

The Gulag Archipelago

— A National Disposal System —

Chapter 2

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

Although I have no statistics at hand, I am not afraid of erring when I say that the wave of 1937 and 1938 was neither the only one nor even the main one, but only one, perhaps, of the three biggest waves which strained the murky, stinking pipes of our prison sewers to bursting.

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

And after it there was the wave of 1944 to 1946, the size of a good Yenisei, when they dumped whole nations down the

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

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

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

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

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

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

In considering now the period from 1918 to 1920, we are in difficulties: Should we classify among the prison waves all those who were done in before they even got to prison cells? And in what classification should we put those whom the Committees of the Poor took behind the wing of the village soviet or to the rear of the courtyard, and finished off right there? Did the participants in the clusters

of plots uncovered in every province at least succeed in setting foot on the land of the Archipelago, or did they not — and are they therefore not related to the subject of our investigations? Bypassing the repression of the now famous rebellions (Yaroslavl, Murom, Rybinsk, Arzamas), we know of certain events only by their names — for instance, the Kolpino executions of June, 1918. What were they? Who were they? And where should they be classified?

There is also no little difficulty in deciding whether we should classify among the prison waves or on the balance sheets of the Civil War those tens of thousands of hostages, i.e., people not personally accused of anything, those peaceful citizens not even listed by name, who were taken off and destroyed simply to terrorize or wreak vengeance on a military enemy or a rebellious population.

This action was, in fact, explained openly (Latsis, in the newspaper *Red Terror*, November 1, 1918): “We are not fighting against single individuals. We are exterminating the bourgeoisie as a class. It is not necessary during the interrogation to look for evidence proving that the accused opposed the Soviets by word or action. The first question which you should ask him is what class does he belong to, what is his origin, his education and his profession. These are the questions which will determine the fate of the accused. Such is the sense and the essence of red terror.” A decree of the Defense Council on February 15, 1919 (the meeting was evidently presided over by Lenin), suggests that the Cheka and the NKVD take hostages among the peasants of those regions where “the cleaning of snow from the railroads does not proceed quite satisfactorily” and that “these hostages be executed if the cleaning is not completed.”

But even restricting ourselves to ordinary arrests, we can note that by the spring of 1918 a torrent of socialist traitors had already begun that was to continue without slackening for many years.

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

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

From January, 1919, on, food requisitioning was organized and food-collecting detachments were set up. They encountered resistance everywhere in the rural areas, sometimes stubborn and passive, sometimes violent. The suppression of this opposition gave rise to an abundant flood of arrests during the course of the next two years, not counting those who were shot on the spot.

In May, 1920, came the well-known decree of the Central Committee "on Subversive Activity in the Rear." We know from experience that every such decree is a call for a new wave of widespread arrests; it is the outward sign of such a wave.

It was in 1920 that we knew (or failed to know) of the trial of the "Siberian Peasants' Union." And at the end of 1920 the repression of the Tambov peasants' rebellion began. There was no trial for them.

But the main drive to uproot people from the Tambov villages took place mostly in June, 1921. Throughout the province concentration camps were set up for the families of peasants who had taken part in the revolts.

Even earlier, in March, 1921, the rebellious Kronstadt sailors, minus those who had been shot, were sent to the islands of the Archipelago. . . .

In that same year the practice of arresting students began, . . . Also in 1921 the arrests of members of all non-Bolshevik parties were expanded and systematized. In fact, all Russia's political parties had been buried, except the victorious one.

In the spring of 1922 the Extraordinary Commission for Struggle Against Counterrevolution, Sabotage, and Speculation, the Cheka, recently renamed the GPU, decided to intervene in church affairs. It was called on to carry out a "church revolution" — to remove the existing leadership and replace it with one which would have only one ear turned to heaven and the other to the Lubyanka. The so-called "Living Church" people seemed to go along with this plan, but without outside help they could not gain control of the church apparatus. For this reason, the Patriarch Tikhon was arrested and two resounding trials were held, followed by the execution in Moscow of those who had publicized the Patriarch's appeal and, in Petrograd, of the Metropolitan Veniamin, who had attempted to hinder the transfer of ecclesiastical power to the "Living Church" group. Here and there in the provincial centers and even further down in the administrative districts, metropolitans and bishops were arrested, and, as always, in the wake of the big fish, followed shoals of smaller fry archpriests,

monks, and deacons. These arrests were not even reported in the press. They also arrested those who refused to swear to support the “Living Church” “renewal” movement.

