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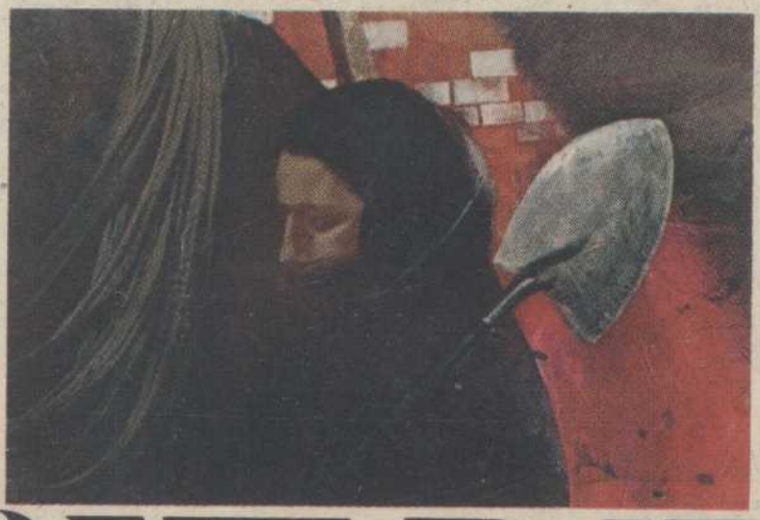

ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVICH

ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN

AUTHOR OF
AUGUST 1914

THE COMPLETE, UNEXPURGATED TRANSLATION
BY RONALD HINGLEY AND MAX HAYWARD

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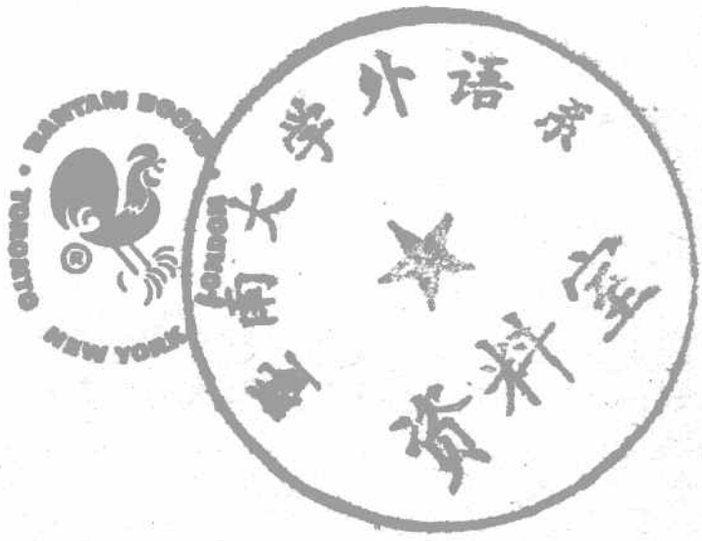
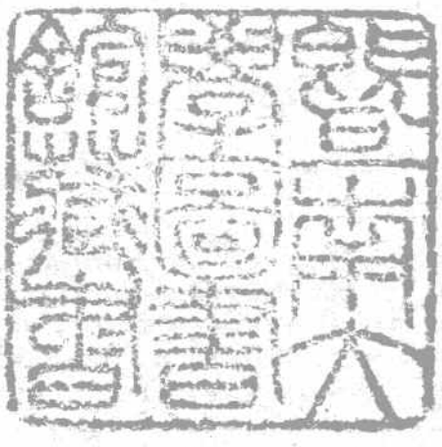
ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN

Translated by Max Hayward and Ronald Hingley
Introduction by Max Hayward and Leopold Labedz





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STORIES AND PROSE POEMS

PUBLISHER'S NOTE*

THIS NEW EDITION of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* includes the author's eloquent appeal for the abolishment of censorship in the Soviet Union. Mr. Solzhenitsyn wrote this letter to the Fourth National Congress of Soviet Writers in May, 1967.

Letter to the Fourth National Congress of Soviet Writers (In Lieu of a Speech)

TO THE PRESIDIUM and the delegates of the congress, to members of the Union of Soviet Writers, to the editors of literary newspapers and magazines:

I

The oppression, no longer tolerable, that our literature has been enduring from censorship for decades and that the Union of Writers cannot accept any further.

This censorship under the obscuring label of Glavlit [Soviet censorship agency], not provided for by the Constitution and therefore illegal and nowhere publicly labeled as such, is imposing a yoke on our literature and gives people who are unversed in literature arbitrary control over writers.

A survival of the Middle Ages, censorship manages in Methuselah-like fashion to drag out its existence almost to the 21st century. Of fleeting significance, it attempts to appropriate unto itself the role of unfleeting time of separating the good books from the bad.

