VICTOR SPARRE, born in 1919, was brought up in Bergen, where his father was city librarian. Later he studied art in Oslo. In 1940, during the German invasion of Norway, he served as a private soldier and was wounded. He was afterwards active in the Resistance.

In 1955, he won a national competition for designs to replace the windows, merely modern copies, of the mediaeval Stavanger Cathedral. There followed more than twenty commissions for stained-glass windows for Norwegian churches, including the so-called 'Arctic Cathedral' in Tromsö, where his window is one of the largest works in stained glass of this century. Meanwhile, he has been a prolific painter, with major works in the Norwegian National Gallery and many other art collections throughout Norway.

He is also well known as a journalist and broadcaster, whilst during the last few years his indefatigable campaigning for human rights has helped to make his name a household word in his own country.

The Flame in the Darkness

The Russian Human Rights Struggle— as I have seen it

VICTOR SPARRE

Translated from the Norwegian by
Alwyn and Dermot McKay

Foreword by Vladimir Maximov

GROSVENOR
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TRANSLATORS' NOTE

Most of this book is translated from fresh material supplied by the author. Some passages are drawn from the author's earlier book *Stenene skal rope* (Tiden Norsk Forlag, 1974).

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Foreword

I FIRST MET Victor Sparre in Moscow in 1973 at the home of the scientist Andrei Sakharov. It was a time when there had been serious setbacks for the freedom movement in Russia and the authorities were putting every sort of pressure on those who fought for human rights. Victor radiated warmth and understanding. Such people are sometimes called big children; rather I would say he is like a wise youngster, having at once wisdom and spontaneous youthful enthusiasm. So long as there are people like this in the world, those suffering oppression need not feel they are alone.

Since then, Victor has given the Russian freedom movement and its fighters unstinted and unfailing support, and a long succession of exiles from Soviet tyranny have made for his home for friendship and counsel. His active—I almost said militant—sympathy and the practical steps he has taken have been of the greatest importance to us and have been greatly valued.

VLADIMIR MAXIMOV
Paris, December 1978

Note to the second edition

SOON AFTER PUBLICATION of *The Flame in the Darkness*, five dissidents serving long sentences in concentration camps in the USSR were exchanged in the full glare of publicity for two Soviet spies in prison in the United States. Three of the five figure in the book: Alexander Ginzburg, Edward Kuznetsov, and Georgi Vins, one of the leaders of the unofficial Baptists. The others were the pilot, Mark Dymshits, who with Kuznetsov tried to steal a plane to escape to Sweden, and the historian Valentyn Moroz, a leading personality in the fight for cultural and national independence for the Ukraine.

On a cupboard door

ON A CUPBOARD belonging to my daughter Veslemöy is a cluster of names in Russian script. They are signatures of Russian dissidents. She began asking them to write their names there some six years ago, when she realised that a succession of them was passing through her home.

When we show visitors her unusual autograph collection, we usually point to four or five of them. There is Andrei Sinyavski, the novelist whose arrest in 1965 is considered to mark the start of the dissident movement, and Alexander Galitch, playwright and sometime playboy, whose ballads of resistance and freedom are sung illicitly by youth all over the USSR today. Beside them are the signatures of Leonid Plyushch, the perfectly sane scientist who was, between 1973 and 1976, reduced to near-imbecility by massive doses of drugs in psychiatric asylums, and of Vladimir Bukovski, who nearly became a martyr for exposing Soviet misuse of psychiatry. Especially there is that of Elena Sakharov, who visited us when in Oslo to receive her husband's Nobel Peace Prize.

These very diverse individuals have one thing in common. They have all suffered for being themselves, and refusing to accommodate themselves to the harsh demands of the regime.

Solzhenitsyn's is not among the autographs. But

Veslemöy shook his work-hardened hand one cold morning at Oslo railway station, in March 1974, just a fortnight after his expulsion from Russia. He and I, together with Per Egil Hegge of *Aftenposten*, had just returned from a whirlwind tour of southern Norway, trying to find him a home in which to settle.

It was during this tour that Solzhenitsyn asked me a question fundamental to this book. 'What,' he asked me suddenly, 'makes you, a busy Norwegian painter, such a persistent fighter for the freedom of my country?'

I had to give a quick answer. 'Because I believe that the rebirth of faith will come from those who have suffered most.'

He seized my arm. 'Stop there!' he said. 'You need say no more.'

Actually, of course, mine was only a partial answer—and a full one must wait till later in this book. Here I will just mention two other things which aroused my interest. The first was that artists and scientists, rather than politicians or workers, appeared to be taking the lead. The second was the extraordinary paradox that these intellectuals seemed to have found it easier to achieve inner freedom in Soviet jails and concentration camps than we do in the comfortable West. As an artist from a family of artists, and one who believes that such inner freedom is the most important thing in life, I was drawn irresistibly into the adventures I shall now relate. But first I must give a brief sketch of how the movement of the dissidents—who like to call themselves the 'otherwise-thinkers'—arose.

Those who think otherwise

IN THE MID-THIRTIES, at the height of Stalin's Terror, an American journalist, Ralph Barnes, asked an official of the Soviet secret police why innocent people were arrested in the USSR. The Russian was so overcome by the naivety of the question that he laughed until he had to wipe the tears from his eyes. Then he explained that if only guilty people were arrested, all the others would feel safe and so be ripe for treason. He described the rationale of all Terrors.

During the decade 1935 to 1945 the world witnessed under Hitler and Stalin human slaughter on an unparalleled scale. Since 1945, when the installations were overrun by the Allied armies, the Nazis' gas chambers have been universally condemned. But Stalin's extermination camps, designed literally to work millions of people to death, have never been accorded the at least equal execration which is their due.

Simultaneously, other millions of Soviet citizens were executed, usually by a pistol held against the back of the head. In *The Gulag Archipelago*, Solzhenitsyn puts these executions into perspective. Under the Tsars, he points out, the death penalty was used 486 times between 1876 and 1905: on average 17 times a year. In the disturbed period between 1905 and 1908, 2200 people were

executed: 45 a month. Then the death penalty was abolished by the Tsar, only to be reintroduced by Lenin in 1918. From then the killings mounted in scale. The climax came in 1936, under Stalin, when a million Soviet citizens were shot; half of them stated to be criminals, half political prisoners.

In addition there were victims of famines, often in what had been the finest wheat-lands of Europe. According to the British Sovietologist Robert Conquest, the total deaths attributable to Stalin were between thirty and fifty million.

At the famous Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, Khrushchev disavowed Stalin and partially dismantled the Soviet Terror. Some millions of prisoners in the concentration camps of Siberia were released and began the long trek home, each with a slip of paper explaining that his sufferings had been groundless. Along with them went a solemn-looking emaciated ex-prisoner named Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who had just completed an eight-year sentence.

Cautious liberalisation commenced. But Khrushchev was no angel of light. His relaxations did not prevent such barbarity as the persecution of the ailing novelist and Nobel prize-winner, Boris Pasternak, which hastened him to the grave. Also, almost as soon as Khrushchev took over, he intensified the persecution of believers and initiated the mental destruction of opponents in psychiatric asylums. Stalin had spared the churches during the war because of their contribution to morale, and this continued afterwards. But during Khrushchev's first five years in office 11,500 churches were demolished or turned into warehouses or workshops—half Russia's churches. Meanwhile, the concentration camp became so much a part of the Russian Christian's way of life, that the unofficial Baptists, who took the brunt of the attacks,

trained church members in how to face arrest and imprisonment. Arrests of believers were, and are, often carried out with the utmost brutality by gangs of strong-arm KGB men armed with steel clubs.

Solzhenitsyn settled down in the town of Ryazan, far from the glare of publicity, and became a mathematics master in a local high school. He had already begun work as an author, but he did not imagine he would ever see any of his writings in print. However, in 1961, a former fellow-prisoner, Lev Kopelev, delivered Solzhenitsyn's *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch* anonymously to the literary magazine, *Novii Mir*. The editor-in-chief, Alexander Tvardovski, at once perceived that a great new writer had arisen. Since the book was an indictment of the regime, if not of the whole Soviet system, official approval at the highest level was sought before publication. Khrushchev himself gave the assent.

No one can say whether Khrushchev's part-liberalisation—of which this was an example—was tactical or sprang from a genuine desire for a milder climate. Whichever it was, parts of the great ice-sheet built up over the years began to shift; and for the first time some kind of opposition became possible in the USSR.

Movement was most discernible among the intellectuals. Hundreds of them at this time found some means of expressing a desire for greater freedom, often by signing appeals or statements.

The tactics adopted owe much to a mathematician and poet of the name of Alexander Yesenin-Volpin, now lecturing at an American university. He was one of the first of the dissidents to be subjected to forced psychiatric treatment. He has the unusual quality of being unable to lie. Whereas other 'patients' at the asylum would hide the pills they were given, Volpin swallowed his immediately, saying that to do anything else would be futile; if

asked, he would have to tell the doctors what he had done with them.

Volpin's stroke of genius was to insist on living strictly according to the laws in the constitution of the USSR. These laws guarantee a great many human rights, and the dissidents have learned to claim these rights openly and publicly, giving their full names and addresses when they do so.

When Khrushchev came to power, the youngest Soviet Academician there has ever been, Andrei Sakharov, was working on the hydrogen bomb, and was held in the highest esteem by the country's leaders. But, like Oppenheimer in America, he began to have increasing doubts about the morality of making nuclear weapons. Eventually, in 1962, he asked Khrushchev, to whom he had ready access, not to proceed with tests of the hydrogen bomb. Khrushchev reported the request to the Council of Ministers, and henceforth Sakharov was regarded as a critic of the regime.

Soon afterwards, Sakharov persuaded the Soviet Academy of Sciences to bar from membership two biologists who were followers of the bogus scientist, Lysenko, a favourite of Stalin. It was audaciously done, all the more so because Stalinism was by then reviving. The ideological secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Leonid Ilitchov, a Stalinist who was later Deputy Foreign Minister, was present when Sakharov spoke. 'Who is this impudent young man?' he demanded of the President.

'That is the creator of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, Academician Sakharov, three times a Hero of Soviet Labour,' the President replied.

But it was obvious that Sakharov had acquired a very dangerous enemy. Not long afterwards he arrived at his place of work and found the gate locked against him.

And now the regime, fearing that waters from the melting ice might collect and sweep all before them, began to blow cold once more. This was in 1966. During the next few years, the intellectuals who had put their names to critical statements, all suffered in such ways as loss of employment or entitlement to a flat, or the disruption of their children's education.

The new rigour came in with an act of savage severity. Sinyavski and his friend the author Yuli Daniel were arrested and sent to concentration camps for sending manuscripts abroad for publication. This frightened off the more timid of the freedom lovers; but it turned others into freedom fighters. Immediately afterwards, the writers Alexander Ginzburg and Yuri Galanskov issued a report on the trial and were themselves arrested, receiving, like Sinyavski and Daniel, long sentences of strict labour camp. There was now a chain reaction. Leonid Plyushch protested against the Ginzburg-Galanskov trial in an open letter. Though arrest did not immediately follow, his career was abruptly terminated.

Two years later, in 1968, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia further shocked liberal opinion in Russia and greatly added to the determination of the dissidents to resist. Seven intellectuals took part in a sit-down demonstration in Red Square. It was immediately broken up by the KGB and all seven were beaten and despatched to jail. They were sentenced to prison or asylum. Some years later I met one of them, the mathematician Victor Fainberg, just after he had been expelled to the West. When he smiled, he still revealed a mouth lacking upper front teeth, casualties of that demonstration.

In the same year, 1968, Sakharov, who now had a minor teaching job, published his manifesto, *Thoughts on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence, and Intellectual Freedom*: a challenge to the regime to introduce liberal reforms. It

created a sensation in East and West, largely because of its author's reputation in Soviet science. The regime reacted by putting new difficulties in the way of his career. He on his side further expressed his detestation of atomic weaponry and his alienation from the regime, by donating to a cancer hospital the fortune of £100,000 which he had amassed while working on the Bomb. From this time he devoted more and more of his attention to the defence of the persecuted, and he and the circle round him formed the Committee of Human Rights, which has been continuously active ever since.

In 1969, a manuscript by Solzhenitsyn was published by the YMCA Press in Paris, and he was expelled from the Soviet Writers Union. This denied him the possibility of having further work published in the USSR. It also carried an obvious threat, for as the poet Osip Mandelshtam, who died in one of Stalin's concentration camps in 1938, once said: 'We should be happy that we live in a country where the authorities take literature seriously. Only here do they kill men for writing it.'

It was expected that, even if the redoubtable Solzhenitsyn did not crawl on all fours, he would at least send no manuscripts abroad, and would keep silent at home.

But no. He issued his celebrated letter to those in the Writers Union who had meekly voted for his expulsion. 'Throw open the heavy curtains which are so dear to you,' its last sentence reads, 'you who do not suspect that the day has already dawned outside.'

To defend Solzhenitsyn in Russia at this moment took great courage, but he was not without support. Elena Sakharov tells how she met a well-known author in the street. His face had such a look of happiness that she thought he must be in love. 'His eyes shone,' she says. Shortly afterwards, she heard that he had made a public protest against Solzhenitsyn's expulsion. 'The man was

indeed in love,' Elena Sakharov declares, 'he was in love with truth.'

At about this time, I began to wonder whether there was anything we in other countries could do to help.

Over there

THE THOUGHT THAT I MUST DO SOMETHING to help Solzhenitsyn gave me no rest. I felt that if I did nothing, I would be a traitor. Night after night, I tossed and turned, until at last an idea struck me.

In Norway we have a Residence of Honour for outstanding people in the arts. It belonged originally to our great nationalist poet, Henrik Wergeland. Immediately after the war it was given to the Marxist poet, Arnulf Överland, whose poems had done much to stir resistance to the Nazis. With Överland's death, it had just become free, and my idea was that it should be offered to Solzhenitsyn.

I leapt out of bed and drafted an *Appeal to the Norwegian People*. Solzhenitsyn belonged to all mankind, I wrote. If his homeland sought to gag him, could not our little country offer him a refuge in which to continue to write?

In the morning I took this to the cultural editor of the Oslo daily *Morgenbladet*, Erik Egeland. He wrote a supporting leader and suggested I obtain more signatures; which I did, another painter and two authors joining me.

The gesture remained a gesture, but it may have done something to encourage the notion that Solzhenitsyn

should be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, which happened later that year. Per Egil Hegge, the journalist in Moscow who helped Solzhenitsyn in his contact with the Swedes over the award—and was expelled from the Soviet Union for his pains—told me how much Solzhenitsyn valued our suggestion. Indeed, he referred to it in his Nobel Speech: 'In the weeks, dangerous for me, that saw my expulsion from the Writers Union, a wall of defence, raised about me by famous writers of the world, protected me from worse forms of persecution, while the hospitality of Norwegian authors and artists made ready a roof to shelter me if I should be, as then seemed likely, exiled from my homeland.'

In this speech, Solzhenitsyn proposed non-party committees of artists and politicians who would work for intellectual freedom. He addressed first and foremost his colleagues in the arts. 'Friends,' he said, with disarming simplicity and directness, 'let us try to help, if we are worth anything at all.'

This prompted me to try to form a freedom committee of people in the arts and science. First two of us met, then five, and eventually nineteen, including Norway's foremost modern poet, Claes Gill. We founded the Solidarity Committee for Intellectual Freedom and our first action was a note to Mrs Furtseva, Soviet Minister of Culture, about her treatment of Solzhenitsyn.

It was drafted in English by Claes himself, satirical in tone and sharp as a needle. Early one morning a number of us went to his home, where, regaled with his favourite Hansa ginger beer, brought specially from Bergen, we sat round him while he stood and read his message in impeccable Oxford English. It was accompanied by appropriate gestures, and the voluminous old dressing-gown he was wearing slipped off, leaving him in his underwear. What did that matter? An imperious sweep of the arm and the

toga was restored to his shoulders. He stood there, once more a massive figure of culture and dignity.

These histrionics were not surprising in one who had recently made a name for himself as an actor in the greatest theatres of Scandinavia. I could not help comparing this many-sided bohemian with the target of his words: the cultural dictator of the USSR. It was a confrontation of spirit and naked force. A former textile-worker, Mrs Furtseva had hardly opened a literary work until the day she was given absolute power over Russia's cultural life. She had little in common with the artistic leaders of her country except a liking for vodka.

Mrs Furtseva made no reply to our protest, but Claes reminded us that we should not be guided by the results, or apparent results, of such actions: we must never fail to raise our voices when truth was assailed. He was as vehement as a Russian.

We then despatched a telegram to the Turkish Prime Minister, protesting at sentences of ten years on two professors. One had published a textbook taken to be subversive; the other had merely defended him in court.

I hoped that our next action would be to support the nomination of Sakharov for the Nobel Peace Prize. This had already been proposed some months before, in March 1973, in an open letter to the world's Press dated from Moscow and signed by Galitch and two close friends and collaborators of Sakharov, the author Vladimir Maximov and the mathematician Igor Shafarevitch.

In June, one of the leaders of the Russian émigré movement, Dr Vladimir Poremski, came to see me and handed over files containing records of Sakharov's work for human rights. He asked me to bring this information to the notice of the Nobel Committee. With this in view I raised the matter at the next meeting of the Solidarity Committee.

There was at once a long discussion of the sort which is typical of us Western intellectuals, but which the Russian intellectuals find great difficulty in understanding. The key note was the remark of a much-admired author and humanist: 'The Peace Prize can never be awarded to the man who manufactured the Bomb. Sakharov must carry that cross to the end of his days.'

In vain I pointed out that Alfred Nobel had founded the Peace Prize with money derived from the manufacture of dynamite. Only one colleague supported me: a woman, however, who knew the Soviet Union far better than any of us, having been wife of the Norwegian ambassador. She had lived in Russia for seven years and spoke fluent Russian.

So I was obliged to seek others with whom to work for Sakharov's nomination. Foremost among these was the veteran labour leader, Haakon Lie, an almost legendary figure. He had led the Norwegian auxiliaries against Franco in the Spanish Civil War, and later, during the time of the Labour Party's greatest success at the polls, had for twenty years been its General Secretary.

We were all the more keen on Sakharov's having the award because the summer of 1973 had seen serious setbacks for the dissidents. The Soviet authorities had persuaded prominent figures in the arts in Russia, including Shostakovitch and Khachaturian, to sign a letter condemning Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov. Shostakovitch later explained that his signature was obtained under duress while he was ill.