Men of religion were an inevitable part of every annual “catch,” and their silver locks gleamed in every cell and in every prisoner transport en route to the Solovetsky Islands.

From the early twenties on, arrests were also made among groups of theosophists, mystics, spiritualists. (Count Palen's group used to keep official transcripts of its communications with the spirit world.) Also, religious societies and philosophers of the Berdyayev circle. The so-called “Eastern Catholics” — followers of Vladimir Solovyev — were arrested and destroyed in passing, as was the group of A. I. Abrikosova, and, of course, ordinary Roman Catholics — Polish Catholic priests, etc.-were arrested, too, as part of the normal course of events.

However, the root destruction of religion in the country, which throughout the twenties and thirties was one of the most important goals of the GPU-NKVD, could be realized only by mass arrests of Orthodox believers. Monks and nuns, whose black habits had been a distinctive feature of Old Russian life, were intensively rounded up on every hand, placed under arrest, and sent into exile. They arrested and sentenced active laymen. The circles kept getting bigger, as they raked in ordinary believers as well, old people, and particularly women, who were the most stubborn believers of all and who, for many long years to come, would be called “nuns” in transit prisons and in camps.

True, they were supposedly being

arrested and tried not for their actual faith but for openly declaring their convictions and for bringing up their children in the same spirit. As Tanya Khodkevich wrote:

You can pray freely — But just so God alone can hear.

(She received a ten-year sentence for these verses.) A person convinced that he possessed spiritual truth was required to conceal it from his own children! 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! True, one was still permitted to renounce one's religion at one's trial: it didn't often happen but it nonetheless did happen that the father would renounce his religion and remain at home to raise the children while the mother went to the Solovetsky Islands. (Throughout all those years women manifested great firmness in their faith.) All persons convicted of religious activity received tenners, the longest term then given.

(In those years, particularly in 1927, in purging the big cities for the pure society that was coming into being, they sent prostitutes to the Solovetsky Islands along with the “nuns.” Those lovers of a sinful earthly life were given three-year sentences under a more lenient article of the Code. The conditions in prisoner transports, in transit prisons, and on the Solovetsky Islands were not of a sort to hinder them from plying their merry trade among the administrators and the convoy guards. And three years later they would return with laden suitcases to the places they had come from. Religious prisoners, however, were prohibited from ever returning to their children and their home areas.)

As early as the early twenties, waves appeared that were purely national in character. . . .

The waves flowed underground through the pipes; they provided sewage disposal for the life flowering on the surface.

In 1931, following the trial of the Promparty, a grandiose trial of the Working Peasants Party was being prepared — on the grounds that they existed (never, in actual fact!) as an enormous organized underground force among the rural intelligentsia, including leaders of consumer and agricultural cooperatives and the more advanced upper layer of the peasantry, and supposedly were preparing to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the trial of the Prom party this Working Peasants Party — the TKP — was referred to as if it were already well known and under detention. . . .

Then all of a sudden, one lovely night, Stalin reconsidered. Why? Maybe we will never know. Did he perhaps wish to save his soul? Too soon for that, it would seem. Did his sense of humor come to the fore — was it all so deadly, monotonous, so bitter-tasting? But no one would ever dare accuse Stalin of having a sense of humor! Likeliest of all, Stalin simply figured out that the whole countryside, not just 200,000 people, would soon die of famine anyway, so why go to the trouble? And instantly the whole TKP trial was called off. All those who had “confessed” were told they could repudiate their confessions (one can picture their happiness!).

Paragraph piles on paragraph, year on year-and yet there is no way we can describe in sequence everything that took place (but the GPU did its job effectively! The GPU never let anything get by!). But

we must always remember that:

Religious believers, of course, were being arrested uninterruptedly. (There were, nonetheless, certain special dates and peak periods. There was a “night of struggle against religion” in Leningrad on Christmas Eve, 1929, when they arrested a large part of the religious intelligentsia and held them — not just until morning either. And that was certainly no “Christmas tale.” Then in February, 1932, again in Leningrad, many churches were closed simultaneously, while, at the same time, large-scale arrests were made among the clergy. And there are still more dates and places, but they haven't been reported to us by anyone.)

Non-Orthodox sects were also under constant attack. . . .

