SOLZHENITSYN

A SOCIALIZED HUMANIST
Solzhenitsyn: a Socialist Humanist

by

Kevin Windle, B.A. Hons, Liverpool

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AUTHOR: Kevin Windle

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PREFACE

In the past few years Alexander Isaevich Solzhenitsyn has become acknowledged as one of the foremost Russian writers of our time. The five stories which were published there brought him popularity unprecedented for a Soviet author. The edition of Novy Mir which carried One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich sold out in record time, as did the book form. This book is now suppressed and withdrawn from library circulation. But although he is now unable to publish in the USSR, Solzhenitsyn has not been forgotten. Other works by him, including Cancer Ward and The First Circle, continue to circulate in samizdat in thousands of copies and a considerable number of intellectuals must have read them. This thesis is an attempt to define Solzhenitsyn's convictions, and examine the implications of his comments on Soviet life and politics.

Since there is scant biographical information about Solzhenitsyn, the introductory chapter collates the more significant known biographical facts and provides an outline of the polemics of the publication and non-publication of his work in the Soviet Union. Succeeding chapters examine his published works in chronological order of writing, as far as chronology can be established, with the emphasis on his themes. Characters are not analysed in depth, except where they have a crucial role as vehicles for ideas. Similarly, I have attempted to restrict sections on language and structure, so that only those elements which are vital to the ideas are discussed.
Mention must be made of possible variations in the available texts of Solzhenitsyn work. There is no problem with the works published in the Soviet Union. Here he seems to have been fortunate enough to have five stories printed as he wrote them, with no changes enforced by the censor. However, no such guarantee can be given in the case of works unpublished in the Soviet Union. Repeated copying by samizdat seems bound to result in at least a few errors. The version of Cancer Ward published by the Bodley Head differs from those published by Possev-Verlag and Mondadori in several places, especially in chapter nineteen. The translation appears to have been made from the latter version.

As regards _The First Circle_, Tvardovsky has said that the copy taken from Solzhenitsyn's home was unfinished. This need not mean that this was not the final version of those chapters which were complete. When Solzhenitsyn has spoken of it, he has not said that it was not the final version. What seems to be meant is that another volume is to follow which continues the story of the first. This does not prevent us from regarding _The First Circle_ as a novel complete in itself.

In the introductory note to their edition of Cancer Ward, Possev apologize to the author for possible errors in the text. I must add my own apologies for possible misinterpretations based on errors in this text and that of _The First Circle_.

My thanks are due to my supervisor, Dr. L. J. Shein, and Dr. C. J. G. Turner for their advice and assistance.
I also wish to express my appreciation of the great interest and assistance offered by Mr. Alan Jones and Mr. Michael Thomson, and my gratitude to Miss Sonja Booth for her patience and reliability as a typist.

I must also thank McMaster University for providing financial aid in the form of a Graduate Teaching Fellowship.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Not much is known about Solzhenitsyn's early life. He has shunned reporters and evaded interviews. As a result, it cannot be guaranteed that all the biographical information presented here is accurate. It is known that his childhood was spent in Rostov-on-Don, where his family moved soon after his birth in December 1918 in Kislovodsk. His father was killed, apparently in a hunting accident, when Alexander was small, and the boy was brought up by his mother. He studied physics and mathematics at Rostov University, and took a correspondence course in literature and philosophy from a Moscow institute at the same time. He married Natalia Alekseevna Reshotovskaya shortly before war with Germany broke out in June 1941, and graduated from university only days before the Nazi attack.

Solzhenitsyn was drafted into the army and assigned to looking after horses, a task for which he had neither aptitude nor interest. However, he succeeded in obtaining a transfer to the artillery early in 1942. He fought continuously from then until the end of the war, winning two decorations and rising to the rank of captain.

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1 One source says Moscow university, Survey, October 1967, "One Day with Solzhenitsyn-An interview" taken from the Slovak journal "Kulturni Zhivot," March 1967, but the majority of sources say that he studied in Rostov.

2 These pieces of information are provided by Time Magazine, (September 27, 1968) which seems unwilling to divulge its sources. It is hoped that the author of the article is not relying solely on Gleb Nerzhin's story in The First Circle.
In January or February 1945, during the fighting in East Prussia, censorship of Solzhenitsyn's letters, in which he made unfavourable comments about Stalin, led to his arrest, despite the protests of his divisional commander, Major-General Travkin. He was taken to Moscow and held in the Lubianka. Without trial, he was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment. Fortunately he was not immediately dispatched to a remote Siberian camp, but put to work for a while on building sites in and around Moscow. Being qualified in physics and mathematics, he was soon chosen to work in a prison research institute, where conditions were good. He was there for four years, until the end of 1949. He spent the next three years in the huge camp complex of Karaganda, in Kazakhstan, where his work was stone-cutting and iron-casting.

He was released in 1953, shortly before Stalin's death, but, like most other political prisoners, he was kept in exile: he could not return to European Russia. He lived in a Kazakh village in Dzhambul' region, on the edge of the desert. It is said that his wife, whom he had urged to divorce him while he was in prison, had remarried. But after his release from the camp she divorced her second husband and rejoined Solzhenitsyn in exile.  

In the camp, Solzhenitsyn had undergone an operation for cancer. After his release the disease returned in acute form. He was near death when he reached the hospital in Tashkent which was to treat him. The prolonged treatment seems to have been effective. It is known that he does not enjoy the best of health, but he has said that the tumour no longer bothers him.

After the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, Solzhenitsyn was freed from exile and he returned in 1956 or 1957 to central Russia, which he loves. He settled in Riazan' and began teaching there in 1957. He asked for minimal

3 Ibid.
teaching hours, and eventually pared his time in school down to nine hours a week, for which he earned a meagre fifty rubles a month. Presumably he wanted to devote his time to his writing. His wife, who has a degree in chemistry, taught in an agricultural institute. During school holidays they are said to enjoy travelling by bicycle in rural areas and Solzhenitsyn takes a great interest in photography.

The reader who is familiar with Solzhenitsyn's work, even if he knows nothing about the author, will feel that he has read most of this information already. One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich tells us about camp life. Matrona's Home is related by an exile returning to central Russia and seeking a teaching post in the country. Zakhar-Kalita reflects his liking for cycling in the country and for photography. Cleg Kostoglotov had an operation for cancer while he was in a camp, and another in a Central Asian hospital, in between periods of exile in a Kazakh village with a name very similar to that where Solzhenitsyn lived. Very few of the known facts about the author's life are at variance with the past of the hero of The First Circle. Even minor details tally: Nerzhin read Dal's dictionary in the camp — so did Solzhenitsyn; both laid parquet floors on Moscow building sites in 1945; both are very fond of Esenin.

Solzhenitsyn's work is very firmly grounded in his own experience. Like Tolstoy, he writes only about what he knows. Many of his characters are people whom he has known, or figures compounded of a number of his acquaintances. The Kavtorang, Buinovsky, and Tsezar' are based on people he knew in

\[4\]This detail is provided by a man who knew him in the camp Boris Burkovsky, in an interview in Izvestia (January 15, 1964). Burkovsky is the Kavtorang in "One Day ..." Tsezar' is another acquaintance of his.
the camp. Shukhov seems to be a compound of a number of others. His work is weaker when he describes people and things which he has not studied at first hand. His portrait of Stalin is probably based on reliable hearsay. Stalin is successfully, and very amusingly, brought to life as a personality, but the picture loses something simply by being all black.

This confirms the opinion that Solzhenitsyn has outstanding powers of observation, but less of imagination. M. Mihajlov compares the relationship between Tolstoy and Dostoevsky and that between Solzhenitsyn and Siniavsky. Tolstoy and Solzhenitsyn examine the real world which they see. For them "the test-tube is the greatest reality." Dostoevsky and Siniavsky break out of the test-tube into the rich realms of the imagination. Mihajlov may be right in saying that when Solzhenitsyn has described all that he has experienced, he will stop writing.

Solzhenitsyn began composing poetry and plays while he was in prison. How much he carried in his head and how much he succeeded in committing to paper is unknown. Only two poems are extant from this early period. He has said that at this time he wrote a play The Feast of the Conquerors, which he has since repudiated and destroyed. One copy, however, is in official hands, and can be expected to appear eventually in the West, much

5 Ibid.


7 He said this in a discussion with the board of the secretariat of Soviet Writers on September 22, 1967. The text of this discussion is in the appendix to Cancer Ward, New York: Bantam Books, 1969, pp. 539-557.
against the author's will. A later play, *The Stag and the Camp Prostitute*, was accepted for production by the Sovremmenik theatre in 1962, but has never been staged. Solzhenitsyn has tried without success to find a producer for a third play, *The Light that is in You*, and for the screen-play, *The Tanks know the Truth*, and a publisher for two collections of stories, *The Right Hand* and *The Small Bite*. These works remain unknown except in name and unpublished both in Russia and abroad.

To turn to the works which we do know, the final draft of *One Day*... was finished in 1959. The short stories published in *Novy Mir* in 1963 were probably written in the early sixties, but this is not certain. The prose poems relate to the year 1963 or early 1964. *Zakhar-Kalita*, his only work to be published in the Soviet Union since the fall of Khrushchev, was written in 1965. Conflicting information is current on the dates of writing of *The First Circle*; the most likely dates seem to be those quoted in the Harper & Row edition — nine years from 1955 to 1964. *Cancer Ward* came later, being begun in 1963 and finished in 1966. The date of writing of *The Easter Procession* is unknown, but it is thought to be very recent. This approximate chronology is the one adhered to in this thesis.

The story of Solzhenitsyn's first introduction to the Soviet reading public is now well-known. In the autumn of 1962 he accurately gauged the political climate and decided that the time was ripe to try to publish *One Day*.... He sent the manuscript to Tvardovsky, the liberal editor of

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8The Russian title is *Olen' i shalashovka*, which has also been translated as *The Reindeer and the Little Hut*. Both translations are possible, and since the content is unknown one cannot say which is correct. However, the term shalashovka is used in *The First Circle* with the meaning of camp prostitute. This lends weight to the opinion that this is the correct translation of the play's title.

9See Solzhenitsyn's letter to the Fourth Congress of Soviet Writers,
Novy Mir who had himself touched on the camp theme in his own work. Tvardovsky was greatly impressed by Solzhenitsyn's story, and sent it to Khrushchev. Khrushchev saw it as a useful political weapon to be used against such adversaries of his de-Stalinization policies as Frol Kozlov and Mikhail Suslov. He ordered its immediate publication, uncut by the censor, though it is certain that many of those in ruling circles opposed the decision to publish it at all. The November edition of Novy Mir, which contained it, sold out in days. The story was lauded in the Soviet press and by readers in letters to the literary journals. Solzhenitsyn enjoyed immense, immediate popularity.

Tvardovsky proceeded to publish two more stories in the January 1963 edition. One Day... was immune from adverse criticism; only one critic dared to speak against it at this early stage. The new stories, however, Matronina's Home and Incident at Krechetovka Station, were attacked instead. In July For the Good of the Cause was published and gave rise to some two-sided debate of its literary merits, something almost unknown in Soviet literary criticism.

After this, Solzhenitsyn's fortunes rose and fell for about three years. After much deliberation it was decided not to award him a Lenin prize


for literature in 1964. He received high praise, however, in January of that year when Novy Mir published a long and very favourable article by one of its leading critics.\textsuperscript{12} Tvardovsky praised him again in Novy Mir's jubilee edition in January 1965. Not until a year later did another work by him see publication. This was Zakhar-Kalita, in January 1966, a very short story which passed almost unnoticed.

This is the last time a work by Solzhenitsyn has appeared in an officially sanctioned Soviet publication. By this time his prose poems had mysteriously reached the West and been published there. Official hostility to him was growing. Already in mid-1965 the KGB had raided his house and taken the manuscript of The First Circle. Nonetheless, in 1966, Tvardovsky, always anxious to promote Solzhenitsyn, accepted Cancer Ward for publication in instalments in Novy Mir, and the appearance of the first chapters was eagerly awaited in the issue of December 1967. At the last moment, when the type was already set up, its publication was stopped. Some attribute this to Brezhnev's personal intervention, others to Konstantin Fedin.\textsuperscript{13}

During 1967, while Tvardovsky and Solzhenitsyn were fighting to publish Cancer Ward, Solzhenitsyn became directly involved for the first time in bitter polemics with officialdom. He sent an outspoken open letter to the Fourth Congress of Soviet Writers on May 16, 1967, in which he vehemently attacked censorship, protested against the suppression of his work, and against a growing campaign of slander against himself.\textsuperscript{14} He mustered some

\textsuperscript{12}V. Lakshin, "Ivan Denisovich, evo druz'ia i nedruzi" Novy Mir 1, 1964, pp. 223-245.

\textsuperscript{13}For additional information, see Survey, nos. 66-69, 1968.

\textsuperscript{14}See note 9
hundred writers as signatories. Many others who supported him dared not sign the letter.\(^{15}\) Those to whom it was addressed ignored it. On September 12 he wrote to the Writers' Union protesting that no action had been taken and that the slander campaign was being stepped up.\(^{16}\) He demanded that Cancer Ward be published before a samizdat copy reached the West. This letter aroused great indignation, and Solzhenitsyn was summoned to face the secretariat of the Writers' Union on September 22.\(^{17}\) He was fiercely attacked by Fedin and a number of lesser figures. Tvardovsky supported Solzhenitsyn, but actually said little in his defence. Solzhenitsyn defended himself very ably and continued his verbal onslaught on the narrow orthodox mentality which is responsible for his persecution, but he could not, of course, persuade them to let his novel be published.

In April 1968, after Cancer Ward's publication had already been halted, Solzhenitsyn received the news that a manuscript had reached the West and that the publishers were vying for the publishing rights. He deplored this in two letters, one to all newspapers and writers, the other to Literaturnaya Gazeta.\(^{18}\) He stressed that he had given Western publishers neither the manuscript, nor his permission to publish it, and he said that publication abroad would not be so damaging to the Soviet Union if the novel had been published there first. At about the same time, The First Circle, which the author had not submitted to either Western or Soviet publishers

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\(^{15}\) The Soviet writer who recently defected to Britain, Anatol Kuznetzov, has spoken of this, Sunday Telegraph, August 10, 1969. He himself did not sign.

\(^{16}\) Cancer Ward, Bantam, op. cit., pp. xiii-xiv.

\(^{17}\) See note 9.

\(^{18}\) Cancer Ward, Bantam, op. cit., pp. 557-559.
appeared in the West, and both novels were soon on sale in Russian and in
translation in every country in the West.

It is no secret that the KGB had a major role in conveying these
manuscripts to the West. The editors of Grani made this clear in their
telegram to Tvardovsky. They received the manuscript of Cancer Ward from
Victor Louis, and the impunity with which this Soviet citizen continues to
travel and work in Russia and abroad leaves little doubt that he is a gov-
ernment agent. 19

The reason why the KGB should do this is far from clear. They could
have altered the text of the novels, but the editions current in the West
show no indication that this has been done. Grani's editors said that the
reason was to forestall, and thus block, publication in Novy Mir; but the
damage done by the publication of these works in the West can scarcely be
less great than by their prior publication in the USSR. A third possibility
is that the KGB are trying to create a pretext for arresting him. They could
charge him, as they did Siniavsky and Daniel', with sending anti-Soviet lit-
erature to the West. Yet if this was the reason, the pretext has still not
been used. So far as we know, Solzhenitsyn is still free. Furthermore, the
KGB do not usually seek pretexts for anything.

Earlier this year it was rumoured that yet another manuscript, Ark-
hipelag GULAG, had reached the West. 20 If this is true, the manuscript does
not seem to have been rushed into print with the haste which is customary
in handling Solzhenitsyn's work. This novel is said to continue the story

19 For more details about V. Louis, see Survey No. 70/71, 1969, pp.
251-260.
of The First Circle, following Nerzhin's fate after his departure from Mavrino. The present study is necessarily restricted to works published before April 1969, and therefore cannot take into account this work, which is still not available.

It is felt that, even without Arkhipelag GULAG, the material which is available provides an ample basis for a study of Solzhenitsyn's beliefs. He is mature as a man and as a writer. His beliefs are fully formulated and well-considered. Essentially the same convictions find expression, in different forms, throughout his published work. The chapters which follow examine these works in turn, with the aim of showing these beliefs.

Addendum to page 5

Two of the facts stated on this page have recently proved to be incorrect. (October 3, 1969). The Right Hand is not a collection of stories, but one story, Правая рука. This autobiographical story, which relates closely to the subject matter of Cancer Ward, was published in Novy zhurnal No. 93, December 1968.

The play The Light that is in You was published in Grani No. 71 May 1969, too late to be discussed in this thesis. The Russian title is Свет в твоем сердце, with the sub-title Свет в твоем сердце. The same copy of Grani also contains the Russian text of The Easter Procession, Пасхальный крестный ход.
CHAPTER II

One Day in the life of Ivan Denisovich

At the time of its publication in 1962 One Day... constituted the most powerful indictment of Stalin's rule yet published in the Soviet Union. It is the more impressive as an indictment for being simply a presentation of the unadorned reality of everyday camp life. Neither the narrator nor the prisoners overtly cry out against the political leaders who are the cause of their misfortune; indeed, the names of Stalin and Beria do not occur once, (the one reference to Stalin is by the name of "bat'ka usaty"). Nevertheless it is obvious that one of the author's aims is to bring to the attention of his readers a matter which they either knew little about, or preferred to forget. In this he was immediately successful. The publication of so unusual a book could not help but create a sensation among the Soviet public, politicians and foreign observers alike.

