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PART I – THE PRISON INDUSTRY

Chapter 1. Arrest

Yes! For three weeks the war had been going on inside Germany, and all of us knew very well that if the girls were German they could be raped and then shot. This was almost a combat distinction. Had they been Polish girls or our own displaced Russian girls, they could have been chased naked around the garden and slapped on the behind – an amusement, no more. (21)

Chapter 2. The History of Our Sewage Disposal System

In the twenties the religious education of children was classified as a political crime under Article 58-10 of the Code – in other words, counterrevolutionary propaganda! (37-38)

Broadly interpreted: when our soldiers were sentenced to only ten years for allowing themselves to be taken prisoner (action injurious to Soviet military might), this was humanitarian to the point of being illegal. According to the Stalinist code, they should all have been shot on their return home.

(Here is another example of broad interpretation. I remember well an encounter in the Butyrki in the summer of 1946. a certain Pole had been born in Lemberg when that city was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Until World War II he lived in his native city, by then located in Poland; then he went to Austria, where he entered the service, and in 1945 he was arrested there b the Russians. Since by this time Austrian Lemberg had become Ukrainian Lvov, he received a *tenner* under Article 54-1a of the Ukrainian Criminal Code: i.e., for treason to his motherland, *the Ukraine!* And at his interrogation the poor fellow couldn't prove that treason to the Ukraine had not been his purpose when he went to Vienna! And that's how he conned his way into becoming a traitor.)

One important additional broadening of the section on treason was its application "via Article 19 of the Criminal Code" - "via intent." In other words, no treason had taken place; but the interrogator envisioned an *intention* to betray – and that was enough to justify a full term, the same as for actual treason. True, Article 19 proposes that there be no penalty for intent, but only for *preparation,* but given a dialectical reading one can understand intention as preparation. And "preparation is punished in the same way [i.e., with the same penalty] as the crime itself" (Criminal Code). In general, "we draw no distinction between *intention* and the *crime* itself, and this is an instance of the *superiority* of Soviet legislation to bourgeois legislation." (61-62)

Chapter 3. The Interrogation

If the intellectuals in the plays of Chekhov who spent all their time guessing what would happen in twenty, thirty, or forty years had been told that in forty years interrogation by torture would be practiced in Russia; that prisoners would have their skulls squeezed within iron rings; that a human being would be lowered into an acid bath; that they would be trussed up naked to be bitten by ants and bedbugs; that a ramrod heated over

a primus stove would be thrusted up their anal canal (the "secret brand"); that a man's genitals would be slowly crushed beneath the toe of a jackboot; and that, in the luckiest possible circumstances, prisoners would be tortured by being kept from sleeping for a week, by thirst, and by being beaten to a bloody pulp, not one of Chekhov's plays would have gotten to its end because all the heroes would have gone off to insane asylums. (93)

[Prior to 1930] no list of tortures and torments existed in printed form for the guidance of interrogators! Instead, all that was required was for every Interrogation Department to supply the tribunal within a specified period with a stipulated number of rabbits who had confessed everything. *And it was simply stated*, orally but often, that any measures and means employed were good, since they were being used for a lofty purpose; that no interrogator would be made to answer for the death of an accused; and that the prison doctor should interfere as little as possible with the course of the investigation. In all probability, they exchanged experiences in comradely fashion; "they learned from the most successful workers." Then, too, "material rewards" were offered – higher pay for night work, bonus pay for fast work – and there were also definite warnings that interrogators who could not cope with their tasks … Even the chief of some provincial NKVD administration, if some sort of mess developed, could show Stalin his hands were clean: he had issued no direct instructions to use torture! But at the same time he had ensured that torture would be used! (102)

We read in *Izvestiya* for May 24, 1959, that Yulipa Rumyantseva was confined in the internal prison of a Nazi camp while they tried to find out from her the whereabouts of her husband, who had escaped from the same camp. She knew, but she refused to tell! For a reader who is not in the know this is a model of heroism. For a reader with a bitter Gulag past it's a model of inefficient interrogation. (133)

Oh, how many ideas and works had perished in that building – a whole lost culture? Oh, soot, soot, from the Lubyanka chimneys! And the most hurtful thing of all was that our descendants would consider our generation more stupid, less gifted, less vocal than in actual fact it was. (137)

In 1920, as Ehrenburg recalls, the Cheka addressed his as follows:

"*You* prove to us that you are *not* Wrangel's agent."