The Big Solitaire game played with the socialists went on and on uninterruptedly — of course.

In 1929, also, those historians who had not been sent abroad in time were arrested. . . .

From one end of the country to the other, nationalities kept pouring in....

From 1928 on, it was time to call to a reckoning those late stragglers after the bourgeoisie — the NEP men. The usual practice was to impose on them ever-increasing and finally totally intolerable taxes. At a certain point they could no longer pay; they were immediately arrested for bankruptcy, and their property was confiscated. The state needed property and gold. The famous gold fever began at the end of 1929.

Who was arrested in the “gold” wave? All those who, at one time or another, fif-

teen years before, had had a private “business,” had been involved in retail trade, had earned wages at a craft, and could have, according to the GPU's deductions, hoarded gold. But it so happened that they often had no gold. They had put their money into real estate or securities, which had melted away or been taken away in the Revolution, and nothing remained. They had high hopes, of course, in arresting dental technicians, jewelers, and watch repairmen. All were arrested, all were crammed into GPU cells in numbers no one had considered possible up to then — but that was all to the good: they would cough it up all the sooner! It even reached a point of such confusion that men and women were imprisoned in the same cells and used the latrine bucket in each other's presence — who cared about those niceties? Give up your gold, vipers! The interrogators had one universal method: feed the prisoners nothing but salty food and give them no water. Whoever coughed up gold got water! One gold piece for a cup of fresh water!

People perish for cold metal.

The crudest detective stories and operas about brigands were played out in real life on a vast national scale.

And so the waves foamed and rolled. But over them all, in 1929-1930, billowed and gushed the multimillion wave of dispossessed kulaks. It was immeasurably large and it could certainly not have been housed in even the highly developed network of Soviet interrogation prisons (which in any case were packed full by the “gold” wave). Instead, it bypassed the prisons, going directly to the transit prisons and camps, onto prisoner transports, into the Gulag country. In sheer size this nonrecurring tidal wave (it was an ocean) swelled beyond the bounds of anything

the penal system of even an immense state can permit itself. There was nothing to be compared with it in all Russian history. It was the forced resettlement of a whole people, an ethnic catastrophe.

This wave was also distinct from all those which preceded it because no one fussed about with taking the head of the family first and then working out what to do with the rest of the family. On the contrary, in this wave they burned out whole nests, whole families, from the start; and they watched jealously to be sure that none of the children — fourteen, ten, even six years old — got away: to the last scrapings, all had to go down the same road, to the same common destruction. (This was the first such experiment — at least in modern history. It was subsequently repeated by Hitler with the Jews, and again by Stalin with nationalities which were disloyal to him or suspected by him.) Like raging beasts, abandoning every concept of “humanity,” abandoning all humane principles which had evolved through the millennia, the authorities began to round up the very best farmers and their families, and to drive them, stripped of their possessions, naked, into the northern wastes, into the tundra and the taiga.

But new waves rolled from the collectivized villages: one of them was a wave of agricultural wreckers. Everywhere they began to discover wrecker agronomists.

There was even a wave for snipping ears, the nighttime snipping of individual ears of grain in the field—a totally new type of agricultural activity, a new type of harvesting! The wave of those caught doing this was not small — it included many tens of thousands of peasants, many of them not even adults but boys, girls, and small children whose elders had sent

them out at night to snip, because they had no hope of receiving anything from the collective farm for their daytime labor. For this bitter and not very productive occupation (an extreme of poverty to which the peasants had not been driven even in serfdom) the courts handed out a full measure: ten years for what ranked as an especially dangerous theft of socialist property.

Paradoxically enough, every act of the all-penetrating, eternally wakeful Organs, over a span of many years, was based solely on one article of the 140 articles of the nongeneral division of the Criminal Code of 1926. One can find more epithets in praise of this article than Turgenev once assembled to praise the Russian language, or Nekrasov to praise Mother Russia: great, powerful, abundant, highly ramified, multiform, wide-sweeping 58, which summed up the world not so much through the exact terms of its sections as in their extended dialectical interpretation.

Who among us has not experienced its all-encompassing embrace? In all truth, there is no step, thought, action, or lack of action under the heavens which could not be punished by the heavy hand of Article 58. . . .