However, Solzhenitsyn has another aim, partly obscured by initial interest in the contemporary political issue, but no less important — the affirmation of human dignity, of man's capacity for enduring the harshest of conditions and remaining unscathed or even strengthened in spirit. He is very objective in this. Some men are broken by camp life. Solzhenitsyn does not hesitate to show us the depths to which such men can sink amid deprivation, but by his choice of hero our attention is focussed on those who remain unbowed. The two categories are sharply contrasted. On the one hand are the stukachi (informers), pridurki (those who find easy jobs), and those who
lick bowls and scrounge cigarette ends. To this group belong the informer Panteleev, Der and Shkuropatenko, who work in an office as supervisors, against the other zeks, and the well-fed cooks and their numerous helpers who receive extra rations for their work at the expense of the other prisoners. There is a note of scorn in the description of the cooks' well-kept hands:

Руки у повара белые, холодные, а волосатые, здоровы. 1

(p.110)

Fetiukov, whose name is almost invariably coupled with the epithet "jackal", is an example of a man reduced to the level of an animal by the severe conditions of camp life. He tries desperately and unashamedly to cadge a second bowl of soup, or a shred of tobacco. He will not pull his weight on the building site, although the team's rations depend on it, but splashes cement out of the barrow to make it lighter. With his attitude, the narrator tells us, he has no chance of surviving his twenty-five year sentence.

On the other hand are the honest rabotiagi, who consider such people beneath contempt:

людей этих рабочих считали ниже дерьма
(как и те ставили работяг). (p.103)

Fetiukov and Panteleev apart, most of Shukhov's team-mates are men who uphold the unwritten camp law — that one must not inform, cadge or look for easy jobs. Only Tsezar' stands somewhere in between the two categories.

1All quotations from the text are from A. I. Solzhenitsyn, Sobranie sochinenii, Possev-Verlag, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1966. Page numbers are appended immediately after the quotations.
Thanks to frequent food parcels he has been able to bribe the authorities into giving him an office job and extra clothes. He has learned how to live well in camp, but takes advantage of his position with only minimal hardship to the rest of his team. He always repays them for any small jobs they undertake. Most of the other prisoners we see are conscientious men who have learned how to survive in the camp and do so without loss of self-respect and with consideration for their fellow-zeks. Shukhov himself, far from being crushed or brutalized by the struggle for survival, has outgrown the bitterness he first felt and long since accepted his fate. He will not lower himself to stealing, informing, or licking bowls:

Не он не был шакал даже после восемь лет общих работ — и чем дальше, тем крепче утверждался. (p.117)

Kil'gas, too, has accepted his fate so completely that he can freely joke about it. The naval captain Buinovsky, after only three months imprisonment, is still in the process of growing accustomed to the crushing change in his social status. He is still learning how to live in the camp, but faces its rigours bravely. Fetiukov sneers at him, and assures him that the camp will break him:

"Подожди, кавторанг, восемь лет посидишь -- еще и ты собирать будешь. Гордеи тебя люди в лагерь приходили..." (pp.39-40)

But the narrator thinks this is questionable:

Фетюков по себе судит, а кавторанг-то, может, и устоит..." (p.40)

The hardened prisoner In-31 is an excellent example of a resilient spirit.

Shukhov does not know the name of this taciturn old man, but he knows that
he has served one term after another with no hope of release, but he sits erect; he will not give in:

И по рукам, большим, в трещинах и черноте, видать было, что немного выпадало ему за все годы отсиживаться придуриком. А засел-таки в нем, не примириться: трехсотграммовку свою не ложит, как все, на нечистый стол в росплесках, а -- на тряпочку стиранную. (p.113)

Aside from the three points of advice given Shukhov by his team-leader at Ust'-Izhma — never inform, lick bowls, or try to get a hospital bed — the zeks have other peculiar standards of behavior of their own. For example, one spits one's fishbones onto the table, then sweeps the pile onto the floor. It is bad manners to spit them straight onto the floor. The camp caste system is rigid. Not only is there a clear-cut distinction between pridurki, stukachi and rabotiagi, but also within the working team, each man has his own unofficial rank in relation to the others:

Снаружи бригада вся в одних черных бушлатах и в номерах одинаковых, а внутри широко неравно -- ступеньками идет. Буйновского не посадишь с миской сидеть, а и Шухов не всякую работу возьмет, есть пониже. (p.14)

The very existence of such a hierarchy, and particularly of the codes of behavior is proof that the majority of zeks recognize the need for them, that life in camp is not a free-for-all. That man can observe standards of any kind under such conditions is a high tribute to his endurance. In this respect One Day ... is an optimistic book, concentrating as it does on man's ability to make the best of adverse circumstances. Nearly all the comparisons made in the book are with worse situations. Shukhov stresses how good life in this camp is, compared with Ust'-Izhma, where the teams had to work into the night to fulfil their norms.
Solzhenitsyn makes us understand a completely new scale of values. The things a free man takes for granted here assume immense importance. Shukhov waxes lyrical about a pair of boots he once owned, so different from the motor-tyre sandals he had grown accustomed to. A hacksaw blade, or a piece of string are invaluable to him. The high point of a zek's day is his evening meal, a bowl of skilly. If he should be lucky enough to receive two bowls, it is a day to be thankful for. At such a meal, Ivan Denisovich is a happy man, emboldened and at peace with the world:

Сейчас он думает: переживем! Переживем все, даст Бог, кончится! (p.111)

By showing us this new scale of values and another code of behavior Solzhenitsyn emphasizes the isolation of the prison world from the world of the free. Not for nothing does he describe the prison system in later works as "arkhipelag GULAG". The camp in the story is unnamed; there are no towns nearby; not even a river is named. It is impossible to locate the camp. It is just somewhere in the vastness of Siberia. The zeks have no contact with the free workers, and know no more of the outside world than their twice-yearly, heavily censored letters tell them. Shukhov, after eight years in camps, cannot conceive of ever living outside a camp again. He fully expects to receive another ten or twenty-five year sentence when this one expires. Many things he hears about life outside are now beyond his comprehension.

He feels he no longer has anything in common with his family:

Сейчас с Кильгасом, латышом, больше об чем говорить, чем с домашними. (p.32)

His points of reference in comparisons are no longer in the outside world, but in Ust'-Izhma, his first camp.

This novel, then, is set in a world apart, and at first sight its
limits appear very narrow — one day, one camp and one man. However, the
title of the work, and its apparent intention, are deceptively modest, for
Solzhenitsyn moves outside these narrow confines (as he does in his longer
works) to depict other aspects of Soviet life about which little is known in
the West. From Shukhov's wife's rare letters we learn of life in his na-
tive village of Temgeniovo. Radio, which was unknown there ten years before,
now blares in every house. Half the men have not returned from the war.
The kolkhoz is run by the women who ran it in 1930 because the young people
prefer factory work in the city. The ex-soldiers who have returned shun the
kolkhoz, and make their fortunes by stencilling designs on carpets. In Tiur-
rin's story we see something of the anti-kulak campaign of the early '30's
— Tiurin was dismissed from the army as the son of a kulak — and of the
vagrant bands of besprizornye into whose care Tiurin entrusts his young
brother, later wishing he had joined them himself. We learn of the successive
waves of purges — the Kirov wave, which followed the liquidation of the ku-
laks in 1935, the army purge of 1937, in which the regimental commander who
dismissed Tiurin from the army was himself shot. In the paragraph on Gop-
chik's imprisonment we learn something of the activities of Bendera's Uk-
rainian partisans in the war.

In connection with the novel's wider import, some discussion of the
question of the generalized hero is necessary. How far is Shukhov an in-
dividual, and how far is he representative of the mass of Russian peasan-
try? His name and his background, the circumstances of his imprisonment,
his life in the camp itself, are of course general features linking him with
millions of peasants who shared the same fate. N. Sergov-and-sev, however,
evidently well grounded in the tradition of the Soviet positive hero, says
that so far as his character is concerned Shukhov is not generalized, and he condemns Solzhenitsyn for not choosing a typical Russian peasant. The Soviet people, he says, have always fought injustice:

If this were true, then one could say that the most prominent feature of Shukhov's character — his passivity — has no general application, but there seems to be no historical basis for this assertion. Sergovantsev gives no examples, presumably expecting his reader to find his own in the October revolution, but, as we know, the part played by the peasants in 1917 was minimal. In the Tolstoyan view of the peasant as the upholder of the philosophy of non-resistance to evil, Shukhov certainly appears typical and generalized, though one should be chary of placing Solzhenitsyn too firmly in the Tolstoyan tradition. Is Shukhov really submitting because it is in his nature to eschew violent resistance, or because of the evident futility and the dangers of violent action?

Shukhov certainly has much in common with the peasant figures of nineteenth century literature. He has the qualities Tolstoy gave Karataev — his passive acceptance of suffering accompanied by resistance in spirit, an adamant refusal to be debased by it. He is considerate of others: he will not let his wife send him food parcels because the family needs the food;

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3 For a detailed comparison of Karataev and Shukhov, see Part II of the article "Solzhenitsyn i dukhovnaya missia pisatel'ia" by D. Blagov (pseudonym), Grani, No. 65, pp. 100-128.
he shares with Aliosha the food he has earned from Tsezar; he is careful not to drop ash on the captain's bunk; while building the wall at the powerstation he takes the harder outside wall "чтоб Сеньке легче было." (p. 72). He has compassion; he feels pity even for Fetiukov, who is so obviously crushed by his environment. He has modesty and humility: he wants to ask Tiurin where the team is being sent to work, but "болезно перебивать его высокую думу" (p.36) when he takes Tsezar's kasha he is afraid to interrupt the latter's learned conversation about an Eisenstein film. He is tolerant of all, regardless of nationality, religion and background. There are two Estonians in his team:

А эстонцев сколь Шуков ни видал -- плохих людей ему не попадалось. (p.39)

Kil'gas, the Lett, is popular:

Кильгас без шутки слова не знает. За то его воя бригада любит. (p.43)

Shukhov likes Aliosha, and the Baptists in general:

То же горячи: богу молились, кому они мешали? (p.123)

If one does not accept Sergovantsev's assertion that the peasants have always fought injustice, but accepts Tolstoy's view of the mass of peasants as innocent, uncomplaining victims of their rulers' wrongs, then Solzhenitsyn's hero is certainly generalized to a large degree.

The close resemblance between Shukhov and the peasants of nineteenth century literature should not, however, mislead one into the view that Solzhenitsyn's portrayal is an idealization of the peasant in the sentimental manner of Nikolai Nekrasov's virtuous peasant martyr. For all his good qualities, Shukhov is no saint. He is always ready to resort to low cunning in his relations with other zeks, and on one occasion he snatches a tray from a man who has every right to it, throwing him against a post in the
effort to seize it. This apart, Shukhov's tolerance for all races and classes seems to indicate that this work is an illustration of what man can endure, be he peasant, naval officer, soldier, Ukrainian, Estonian or Lett. Solzhenitsyn is above all a humanist, not a eulogist of any one class or creed.

Any literary hero must be generalized to some extent, so that a reader can identify himself with him. As shown above, many of Shukhov's qualities are general features, essentially the same as those of Tvardovsky's Tiorkin, though the latter is more obviously a positive hero. However, Shukhov has enough individual features to make him a credible person in his own right, whereas Tvardovsky's hero is not intended to be more than a generalization. Among Shukhov's more eccentric quirks is a dislike of loose fish-eyes in his soup. He will eat them if they are still in their sockets, but leaves them if they are floating separately. From long habit he always removes his hat to eat. His attitude to his work is one of his individual features not shared by his team-mates. At the power-station he throws himself into it with a will, oblivious to everything but the cement and the blocks, and takes a pride in his work.

The attitude of Shukhov and his team-mates to their work attracted much attention among Soviet critics. V. Lakshin says that this is the most poetic, inspired description of manual labour in Soviet literature. It is ironic that Soviet critics should find their finest eulogy of work in a

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2 V. Lakshin, "Ivan Denisovich, evo druž'ia i nedrugii", Novy Mir, No. 1, 1964, pp. 233.
book about a concentration camp, but this view is widely held. The passage in question is undoubtably an engrossing piece of writing. The reader is caught up in the tireless rhythm of Shukhov's movements as he lays the concrete; judges the size and shape of each block and places it in position. T. Bradley draws a comparison between this passage, showing Shukhov's absorption in his work, and the passage in *Anna Karenina* where Levin goes mowing. There is much in common, but it is important to contrast the reasons why Shukhov and Levin display such enthusiasm for their work.

Levin is consciously seeking harmony with nature and his environment, and the sense of oneness with one's fellow workers which sustained physical effort brings. Shukhov may experience these feelings, but they themselves are not the motive behind his extraordinary zeal. The most important motive is provided by the need to keep warm in the cruel frost. On the steppe there is no shelter from the wind until the zeks have built it. Until then muscular exertion is the only way of keeping warm. One gang is sent to a new site, the socialist community settlement, where building has not begun and there are no walls to provide shelter. Before they start building they have to fence in the site. The ground is so hard that they cannot dig holes for the posts. They are forbidden to light fires to thaw the soil and warm themselves by. The only way to keep warm is to keep on swinging a pickaxe uselessly against the unrelenting ground.

Another powerful incentive to work is occasioned by the insidious social structure of the camp. The gang's rations depend upon its fulfilling the work quota. If one man slack, the whole gang goes short; this is why Fetikov is so despised. As the author tells us, a zek's worst enemy is

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Thus the zeks feel obliged to work hard as each man's rations depend on the next man's work. It is, after all, only on the site, with the team, that Shukhov works hard. He shows no enthusiasm for washing the guard-house floor. Here his philosophy is —

Для людей делаешь -- качество дай, для дурака делаешь -- дай показуху. (p.13)

But on the site this maxim ceases to apply. He does not know whom he is working for and does not think about it. Here he has to keep warm, and earn the team's rations.

A further reason for working hard becomes clear when Shukhov is sentenced to three day's penalty with work:—

С выводом на работу -- это еще полкарцера, и горячее дадут, и задумываться некогда. Полный карцер -- это когда без вывода. (p.8)

Hard physical work keeps one's mind from being active, and it is only when one is absolutely absorbed in one's work that the hours fly by, as they do for Shukhov on the building site. Once at work with bricks and mortar Shukhov is a happy man, anxious to do a good job, taking a pride in his completed work. In this respect Shukhov is different from his team-mates.

Most of them work hard, because they have to, but Shukhov's enthusiasm is
extraordinary. They do not stay on the site for half an hour after the hooter in order to finish the work. A reason for Shukhov's exceptional devotion to his job is put forward by M. Mihajlov. In Tengeniovo before the war Shukhov had been a builder by trade. The camp work represents to him an aspect of his life in freedom.

Various analogies can be drawn between certain aspects of One Day's work theme and Russian life outside the camp. The gang working in the Socialist Community Settlement have to wire themselves in before they begin building:

...предде чем что там делать, надо ямы накопать, столбы ставить и колючую проволоку от себя самых натягивать -- чтоб не убежать. А потом строить. (p.7)

Buinovsky is sentenced to ten days' solitary confinement in the BUR (barak usilenovo rezhima). Shukhov and his team know exactly what conditions are like there. They built it, and now one of their own team is to be punished there. Is one to infer from these ironic touches, especially the first, that the builders of communism on a nationwidescale must be forced to wall themselves in so that they cannot escape? It may be unfair to impute such an extreme opinion to Solzhenitsyn. He draws no conclusions; he simply presents the facts and lets the reader draw his own, but the facts point to this analogy and many Soviet readers must have observed it. The zeks are working against themselves and their friends — a theme Solzhenitsyn expands in his later works.

In another instance the Soviet reader familiar with Dostoevsky will be reminded of Raskol'nikov's dream in Crime and Punishment. The weak

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Buinovsky, unused to camp life, struggling manfully to keep up with the pace of work, recalls to Shukhov a horse he once had:

Такой мерин у Шухова был. Шухов-то его прибережал, а потом подрезался он. И шкуру с него сняли. (p.81)

As the horse in Raspol'nikov's dream is symbolic of Russia's insulted and injured, so here the captain and the horse to which he is compared are representative of the downtrodden of Soviet society driven to death by their cruel masters.

These are issues which go beyond the confines of the camp to extend to the whole of Russia, and outside the limited time-span of one day, even of the whole Stalin era, to link the novel with the nineteenth century tradition. A feature which reinforces this link is the strong Christian spirit of much of the story, embodied above all in the Baptist, Aliosha. With his meek, obedient acceptance of hardship he is in many ways reminiscent of Alei in The House of the Dead, Shukhov admires his and the other Baptists' ability to accept their fate, not only without bitterness, but with joy in the thought that they are suffering for the sake of Christ.

Shukhov admires Aliosha, but does not really resemble him. He accepts suffering not for the sake of Christ, nor from any need for it. There is no Dostoevskian theme here of expiation of sin through suffering. Shukhov has no sin on his conscience to merit ten years in Siberia. He accepts it because he has to, because there can be no escape. He knows that he was unjustly convicted, but has outgrown his initial bitterness, although he is still mildly indignant when he thinks about it:

"Вишь, Алешика, у тебя как-то ладно получается: Христос тебе сидеть велел, за Христа ты и сел. А я за что сел? За то, что в сорок первом к войне не приготовились, за это? А я при чем?" (p.130)
The Christian faith is deep-rooted in the Russian peasantry, and this is frequently brought out in the story. The villagers of Tengenio-vo learned of the outbreak of war from the people who had been to mass in Polomnia Shukhov's wife used to send him parcels at Easter. The name of God is often on his lips:

...слава тебе, господи, еще один день прошел! (p.127)

But for all he has inherited and absorbed from his environment, for all his tolerance of the Christian faith and respect for its ideals, Shukhov himself has no faith in God, as we see when Aliosha asks him why he does not pray:

"Потому, Алешка, что молитвы те, как заявления, или не доходят, или 'в жалобе отказать'." (p.128)

He is sceptical towards Aliosha's unquestioning faith. He opposes his dicta in the most mundane terms. He cites the example of the lecherous local priest in Polomnia and tells him that no amount of prayer will shorten his sentence. With his pragmatic nature, he does not understand Aliosha's reply:

"А об этом и молиться не надо!" (p.130)

Shukhov is a simple man with the Christian qualities of peasant heroes of earlier literature, but without the Christian faith itself.

