he would never get to know his own limitations." Solzhenitsyn has presumed to give Soviet fiction a perspective that modestly recognizes them. Vladimir Tendryakov and Vasily Aksyonov have, among others, shown a great deal of the seamy side of Soviet life in their novels—the inefficiency, the complacent selfishness of the bureaucrats, the dishonesty and violence that exist in all countries but that are not often admitted in the U.S.S.R.—and that Solzhenitsyn does the same is nothing new. Also, his romantic erotic scenes could only have been written by a Soviet writer; as Rusanov's forthright daughter says (she hopes to become an official poet), "Combined with really progressive ideological thinking [eroticism] adds a certain richness of flavour" to literature; and what eroticism means here is a mixture of occasional earthiness with the shy contemplation of "yellow-haired angels"—the nurses.

Cancer Ward is, of course, a novel difficult to separate from the circumstances in which it was written, and therefore hard to judge. It is easy to point to its frequent lazy imprecisions: "Her neck was neither too thin nor too fat, too short nor too long, but just right for her figure" is the sort of uninformative description in which the novel abounds. But it is impossible to forget that to write *Cancer Ward* was itself an act of heroism, as was Solzhenitsyn's rebellious letter to the Writers' Congress last year. Solzhenitsyn has been reported as saying that he is less afraid of dying of the cancer that he himself has been suffering from for nearly fifteen years than of being killed "accidentally" by the K.G.B. At any rate, that *Cancer Ward* was refused publication in the Soviet Union is disturbing not least because its events relate entirely to the years of the "personality cult". When—and if—it is published there we will know that the Soviet Union has, to its eternal good, come some way to learning its "own limitations".

MANCHESTER GUARDIAN
20 September 1968

How we see suffering

CANCER WARD, by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, translated by Nicholas Bethell and David Burg (The Bodley Head, 30s).

by Raymond Williams

THIS is a translation of the first part of Solzhenitsyn's novel "Cancer Ward." A translation of the second part will follow. It is a difficult work to judge, in its present form. Its qualities are obvious, and are what would be expected from the author of "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich." The inherent situation—there a labour camp, here the cancer wing of a hospital in Soviet Asia—is arresting and isolated. The writing within this dominating situation is an intensely detailed observation, without major development.

There is no fixed point of view in this part of "Cancer Ward." It begins with the arrival of a minor administrator, Rusanov, who has a large tumour on his neck and is put in the cancer wing. We see the place through his eyes: an observation of others who are suffering in this old, overcrowded hospital. He is without sympathy and sees people in ugly ways. The intrinsic suffering and the ugliness of exposure are seen through a mind which is in part shocked by the terrible physical thing that has happened to him, in part accustomed to a distaste and contempt for others, an habitual but now disturbed consciousness of his own privileged position, which we would know as a class feeling and which is in fact a familiar viewpoint in some Western fiction of this kind.

It then moves to his neighbour, Oleg Kostoglotov, a political prisoner now in perpetual exile, who has been brought in almost dead but who is responding to radiation treatment. This other mind, which becomes dominant in the novel, is in a different way bitter: seeing as much of suffering and exposure, with that inevitable observation which comes from being shut up with it; politically sceptical at a depth which takes over from ordinary politics and becomes a whole crisis of belief; but also, with his returning energy, capable of seeing what Rusanov never sees—the humanity of the others, the endless and selfless work of the doctors and nurses, the goodness of ordinary life and experience, as against the obsession with social position and material success of Rusanov.

These contrasted viewpoints, and the suffering that is seen through them, are the basic success of the novel. But there is a problem of construction beyond this. Towards the end of this part, especially, though briefly elsewhere, the novel moves to see the same scene through yet other eyes, in what is really, in its brief development, a series of sketches, and it ends with an obviously staged discussion of sincerity in literature; the tension between telling the uncomfortable truth of the present and the doctrine of imagining, within this, the seeds of a different life.

It is thus a difficult novel to read, let alone to judge. What we see with Kostoglotov, or with the nurse Zoya, or the doctors Dontsova and Gangart, is of course painful, in so much suffering, death, humiliation of the body, but life flows in this, deeply involved and felt. To see with Rusanov is sickening, and it is only relatively late that the novel succeeds in defining his distorted consciousness: not only the self-pity, the contempt for others, but these as the weakness which has made and confirmed him as that kind of administrator: a cold, frightened, self-interested manipulator of others, in the name of a system. And by that time, in fact, we have also got what connects but is sickening in his consciousness: the naked ugliness of others who are suffering and who disturb one's own suffering.

"Cancer Ward" has not been published in the Soviet Union, and it is reported that Solzhenitsyn is in very serious political trouble. There are only three things to say. First, that if it came from almost any author, anywhere, with no external political or commercial impetus, it would have some difficulty in getting published: it is not difficult to imagine the orthodox reports and reviews of what would be called its morbidity. Second that (as so often in these cases) it is a work of literature: not, I think, a major work, but important, deeply felt, authentic. Third, that the view of life it supports and the view it succeeds in exposing are distinguished by values which belong to a profoundly democratic humanism; in Marxist literary terms, a critical realism; which it is always possible socialism may develop beyond, but which it could never, in any circumstances, exclude.

It is, that is to say, only Rusanov, or his quite commonplace bourgeois equivalent, who would prevent this book being published or try to harm its author. If anyone insists on that self-identification, that is his privilege; but the voice that matters, the voice I have heard in other Russian writers, is Kostoglotov: harsh from the suffering in which we are all involved trying to learn to live with good people, and for the beauty of the earth, wanting to help and to tell the truth though all the bitter complexities of history. It is then as a Soviet writer, and not as an exploited exile or self-exile, that we need Alexander Solzhenitsyn. I try to send him that word, and to let others, who will decide, overhear it.