The authorities also held a Press conference in Moscow at which two noted dissidents, Pyotr Yakir, and Viktor Krasin who is now in the West, stood before television cameras and expressed regret at having exposed the regime. Yakir is the son of a Soviet general who was shot by Stalin. He was imprisoned first at the age of fourteen

and had been in prison and concentration camp longer than almost any other dissident. Both men later said that great pressure had been put on them to extract their professions of regret. Yakir said he was told that if he did not play his part his pregnant daughter would be arrested.

News now came out of Russia that Galitch had been expelled from the Writers Union. Soon afterwards we learnt that he had been expelled from the Film-makers Union also. This meant that he would now have no employment and that his position would be precarious in the extreme. So I arranged for him to be invited to lecture at the Norwegian State Theatre on Stanislavski under whom he had studied, and who was a specialist on Ibsen. However, the Soviet authorities would not let him out, and named three other men who, they claimed, were better qualified than Galitch to lecture on Stanislavski.

At that, I determined to go to Russia, by one means or another, to hand Galitch a private invitation to Norway and to assure Sakharov that a group of us intended to do all we could to see that he received the Nobel Prize.

I prepared for the mission by contacting the Russian liberation movement, Narodno-Trudovoi Soyuz, NTS, which is active both outside and inside the USSR. From these friends I obtained an excellent memorandum to transmit to Sakharov, describing the political situation in Russia as seen from the West, and a collection of Press cuttings. They also made me a hand-drawn map, showing the addresses I wished to reach in Moscow, and gave me the relevant telephone numbers, since directories are not available in the USSR. Finally, they telephoned Galitch anonymously, asking him to stay in on a certain evening—the evening of my arrival in Moscow—as he would receive an important telephone call. This was a ruse to ensure that he would be at home when I called.

Inevitably I was refused an entry visa; all the hotels

were said to be full. This difficulty was readily overcome: I booked with a package tour. We flew with SAS to Stockholm, where we joined a regular Aeroflot flight.

As we entered the Russian plane, we felt we had already arrived in the Soviet Union. Russian airliners are as modern as their Western counterparts, but they give the impression of being stale and old. The Russian air-hostesses are matrons, rather than girls, and the food, though it is of the same type as that served by Western airlines, is less crisp and fresh.

Most of the passengers were Russian. I found myself among a party from the Soviet Embassy in Stockholm. The air was heavy with expensive perfume and they made one of the most elegantly-dressed companies I had ever set eyes on. Next to me was a man of huge proportions. Like the rest of the men he was immaculately clad in a black suit and smelt of perfume, but he looked more like a boxer than a diplomat.

When one lands in Moscow, one at once meets the well-known Soviet suspicion of anything coming in from outside. The passport inspectors and customs officials carry out their duties with minute and deadly earnestness. Every millimetre of the bags of ordinary Soviet citizens was gone through. However, our tourist party was waved through without a glance at our belongings. I was greatly relieved at this, for in one of my bags was the file of Press cuttings and other things that would have been of interest to the officials.

Beyond the customs barrier our guide in Moscow was waiting to shepherd us. She was young, blonde, and good-looking, and heavily made up, like the embassy women on the plane. She introduced herself as Natasha and as she helped us on to the airport bus she addressed us in Swedish.

As we sped towards the city we peered out across

snowy landscapes. Every now and then we passed groups of shabby wooden villas, some of them so old that they leant towards each other as if for mutual support. It was astonishing to learn from Natasha that these were some of the famous dachas which well-to-do persons have as country retreats.

It was already dark—it was 3 December—when the bus pulled up in the snow-filled street outside the old-fashioned Hotel Berlin. We were to spend only three days in Moscow, so I had already decided that I must get to work at once. I slipped the home-made map into my pocket and prepared to go out. Half way across the foyer, I was halted by a rasping voice. 'Where are you off to?'

It was a woman in our party. For a moment I was filled with horror. Was she a 'stool-pigeon', set to spy on us? Or was she just a busybody with a naturally harsh voice and suspicious eyes? Doing my best to sound unconcerned, I said I was not hungry and was eager to get my first taste of Moscow, rather than of the hotel's food.

But this encounter upset me considerably and I felt full of apprehension as I walked out into the street. The fact that half the passers-by seemed to be in uniform did nothing to allay my fears. Moreover, I knew from my map that the hotel was only a stone's throw from the KGB headquarters, the Lubyanka Prison. In front of it, I had read, was a statue of the founding father of the Soviet secret police, Dzerzhinski. By going a few paces down a side road I was able to see statue and prison.

I made my way down into the Metro. It was a simple matter to buy a ticket, but how would I find the right train? In the brilliantly-lit concourse, I spotted a young man sitting by himself on a bench. I hesitated and then resolutely approached him and asked about my train in English. He looked up with a shy expression and, as he did so, I noticed he had long, sensitive fingers.

'Where are you from?' he asked.

'Norway.'

At that, he looked as though an insect had stung him. After glancing quickly around, he exclaimed, 'How marvellous! I'm a pianist and I've just added Grieg's A minor piano concerto to my repertoire.'

'And we've just had a Rachmaninov festival in Norway, with his wonderful Russian music,' I rejoined.

'That's right,' he said, his enthusiasm growing with each moment. 'Grieg and Rachmaninov are my favourites. Please let me help you.'

He put me on the right train and came in with me, all the time keeping up a lively conversation on music. However, I noticed that he continually darted cautious looks about him, and not wanting him to get into trouble for associating with a foreigner, I asked him before long to tell me how to recognise my station. He took the hint and told me, getting off himself at the next stop.

From the station I found my way easily with the help of the map to the block of flats where Galitch lived. On the first floor was a stolid-looking female concierge, who I realised would be a KGB informer. Without addressing her I found my way to apartment 37.

I pressed the bell. This, as I discovered a minute or two later, was a mistake. There was a very long pause. Then the door opened a tiny crack and I was examined. I said in German, 'I am the important telephone call.'

The door opened a fraction wider and I squeezed through, finding myself in the presence of a tall, handsome man with a brown moustache. His first words were, 'Are you a believer? We are all believers here.'

'Certainly, I am very much a believer,' I replied.

He then explained that his caution had been due to my ringing the bell. His friends walked straight in, he said,

the door being kept unlocked. When he heard my ring, he immediately suspected that it might be the KGB.

I took out his invitation to Norway and handed it to him. When he realised what it was he seized me in an embrace and profusely thanked me. However, he said, since the authorities had already once refused him permission to leave the country, he did not know how they would respond this second time.

His wife, Angelina, now appeared in a doorway which led into a sitting-room, and we were introduced. Unfortunately, she spoke neither English nor German; and that is the extent of my foreign languages. We went into the room, where Galitch and I took chairs on either side of a small table, while Angelina sat in a corner listening and smiling secretly to herself.

'We must lay our plans for your visit,' Galitch said without preliminaries. 'Whom do you want to see?'

'Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov, and Maximov.'

'Certainly you can see Sakharov and Maximov. But with Solzhenitsyn it's. . . .'

He broke off and looked dubiously at me. I smiled. 'Rumours that Solzhenitsyn is a lone wolf have reached the West,' I said.

'The man who can help us here—if anyone can—is Maximov.'

He took up the phone and plunged into an animated conversation such as one may have with a bosom friend. At the end of it he told me Maximov would ring back.

I looked about the poorly furnished room. The only object that looked new was a radio. In fact, radios are the one possession above all others that Russians must have. On the wall hung a seven-string gypsy guitar. I guessed what it was. Thousands of tapes of Galitch's songs circulate illegally. On most of them Galitch himself is the singer to his own guitar accompaniment. Probably

at that moment the sound of the guitar on the wall was going out all over the Soviet Union.

Before long, friends began to drop in, entering correctly without ringing. Angelina served sweets. A smiling young couple stood before me, and Galitch introduced the man as one of Russia's finest younger composers. 'But the authorities forbid performances of his work,' he explained, adding, 'It may be because, like you and me, he is a believer.'

I asked the young man what sort of music he wrote.

'Symphonic music. But what is the use? Mrs Furtseva has decided it is not the sort of music the people need.'

As he spoke, he looked so desperately sad that I tried to console him. 'You must continue to create,' I said. 'And you have faith: that is the most important thing in life.'

Then occurred what is seldom allowed to happen among men. He sat quietly and tears welled up in his eyes and overflowed without his making any attempt to stem them. At last he said, 'I shall continue to write, but without hope.'

It was like looking into an abyss of suffering. How often we at home had lightly said that if art is good enough it is bound to gain recognition in the end. But this is not true in the Soviet Union. Almost certainly great art is being created in Russia today which will never be seen, heard, or read by a living soul. Much of Mandelshtam's vast output of poetry in the Stalin era survives only because his widow, Nadezhda, committed it to memory.

The telephone rang. It was Maximov to report that he had got through to Solzhenitsyn outside Moscow. Solzhenitsyn remembered my name and, although he was reluctant to break off his work, he would come into Moscow to meet me. Unfortunately, our tourist party was to

leave for Leningrad before the day Solzhenitsyn proposed. However, Sakharov wanted me to come to his flat the evening after next: Maximov would be there, as would Galitch himself.

We arranged for Galitch to pick me up by taxi outside the Hotel Berlin. But this seemed to me so rash that I protested, 'Can you do that?'

He brushed aside my concern. 'You can do anything here,' he declared. I was carried back to the days of the German occupation of Norway when we of the Resistance indulged in just the same boyish defiance, like whistling in the dark.

The next day I was content to be a tourist. I saw the icons at the new Rublyev Gallery. Our party was fortunate enough to be taken round by a well-informed young woman who also worked as a restorer of icons. I told her I was a believer as well as an artist and asked her to be both reverent and thorough in her descriptions. I had nothing to complain of: on the contrary, she was enlightening in every way.

At the end of our tour, I asked her why all icon painters used reversed perspective. When she could only grope for an answer, I ventured an explanation. Uccello's introduction of perspective in the 14th century enabled an artist to create an illusion of space by making his lines converge at a vanishing point. The viewer judges the world. But the painters of icons turn perspective in the opposite direction. All their lines meet at a point in front of the picture, where the viewer stands. Now it is the picture which contemplates the viewer. The picture is not weighed in the balance, but the viewer.

I took from my pocket a colour postcard of the largest stained-glass window I have yet made, which fills the east end of the great new church in Tromsö in North Norway—often called 'the Arctic Cathedral'. I showed it to

the young woman and told her, 'It represents Christ returning to mankind.' She held the card and looked at it until tears came to her eyes. 'You are converting her,' whispered one of the party in Norwegian. She asked if she could keep the card, but I had earmarked it for Solzhenitsyn. Whatever process was set in motion by the icons and the stained glass was checked, and it was a self-possessed young woman who said goodbye to us.

Tea in Mrs Sakharov's kitchen

AT SEVEN the following night I stood outside the Hotel Berlin in the December cold and waited for Galitch. Muscovites, warmly encased, streamed by. Some blocks away the illuminated red star over the Kremlin shone its message over the city: hope for some, hopelessness for others. Such stars were on top of all the Christmas trees in the shops. Christmas trees? Officially at least they celebrated Father Winter, not the Christ Child.

My nervousness had returned, partly because I had in one hand a treacherous wine-red bag. In Oslo when I accepted it I had not thought about the colour, but now, the longer I stood there, the more conspicuous I felt it must be. In it were clothes, a gift from the Nansen family—the clan of the arctic explorer Fridtjof Nansen—to Mrs Grigorenko, wife of General Grigorenko, who was then incarcerated in a psychiatric asylum. His crime? Taking up the cause of the Crimean Tatars, who were deported *en masse* to Uzbekistan in Central Asia in 1944. I also carried presents of my own for Galitch and Solzhenitsyn, and a briefcase holding the file of Press cuttings.

I was relieved when Galitch drove up in his taxi, and smilingly beckoned me inside. He was risking much more than I was, yet he looked completely unconcerned. The

dissidents walk on a knife-edge but are resolved not to bow their heads meekly any longer. However, he had observed something I had not noticed. As the taxi moved off he remarked, 'We're being followed by two cars. The KGB are interested in your visit.'

In the taxi we exchanged gifts. I was heartily glad to be rid of the red bag. His gift to me was a record of ancient Russian church music. At length we drew up in Tchalkova Street where Sakharov lived and entered a big grey block of flats, taking a lift to the sixth floor.

Sakharov himself opened the door. He is a big diffident fellow, and he was wearing an open-necked shirt with rolled up sleeves. He was friendly; unassuming and reassuring. He had tufty hair behind his ears, which gave him a countrified air. The famous scientist might have been a tractor-driver.

Galitch and I hung up our fur coats and hats and were shown into what was plainly the Sakharovs' bedroom. On a double-bed which took up most of the room lay Elena Sakharov, with a rug over her. She greeted me and explained that she was sick. There were also two men in the room seated on chairs that were very close to the bed, simply because there was nowhere else for a chair to be. One of the men had a large head and a powerful proletarian face which he now supported on one hand. Sunk deeply in his chair, he looked a very monument of melancholy. I realised he must be Maximov and, knowing him to be an authority on the subject, I remarked, 'It is good to be with someone who knows about icons.'

He stirred himself a little. 'No. Icons cannot be known,' he replied. 'You can only live into them.'

The other man was young, lanky, and grave. He had a difficult name which I did not catch, but I gathered he was a poet. There were more chairs round the bed. I was shown into one of these, and when Sakharov and Galitch

had joined us, we made up a picture like those icon paintings which show Mary enthroned on a couch with the disciples sitting tightly packed around her.

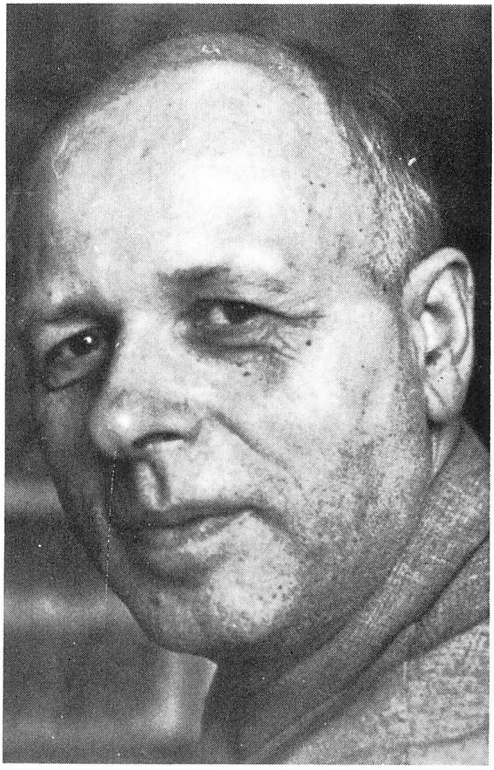
As I sat there I began to feel deeply disturbed. These people had spent years in the front-line of the battle for human rights, with all its anxiety, dangers, and hardship. During the last year, I knew, there had been little but setbacks. The determined faces were worn and grey. The well-known Russian pessimism lay, not just on Maximov, but on them all. Could I lift it a little, I wondered?

Elena, a medical doctor of an Armenian-Jewish family, may have sensed my reaction. She smiled and apologised for lying on the bed. 'The physician cannot cure herself,' she said. 'I am suffering from so many diseases. But what worries me most is my eyes.' Her sight was permanently affected when she was badly wounded while an army nurse during the war. One eye was blind.

The tiny flat with its bare furnishings is familiar to many in the West. TV cameras, including those of the BBC, have been in there. The small bedroom serves as sitting-room. It is also the only study of a great scientist, but there was no space, even for a desk.

Sakharov, as an Academician, had the right to an ample apartment, but he was at that time forbidden to occupy it, and he and his family had to crowd into this miniature dwelling, designed for two and originally the home of Elena and her mother. This was, of course, part of the psychological pressure exerted on the Sakharovs.

But their small cramped abode had become a beacon of hope for the whole far-flung empire—the only 19th-century empire that has expanded in the 20th. Tatars, Caucasians, Ukrainians, and Lithuanians, and Jews from all parts of the Soviet Union, knock on their door. The man who made what could destroy humanity has become the great humanitarian. In his flat where seven people



Andrei Sakharov, Nobel prize winner, Member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. In the 60s he was known as the father of the Soviet hydrogen bomb: by the 70s he had become 'the father of all who suffer persecution in the Soviet Union,' to use Sparre's words.
photo: Peter Reddaway

The Sakharovs in the kitchen of their tiny Moscow flat, which, says Sparre, is like 'a beacon of hope for the oppressed'.

Sparre and Solzhenitsyn during their whirlwind tour of southern Norway in 1974, seeking a home for the author. Ten days before this picture was taken, Solzhenitsyn was in a Soviet jail, facing a possible death sentence.

lived in three small rooms, it was not uncommon for three or four visitors from distant places to sleep on the floor.

The young poet had been invited along to translate into French, which he spoke with the greatest fluency. Alas! I know no French and we were obliged to proceed on the slender thread of my German, which I failed in Middle School. Galitch perched himself on the end of the bed to act as linguistic middle-man, which he did with aplomb. He was plainly at home with the Sakharovs and had in fact been one of Andrei Sakharov's closest associates in the dissident movement since 1970.

I set things going by handing Sakharov the brief-case containing the Press cuttings. They consisted of the most important articles and news reports about the dissident movement which had appeared in the Western Press during the previous six months. Sakharov fell upon them like a starving man upon food, and after a moment or two was so absorbed that he rose from his chair and began pacing back and forth in and out of the bedroom, all the time picking out fresh items and skimming through them.

We others kept up small talk until at last he came back to us, holding out to me one news report. 'You see this man in the picture?' he said. 'He's a loyal enough supporter of the regime—yet he voted against my being expelled from the Academy of Sciences. I wouldn't have dreamt he had the moral courage. A thing like that gives you hope.'

He resumed his seat and then made what was like a little speech. 'They know you are here,' he began, emphasising every word. I guessed that he was warning me that every conversation in that flat is listened to by a third party: the KGB. His next words seemed to be addressed directly to the microphones, as if he wanted the KGB to take good note of them. 'We have nothing to hide. Everyone speaks freely here. If we feel we are not free, then

we are not free. We must begin to practise our laws which guarantee us freedom of thought. We must live as though we already had our human rights.'

I had been told that when the dissidents want to keep things secret, they go out for a walk away from their microphone-stuffed flats. Alternatively, they silently pass each other written notes. Sometimes even a husband and wife in bed will exchange notes.

I said that I wanted to give them an evaluation of Russian opposition as seen by sympathisers in the West. Sakharov immediately asked, 'Who has drawn it up?'

I paused for a moment, not wanting to mention the NTS in this connection. 'Friends in the West,' I said.

'What friends?'

Again I thought it over, and again I said, 'Friends in the West.'

I then spoke—from memory, since I had not dared to bring notes—for about an hour. They listened with the utmost attention. I mentioned the injurious Press conference at which Yakir and Krasin made their bogus confessions before TV cameras. And I said, 'It seems not to have harmed the NTS.' Looks were exchanged. I realised it was possibly the first time that the NTS had been spoken of in the Sakharov flat.