In two places in this story Solzhenitsyn touches briefly on a theme which occupies him in his later work — the paradoxical freedom of prison. In spite of all the outward restrictions on a prisoner's activity, the zeks have some liberty 'free' people do not enjoy. Here at least they can think what they like, and even say what they like with impunity. In one hut a man makes a derogatory remark about Stalin in a loud voice. The author
The second instance arises in the course of half a page devoted to the student of literature Vdovushkin, now a zek posing as a medical assistant. He uses his spare time in the infirmary to write poetry.

We shall see this question examined more closely in the long novels, particularly in *The First Circle*.

Unexpectedly, in these surroundings, Solzhenitsyn makes two characters discuss the aims of art. In the office, Tsezar' and zek Kh-123 are talking about Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*. Tsezar' is very impressed by the artistic merits of the film. Kh-123 pours scorn on its artistic merits and draws attention to its ideology, which he finds repugnant.

Tsezar replies —

"Но слушайте, искусство -- это не что, а как." (p.64)

to which Kh-123's forceful answer is —

"Нет уж, к чертовой матери ваше 'как', если оно добрых чувств во мне не пробудит!" (p.64)

This is probably Solzhenitsyn's own opinion. If so, it is one of the few points on which he holds the official view. Certainly, little of his art is for art's sake alone. In art it is the underlying idea which is all-important. The quality of the medium is important only with reference to its effectiveness in conveying the idea.

It is nevertheless undeniable that the impact of what is said in this story is much the greater because of the way in which it is said.
Solzhenitsyn's artistic method in this story is characterized above all by understatement and extreme restraint. A lesser writer might have tried to shock his reader in the easier and more obvious way — by choosing to show him a day marked by beatings and killings in a camp where the guards are merciless. Solzhenitsyn, on the contrary, chooses an ordinary day on which no atrocities occur. We are told briefly that such things do sometimes happen, we are told of the BUR and of the sadist Volkovoi, but these matters are not dwelt on and the one day of the story is free of them. In Shukhov's eyes it is an exceptional day, filled with outstanding successes —

Засыпал Шухов вполне удовлетворенный. На дню у него выдалось сегодня много удачи: в карцер не посадили, на Сосногородок не выгнали, в обед он заказал кашу, бригадир хорошо закрыл процентовку, стену Шухов клал весело, с ножовкой на шмоне не попался, подработал вечером у Цезаря и табачку купил. И не заболел, перемогся.

Прошел день, ничем не омраченный, почти счастливый. (p.133)

This closing passage is typical of the irony of the novel. Other instances can be quoted, one concerning the prisoner Iu-81, who has been in camps for decades:

На голове его головой стричь давно было нечего — волоса все вылезли от хорошей жизни. (p.113)

But in several cases, as in the closing lines of the story, quoted above, what is ironic to the reader is to a zek an ingenuous statement of fact.

As has been pointed out earlier, Solzhenitsyn makes clear that a zek lives by a different scale of values. A man who has forgotten what it is to live outside a camp can call such a day праздник without a tinge of irony.

One of the more striking features of One Day... is Solzhenitsyn's use of the Russian language and his original style of narrative. It is a
curious mixture of third person narrative and the *skaz* method. The narrator, with his peasant speech, is clearly not Solzhenitsyn, nor is he Shukhov, of whom he speaks in the third person, but he and Shukhov are so close that it is often difficult to say which is speaking or thinking. The Tolstoyan technique of the stream of consciousness is fundamental to the story. Shukhov is not the narrator, but the story is told almost entirely in the way Shukhov thinks. The narrator is outside the action, but he sometimes intrudes into it as though he were a character in the story: —

А МИГ — НАШ! ПОКА НАЧАЛЬСТВО РАЗБЕРЁТСЯ, ПРИТЯНИСЬ, ГДЕ ПОТЕПЛЕЕ, СИДЬ, СИДИ, ЕЩЁ НАЛОМАЙ СПИНУ. (p.37)

The line of narrative closely follows Shukhov's line of thought. Thus, epithets indicating Shukhov's feelings are inserted in mid-sentence in the narrative: —

...идет, сучье вымя, но силки наклонит... (p.75)

...сидит, горяч, перед огнем, набок голову, склоня.

В инженеря лезет, свинячья морда! (p.76)

This is one feature of Solzhenitsyn's prose which brings it closer to speech. Actual dialogue does not constitute a large proportion of the text, but in many ways the narrative is closer to the spoken language than to conventional prose. Slang and colloquial forms of words abound. Words like брыхо, морда, башка, роха, and their diminutives far outnumber their more literary equivalents. A wealth of diminutives are used; — печевка, печурка, начальничек, хлебец, больничка, молоточек, табачинку, тонюсенький. Other features of peasant language are the double adjective — слепенькая, слепенькая — the double preposition — на
чего на голову, the liberal use of particles and gerunds, the archaisms - око, месяц, (used as moon). Popular sayings are found both in the dialogue and in the narrative: Кто кого сможет, тот того и гложет; В январе солнечно корове бок согрело. Possessive adjectives formed from nouns - бригадирова, кильгасова, цезарева are common. Words like кабы, ихний characteristic of rural colloquial speech occur frequently.

As in speech, sentence structure is often elliptical. Meaning is conveyed with the bare minimum of words. Sentences are short, often only one or two words. Finite verbs are used very sparingly: —

Пошел себе Дар по полю, съежился. В кантору, греется. Неприятно ему небось. (p.79)

Where possible, constructions involving если бы are avoided; the shorter construction using the imperative is used instead: —

И хоть спину тут в работе переломи, хоть животом ляжь -- из земли еды не выколотишь, больше, чем начальник тебе выпишет, не получишь. (p.56)

чтобы, too, is often omitted where a plain infinitive will suffice: —

И он сунул руку в брючный карман -- проверить, что там пусто...

(p.97)

The personal pronoun is often left out before a verb, the subject of which is clear:

Носилки схватил -- и по трапу. (p.83)

Потянулся сунуть полпайки в тумбочку, но опять раздумал: вспомнил, что дневальные уже два раза за воровство биты. (p.21)

Conventional syntax is frequently ignored, and replaced by parataxis: —

Завстоловой -- откормленный гад, голова как тыква, в плечах аршин. (p.106)

Урна он и есть, статья уголовная, но меж других статей навесили ему 53-14... (p.123)
The clumsier equivalents of the verb 'to be' - ЯВЛЯТЬСЯ, ПРЕДСТАВЛЯТЬ собой - so common in educated and official language are rarely, if ever, used. One notable innovation is that the mixture of camp slang vocabulary, peasant sayings, and neologisms of Solzhenitsyn's own invention, is sprinkled with obscenities which have never appeared in print in Russia until now. In the context of harsh camp life it would seem unnatural if they were avoided.

This style of narrative is ideally suited to the subject matter of the story and to the expression of its central idea. The bare, laconic language, the sustained understatement both in selection of detail and in expression of feeling, conveys excellently the mood of acceptance of fate, and above all the lack of bitterness with which Shukhov views his life. Whatever Kh-123 may think about art, the medium here is a vital part of the message.

Blagov, in his article on Solzhenitsyn, briefly reviews history and concludes that the Stalin era is the very nadir of human history. Stalin becomes the devil, forcing men to surrender their souls to him:

Культ личности, это то, о чем Христос предупреждал как о единственном, чего следует бояться --- убийство души: "Не бойтесь убивающих тело, души же не могущих убить, а бойтесь более того, кто может и душу и тело погубить в геенне." 8

Solzhenitsyn would doubtless agree that society both inside and outside the camps forces men to sell their souls to the devil in order to survive. We

8 Blagov, " Solzhenitsyn i dukhovnaya missia pisatelia", Grani, No. 64, 1967, pp. 116-149.
see it still more in *The First Circle*, in prison and in freedom. However, whereas Blagov takes the view that most Russians did succumb, and were spiritually maimed by such pressures, Solzhenitsyn does not. In *One Day* ... and the works which will be discussed in the following chapters the reader's attention is centred on those who resist these pressures and retain their moral integrity. This is some indication of Solzhenitsyn's faith in man. As a tribute to man's capacity for physical and spiritual endurance, this story is fully successful.
CHAPTER III

THREE STORIES

During 1963 three more stories by Solzhenitsyn were published in Novy Mir. In the January edition Incident at Krechetovka Station and Matriona's Home appeared, and in the July edition came For the Good of the Cause. The stories deal with widely varied subject matter, and all three are far from the camp setting of One Day... but, like this story they relate closely to Solzhenitsyn's own experience. The background to Matriona's Home reflects his own aspirations on his return from exile, though the plot may be the product of his imagination. Krechetovka Station, he tells us, describes what he saw during a fortnight's journey to the Gor'ky region after a junior officers' training course in early 1942. Only the material for For the Good of the Cause is of uncertain origin.

In spite of the variety of background and subject matter of Solzhenitsyn's first four published works there are affinities of theme. One Day... showed man's capacity for remaining human in degrading conditions and at the same time provided a picture of the Russian peasant. Matriona's Home does both of these in a different setting. Taken together, the four works provide a good idea of the author's notion of good and evil. Matriona's Home and For the Good of the Cause depict, in different circum-

stances, simple clashes of right and wrong. In both cases, "wrong" is the rapacious, self-seeking mentality, and in both cases wrong wins. "Right" is humanity and consideration in one's dealings with others. For the Good of the Cause and Krechetovka Station both deal with the educated Soviet city-dweller, a very different kind of person from Shukhov and Matriona, but the moral standards by which Solzhenitsyn invites us to judge them as people, remain the same.

Solzhenitsyn's heroes are, for the most part, ordinary, insignificant people, often the oppressed of Soviet society, powerless to better their situation. In this connection E. Fojtikova makes a valid comparison with L. N. Tolstoy:

A further similarity relates to Tolstoy's philosophy of history: the ordinary man, gifted with natural intelligence, as a measure of the epoch, a judge of history.

It is, of course, laudable in Soviet official eyes to have ordinary people as literary heroes, but it is the passivity of Solzhenitsyn's ordinary people which has met with the disapproval of Russian critics. He refuses to conform to the tradition of the positive hero. Shukhov, Fiodor Mikheevich, and later Nerzhin and Kostoglotov, all recognize evil, and resist it in as much as they refuse to succumb to it in themselves; but to have them fight it and defeat it, as the canons of socialist realism and the tradition of the positive hero require, is to Solzhenitsyn unrealistic, especially in the circumstances in which his heroes are placed.

Matriona seems to know by instinct the morally right way to act,

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but is so good, so simple, that far from resisting evil, she appears not even to see it in others. This is a rather sentimental portrait of a kind of person the author clearly regards with admiration and love. Her virtues consist principally in _serdechnost_ and _prostota_, terms which are somewhat inadequately conveyed by their equivalents "warm-heartedness" and "simplicity", and in spontaneous denial of self. To Solzhenitsyn she is the embodiment of the beauty of pure goodness. She accepts without complaint the impositions made upon her by her neighbours. Despite her failing health she helps them to plough their land, and dig potatoes, and she works without pay for the _kolhoz_. Although her death is accidental, the image of the suffering innocent dying for the sake of others links this story with the long tradition of _konoticism_ in Russian literature, which goes back to the tale of the martyrdom of Boris and Gleb.

Most of the other characters in the story contrast sharply with Matriona. Partly because of their failings, the Soviets attacked this story as a very negative picture of rural Russian life and of the people, and they condemned Matriona as an old-fashioned idealization of the passive _pravednik_ (righteous person). There is some truth in this. Matriona is certainly a more idealized figure than Ivan Denisovich. However, Soviet commentators omit to point out that her qualities are precisely those which are desirable in a communist state. She is a socialist - the only one in the story. She will leave her own work at any time to go and assist a neighbour, for no payment or reward. She alone attaches no importance to possessions. The other characters avidly accumulate and horde material goods and despise her for not doing so, just as they despise her for helping others without payment:
Solzhenitsyn condemns the selfish, anti-socialist, (and incidentally, un-Christian) attitude of Matriona's neighbours, without once using these epithets, on more than one occasion:

Что доброе нашим, народным или моим, странно называет язык имущество наше. И его-то терять считается перед людьми постыдно и глупо. (p.228)

Matriona's goodness is set most forcefully against the greed of her neighbours and relatives at her funeral. The laments are really thinly-disguised accusations and counter-accusations by the two factions who are fighting over the rest of Matriona's hut and her property. Ties of blood mean nothing to her sisters. Faddei's former engagement to Matriona has no meaning for him. The only real concern the two parties have for the dead woman lies in her possessions. Faddei becomes almost a symbol of destruction. His last respects to Matriona's remains are paid with indecent haste, as he is anxious to salvage the remaining logs from the hut and lay claim to the rest of her property. Lust for possessions has become the main driving force in his life, and it is a powerful motivation in many of the others. As he and his accomplices dismantle Matriona's room —

Все работали как безумные, в том ожесточении какое бывает у людей, когда пахнет большими деньгами или ждут большого угощения. (p.219)

3 All quotations in this chapter are taken from A. I. Solzhenitsyn, Sobranie sochinenii, Frankfurt-am-Main: Possev-Verlag,1966. Page numbers follow immediately after the quotations.
Matrona's only real friend, Hasha, comes to tell Ignatich of the accident, and gives voice to expressions of grief, but it soon becomes apparent that even she has a material interest in the proceedings. She has come to collect the grey shawl Matrona promised her. Ignatich is also indignant at the hard-hearted abruptness of the railway officials who come to the hut after the accident. They behave as if they were about to make an arrest, refuse to explain what has happened, and consider the two deaths a trifle:—

"Разворотило их всех. Не соберешь."
А другой добавил:
"Да это мелочь. Двадцать первый скорый чуть с рельс не сошел, вот было бы."

(p.222)

Only Paddei's daughter, Matrona's foster-daughter, Kira is genuinely grief-stricken. She alone feels some responsibility for her death on her conscience.

This is one of the most personal of Solzhenitsyn's works. It is one of the few in which direct first person narrative is used. The author makes little attempt to disguise himself beyond giving the narrator the name Ignatich and having him return from exile in 1953 instead of 1956. It seems clear that, in all his tastes, Ignatich is Solzhenitsyn. He loves the remote, backward villages of European Russia, with their quaint names:—

А дальше целый край идет деревень: Часлицы
Овинцы, Спудни, Жевертни, Шестимирово -- все
поглущено, от железной дороги подале, к озерам.
Ветром успокоения потянуло на меня от этих
названий. Они обещали мне кондовую Россию.

(p.197)

Ignatich seeks work in as rustic a setting as possible, far from the railway line. He delights in sitting in the silence of a woodland glade where there are no people, no radios, no sound except the wind in the trees. He loves the slow, lilting peasant speech which recalls to him the Russia of fairy-tales:—
The villagers' speech is often rendered phonetically. The narrator feels a deep attachment to things truly Russia. He listens to a programme of Glinka on the radio. Matrona hears it and weeps for joy - "A вот это-по-нашему..." проспептала она. (p. 211) Matrona's half-pagan, half-religious beliefs, like Ivan Denisovich's sayings and his comments about God, reveal the author's interest in folk-lore. She has complete faith in a number of superstitions, and at the same time has icons on the walls, by which she sets lamps on feast days. Premonitions are also significant in this story. Matrona's fear of trains pre-figures the nature of her death. Her death and the destruction of her house are seen as the final fulfilment of Faddei's curse on it. The narrator is happy in Matrona's house. He even grows used to the rustling of the cockroaches —

...ибо в нем не было ничего злого, в нем не было лжи. Шуршание их была их жизнь. (p. 201)

Nostalgia is, of course, implicit in much of this. On occasion it becomes overt, as when Matrona tells Ignatich of her youth and her love for Faddei, in the summer of 1914:

И -- песню, песню под небом, каких теперь, при механизмах, не споешь. (p. 214)

Rarely does Solzhenitsyn tell us so subjectively of his likes and dislikes, or present us with such a paragon of goodness as here. Matrona is completely free from sin:

Только грехов у нее было меньше, чем у ее колченогой кошки. Та -- мышей душила. (p. 210)
Being subjective, and to some extent nostalgic, Solzhenitsyn left himself open to attack by Soviet critics, to whom subjectivity and nostalgia are anathema. Besides this, the story is not a flattering picture of the Russian people, nor of Soviet society. The majority of the characters are self-seeking and greedy for property. But although Matrona is alone in the story, the rather moralistic closing lines give us to understand that she is anything but unique in the country as a whole. She is to a large degree a generalization:

Все мы хиля рядом с ней и не поняли, что есть она тот самый праведник, без которого, по пословице, не стоит село.
Ни город.
Ни вся земля наша.