There was no section in Article 58 which was interpreted as broadly and with so ardent a revolutionary conscience as Section 10. Its definition was: "Propaganda or agitation, containing an appeal for the overthrow, subverting, or weakening of the Soviet power. . . and, equally, the dissemination or preparation or possession of literary materials of similar content." For this section in peacetime a minimum penalty only was set (not any less! not too light!); no upper limit was set for the maximum penalty.

Here is one vignette from those years as it actually occurred. A district Party conference was under way in Moscow Province. It was presided over by a new secretary of the District Party Committee, replacing one recently arrested. At the conclusion of the conference, a tribute to Comrade Stalin was called for. Of course, everyone stood up (just as everyone had leaped to his feet during the conference at every mention of his name). The small hall echoed with "stormy applause, rising to an ovation." For three minutes, four minutes, five minutes, the "stormy applause, rising to an ovation," continued. But palms were getting sore and raised arms were already aching. And the older people were panting from exhaustion. It was becoming insufferably silly even to those who really adored Stalin. However, who would dare be the first to stop? The secretary of the District Party Committee could have done it. He was standing on the platform, and it was he who had just called for the ovation. But he was a newcomer. He had taken the place of a man who'd been arrested. He was afraid! After all, NKVD men were standing in the hall applauding and watching to see who quit first! And in that obscure, small hall, unknown to the Leader, the applause went on — six, seven, eight minutes! They were done for! Their goose was cooked! They couldn't stop now till they collapsed with heart attacks! At the rear of the hall, which was crowded, they could of course cheat a bit, clap less frequently, less vigorously, not so eagerly — but up there with the presidium where everyone could see them? The director of the local paper factory, an independent and strong-minded man, stood with the presidium. A ware of all the falsity and all the impossibility of the situation, he still kept on applauding! Nine minutes! Ten! In anguish he watched the secretary of the District Party Committee, but the latter dared not stop.

Insanity! To the last man! With make-believe enthusiasm on their faces, looking at each other with faint hope, the district leaders were just going to go on and on applauding till they fell where they stood, till they were carried out of the hall on stretchers! And even then those who were left would not falter. . . . Then, after eleven minutes, the director of the paper factory assumed a businesslike expression and sat down in his seat. And, oh, a miracle took place! Where had the universal, uninhibited, indescribable enthusiasm gone? To a man, everyone else stopped dead and sat down. They had been saved! The squirrel had been smart enough to jump off his revolving wheel.

That, however, was how they discovered who the independent people were. And that was how they went about eliminating them. That same night the factory director was arrested. They easily pasted ten years on him on the pretext of something quite different. But after he had signed Form 206, the final document of the interrogation, his interrogator reminded him:

“Don't ever be the first to stop applauding!”

(And just what are we supposed to do? How are we supposed to stop?)

Now that's what Darwin's natural selection is. And that's also how to grind people down with stupidity.

But today a new myth is being created. Every story of 1937 that is printed, every reminiscence that is published, relates without exception the tragedy of the Communist leaders. They have kept on assuring us, and we have unwittingly fallen for it, that the history of 1937 and 1938 consisted chiefly of the arrests of the big

Communists — and virtually no one else. But out of the millions arrested at that time, important Party and state officials could not possibly have represented more than 10 percent. Most of the relatives standing in line with food parcels outside the Leningrad prisons were lower-class women, the sort who sold milk.

The real law underlying the arrests of those years was the assignment of quotas, the norms set, the planned allocations. Every city, every district, every military unit was assigned a specific quota of arrests to be carried out by a stipulated time. From then on everything else depended on the ingenuity of the Security operations personnel.

The former Chekist Aleksandr Kalganov recalls that a telegram arrived in Tashkent: “Send 200!” They had just finished one clean-out, and it seemed as if there was “no one else” to take. Well, true, they had just brought in about fifty more from the districts. And then they had an idea! They would reclassify as 58's all the nonpolitical offenders being held by the police. No sooner said than done. But despite that, they had still not filled the quota. At that precise moment the police reported that a gypsy band had impudently encamped on one of the city squares and asked what to do with them. Someone had another bright idea! They surrounded the encampment and raked in all the gypsy men from seventeen to sixty as 58's! They had fulfilled the plan!

Just as the intelligentsia had never been overlooked in previous waves, it was not neglected in this one. A student's denunciation that a certain lecturer in a higher educational institution kept citing Lenin and Marx frequently but Stalin not at all was all that was needed for the lecturer not to show up for lectures any more. And what if he cited no one?