They seemed encouraged by my exposition and their spirits, I thought, rose. I then raised a question that is of great consequence to those in the West who support the dissidents' fight. The Soviet biologist, Zhores Medvedev, I began, had at one time been a courageous opponent of the regime, but had since spread confusion about the dissident movement. He had claimed, for instance, that the West should have one aim only in its relations with the Soviet Union: détente. Protests at such things as arrests and forced treatment in asylums, he maintained, only harmed those concerned and, moreover, hindered

further liberalisation in the USSR. What truth was there in these contentions?

'It's very strange with these Medvedev twins,' replied Sakharov. 'There is probably no one we otherwise-thinking have done more to help when they were in trouble than Zhores and Roy Medvedev. But see what they do when others suffer! They turn around and tell the West to keep silent. Let me make it quite plain: without the active support of Western opinion we'—he threw his hand round the room—'would all be in prison. Without the Western Press no one outside would know that we exist.'

Sakharov can appear shy and reticent, but as soon as an important matter arises, he speaks with complete authority. It is not the prophet's authority, but the scientist's. His point of view is carefully thought out and defined with precision.

I then asked him to comment on the contention that those in the West supporting the dissidents were propagating the cold war.

'These accusations are also made against me,' he said. 'But I already made it clear in my manifesto of 1968, *Thoughts on Progress, Coexistence, and Intellectual Freedom*, that I recognise the need to halt the arms race and put co-operation in place of conflict. However, we cannot have genuine détente without, at the same time, freedom of speech and human rights. I fully support efforts to achieve détente through a conference on European security and co-operation'—here he referred to the forthcoming Helsinki Conference—'provided, at the same time, there are adequate guarantees of human rights. I am totally at a loss to understand people who say that we should have international agreement on such things as restricting atomic weapons, but should simultaneously desist from such just demands as the return of the Tatars

to the Crimea and a general amnesty for political prisoners.'

He then spoke again of our part in the West. 'Write of us. We beg you to,' he said. 'That is our best defence. All publicity about Soviet persecution helps its victims.' He paused and then added, 'We have laws that specifically guarantee human rights. We do not want to alter those laws, we want to have them applied. Thus, ours is not a political struggle; it is a moral struggle.'

Vladimir Maximov, who had been silent all this time, put in, 'It is Christianity.'

Once again, as I looked around, the tired faces filled me with compassion. They were like people living in an ice age, and warmer climes seemed so far, far away. I had informed them: they had informed me. Could I do more? Could I melt a little of the ice?

I did something a child might have done. I turned to Andrei and gripped his hands. 'You may not know,' I said, 'what a light you are in a dark and heartless world. You must not carry your burdens alone. An entire world of human beings is ready to share them with you.'

'You seem to understand us,' Andrei said.

'People come here and interview us,' said Vladimir. 'They want something from us, and we are glad to give it. But this is different. You are one in ten.'

Elena suddenly raised herself on the bed. 'He's one in a hundred,' she exclaimed with a laugh.

'We who have been through the German occupation and known the Gestapo understand what you are going through,' I said.

This only half convinced Andrei. 'You had a foreign invader and for a few years,' he said sadly. 'Our own countrymen are our tormentors, and we have endured for fifty years.' His words and his voice, and the obvious concurrence of the rest, brought home to me all at once

the abhorrence the Russian people feel for their government.

Throughout our conversation, I had noticed one or other of them glancing at a small table on which lay some official paper. Sakharov now picked it up and handed it to me. It was a summons from the KGB, addressed to Elena. It was in fact the fifth demand that she present herself for interrogation. After two interrogations, Sakharov had forbidden her to go again. It may well have been the first time in the history of the Soviet Union that anyone had dared to disobey such an order. 'I have informed the KGB that I alone take responsibility for her not appearing,' Andrei said.

Elena was accused of smuggling the diary of the political prisoner, Edward Kuznetsov, out of a concentration camp. At the first examination she had made it clear that she had had nothing to do with it. At the second, therefore, which lasted five hours, she sat in silence. The colonel in charge was exaggeratedly courteous: a bad sign. He did not raise his voice throughout the interview until the final minutes. Then, red in the face, he yelled at her in fury, before whispering a last threat with deadly clarity: 'Remember you are a mother.'

One of her daughters had since been expelled from university and her son, a gifted mathematician, had been refused permission to study. As Andrei told me this, there was a stifled cry from the bed. 'We can stand it all,' Elena burst out, 'except when our children suffer. That is more than we can stand.'

There was a cautious knock on the door: tea was served. We went in single file—it had to be—down the narrow passage. Elena rose from her bed of sickness and followed us. We reached a kitchen, where a table was spread for a festive little meal. There were chairs, and a sofa on which was seated a distinguished-looking, upright

old lady. It was Elena's mother. The kitchen was her home. After smiling to me, she continued knitting.

Eyeing the good things, Andrei remarked, 'You must think we live in luxury when you see such a table.'

Maximov then apologised for the fact that we would not drink a toast of welcome. Alcohol was not drunk in the Sakharovs' home on principle, he explained.

The neat white-haired head over the knitting was raised. 'If any alcohol arrives in this house, I drink it up,' the old lady said mischievously. I had already been told that she was a former Communist revolutionary. Later she had been in concentration camps for fourteen years. She said no more that evening but I knew that a sharp brain followed everything.

Elena, who was recovering with every minute, ferreted in a drawer. Suddenly a large bottle landed on the table.

'Where has that come from?' asked the scientist.

'That's my secret,' said Elena.

There was not a great deal in the bottle. No doubt it came from a neighbour. Maximov filled small glasses. 'On occasions like this one must have a symbol,' he said. But I noticed that the mother, in spite of her earlier boast, did not want even a symbol. We clinked glasses and toasted.

Maximov and Sakharov asked to hear about my work and I told them of my painting *Judge Smirnov and the Prisoner*. The prisoner is Sinyavski. Judge Smirnov, the Supreme Appeal Judge of the USSR, sits drinking tea, a large, obese figure occupying the centre of the painting. Sinyavski is a small figure to the side, standing in the dark. The picture poses the question: who is really the prisoner, who free? Sakharov commented, 'Smirnov has reached the top of the tree, but he is totally dead inside.'

I then told them of a one-man exhibition I was to hold that summer at the annual Bergen Festival, and asked

Maximov whether he would write a foreword to the catalogue. He replied immediately with the one word of German which he seemed to possess, 'Gewiss'.

We went on to discuss Galitch leaving Russia. He had been offered the chance of emigrating as a Jew. But this stuck in his gullet. He was born in the Ukraine into a middle-class family of Jewish extraction, but his passionate attachment to Russian literature and culture entirely determined his feelings of nationality. His position in Soviet Russia was almost intolerable because of angina; he could not have survived a term of imprisonment. Nevertheless, I felt I must warn him about the West. So long as he had remained on good terms with the regime, his position as an artist in the USSR was affluent and secure. In the West the artist had complete freedom to create as he wished, but he had to fight his way by talent and hard work. 'I know, I know,' replied Galitch. 'I'm afraid I may come to regret it if I get my exit permit.'

Then, in spite of the listening microphones, I raised the question of Sakharov getting the Peace Prize. There was, I said, a group of friends who were ready to do all they could to bring it about. We had the best man in Norway to work for it, I added, meaning Haakon Lie. I was only telling the KGB what they already knew.

The conversation was now lively and we talked of many things. Perhaps the most surprising was for me to tell these Russians the story of Aida Skripnikova, a girl condemned to three years in a concentration camp for handing out hand-written pamphlets about Jesus at a street corner in Leningrad.

'I saw two photographs of her,' I said, 'one when she was nineteen. A girl of unusual beauty. The beauty of an intense, passionate faith. The second photograph was of Aida Skripnikova after three years in prison. An old woman's face, wrinkled and worn, like Rembrandt's sage-

looking self-portrait. Thirty years' suffering in three years. But the face had a new kind of beauty. The beauty of fidelity. Faith radiated from that face. There was enough light flowing from that forehead to bring life into the deepest darkness.'

Except perhaps for Maximov, none of them had heard of Aida Skripnikova. If Maximov, the most widely informed about the Christian side of the opposition, did in fact know, he was unwilling to admit it before the microphones. I did not dare to look at Elena's face during my account, but I sensed that she was deeply moved by the tale. Aida was now out of prison and in a job, I concluded.

I also told them of a woman attendant in the huge Library of Atheism which a Norwegian friend visited. 'She was the one sign of life in all those canyons of books. Half in fun, he approached her and said, "Isn't it extraordinary that in spite of all these words, God still exists?"

'She looked cautiously to every corner of the room and then whispered. "Yes, yes, God lives. I am a believer too." '

The Sakharovs are not believers, but they have the greatest respect for faith in others. It is remarkable how many of Russia's dissident intellectuals have a faith, and I said, 'In the West, most of the intellectuals seem to become Communists; here they seem to become Christians.'

Maximov was the first to leave. He lived far out of town. He told me he had selected a fine icon from his collection, and that he wanted me to take it home as a gift. I was obliged to refuse it. It would have been foolish to have been arrested at the airport for smuggling antiques. But at least I know that one superb icon in Russia is mine, awaiting my return. What I was able to

accept were some amusing peasant figures for our children.

I had brought with me a Norwegian pullover for Solzhenitsyn. I also wanted him to have the postcard of the window of the Arctic Cathedral. Maximov wrapped them in the last edition of *Pravda*, making such an uncouth parcel that we all laughed heartily. I asked if it really was that day's *Pravda*; at which Elena said drily that it was a good way of using the paper, since there was no point in reading it.

When Maximov was gone, Sakharov said there was one final request he would make of me. He then got me to write down details about two scientists who were being persecuted by the regime. The first was the 41-year-old mathematician Yuri Shikhanovitch, who ten days previously had been condemned to forced treatment in a psychiatric asylum. He was evidently a close friend of the Sakharovs', for Elena reached over and took from a shelf a photograph which had been standing there, showing a youngish-looking smiling man playing with a dog.

'Does he look psychologically unbalanced?' Elena demanded.

To Sakharov's dictation I wrote down six ways in which the trial had been irregular according to Soviet law. He made me promise to publish the facts on my return. This I did, both on TV and in the Press. These were among numerous protests in the West and it was gratifying that Shikhanovitch was released a few months later. On release, he at once resumed his work for human rights.

The second case raised by Sakharov was that of Leonid Plyushch. It was the first time I had heard of him. He too was a friend of Sakharov's, who described him as a brilliant mathematician. His offence was that he was one of the fourteen founder-members of the Initiative Group for Human Rights. For six months he had been injected at

the worst of the KGB psychiatric hospitals, at Dnepropetrovsk, and the treatment was beginning to show effects.

'Plyushch is being destroyed,' put in Elena passionately.

On return I took up his case also, one of many who did this. Once again, there is little doubt that Western protests secured his release.

During all this time, Elena had been assiduously filling my plate with pastries and other dainties. But I was so taken up with the conversation that I was hardly aware of eating them. I did not observe until the very end that I was the only one who consumed more than a morsel.

Galitch and I now went for our coats and hats. When we had them on Elena patted my shoulder and said I was indistinguishable from a *krestianin*—a Russian peasant. I was pleased, all the more so since the word sounds like that for a Christian.

Outside, the KGB cars were waiting. When Galitch and I got into our taxi, they fell in behind.

Two days later I left the Soviet Union. It proved less easy to slip out than to slip in. I was no longer an anonymous and innocuous tourist. My travelling companions were waved through, but I was halted. My pockets and cases had all to be turned out. The woman KGB official who superintended this was as hard as iron. She showed no feelings whatever until she triumphantly held up a message in English in support of Sakharov. I had brought it with me from Norway to show to the dissidents and should then have destroyed it. I defended myself as best I could, saying it had been in all the Western newspapers. 'Keep it,' I said, 'and study it.'

A higher-ranking male official came over. He formed a great fascination for my sketch-book. Inside the cover was a photograph of Shikhanovitch, the mathematician

placed in the asylum. Fortunately he did not recognise it and I said, 'Oh that's just a friend of mine.'

He was far more suspicious of my pencil drawings. He studied each one of them the right way up, from the side, and upside-down. What was he after? Codes or maps? In the end I grew angry, leant over, seized the sketch-book, and hurled it into my bag, which I snapped shut. The KGB man wanted it open again, but I declared abruptly, 'I am an artist and I never let anyone study my sketches.' He hesitated and seemed to decide that no more could be done, and I was allowed to join the rest of the party.

The plane took off and set course for the West. It was night, but behind us was a blood-red streak of dawn over the Russian landscape. Ah, Russia, what opposites face each other on your soil! The human race here shows itself so hate-filled and so fiendish, so humble and so holy. Is it possible yet for the good to triumph?

In Dostoyevski's novel, *Crime and Punishment*, the hero Raskolnikov in his pride arrogates to himself the right to kill an old woman, whom he considers of less worth than himself. Without knowing why, he is unable to free himself from the crime. It is the prostitute Sonya who helps him to understand that a man breaks a holy law and destroys himself when he decides that another human being is inferior to himself. She tells him: 'You must go and stand at a cross-roads and there bow yourself to the earth which you have sullied, bow before the whole world to north, south, east, and west, and shout to each, "I have murdered." Then God will give you back your life.'

Has this begun to happen? Have the intellectuals of Russia on behalf of their nation placed themselves at the cross-roads? Has Raskolnikov's confession that every individual is of infinite worth found spokesmen in these Russians who think otherwise?

While our plane sped westwards a conviction formed in my mind. The four hours in Andrei Sakharov's home had changed my life for the second time. The first change had given me a Christian faith; this second had bound my life for ever to a band of men and women. I decided then and there that for the rest of my life, to the best of my ability, I would serve in their struggle for freedom. The two changes were complementary.

Solzhenitsyn on the bridge

BACK IN NORWAY, I threw myself into the task of familiarising public opinion with the idea that Andrei Sakharov deserved the Peace Prize. This, and submission of evidence to the Committee, is all that anyone can do to influence the award: a direct approach to any of the five members of the Committee is out of order and would be counter-productive. I wrote a series of newspaper articles on my theme and approached Members of Parliament, several of whom were ready to use their right of nomination on Sakharov's behalf for 1974.

I was becoming a marked man in some quarters. Soon after my return from Moscow, at a committee meeting of artists, a sculptor, an old-style Stalinist, sneered, 'Here comes the man who wants to kill all Communists.' My reply scarcely penetrated the wall. 'I'm not out to kill Communists: that's best left to the Communists themselves. I'm out to give Communists and capitalists alike something greater to live for.'

It was not an easy time for me to engage in a campaign. There was only about three months before the Bergen Festival, of which I had spoken to Maximov. It is the premier Norwegian music and arts festival. The invitation to show my pictures there was the greatest opportunity I had yet had as a painter. I wanted to display my best

and to have pictures which spoke as powerfully as possible of my ideas. Some suitable pictures were in my studio and others I could call in on loan, but I was anxious also to have some new works, and I launched into a series of large compositions, most of which I had to paint at night, as my days were filled with campaigning.

The two largest canvases portrayed suppression of freedom in the East and abuse of freedom in the West. The one, entitled *Forced Journey for Vladimir Bukovski*, showed the young author who has been given compulsory injection treatment in a KGB asylum. The subject of the other, *Behind the Scenes in the Free World*, was the false freedom of the West where drugs are injected voluntarily.

But another train of events had now begun, which before long was to make even greater inroads on my time. Volume One of *The Gulag Archipelago* had just been published in Russian. Since the book is a devastating indictment of fifty years of Soviet Terror, the Kremlin's fury could be counted upon. The world sat in the orchestra stalls and watched the drama draw to its climax.

Solzhenitsyn had intended to delay publication of the book until after the death of all the witnesses he interviewed to obtain material, but the KGB induced one of the women who had typed the manuscript to reveal the whereabouts of a typescript. Appalled at what she had done, she hanged herself. A deeply grieved Solzhenitsyn then saw no point in holding back publication.

He now waited for the storm to break. In a Press interview in Moscow, he declared: 'My family and I are ready for anything. I have done my duty towards those who died. The truth about them had been condemned to death, drowned, burnt to ashes. But here in *The Gulag Archipelago* that truth is alive, and no one will ever be able to erase it.'

Shortly before the New Year I had a message via Tel

Aviv and Paris that I should ring a particular number in Moscow. When I did so, it was to hear the reassuring tones of Andrei Sakharov, 'Ein gutes Neujahr!'

He was in Galitch's flat with Maximov. Galitch then took the phone and said the KGB were now indicating in the clearest manner that their power was nothing to trifle with. The campaign against the otherwise-thinking which had begun in the summer was intensifying. No one knew what would happen next.

This disturbing report was one of the many paradoxes in my dealings with the Russians. Here were persecuted dissidents talking openly to another country over a tapped telephone-line about their own persecution. Moreover, Galitch went on to say that he would make written application to leave the country and was in a dangerous intermediate position until he had an answer.

In the midst of their uncertainties and dangers, my friends had not forgotten my needs. Maximov told me he had written a foreword to the catalogue for the Festival and would send it to me. He did not mention over the phone how he meant to do this.

A few days later, I received through the post a letter which had obviously been smuggled out of Russia. It was in two envelopes, the inner one of which was of the distinctive poor-quality Russian paper. It was not from Maximov, but from Solzhenitsyn, and was a month old, having been intended to reach me before I left Moscow. It was in Russian and read:

'I am very touched by your consideration and by your gift. I count on meeting you today.

'I believe that Norway and Russia must have much in common in their northern country life (as it was, of course, not as it is today). With you too it was obviously the custom to have household utensils made of wood, just as we do.

'Recently I have also come to the conclusion that the Norwegian spirit is one of the finest and most resolute in Europe.

'I warmly shake your hand. Give my heartfelt thanks to your colleagues, who in such a moving way were ready to receive me four years ago.

'Warmest greetings, A. Solzh.'

This set my thoughts buzzing with the idea that if Solzhenitsyn was now forced into exile, Norway was the country to which he would go.

With this in mind I began painting for the Festival a full-length portrait of Solzhenitsyn entitled *The New Man*. I had just completed it, when news came over the radio that he had been arrested.

Things seemed as bad as they could be. The radio pointed out that he was charged, under Paragraph 64 of the Soviet Penal Code, with high treason, the only penalties being fifteen years' hard labour or death.