And in 1950, one of the leading colonels of the MGB, Foma Fomich Zheleznov, said to his prisoners: "We are not going to sweat to prove the prisoner's gilt to them. Let *him* prove to *us* that he did *not* have hostile intent." (137)

Chapter 4. The Bluecaps

There is an interesting story about Alexander II, the Tsar surrounded by revolutionaries, who were to make seven attempts on his life. He once visited the House of Preliminary Detention on Shpalernaya – the uncle of the Big House – where he ordered them to lock him up in solitary-confinement cell No. 227. He stayed in it for more than an hour, attempting thereby to sense the state of mind of those he had imprisoned there.

One cannot but admit that for a monarch this was evidence of moral aspiration, to feel the need and make the effort to take a spiritual view of the matter.

But it is impossible to picture any of our interrogators, right up to Abakumov and Beria, wanting to slip into a prisoner's skin even for one hour, or feeling compelled to sit

and meditate in solitary confinement. (144-145)

Power is a poison well known for thousands of years. If only no one were ever to acquire material power over others! But to the human being who has faith in some force that holds dominion over all of us, and who is therefore conscious of his own limitations, power is not necessarily fatal. For those, however, who are unaware of any higher sphere, it is a deadly poison. For them there is no antidote. (147)

The motivations and actions of the bluecaps [interrogators] are sometimes so petty that one can only be astounded. Security officer Senchenko took a map case and dispatch case from an officer he'd arrested and started to use them right in his presence, and, by manipulating the documentation, he took a pair of foreign gloves from another prisoner. (When the armies were advancing, the bluecaps were especially irritated because they got only second pick of the booty.) The counterintelligence officer for the Forty-ninth Army who arrested me had a yen for my cigarette case – and it wasn't even a cigarette case but a small German Army box, of a tempting scarlet, however. And because of that piece of shit he carried out a whole maneuver: As his first step, he omitted it from the list of belongings that were confiscated from me. ("You can keep it.") He thereupon ordered me to be searched again, knowing all the time that it was all I had in my pockets. "Aha! What's that? Take it away!" And to prevent my protests: "Put him in the punishment cell!" (152-153)

Interrogator Fyodorov […] stole a wristwatch while searching the apartment of the free person Korzukhin. During the Leningrad blockade Interrogator Nikolai Fyodorovich Kruzkhov told Yelizaveta Viktorovna Strakhovich, wife of the prisoner he was interrogating, K. I. Strakhovich: "I want a quilt. Bring it to me!" When she replied: "All our warm things are in the room they've sealed," he went to her apartment and, without breaking the State Security seal on the locks, unscrewed the entire doorknob. "That's how the MGB works," he explained gaily. And he went in and began to collect the warm things, shoving some crystal in his pocket at the same time. She herself tried to get whatever she could out of the room, but he stopped her. "That's enough for you!" - and he kept on raking in the booty. (153)

Thus it was that Captain Sayenko […] was weak enough to marry for love an ex-employee of the Chinese Eastern Railroad named Kokhanskaya. And suddenly he found out, right at the beginning of the wave, that all the Chinese Eastern Railroad people were going to be arrested. At this time he was head of the Security Operations Department of the Archangel GPU. He acted without losing a moment. How? He *arrested his own beloved wife!* And not on the basis of her being one of the Chinese Eastern Railroad people – but on the basis of a case he himself cooked up. Not only did he save himself, but he moved up and became the Chief of the Tomsk Province NKVD. (156)

[T]here is a vague rumor that in his time he had personally beaten Khrushchev's daughter-in-law Lyuba Sedykh, the wife of Khruschev's older son, who had been condemned to a punishment battalion in Stalin's time and who died as a result. And, so goes the rumor, this was why, having been imprisoned by Stalin, he was tried – in Leningrad – under Khrushchev and shot on December 18, 1954. But Abakumov had no real reason to be depressed: the *Organs* still didn't perish because of that. (159)