Arrests rolled through the streets and apartment houses like an epidemic. Just as people transmit an epidemic infection from one to another without knowing it, by such innocent means as a handshake, a breath, handing someone something, so, too, they passed on the infection of inevitable arrest by a handshake, by a breath, by a chance meeting on the street. For if you are destined to confess tomorrow that you organized an underground group to poison the city's water supply, and if today I shake hands with you on the street, that means I, too, am doomed.

The reverse wave of 1939 was an unheard-of incident in the history of the Organs, a blot on their record! But, in fact, this reverse wave was not large; it included about 1 to 2 percent of those who had been arrested but not yet convicted, who had not yet been sent away to far-off places and had not yet perished. It was not large, but it was put to effective use. It was like giving back one kopeck change from a ruble, but it was necessary in order to heap all the blame on that dirty Yezhov, to strengthen the newcomer, Beria, and to cause the Leader himself to shine more brightly. With this kopeck they skillfully drove the ruble right into the ground. After all, if "they had sorted things out and freed some people" (and even the newspapers wrote intrepidly about individual cases of persons who had been slandered), it meant that the rest of those arrested were indeed scoundrels! And those who returned kept silent. They had signed pledges not to speak out. They were mute with terror. And there were very few who knew even a little about the secrets of the Archipelago.

But for that matter they soon took that kopeck back — during those same years and via those same sections of the boundless Article 58. Well, who in 1940 noticed

the wave of wives arrested for failure to renounce their husbands? And who in Tambov remembers that during that year of peace they arrested an entire jazz orchestra playing at the "Modern" Cinema Theatre because they all turned out to be enemies of the people? And who noticed the thirty thousand Czechs who in 1939 fled from occupied Czechoslovakia to their Slavic kinfolk in the U.S.S.R.? It was impossible to guarantee that a single one of them was not a spy. They sent them all off to northern camps. And was it not, indeed, in 1939 that we reached out our helping hands to the West Ukrainians and the West Byelorussians, and, in 1940, to the Baltic states and to the Moldavians? It turned out that our brothers badly needed to be purged, and from them, too, flowed waves of social prophylaxis. They took those who were too independent, too influential, along with those who were too well-to-do, too intelligent, too noteworthy; they took, particularly, many Poles from former Polish provinces. They arrested officers everywhere. Thus the population was shaken up, forced into silence, and left without any possible leaders of resistance. Thus it was that wisdom was instilled, that former ties and former friendships were cut off.

Finland ceded its isthmus to us with zero population. Nevertheless, the removal and resettlement of all persons with Finnish blood took place throughout Soviet Karelia and in Leningrad in 1940. We didn't notice that wavelet: we have no Finnish blood.

In the Finnish War we undertook our first experiment in convicting our war prisoners as traitors to the Motherland. The first such experiment in human history; and would you believe it? — we didn't notice!

That was the rehearsal — just at that moment the war burst upon us. And with it a massive retreat. It was essential to evacuate swiftly everyone who could be got out of the western republics that were being abandoned to the enemy. In the rush, entire military units — regiments, anti-aircraft and artillery batteries were left behind intact in Lithuania. But they still managed to get out several thousand families of unreliable Lithuanians. From June 23 on, in Latvia and Estonia, they speeded up the arrests. But the ground was burning under them, and they were forced to leave even faster. They forgot to take whole fortresses with them, like the one at Brest, but they did not forget to shoot down political prisoners in the cells and courtyards of Lvov, Rovno, Tallinn, and many other Western prisons. In the Tartu Prison they shot 192 prisoners and threw their corpses down a well.

How can one visualize it? You know nothing. The door of your cell opens, and they shoot you. You cry out in your death agony, and there is no one to hear your cries or tell of them except the prison stones. They say, however, that there were some who weren't successfully finished off, and we may someday read a book about that too.

In 1941 the Germans went round Taganrog, cutting it off so swiftly that prisoners were left in freight wagons at the railway station where they had been brought to be evacuated. What should one do with them? Certainly not set them free nor leave them to the Germans. Oil tank trucks were rushed to the station, and the wagons were drenched with oil and set on fire. All the prisoners were burned alive.

In the rear, the first wartime wave was for those spreading rumors and panic. That was the language of a special decree,

outside the Code, issued in the first days of the war.

Then there was a wave of those who/ailed to turn in radio receivers or radio parts. For one radio tube found (as a result of denunciation) they gave ten years.