For the rest of the day, 13 February, I went about all my tasks desperately wondering what could be done to help him. That evening there was a showing of a film on the Arctic Cathedral, followed by a lecture on my work by Erik Egeland. The evening opened with a minute's silence for Solzhenitsyn, and at the close I read out a resolution which was accepted unanimously by all present. It was addressed to Kosygin and opened with the words: 'Alexander Solzhenitsyn loves his people so greatly that he faces the truth about them. He is therefore perpetuating the deep Christian tradition in Russia, which has meant so much to our civilisation.'

Early next morning, I phoned Galitch. He said that Sakharov and Maximov had spent the previous evening with Mrs Solzhenitsyn and the children. All were terribly shaken. Galitch himself was near to despair.

At noon, I went to the Soviet Embassy with the man

who had chaired the meeting the night before, and we tried to hand over our resolution. We were received by two Norwegian-speaking officials who refused to accept it. Back in the centre of town, we were greeted by a second shattering piece of news: Solzhenitsyn had been put aboard a Russian airliner and would be in Frankfurt within the hour.

I telephoned a Russian friend in Germany. 'Please make sure that the first thing to reach the exile as he steps from the plane is a warm greeting and an assurance that the invitation to Norway given four years ago still stands.'

Two hours later a telex ticked through from Norsk Telegrambyraa's correspondent in Germany: 'The Moscow plane landed an hour ago in Frankfurt. As Solzhenitsyn left the aircraft he was handed a telegram containing a warm invitation to Norway from his friend the Norwegian painter Victor Sparre.'

Solzhenitsyn had been placed on the plane with no idea of his destination. He thought it might be Vienna, which seemed to be confirmed when he saw they were descending on a large city astride a wide river. As the plane landed he stood up but was made to sit again. One of the eight KGB men escorting him went outside and after a few minutes returned. 'Put his clothes on,' he ordered. Then: 'Take him out.' Making a half-circle behind him the men herded him like an animal to the door. Then they pushed him through it. As he began to go down the gangway, he looked back. He had not been followed. Below was a man who smiled up at him and told him he was an official of the West German Foreign Ministry. He was in Frankfurt, the man told him: he was free to go anywhere, but the author Heinrich Böll was awaiting him, and if he wished, he would drive him to Böll. Solzhenitsyn

said he would go to Böll, whom he knew as a fellow Nobel prize-winner for literature.

My invitation to Solzhenitsyn to settle in Norway was reinforced the following evening by a number of youth organisations who got together to hold a demonstration to show their solidarity with the dissidents. Well-known personalities—an actress, a bishop, and an author—were asked to join the demonstration and to speak, and I was asked to make the final address. The demonstration was held in the centre of Oslo in the big University Square, which was packed by the time I came forward to speak.

I concluded with Solzhenitsyn's own words: 'Throw open the heavy curtains which are so dear to you—you who do not suspect that the day has already dawned outside.'

A lorry stood by with torches. People took them and lit them, and a procession of two thousand five hundred torch-bearers marched slowly and impressively down Drammensveien towards the Soviet Embassy. In front was a banner: 'Welcome to Norway, Solzhenitsyn.' A message was left at the embassy, which remained throughout like a house of the dead.

Solzhenitsyn stayed for a week with Böll. He was besieged by the Press, but would have little to do with them and gave no hint of where he would go next. None the less, rumours started to circulate that he would settle in Norway, and there were big headlines in Norwegian papers discussing the event in all the ways they could think of. One read, 'Will Solzhenitsyn become a Bergenser?' Acting for the two authors and two painters who had invited Solzhenitsyn to Norway four years before, Erik Egeland undertook to find a house. He obtained the offer of the former home of the novelist Sigrid Undset, a Norwegian Nobel prize-winner for literature in the Twenties. The house was called *Bjerkebakken*, Birch Hill,

and lay in the mountains behind Lillehammer in central Norway. After two days Per Egil Hegge was sent down to Frankfurt by his paper, *Aftenposten*, and we asked him to let Solzhenitsyn know that the house was available. Unlike the other journalists, Hegge was at once admitted into the Böll residence, and he was able to report to us that Solzhenitsyn liked the sound of the house and was touched by the thought of being welcome in Norway.

Soon afterwards we heard on the news that Solzhenitsyn was on a train heading north. Late that night I had a phone message from *Aftenposten*: Solzhenitsyn was on the ferry from Copenhagen to Oslo and his 'last order' before retiring was that I should be on the quay to meet him.

Next morning in the first light I arrived at the quay to find a police cordon holding back a large crowd of well-wishers and pressmen. I carried a bouquet which my wife Aase Marie had managed to organise during the night. A forlorn-looking man, also carrying flowers, approached me and said he was Solzhenitsyn's Norwegian publisher, Trygve Johansen; he had wanted to welcome the author but was stopped by security men. I told him to come with me. The security men let us through their cordon and the two of us stood on the quay with our flowers as the big Danish boat ploughed its way up the fjord in the dawn. Five broad fellows, in the international security man's uniform of a long overcoat bulging suspiciously under the arms, formed up in a line a yard behind us. A Swedish reporter beckoned me over. 'What have you thought of saying to him?' he asked.

'Nothing,' I replied truthfully.

As the ship drifted slowly towards the quay, I saw to my astonishment that Solzhenitsyn was on the bridge. The man who ten days before had languished in Lubyanka Prison now stood there in a fur hat, with a big

brass telescope slung round his waist, looking for all the world as though he were in command, not just of the ship, but of the whole situation. Here was a man who could not be exiled: the world was his homeland.

I rushed up the gangway, followed by the publisher, and in the presence of the smiling captain and owners of the vessel, and of Danish security men—as conspicuous as if they had been in mediaeval armour—I received a powerful Russian hug and kisses on both cheeks.

The journalists had by now broken through the cordon and were surging round the foot of the gangway. Solzhenitsyn, Hegge who was with him, and I forced our way past them and made for a car supplied by *Aftenposten*, in which we drove away at speed, followed by the Norwegian security men. The journalists, furious at being, as they saw it, cheated of the interview that was their due, ran to their cars and made off for the railway station, guessing rightly that Solzhenitsyn would be going up to Lillehammer and by train.

Solzhenitsyn was puzzled. He imagined that if he scowled at the pressmen and told them not to write about him, they would go quietly away. He knew all about the KGB, but nothing yet about the Western Press. Hegge knew all about the Press and tried to persuade him that if he threw these hounds just one small bone they would, for the moment, be satisfied and disappear. But he brushed this off: he had no time to waste with the newspapers, he said.

Having no wish to expose ourselves to the pressmen unnecessarily, we gyrated round Oslo until just before the train left, showing Solzhenitsyn the sights. 'What is that castle?' he asked, pointing; and we even had time and freedom to get out and take a better look at the royal palace.

The more prescient of the Press booked themselves on

the train while there was still room and travelled with us. When we got out at Lillehammer, they hired cars and followed, though kept at a distance by the security men in their car. We were making for a little farm where we were to stay for the night. There was only one road up to it with three feet of snow on either side; so when we arrived, the security men established a barrier which was impassable.

However, after long negotiations, the sluice was opened and fifty panting men and women with cameras, microphones, and notebooks came pouring up the road into the farmyard. Solzhenitsyn observed this with amusement: 'Well now,' he said to me, 'let's give them some good pictures. Let's put on a little charade. Get me the oddest clothes you can find and put on something outlandish yourself.' We made a strange pair as we marched out a few minutes later to meet the world's Press. Solzhenitsyn sported a red elf's cap.

But the Press had at last got something to gnaw and they went back to Lillehammer and Oslo where it was warmer. Once they were gone, everything was wonderfully silent and peaceful, as it is in landscapes deep in snow. Solzhenitsyn and I strolled out to enjoy it. We went into one of the farm-buildings where the animals were wintering, and listened to them nuzzling contentedly in the straw.

Solzhenitsyn contemplated them in silence. Then all at once he spat violently in front of him and burst out: 'All the misery that damned collective farm system has brought to my country! We should have agriculture like yours—each man with his own little farm.'

From the check-point the guards reported the arrival of two Swedish students. Solzhenitsyn said they were to be admitted. When they entered the farm, one of them asked me if I was Victor Sparre and if I had received

Solzhenitsyn's letter. It was he who had brought it from Russia. Solzhenitsyn and the two, who both spoke fluent Russian, withdrew and talked. Meanwhile I watched television. When the news came, I called in Solzhenitsyn to watch our afternoon's frolic, which set him roaring with laughter. I reflected on the little pantomime. On the rare occasions when he had let himself be photographed in Russia, Solzhenitsyn had always looked severe to the point of grimness. He told me once that he thought this suited the gravity of his message. But he was also a humorist. When not driven on by his tyrannical urge to write, he was lively, talkative, and charming; and he had this humour which ranged all the way from the sharpest irony to grotesque clowning. Plainly, I said to myself, the only way to reach a closer relationship with this lone wolf was through humour.

Later I talked with the Swedes in our own languages and they told me their errand. They were to go to Moscow to get from libraries and from Solzhenitsyn's own literary archives material for the work he was presently engaged on: his huge historical sequence. They said they might be sacrificing their chances of ever going to Russia again, but it was worth it.

Hegge and I were up early next morning, but not so early as our travelling companion. We breakfasted at eight and he had been writing for an hour. Our programme was to look at properties he might rent or buy. The Swedes said they would wait until we had left, drawing off the Press, and then leave quietly themselves.

We went first to the Undset house. Erik Egeland was there and when I told Solzhenitsyn the part he had played four years ago, he too got a bear's hug. The son of Sigrid Undset offered Solzhenitsyn what he told us he was proud to say was Russian vodka. But Solzhenitsyn said it was Polish and in any case he did not want strong drink. We

went over the house with great care, but Solzhenitsyn did not want to buy it. It was plain to see why: it was like a Sigrid Undset museum. An all-pervasive ghost would have had to be laid before another powerful presence could move in. We went on our way.

I soon discovered that with Solzhenitsyn every nook and cranny of the day is filled by writing with a very sharp pencil in a minuscule hand that must have been almost impossible for anyone else to read. As we drove along, followed by our faithful security men, Hegge and I told him about old customs, old buildings, and historical events. All of it went into the notebooks in the tiny writing. As the car grappled with its studs on a steep mountain road, we told him of the Viking king 'Saint' Olav, who Christianised the country, smashing the old idols with clubs and forcing the peasants to choose between Christ and death. 'Just like Russia,' he exclaimed. 'A sword was the only way to make Christians out of us too.'

Money was the least of Solzhenitsyn's worries once he had left the Soviet Union. He had the rapidly swelling royalties from his books, not to mention the Nobel prize money. He could have purchased any property in Norway and lived there in style.

One place we looked at was the beautiful home of an art-collector, who has the finest collection of modern French paintings in Norway. His residence consisted of a group of exceptionally fine old log-built houses, superbly modernised inside. The price of the estate was a million pounds. The lady of the house, an elderly distinguished-looking woman, with salmon-red hair, received us in a luxurious drawing-room, with a colossal fireplace in which a log fire blazed. We were served with champagne and Russian caviar by a white-clad butler. I

glanced at the man so recently in a Russian prison to see what he thought about all this. But he was an enigma.

We then went from room to room, as though perambulating through some delightful, intimate museum. At last she showed us into her boudoir. There, in a carved and gilt frame, hung a picture I recognised. 'This painting I love,' she confided to Solzhenitsyn. 'I would never part with it.'

Until this moment her whole attention had been given to the Nobel prize-winner for literature. But when she learnt that her beloved picture had been painted by the unnoticed Norwegian, she gaped at me, her aristocratic poise for the moment lost.

After we had left, I told Solzhenitsyn that the sale of that picture, coming at the lowest ebb of my fortunes, had saved me from starving. He remarked, 'How can you bear to part with your pictures? My works I have always with me.'

But he did not want the magnificent estate. 'I don't like luxury,' he remarked. 'I have no feeling for it.' What he sought was quiet and simplicity.

The caviar was all we ate that day until evening, and, except for water, the champagne was all we drank. Solzhenitsyn considered it a waste of time to eat or drink during the working day.

One house we went to was that of a famous Norwegian painter. As Solzhenitsyn often writes of painting in his books, I was eager to discover whether he had any deeper understanding of the subject. We stopped in front of one of the man's abstracts and I asked Solzhenitsyn what he thought of it.

'That's just emptiness,' he commented.

'But he has the most secure reputation of all living Norwegian painters,' I protested.

He pointed at the fine furniture in the room. 'He has

old chairs but paints modern pictures,' he remarked, leaving no doubt of his preference. 'I guess I'm too old-fashioned,' he added.

In the afternoon we went to the famous open-air museum, Maihaugen, in Lillehammer. It contains a 12th-century stave church, in front of which is a pillory. As I knew the place, I ran on ahead and put myself into it, with my hands chained and the lock fastened round my neck. When Solzhenitsyn came round the corner, his poker face for once filled with astonishment. As I could hardly speak in the grip of this torturous relic, Hegge had to explain. If you committed a sin or misdemeanour in the old days, this was where you went while you repented.

'Did the poor sinner go in there of his own free will or was he condemned to stand like that by others?' Solzhenitsyn asked. And when Hegge was obliged to tell him that no one went in there freely, it was obvious that the Russian was shocked to learn how we used to treat the otherwise-thinking. He loosed the chains to let me out and then went in himself. Then notes went furiously into the little book.

It was eight o'clock before we made up for our abstinence, which we did very adequately. After eating up the food, Solzhenitsyn scraped the plate clean and then polished it with a piece of bread, so that no calorie was lost.

I made a remark which showed that I assumed this was a habit from the prison camps. But he thought about this and shook his head. It was a habit from his very earliest years. At home they had lived in great hardship. Until he was forty, he had never lived in what we in the West would call a house, but a hut. And he never had enough fuel to keep it even tolerably warm in winter.

There was no lack of fuel at the farm. After the meal he went to the blazing log fire in the sitting-room and began to go through his day's notes. Some he discarded

and threw on the fire. This was another habit he could not give up, he explained. For twenty years he had thus censored away anything dangerous at the end of the day, lest the KGB made an untimely call.

He had also the modern Russian custom of tuning in regularly to news on the radio. He carried everywhere a huge battery set given him in Germany. He knew the times of the Russian news and features on Munich's Radio Liberty and listened avidly. Much of it was about him. Each step of our journey was reported.

Solzhenitsyn and I were obliged to speak German, unless we wanted Hegge to translate everything from or into Russian. We spoke German equally badly and Hegge remarked severely, 'You would drive any German teacher up the wall.'

'We do entirely without grammar,' the Man of Letters admitted cheerfully, 'but we understand each other perfectly.'

Like most Norwegians, I soon call everyone I meet by the informal *du*. Right from the start I addressed Solzhenitsyn like that, even though the word does not slip out quite so easily in German. Hegge was shocked. Solzhenitsyn himself looked at me as if to say, 'Is that really the way to address a Nobel prize-winner?' In Russian no one addresses him as *ty* (*du*) except his wife Natalia. He remarked, 'In Russia we reserve *du* for God and the Tsar.' 'But now, my dear Alexander, you are in Norway,' I pointed out.

During the evening he telephoned Natalia. This he did every evening, Hegge told me. She and the children were still in Moscow. He was deeply concerned about them and had no idea whether they would be allowed to join him. He was also desperately worried about the archives, which were so necessary for his literary work, and which could at any time have been seized by the KGB.

Next morning Solzhenitsyn announced at breakfast: 'Today I want to see a Norwegian fjord.'

We were in eastern Norway, separated from the fjords by mountains which are passable in winter only far to the north or south. But Hegge and I knew that protests were useless; we packed our bags and set off on the long journey to Aandalsnes, driven by the local policeman, and followed by the security men in their own car. We were soon free from the Press, our driver cleverly giving them the slip in the back streets of Lillehammer.

At Aandalsnes thick fog lay over the fjord and there was little to see as we strolled round the little place between towering mountains. I had not been there since a hospital ship I was in was bombed in the fjord during the war.

We were allowed a cup of coffee that day. We drank it in the station cafeteria while Solzhenitsyn listened to the news. 'They call us the three musketeers,' he reported.

We crossed a bridge when we left the station, and watched a goods-train pass underneath. Solzhenitsyn remarked, 'A man living in the suburbs of Moscow used to go to work over a bridge like this, and he liked to watch the trains. He got ten years for spying.'

Outside the town, Solzhenitsyn went off the road to relieve himself. But along came a car out of nowhere. He was now, of course, after innumerable appearances on TV and in the papers, a well-known figure. The car, full of people, pulled up and went like lightning into reverse. Cameras popped out, catching him in the act.

'Alexander Isayevitch,' I said, 'this is a great scandal. Just now the world's Press have got a picture of you expressing what you really think of the West.' A smile broke through. He gripped my arm. 'You've got humour,

Victor.' He called me *du* for the first time. I have been *du* to him ever since.

The next evening we were invited to supper by an elderly couple who had sheltered a Russian during the war. While we were still in the vestibule, the old fellow began pointing to cups and sporting photographs and telling the tales that went with them. Hegge's translation spun out these ancient exploits to twice the length, and very soon I saw from Solzhenitsyn's wrinkled brow that he was counting how many trophies were still to come and how many pages he could have written if he had been back in his bedroom. Before long he broke in with undisguised impatience: 'Haven't you any old Norwegian wooden furniture?'—his perennial interest.

In the kitchen, his wife overheard this, and though she was perplexed she put her head in. 'That table must be about fifty years old,' she said.

'I must go,' the author announced. 'I have very little time.' And off he set at a cracking pace for the hotel where we were staying, pursued by the security men, for once in wild disarray. Hegge and I made what apologies we could and followed. As he strode down the path, two paces ahead of the rest of us, Solzhenitsyn was the one calm member of our little company.

But such behaviour is not difficult to understand. Stalin stole ten years of this man's life, war took another four, and cancer, though checked, could cut off some at the end. He feels he has a lifetime's work to be done in half a lifetime. His locomotive races on towards faith and truth, and nothing that might slow the journey is permitted on the tracks. To bring home to Hegge how little time he had, he held out his big, rough hands, with the damaged right thumb, and declared: 'See! My hands are burning with the books I have not yet written.'

Over dinner in the little hotel, I told Solzhenitsyn I was

struck by his being always on the attack. He accepted my compliment by tightening his fists round his knife and fork and shadow-boxing around him. 'I don't sit and wait for the enemy to hit me,' he said. 'I strike first. I guess at the enemy's next trick. I avoid fighting on his ground. I attack when he least expects it, and where I am strongest. The KGB mustn't think they've got the initiative by deporting me. I've got something ready for them any day now.' He referred to his *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*, published shortly afterwards.

Later, when I sat alone with him, I asked him how he had come to have a faith. He was baptised, he said, at the church of St Pantaleon in the village where he was born. His earliest memories were of church-going. One day in the middle of a service, revolutionary soldiers broke in and confiscated the church's property. Later, when he was six, the family moved to Rostov-on-Don. There was a huge wall at the end of the street. Every day for ten years as he came home from school he would pass long queues of women who had been standing there for hours. What was behind the wall? Everybody knew: it was the headquarters of the secret police. The women were wives, hoping to deliver a parcel.