Pride grows in the human heart like lard on a pig. (163)

When they led me out of the punishment cell, there were already seven prisoners there in three and a half pairs standing with their backs to me. Six of them had on well-worn Russian Army overcoats which had been around for a long time, and on their backs had been painted, in indelible white pain, "SU," meaning "Soviet Union." I already knew that mark, having seen it more than once on the backs of our Russian POW's as they wandered sadly and guiltily toward the army that was approaching to *free* them. They had been freed, but there was no shared happiness in that liberation. Their compatriots glowered at them even more grimly than at the Germans. And as soon as they crossed the front lines, they were arrested and imprisoned. (164)

If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart? (168)

From the most ancient times justice has been a two-part concept: virtue triumphs, and vice is punished.

We have been fortunate enough to live to a time when virtue, though it does not triumph, is nonetheless not always tormented by attack dogs. Beaten down, sickly, virtue has now been allowed to enter in all its tatters and sit in the corner, as long as it doesn't rise its voice.

However, no one dares to say a word about vice. Yes, they did mock virtue, but there was no vice in that. Yes, so-and-so many millions did get mowed down – but no one was to blame for it. And if someone pipes up: "What about *those who* ..." the answer comes from all sides, reproachfully and amicably at first: What about you talking about, comrade! Why *open* old *wounds*?" Then they go after you with an oaken club: "Shut up! Haven't you had enough yet? You think you've been rehabilitated!"

In that same period, by 1966, *eighty-six thousand* Nazi criminals had been convicted in West Germany. And still we choke with anger here. We do not hesitate to devote to the subject page after newspaper page and hour after hour of radio time. We even stay after work to attend protest meetings and vote: "*Too few!* Eighty-six thousand are too few. And twenty years it too little! It must go on and on."

And during the same period in our own country (according to the reports of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court) about *ten men* have been convicted. (175-176)

Chapter 5. First Cell, First Love

To *stand up* for the truth is nothing!
For truth you have to *sit* in jail! (202)

The prison doctor was the interrogator's and executioner's right-hand man. The beaten prisoner would come to on the floor only to hear the doctor's voice: "You can continue, the pulse is normal." After a prisoner's five days and nights in a punishment cell the doctor inspects the frozen, naked body and says: "You can continue." If a prisoner is beaten to death, he signs the death certificate: "Cirrhosis of the liver" or "Coronary occlusion." He gets an urgent call to a dying prisoner in a cell and he takes his time. And whoever behaves differently is not kept on in the prison.

But our *stoolie* [snitch] was better informed about his rights. (According to him he had already been under interrogation eleven months. And he was taken to interrogation

only during the day.) He spoke up and asked for an appointment with the prison chief. What, the chief of the whole Lubyanka? Yes. His name was taken down. (And in the evening, after taps, when the interrogators were already in their offices, he was summoned. And he returned with some makhorka.) This was very crude, of course, but so far they had not been able to think up anything better. It would have been a big expense to convert entirely to microphones in the walls and impossible to listen in on all 111 cells for whole days at a time. Who would do it? Stool pigeons were cheaper and would continue to be used for a long time to come. But Kramarenko had a hard time with us. Sometimes he eavesdropped so hard that the sweat poured from him, and we could see from his face that he didn't understand what we were saying. (208)

At the Lubyanka, matches were categorically forbidden to prisoners; to get a light for a cigarette we had to signal patiently with a finger when the peephole was opened, thus asking the jailer for a light. But blow torches were entrusted to us without hesitation. (210)

[I]t turned out that the U.S.S.R. did not recognize as binding Russia's signature to the Hague Convention on war prisoners. That meant that the U.S.S.R. accepted no obligations at all in the treatment of war prisoners and took no steps for the protection of its own soldiers who had been captured. The U.S.S.R. did not recognize the International Red Cross. The U.S.S.R. did not recognize its own soldiers of the day before: it did not intend to give them any help as POW's. (219)