Our writers are not supposed to have the right, they are not endowed with the right, to express their anticipatory judgments about the moral life of man and society, or to explain in their own way the social problems or the historical experience that has been so deeply felt in our country.

Works that might have expressed the mature thinking of the people, that might have timely and salutary influence on the realm of the spirit or on the development of a social conscience are prohibited or distorted by censorship on the basis of considerations that are petty, egotistic 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 union members and even delegates at this congress know how they themselves bowed to the pressure of censorship and made concessions in the structure and concept of their books, changing chapters, pages, paragraphs, sentences, giving them innocuous titles, only to see them finally in print, even if it meant distorting them irremediably.

We have one decisive factor here, the death of a troublesome writer, after which, sooner or later, he is returned to us, with an annotation "explaining his errors." For a long time, the name of Pasternak could not be pronounced out loud, but then he died, and his books appeared and his verse are even quoted at ceremonies.

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

But tardy publication of books and "authorization" of names do not make up for either the social or the artistic losses suffered by our people from these monstrous delays, from the oppression of artistic conscience. (In fact there were writers in the 1920s, Pilnyak, Platonov and Mandelshtam, who called attention at a very early stage to the beginnings of the cult and the particular traits of Stalin's character; however, they were destroyed and silenced instead of being listened to.)

Literature cannot develop between the categories "permitted" —"not permitted"—"this you can and that you can't." Literature that is not the air of its contemporary society, that dares not pass on to society its pains and fears, 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 the present, and the bril-

liance of experimentation that distinguished it in the 1920s. To the entire world the literary life of our country now appears as something infinitely poorer, flatter and lower than it actually is, than it would appear if it were not restricted, hemmed in.

The losers are both our country, in world public opinion, and world literature itself. If the world had access to all the uninhabited 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 that would demand and insure the abolition of all censorship, overt or hidden, of all fictional writing and release publishing houses from the obligation of obtaining authorization for the publication of every printed page.

II

The duties of the union toward its members:

These duties are not clearly formulated in the statutes of the Union of Soviet Writers (under "Protection of copyright" 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 defended neither the "other" rights nor even the copyright of persecuted writers.

Many writers were subjected during their lifetime to abuse and slander in the press and from rostrums without being given the physical possibility of replying. Moreover they have been exposed to violence and personal persecution (Bulgakov, Akhmatova, Tsvetayeva, Pasternak, Zoshchenko, Platonov, Aleksandr Grin, Vasily Grossman).

The Union of Writers not only did not make available its own publications for reply and justification, not only did not come out in defense of these writers, but through its leadership was always first among the persecutors.

Names that adorned our poetry of the 20th century found themselves on lists of those excluded from the union or not even admitted to the union in the first place.

The leadership of the union cowardly abandoned to their distress those for whom persecution ended in exile, camps and

death (Pavel Vasilyev, Mandelshtam, Artem Vesely, Pilnyak, Babel, Tabidze, Zapolotsky and others).

The list must be cut off at "and others." We learned after the 20th congress of the party [on de-Stalinization in 1956] 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 be read and will never be read by our eyes. It contains the names of young prose writers and poets whom we may have known only accidentally through personal meetings, 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 [heads of the secret police under Stalin].

There is no historical necessity for the newly elected leadership of the union to share with preceding leaderships responsibility for the past.

I propose that paragraph 22 of the union statutes clearly formulate all the guarantees for the defense of union members who are subjected to slander and unjust persecutions so that past illegalities will not be repeated.

III

If the congress will 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. My novel "In the First Circle" was taken away from me almost two years ago by the state security people, and this has prevented it from being submitted to publishers. Instead, in my lifetime, against my will and even without my knowledge, this novel has been "published" in an unnatural "closed" edition for reading by a selected unidentified circle. My novel has become available to literary officials, but is being concealed from most writers. I have been unable to insure open discussion of the novel within writers associations and to prevent misuse and plagiarism.

2. Together with the novel, my literary archives dating back 15 and 20 years, things that were not intended for publication, were taken away from me. Now tendentious excerpts from these files have also been covertly "published" and are being circulated within the same circles. The play "Feast of the Victors,"

which I wrote down from memory in camp, where I figured under four serial numbers (at a time when, condemned to die by starvation, we were forgotten by society and no one outside the camps came out against 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 is being 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, "served the Germans." That is the interpretation now being put on the 11 years I spent in camps and 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 R.S.F.R. [Russian Republic] 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 files, and I have no way of replying.

4. My story "The Cancer Ward," 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 Novy Mir, Zvezda and Prostor [literary journals].