But like many other Soviet citizens, he gradually formed a twisted picture of what was going on behind the wall. The secret police were rooting out class enemies, and making possible the creation of a new type of man in a new workers' State. Though he was never a Party member, he became a Marxist, an idealist ready to serve the socialist State.

'How did you find your faith in the God who leads you through life?' I asked—for he had said to me that God, not the KGB, had sent him to the West.

'It happened in prison camp,' he replied. 'Like so many

others, in the misery of the camp I found my way back to my childhood faith; gradually, with no sudden change.'

At that, I handed him an icon which a young Russian couple had begged me to give their great compatriot. It was not particularly old or fine, but it meant a great deal to them. It had been a wedding present, blessed by the Orthodox priest during the marriage ceremony.

Solzhenitsyn said he did not think it right to accept the gift, but he would keep it overnight. Next morning he had written a warm greeting to the young couple. We decided to return to Oslo by train, so I offered to put the icon in my suitcase and later give it back to them. But no, Solzhenitsyn wanted to keep it a little longer. On the train, I saw the icon again, in his briefcase. 'Shall I take it now?' I asked. But this time he replied, 'I will keep the icon. It is good for me.' He took it carefully from the briefcase and propped it up behind the pillow of the couchette.

I felt I could venture a question about his books, a subject I had been careful not to touch on earlier. 'The lady who together with her husband wanted you to have the icon is writing a study of the women in your novels. But really there are very few women in them.'

'You are quite right,' he agreed. 'You must ask the lady to wait a few years. I have not yet done justice to women.'

During the journey, he glanced at me above the notebook in which he was writing, and remarked: 'I cannot think how you, a painter, can live for three days without touching your brushes.' I could have told him that once, for the sake of Truth, I had gone, not for three days, but two years, without touching a brush.

In Oslo we stayed in the luxury suite of the Grand Hotel; but he was not at his ease in such surroundings. In the Norwegian Parliament we were received by the

four Presidents, a rare honour. He tried one of the seats. 'If you settle in Norway, perhaps the people will one day give you a seat in Parliament,' I remarked, at which the President of the Nobel Committee, Aase Lionaes, put in, 'Alexander Solzhenitsyn shall have my seat.'

But Alexander Solzhenitsyn did not settle in Norway. The next morning, four days after he had set foot in Norway, my wife and I and our three daughters said goodbye to him at Oslo railway station. He settled in Switzerland. He had been there during his stay with Böll, and perhaps realised that it could offer him what he most sought: peace and quiet, anonymity, and his finger on the pulse of Europe and the West. And now he has unhappily another requirement, safety from the KGB, which has driven him from Europe to live in America.

On the estate in America's north-east, where he has finally established himself and his family, is a small lake with a rocky promontory. 'From that stone we will one day fly home to Russia,' the author has told his sons.

Solzhenitsyn's character is many-stranded. There is something melancholy and introspective about his eyes, but the forehead is high and clear. Over his right brow there is a depression. Is it the result of a blow in an accident or in the war? I rather suppose it is something he was born with. It gives to a face that would otherwise be all clarity and balance, a sense of disharmony, and tells that the man with this face is more complicated than one had at first thought. His moods of grace and charm alternate with others when he is unyielding and unapproachable.

His books are those of a man of action. He never engages in abstract argument. He describes people and their experiences; actual people and actual experiences. He himself maintains he is not an author in the commonly

accepted sense: he is not creating fantasy; he is reinstating the truth.

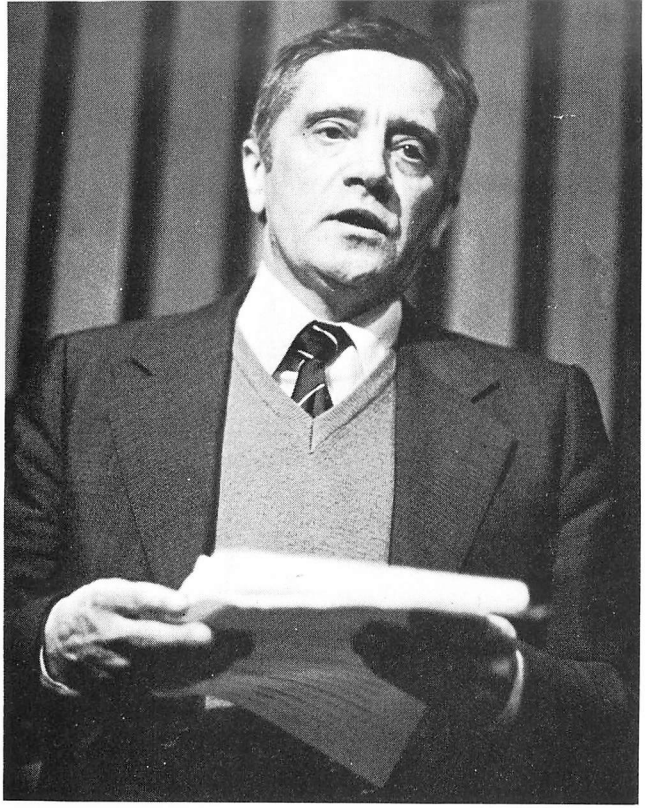
The manner of Solzhenitsyn's composing his first literary work tells much about the man. He was in a Siberian camp, working twelve hours a day in a quarry. The food was insufficient for long survival. Paper and pencil were not to be had. Yet this apparently doomed man has such a passion for writing that he composed in his mind. As poetry is easier to commit to memory than prose, he chose poetry as his medium, composing in all ten thousand lines. He made a little collar filled with pebbles and at night would let them slip through his fingers, each stone representing a line. When he was released from this camp, he at once wrote down the poem, *The Conquerors' Feast.*

Like himself, the characters in his books go through trials and sufferings, which he describes with primitive brutality. Yet in the end, like himself, his characters stay miraculously uncontaminated by evil.

After the publication of his first novel, *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch*, in 1962, *Pravda* itself made the same point, their reviewer asking: 'Why is it that as we read this remarkable novel our souls are filled, not merely with sadness, but with light? It is because of deep humanity: the human beings remain human beings, no matter what degradation they suffer.'

This is such an inspired description of Solzhenitsyn's achievement that one might have supposed it to have been written by someone deeply religious. But the words are those of a dogmatic Marxist, V. Yermilov, who had himself taken part in Stalinist purges.

Most art comes into being as an expression of the artist's personality. But the greatest art, such as that of the icons, arises when self is denied, and inspiration fills the empty space. Solzhenitsyn at the age of fourteen



Vladimir Maximov. Brought up in a succession of orphanages and in early life a bricklayer, he has become a world-famous novelist and is editor of the literary quarterly *Kontinent* which is produced in eight languages and is smuggled into the Soviet Union. *photo: Rengfelt*

Alexander Galitch, poet and playwright. His banned songs of hope and resistance to evil, sung to the accompaniment of his guitar, circulate in Russia by tape in an estimated million copies. He is seen here interviewed by a journalist at Caux in Switzerland. *photo: Freeman*

Photo: Verdens Gang

Elena Sakharov watches a torchlight procession in the main street of Oslo, held in honour of herself and her husband in 1975, after the ceremony at which she had received the Nobel Peace Prize on her husband's behalf. During the festivities in Oslo, Sakharov was standing vigil in the snow outside a court-house in Lithuania where the human rights leader Kavalov was on trial. Kavalov was condemned to nine years in prison.

President of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Aase Lionaes (right), with Elena Sakharov and Sparre. Many expected the Finnish President Kekkonen to get the peace prize for acting as host to the Helsinki Conference in the previous summer, and the award of the prize to Sakharov was widely regarded as a personal triumph for Miss Lionaes.

Photo: Gunnar Moe

began to assemble material for a great trilogy of epic novels, of which the first is *August 1914*. They were to be the crowning achievement of his life. But in his fifties he was stirred to write an entirely different but equally massive work, *The Gulag Archipelago*. His motive was no longer the creation of great literature, but a sense of a solemn obligation to the dead and the living in the prison camps. He felt the Almighty had laid on him the task of recording the truth about these sufferers.

The Gulag Archipelago is the mightiest expression of the greatest tragedy of our age. Through obeying a behest from beyond self, Solzhenitsyn has made his most magnificent contribution to the literature of the world.

When his first novel was published, the Soviet news agency *Tass* issued biographical notes on the author, which they must later have regretted bitterly:

'Alexander Isayevitch Solzhenitsyn was born in Kislovodsk in 1918. He lost his father and was brought up by his mother from his earliest years. He passed out of the middle school, and in 1941 he graduated from Rostov University in physics and mathematics.

'In 1941 he was called up into the army as a private. In 1942 after completing a course at the artillery school he was commissioned as commander of a battery, and he held this position at the front until February, 1945. He was twice decorated. In February, 1945, while a captain, and having reached East Prussia, he was arrested on false political testimony. He was condemned to eight years. These he served, but was then exiled. He returned in 1956. In 1957 he was granted full rehabilitation on the grounds that he was not guilty of any crime. He now works as a teacher of physics and mathematics.'

All this is the plain truth. Later the apparatus of propaganda was set to work to blacken him again, not only in the eyes of the Soviet people, but of the rest of the world.

Although he earns millions from his books, his life style is unchanged. While he was in Zurich he had a car, but he preferred to take the tram. He fetched the early morning milk. Some time ago on French TV, he was wearing the pullover I had given him in Moscow two years before. He still has no feeling for luxury.

The money which rolls in from publishers around the world is for the most part paid into the Russian Community's Fund. It is sent into Russia—allowed for the sake of their balance of payments—to help the persecuted and their families. The fund was originally administered in Russia by Alexander Ginzburg. The Soviet Government levies 75 per cent tax on gifts to such funds.

Solzhenitsyn writes his books standing, leaning on a tall writing-desk, old and shabby, which was brought over from Russia. He uses a pen. His work-room is barely furnished: there is a big carved table, there are chairs which were his mother's, and two icons.

The forty-year-old Natalia is the most important of his collaborators. She has undertaken as her life's work to serve her husband's authorship, correcting all his manuscripts. She also sees to it that he has peace and quiet. Anyone wishing to speak with the author must first pass the obstacle, Natalia. She is far from a nobody. She is a mathematician by training. At one time she was a keen mountaineer.

When the Soviet authorities banished Solzhenitsyn in 1974 they presumably thought they were rid, once and for all, of a troublesome voice, disturbing their consciences. No doubt, too, they hoped that wealth and flattery would soon corrupt him. They were as wrong as those in the West who believed that the fêted Nobel prize-winner would prove a pleasant, accommodating guest.

I recall how, just after the expulsion, Olav Lagerkrantz,

editor of Sweden's *Dagens Nyheter*, speaking in a studio discussion on Norwegian Radio, said: 'Now that Solzhenitsyn can no longer write from Moscow, he will lose his significance. This is probably the last time he will be discussed in the Western mass-media.' It is amusing to reflect that in the years that have followed, Lagerkrantz has regularly taken part in discussions on Solzhenitsyn in the mass-media.

Of all the Russian dissidents, only Sakharov is Solzhenitsyn's equal in stature. The two are close friends. Elena told me that when Solzhenitsyn's first child was born, he was overcome with delight, partly because he had thought that, through his years of imprisonment and exile, Stalin had robbed him of the possibility of being a father.

He felt therefore that he must celebrate his first-born, and came knocking on Sakharov's door, bringing with him a bottle of vodka, and announcing that he could spare two hours. These two men, who normally do not touch alcohol, sat down to yarn together and to drink toasts. After two hours exactly, Solzhenitsyn rose, put the cork back in the bottle, and returned to his writing.

The man who reveals so much of human personality in his writings is reticent about himself. But in the prayer he composed after the publication of *Ivan Denisovitch* we glimpse for once his own depths.

> How easy, Lord, it is for me to live with You!
> How easy it is for me to believe in You!
> When my understanding is perplexed by doubts
> or on the point of giving up,
> when the most intelligent men see no further
> than the coming evening, and know not
> what they shall do tomorrow,
> You send me a clear assurance

that You are there and that You will ensure
that not all the roads of goodness are barred.

From the heights of earthly fame I look back
in wonder at the road that led
through hopelessness
to this place whence I can send
mankind a reflection of Your radiance.

And whatever I in this life may yet reflect,
that You will give me;
and whatever I shall not attain,
that, plainly, You have purposed for others.

Brothers in arms

SOME TWO WEEKS after Solzhenitsyn's explusion from the Soviet Union, Maximov followed him to the West. His departure was voluntary. Plainly, it had become official policy to send awkward opponents abroad, or let them go. After receiving an invitation from the French PEN Club to live in Paris, Maximov applied for a visa and got it almost by return. He married just before he left and was allowed to take his wife with him. He would have been very helpless without her: he speaks no language but Russian; she is a considerable linguist.

In his best-selling novel *The Seven Days of Creation*, Maximov draws on the experience of his early life. Born in 1932 to a working-class couple in Leningrad, he had to leave home at the age of twelve because his father was imprisoned under Stalin, and later fell in the war. He spent several years in different children's homes and then, because he kept running away and joining criminal bands, in corrective camps. At eighteen he was trained as a building worker, and became a bricklayer. His thick arms still speak of it. But at their ends are fine and slender hands. Originally they were large and powerful, but after he had made an attempt to escape from a prison camp, the guards broke his hands, making them as they are today, when they always look as though they are folded.

Sometimes I have mused about them. The arms and hands are the story of his life: the toughest proletarian beginnings, leading on almost incredibly to the sensitive artist and intellectual of today.

His career as an author began with the publication of a collection of poems in 1956. Later he wrote plays and novels, and he was given the task of editing the literary magazine *Oktober*.

In 1967 his name was deleted without explanation from the list of authors permitted to publish in the USSR. In 1973 he was expelled from the Writers Union, this time accused of anti-Soviet propaganda, because he had allowed two of his books to be published abroad. Solzhenitsyn commented, 'Yes, Vladimir Maximov does not belong in the Writers Union. He has seen too much of the truth.'

Heavy and serious, Maximov seldom smiles. But when he does, it is a smile indeed reaching almost to the ears. He carries his heart on his sleeve, and perhaps for that reason is much loved. At the same time he is a dangerous enemy of all forms of lies and compromise.

From Paris, he travels indefatigably through Western Europe, as he once did through the Soviet Union. Now as then, he is the cement which holds together the powerful Russian personalities who make up the dissident movement. Some of the Russians go to pieces when torn from their milieu, but Maximov and Solzhenitsyn stand like lighthouses. They keep faith with the future. A character in one of Maximov's novels speaks for him: 'I knew that the river would one day return to its bed, if not in our life-time, at least in the time of our children.'

Like Solzhenitsyn, Maximov came to the West with high hopes. Both thought that they would return to a changed Russia within ten years; both thought that thinking Westerners would give them the fullest support in

their struggle for a moral renaissance. They were disappointed and came to realise that they could only fight with all their strength for the truth and leave the outcome in the hands of a higher Power.

Maximov has become the editor and prime mover of the dissidents' literary review, *Kontinent*. This is now internationally acclaimed, and can fairly be described as the mouthpiece of the democratic opposition of Eastern Europe. In issuing it, the exiles are following an old Russian tradition. Just as more than a hundred years ago Alexander Herzen published the anti-Tsarist review, *Kolokol*, and smuggled it into Russia, so now *Kontinent*, besides going all over Europe in eight languages, is smuggled into the Soviet Union, 1500 copies of each issue.

None of the dissidents is more typically Russian than Maximov, yet none so truly represents the universal in Man. He speaks therefore with authority to both sides of the Iron Curtain. Not guns and bombs but undeniable truth penetratingly expressed is his weapon. 'The Soviet leaders are people who will stop at nothing,' he has said. 'Where you will eat a mushroom, they will eat human flesh—I speak figuratively, to emphasise that human lives mean nothing to them. But by a quirk, political and other Mafias are very fond of respectability and sensitive to adverse publicity. They want to be man-eating tigers with a human face. Therefore when people in the West ask how they can help us, I repeat, "Publicity, publicity, publicity". '

Strangely enough, Maximov saw Galitch once years before they became friends as dissidents. It was in Galitch's early years of easy success as a writer of farce for the State theatre. One day he emerged from a Metro train, mustachioed, beautifully dressed, and twirling a silver-topped walking-stick. A youthful Maximov, clad in rags, watched the dandy go by.

After Maximov's departure for the West, the KGB continued to let Galitch know they would let him go too, but only as a Jew. I telephoned Moscow every week at this time, contacting Galitch. I would ask how he was. At best it came, 'So, so'; sometimes it was, 'I am finished.' He was in fact by then in a desperate plight; in poor health, with no prospects of a job, and selling off his furniture to buy food. However, I was determined that the decision to go into exile should be his own; and the furthest I went in the direction of persuasion was to tell him that I hoped he would sing at the opening of my exhibition in Bergen. From the other end of the wire came, 'That would be a fairy tale. And it could come true. I will apply for a visa this week.'

But still he did not do so. In the end I rang Maximov in Paris and told him the situation. Next time I rang Galitch, his tone was completely changed. Maximov had talked to him as only a Russian can talk to a Russian. Vladimir had given him hell, he said: he had immediately gone to the emigration office and handed in his application for a visa to depart as a Jew.

It came almost at once, and he and Angelina were given only three days to get their affairs in order and pack. For Jews emigrating from Russia to Israel, Vienna was used as a staging-post. I got in touch with the Norwegian Ambassador in Vienna, and arranged that when the Galitches arrived, they should be quietly spirited out of the lounge where the emigrants waited for their plane to Israel. They would then be taken to the Norwegian Embassy, provided with Nansen passports, and sent on to Norway.

As they left Moscow airport, an official tried to take from Galitch the gold baptismal cross he was wearing. He said that rather than part with it he would not fly. But he threatened that if so he would inform all accredited

foreign correspondents in Moscow of the 'unheard-of mockery and coercion', as he called it. The threat was effective, and he was allowed to keep the cross.

A few days later, Aase Marie and I welcomed the Galitches with wide-open arms at Oslo airport. Alexander carried his guitar, wrapped in an old grey cover. 'See my guitar in prison-clothes,' he said. For their first month in the West, they stayed with us.

Alexander Galitch and I never *became* friends. We had always been friends, even before we met. He was twelve days older than I; twelve days wiser. He was a prolific playwright, fourteen of what he called his 'worthless' plays having been staged in the State theatres. His first serious and honest play was rejected. He was also an outstanding film-director.