Chapter 6. That Spring

(The Germans would shout at us from their trenches: "Ivan plen nicht!" - "Ivan no prisoner!") Who can picture all that means? There is war; there is death – but there is no surrender! What a discovery! What it means is: Go and die; we will go on living.and if you lose your legs, yet manage to return from captivity on crutches, we will convict you. (243)

Near Malye Kozlovichi, I was told, an interesting encounter took place. As the soldiers dashed back and forth among the pines, things got confused, and two soldiers lay down next to one another. No longer very accurately oriented, they kept shooting at someone, somewhere over there. Both had Soviet automatic pistols. They shared their cartridges, praised one another, and together swore at the grease freezing on their automatic pistols. Finally, their pistols stopped firing altogether, and they decided to take a break and light up. They pulled back their white hoods – and at that same instant each saw the other's cap … the eagle and the star [German and Russian]. They jumped up! Their automatic pistols still refused to fire! Grabbing them by the barrel and swinging them like clubs, they began to go at each other. This, if you will, was not politics and not the Motherland, but just sheer caveman distrust: If I take pity on him, he is going to kill me.

In East Prussia, a trio of captured Vlasov men was being marched along the roadside a few steps away from me. At that moment a T-34 tank thundered down the highway. Suddenly one of the captives twisted around and dived underneath the tank. The tank veered, but the edge of its track crushed him nevertheless. The broken man lay writhing, bloody foam coming from his mouth. And one could certainly understand him! He preferred a soldier's death to to being hanged in a dungeon. (255)

[I]n October, 1944, the Germans threw in Kaminsky's brigade- with its Moslem units – to

suppress the Warsaw uprising. While one group of Russians sat traitorously dozing beyond the Vistula, watching the death of Warsaw through their binoculars, other Russians crushed the uprising! Hadn't the Poles had enough Russian villainy to bear in the nineteenth century without having to endure more of it in the twentieth? (257-footnotes)

In the general disaster, Vlasov gathered up his two and a half divisions near Prague at the end of April, without coordinating his action with the German Supreme Command. It became known at this point that SS General Steiner was preparing to destroy the Czech capital rather than surrender it intact. And Vlasov ordered his divisions to the aid of the Czech rebels. And at that point, all the hurt, bitterness, and anger against the Germans that had accumulated during three cruel and futile years in the breasts of the enslaved Russians was vented in the attack on the Germans. They were shoved out of Prague from an unexpected direction. Did all Czechs realize later *which* Russians had saved their city? Our own history is similarly distorted; we claim that Prague was saved by Soviet armies, although they couldn't have gotten there in time. (258-259)

There is a simple truth which one can learn only through suffering: in war not victories are blessed but defeats. Governments need victories and the people need defeats. Victory gives rise to the desire for more victories. But after a defeat it is freedom that men desire – and usually attain. A people needs defeat just as an individual needs suffering and misfortune: they compel the deepening of the inner life and generate a spiritual upsurge. (272)

Chapter 7. In the Engine Room

And, last but not least, not only did the OSO not have to confront the accused face to face, which lessened the burden on interprison transport: it didn't even have to have his photograph. At a time when the prisons were badly overcrowded, this was a great additional advantage because the prisoner did not have to take up space on the prison floor, or eat free bread once his interrogation had been completed. He could be sent off to camp immediately and put to honest work. The copy of the sentence could be read to him much later. (285)

But just take the jurists' side for a moment: why, in fact, should a trial be supposed to have *two* possible outcomes when our general *elections* are conducted on the basis of *one* candidate? An acquittal is, in fact, unthinkable from the economic point of view! It would mean that the informers, the Security officers, the interrogators, the prosecutor's staff, the internal guard in the prison, and the convoy had all worked to no purpose. (291-292)

"What did you get it for?" "For nothing at all." "You're lying. *The sentence for nothing at all is ten years*." (293)