Then there was the wave of Germans-Germans living on the Volga, colonists in the Ukraine and the North Caucasus, and all Germans in general who lived anywhere in the Soviet Union. The determining factor here was blood, and even heroes of the Civil War and old members of the Party who were German were sent off into exile.

By the end of the summer of 1941, becoming bigger in the autumn, the wave of the encircled was surging in. These were the defenders of their native land, the very same warriors whom the cities had seen off to the front with bouquets and bands a few months before, who had then sustained the heaviest tank assaults of the Germans, and in the general chaos, and through no fault of their own, had spent a certain time as isolated units not in enemy imprisonment, not at all, but in temporary encirclement, and later had broken out. And instead of being given a brotherly embrace on their return, such as every other army in the world would have given them, instead of being given a chance to rest up, to visit their families, and then return to their units — they were held on suspicion, disarmed, deprived of all rights, and taken away in groups to identification points and screening centers where officers of the Special Branches started interrogating them, distrusting not only their every word but their very identity.

The victory outside Moscow gave rise to a new wave: guilty Muscovites. Looking

at things after the event, it turned out that those Muscovites who had not run away and who had not been evacuated but had fearlessly remained in the threatened capital, which had been abandoned by the authorities, were by that very token under suspicion either of subverting governmental authority (58-10); or of staying on to await the Germans. . . .

From 1943 on, when the war turned in our favor, there began the multimillion wave from the occupied territories and from Europe, which got larger every year up to 1946.

And dismiss the thought that honorable participation in an underground anti-German organization would surely protect one from being arrested in this wave. More than one case proved this.

Those who were in Europe got the stiffest punishments of all, even though they went there as conscripted German slaves. That was because they had seen something of European life and could talk about it.

That also was the reason why they sentenced the majority of war prisoners (it was not simply because they had allowed themselves to be captured), particularly those POW's who had seen a little more of the West than a German death camp. This was obvious from the fact that interned persons were sentenced as severely as POW's. For example, during the first days of the war one of our destroyers went aground on Swedish territory. Its crew proceeded to live freely in Sweden during all the rest of the war. After the war Sweden returned them to us along with the destroyer. Their treason to the Motherland was indubitable — but somehow the case didn't get off the ground. They let them go their different ways and

then pasted them with Anti-Soviet Agitation for their lovely stories in praise of freedom and good eating in capitalist Sweden. (This was the Kadenko group.)

What happened to this group later makes an anecdote. In camp they kept their mouths shut about Sweden, fearing they'd get a second term. But people in Sweden somehow found out about their fate and published slanderous reports in the press. By that time the boys were scattered far and near among various camps. Suddenly, on the strength of special orders, they were all yanked out and taken to the Kresty Prison in Leningrad. There they were fed for two months as though for slaughter and allowed to let their hair grow. Then they were dressed with modest elegance, rehearsed on what to say and to whom, and warned that any bastard who dared to squeak out of turn would get a bullet in his skull — and they were led off to a press conference for selected foreign journalists and some others who had known the entire crew in Sweden. The former internees bore themselves cheerfully, described where they were living, studying, and working, and expressed their indignation at the bourgeois slander they had read about not long before in the Western press (after all, Western papers are sold in the Soviet Union at every corner newsstand!). And so they had written to one another and decided to gather in Leningrad. (Their travel expenses didn't bother them in the least.) Their fresh, shiny appearance completely gave the lie to the newspaper canard. The discredited journalists went off to write their apologies. It was wholly inconceivable to the Western imagination that there could be any other explanation. And the men who had been the subjects of the interview were taken off to a bath, had their hair cut off again, were dressed in their former rags, and sent back to the

same camps. But because they had conducted themselves properly, none of them was given a second term.

During the last years of the war, of course, there was a wave of German war criminals who were selected from the POW camps and transferred by court verdict to the jurisdiction of Gulag. .

In 1945, even though the war with Japan didn't last three weeks, great numbers of Japanese war prisoners were raked in for urgent construction projects in Siberia and Central Asia, and the same process of selecting war criminals for Gulag was carried out among them.