After his expulsion from the Film-makers Union, black patches began to appear on titles of his films where his name had been. By then he was unemployed and was in danger of being jailed as a parasite. 'This,' he remarked to me, 'is a very practical way of jailing people in the USSR. You take away a man's work and then arrest him for doing nothing.' Even so, he went on, he had had no wish to leave Russia if it could possibly be avoided. This, I knew, was because of the Russians' well-known belief that writers and artists can achieve greatness only if they stay in their native land. In Norway just the opposite opinion is held: it is felt that no one at home is allowed to grow above middle height. To become great, you must go abroad. Ibsen was a failure in Norway, and only when he had become established in Rome was he praised by his own countrymen as the giant of his time.

At the age of seventeen, Galitch went to study acting under Stanislavski. However, after his third year, his school report read, 'Alexander Galitch will one day become something great but it will not be as an actor.'

He took the hint and studied poetry instead; and ever since, even during the period of his barren farces, he continued to write poems and songs.

Pasternak brought a new vitality to Russian poetry by using everyday language. But in the concentration camps of Stalin a new vernacular was born: earthy, brutal, cynical, yet with its own beauty. When the millions streamed back from the camps after the death of Stalin, they transformed the Russian idiom. Galitch was a master in the use of this new language.

On warm evenings of the early summer, we would sit on our veranda overlooking the fjord, and listen to Galitch singing his songs. He would first translate for us, and then pour out all his pain and hope to the notes of the guitar.

We're buried somewhere near Narva,
  Near Narva, near Narva,
We're buried somewhere near Narva,
  We existed, but nothing more.

As we marched, so we lie,
  Two by two, two by two.
As we marched, so we lie.
  Greetings, one and all!

Neither foe nor reveille disturbs us,
  Reveille, reveille.
Neither foe nor reveille disturbs us,
  Frozen lads.

Excepting once we heard,
  So it seemed, so it seemed,
Excepting once we heard,
  Trumpets sound again.

Come on, get up, you so-and-so's,
  You so-and-so's.
Come on, get up, you so-and-so's:
  Blood's thicker than water.

If Russia calls her fallen,
  Russia, Russia,
If Russia calls her fallen,
  Things must be really bad.

He himself created both the accompaniment and the melodies, often based on folk-songs. He claimed that he merely appeared to sing, but really only spoke the words.

He was never in a concentration camp—though his brother was, for a whole twenty-five years. He sang of the outrages and sufferings of life in the USSR outside the camps.

His wider fame as a poet and singer began in the late Sixties at a national song festival in Novosibirsk. Singers from all parts of the Soviet Union came to this city of the forests, two thousand miles east of Moscow. At the airport they were greeted by an ambiguous slogan which must have sent a shiver down many spines: 'Siberia awaits you.' Galitch won the first prize at the festival—and was promptly forbidden to sing again in public.

His reply was to hold home concerts. In private apartments he sang to packed audiences. As he sang, at least ten tape-recorders would often be at work. The ten tapes each made ten more, and so on, until today it is reckoned that there are a million of them in circulation. They are even fashionable among officialdom.

His songs are full of indignation, satire, and harrowing sadness, but also faith. When he began to be known as a singer, a bishop of the Orthodox Church outside the Soviet Union wrote of him that he was the most Christian

of contemporary poets. This surprised Galitch. I think he never doubted that God believed in him, but that he should believe in God was news to him.

There followed a period of deep melancholia. He considered making an end of things. He went down to the country and drank himself into oblivion. Then in the middle of the night, he heard a voice, he said, calling him: 'Stand up.' It came again: 'Stand up.' He obeyed this time and dressed. 'Go to the river,' came the next instruction. He did so. 'Walk to the left.' And there between his feet lay an icon of the Holy Mother and Child from Kazan.

Galitch returned to the city, called on a priest, and was baptised. And he hung round his neck the cross from which he would not be parted at the frontier.

Aase Marie and I learnt from the Galitches that, provided they serve the regime obediently, intellectuals in the USSR have a very privileged—some might say aristocratic—life. They never touch such a common thing as a tool; their wives never take a scrubbing-brush. While the Galitches were with us, one of our daughters got a job in a shoe-shop. The couple from the land of the proletariat were horrified. The daughter of an intellectual! To work in a shoe-shop! Class differences, Aase Marie remarked to me, are obviously far greater in the USSR than in Norway.

All over Russia, in the woods, on mountain paths, on the beach—in the most inappropriate and unlikely places—they have posters solemnly advising citizens: 'Work ennobles Man.' But, in reality, in the 'Workers State' work is more often despised.

Eventually the Galitches obtained a flat outside Oslo. New, easy-to-erect beds were delivered by Oslo's main department store. But in the middle of their first night on their own, the poet fell through the bottom of his bed

on to the floor. Next morning he rang me in distress. 'We must get a carpenter immediately,' he said.

'No, no, I'll come round and fix it,' I told him.

When I arrived, I asked for the hammer I had given him. Very reluctantly he went for it and brought it, staring at it as though it were a snake which he did not know whether to take by the head or the tail. All that was needed was a couple of nails to hold struts in place.

The next morning again, he rang me in delight, obviously more impressed with my carpentry than with my painting. 'I slept wonderfully all night,' he assured me. 'You are a Leonardo da Vinci.' Next time I go to the land of the Hammer and Sickle, I shall take my own hammer.

The prize fight

ALL THIS TIME the Nobel debate proceeded, with more than its customary clatter. Andrei Sakharov proved a highly controversial candidate. It was sometimes difficult to believe that this amiable and peaceable man could be the cause of so much bitter dispute. More than sixty MPs of different countries nominated him, but at the same time most Norwegian politicians, as well as most of our Press, were opposed to his getting the prize. They maintained that, like Solzhenitsyn, he held such extreme views that he jeopardised both international détente and liberalisation inside Russia.

Towards the time of the announcement of the winner, much confusion was caused by Zhores Medvedev, whom Sakharov had criticised to me during my Moscow visit. Calling himself a dissident, he gave a lecture in Oslo on the dissident movement, without so much as mentioning Sakharov. In response to a question from the audience, he put forward the view that it was unwise to have a peace prize at all, since politics so often influenced the choice. As regards Sakharov, he said, he would only remark that it was up to the Committee to decide whether a man who had produced the hydrogen bomb had done anything for peace.

Later he spoke on television, maintaining that Russian

intellectuals were not interested in religion and that the Soviet regime was progressing towards democracy. A case of forced treatment in an asylum was quoted to him and he was asked to state the present position regarding the misuse of psychiatry in the USSR. He replied that he knew 'of no new case like the one quoted, during the last year'—a clever piece of evasion.

Solzhenitsyn attacked Medvedev's views in an article in *Aftenposten*. Medvedev in turn said that Solzhenitsyn had put into his mouth things he had not said. But I managed to get a tape of the TV interview and published an article in *Aftenposten* and *Morgenbladet* giving the disputed passages verbatim in English, the original language. Medvedev's words were substantially as Solzhenitsyn had quoted them.

In the meantime the announcement of the award of the 1974 Peace prize was made. It was given jointly to Sean MacBride and Eisaku Sato.

Solzhenitsyn wrote to thank me for my article, commenting, 'It is especially important for the Russian freedom movement that what goes on in the USSR is properly understood in the West. Medvedev is systematically distorting the truth in Western eyes. I can no longer hide what I think about this, all the more so because he makes out he is a good friend of mine. This is the end of such hypocrisy.'

He then turned to the subject of the prize. 'It is plain that Medvedev has been able to harm Sakharov by what he said. This grieves me. What happened to the Committee? Alas, alas! for Sakharov a bad defeat, for the Soviet regime a victory. X (a journalist who had helped to build up the reputation of Medvedev) is without clear principles and without a backbone.'

But we friends of Sakharov continued our prize fight. We had been knocked down in the first round, but we

went into the second with new fighting spirit. We did not confine our collaboration to the Nobel award. We also, for instance, took up the defence of Georgi Vins, a leader of the unofficial Baptists in the Soviet Union.

The Vins family from the Ukraine has suffered Soviet persecution for four generations, starting with Georgi's grandfather. His mother was in prison for many years, and his son Peter, also an unofficial Baptist leader and a member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Committee, was made unemployed and accused of 'parasitism'.

In March 1974, Georgi Vins was arrested for a second time and put on trial for his pastoral work. He demanded a Christian defence lawyer and appealed for one from abroad. Judge Alf Haerem, with whom I had worked closely in Moral Re-Armament, was approached by the Norwegian Mission Behind the Iron Curtain, offered his services, and was accepted by Vins. Three Norwegian MPs volunteered to accompany Haerem to Russia as observers, and I was asked to join them, partly as a link with Sakharov, who was also taking up Vins's defence. The Soviet Embassy returned our applications for visas by the next mail without comment. But both the application and the refusal were major news items in the media.

Sakharov made two appeals on behalf of Vins. The first, in September, was addressed to the World Council of Churches, asking them to intercede. It included the news that Vins had been on hunger-strike for four months. Sakharov's second appeal, in October, was signed also by three colleagues on the Human Rights Committee and was addressed to the World Council of Churches and Amnesty International. This brought a response from the World Council of Churches. Their General Secretary, Dr Philip Potter, wrote to the Soviet Minister of Justice and the Minister of Justice in the

Ukraine, where Vins was to be tried. Getting no reply, he made a further appeal, this time to the Soviet Government.

Vins's trial began on 27 January 1975 in a court in Kiev. Members of his family managed to get past the military guard throughout the five days of the trial, whilst other believers stood outside the courthouse the whole time in the intense cold. Vins was given the opportunity to defend himself, but he said only, 'My defence should have been conducted by Alf Haerem, but now I leave my whole case with my Lord Jesus.'

A sentence of five years' strict labour camp, followed by five years' exile, was announced the next day. Believers in court had flowers concealed beneath their coats. Roses, carnations, and narcissi were tossed to him, and his wife called out, 'You have won this trial.' Then his daughter, Natasha, climbed on to a seat and shouted, 'No, Father, the Church will not die.' The last five words are a line from a poem by Vins. Then, quoting from a letter which Vins's father wrote, when he was in a concentration camp in Stalin's time, she added, 'With Christ you are free in prison: but freedom without Him is prison.'

Outside the court there was now a crowd of five hundred. As Vins left the building, they stood bareheaded and sang one of his favourite hymns: *For the faith of the Gospel.* Once an outstandingly strong, fine-looking man, he had already been greatly weakened by his first sentence, and his friends wondered what a second imprisonment would do to him.

Sakharov's appeals for Vins were specially significant. It was the first time that he had made a separate statement in defence of a religious leader. For a long time there was little contact between the two great waves of opposition rolling across the Soviet Union: the dissident intellectuals,

even the Christians among them, and the Underground Church. But Sakharov has gradually come to recognise that religion will be a decisive battleground in the struggle for human rights and since the time of Vins's trial he has fully involved himself with the persecuted Christians. He feels equal concern whether those who suffer are Christians or Communists.

On the day after Solzhenitsyn's arrest, 14 February 1974, Sakharov and other dissident leaders had issued an *Appeal to Mankind*, asking for Soviet crimes against humanity to be brought before the bar of international justice. This now, in the spring of 1975, prompted a group of East European émigrés living in Denmark to initiate what became known as the *International Sakharov Hearing*. The chairman of the preparatory committee was a fiery Hungarian, Ernö Eszterhas, who had represented his country at fencing. During the Hungarian uprising he was at the barricades in Budapest. It was hard to persuade him that this was a different sort of struggle, and that when the KGB was the opponent the best weapon was not the sabre but the rapier.

He and his fellow exiles had enthusiasm in plenty but lacked finance, strategy, and a secretariat. Norway provided half the money for the enterprise, much of it coming in response to an advertisement in the Press, signed by Haakon Lie, Bishop Norderval, and myself. Danish parliamentarians provided much *savoir-faire*. Their greatest stroke was to persuade the Presidium of the Danish Parliament to place part of the Parliament building at the disposal of the Hearing. The Presidium had already hosted there a Vietnam Tribunal and a Chile Tribunal, but it takes courage of another order to mount an action seen as hostile by the USSR. Finally, nearer the time of the Hearing, a Russian woman who ran a secretarial business in Copenhagen closed it for a month to organise

the secretariat, without pay. In fact, all the organisers worked gratuitously.

Plans were made to hold the Hearing for three days in October, with witnesses recently emerged from the USSR and an examining panel of different nationalities. It was decided to confine evidence to conditions during the previous ten years.

In August, two months before the Hearing, the Helsinki Conference on European Security and Cooperation took place, attended by thirty-four Heads of State. Sakharov was anxious that the West should be fully on guard. 'I welcome détente and disarmament,' he told the Press in Moscow, 'as long as it does not entail unilateral and extremely dangerous concessions to totalitarian regimes. I am not afraid that I may harm the interests of peace by telling the truth about my country's ambitions: bitter truth is safer than sweet lies or silence.'

At Helsinki, Brezhnev extracted from the West recognition of existing frontiers in Europe; in other words, of permanent domination by the Soviet Union of Eastern Europe. The Western nations also agreed to a policy of détente and of economic and technological cooperation, which in view of the disparity of the parties in these areas meant, and means, nothing else than Western aid in building up Soviet industry and the Soviet war-machine. The Agreement thus greatly benefited Russia at the expense of the West.

However, there was one immediate gain for the West. Portugal was then in a state of ferment. The West were able to warn the USSR not to interfere, lest they destroyed the détente. The Russians were therefore obliged to stand by idle while their Communist brothers in Portugal suffered humiliating defeat.

Moreover, as time passed it became more and more clear that the West had scored some significant gains at

the Conference. As the price of agreeing to Brezhnev's wishes, they prevailed on him to put his signature to a far-reaching declaration of human rights. No doubt Brezhnev thought the West would not take this seriously, but in the end it may prove of immense importance to the cause of world freedom; only however if the democracies now stand firm and insist that the Agreement is carried out in its entirety.

A sad figure at Helsinki was a Russian violinist who had defected from a Soviet jazz orchestra in Japan. That had been many years ago and throughout the interim he had been thwarted in his efforts to get exit permits for his wife and daughter. He was now desperate and at the Conference he stalked the streets with a banner saying, 'Save my Family'. He would rush up to delegates to put his case. He also sent in petitions to Brezhnev and President Ford. But, obtaining no satisfaction from anyone, he then wrote to that last resort of the oppressed of Russia: Andrei Sakharov.

Elena had at this time, after many months of badgering officialdom, and of pressure from the West, obtained a permit to visit Italy for an operation to her eyes. On the morning when she set out on her journey, the envelope of the violinist's letter arrived in the Sakharov flat. But a KGB official had removed the contents and replaced it with a photograph of a face in which the eyes had been scratched out and skulls substituted.

It was with this ghoulish greeting from the KGB that Elena set off on her quest for new eyesight. However, the operation was successful beyond all expectations. For the first time since the war, she was able to see clearly with both eyes.

After her convalescence, she had talks with leading Italian Communists and Left-wing socialists. They discovered she was like lightning in debate. An exchange

between Elena, the Leftist Mayor of Milan, Aniasi, and the Communist Deputy Mayor, Korach, was preserved by a reporter.

ANIASI: I hope to welcome your husband to Milan.
ELENA: Wherever my husband is, he speaks out for peace and warns against the dangers of dictatorship. I am afraid you in the West have not read his new book carefully enough. Or am I mistaken?
ANIASI: Unfortunately, it was published in extracts in a reactionary paper.
ELENA: Mr Korach, you are the first Communist I have met in Italy who does not seem afraid of me. Have you read my husband's book?
KORACH: No, because I don't read such papers either. You're a doctor, aren't you?
ELENA: Yes.
KORACH: And you work in Moscow?
ELENA: For the last two years I haven't worked.
KORACH: Why?
ELENA: I don't wish to embarrass you, but I am a member of Amnesty International and my husband's wife. The chairman of the Russian Amnesty committee, a considerable mathematician, has no work either, because in September 1973 he protested at my husband being denied civil rights. And there's no unemployment benefit in our country. Friends help him as best they can. But all ordinary people have very small incomes. You comrades from the Italian Communist Party ought to find out how ordinary people live in our country. You oughtn't just to mix with officials. Have you been to Russia?
ANIASA: Korach has never been, even though he is a Member of Parliament, but I've been.
ELENA: Did you visit a private apartment?
ANIASI: Yes.

ELENA: Whose?
ANIASI: I can't remember exactly. A girl. She wanted discs. She lived with some friends.
ELENA: Well? How did they live?
ANIASI: A lot of them together.
ELENA: But how did they live materially?
ANIASI: Well, modestly.
ELENA: Perhaps that isn't quite the right word.
ANIASI: Well, they lived in the kitchen . . . quite poorly.
ELENA: In fact, very poorly. And you ought to know that people live even worse in the provinces.
ANIASI (changing the subject): But we believe that all should work together for détente, peace, and the opening of the frontiers.
ELENA: And what is the Soviet Union working for in your opinion?
ANIASI: It would take too long to say. But I believe the Soviet Union is working for this goal with the USA.
ELENA: I'm afraid that it is only the USA who is seeking good relations with the Soviet Union. And I am afraid that Italy is not working hard enough for good relations with America. I am afraid that something similar to what happened in Czechoslovakia could happen in Italy.
ANIASI (shifting his ground again): Have you been in the USA?
ELENA: For 11 months I had to fight against every imaginable difficulty to get a visa for an eye operation in Italy, and even then I only got it thanks to the Western Press and public opinion. If I'd had ten eyes, I expect that with even greater difficulty I could have got to America.
ANIASI: I've seen terrible things in New York. We want to work for socialism in democracy and freedom.
ELENA: All men have dreamt of that since the days of the Bible. My greatest dream is that our socialist State will

get us a flat with a third room where our family of seven can live.

ANIASI: But in Western Europe there is socialism with freedom.

ELENA: Oh, really? Who can explain just what Communism and socialism are? No one in our country knows. Brezhnev says we are just beginning for the first time to build up socialism. But he doesn't know what it is either.

ANIASI: We know what Fascism is, at least. We've experienced it.

ELENA: We have experienced Fascism too during the invasion of our country. And I live in a country where they say they are building socialism and Communism. It is more like Fascism.

Early in October, Elena held a Press conference in Florence, in a villa on the famous hillside above the city. I went to it with the Danish secretary of the Sakharov Hearing. The elegant room was packed with eighty of the world's Press; a TV camera rolled throughout, cameras flashed, and tapes were at work. In the centre of it all, unconcerned, Elena sat and read a message from her husband, urging the West to compel Russia to apply all the terms of the Helsinki Agreement. Afterwards she answered questions.

One was: 'Oughtn't you to keep silent about Soviet shortcomings, considering you have been permitted to leave the country for your operation?'