Chapter 8. The Law as a Child

It may seem strange to us now, but it is a fact that in those thunderous years bribes were given and taken just as tenderly as they had been from time immemorial in Old Russia and as they will be in the Soviet Union from here to eternity. Bribery was particularly rife in the judicial organs. And, though we blush to say it, in the Cheka. The

official histories in their red, gold-stamped bindings are silent about this, but the old folks and eyewitnesses remember that the fate of political prisoners in the first years of the Revolution, as distinct from Stalinist times, often depended on bribes: they were accepted uninhibitedly, and prisoners were honestly released as a result. Although Krylenko picked out only a dozen *cases* for the five-year period his book covers, he reports two cases of bribery. Alas, even the Moscow Tribunal and the Supreme Tribunal squeezed their way through to perfection along a crooked path, muddied themselves in improprieties. (311)

Chapter 9. The Law Becomes a Manipulating

At the end of the Civil War [1919], and as its natural consequence, an unprecedented famine developed in the Volga area. They give it only two lines in the official histories because it doesn't add a very ornamental touch to the wreaths of the victors in that war. But the famine existed nonetheless – to the point of cannibalism, to the point at which parents ate their own children – such a famine as even Russia had never known, even in the Time of Troubles in the early seventeenth century. (342)

[From letter from Lenin to Kursky, 17 May 1922]: openly to set forth a statute which is both principled and politically truthful (and not just juridically narrow) to supply the motivation for the *essence* and the *justification* of terror, its necessity, its limits. (353)

With the exception of a very limited number of parliamentary democracies, during a very limited number of decades, the history of nations is entirely a history of revolutions and seizures of power. And whoever succeeds in making a more successful and more enduring revolution is from that moment on graced with the bright robes of Justice, and his every past and future step is legalized and memorialized in odes, whereas every past and future step of his unsuccessful enemies is criminal and subject to arraignment and a legal penalty. (355)

Chapter 10. The Law Matures

For the engineers (those who were still free, not yet imprisoned, and who had to face the necessity of working cheerfully after the defamation at the trial of their whole class), there was no way out. They were damned if they *did* and damned if they *didn't*. If they went forward, it was wrong, and if they went backward, it was wrong too. If they hurried, they were hurrying for the purpose of wrecking. If they moved methodically, it meant wrecking by slowing down tempos. If they were painstaking in developing some branch of industry, it was intentional delay, sabotage. And if they indulged in capricious leaps, their intention was to produce an imbalance for the purpose of wrecking. Using capital for repairs, improvements, or capital readiness was tying up capital funds. And if they allowed equipment to be used until it broke down, it was a diversionary action! (382-383)

Is it not true that professional politicians are boils on the neck of society that prevent it from turning its head and moving its arms? (391)

Chapter 11. The supreme Measure

At the beginning of 1918, Trotsky ordered that Aleksei Shchastny, a newly appointed

admiral, be brought to trial because he had refused to scuttle the Baltic Fleet. Karklin, the Chairman of the Verkhtrib, quickly sentenced him in broken Russian: "To be shot within twenty-four hours." There was a stir in the hall: But it [death penalty] has been abolished! Prosecutor Krylenko explained: "What are you worrying about? Executions have been abolished. But Shchastny is not being executed; he is being shot." And they did shoot him. (434-435)

Still more terrible to us was the practice – initially followed by both warring sides and, later, by the victors only – of *sinking barges* loaded with uncounted, unregistered hundreds, unidentified even by a roll call. (435)

Prisoners sentenced to death were given no medical attention. Okhrimenko was kept in a death cell for a long time in 1938, and he became very ill. Not only did they refuse to put him in the hospital, but the doctor took forever to come to see him. When she finally did come, she didn't go into the cell; instead, without examining him or even asking him any questions, she handed him some powders through the bars. And fluid began to accumulate in Strakhovich's legs – dropsy. He told the jailer about it – and they sent him, believe it or not, a dentist. (446)

Chapter 12. Tyurzak

Tsarism lost its chance to survive not in the street skirmishes of February but several decades earlier, when youths from well-to-do families began to consider a prison term an honor; when army officers (even guard officers) began to regard it as dishonorable to shake the hand of a gendarme. (458)

Artificial feeding has much in common with rape. (470)

But is suicide really resistance? Isn't it actually submission? (472)

When, in 1960, Gennady Smelov, a nonpolitical offender, declared a lengthy hunger strike in the Leningrad prison, the prosecutor went to his cell for some reason (perhaps he was making his regular rounds) and asked him: "Why are you torturing yourself?"