At the end of 1944, when our army entered the Balkans, and especially in 1945, when it reached into Central Europe, a wave of Russian emigres flowed through the channels of Gulag. Most were old men, who had left at the time of the Revolution, but there were also young people, who had grown up outside Russia. They usually dragged off the menfolk and left the women and children where they were. It is true that they did not take everyone, but they took all those who, in the course of twenty-five years, had expressed even the mildest political views, or who had expressed them earlier, during the Revolution. They did not touch those who had lived a purely vegetable existence. The main waves came from Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia; there were fewer from Austria and Germany. In the other countries of Eastern Europe, there were hardly any Russians.

As if in response to 1945, a wave of emigres poured from Manchuria too. (Some of them were not arrested immediately. Entire families were encouraged to return to the homeland as free persons,

but once back in Russia they were separated and sent into exile or taken to prison.)

All during 1945 and 1946 a big wave of genuine, at-long-last, enemies of the Soviet government flowed into the Archipelago. (These were the Vlasov men, the Krasnov Cossacks, and Moslems from the national units created under Hitler.) Some of them had acted out of conviction; others had been merely involuntary participants.

Along with them were seized not less than one million fugitives from the Soviet government — civilians of all ages and of both sexes who had been fortunate enough to find shelter on Allied territory, but who in 1946-1947 were perfidiously returned by Allied authorities into Soviet hands.

It is surprising that in the West, where political secrets cannot be kept long, since they inevitably come out in print or are disclosed, the secret of this particular act of betrayal has been very well and carefully kept by the British and American governments. This is truly the last secret, or one of the last, of the Second World War. Having often encountered these people in camps, I was unable to believe for a whole quartercentury that the public in the West knew nothing of this action of the Western governments, this massive handing over of ordinary Russian people to retribution and death. Not until 1973—in the Sunday Oklahoman of January 21—was an article by Julius Epstein published. And I am here going to be so bold as to express gratitude on behalf of the mass of those who perished and those few left alive. One random little document was published from the many volumes of the hitherto concealed case history of forced repatriation to the Soviet Union.

“After having remained unmolested in British hands for two years, they had allowed themselves to be lulled into a false sense of security and they were therefore taken completely by surprise. . . They did not realize they were being repatriated. . . They were mainly simple peasants with bitter personal grievances against the Bolsheviks.” The English authorities gave them the treatment “reserved in the case of every other nation for war criminals alone: that of being handed over against their will to captors who, incidentally, were not expected to give them a fair trial.” They were all sent to destruction on the Archipelago. The American authorities did the same: in Bavaria as well as on the U.S. territory, they delivered tens of thousands of Soviet citizens to a cruel fate, turning them over to the Soviets against their will.

A certain number of Poles, members of the Home Army, followers of Mikolajczyk, arrived in Gulag in 1945 via our prisons.

There were a certain number of Rumanians and Hungarians.

At war's end and for many years after, there flowed uninterruptedly an abundant wave of Ukrainian nationalists.

We have to remind our readers once again that this chapter does not attempt by any means to list all the waves which fertilized Gulag-but only those which had a political coloration. And just as, in a course in physiology, after a detailed description of the circulation of the blood, one can begin over again and describe in detail the lymphatic system, one could begin again and describe the waves of nonpolitical offenders and habitual criminals from 1918 to 1953. And this description, too, would run long. It would bring to light many famous decrees, now in part

forgotten (even though they have never been repealed), which supplied abundant human material for the insatiable Archipelago.

We are not going to go into a lengthy and lavish examination of the waves of nonpolitical offenders and common criminals. But, having reached 1947, we cannot remain silent about one of the most grandiose of Stalin's decrees. We have already mentioned the famous law of “Seven-Eight” or “Seven-eighths,” on the basis of which they arrested people right and left — for taking a stalk of grain, a cucumber, two small potatoes, a chip of wood, a spool of thread — all of whom got ten years.

But the requirements of the times, as Stalin understood them, had changed, and the tenner, which had seemed adequate on the eve of a terrible war, seemed now, in the wake of a world-wide historical victory, inadequate. And so again, in complete disregard of the Code, and totally overlooking the fact that many different articles and decrees on the subject of thefts and robberies already existed, on June 4, 1947, a decree was issued which outdid them all. It was instantly christened “Four-sixths” by the undismayed prisoners.

The advantages of the new decree lay first of all in its newness. From the very moment it appeared, a torrent of the crimes it specified would be bound to burst forth, thereby providing an abundant wave of newly sentenced prisoners. But it offered an even greater advantage in prison terms. If a young girl sent into the fields to get a few ears of grain took along two friends for company (“an organized gang”) or some twelve-year-old youngsters went after cucumbers or apples, they were liable to get twenty

years in camp. In factories, the maximum sentence was raised to twenty-five years. (This sentence, called the quarter, had been introduced a few days earlier to replace the death penalty, which had been abolished as a humane act.)