Elena struck back hard: 'I have no gratitude to the KGB, if that is what you mean. According to the Helsinki Agreement, travel abroad should be a right, not a concession.'

Afterwards a few of us, including Maximov, sat round a table in the garden and conferred with her about the Sakharov Hearing, now only a few weeks away. She went

through all the arrangements with care. She was especially concerned about the nationality problem. The Hearing must not become anti-Russian, she insisted, even though many of the participants would be victims of the Russification policies of the Soviet Union throughout its empire. 'Remember Andrei is a Russian,' she said.

'The Hearing must not promote hatred and revenge,' she continued. 'We cannot achieve peace in the world through hate, only through caring for people. We must tell the truth about oppression and suffering, but we must seek a new way to live together. Condemnation of the wrong-doers is not our business. All our strength must be devoted to caring for those who suffer.' She added that she had opened a bank-account in Paris for the support of children of political prisoners.

As we sat round, Maximov asked if Sakharov would get the peace prize. All of them at once stared at me. I told them I would be very, very, very surprised if Sakharov did not succeed this time.

But not all his supporters were so sure. A few days previously I had met in the street the former Prime Minister, Per Borthen, who had been one of numerous MPs nominating Sakharov. He was not hopeful. 'I don't think they dare give Sakharov the prize,' he remarked.

Betting throughout the world was on the Finnish President Kekkonen, for acting as host to the Helsinki Conference. Finnish Radio and TV had arrived in Oslo with all their equipment in anticipation of Kekkonen getting the award.

Aase Lionaes, the Nobel Committee's President, is a great art-lover, and during the summer I often saw her, and we sometimes spoke to each other, at exhibitions. On one occasion, at an Egyptian exhibition, we were in a model of a tomb which was so dark that we almost stumbled over each other; but neither then nor at any

other time did we mention the subject which was of burning interest to us both. We spoke once or twice of our common friend Solzhenitsyn. In the tomb she told me that after his challenge to the democracies of the West she had lain awake much of the night.

Shortly before the announcement was due, Sinyavski gave a lecture at the Nobel Institute, calling Sakharov 'the greatest man in Russia today'—a glancing blow at Brezhnev.

The announcement of the prize was made while I was on my way home from Florence. I had to visit London, among other things to give a lecture, mainly on art, entitled 'Dangerous for Evil', at the Westminster Theatre Arts Centre.

While the audience were assembling, I was called to the phone. It was Aase Marie in Oslo. She almost screamed over the wires: 'Sakharov has the prize.' She had spoken with a friend who was present at the announcement. It is usually a stiff, formal occasion, but Aase Lionaes had broken with this tradition. She had entered the room where the announcement is made, holding two photographs of Sakharov and beaming with pleasure, leaving no doubt that her heart was in the choice.

I walked back into the lecture-hall in London where everyone was now waiting for me to begin. I stood before the microphone and opened my mouth. Not a sound came out. My eyes ran with what could only be tears. In front of a Norwegian, or still more, a Russian audience, it would have been accepted as quite normal. But the English have such control over their feelings.

The situation was saved in the strangest manner. At that moment the room shook with a violent explosion. It was an IRA bomb in Piccadilly, half a mile away. It killed

one and injured twenty. It also shook me back into reality.

It was in fact an appropriate start for a lecture mentioning the Nobel Prize, as mine did. For the prize was financed by dynamite, a discovery of great importance to war, industry, and terrorism.

A Russian Antigone

SOME DAYS LATER, I set off from Oslo for the International Sakharov Hearing in Copenhagen, accompanied by Aase Marie, who is as passionately committed as myself to a free Russia. The award of the peace prize to Sakharov doubled the impact of the Hearing. Such was the call on the three hundred public seats, that people had to take turns to sit in the auditorium or in side-rooms with headphones. Two hundred and twenty journalists came, from all parts of the world, and the many important personages present were guarded by fifty security men, in addition to uniformed police.

With me from Norway on the examining panel was Haakon Lie. Beside me sat Simon Wiesenthal, head of the Jewish Documentation Centre in Vienna. It was his organisation which tracked down the organisers of the Nazi gas-chambers, their biggest catch being Eichmann. Over a meal, he showed Aase Marie and me a small container like a fountain-pen. 'If ever I have to use this thing,' he remarked, 'I must remember to turn away my head; otherwise I will merely fall asleep in the arms of my attackers.'

Behind me on the panel sat a man with a deep wound in his skull. He had been struck down and nearly killed in London a few days before. His doctor had forbidden

him to come, but here he was, Professor of Economics Stypulkowski, the only Polish officer in Russian hands at the beginning of the war who escaped the Katyn Massacre. The Russians let him survive in order to pump him for facts about the German economic miracle of the Thirties, on which he was an expert. In Copenhagen, before the main sessions began, he gave a talk on Katyn. During the sessions proper he put many questions about the statistics of the Soviet camps, another subject on which he is expert.

Twenty-four witnesses were called, all of them former Soviet citizens who had recently arrived in the West. The panel reached the conclusion that freedom of thought and expression, freedom of movement, both across and inside the Soviet frontiers, and freedom of religion were all curtailed in varying degrees in the period reviewed, 1965 to 1975; and that alleged infringements carried penalties in the areas of employment, housing, and education. It was concluded further, that the interests of minorities were being set aside, especially those of deported groups like the Crimean Tatars and the Volga Germans. Finally, people were being denied freedom, often in inhuman conditions in prisons, camps, and psychiatric asylums. No conclusion was reached as to their numbers, the estimates varying too greatly.

The Soviet authorities evidently feared the effect of the Hearing; for while it was in progress they held a Press conference in the Russian Embassy, to which they sent nine safe intellectuals who attempted to disprove what was established at the Hearing. One of them was presented as the Rabbi of the Jewish congregation in Moscow, but was actually the KGB controller of the synagogue and not a rabbi. Another was the physicist B. M. Vul, who had known Sakharov for thirty years. He gave it as his opinion that for a leading scientist suddenly to

interest himself in human rights to the extent of jeopardising his scientific career could only be explained in terms of psychic disorder.

But the most important speaker at the Press conference was Dr Ruben Nadzharov, one of the psychiatrists always ready to support the KGB when they want to condemn an 'otherwise-thinker' to an asylum. The theories employed on such occasions were worked out by another psychiatrist, Dr Daniel Lunts, now dead, but at that time head of the diagnostic section of the psychiatric Serbski Institute in Moscow. Lunts classed as schizophrenic persons who concerned themselves with human rights in addition to their jobs. He described three stages in this form of schizophrenia: criticism of the Soviet system, hatred of the police, and a predisposition to assassination. The task of the psychiatrist, said Lunts, is to cut short the progression at the first stage by sending those affected to asylums.

At the Sakharov Hearing were two witnesses who had known Dr Lunts's clinic from the inside. One was Victor Fainberg, who was arrested at the demonstration against the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. After his beating by the police he was sent to the Serbski Institute, where he was treated with injections. He was only saved from becoming an idiot by a young woman doctor who, when she realised she was injecting drugs into a sane man, quietly stopped. She is Marina Voikhanskaya and she was the other witness from the Serbski Institute who spoke at the Hearing.

When Nadzharov rose to address the Press conference at the Soviet Embassy, Victor Fainberg, who was among the public, also stood up and said, 'Dr Nadzharov, do you remember that the last time we met was at the Serbski Institute?' He was at once escorted from the Embassy, Nadzharov explaining that Fainberg was a sick man.

Dr Voikhanskaya was made to suffer dearly for giving evidence at the Hearing. When she left the Soviet Union, she left behind her son, Misha, but only on the understanding that he would soon be allowed to follow her. But the authorities kept the boy back for four years and only in 1979 at last allowed him to join his mother in Cambridge, where she is now practising.

When we returned to Oslo after the Hearing, the big question was: would Sakharov be allowed to come and receive his prize? After all, one of the main provisions of the Helsinki Agreement was for the free exchange of people and ideas. But the Soviet authorities soon found a formula for not letting him out: that he was in possession of State secrets. In vain, he undertook to have a KGB man at his elbow throughout his visit to Oslo; in vain, he pointed out that he had now been out of touch with military research for years. One morning in the middle of November, a deeply disappointed scientist came out of the Moscow passport office empty-handed.

However, Elena was still in the West, and had in fact stayed on for just this eventuality. Sakharov appointed her to accept the prize on his behalf.

Clearly, it would do much for the Russian public if a running commentary on the ceremony could be broadcast in Russian, beamed on the Soviet Union. Radio Liberty in Munich were anxious to do this and were granted facilities by Norwegian Radio, NRK, as were radio stations in all parts of the world. However, on 8 December, two days before the presentation of the prize, Radio Liberty were informed by telegram that for technical reasons Norwegian Radio could not make available the promised facilities: a studio and radio-link.

Fortunately, the director of Radio Liberty rang me from Munich and told me what was afoot. I in turn rang the Director of the Nobel Institute who told Norwegian

Radio that if the facilities were not made available, they would have to explain why publicly. The technical difficulties were speedily resolved.

On 10 December, Oslo University's magnificent banqueting hall, whose walls are adorned with the famous Munch paintings, was filled to capacity. In the centre sat the Royal Family, around them the Government, most of Parliament, representatives of cultural life, ambassadors, except those of Communist countries, who had refused the invitation, and friends of the prize-winner. A number of these were Russians, and they included Maximov, Galitch, and the author Victor Nekrasov.

The orchestra played a lively Norwegian composition called *The March of the Brave*, and then the President of the Nobel Committee came forward. Aase Lionaes, known among politicians in the UN as 'the lioness', is a lifelong fighter for the underprivileged and the rights of women. Life has not passed for this Social Democrat without leaving its mark. Her face is lined and furrowed, and there is something bitter about the mouth. But today she stood on the rostrum in triumph. Everyone in the hall knew that the award of the peace prize to Sakharov was for her the crown of a life of fighting injustice. The latter part of her speech was in fluent Russian. The hard face melted and radiated warmth and elation.

Then Elena rose and walked to the rostrum. It was not the customary Elena with the injured eyes, the too-large chin, and grey-streaked hair. It was Antigone who stood there. Proud and beautiful, she was at that moment the incarnation of resistance to the tyrant.

'As I speak to you,' she began, 'my husband, Andrei Sakharov, stands alone and shivering outside the locked doors of a courthouse in the USSR.' On the very day she arrived in Oslo, she went on, the trial of one of their closest friends, the biologist Sergei Kovalyov, opened in

Vilnius in Lithuania. He was accused of publishing material in the dissidents' paper, *Chronicle of Current Events*, of spreading information from the underground Lithuanian Catholic newspaper, and of handing out copies of *The Gulag Archipelago*. These, she said, were 'crimes' which could earn Kovalyov many years in prison and camp.

What great dramatist had created this tragedy? Sakharov, the Russian patriot, Hero of Soviet Labour, recipient of his country's highest honours, the Order of Lenin and the Stalin Prize, stood lonely and snubbed in the Soviet-occupied Baltic State, while at the same time he was honoured by all the free world as President Lionaes handed to his wife the peace medallion.

King Olav greeted Elena afterwards with more than his usual warmth. By this time all were Sakharov fans. Opposition to the candidature of the Russian had been widespread among Left-looking politicians, and had been general in the Press. But all was now forgotten. The Director-General of Norwegian Radio was at his most genial as he walked among the smiling guests.

In the afternoon there was a torch-light procession in honour of Sakharov. It had been organised by the Solidarity Committee, who had overcome their objections to Sakharov getting the prize. At the fore marched Eigil Nansen, grandson of Fridtjof Nansen, the polar explorer, who was another great champion of freedom, and a Nobel Peace Prize winner for his relief work in the Ukraine after the civil war.

Elena watched the march from the balcony of the Grand Hotel, her head swathed in a scarf against the bitter cold. As the marchers passed her—among them Haakon Lie, who preferred to march with the people, rather than attend the Nobel banquet—they shouted up

in Norwegian and Russian, 'Long live Elena and Andrei Sakharov!'

But I wondered if the Sakharovs would live long. I thought of the German pacifist Ossietzki, who was awarded the prize in 1936 when he was in a Nazi concentration camp, where he later died. And Albert Luthuli, who was allowed to come to Oslo for his prize, but died soon afterwards in the little village where he was kept under house arrest by the South African Government. And Martin Luther King, assassinated by a hired murderer a year after he received the prize. Andrei Sakharov is in a like case; his environment fully as hostile as theirs. If he were to sit quiet and do nothing, he would soon be forgotten, and his one protection against destruction would be gone. The KGB would take him away; there would be a few barks in the Press of the free world, and he and Elena would be heard of no more. However, he will be determined not to let the initiative slip from him. He may be arrested, not once, but many times. But, active, he will have protection, and will be no less dangerous to the KGB in prison than outside.

At the banquet all of us except the Russian guests were dressed up like penguins in tail-coats. The Russians, in ordinary dark suits, smiled at us, Maximov calling us capitalists. But I was able to introduce him afterwards to the President of the Parliament, Guttorm Hansen, every bit as much a proletarian as himself. At the meal Hansen made an outstanding speech. 'Work for peace must begin in one's own life,' he said. 'To build a world without fear, we must be without fear. To create justice, we must be just. We cannot fight for freedom unless we are free in our minds. We cannot ask others to sacrifice unless we are ready to sacrifice. The Nobel Committee has honoured a man who is in this tradition.'

He then read from a poem by the Russian poet, Anna

Akhmatova: 'After my death I want people to remember me as I stood in the queue day after day outside the prison where my dear ones suffered.' A silence fell around the loaded tables as one and all thought of Sakharov standing outside the courthouse in Lithuania.

Elena was once more like a symbol of a victorious idea. But she showed too her womanliness. After she had delivered her husband's powerful Nobel Speech, and the company rose in a standing ovation, she was obliged to turn her back and sob into her hands.

The next day there was a Press conference with television interviews. On the next again Elena was supposed by the Press and public to have left Norway. But while the landscape all around lay in perfect peace, and the silver fjord was so still that even the stars were reflected in it, I drove Elena out to our home, with an escort of three armed guards in a car behind.

As we arrived, a fire of dry birch-wood crackled on the hearth, and the smell of Aase Marie's good cooking was in the air. The guards joined our children in the television room, and we others went into the parlour to enjoy what was being lifted from the oven.

The KGB foiled us. The phone rang with the news that Sergei Kovalyov had been sentenced to seven years in prison, followed by three in exile. The food was put back in the oven, and we settled down to help Elena to compose a statement for the Western Press.

'This is just like home in Moscow,' she remarked. 'We get all ready to enjoy supper with our friends, and then comes some news and we all take off our coats and write appeals and protests while the food goes cold.'

An hour later, I had phoned to the news agencies Elena's last message from Norway, protesting at the sentence. An hour later again, and one of the guards put his head in to tell us to come and hear the statement on TV.

The sweet was raspberries from the deep freeze. 'Oh, this is Andrei's favourite,' Elena exclaimed. 'But we haven't tasted raspberries for years. If only he were with us!' And the tears ran.

She then reported to us that she had at least managed to get through to her daughter on the phone. 'And what do you think? They heard the entire ceremony in a running commentary in Russian from Radio Liberty.'

Cigarettes came out, Elena's only weakness. Andrei does not smoke, but in the four months Elena had been away, he had sent her every week the Russian papyrosis which she likes best.

At this peaceful moment, we invited Elena to tell us her story. She was fourteen when, in 1937, during the great Terror under Stalin, her parents were arrested. Her father was shot and her mother given fourteen years. Elena was the oldest of the children, and also older than any of the children next door, whose parents too had been arrested. She therefore had many small people to care for and stand in queues for.

Her parents had both been revolutionary Communists, but Stalin kept her mother—the fine old lady whom I had met in Moscow—behind bars for fourteen years. Within months of their arrest, the child Elena had grown into a wise woman, so that when it was her turn to be called to interrogation, she was shrewd enough to say, 'I have nothing to tell. I am just a little girl.' But interrogation went on every night until three in the morning. She had then to walk home in the dark. 'That was the worst of all. I was utterly terrified. I could have been raped and murdered.'

Then came the war. Elena was already used to a life of caring for others, so it came naturally for her to enlist as a nurse. She served in the front line and was decorated for bravery, but was badly wounded. On recovering, she

was given the opportunity to train as a doctor, specialising in prematurely-born children.

I asked her when she had left the Communist Party. But she laughed and replied: 'I don't know that I have left the Party. During the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, I informed my Party group that I couldn't remain a member any longer. They replied that I couldn't just resign like that; in fact, I must attend a Party rally where all that was going on in Czechoslovakia would be explained. At this meeting, leading Party comrades spoke, and finally the chairman asked whether all present accepted the Party standpoint. Everyone clapped, except me. I rose and said that I did not consider the explanations satisfactory and wanted to resign from the Party. But I still didn't get my resignation accepted. I was merely accused of confused thinking, and threatened with reprisals. But I wasn't called to any further Party meetings.'

She took up the work for human rights through her concern for individuals. More and more young intellectuals dared to think for themselves now and to show that they were 'otherwise-thinking'. She began to help young people who came under persecution. Every time one of them was sent to concentration camp, Elena joined the queue to send a parcel or letter to them. 'I see you have a new nephew to look after,' people would say to her. Victor Fainberg was one of her 'nephews'.

But if Elena came into the dissident movement through concern for people, Andrei was drawn into it through theoretical considerations. The scientist who throughout his career had lived more or less isolated from people in a world of formulae, reached the philosophical conclusion that science could become a deadly danger to mankind unless it was guided by morality.

He was then—at the end of the Sixties—a widower. He and Elena became acquainted at this time, but only saw

each other when they had to sign some appeal. One day Elena got a few friends together to celebrate her birthday. A bashful Andrei rang up and asked if he might join them. The first thing that caught his eye on entering the flat—the apartment where they later lived—was an envelope fastened to the wall marked in large letters: 'For the children.'

'What children?' he enquired.

'The children of people in prison, of course,' replied Elena. For years such an envelope had hung in the flat, and guests would slip in a few coins.

The little incident set Andrei thinking, and he began to be convinced that concern for the individual was just as important in the struggle for human rights as philosophical standpoints.

Soon afterwards, he told Elena that when he had realised that it might have been wrong to work on the hydrogen bomb, he gave all the money he had earned from the project to a hospital. This did not impress Elena. 'To think of giving all that money to the State apparatus which suppresses human rights! You should have put it in the envelope for the children.'

Today, concern for individual suffering and persecuted people is Sakharov's main life work. It is a very arduous life, in which he receives a continual stream of callers at the little flat and travels long distances to support men brought to trial. He has had two minor heart-attacks brought on by over-work, and at one point his friends detailed Galitch to take him for a walk, away from the microphone-stuffed flat, and persuade him to do less. Should he not be more selective? Take up only important cases? 'Who am I to decide whose case is more important than another's?' Andrei demanded. 'I cannot help myself. Every time I see an injustice done to one of my fellow

men, I must and I will speak up.' The well-planned corrective was a fiasco.