And Smlov replied: "Justice is more precious to me than life."

This phrase so astonished the prosecutor with its irrelevance that the very next day Smelov was taken to the Leningrad Special Hospital (i.e., the insane asylum) for prisoners. And the doctor there told him:

"We suspect you may be a schizophrenic." (473)

PART II – PERPETUAL MOTION

Chapter 1. The Ships of the Archipelago

[I]n the autumn of 1946 N. V. Timofeyev-Ressovsky traveled from Petropavlovsk to Moscow in a compartment that had *thirty-six* people in it [designed for eight]! For several days he *hung* suspended between other human beings and his legs did not touch the floor. Then they started to die off – and the guards hauled the corpses out from under their feet. (Not right away, true; only on the second day.) That way things became less crowded. The whole trip to Moscow continued in this fashion for *three weeks*. (493)

Now that fast-moving little Frenchman over there near the grating – why does he keep twisting around, what is he so surprised at? Explain things to him! And you can ask him at the same time how he happened to land here. So you've found someone who knows French, and you learn that he is Max Santerre, a French soldier. And he used to be just as alert and curious out in freedom, in his douce France. They told him politely to stop hanging around the transit point for Russian repatriates, but he kept doing it anyway. And then the Russians invited him to have a drink with them, and from a certain moment after that he remembers nothing. He came to on the floor of an airplane to find himself dressed in a Red Army man's field shirt and britches, with the boots of a convoy guard looming over him. They told him he was sentenced to ten years in camp, but that, of course, as he very clearly understood, was just a nasty joke, wasn't it, and everything would be cleared up? Oh, yes, it will be cleared up, dear fellow; just wait. Well, there was nothing to be surprised at in such cases in 1945-1946. (517)

In 1946, retired Colonel Lunin, a high-ranking official in Osoaviakhim – the Society for Assistance to Defense and to Aviation-Chemical Construction of the U.S.S.R. - recounted in a Butyrki cell how the thieves in a Moscow Black Maria, on March 8, International Women's Day, during their transit from the City Court to Taganka Prison, gang-raped a young bride in his presence (and amid the silent passivity of everyone else in the van). That very morning the girl had come to her trial a free person, as attractively dressed as she could manage (she was on trial for leaving her work without official permission – which in itself was a repulsive fabrication worked up by her chief in revenge for her refusal to live with him). A half-hour before the Black Maria, the girl had been sentenced to five years under the decree and had then been shoved into this Black Maria, and right there in broad daylight, somewhere on the Park Ring ("Drink Soviet Champagne!"), had been turned into a camp prostitute. And are we really to say that it was the thieves who did this to her and not the jailers? And not her chief?

And thief tenderness too! Having raped her, they robbed her. They took the fashionable shoes with which she had hoped to charm the judges, and her blouse – which they shoved through to the convoy guards, who stopped the van and went off to get some vodka and handed it in so the thieves could drink at her expense too.

And when they got to the Taganka Prison, the girl sobbed out her complain. And the officer listened to her, yawned, and said: "The government can't provide each of you with individual transportation. We don't have such facilities." (530)

Chapter 2. The Ports of the Archipelago

"Well, even if the Ivanovo Transit Prison isn't one of the more famous, my friends, just ask anybody imprisoned there in the winter of 1937-1938. the prison was *unheated* – and the prisoners not only didn't freeze to death, but on the upper bunks they lay there undressed. And they knocked out all the windowpanes so as not to suffocate. Instead of the twenty men Cell 21 was supposed contain, there were *three hundred and twenty-three!* There was water underneath the bunks, and boards were laid in the water and people lay on those boards. That was right where the frost poured in from the broken windows. It was like Arctic night down under the bunks. There was no light down there either because it was cut off by the people laying on the bunks above and standing in the aisle. It was impossible to walk through the aisle to the latrine tank, and people crawled along the edges of the bunks. They didn't distribute rations to individuals but to units of ten. If one of the ten died, the others shoved his corpse under the bunks and kept it there until it started to stink. They got the corpse's ration. And all that could have been

endured, but the turnkeys seemed to have been oiled with turpentine – and they kept driving the prisoners endlessly from cell to cell, on and on. You'd just get yourself settled when 'Come on, get a move on! You're being moved!' And you'd have to start in again trying to find a place! And the reason for such overcrowding was that they hadn't taken anyone to the bath for three months, the lice had multiplied, and people had abscesses from the lice on their feet and legs – and typhus too. And because of the typhus the prison was quarantined and no prisoner transport could leave it for four months." (534-535)