5. The play "The Reindeer and the Little Hut," accepted in 1962 by the Theater Sovremennik [in Moscow], has thus far not received permission to be performed.

6. The screen play, "The Tanks Know the Truth," the stage play "The Light That Is in You," short stories, "The Right Hand," the series "Small Bits," cannot find either a producer or a publisher.

7. My stories published in Novy Mir have never been reprinted in book form, having been rejected everywhere—by the Soviet Writer Publishers, the State Literature Publishing House, the Ogonyok Library. They thus remain inaccessible to the general reading public.

8. I have also been prevented from having any other contacts with readers, public readings of my works—in November, 1966, 9 out of 11 scheduled meetings were canceled at the last moment—or readings over the radio. Even the simple act of giving

peasant background, opposed emphasis on industrialization, known for a widely publicized, rowdy personal life. A suicide.

ZAMYATIN, Yevgeny (1884-1937), prose writer, hostile to Soviet regime; his stories warned of coercion and uniformity in a Communist society. Silenced after late 1920's, he was permitted to emigrate in 1932 and died in Paris.

ZABOLOTSKY, Nikolai (1903-58), poet arrested in Stalinist purges of late 1930's, survived eight years of imprisonment and was rehabilitated.

ZOSHCHENKO, Mikail (1895-1946), author of outspoken satirical short stories. Denounced with Anna Akhmatova in 1946 during crackdown on arts.

INTRODUCTION

ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN'S *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* is beyond doubt the most startling work ever to have been published in the Soviet Union. Apart from being a literary masterpiece, it is a revolutionary document that will affect the climate of life inside the Soviet Union. It is a pitiless and relentlessly told tale of forced labor camps under Stalin.

Solzhenitsyn has laid bare a whole new world. For a quarter of a century, the vast concentration camp system created by Stalin was, directly or indirectly, part of the daily life of all Soviet citizens. There was hardly a family that did not have a son, a husband, a brother, or some other relative in a camp, and the truth of what Solzhenitsyn says has long been known, but not always believed, outside the Soviet Union.

But Solzhenitsyn's book, because of its supreme artistic quality, creates a greater impression of horror and revulsion than anything ever published abroad by even the most embittered victims of Soviet camps.

For several years now, it has been possible to mention the existence of concentration camps under Stalin in Soviet literature, and, indeed, the figure of the returned prisoner has become a commonplace, but what life was actually like in this man-made hell has never before been revealed in print to Soviet readers.

The blanket of silence over the prison-camp universe was as thick as the snow over the world's greatest land mass, stretching from the Kola Peninsula to Magadan, from Vorkuta to Kolyma.

In their struggle to rise from the depths of degradation into which they were plunged by Stalin, Soviet writers had to come to terms sooner or later with his betrayal of that deep humanity which once made Russian literature so great in the eyes of the world. It has fallen to Alexander Solzhenitsyn to restore the literary and human values of the past. It is fitting that he has chosen to do this by ruthlessly exposing the shameful institution that was at once the instrument and the embodiment of an utterly despicable tyranny. Solzhenitsyn has thereby eased the tormented conscience of those innumerable Russians who for so long have had to live in silence with the knowledge of this shame. As Alexander Tvardovsky says in his preface: "The

effect of this novel, which is so unusual for its honesty and harrowing truth, is to unburden our minds of things thus far unspoken, but which had to be said. It thereby strengthens and ennobles us." The power of the novel is such that we too can share this feeling.

The conscience of the nation could scarcely be satisfied by the smug formula, sickening in its hypocrisy, by which, since the years of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, the "mistakes" of Stalin were ascribed to "certain phenomena associated with the personality cult." Solzhenitsyn's novel transcends this convention.

In other ways, too, Solzhenitsyn goes far beyond the bounds of what had hitherto been permissible in public discussions about the past. He shows that the camps were not an isolated feature in an otherwise admirable society—the unfortunate result of a temporary "infringement of socialist legality"—but that they were, in fact, microcosms of that society as a whole. The novel draws an implicit parallel between life "inside" and "outside" the camp: A day in the life of an ordinary Soviet citizen had much in common with that of his unfortunate fellow countrymen behind barbed wire. We now see that on both sides of the fence it was the same story of material and spiritual squalor, corruption, frustration, and terror.