And then, at long last, an ancient shortcoming of the law was corrected. Previously the only failure to make a denunciation which qualified as a crime against the state had been in connection with political offenses. But now simple failure to report the theft of state or collective farm property earned three years of camp or seven years of exile.

Stalin's new line, suggesting that it was necessary, in the wake of the victory over fascism, to jail more people more energetically and for longer terms than ever before, had immediate repercussions, of course, on political prisoners.

The year 1948-1949, notable throughout Soviet public life for intensified persecution and vigilance, was marked by one tragic comedy hitherto unheard of even in Stalinist anti justice — that of the repeaters.

That is what, in the language of Gulag, they called those still undestroyed unfortunates of 1937 vintage, who had succeeded in surviving ten impossible, unendurable years, and who in 1947-1948, had timidly stepped forth onto the land of freedom. . . worn out, broken in health, but hoping to live out in peace what little of their lives remained. But some sort of savage fantasy (or stubborn malice, or unsated vengeance) pushed the Victorious Generalissimo into issuing the order to arrest all those cripples over again, without any new charges! It was even disadvantageous, both economically and politically, to clog the meat grinder with its own

refuse. But Stalin issued the order anyway. Here was a case in which a historical personality simply behaved capriciously toward historical necessity.

At this point the Autocrat decided it wasn't enough to arrest just those who had survived since 1937! What about the children of his sworn enemies? They, too, must be imprisoned! They were growing up, and they might have notions of vengeance.

By 1948, after the great European displacement, Stalin had succeeded once again in tightly barricading himself in and pulling the ceiling down closer to him: in this reduced space he had recreated the tension of 1937.

And so in 1948, 1949, and 1950 there flowed past:

- Alleged spies (ten years earlier they had been German and Japanese, now they were Anglo-American).
- Believers (this wave non-Orthodox for the most part).
- Those geneticists and plant breeders, disciples of the late Vavilov and of Mendel, who had riot previously been arrested.
- Just plain ordinary thinking people (and students, with particular severity) who had not been sufficiently scared away from the West. It was fashionable to charge them with:
 - VAT — Praise of American Technology;
 - VAD — Praise of American Democracy;
and
 - PZ — Toadyism Toward the West.

These waves were not unlike those of 1937, but the sentences were different. The standard sentence was no longer the patriarchal ten-ruble bill, but the new Stalinist twenty-five. By now the tenner was for juveniles.

By this time resistance in Lithuania and Estonia had already come to an end. But in 1949 new waves of new “social prophylaxis” to assure collectivization kept coming. They took whole trainloads of city dwellers and peasants from the three Baltic republics into Siberian exile. (The historical rhythm was disrupted in these republics: they were forced to recapitulate in brief, limited periods the more extended experience of the rest of the country.)

In 1948 one more nationalist wave went into exile — that of the Greeks who inhabited the areas around the Sea of Azov, the Kuban, and Sukhumi. They had done nothing to offend the Father during the war, but now he avenged himself on them for his failure in Greece, or so it seemed. This wave, too, was evidently the fruit of his personal insanity.

During the last years of Stalin's life, a wave of Jews became noticeable. (From 1950 on they were hauled in little by little as cosmopolites. And that was why the doctors' case was cooked up. It would appear that Stalin intended to arrange a great massacre of the Jews.)

But this became the first plan of his life to fail. God told him apparently with the help of human hands — to depart from his rib cage.

The preceding exposition should have made it clear, one would think, that in the removal of millions and in the populating of Gulag, consistent, cold-blooded planning and never-weakening persistence were at work.

That we never did have any empty prisons, merely prisons which were full or prisons which were very, very overcrowded.

And that while you occupied yourself to your heart's content studying the safe secrets of the atomic nucleus, researching the influence of Heidegger on Sartre, or collecting Picasso reproductions; while you rode off in your railroad sleeping compartment to vacation resorts, or finished building your country house near Moscow—the Black Marias rolled incessantly through the streets and the gaybisty — the State Security men — knocked at doors and rang doorbells.

And I think this exposition proves that the Organs always earned their pay.