Chapter 3. The Slave Caravans

To conceal the loading from the local population was necessary because approximately a thousand people were being loaded on the train simultaneously (at least twenty-five cars), and this wasn't your little group from a Stolypin that could be led right past the townspeople. Everyone knew, of course, that arrests were being made very day and every hour, but no one was to be horrified by the sight of large numbers of them *together*. In Orel in 1938 you could hardly hide the fact that there was no home in the city where there hadn't been arrests, and weeping women in their peasant carts blocked the square in front of the Orel Prison just as in Surikov's painting *The Execution of the Streltsy*. (Oh, who one day will paint this latter-day tragedy for us? But no one will. It's not fashionable, not fashionable …) But you don't need to show our Soviet people an entire trainload of them collected in one day. (And in Orel that year there were.) And young people mustn't see it either – for young people are our future. Therefore it was done only at night – and every night, too, each and every night, and that was the way it went for several months. The black line of prisoners to be transported was driven from the prison to the station on foot. (Meanwhile the Black Marias were busy making new arrests.) True, the women realized, the women somehow found out, and at night they came to the station from all over the city and kept watch over the trains on the siding. They ran along the cars, tripping over the ties and rails, and shouting at every car: "Is So-and-so in there?" "Is So-and-so in there?" And they ran on to the next one, and others ran up to this one: "Is So-and-so in there?" And suddenly an answer would come from the sealed car: "I'm in here. I'm here!" Or else: "Women! Listen! My wife is somewhere out there, near the station. Run and tell her." (567-568)

"Next unit of five – stand up! To the car – on the run!" (Only on the run, so as not to have time to look around, to think things over, to run as though chased by the dogs, afraid of nothing so much as falling down.) On that uneven path. Up the loading ramp, scrambling. And clear, hostile searchlight beams not only provided light but were an important theatrical element in terrorizing the prisoners, along with yells, threats, gunstock blows on those who fell behind, and the order: "Sit down." (And sometimes, as in the station square of that same Orel: "Down on your knees." (568)

A particular technique for prisoner transport on foot was worked out where such transports were frequent and abundant. When a transport is being taken through the taiga from Knyazh-Pogost to Veslyana, and suddenly some prisoner falls by the wayside and ca go no farther, what is to be done with him? Just be reasonable and think about it: what? You aren't going to stop the whole transport. And you aren't going to leave one soldier behind for everyone who falls. There are many prisoners and only a few soldiers. And what does that mean? The soldier stays behind for a little while with the fallen prisoner and then hurries on to catch up with the rest – alone. (585)

Chapter 4. From Island to Island

And I, too, swayed between a new term and being released. I had quite forgotten that half a year before, some character had come to our camp and distributed Gulag registration cards. (After the war they had begun this registration in all the nearby camps, but it seems unlikely that it was ever completed.) The most important question on it was: "Trade or Profession." And the zeks would fill in the most precious Gulag trades to enhance their own value: "barber," "tailor," "storekeeper." As for me, I had frowned and filled in "nuclear physicist." I had never been a nuclear physicist in my life, and what I knew of the field I had heard in the university before the war – just a little bit, the names of the atomic particles and their parameters. And I had decided to write down "nuclear physicist." This was in 1946. the atom bomb was desperately needed. (589-590)