(p. 231)

The background to the story presents a dreary picture of village life. The populace still live in wooden huts, and are obliged to steal peat in order to heat them, for the peat is for the management, the teachers, the doctors, not for the ordinary villagers of Tal'novo. The disappearance of horses has increased their hardship. They have no tractors with which to plough their own land, so have to pull the plough themselves. The village produces very little food. The inhabitants have to go to the nearest town for it. There is corruption in the local school, which awards high marks for the sake of its name, and the bureaucracy is heartless in sending Matrona from one office to the next in search of her pension.

The substance of this depressing picture, indeed the very tone of it, re-echoes Tiutchev's famous poem, and the figure of Matrona parallels the disguised, humiliated Christ of the poem:

Эти бедные селенья,
Эта скудная природа —
Край родной долготерпенья,
Край ты русского народа!
In Incident at Krechetovka Station Solzhenitsyn portrays a Soviet citizen of very different background and upbringing from Ivan Denisovich and Matrona. These were uneducated country people, one middle-aged, one elderly, with no interest in politics. They were people to whom the socialist principle of self-abnegation came naturally although they knew little of formal communism. Both were individuals, but both were representative of millions who shared the same sort of life. The hero of Krechetovka Station is different, but, like them, representative of a section of Soviet society. In Vasili Vasilich Zotov we see an educated city-dweller of the younger generation, which has lived most of its life under Soviet power and accepted official dogma.

In many ways Zotov is an admirable character. He is earnest, sincerely devoted to the cause, and prepared to die to save it from collapse at the hands of Hitler. He remains faithful to his wife in spite of the temptations which are put in his way. He is ashamed because he is not at the front, and for this reason becomes doubly conscientious about his work at the station, as if by working harder there he compensates for not fighting. He is devoutly patriotic, willing to sacrifice his life and even his

4 F. Tiutchev, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, ed. P.V. Rykov, St. Petersburg, 1913.
family for the sake of his country and the party:—

Уцелеть для себя — не имело смысла. Уцелеть для жены, для будущего ребенка — и то было не непременно. Но, если бы немцы дошли до Байкала, а Зотов чудом бы еще был жив, -- он знал, что ушел бы пешком через Маньчжурию, или в Индию, или за океан -- но для того только ушел бы, чтобы там виться в какие-то окопы части и вернуться с оружием в Россию и в Европу. (p.140)

He is basically a timid person, over-awed by the battle-hardened troops who pass through the station on their way to the rear from German encirclements, but friendly and open too. He immediately likes the gentle, modest professional actor Tveritinov, and is soon talking unconstrainingly to him about himself, his past, and the course of the war.

However, his mode of thought has been completely determined by his upbringing. When Tveritinov refers to the year 1937, thinking of the great purge, Zotov at once assumes that he is talking about the Spanish Civil War. He has complete faith in Stalin and is afraid to think thoughts which reflect badly on the leader, who, he believes, must be in full control of the situation:—

Нась Zotov преступлением считал в себе даже пробегание этих дрожащих мыслей. Это была хула, это было оскорбление всемогущему Отцу и Учителю, который всегда на месте, все предвидит, примет все меры и не допустит. (p.139)

He thinks that Stalin should give an order that lazy, inefficient men like Sergeant Samorukov should be shot. He utters commonplaces about the theatre as education and loves Gorky's plays. He is shocked when old Kordobailo defends the starving окруженцы (troops who have been in German encirclements) who stole flour. He spends his evenings reading Das Kapital so as to become invincible in ideological arguments.
The central point of the story is the way in which Zotov at once becomes suspicious of Tveritinov when the latter forgets about the renaming of Tsaritsyn. He is convinced that he is a spy, possibly an emigre in the pay of the Germans. He regrets that he forgot himself and spoke freely with this stranger, and has him arrested. Suspicion is, of course, universal, and often encouraged in any country in wartime. One has only to read Robert Graves's *Goodbye to All That* to see how absurdly suspicion can be aroused in wartime Britain. But from what we see of Zotov's character it seems clear that he has been conditioned to react in this way even in peacetime. In the thirties people were constantly warned to look out for saboteurs and enemies of the people and compelled to report their suspicions. Suspicion in itself was enough to send a man to prison. In this case the man in question is an *okruzhnents*. The authorities advise extreme caution in dealing with these men, especially when they are alone. Tveritinov has little chance of escaping punishment.

Zotov experiences pangs of conscience afterwards because he is dimly aware of the fate that awaits Tveritinov, whether he is innocent or guilty. He himself has condemned a man, about whose guilt he is far from certain, to prison. Long years of party training have taught him that it is his duty to the party and the fatherland to report anything slightly suspicious. When his suspicions are aroused he fulfils his duty without hesitation. Thus one part of his conscience, his party conscience, is clear:—

Все сделано было, кажется, так, как надо.
Так, да не так...  

---

But when suspected guilt is construed by the authorities as undoubted guilt and punished as such the individual who declares his suspicions becomes as responsible for the fate of the suspect as a judge, hence Zotov's uneasiness. He is realizing that one's conscience as a party member and one's conscience as a human being are very different things. They are often irreconcilable.

This is the moral problem at the centre of the story. Solzhenitsyn is attacking the inhumanity of a system which demands that one repres human warmth and sympathy in the name of a concept so artificial as "partiina-ya sovest". Zotov has done his duty as a communist, but cannot escape the feeling that he has betrayed a friend. He did, after all, thoroughly enjoy his conversation with this gentle, intelligent man. Tveritinov showed him photographs of his family, and showed that he trusted him by his comments about 1937, and even more by asking him the pre-revolutionary name of Stalin-grad. Until this disastrous slip Zotov genuinely warmed towards him. He is very embarrassed about putting him under arrest. After the arrest, his telephone calls to the NKVD show that he is concerned about his fate, and his conscience will not let him forget him.

The story contains various comments about the mismanagement of the war. Zotov sees numerous deficiencies in the transport system, and is eager to write a report about them. Tveritinov's military training has been appallingly scanty. It has lasted only a few days; they practised bayonet fighting with sticks; they practised throwing wooden hand-grenades and were only issued with rifles, of 1891 model, on the march. Besides this there is considerable mismanagement of provisioning of troop trains and escorts on freight trains. Sergeant Dygin has to steal food to feed his men. The okruzhentsy have to steal flour. There is heavy irony in Solzhenitsyn's
manner of expressing Zotov's trust in Stalin's war leadership in the lines already quoted on page 39.

The lack of official war news is damaging. Zotov has a vague idea of the speed of the German advance because he has orders not to send trains beyond certain points, but he is still sufficiently ill-informed to cherish absurd hopes:

И когда был не на службе, а спал на квартире, все равно просыпался в шесть утра, томясь надеждою, что сегодня-то загрежет победная сводка. (p.139)

Because there is no official news, those who care, like Zotov and Polina are made all the more anxious about the war. Everybody else is all the more indifferent. The majority are unaware how desperate the situation is. The local people blithely continue to enjoy the windfalls the disaster brings, in the form of profitable barter with the refugees, never thinking that in a matter of weeks they may be refugees themselves.

There is a strong awareness of a kind of class feeling, a feeling of "them" and "us" in old Froisia's attitude to the refugees. She will swindle the ones who look rich, taking their clothing and soap in exchange for a few potatoes. The poor ones she will feed and provide with accommodation for nothing. Her pity for the poverty-stricken is not unlike the humanity of Kordobailo, who sympathizes with the starving окружены, But to Zotov, and the narrow official mentality, humanity is misplaced here. These men are guilty of treason.

For the Good of the Cause, like Matrona's Home, centres on a direct
clash between good and evil, or, to adhere more closely to the wording of
the original, of justice and injustice. The main protagonists are easily
divided into opposing groups, one standing for ambition and materialism,
the other for humanity. In these groups are also contrasted two types of
ruler, the hardened despot and the cautious, conscientious man.

Khabalygin and Knorozov are the representatives of injustice. In-
deed, Khabalygin is almost a symbol of evil. He is well-fed to the point
of obesity and Solzhenitsyn stresses his bulk and the folds on his neck al-
most every time he mentions him:—

ОБВИСАЮЩИЕ СКЛАДКИ НА ЕГО ШЕЕ, КАК ГРИВЕНКА У
ВОЛА, ТОЖЕ ЗАКОЛЫХАЛИСЬ.  
(p. 257)

He is a factory director, who, as we learn in the course of the story, stands
to obtain a better job in the institute of scientific research, if this ins-
titute is established in his town. To make certain that the institute is
set up here he uses his influence with the secretary of the regional commit-
tee Knorozov to requisition the buildings built for the technical school.
Knorozov gives him one, but not satisfied with this, Khabalygin goes to the
site and instructs the workers to push the boundary fence further into the
grounds of the technical school.

If Khabalygin is greedy for power and personal glory for himself,
Knorozov is ambitious not only for himself, but for the region, and for the
towns in it. If a scientific research institute is established in the town,
Knorozov explains, it will gain immensely in prestige. It will become a
city in the same class as Gor'ky and Sverdlovsk. This will, of course, ad-
vance his own career:—
His cold, immobile face, which betrays no emotion, his solid frame, his metallic voice, all enhance the impression that he is a leader cast in the Stalinist mould, who rules his oblast like a medieval satrap bent on gathering laurels, as Grachikov tells him. The comparison with Stalin is made by the narrator himself as well. To Knorozov, the unwavering ruthless way of Stalin is the only way to rule.

The righteous in this story are represented principally by Fiodor Mikheevich, Grachikov and Lidia Georgievna. Fiodor Mikheevich is a sincere man of integrity, but weak, unable to stand up to his tyrannical superiors. His weakness is symbolised in his right hand, which shakes so much that he has to grip his wrist in his left hand when he writes. He is apologetic with Khabalygin and his party, as though he were at fault, although this group has no authority to inspect his premises and gives him no reason. On learning that he is losing the building built for him he wilts and protests feebly. He is overwhelmed, unable to fight the decision. Being weak and trusting he admires Knorozov's unbending will and energy and accepts his decision without question:

Likewise it never occurs to him to doubt Khabalygin's honesty until Grachikov suggests it to him. His final disillusionment comes only in the last four pages, when he finds Khabalygin stealing land from his school.

Grachikov is a more forceful exponent of the other style of leader—
ship. He likes to weigh up every consideration and discuss matters thoroughly with the interested parties before coming to a decision. This is very far from Knorozov's method, which is

Я говорю вам то, что вам нужно. А нужно вам -- то, что я сейчас говорю. (p. 281)

Knorozov reproaches Grachikov for weakness and indecision, "Не советский у тебя стиль!" (p. 267). Grachikov is always ready to defend what he sees to be right, as we see from the anecdote about his war service, where he risked court-martial rather than betray his principles. He sees clearly that right and wrong are as clearly defined in this case as in the earlier one, and is not disturbed by Knorozov's threat to remove him from his post. He is prepared to lose his job for the sake of justice. Unfortunately, he cannot alter the course of events even if he does lose his position.

Grachikov shows Fiodor Mikheevich that Khabalygin wants the post in the research institute for purely selfish motives. From this position he will be able to work towards a Lenin prize. Khabalygin purports to act in the name of communism — it is he who uses the phrase "для пол'зь деля"— but, to Grachikov, such a man is not a socialist, but a bearer of the seeds of the capitalist mentality who must be expelled from the party.

Moreover, if Knorozov is sincere in his defence of the decision about the institute, then he has a view of communism which is totally erroneous in Grachikov's eyes. The question is raised — what is the essence of the "cause" for whose good are they working? To Knorozov the factor which is all-important is prestige, of the town, the region, and ultimately of the Soviet Union. If this town has a research institute it will be in the same class as Gor'ky. The principle is the same as in international rivalry in
moon-rockets and ballistic missiles. Grachikov thinks that communism should have nothing to do with material matters of prestige.

In the eyes of Grachikov, Fiodor Mikheevich, Lidia Georgievna, and of the author, the cause of humanity is a pre-requisite to the cause of communism. As Grachikov forcefully tells Knorozov, people are more important than material progress and prestige:

"Не в камнях, а в людях надо коммунизм строить, Виктор Вавилович!" упоенно крикнул он. "Это больше и труднее?! А в камнях мы если завтра даже все достроим, так у нас еще никакого коммунизма не будет!!" (p. 283)

A measure of the town's achievement is not the establishment of a research institute, but the fact that the students voluntarily built the premises without pay. Lidia Georgievna is a staunch defender of the same humanist principles. One must be truthful with the students. If the young are deceived, their faith in mankind will be destroyed; they will be soured for life. Quoting Lenin as support, she declares that one must publicly admit failures, not publicly announce only successes.

In the course of the story some interesting information is provided which throws light on the thaw atmosphere of the early '60s. Meeting the students on their return from the vacation, Lidia Georgievna notices their air of freedom and enthusiasm. There is great variety in the girls' hair-styles. The boys, in multicoloured open-neck shirts and garish socks, are more colourfully dressed than the girls, and although Lidia Georgievna is under thirty she finds this very new, almost too sudden a change. To her inborn conservatism it is disturbing and somewhat unnatural.

A heated discussion ensues, which she would have preferred to avoid,
about the value of literature. She is displeased by their cynicism towards it, but gratified that they are at least eager to discuss it. She defends literature in the trite platitudes she has learned at school:

"Но поймите ребята! Книга запечатлевает нашего современника, нас самих, и наши великие свершения!" (p. 247)

"А книга живет? — веcа́й!" воскликнула Лидия Георгиевна грозно, но улыбался. (p. 245)

The students are not well-informed about the subject but they forcefully air their view that artistic literature is written only for the critics and that one might as well listen to the radio. Again Lidia Georgievna is surprised at the change in them. Only two years ago they were obedient students, getting good marks, never daring to talk like this. This is symptomatic of the short-lived period of comparative freedom in the early '60s which enabled Solzhenitsyn to publish.

As with One Day... the structure of these stories is simple and strictly controlled. The narrative is straightforward, free from any manipulation of the chronology of events. Digressions occur only where they are integral to the story, to show the past life of a character, or to illustrate essential points. In all his works Solzhenitsyn adheres closely to the three classical unities. In all the four stories studied so far there is strict unity of place and action. Unity of time is closely observed in three of them. One Day in the life of Ivan Denisovich covers no more than the one day of the title. The events of Krёchetovka Station take place in the space of a few hours, those of For the Good of the Cause, in the space of a few
days. Only Matriona's Home spans a period of months.

One Day... and Matriona's Home are both related by a narrator, but in the first case the narrator sees through the eyes of the hero, not through his own as in Matriona's Home. Consequently, peasant language is less prevalent in the second story, though it is still fundamental to the dialogue and is used at times in the narrative. Matriona's Home and One Day... do not rely heavily on dialogue, whereas Krechetovka Station and For the Good of the Cause do. The whole of the first chapter and the beginning of the second chapter of this last story consist of continuous dialogue, like the script for a play, unbroken by a line of narrative. In this story and in Krechetovka Station, set in a different milieu from that of One Day... and Matriona's Home, the language changes accordingly. Instead of peasant language, the medium is colloquial, modern speech in the dialogue, and concise, standard Russian in the narrative.

In general the three short stories are more conventional in style than One Day.... In One Day..., thoughts were rendered in such a way that one was rarely certain whether it was the narrator or Shukhov who was thinking, so close were the two people. In the short stories, Solzhenitsyn's method is more like conventional monologue, opening with the words "he felt that...", "he thought..", although the language expressing the thought may be every bit as laconic as in One Day....

Comments in two of the stories tell us something of Solzhenitsyn's major dislikes in matters of language. He dislikes the cacophonous compound words so common in Soviet official jargon. Of the word Torfoprodukt he says:-

Ах, Тургенев не знал, что можно по-русски составить такое!

(p.196)
In *For the Good of the Cause* Grachikov finds the pseudo-dramatic use of war vocabulary in peacetime distasteful. This phenomenon is not restricted to Soviet political tracts; it is common in political speech in many lands, but it is especially prevalent in the USSR. Solzhenitsyn cites several examples of such usage, and comments- "A русский язык расчетливо обмотается и без них." p. 228.

In all these three stories, good and evil, as seen by Solzhenitsyn, are sharply defined. In *Matrona's Home* and *For the Good of the Cause* the definition is so sharp as to become an artistic weakness. Such a clear distinction between good and evil is excessively schematic and simplistic. The coupling of physical ugliness and evil nature in Khabalygin is cruder than one expects from an artist who has elsewhere shown himself to be sensitive.

The good sides in all cases are closely linked and have a direct bearing on the theme of this thesis. Grachikov's argument with Knorozov, his assertion that people are more valuable than stones, expresses the essence of Solzhenitsyn's humanism. Matrona's blithe unconcern for material goods, her compassion for other people, is an affirmation of this principle, made the more powerful by setting her against people to whom possessions mean everything. In Vasya Zotov we are presented with the tragedy of a person whose spontaneous, natural warmth, and his concern for others, are negated by distrust in one's dealings with people - a distrust which has been artificially imposed by his environment. His better side, his basic humanity is stifled, just as the goodness, the compassion of Matrona, Fiodor Mikhailovich, Lidia Georgiavna and Grachikov, is overcome by their materialistic, self-seeking opposites.
CHAPTER IV

By the Oka and the Don

In 1964 a typescript comprising eighteen short works entitled "Etiudy i Krokhotnye rasskazy" appeared in the West. Fifteen of these fragments, which had circulated in samizdat in Russia without being officially published, were soon printed by the emigre journal, Grani, thus becoming the first of Solzhenitsyn's works to be published abroad while still unpublished in the USSR.¹ These fifteen were later translated into English and published, classified, appropriately, as prose poems.² The remaining three, however, do not appear to have been published anywhere and must therefore be omitted from this study.