By choosing as the hero of his tale a very ordinary working man, Solzhenitsyn has broken another convention. Ivan Denisovich is no standard hero of labor bearing aloft the banner of triumphant socialism and striding confidently into the glorious Communist future. He is a humble, utterly bewildered plain man who wants nothing more than to live out a normal working life as best he can. He struggles pathetically to maintain his honesty, self-respect, and pride in a hopeless battle with mysterious forces that seem determined—for reasons beyond his ken—to destroy his human dignity, to deny him his right to love his country, and to render meaningless the work of his hands. Up to now we have heard only about more exalted victims of "the period of the personality cult." In the campaign of rehabilitation initiated by the heirs to Stalin's power, the emphasis has been on "honest Communists unjustly sentenced." Now, for the first time, we learn from Solzhenitsyn of the way in which millions of nameless people paid with their freedom and with life itself for the "construction of socialism."

Solzhenitsyn has destroyed for all time the web of lies that

has surrounded Soviet concentration camps for more than three decades—not to mention the myths propagated with such confidence and with such arrogance, all evidence to the contrary, by the self-appointed "friends of the Soviet Union," who now stand revealed as traitors to the true Russia and to all humanity. On their conscience be it.

It would be wrong, however, to consider Solzhenitsyn's novel only in crassly historical and political terms. Like all great works of art, it is outside place and time. In showing one man, in one particular time and place, in the most sordid setting imaginable, Solzhenitsyn has succeeded in strengthening our faith in the ultimate victory of civilized values over evil. His novel is a morality play in which the carpenter Ivan Denisovich Shukhov is Everyman.

New York
January, 1963

MAX HAYWARD
LEOPOLD LABEDZ

EXPLANATORY NOTES

THE following notes refer to words asterisked in the text, in the order in which they appear.

"Free" workers (*Volnye*)—The term used by the prisoners about the people "outside" (*navole*). These "free" workers employed on construction sites in the vicinity of Soviet concentration camps were mostly former prisoners themselves who, after serving their sentences, either had no home to go back to or were not allowed by the authorities to return to their former places of residence.

Western Ukrainian—A native of that Ukrainian territory which until World War II belonged to Poland and was subsequently annexed by the Soviet Union. The implication of the passage is that the people in this region still had not lost some of the manners of non-Soviet society.

Ust-Izhma—One of the many camps on the river Pechora, which flows into the Barents Sea. In these camps, the prisoners were employed mostly in cutting timber.

"Special" camp (*Osoblager*)—Camps with a particularly harsh regime.

Volkovoy—A name derived from *volk*, meaning "wolf."

Article 58—The notorious article of the Soviet Criminal Code that covers a wide range of "anti-Soviet" offenses—espionage, sabotage, propaganda against the regime—and was interpreted to cover the activities of any "socially dangerous elements." Under Stalin, it was applied indiscriminately and automatically to untold numbers of people (like Shukhov in this novel) on mere suspicion of disloyalty or disaffection.

Old Believers (*Staroobryadtsy*)—Schismatics of the Russian Orthodox Church who refused to accept certain reforms introduced by the Patriarch Nikon in the seventeenth century. They were persecuted both under the Czars and under the Soviets.

Bendera—Stepan Bendera, the leader of the Western Ukrainian nationalist partisans who at first collaborated with the Germans against the Soviets during the war, but then became disillusioned with the Germans and continued guerrilla war-

fare on Soviet territory until about 1950. Bendera was assassinated by Soviet agents in Germany in October, 1959.

"Goner" (*Dokhodyaga*)—Camp slang for a prisoner who was so exhausted by work and wasted by disease that he had little time left to live.

Oprichniki—Ivan the Terrible's janizaries, who in the sixteenth century were used to crush all opposition to the Czar.

"How are you serving?" . . . "I serve the working people."—A standard form of address between officers and men in the Soviet Army.

"Kirov business"—Sergei Kirov, a member of the Politburo and Party boss of Leningrad. His assassination there in 1934, probably engineered by Stalin himself, provided the excuse for mass arrests and the liquidation of real and imagined political opponents that culminated in the Great Purge of 1936-38.

Zavadsky—Yuri Zavadsky, a prominent Soviet stage producer associated with the Moscow Art Theater, the Theater of the Red Army, and the Theater of the Moscow City Soviet.

TRANSLATORS' NOTE

SOLZHENITSYN's novel presents unique problems of translation. Not only the dialogue, but the narrative is written in a peculiar mixture of concentration camp slang and the language of a Russian peasant. The translators have sought to render something of the flavor of this by using the uneducated speech forms of American English. A further difficulty has been the author's liberal use of common Russian obscenities. These have never before appeared in print in the Soviet Union, and even here they are rendered in a slightly disguised form. The translators of this version have thought it best to ignore the prudish conventions of Soviet publishing and spell out the English equivalents in full.

The translators wish to thank Mr. Vladimir Yurasov for his help in elucidating certain obscure words and phrases. They are also greatly indebted to Jean Steinberg, Phyllis Freeman, and Arnold Dolin for their invaluable and devoted editorial assistance.