In the deep, deaf stillness of midnight, the doors of the death cells are being swung open – and great-souled people are being dragged out to be shot. On all the railroads of the country this very minute, right now, people who have just been fed salt herring are licking their dry lips with bitter tongues. They dream of the happiness of stretching out one's legs and of the relief one feels after going to the toilet. In Orotukan the earth thaws only in summer and only to the depth of three feet and only then can they bury the bones of those who died during the winter. And you have the right to arrange your own life under the blue sky and the hot sun, to get drink of water, to stretch, to travel wherever you like without a convoy. So what's this about unwiped feet. And what's this about mother-in-law? What about the main thing in life, all its riddles? If you want, I'll spell it out for you right now. Do not pursue what is illusory – property and position: all that is gained at the expense of your nerves decade after decade, and is confiscated in one fell night. Live with a steady superiority over life – don't be afraid of misfortune, and do not yearn after happiness; it is, after all, all the same: the bitter doesn't last forever, and the sweet never fills the cup to overflowing. It is enough if you don't freeze in the cold and if thirst and hunger don't claw at your inside. If your back isn't broken, if your feet can walk, if both arms can bend, if both eyes see and if both ears hear, then whom should you envy? And why? Our envy of others devours us most of all. Rub your eyes and purify your heart – and prize above all else in the world those who love you and who with you well. Do not hurt them or scold them, and never part from any of them in anger; after all, you simply do not know: it might be your last act before your arrest, and that will be how you are imprinted in their memory! (591-592)

The cars are full. (Well, "full" in free people's terms – no one is lying under the benches, and no one is sitting on the floor in the aisles.) I was told to behave naturally, and I have been behaving very naturally indeed: I noticed a seat beside a window in the next compartment, and got up and took it. And there were no empty seats for my guards in that compartment. They sat where they were and kept their loving eyes on me from there. In Perebory, the seat across the table from me was vacated, but before my guard could get to it and sit down, a moon-faced fellow in a sheepskin coat and a fur cap, with plain but strong wooden suitcase, sat down there. I recognized his suitcase: it was camp work, "made in the Archipelago."

"Whew!" he puffs. There was very little light, but I could see he was red in the face and that he had had a hassle to get on the train. And he got out a bottle: "How about a beer, comrade?" I knew that my guards were close to a nervous breakdown in the next

compartment: I was not allowed anything alcoholic. But still … I was supposed to conduct myself as naturally as possible. And so I said carelessly: "All right, why not?" (Beer! It's a whole poem! For three years I hadn't had even one swallow. And tomorrow in my cell I would brag: "I got beer!") The fellow poured it, and I drank it down with a shiver of pleasure. It was already dark. There was no electricity in the car. This was postwar dislocation. One tiny candle end was burning in an ancient lantern at the door, one for four compartments: two in front and two behind. I talked amiably with the fellow even though we could hardly see each other. No matter how far forward my guard leaned, he couldn't hear a thing because of the clickety-clack of the wheels. In my pocket I had a postcard addressed to my home. And I was about to explain who I was to my simple friend across the table and ask him to drop the card in a mailbox. Judging by his suitcase he had been in stir himself. But he beat me to it: "You know, I just barely managed to get some leave. They haven't given me any time off for two years; it's a dog's branch of the service." "What kind?" "Don't you know? I'm an MVD man, an asmodeus, blue shoulder boards, haven't you ever seen them?" Hell! Why hadn't I guessed right off? Perebory was the center for Volgolag, and he had gotten his suitcase out of the zeks, they had made it for him for free. How all this had permeated our life! Two MVD men, two asmodei, weren't enough in two compartments. There had to be a hird. And perhaps there was also a fourth concealed somewhere? And maybe they were in every compartment? And maybe some else there was traveling by special convoy like me. (592-593)

They have tightly bound my body, but my soul is beyond their power. (595)

And on the bowls will be stamped)so we shouldn't make off with them on the prisoner transport) the mark "Bu-Tyur" - for *Bu*tyrskaya *Tyur*ma, Butyrki Prison. The "BuTyur" Health Resort, as we mocked it last time. A health resort, incidentally, very little known to the paunchy bigwigs who want to badly to lose weight. They drag their stomachs to Kislovodsk, and go out for long hikes on prescribe trails, do push-ups, and sweat for a whole month just to lose four to six pounds. And there in the "BuTyur" Health Resort, right near them, anyone of them could lose seventeen or eighteen pounds just like that, in one week, without doing any exercises at all. (595)