In the same chapter it is convenient to deal with a short story which Novy Mir published in January 1966, Zakhar-Kalita. Despite the difference in genre and publishing history it is sufficiently close to the prose poems in theme and tone to be discussed with them.

These works show Solzhenitsyn experimenting with different genres. His published works so far had consisted of one povest, and three shorter rasskazy. The change in genre from these to prose poems is radical.

¹Grani, No. 56, 1964. All fifteen are included in A. I. Solzhenitsyn, Sobranie sochinenii, Frankfurt-am-Main: Possev-Verlag, 1966. Quotations from them and from Zakhar-Kalita are all taken from this edition.

Even Zakhar-Kalita, which is classed as a rasskaz, is very different in style and manner from the earlier rasskazy, and only about one fifth of their length. It seems certain that Solzhenitsyn must have read Turgenev's Senilia, as the style of his studies is remarkably similar. Sometimes there is even similarity of theme; Solzhenitsyn, like Turgenev, writes of the gentle, rolling countryside of European Russia, but Solzhenitsyn's prose poems lack the lament for lost youth and the fear of approaching death which characterize a number of Turgenev's.

The prose poems are, by their very nature, intensely subjective. Here, for once, Solzhenitsyn is speaking in his own name, without the device of another narrator. The personal nature of many of them, and Zakhar-Kalita, is a far cry from the dispassionate narrative of One Day... The author gives voice to a number of his own thoughts, primarily about Russia, but sometimes of universal application. Relatively few of these works express the humanism which is so prominent in most of his work, but most tell us something of his own likes and dislikes.

"Gorod na Neve" is one of those prose poems which does reflect his humanism. An analogy is drawn between the human cost of the creation of beauty, like the city of Leningrad, and that of the building of a communist state. Solzhenitsyn admires the graceful statues and elegant buildings, but remembers the suffering which it cost. It has been said that more people died in the building of Peter's city than in all the wars of his reign, but those who died of disease in the cold Neva marshes are now forgotten. The visitor, oblivious of their miserable deaths sees only the beauty that they built. The question Solzhenitsyn explicitly asks is, will the untold suffering inflicted on the Russian people in recent decades give rise
to such beauty? And will these victims also be forgotten? In other words he questions whether the end justifies a means which takes such an appalling human toll. One feels that, for Solzhenitsyn, the question is answered by Grashikov's reply to Knorozov. There can be no moral justification for putting stones before people.

"My-to ne umriom" is, in an oblique way, a continuation of this theme. It is an attack on the widespread attitude, according to which death is something shameful, which should be ignored. The dead, and memories of them, whether they died building St. Petersburg, mining Vorkuta coal for Leningrad, or fighting for Stalingrad, must not be allowed to hinder the living. The prevalence of this attitude is stressed, in the author's eyes, by the fact that the Soviet Union does not set aside a day for remembrance of its war dead, although Russian war deaths vastly outnumber those of any other country. The living are not encouraged to think of the dead; they should not be reminded that they are mortal too. This amounts to no more than a cowardly evasion of the truth. "This", concludes Solzhenitsyn, with heavy irony, "is the peak of twentieth century philosophy."

Solzhenitsyn challenges the material reason for not spending time on remembrance of the dead, which is —

Если на всех погибших оглядываться -- кто кирпичи будет кладь? (p.301)
the youths vigorously performing their morning exercises, Solzhenitsyn comments that daily devotion to one's body is generally accepted and praised, but people would be offended if a man paid so much attention to his soul. He expands on this theme in "Puteshestvuyu v dol' Oki", and suggests that the removal of spiritual values upheld by the Church propagates the spread of undesirable materialism, even hedonism, in their place. This short essay shows something of the author's view of the Church in pre-revolutionary Russia. When the evening bells rang out over the village they reminded people to turn away from earthly matters and think about eternity:

Этот звон, сохранившийся нам теперь в одном только старом напеве, поднимал людей от того, чтобы опуститься на четыре ноги. (p. 302)

One expects a person with such an attitude as this to be sceptical towards the achievements of progress in the field of technology. This does indeed prove to be the case, as we see in "Utionok". Science may have enabled man to travel through space, and given him the potential to destroy his planet with nuclear weapons, but it will never enable him to construct such perfection as this downy, fragile duckling.

Against the crude materialism of modern living, are set the simple joys provided by natural beauty, an appreciation of which is heightened by years spent in prison. The prison theme is hardly present in the prose poems, but from the few comments made about it, it is apparent that eight years total deprivation of freedom have made Solzhenitsyn more aware of its value. This is very clear in "Dykhanie". Inhaling the scent of the apple tree and the moist grass, he says —

Вот похалуй, та воля — та единственная, но самая дорогая воля, которой лишает нас тюрьма: дышать так, дышать здесь. (p.291)
Freedom is also the theme of "Sharik". Given the choice between food and freedom, the puppy chooses the latter, spurning the proffered bones.

Such a sense of wonder at the beauty of creation is characteristic of many of the prose poems. Love for the simple, humble beauty of the Oka countryside, with its poor villages, a beauty which has passed unnoticed for centuries, comes through strongly in "Na rodine Esénina", "Futeshest-vuya vdol' Oki", "Ozero Segden", and "Prakh poeta". Awed admiration for the phenomena of nature is expressed in "Groza v gorakh", and love for things truly Russian in "Kolkhozny riukzak".

Solzhenityshyn's pictures of the Russian countryside contain numerous references to churches and monasteries, and it seems that the author regrets both the passing of the Church as an upholder of spiritual values, and the neglect, or thoughtless destruction, of their architectural splendor. He says at one point that the key to the charm of the tranquil Russian countryside lies in its churches. It is only when one is close to them that one realizes that they have been converted into cowsheds, or clubs, or have been ransacked, stripped of everything which could be used and left bare, but for the graffiti on the walls. The Uspensky monastery, one of the oldest in Russia, in a setting of ideal beauty, has been converted into some kind of prison. Polonsky's grave is in the forbidden zone. The highest irony of all is the poster outside it, which shows a Russian worker with a Negro child in his arms and bears the slogan "For peace among peoples". Behind it stand the watch-towers, the guard-house and the barbed wire, the very symbols of repression.

"Ozero Segden" is an attack, not on repression, but on privilege and inequality. The lake and its guarded surroundings are the private
property of one man, whom the author dubs "liuty kniaz". The charm of this place is enjoyed by one person and his family only. Socialist ideals have gone by the board. Turgenev, writing of nineteenth-century Russia, voiced exactly the same protest in his short essay "Koi derev'ia", a landowner's assertion that his land and the trees on it are for himself alone. Only a privileged few can enjoy such luxuries, and those who can will not share them with the less fortunate. Solzhenitsyn resists the continued existence of such privilege in a would-be socialist society.

The story Zokhar-Kalita contains little that is directly relevant to this thesis, but it does provide further evidence of Solzhenitsyn's feeling for Russia. It differs from previous rasskazy in being told in the first person by Solzhenitsyn himself. It tells of a visit by bicycle, with a companion—probably his wife—to the battlefield of Kulikovo in 1963.

The story is basically a character sketch of the cantankerous old man who guards the field and the monument, who is in perfect harmony with the atmosphere of the field, which Solzhenitsyn so keenly senses. He clearly has a deep affection for simple, uneducated country people, perhaps preferring them to city-dwellers. This is suggested by the choice of the hero in One Day... and Katrigia's Home, and by comments like that in One Day... about Muscovites, who talk so fast that they do not seem to be speaking Russian.

The story is imbued with a deep sense of history. The author displays a detailed knowledge of Russian history, and again shows a weakness

for folktales and legends. He repeats the tale that Hamai, in a mist, mistook the forest around him for the Russian army, and fled. He conveys the beauty of the site with the same sensitivity as in the prose poems, and again draws our attention to a derelict church, the church of Sergei Radonezhsky. The author deplores the fact that the local people have torn up the flooring and taken the cupola casing for their own needs, but does not dwell on this, nor on any matter connected with religion, as he does in the prose poems.

The tone of the narrative is unusually conversational for Solzhenitsyn, particularly in the opening line:—

Друзья мои, вы просите рассказатд что-нибудь из летнего велосипедного? Ну вот, если нескучно, послушайте о Поле Куликовом. (p.303)

In this story and in the etiudy the language is generally concise, although, when describing natural beauty, Solzhenitsyn uses long, lyrical sentences more frequently. This happens notably in Zakhar-Kalita and "Futeshestvuya v dol' Oki". At other times restrained feeling comes clearly through laconic phrases which have much in common with the style of One Day...: —

Замкнутая вода. Замкнутый лес. Озеро в небо смотрит, небо — в озеро. И есть ли еще что на земле — неведомо, поверх леса — не видно. А если что и есть — оно съеда не нужно, лишнее. (p.292)

Colloquial elements are very common in the narrative and dialogue alike. Particles like аx, уx, the suffix -to the use of может instead of может быть phrases like как бы (он как бы недоумевал) are all hallmarks of direct speech. All occur frequently in the etiudy and the story.

In works of the genre, as in poetry, the quality of the artistic
medium becomes all the more important in enhancing the persuasive force in
the communication of the idea. The etiudy is not a common literary form,
and it seems that in his use of it, Solzhenitsyn has relied heavily on the
techniques used by Turgenev, one of the few Russian exponents of this genre.
The structure of the etiudy is very close to that of many of Turgenev's. Se-
veral are based on an analogy observed between some phenomenon of nature
and a human characteristic or situation. This is a method common in poetry
and fable. Turgenev used it in prose in "Gad" and "Kamen!", to name but
two examples. Solzhenitsyn uses the same technique in "Otrazhenie v vode",
"Kostior i murav'i", and "Gorod na Neve". The analogy may be explicit, as
in "Otrazhenie v vode", or only hinted at as in "Kostior i murav'i".

Often there is also an affinity of theme with Turgenev's studies.
Turgenev admires the dashing, cheerful sparrows, which seem to scorn the
threat of death presented by the shadow of the hawk. Solzhenitsyn wonders
at the apparent will to live of the elm tree which was cut down a year ago,
but still defiantly puts out shoots; and at the courage of the ants in the
burning log, and, by analogy, at the courage of the Russians, who recovered
from their stunned confusion in 1941, to lay down their lives for their
country.

One stylistic feature of some of the etiudy appears to have been
learnt from L. N. Tolstoy. This is the threefold repetition of a similar
phrase or sentence structure, a device frequently used by Tolstoy. Numerous

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5 Ibid., p. 197.
examples can be quoted. The following are typical: ---

Никакая еда на земле, никакое вино, ни даже поцелуй женщины не славще мне этого воздуха, этого воздуха напоенного цветением, сырость, свежесть.

Вышедшеу к воде, видна тебе вся окружность заминутого берега: где желтая полоска песка, где серый камышок ощетинился, где зеленая мурава легла.

Only a few of these short works show us the author's humanism as such. They are, however, important in that they throw light on some of his ideas which are closely related to it. Being subjective, they reveal aspects of his own personality which help us to understand his kind of humanism. We see his opposition to materialism, his deep-rooted love for Russia, especially rural Russia and its people. We see, too, that Solzhenitsyn, though not necessarily a Christian, has a great respect for the virtues ex-
tolled by the Christian church.
The First Circle presents us with one of the most keenly analytical descriptions of Russian life in the Stalin era yet to appear in print. Nominally set in the close confines of a prison research institute, the narrative reaches far outside these walls to embrace all of Russia and people in all walks of life. Without oncedescending to pity or pathos, the author paints a detailed picture of bleak life in the harshest period of Russian history, the last years of Stalin's rule. The country has been laid waste by four pitiless years of war; a generation of men has been swept to its death; of those who escaped death at the front and in the Nazi concentration camps, millions now continue to fight it in the Soviet camps of the Siberian wastes. A generation of young women looks forward to an empty life of spinsterhood. While Izvestia quotes ever higher production figures the mass of the people are fighting to live at a bare subsistence level, and while the radio carries extravagant eulogies of the "velikii vozhd" (Great leader) his subjects struggle to evade the clutches of his ubiquitous agents.

However, Solzhenitsyn does not simply record these external facets of the period - this could have been done by any journalist given adequate facilities - , he tries to fathom the minds of the people who caused this situation and those who allow it to prevail. He examines in depth the men-
talities of a mass of characters from Stalin himself to the humble peasant Spiridon, shows how each reacts to the pressure of a tyrannical system, and expresses his view that the situation should never have arisen, that the violence perpetrated in the name of communism cannot be justified by any moral standards, be they Christian or humanist, nor in terms of the end.

Solzhenitsyn's condemnation of Stalin in this novel must surely be the most outspoken to be published in literary form. It seems most unlikely that Solzhenitsyn ever met Stalin, least of all at this period of his life, so the chapters about him must be largely conjectural and cannot be taken as historical truth. Perhaps, like Gleb Nerzhin, Solzhenitsyn made notes about him, and about the period, while he was in the sharashka. In The First Circle we see Stalin as a cunning, irascible old man whose mental faculties are beginning to fail him. Solzhenitsyn portrays his thought processes with rich irony and acid humour, but paints him so black that he risks creating a caricature. Although highly entertaining, this must be considered one of the novel's weak points.

Stalin is not given one redeeming feature. Nerzhin blames him for Russia's unpreparedness for war, and despises his mediocre intellect, his clumsy handling of the Russian language, his love of absurd adulation. In his eyes, it was Stalin who personally ordered Kirov's murder, framed the engineers in the sabotage trial in 1931, deprived himself and his wife and millions of couples like them of the right to have children. The liquidation of the kulaks, he is sure, was unnecessary. Marx saw other ways of including all the peasantry in the social system, without expropriations and mass killings, but

Пахан, в 1929 году, конечно не искал других путей. А что тонкое, что умелое он когда-
Suspicion is his dominant characteristic. He has an obsessive fear of plots and attempts on his life. Mistrust is his world-view. Until June 1941 he trusted only Hitler, and after that, nobody. He has a cynical distrust of people who seem selfless and dedicated. He prefers those whose motives he can understand—like the self-seeking Abakumov, who amassed a fortune after the war in trainloads of German loot.

Solzhenitsyn shows that, in spite of the revolutionary cliches which have become part of his way of thinking, Stalin is inwardly conservative. He dismisses Lenin's statement that any cook should have the opportunity to govern as absurd. He considers mass education to be nothing but a nuisance. He hankers after the days when officers had batmen and schoolchildren paid fees. He has personally re-introduced words like Rossia and roding, long banned because of their patriotic connotations.

As his rule is so absolute these aspects of his character are reflected in Soviet society. It is inevitable that suspicion should be the hallmark of the period and that Russia should be socialist in name only. Suspicion has been actively encouraged and inculcated in every member of society:

Поколению воспитанному в подозрительности и
секретности, мерялись тайны там, где их не
было.

The better human qualities such as honesty and compassion, are atrophied by the system. Rubin instinctively likes Volodin when he hears his voice; he cannot believe that he is an enemy of the people, but suspicion, inbred

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since childhood by his environment, makes him convince himself that Volodin is speaking in code. Just as Stalin disbelieves in sincerity, so Pryanchikov's honesty seems unnatural to many of those around him:

Но Пранчиков вряд ли был способен соображать -- по своей неестественной искренности, которую многие трезвые сыны века считали душевной ненормальностью.

Likewise, given Stalin's basic conservatism, the society he controls is bound to be as stratified, and inequality in it as rife, as in Russian society of the last century. The Soviet aristocracy is a very different class from the landed gentry of the nineteenth century, but it enjoys privileges at least as great. It consists of diplomats, judges, army officers, and officers of the NKVD, who live in luxury flats, ride in chauffeur-driven cars, buy their food and clothes in their own shops, which are inaccessible to the general public, and employ Georgian maidservants.

Makarygin is the epitome of this class. Anna Scherer's soiree in War and Peace is reconstructed in Soviet Russia in the dinner which he gives, where the host and hostess supervise the conversation and the introductions in order to make the best impression. As in Tolstoy's novel, the guests come to make social contacts which will help them to climb in society. Snobbery is as blatant in Alevtina Nikanorovna's attitude to her childhood friend as in the general attitude to Pierre Bezukhov at Anna Scherer's:

...Словута мог подумать, что у Макарыгиных принимают ревень (так Алевтина Никаноровна называла всех, кто не умеет хорошо устроиться в жизни и получать высокую зарплату). Это отравляло ей вечер. И она посадила подругу на другой конец стола от Словуты и заставляла ее говорить тихе.

Makarygin himself has the same fear that Dushan Radovich will commit some unpardonable faux-pas as Anna Scherer with regard to Pierre:
A number of characters speak out against the injustices of the system. Makarygin's daughter Klara, brought up in luxury unheard of at this time, observes the difference between her life and that of her contemporaries and rebels against her self-satisfied parents. She feels that it is wrong for her to live in a luxury apartment built by forced labour and be waited on by servants. Her work in the sharashka and her acquaintance with Rus'ka Doronin heighten her awareness of the country's social ills. The revolution, Rus'ka reminds her, was against privilege and inequality. Both remain:

Если равенство, так всем равенство, а если нет -- так к ядерной фене... (p.207)

Radovich and the Hungarian girl Erzhika support these views. The latter comes to the Soviet Union as an idealist to the homeland of communism, but disillusionment soon sets in. Radovich, also an idealist revolutionary, declares that the principles of Lenin have been abandoned in the Soviet Union.

Of those who enjoy the privileges the system offers, those who are not cynical about the revolution and its aims blind themselves to the inequality and sincerely believe that it does not exist. Makarygin, in arguments with his daughter and with Radovich, becomes hopelessly confused and fails to understand how Radovich can call his values bourgeois, and how Klara can compare the present system with the Tsarist one. His has been a very successful exercise in self-deception. Similarly, Volodin, has until recently turned a blind eye to the disparity between his standard of living and
that of the less fortunate. He has enjoyed to the full the opportunities provided by his position, never pausing to consider the rights and wrongs of it. Volodin's first twinges of conscience, the first signs that he is aware of the falsity of his life, come only days before his arrest, as he reads his mother's diaries. He has lived for pleasure, but he is now beginning to realize that not only does he have only one life, but only one conscience too. The principles he finds set out in his mother's diary are the simple ones of respect for other people and determination never to harm them:

"Жалость - первое движение доброй души."

"Никогда не считай себя правым больше, чем других. Уважай чужие, даже враждебные тебе мнения."

"Что дороже всего в мире? Оказывается: сознавать, что ты не участвующ в несправедливостях. Они сильней тебя, они были и будут, но пусть - не через тебя." (p.305)

Although these commandments are in flat contradiction to all he has been taught and everything he has lived by, they strike a chord deep in Volodin's soul.

Self-deception, such as that practised by Volodin and Makarygin, together with the deception of others, is also the distinguishing feature of the arts in the Soviet Union. Literature and the theatre avoid or beautify ugly reality. Studying literature in wartime Tashkent, Klara Makarygina soon realizes that it is utterly remote from life. Khorobrov's search for something to read in the sharashka library presents an ironic but accurate summary of the plight of Soviet literature. A writer must lie to himself and to his readers if his work is to be published. One book which Khorobrov
finds is particularly ironic:

...в ней говорилось о строительстве руками зэков, о лагерях — но нигде не названы были лагеря, и не сказано, что это — зэки, что им дают пайку и сажают в карцер, но подменили их комсомольцами, хорошо одетыми, хорошо обу-тными и очень воодушевленными. И тут же чувствовалось опытному читателю, что сам автор знает, видел, трогал правду, может быть даже — был в лагере оперуполномоченным, но с холодно-стеклянными глазами лжет.

Galakhov, though at the peak of his fame, realizes that his work has no value, that he is writing for the party critics and, according to Khorobrov, for fools. All this is an expression of the opinion Solzhenitsyn has voiced in interviews, that Soviet literature is cosmetics, the lowest form of art.

Just as in One Day..., where the zeks where made to build their own prison and their own punishment cells, so in The First Circle we are shown how men are forced, or bribed, to work against themselves and their fellow-sufferers, both in prison and in freedom. The gentle, harmless Muza is forced at gunpoint to inform on the other students she works with, although the idea is repugnant to her. Spiridon was once an ordinary zek on the Moscow-Volga canal, but then he was offered a wage, handed a rifle, and ordered to stand guard over the other zeks with whom he was working the day before. In the sharashka the prisoners are bribed to work on special projects with promises of freedom, but most of them at once see the immorality of earning freedom by creating equipment which will be used to deprive others of theirs. Rubin, who has complete faith in the rightness of the cause, can accept this and convince himself that the people whom his creations will trap are really enemies of the state. Sologdin, who has no such illusions, is acutely aware of the moral dilemma and vacillates between the two options.
but finally decides to put his own freedom before that of the people who will be caught by his invention. Gerasimovich and Nerzhin, however, retain their moral integrity. Both are offered the chance to earn freedom, and both refuse, thus condemning themselves to a return to the labour camps. In Gerasimovich's case the choice is particularly difficult. His wife, who is on the verge of a breakdown, has begged him to look for just such an opportunity, but he still thinks it wrong to save himself and her by imprisoning other innocent people.

A few idealists are aware of the injustices of the era, do not ignore them, but remain convinced that they are necessary, that the end justifies the means, and that Russia is on the right road to communism. Such is Lev Rubin, a staunch communist who continues to defend Stalin and his regime although imprisoned by it. He is a complex character, portrayed with sympathy and understanding, though in ideological discussions his arguments are invariably the weaker.

Even in him there is an unconscious element of self-deception, as we see when he talks to the German prisoners about international events:

...следовало отбирать для них, как и для истории (как бессознательно отбирал он и для себя) - только те из происходящих событий, которые подтверждают столбовую дорогу, и пренебрегать теми, которые затем няли ее. (p. 14)

In this judgement, as in others, he thinks he is being objective, although Nerzhin and the artist Kondrashev-Ivanov tell him that objectivity is impossible. His attempts to justify Stalin fall flat, as in his allegorical poem about Moses leading the Israelites through the wilderness for forty years. The people rebelled against him, but Moses was right, always keeping
the goal in view. Chelnov deflates this attempted justification of Stalin by pointing out that, since the distance from the Nile to the Promised Land could easily have been covered in three weeks, Moses did not in fact have any idea where he was going.

Rubin's tragedy is that he is an intelligent idealist, completely devoted to the cause and eager to work for it, but whose energy and talent are being wasted in prison because the cynical authorities do not believe in idealism and do not know how to use such people. In his own mind, Rubin expresses this succinctly by comparison with the fine sword lying rusting in Krylov's fable:

В руках бы воина врагам я был ужасен!
...А здесь мой дар - напрасен...
Нет, стыдно-то не мне, а стыдно лишь тому,
Кто не умеет понять, к чему я годен!...
(p. 368)

As Sologdin tells him, Rubin does not carry his philosophy to its logical conclusion. If as Rubin maintains, the end justifies the means, then the jailers are right in holding the other prisoners, if not him, and he should therefore help them. He refuses, however, to inform or assist them in any way against his fellow-prisoners. This indicates that, for all his defence of immoral means in terms of exalted future ends, he is still torn between acting according to this philosophy and according to common human morality in the present.

The sum of all this damning commentary on Soviet life is that the end does not justify the means. Solzhenitsyn is showing that the means being used, supposedly to achieve the end of communism are, in fact, making it impossible to attain this end. The means are destroying the best human qualities, without which communism cannot exist. Those features of the
age which Rubin would defend as necessary, if undesirable, in the struggle towards communism --- the vast prison system, the liquidation of classes and nationalities, the all-powerful secret police --- have promoted deceit, fear, mistrust and suspicion, and given rise to a new privileged class. They have destroyed truth, compassion, trust, and care for one's neighbour, and reduced life to a struggle for the preservation and, where possible, the furtherance of the self, the very antithesis of the communist ideal.

This is one of the most important conclusions to be drawn from the novel. The author gives much weight to the facts which point to it, but only once is the conclusion itself expressed. This happens in the course of Sologdin's bitter quarrel with Rubin:

"Так запомни: чем выше цель, тем выше должны быть и средства! Нероломные средства уничтожают и саму цель!" (p.358)

The evidence of this novel and of his other works indicates that this is Solzhenitsyn's own opinion. If the means involve perversion of man's finest qualities, then the notion of ends over means as a yardstick by which to judge behavior are not only false but positively harmful. Once this yardstick is removed, Stalin's actions are left indefensible. Morality and humanity, the remaining criteria, condemn them. This is one of Solzhenitsyn's aims, to condemn Stalin by exposing the falsity of the only justification offered for his behavior. Solzhenitsyn's denunciation of his brutal methods and its invidious by-products in perversion of human nature constitutes a powerful expression of a humanist view of the dictator.

From this there arises the painful question of collective guilt. If the end does not justify the means, are all the Soviet people collectively
responsible for allowing and assisting this evil autocracy to dominate them for thirty years, using the means it does? When Rubin says that the German zeks share responsibility with Hitler because they did not resist him, Nerzhin's answer is that they themselves are guilty for not resisting Abakumov and Stalin. Even such defenders of the system as Rubin and Roitman, who have fulfilled unpleasant duties for the party, sometimes wonder whether they were right to do so. Rubin spends a sleepless night tormented by doubts about his part in the enforced collectivisation of the land, and about his denunciation of his cousin to the GPU. Did he denounce him out of cowardice or because he felt it to be his duty? Roitman remembers with shame his boyhood denunciation of another boy, although he did not initiate this action, but only followed the lead of others.

These two men are defenders of the regime who have doubts about the morality of their actions in support of it. What of those who have taken no active part in supporting the system, but feel guilty because they have, perhaps unconsciously, taken advantage of it and made no effort to resist it? Meeting the embittered glance of the woman-prisoner scrubbing the stairs, Klara Makarygina averts her eyes in shame. This theme has arisen in Solzhenitsyn's earlier works and it appears again in Cancer Ward, as we shall see.

Other Soviet writers have touched on this question too. In "Za dal'yu dal!" Tvardovsky meets the best friend of his youth on a Siberian railway station. He experiences an overwhelming sense of guilt before this man, who has served seventeen years in a labour camp. V. Nekrasov's middle-

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aged Kira Georgievna only really grows up when her first husband returns from Siberia. Struck by the difference between his maturity, which has come from facing reality and living with it, and her sham gaiety, which has come from pushing unpleasant things out of her mind, she too feels ashamed. There is a sense of guilt in one of the camps when he asks how it is that he knew nothing of the camps --

"Как мог я жить тогда так мирно и самодовольно?" and mentions the girls on the train in Tiurin's story who were "going past life", not seeing the realities of it. But these hints pale into insignificance beside one short paragraph in The First Circle, in which Solzhenitsyn directly accuses all the Soviet people of cowardly inactivity, in full knowledge and secret disapproval of what was happening. All must share this responsibility.

Vital as these issues of ends versus means and of guilt are, the strongest single impression left by The First Circle is of the indomitable courage of the victims of the system. Some of the free workers and even some of the guards, for example Nadelashin, are impressed by this. The pris-
oners will readily discuss anything, and in conversation about the contemporary situation their anger is focused, not on the injustice of their own imprisonment, but on the wrongs perpetuated in the name of communism against the people as a whole.

The geks are the dead, as the title of the novel, referring to Dante's *Inferno*, implies. They see themselves as lemurs, the spirits of the dead, whose immortal souls are condemned to eternal labour in the first circle of Hell. Most have come to understand the true nature of the experience of prison, which does not lie in horror and physical brutality. (As in *One Day...* where Solzhenitsyn chose "almost a happy day", so here he shows us four of the best days of the year in a prison where physical conditions are comparatively luxurious and brutality is rare.) Most have been in prison long enough to realize its true horror:

*...Ужас — в серьёзной методичности лет. В том, что забывает, что единственная жизнь данная тебе на земле — изломана. И готов прости́ть это кому-то тупоры́лому... Толь ко непрерывными бесконечными годами воспитывается подлинное ощу́щение тюрьмы.*

These men know this and, whatever their sentence is, accept that they are there for life. Only their wives count the days until their release. They themselves do not, because they expect no release. Once they have accepted this, the worst that can happen, and learnt to expect nothing better from the future, they can begin to live near-normal lives. Once they realize that they have lost everything, they acquire the courage that comes when there is nothing more to lose.

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*Underlined words are italicized in the text.*
This leads on to one of the paradoxes hinted at briefly in *One Day...* that of freedom in prison. As Bobynin tells Abakumov, when a man has been stripped of everything he becomes free to act, talk and think as he pleases, secure in the knowledge that nothing more can be taken from him. For this reason Bobynin considers his own position preferable to that of Abakumov and Yakonov. These men are apparently at the peak of their careers, yet the higher they climb the more precarious their position becomes. They know that for some slight indiscretion they may lose everything, as Mamurin does, and be banished to the camps themselves. Roitman, also a successful NKVD officer, wishes he were free of his epaulettes and the responsibility that goes with them. He envies the zeks their freedom to be themselves, to build things and to exercise their fantasies. In prison one can talk freely about matters one would not dare discuss in freedom. The painter Kondrashev-Ivanov, like the poet Vdovushkin in *One Day...*, is free to paint whatever he likes in prison.

Some of the zeks, including Sologdin and the hero Gleb Nerzhin, have learned to look on prison not as a curse, but as a blessing. This is an expression of the very Russian idea of the spiritual value of suffering. It echoes the attitude expressed by Aljosha in *One Day...*, an attitude which permeates much of Solzhenitsyn's work. One should look on prison with joy, rejoicing in the opportunity to strengthen one's will by mortification of the flesh. One must learn how to face difficulties joyfully, how to be grateful for failures and learn from them. Man should not be degraded, but on the contrary, spiritually fortified by such suffering. Sologdin expresses this in his conversation with Larisa Nikolaevna:
"Из лагерных лет я семь провел на балансе, моя умственная работа шла без сахара и без фосфора. Это вынудило меня к строжайшему распорядку. На свободе или в тюрьме, - какая разница? - мужчина должен воспитывать в себе непреклонность воли, подчиненной разуму." (p.161)

(Ironically, Sologdin, who has been influential in developing Nerzhin's philosophy, opts for the chance to earn his freedom by working on a special project, although he does hesitate for a while.)

Nerzhin has gone to prison with the deliberate intention of testing his strength. By making the choice which is morally right, he forfeits the opportunity to remain in the sharashka working on equipment for the secret police, choosing the course which he knows will send him back to the camps. Having made the decision, he wonders whether he is strong enough to endure the punishment he has chosen:

Что успел он за трехлетнюю шарамечную пере- дняшу? Достаточно ли он закалил свой характер перед новым швирком в лагерный провал? (p.62)

It seems that prison has already changed Nerzhin considerably. His wife suspects, wrongly, that prison is causing undesirable distortions in his character. She wonders whether he is becoming a mystic, or an idealist, or whether he is being beaten into submission. A chance phrase he utters at their meeting, "бог знает", leads her to wonder if he is beginning to believe in God:

"Да ты уж не стал ли верить в бога??!"

... Глеб улыбнулся:
"Паукаль, Ньютон, Эйнштейн... "Кому было сказано - фамилии не назвать!": гаркнул надзиратель. (p.197)
A previous conversation in the novel, known to the reader but not to Nadia, leaves little doubt that, had Nerzhin not been interrupted by the boorish guard, the sentence would have been to the effect that all these great scientists believed in God, and Nerzhin thinks that perhaps they were right.

This leads one to speculate whether Solzhenitsyn himself came to believe in God in prison. One cannot, of course, be dogmatic in attributing the ideas of a literary hero to his creator, but so close are the similarities in biography of author and hero that it does not seem far-fetched to infer that Solzhenitsyn does believe in God. The opinions expressed in the prose poems and in The Easter Procession lend weight to this opinion.

Nerzhin's life is a relentless search for the truth about man. He is driven by a desire to learn about him and understand him. Looking back, he sees it as inevitable that his search should have led him to prison:

Глеб ходил мечтать, как он когда-нибудь во всем разберется и, может быть, побудет даже в тех стенах, где эти люди почему-то все, как один, брали на себя предсмертное самообогащение. Может быть в тех стенах можно это понять?...

Все собилось и исполнилось, но за этим - не осталось Нержину ни науки, ни - жены...
Одна большая страсть, раз занявшая нашу душу, жестоко измешает все остальное. Двум страстям нет места в нас. (p.181)

Words to the effect that there is no better place than prison in which to study man occur more than once in the novel. L.N. Tolstoy is quoted as saying that he would like to have been in prison.

Nerzhin looks on his experience of prison as something akin to the populist movement of the last century. This failed partly because of peasant suspicion and partly because the young intellectuals who took part
had nothing in common with the narod and failed to understand or learn anything about them. In the camps and in various prisons Nerzhin has come to know them well on equal terms, for in the lowest stratum of Soviet society, the lowest circle of Hell cut off from the higher circles, a rare degree of equality in poverty has been achieved. As M. Hayward points out, in the camps the Soviet intelligentsia got to know the narod better than ever before.6

After various changes of opinion, Nerzhin has evolved his own attitude to the narod. He is familiar with nineteenth-century Russian literature and he finally rejects the idealized view of the peasants so common in it. They are no stronger, no braver, no more resilient in spirit than any other class of people. Most important of all, they lack any point of view, something which to Nerzhin, is dearer than life itself.

In Spiridon, one of the few peasants in the sharashka, Nerzhin continues to search for a peasant point of view. He tries to find the philosophy by which the narod lives. In the course of his harsh life, Spiridon has fought in the Civil War, for the Reds, the Greens, the Whites, and again for the Reds; he has expropriated kulaks at gun-point, worked as a zek on the White Sea canal, then as a guard over the other zeks; he changed sides a number of times in the Second World War in order to stay with his family. Spiridon cares nothing for politics, Marxist-Leninist philosophy, or nationality. He is one hapless grain of sand, driven by the wind like millions of others. The comparison made by Fojtikova in her articles on One Day...,

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between Tolstoy's and Solzhenitsyn's ordinary men as measures of the epoch, applies equally well here. 7

Spiridon has no desire to hurt anyone, though he has on occasion when he has been forced to, shared complicity in harmful actions. He bears no grudges, not even against the Germans, whom experience has taught him to see as people like himself, not as a race apart. All he has done has been for himself and his family. His family and the land he works are everything to him -- religion, socialism, rodina. Nerzhin is struck by the simple force of the peasant saying by which Spiridon justifies his past actions:

"Волкодав прав, а людой - нет." (p. 356)

To kill or commit violence when one is blackmailed into doing so by one's masters, with threats against oneself and those one loves, is, if bad, at least better than devouring one's own kind.

Nerzhin's search for a philosophy has led him to an interest in stoicism and scepticism, but while Rubin jokingly calls him a sceptic, Nerzhin is not really devoted to this way of thinking. A philosophy which preaches that one cannot know the true nature of things, that one cannot pass judgement because objectivity is impossible, and that one should therefore do nothing, may be necessary to mankind but it is not a philosophy to live by:

"Ты понимаешь, я сам считаю, что скептицизм человековеческу очень нужен. Он нужен, чтобы расколоть каменные лбы, чтобы поперхнуть фанатические глотки. Но скептицизм не может стать твердой землей под ногой человека. А земля, может быть, все-таки нужна?" (p. 64)

7See p. 32
Nerzhin is nearer to stoicism which holds virtue, equated with wisdom, to be the *sumnum bonum* for man. As Kondrashev-Ivanov tells Nerzhin, one's environment, the conditions of one's life, must not be allowed to determine one's consciousness. The surroundings are of no importance. Nothing matters but the inner self.

Rubin and Nerzhin ponder the nature of happiness, how it may be illusory, as in the case of Faust, how the essence of contentment lies in knowing how to be content, and how different the *zeck's* idea of happiness is from the free man's. The most important point they make is that happiness is not in attainment; but in striving towards attainment:

"Счастье непрерывных побед, счастье триумфального исполнения желаний, счастье успеха и полного насыщения — есть страдание! Это душевная гибель, это некая непрерывная моральная изногодя!"

This is proved in the case of Innokenty Volodin, who appears to have everything he could want, but whose material wealth soon palls and brings him only "a tasteless, repugnant feeling of satiety." (p. 303)

Nerzhin's search is principally for a meaning in his own life. He is critical of the verbose discussions of this question which he has read in literature, saying simply:

"Мы живем — и в этом смысл." (p. 33)

This is an expression of the view that we find stated in Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*, that man is born to live, not to prepare for life. But to live caring for nothing but one's own physical welfare is wrong:

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8 Underlined word is italicized in text.
He comes finally to the conclusion that the highest aim in life is to develop the inner self, to deepen one's knowledge and understanding, to temper one's spirit, so as to become a fragment of one's own people, as the closing lines of the chapter "Khozhdenie v narod" tell us:

Не по рождению, не по труду своих рук и не по крылам своей образованности отбираются люди в народ.
А - по душе.
Душу же выковывает себе каждый сам, год от году.
Надо стараться закалить, отграничить себе такую душу, чтобы стать человеком.
И через то - крупицей своего народа. 9

The eminent Hungarian critic Penyo Miksa praises this novel, but comments that Solzhenitsyn's technique is basically only good photographic factual rapportage. 10 This seems to suggest that the book is strictly documentary and devoid of emotional colouring, and is far from true. Emotion is restrained throughout the myriad episodes — Solzhenitsyn could never be accused of sentimentality with reference to this work — but it is there nonetheless. The moving passages concerning Merzhin's wife, and even concerning Simochka, the free girl who falls in love with him, achieve a rare degree of poignancy.

9 Underlined word is italicized in text.
The same critic also considers that Solzhenitsyn is unable to conceptualize, that he states facts without formulating them into any central idea. This is also false. Almost all the facts stated point to one very important conclusion, although it is only once formulated in as many words: that the end does not justify the means; it is destroyed by them. A society which forces man to work against his neighbour, to become, at best, a wolfhound and, at worst, a cannibal, is inhuman. It cannot be justified either morally or in terms of the exalted ends of communism, the very basis of which is being destroyed by the ruler's methods.

The second conclusion is that reached in _One Day..._ , that man can endure almost any physical privations and remain a human being. However, the mental and spiritual privations are incalculably more evil and damaging. In his article on Solzhenitsyn, D. Blagov says that indifference to the fate of others is the most terrible form of spiritual death.\(^{11}\) The most insidious feature of the Stalinist system is that, while forcing people to denounce and spy on their neighbours if they want to stay free, i.e. forcing them to be indifferent to the fate of others, it tries to convince them that their denunciations are manifestations of their social responsibility, the supreme example of care for others. The soul of a free man with possessions, who is determined to stay free and keep what he has, even if he has to betray friends in order to do so, may be irreparably impaired by the immoral pressures put upon him.

Solzhenitsyn makes plain the effects of both physical and mental

\(^{11}\) D. Blagov(pseudonym), "A. Solzhenitsyn i dukhovnaya missia pisatel'ia", Part I, _Grani_, No. 64, 1967, pp. 116-149
torture, but concentrates our attention on those who retain their integrity and accept physical punishment. This they can do with a clear conscience, and once they have grown accustomed to the prison environment, they find unexpected reserves of strength. Solzhenitsyn's admiration for human courage and endurance is nowhere clearer than in the proud lines of the last page, as a group of zeks is taken from the sharashka to begin their journey back to the lowest circle of Hell:

Да, их ожидала тайга и тundra, полюс холода Ой-Мякоя и медные копи Джезказгана. Их ожидала опять кирка и тачка, голодная пайка сырого хлеба, больница, смерть. Их ожидало только худшее.

Но в душах их был мир.

Им владело бесстрашие людей, умеряющих все до конца, — бесстрашие, достающееся трудно, но прочно. (p.510)
CHAPTER VI

CANCER WARD

This novel is set in a central Asian hospital in the early months of 1955, some five years after the events of The First Circle. The all-pervasive mood of black despair which was dominant in Stalin's last years is lifting. There are signs that the gloom which formed the background to the earlier novel may be giving way to a change for the better. However, the essential questions posed in Cancer Ward are those of The First Circle in a different context. Cancer Ward can be read on two levels. First, on a purely medical and psychological plane, it is a detailed picture of the mysterious disease and its effects, and a penetrating study of people faced with death from it. Their private thoughts are laid before us. Their relationships with one another are examined in depth. Secondly it can be read bearing in mind the parallel between sickness in the human body, and sickness in society. The doctor's treatment of the disease can be compared to the ruler's method of government; the patient's psychological state to that of society.

There is a pronounced tendency to be over-zealous in seeking analogies, in stories about Russian prisons and hospitals, between the institution and society as a whole. It is clear, however, that in this case we are intended to do so. Solzhenitsyn states it openly in the last chapter, when Kostoglotov is told that all exiles will soon be rehabilitated:
The changes coming after Stalin's death represent a return to life after a long illness.

However, the camps and the exiles are not the only tumors afflicting society. Some of the others, which Solzhenitsyn showed us in *The First Circle*, are mercilessly examined again in this novel. Corruption is as rife at this time as it was in the days of the earlier book. Rusanov is accustomed to giving bribes to get things done. His wife tries to bribe a nurse to obtain special treatment for her husband. The black market thrives as never before. In this area the most profitable form of trade is carrying fruit to Karaganda. Chaly, a patient in the ward, makes his living by illicit trade. Snobbery is the most prominent feature of the official class. Rusanov is worried lest his son make a mistake in marriage, by marrying a factory girl or kolkhoz worker, instead of someone of his own class. Rusanov and his wife love the People, in the abstract, but they cannot endure direct contact with individual members of the People. They avoid any encounter with them at close quarters by travelling in taxis or in their own car, because they find it unpleasant to ride in packed buses with the common people. They never walk on the street because of their fear of being accosted by some uncouth representative of the masses. Kostoglotov attacks

1All quotations from the text in this chapter are from A.I. Solzhenitsyn; Rakovsky Korpuz, London: The Bodley Head (2 vols.), 1968. In Vol. I the pages are numbered 1-149 up to the end of chapter 10; numbering then starts again from 1-173. For this reason quotations from Vol. I are here marked IA, if they are from the first 10 chapters and IB if they are from chapters 11-21.
the many inequalities which exist in Soviet society. He condemns the vast difference in earnings between the official class and the working class, and Shulubin comes to his aid quoting Lenin's April Theses:

"Плата всем чиновникам не выше средней платы хорошего рабочего." С этим начинали революцию." (2.p.148)

Before a disease can be cured in man or in society, the truth must be told about the nature of the disease. This is what is not done. The doctors refuse to call cancer by its name, preferring to use euphemisms like "polyp". Patients who suspect that they have cancer do not want to have their suspicions confirmed. Even Doctor Dontsova does not want to hear her colleagues' diagnosis of her own complaint, and she refuses to look at the X-ray photographs of herself. It is standard practice in the hospital not to let patients know how serious their condition is, for fear of frightening them, and most of the patients tacitly approve of this policy. Cancer and death are the reality, the truth, which they are afraid to face. Rusanov's insistence that patients should not discuss their illnesses or death in the ward reminds us of the philosophy Solzhenitsyn attacked in the prose poem "My-to ne umriom".

Kostoglotov alone is opposed to hiding the truth. He wants to know exactly what is wrong with him and respects a doctor who has the courage to tell him that he has only a few months to live. He vehemently attacks Rusanov's attempts to keep death and the dead out of his mind:

"Ну-ка скажите, чего вы сейчас больше всего боитесь? Умереть!! А о чем больше всего боитесь говорить? О смерти! Как это называется? Лицемерие!" (1B.p.7)
He demands that the harsh truth be openly discussed. But, where the illnesses of others are concerned, he does not always obey his own principles. When Proshka is overjoyed at being discharged from the hospital, Oleg is unwilling to tell him the meaning of the four Latin words on his discharge certificate, "Tumor cordis, casus inoperabilis".

In the same way as doctors and patients avoid discussing the truth about their illnesses, so all avoid the truth about society's ills. Soviet literature does not depict present reality. It is designed to provide an escape from reality by presenting the Utopia of the future. Among the books which Rusanov's daughter brings him, he looks for one which will make him feel better, not one which might give him a better understanding of his situation:

"Литература - чтобы развлечь нас, когда у нас настроение плохое." (1B.p.177)

There is humour in his daughter's perfectly sincere affirmation that sincerity in literature is harmful:

"Искренность никак не может быть главным критерием книги. При неверных мыслях или чуждых настроениях искренность только усиливает вредное действие произведения, искренность - вредна! Субъективная искренность может оказаться против правдивости показа жизни." (1B.p.176)

One cannot, of course, talk openly about that most persistent tumour in Soviet life, the prison system. The nurse Elizaveta Anatol'evna cannot tell her son that his father is in a labour camp, although Kostoglotov tells her that she must burden him with the whole truth. Everyone must deceive himself and others. The furious argument in the ward about
the "bourgeois mentality" hinges upon self-deception too. Orthodox communists have to delude themselves into the belief that the revolution has done away with human vices. Crimes committed for oneself are explained as remnants of the bourgeois mentality. Zatsyrko and Rusanov are outraged when Kostoglotov rejects this theory and attributes such crimes to ordinary human greed, which is an ineradicable human trait.

Most adults at this time are aware of the true condition of the Soviet Union. Of the characters in this novel, Efrem, Akhmadzhan, and Lev Leonidovich have all worked in the camps. Federau and Kita are exiles. Many, like Rusanov and his family, succeed in brainwashing themselves, by not looking at the tumours, or by not seeing them for what they are. But many more, who do not delude themselves, are obliged to keep silent and hide the truth. Yet only when this truth is brought out into the open can the disease be healed.

Here the problem of collective guilt, examined already in The First Circle, arises again. After reading a story by L.N. Tolstoy, Efrem Podduev becomes greatly interested in the idea of man's conscience as a direct cause of physical illness. This notion is given added weight in the story by the fact that Shulubin is the patient most stricken by remorse, and it is he who has the most humiliating form of the disease.

The chapter "Idoly rynka" gives expression, through Shulubin, to the most damming statement of public responsibility for past events which Solzhenitsyn has yet published. It has all the force of the lines in The First Circle already quoted, but it is longer and more detailed.2 Shulubin feels an intolerable weight of guilt on his conscience.

2 See page 70.
for his albeit insignificant role in the atrocities of the past thirty years. He has, in fact, done no more than many other people. He has simply acquiesced, but by this simple, negative act, as he is acutely aware, he has helped send innocent people to the camps and to their deaths. Nobody, he assures Oleg, believed the charges levelled at the trials, but just as the peasants in Tsarist times dared not oppose the barin, so here all acquiesced. None dared to oppose the rulers.

Shulubin quotes a stanza from Pushkin:

В наш гнусный век
...
на всех стихиях человек
Тиран, предатель или узник!
(2, p. 180)

Thus he comes to the harsh conclusion that he and millions like him, who were neither tyrants nor prisoners, can only be placed in the third category.

There is no doubt that Shulubin is expressing the author's own opinion here. In his view, all who did nothing to prevent events following their course share responsibility for them. This guilt lies hidden, and the truth is suppressed, but all are aware of it. Solzhenitsyn insists that the truth be made public, and that the guilt be admitted and expunged. Only then can the cancer be healed.

If the truth is kept hidden, if the burden of guilt is not lifted from the conscience of the people, then, according to the logic of Tolstoy's idea, the millions of guilty consciences will give rise to millions more diseased minds and bodies. Society's sickness will be perpetuated ad infinitum. Solzhenitsyn's mission is to heal Soviet society by making it face the truth.
The question of means and ends, so vital in The First Circle, is is important in Cancer Ward too. It arises in the context of medical treatment, but the wider issue of national government immediately suggests itself. To Doctor Dontsova and her assistants the preservation of life is paramount. For this end all is permitted. No price is too high. In Kostoglotov's view, the value of life is over-estimated. He learns that the injections he is receiving will destroy his tumour and prevent the formation of secondaries, but, being hormone injections, they will also destroy his virility. To him, mutation of body and personality, and loss of potency is an extortionate price to pay for one's life. He would rather live his last few months as a near-normal person than live on for years as half a man.

This principle can be extended to the national level. The basic tenet of Marxism, that the end justifies any means, gives Stalin justification for using all the means in his power to keep his system alive in the hope of achieving communism. To Solzhenitsyn, the large-scale killings and prison sentences, the encouragement of the worst human vices, which characterized this period, are too high a price to pay for anything.

One is reminded here of Ivan Karamazov's rebellion against God. Ivan is appalled at the atrocities which must be forgiven if universal harmony is to be achieved. The human price which must be paid for such harmony is too high. He also says that the people of the future for whom this happiness is designed will never be at ease knowing that it has been bought at the price of the unjustly shed blood of even one tortured child. Solzhenitsyn's attitude to the hypothetical communist utopia is very close to Ivan's attitude to universal harmony.

A discussion between Kostoglotov and Dontsova recalls another of
of Ivan Karamazov's ideas, "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor". Kostoglotov rejects the doctor's notion that human life is of paramount importance, replying that what is more important is the individual's freedom to decide his own fate. Dontsova thinks that men are happier, or should be happier, if the doctor alone knows the truth about their disease, and takes upon himself the responsibility for crucial decisions to operate or to discharge. The patient should be glad to entrust this freedom and the right to know the truth to someone more competent than himself.

This is precisely the philosophy propounded by the Grand Inquisitor, and, in the majority of cases shown in this novel, it holds true. Most of the patients do find the burdens of free choice and knowledge of truth intolerable and surrender them willingly to the doctors. Kostoglotov, however, is the exception. He demands that he be told the truth and not deprived of his right to make decisions. He admits that Dontsova may be right when she says that he will return to the hospital in a few months, begging them to use any methods to cure him, thus admitting that freedom is too much for him to bear. However he understands that the philosophy is one of dictatorship, be it a benevolent dictatorship or a cruel one.

The chapter "Khoroshee Nachinanie" contains an interesting, if inconclusive, discussion between Dontsova and Lev Leonidovich about the patient's right to judge his doctor. In the early fifties, in the wake of the "doctors' plot", doctors were often regarded with suspicion. Some instances of this are shown in the novel. The discussion arises because Lev Leonidovich has just attended the trial of a doctor in a "comrades' court". The essence of his argument is that once a patient has entrusted his freedom of choice to a doctor, he has no right to pass judgment on him. As he points
out, the implications of this discussion reach far beyond the field of medicine. If his line of argument is extended, it implies that, once the individual members of society have entrusted their freedom to their ruler, to the Grand Inquisitor, they forfeit their right to pass judgment on him. Solzhenitsyn would conclude from this that the individual must guard his own freedom and his right to determine his own destiny, however difficult this may be. These freedoms must not be surrendered to anybody.

Through one of the ironic twists which Solzhenitsyn seems to relish, Doctor Dontsova is struck down by the disease which she has spent years healing. The Grand Inquisitor becomes a humble subject. There are several similar instances of sudden falls from power in Solzhenitsyn's work. Buinovsky, Namurin, Yakonov, and Rusanov are all high-ranking officials and service officers, accustomed to giving orders and being treated with respect. A sudden blow of fate, the nature of which they do not understand, turns the first two into insignificant zeks, the last into a helpless hospital patient, and leaves Yakonov quaking, terrified, before the abyss of imprisonment. Dontsova's role like theirs, is being reversed. In a few days she will be a patient in a ward. She is quite prepared to renounce her knowledge of truth and her right to make decisions, relinquishing these rights to a new "inquisitor".

Oleg Kostoglotov's past is very similar to that of the author. He is a very different character from Gleb Nerzhin, who has a lot more in common with Solzhenitsyn, but nevertheless he has many of his creator's ideas and tastes. Among other things, he shares Solzhenitsyn's view of Stalin
and his passion for truth. He also expresses the same scorn for material possessions which we find in the prose poems and Matrona's Home. Concern for material things is embodied for him in the customer in the shop who can tell the attendant the size of his collar when he buys a shirt. If a man can hold such trivia in his head he must have forgotten a lot that is more important, thinks Kostoglotov. He has no desire to be rich or to live in a luxury apartment. He wants nothing more than to live close to the land and to nature, owning nothing, but being free. He yearns to be back in the remote Kazakh sul of Ush-Terek, to sit still by the river, thinking. He despises Rusanov and his like, to whom a high salary and possessions mean everything:

"А мне не нужна пенсия," свободно докрикивал Костоглотов. "У меня вот нет ни хрен с- и я горжусь этим! И не стремлюсь! И не хочу иметь большой зарплаты - я ее презираю!" (2.p.146)

One feels that, in Solzhenitsyn's view, this healthy scorn for worldly goods is one of the positive values taught by prolonged imprisonment. Oleg is completely self-sufficient. He knows himself and his limits, and like Shukhov and Merzhin he has a clear conscience. His needs for living are the very simplest. In prison he has learned what is important, and what can be dispensed with. He has emerged a wiser and a better person. Zoya senses in him a strength and stability which she has not encountered before. She feels that he has been put to the test, and has proved himself. He has spent the hardest years of his life avidly accumulating knowledge, and found Butyrka and Krasnaya Presnya prisons the most educationally rewarding institutions he has visited. In ten years he may have forgotten how to live in
the city, but what he has learned about life in general more than compensates for this loss.

On one important point, however, Kostoglotov expresses a view which is at variance with Solzhenitsyn's. This concerns the aim of human life. To Kostoglotov it is a self-evident truth that life is given to man so that he may achieve happiness, and the first essential for happiness is a woman's love. On the evidence of The First Circle, it is fair to assume that Solzhenitsyn considers this attitude shallow and selfish. As Shulubin tells Kostoglotov, happiness is a mirage, an idol of the market place. Such a false god cannot be allowed to be the aim of human life. If all are bent on the pursuit of personal happiness for themselves a terrifying society results.

For Nerzhin, the aim of life was to develop one's inner being, so as to become a fragment of one's own people. Two characters in Cancer Ward express related views. One is Doctor Oreshechenkov, to whom the meaning of life has nothing to do with the profession which occupies most of his time:

| Смысл существования...представлялся ему не в главной деятельности людей...а в том, насколько удалось им сохранить незамутненным непродрогнувшим неисказанным - изображение вечности, зароненное каждому. | (2.p.174) |

The other is Shulubin, who, lying racked with pain after his operation, feels that some part of himself is eternal. It is indissolubly bound to something higher:

"Иногда я так ясно чувствую: что во мне - это не все я. Что-то уж очень есть неистребимое, высокое очень! Какой-то осколочек Мирового Духа." | (2.p.229) |

Lines like these suggest some kind of religious faith. However,
Christianity does not figure prominently in this book, although the one upholder of the Orthodox faith, Aunt Stiofa, is presented in a highly sympathetic light. Djomka has been taught from childhood that religion is the opium of the people and the embodiment of reaction, of use only to swindlers, yet he finds that she is one of the few people to whom he can unburden his thoughts. He is drawn to her by her cheerful kindness and her readiness to listen and understand.

In the chapter "Idoly rynka" Shulubin propounds the most positive remedy for society’s ills to be found in Solzhenitsyn's work so far. Until now he has been more concerned to pinpoint the precise nature of the disease afflicting the society he lives in. Shulubin compares a number of social systems. He dismisses capitalism at once as morally indefensible. Christian and democratic socialism seems unrealistic to him. He posits what he sees as the only true, and the only feasible, form of socialism, ethical socialism. Society must be based on love and good will among men. Local, national and international disputes should be decided not by might or by greed, but by morality. He is attracted by Soloviov’s idea of an economy based on ethics.

For all this, Shulubin will not call this system Christian socialism. The ideals which form the very basis of it are the Christian ones of love and respect for others, yet Christian socialism means something very different to him. It is a concept which he identifies in his mind with the social systems of Western Europe, where a degree of socialist superstructure is imposed on a capitalist base. Nevertheless, to all intents and purposes, the ethical socialism which he proposes appears to be Christian socialism without God and without Christ.
Solzhenitsyn has called the artistic method used in his major works "polyphony". A mass of characters are involved, all of whom are important as individuals, and whose interaction is still more vital. In neither of the long novels is there a great deal of external action, but the large number of characters provides great opportunities for discussion of the questions which interest Solzhenitsyn. Of The First Circle and Cancer Ward perhaps only the former can be said to have a plot, in the sense in which this term is generally understood in the West. This comprises Volodin's "crime", with which the novel begins, its detection, and his capture, which occurs almost at the end of the book. However, this plot is submerged, throughout the bulk of the work, beneath the everyday affairs of life in Mavrin, and wide-ranging conversations among the inmates.

The polyphonic technique enables the author to show each character from a number of different angles. In Cancer Ward, each newcomer to the ward eyes his neighbours carefully and listens to their conversations. They in turn study him, and each forms his own opinion. Thus the reader is presented with perhaps five radically different views of each character. Each private opinion reveals as much about the observer as about the observed. The same technique is used in The First Circle, but it is developed to a higher degree in the later book. In The First Circle, not every character is always seen through the eyes of another. The reader is more conscious here of the presence of the author, who, while never speaking in the first person, nonetheless sometimes speaks very obviously in his own name, as in the lines quoted on page 70.

The method of characterization used in both books is basically

\[3\] See page 70.
Tolstoyan. The characters are seen first superficially, in terms of their physical appearance, then with ever-increasing depth. Like Tolstoy, Solzhenitsyn lays stress on one distinguishing physical feature; Kostoglotov's uncontrollable hair, Rubin's thick black beard, and Sologdin's neatly trimmed beard. Frequently he couples one adjective or one simile with a name and gives it emphasis by repetition; Simochka is birdlike, the silent Shulubin is like a brooding eagle-owl.

On the whole, the language itself is laconic and studded with irony. The First Circle is particularly rich in bitter irony. However, the striking linguistic and stylistic innovations which characterized One Day... have no place here. The medium in both novels is concise, colloquial standard Russian, but it varies in places according to which character is acting as the reader's point of vantage from which to view events or the other characters. Interior monologue is important here. If the vantage point is Efrem, his unspoken thoughts will be expressed in the blunt, terse language in which he speaks; if it is Rusanov, in the bureaucratic jargon which marks his speech.

In these novels, as in most of his work, Solzhenitsyn adheres closely to the classical unities of time, space and action. The First Circle spans a period of only four days and most of the action takes place within the closely-guarded, isolated sharashka. However, we are shown central Moscow when Bobynin and Prianchikov are taken to see Abakumov and when Nershin is taken to the Lefortovsky prison to see his wife, and the stories of the prisoners' past lives expand the novel's spacial and temporal limits immensely. Spiridon's wanderings have taken him as far as the Rhine, and Adamson has spent years in exile in the far east. We learn in detail
of the events of the thirties, the show-trials, collectivization, the purges and of the cataclysmic war with Germany and its aftermath. All these we are shown in terms of the effects which they had on the ordinary insignificant citizens who have since become prisoners in the sharashka.

The same is true of Cancer Ward, which covers some three months at the most. The primary action does not move outside the hospital until the last two chapters, when Kostoglotov is discharged and goes out into the town, but again the patients' stories show us Soviet life in many aspects, both in the past and at the time of the events in the book. In one chapter, "Memories of Beauty", in the very middle of the book, the reader is transported far away from the oppressive atmosphere of the ward, where all are preoccupied with disease and death, to the remote, tranquil beauty of Ush-Terek, where Kostoglotov spent his first two years of exile. Solzhenitsyn might resent comparison with Sholokhov, who has urged extreme measures against him and all dissident writers, but this chapter inevitably recalls one of the finest passages in The Quiet Don. This passage, in which Misha Koshevoi herds horses, alone in the wild, vibrant beauty of the southern steppe, again comes right in the middle of the book, forming a welcome break in the central narrative about the savage internecine struggle of the Civil War.

As has been remarked already, the polyphonic method is used in more fully developed form in Cancer Ward than in The First Circle. Unlike The First Circle, in which one character is very close to the author, here no one character expresses the author's views. Instead, several very different and highly individual figures voice various of the author's opinions. Kostoglotov expresses more of them than the others, but
on some issues he holds opposite views too. Shulubin and Lev Leonidovich express an opinion nearer to Solzhenitsyn's on the nature of happiness and the meaning of life.

However, although such matters as the meaning of life and Shulubin's concept of moral socialism are vital, other issues are more important. As in The First Circle, the question of means and ends is crucial. But the issue which is given most weight is that of the importance of coming to terms with one's conscience, and of facing the truth about evil and disease. We are reminded of this in the closing pages of the novel.

Spared death from the tumour in his body and freed from the camps, the tumour in society, Kostoglotov ventures into freedom and makes the zoo the object of his first visit. Here he sees likenesses between all the animals and people he has known, and in his mind he divides them into groups of good and bad. The cruel yellow eyes of the tiger remind him of Stalin. But the monkey blinded by tobacco thrown in its face makes the deepest impression on him. He is again brought face to face with the perennial, baffling question of senseless evil. The unknown man who maimed this helpless creature represents Stalin to him. 4

Solzhenitsyn's answer is that society and all its individual members must face the truth about the past. Only worse harm can result from stifling the truth and hiding the guilt, which is shared by every individual who allowed atrocities to be perpetrated in his name. Only through the personal regeneration of individual people can society as a whole be restored to health.

4 If any doubt remains about this, Solzhenitsyn himself stated, at the session of the Writers' Secretariat on September 22, 1967, that this man specifically represents Stalin.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Solzhenitsyn's novels are to some extent repetitive. The same points are made again and again, in different contexts and in different terms, but always with great force and artistic skill. Now is a convenient time to summarize the important points.

All Solzhenitsyn's work exhibits an undying faith in man. Always realistic, he does not turn a blind eye to man's weaknesses. He never glosses over the fact that many people do succumb to the iniquitous pressures to which they are subjected. In the camps many zeks consented to become informers and pridurki. In the sharashkas, not a few prisoners, like Sologdin, forgot their scruples to buy their freedom. Innumerable free people, like Shulubin, chose to bend with the wind of politics, although they were convinced that the policies were wrong. However, for every one who succumbs, there is a Shukhov, a Buinovsky, a Nerzhin, a Gerasimovich, or a Kostoglotov, who does not. It is on people like these that attention is centred.

Almost all his works are set in scenes of profound gloom, yet the message which emerges from each one is not one of despair, but on the contrary, of great optimism. Cancer Ward is perhaps set in the most gloomy surroundings of all. For this reason it was vehemently attacked at the session of the Soviet Writers' Secretariat on September 22, 1967. Words
to the effect that the novel is "too gloomy to be published" occurred repeatedly. Novichesko expressed the opinion that the chapter in which Rusanov and his daughter air their view that literature should make one feel better is a caricatured scene. He failed to see that the members of the secretariat were at that moment acting out this very scene in real life. The views on literature of one Kerbabaev verge on the comical, so astonishingly similar are they to Rusanov's:

Why does the author see only the black? Why don't I write about the black? I always strive to write only about the joyful things.

In reply, Solzhenitsyn expressed surprise at this naive view of literature, and at the opinion that his novel is pessimistic and anti-humanitarian.

I absolutely do not understand why Cancer Ward is accused of anti-humanitarianism. Quite the reverse is true: life conquers death, the past is conquered by the future.¹

Here he expresses his intention that this novel in toto should be optimistic. This intention is fulfilled by the last chapters of the novel, where Kostoglotov leaves the hospital. He explores the town, which to him is as new and fresh as on the first day of creation. He boards the train for Ush-Terek a free man, owning nothing, but returning to the place he loves, and with the knowledge that his exile will soon be over. The future is conquering the past.

A central issue, stressed time and again in the long novels is

¹For the text of this discussion see appendix to A.I. Solzhenitsyn, Cancer Ward, New York: Bantam books, 1968., pp. 539-557.
the challenge to the fundamental tenet of Marxist dogma, that the end justifies the means. The First Circle shows that immoral means destroy the end by destroying the better human qualities. Blagov declares that means which involve mass killings are evil, but means which destroy a man's soul before killing him are incalculably more evil. This is the process which Solzhenitsyn shows us in his novels. Man is compelled to sell his soul for a crust of bread. Moreover, even if the means should succeed in creating the desired end, the people who live in the resulting society will not be able to live happily knowing the colossal price at which such a society was bought. "Society" is an abstract term. Its components are individual human beings, and, as Solzhenitsyn reminds us through Grachikov, human beings are more important than stones.

Solzhenitsyn's humanism always stresses the importance of the individual. This places him far from atheistic humanism, in which man, as a collective, is a measure of all things. This philosophy implies materialism, and materialism is something which Solzhenitsyn despises. The importance he attaches to the individual brings him closer to Christian humanism.

It seems likely that Solzhenitsyn came to believe in God while he was in prison, like Gleb Nerzbin. Respect for the Christian values is apparent in most of his works. Many instances have been indicated in the main body of this thesis. An important instance which has not been cited is the essay The Easter Procession.\(^\text{2}\) Here Solzhenitsyn attacks the

\(^{2}\)This essay was published in translation in Time magazine, March 21, 1969, and a slightly different version, taken from the Observer, appeared
behavior of the young spectators at the celebration of the Orthodox Easter, and the inactivity of the policemen on duty there. He suspects that the youths are officially encouraged to go and jeer at the believers and warns of the dangers of this policy. One feels that he is speaking not simply as one who upholds the right of people to believe what they like, but as a would-be worshipper himself.

Despite the emphasis on Christian virtues, Shulubin, a character who expresses a number of the author's opinions, dismisses Christian socialism as an impractical solution to Russia's problems, where one is again faced with the danger of ascribing all the thoughts of a literary character to his creator. On this basis any discussion of Solzhenitsyn's opinions can only reach tentative conclusions. Yet the social systems considered by Shulubin are the only positive suggestion for a better society to be found in Solzhenitsyn's work to date. He must, therefore have given these ideas some consideration. Shulubin is not attracted by the Christian socialist parties which have arisen in post-war Italy and West Germany. He recalls Tolstoy's unsuccessful attempts to improve peasant life by greater insistence on Christianity and dismisses them as impractical. In his view, a society in which everything, the legal code, education, foreign relations

in the Toronto Globe & Mail, April 8. This version has two important closing paragraphs which are omitted from Time magazine's version. These bring home the dangers of the politically-oriented educational system which has made the young people what they are, and of the political department which is responsible for sending them to persecute the believers. These people may turn on anybody, including their masters.

This recalls the plot of another (unpublished) story which Solzhenitsyn is reputed to have written. In it a prison camp is dismantled, the guards dismissed and their dogs given to local people as pets. The dogs are docile for a while, but then attack their masters.
and the economy, are based entirely on morality and truth is the only practical solution. If Solzhenitsyn ever has more new work published, it will be interesting to see if this idea is developed.

A determination to bring the truth into the open is the force which compels Solzhenitsyn to write. He repeatedly condemns the lies, the falsehood, and the suspicion which characterized Stalin's rule. Two lines quoted in The First Circle, from Esenin, for whom Solzhenitsyn has great admiration, illustrate how far the regime has departed from the ideals of the revolution.

Розу белую с черной жабой
Я хотел на земле повенчать...

The NKVD officer, the active upholder of the regime, who is mystified by these lines, himself resembles a black toad. Nerzhin explains the lines to him:-- the white rose of truth and the black toad of evil can never be reconciled.

Solzhenitsyn's earliest extant work, two poems written while he was in prison or camp between 1948 and 1950, show his resolution to record and reveal the truth. It was perhaps this resolution, above all which gave him the strength to survive;

Когда-нибудь в далекой темной ссылке
Дождусь, освобожу измученную память --
Бумагой, берестой в засмоленной бутылке,
Укрою повесть под хвоей, под снега заметь.
Но -- если раньше хлеб отравленный дадут?

3 Y. krug pervom, op. cit. p. 495.
As Solzhenitsyn sets out to show in Cancer Ward, a man suffering from cancer should be told the precise nature of his disease. In the same way, society must be told the whole truth about its afflictions. Only when the truth is revealed and accepted can the process of restoration to health begin. He believes that these painful preliminaries are essential if any kind of morality is ever to become a force in Soviet politics. With his implacable opposition to Stalin and all who emulate him, he hoped that if his novels were published they could help in sweeping away all such people from positions of power and clear the way for new men. Unfortunately, these same people held the power to prevent the publication of his work.

Solzhenitsyn is neither anti-Russian nor anti-Soviet. He upholds the declared principles of the Soviet state, and opposes its rulers who consistently ignore them. He has never once left Soviet territory and his love for his country makes itself felt in all his work. His desire is to see the regime return to some kind of moral basis, or, to borrow a phrase from the Czech liberals, develop communism with a human face. He does not want the destruction of Soviet society, but a radical transformation of it, in conformity with the ideals of those who made the revolution.

However, those in power will not allow Solzhenitsyn to fulfil the first essential for such a transformation, to force society to face the truth. The results would be painful to many people. The truth would touch

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4 The poem of which this is part is quoted, with another one, in D. Blagov's article (see p.17) p.136. The last line is the first line of a poem by Pushkin written in 1833.
too many guilty consciences. This fact alone ensures that The First Circle and Cancer Ward will not be published in the Soviet Union.

So far as is known, Solzhenitsyn is still living in Riazan'. He is in the anomalous position of a member of the Union of Writers who is forbidden to write. In July he was elected to honorary membership of the American Academy of Arts and the National Institute of Arts and Letters. He thus joins Pasternak and Shostakovich, the only other Russians to be honoured in this way. It is difficult to see how this can make his position in the Soviet Union any easier. At about the same time concern was being expressed about his welfare when he failed to appear for his annual July holiday in Estonia, and did not answer letters to his school in Riazan'. It is to be hoped that there is no serious reason behind this. But even if he remains free for the rest of his life, it seems most unlikely that his work will be seen in print in the Soviet Union again. The rulers of the country would like nothing more than to silence him forever. If they succeed, it will be a disaster for the Soviet intelligentsia, but one which will bring the regime into even greater disrepute.

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5*Time Magazine*, August 1, 1969.

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