On the other hand early in 1973, Sakharov, who has never been abroad, mentioned casually in a Press interview that he had applied for a visa for his whole family to visit the United States, where he had been invited to give lectures at Princeton University. This produced an immediate sharp reaction among his friends and followers in the Soviet Union. Led by Solzhenitsyn, they urged him to lay aside his travel plans. He was easy to persuade, one of them commented.

He is now convinced that his task is to remain in Moscow, the rock of resistance. 'I do not wish to go abroad and I do not intend to go abroad,' he told a Western journalist recently. But he added that 'a normal society differs from a sick society in that people can freely travel abroad, see the world, and return home.'

This concluded Elena's tale of a husband and wife who have taken it on themselves to care for a nation. It was late now. Logs still glowed on the hearth, but the candles were burning low. We went out into the studio to look at my pictures. Elena looks at paintings as she looks at people: seeking out the feeling. Looking at a large canvas, *Russia Awakes*, she remarked: 'You have captured perfectly the atmosphere of our meeting in Moscow.' To take home with her, I asked her to choose between a head of Christ and a picture of a solitary, flickering candle. She chose the candle, knowing it to be herself and her husband, keeping alive a flame in the darkness of Soviet Russia.

Victor Nekrasov, who had been with us for the evening, took the head of Christ. Nekrasov, who fought at Stalingrad, had the courage to write his great novel, *In the Trenches of Stalingrad*, without mention of the Generalissimo after whom the city is named. However, to every-

one's astonishment, Stalin was so impressed with the book that he himself wrote out the papers which ensured that Nekrasov was awarded the Stalin Prize.

On the stairs between the studio and the hall, Elena caught sight of my design for the window in the Arctic Cathedral. 'There's the picture I had from you in Moscow,' she exclaimed. 'And do you know what I did with it? I sent it to Kuznetsov in the camp. It is now hanging over his bunk.'

Kuznetsov was another 'nephew'. He is a Jewish activist and was sent to prison camp for fifteen years for conspiring to steal a plane to fly to Sweden. In the camp he wrote a diary of his experiences which has been incorporated in a report by Amnesty International. It was in connection with the smuggling out of this diary that Elena was interrogated by the KGB just before my visit to their flat. When I heard that Elena and her 'nephew' had valued my picture so highly, I felt prouder than I had been to have the window adorning the church.

We tip-toed past the children's bedroom and collected the security men, who were playing cards in the television room. We made our farewells and Elena set off with her guards—in Norway her protectors.

The next morning, unattended by the Press or even security men, a little group of us, including Aase Lionaes, walked with Elena to her plane. At the top of the steps she stopped. Turning to us, she said, 'If you forget us, we are lost.'

The fight goes on

IN JANUARY 1976, Leonid Plyushch—for whom the Sakharovs fought long and hard, so that he should not be forgotten—reached exile and sanctuary. He arrived in Vienna, in a glare of Press and television publicity, straight from the asylums where they turn sane men insane.

Plyushch first clashed with the authorities in 1968, when he protested against irregularities at the trial of Galanskov and Ginzburg. For this he was dismissed from his position as mathematical engineer at the Institute of Cybernetics in Kiev. Afterwards, in spite of constant efforts, he was unable to find employment.

His arrest came in 1972 on a number of charges of possessing and writing anti-Soviet literature, and membership of the human rights movement known as the Initiative Group. He then became an object of the illegality against which he had protested earlier. He was held in custody for more than a year before being brought to trial, his wife was denied access to him during this time, and the eventual trial was held *in camera*; all of which violated Soviet laws. At the trial it was ruled that he was mentally ill and in this condition had committed 'especially dangerous crimes'. The court ordered him to be

confined in a special—that is to say, maximum security—psychiatric hospital.

In detention, as his letters show, he at first maintained his usual high standard of intellectual activity, and his wife Tatyana sent him in books on mathematics. He turned his wide-ranging and original mind to inventions in the field of psychology, but to the doctors this was merely further evidence of a 'paranoid disturbance'. He also tried to apply mathematical ideas to medicine, which brought from the hostile woman doctor immediately in charge of him the comment, 'The patient has shown a tendency to mathematicise psychology and medicine. I am a doctor and I know that mathematics has nothing to do with medicine.'

In July 1973, he was sent to what the dissidents consider the worst of the KGB asylums, the psychiatric wards of the hospital in Dnepropetrovsk. Injections then began. He was first given massive doses of haloperidol. The Sakharovs had told me when I was in Moscow that Plyushch was so affected by drugs that he could no longer recognise his wife. The truth was worse: when Tatyana visited him on 22 October of that year, she could not recognise him.

'When they brought Leonid Ivanovitch into the visiting room,' she wrote in an account of her experiences, 'it was impossible to recognise him. His eyes were full of pain and misery, he spoke with difficulty and brokenly, frequently leaning on the back of the chair in search of support.' After talking for some time, he 'began to gasp, to unbutton his clothing awkwardly . . . his face was convulsed and he got cramp in his hands and legs . . . it was he who asked that the meeting be ended, ten minutes ahead of time.'

He could no longer write or read by this time. In February 1974, the doctors changed from haloperidol to

heavy doses of insulin—for which Plyushch had no need. This brought further deterioration. Visiting him on 4 March, Tatyana noted, 'Great dropsical swellings had occurred.' Six months later, another change was made, to the anti-schizophrenic drug triftazin. Throughout, the doctors did nothing for the bone tuberculosis which Plyushch has in the leg; and this added to his suffering.

Tatyana was a tiger in her husband's defence. When the injections began at the hospital, she threatened to publish in Western newspapers the names of the doctors concerned. She seemed to have frightened them; twice the injections were discontinued, and Plyushch's physical and mental condition at once improved.

Then, in December 1974, Tatyana wrote to the Dnepropetrovsk regional procurator asking for criminal proceedings to be initiated against the medical staff. 'For the last year and a half,' she asserted, 'my husband has been deliberately given incorrect medical treatment. This justifies my regarding the actions of the hospital's medical personnel as criminal and demanding that they are examined in court.' Soviet law provides for criminal proceedings against doctors who prescribe wrong treatment. Western psychiatrists followed up her action and wrote to the procurator asking to attend the court hearing. No hearing was held.

However, further pressure by Tatyana and from the West—much of it prompted by Sakharov—was almost certainly responsible for Plyushch's eventual release a year later. There was by then world-wide protest against his persecution. The French and Italian Communist Parties joined in, indignant because he was a professing Marxist—Plyushch remained that. No doubt they also saw it as an opportunity to demonstrate to voters that they were independent of Moscow.

At last three French lawyers, who had entered the

Soviet Union as tourists, went with Tatyana to the Dnepropetrovsk hospital and demanded to see Plyushch. This seems to have been the last straw for the Soviet authorities. Injections stopped finally, Plyushch recovered, and early in January 1976, he, Tatyana, and their two young sons reached Paris, where they were guests of French mathematicians.

He and Tatyana came to our home that summer. He hobbled smiling to meet us, dragging a stiff leg. Aase Marie and I were dismayed to see, what is not obvious in photographs, how small and fragile he is. But what a great heart in that tiny chest!

On our veranda we lifted our glasses for a toast in Norwegian apple juice—he would not touch either alcohol or Coca Cola. 'Freedom for the Ukraine!' was his toast. He is an ardent Ukrainian nationalist, speaking his own Ukrainian language in preference to Russian, and struggling to maintain his nation's identity in face of the heavy-handed Russification that has been going on since Peter the Great's time.

My toast was, 'A moral and spiritual revolution!' which brought from him, 'Yes, we need a spiritual one—but not a political one.'

It seems strange for a Marxist to abjure political upheaval, but he is a strange Marxist, disconcerting Communists and Conservatives alike by claiming to follow Marx whilst passionately fighting for freedom. He is profoundly distrustful of labels. In my studio he saw a photograph of Solzhenitsyn and asked for a copy. 'In the Soviet Union,' he said, 'I had his picture on the wall.' He plainly feels more in common with a Christian who believes in freedom than with Marxists who believe in totalitarianism.

Early in life he was an enthusiastic Stalinist, and he offered the KGB his services. He was rejected: he was

too naive and idealistic, as they put it. They prefer men motivated by personal advantage: they can be counted on.

Plyushch continually surprises friends. When Aase Marie and I went to the airport with the Plyushches and their Ukrainian hosts in Norway, he suddenly exclaimed, 'I will have a glass of beer—in order to show Sparre here that I am not the only non-drinker from the Soviet Union.' He eschewed even that label. As he raised his glass, he said, 'Let's toast our wives.' They sat on the other side of the lounge in lively conversation—though they had no common language.

How much he owed to that smiling wife! I could not help at that moment remembering Yuri Galanskov, about whose trial in 1968 Plyushch had made his public protest. In 1972, Galanskov sent a despairing appeal to the United Nations and to the International Red Cross, saying that he was weak and ill, yet still compelled to do hard labour. Neither organisation lifted a finger and a few months later Galanskov was dead.

* * * *

In March 1976 the Soviet Union's most considerable sculptor, the 51-year-old Ernst Neizvestny, went into exile in Switzerland. 'If I had not come out,' he declared, 'the artist in me would have died.' It is said that the decision to let him go was taken extremely reluctantly by the authorities, and at the highest level. 'We need Neizvestny,' observed an official, 'but we cannot use him. We must create a Communist Neizvestny.'

This volcano of a man is in fact a Christian. His final break with the regime came over a commission to decorate the front of the Communist Party building in Ashkhabad. He made a huge sculptural composition, fifty feet high and fifty feet wide, covering the entire front of the building. The design was approved in sections and

the Party officials did not see it as a whole until it was unveiled. At the unveiling a gasp of horror went through the ranks of Party members. The front of the Communist headquarters was dominated by a cross. 'A cross?' said Neizvestny. 'Can't you see it's a face?' But most people took it for a cross and he was expelled from the Artists Union, thereby losing his livelihood.

It was not his first clash with authority. He had had a confrontation with Khrushchev, which has become a legend. The true story was recently elicited from people who were present by the Norwegian journalist Leif Hovelsen. During Khrushchev's liberalisation, the Moscow Art Society had assembled an exhibition of modern works by Russian artists at the *Manège*, which is near the Kremlin. It roused great public interest, especially among the youth.

Khrushchev came to the preview with seventy henchmen. His first sight of the works of art, from the top of a flight of steps which led down to the exhibition, sent him into a fury. 'Dog shit! Scandal! Filth!' he yelled. 'Where's the leader?' Neizvestny was pointed out, and Khrushchev stormed anew. An uncowed Neizvestny replied, 'You are the Prime Minister and Party Chairman, but among my works I am the chief and if we are to discuss, it will be as equals.'

The head of security intervened. 'Do you realise who you are talking to? We'll have you in the uranium mines.' Two of his men seized Neizvestny's arms, but he told Khrushchev, 'You are talking to a man who is ready to die at any time.' At a nod from Khrushchev, the KGB men freed him and Neizvestny and he began to argue about the exhibits. When both became heated, the security chief interrupted again: 'Look at his leather jacket—a beatnik jacket!' Neizvestny retorted, 'What a remark in a society where work holds the place of honour! I've

worked all night, but your people wouldn't let my wife bring me a clean shirt.'

Another of Khrushchev's entourage pointed to some of Neizvestny's works and demanded, 'Where do you get all that bronze?'

'I steal it,' said Neizvestny.

Khrushchev laughed at this and remarked, 'You're the sort of fellow I like. But there's both an angel and a devil in you. If the angel wins, we'll get on together; but if the devil wins, we wipe you out.'

The angel prevailed. When Khrushchev died, Neizvestny was commissioned to carve the memorial which today stands on his grave at the Novodevichi Cemetery: a powerful naturalistic head of the dictator, surrounded by modern cubist shapes. The Khrushchev family have charge of the works Neizvestny left behind in Russia.

Neizvestny reports that there is a catacomb movement among artists in the Soviet Union. Those concerned in it, he says, have a deeply religious commitment and seek to express it in their work.

* * * *

While the youth of the world pitted themselves against each other in the Montreal Olympiad in August of 1976, a young Russian in solitary confinement in Vladimir jail pitted himself against death. Thirty-four-year-old Vladimir Bukovski had begun a hunger strike on 19 February and up to the middle of August no one outside had heard news of him. His contest was not watched by cheering crowds: one cold eye in the spy-hole of the door observed his Marathon.

For his campaign against Soviet misuse of psychiatry and his fearless utterances over more than a decade, Bukovski had come to stand as a symbol of the fight for human rights in the USSR. He was first arrested in 1963

for possessing copies of Milovan Djilas's book *The New Class*, and was confined for more than a year and a half in psychiatric asylums.

He was arrested for a second time in 1965 for taking part in the historic demonstration in Pushkin Square in Moscow, and again in 1967.

After three years of strict labour camp, he was free once more, and threw himself into work for human rights, realising that his period of freedom was likely to be short. He compiled documentation on the psychiatric diagnosis and treatment of dissidents, gave interviews on the subject to Western correspondents, and appealed to Western psychiatrists to defend the victims and attack the evil practice. Finally, he managed to smuggle to the West a folio of documents.

This intensive campaign was a turning point. From then on psychiatrists, jurists, human rights organisations, parliamentarians, journalists, and broadcasters in the West have known the facts, and many have attacked and publicised the Soviet abuses.

Bukovski was indeed arrested again, in March 1971 after exactly one year, two months, and three days. This time he received a sentence of two years in the special-punishment Vladimir jail, followed by five years' strict labour camp and a further five in exile in Siberia. He was not silenced, however. In camp he and a young fellow-prisoner, Semyon Gluzman, produced a *Handbook of Psychiatry for Dissidents*. It has been circulated widely in *samizdat*. But Bukovski was returned to Vladimir jail.

In the spring of 1976, a half-suppressed cry for help penetrated the Iron Curtain. Bukovski's unhappy mother in Moscow alerted the West to the fact that she had had no news of her son since he had begun his hunger strike. Western opinion became alarmed. I myself wrote a four-

column article in *Aftenposten* under the heading: 'Is Bukovski dead?'

In the end, there was such a chorus of protest that the Soviet authorities found a way of releasing their embarrassing prisoner without complete loss of face: exchanging him for the Communist leader, Luis Corvalan, imprisoned by the Rightist regime of Chile. A posse of ten KGB officers, led by the second-in-command of that organisation, accompanied the chained Bukovski in the aircraft to the West. The handcuffs that bound his hands behind his back were of American manufacture. Even in this area the USSR depends on Western technology. So perhaps it was appropriate that the first Western statesman to receive Bukovski was the newly-elected President Carter.

Bukovski came to Norway in October 1977 to speak at a human rights meeting in Oslo, and during his ten-day visit he stayed in our home. The day after his arrival, he and Solzhenitsyn were attacked in a major article in *Dagbladet*. Its main points were that the two Russians had adopted a sceptical attitude to détente and that they believed the last hope for the West was an 'inner moral rebirth'. 'It is not surprising,' said the article, 'that men with such views land up among the most reactionary circles in the West.'

Bukovski replied, 'These political wiseacres claim that the best way to ensure peace is to give in to Hitlers of all colours. When new witnesses arrive from the East, they want an "open discussion" in the West on whether the alleged evidence has been manipulated from the Left or the Right. But left or right of us in the camps, there was only barbed wire. So we learned to see only one struggle in the world: humanity's fight against inhumanity, life against death.'

We went up to a hut in the fells of central Norway

to rest and meditate in the solitude of nature. There he told me something about himself.

'I was nineteen when my mother suddenly joined the Communist Party—not from conviction, but simply and solely because it was one of the qualifications for the job she was after. The Party prefers such opportunists to idealists, because it finds them more reliable. I was furious with my mother, and went straight to a priest and asked to join the Church. I also got hold of a Bible, and studied it for a year, but I never found my way to a religious faith. I suppose I am too rational and scientific: I must have something I can prove.

'But my opposition to the system increased. I was expelled from school for a joke about the Soviet leaders, though I still managed to wangle a university place.

'I dreamed of violent revolution, and began to plan terrorist acts, but when I was drawn into the young dissident movement—I was its youngest member—I came into contact with men who were developing an entirely different philosophy of resistance, based on claiming our human rights under Soviet law.'

During his stay we planned support for Dr Yuri Orlov, who was much on Bukovski's heart. Our aim was to collect signatures to nominate for the Nobel Peace Prize both Orlov and the Helsinki Committee, which monitors Soviet adherence to the Agreement, and of which Orlov is one of the leaders. Parliamentarians in many countries, both singly and in groups, have since sent in their nominations.

* * * *

Two months after Bukovski's visit, my friend Alexander Galitch died in Paris. He apparently electrocuted himself tinkering with his radio.

In his last year, the indifference and self-indulgence of

the West nearly led him into a spiritual tragedy. Seeing it coming, I had to do something drastic. Risking our friendship, I wrote a letter as hard and condemnatory as I knew how, saying that he was making a mockery of the precious baptismal cross round his neck. Aase Marie and I followed up the letter with a visit. As a result Alexander began to live up to his cross.

The last year of his life was triumphant. I myself saw him by the Berlin Wall, giving hope and challenge to thousands of Germans, and again in Rome when he spoke of the 'great awakening' he saw coming to the world.

Galitch was buried on a cold winter day. That morning I walked in deep thought along the Champs Élysées towards Galitch's home. I had promised to accompany Angelina Galitch, Maximov, and a few others on the sad journey behind the coffin to the Russian Orthodox Cathedral.

The day was dark, but it is in the darkness that one can perceive the light. I recalled how I had first met Alexander five years earlier at one of the darkest moments in the dissidents' fight, and how he had introduced me to the wonderful group in Sakharov's flat, who refused to acknowledge the darkness. Though stricken a thousand times, the new-born spirit of freedom lived and grew, while the mighty ones in the Kremlin stood only for dead ideas.

The Orthodox Cathedral is a huge building. The hundreds of candles we held in our hands did little to disperse the darkness beneath the high cupolas, but their flickering light illuminated the flower-decked coffin, the holy icons, and the serious Russian faces; faces of people who have fought and suffered, and have been rewarded with exile here on earth, even if a crown of victory awaits them in heaven.

There by the coffin was Maximov's stone-like face. As

Galitch's best friend, he had suffered as great a loss as anyone. The two had complemented one another perfectly. Where Maximov was a hard and uncompromising fighter, Galitch was adaptable, able to devise the inspired stroke.

I was almost the only Westerner present, but not quite. Beside me, with his candle, stood André Glucksmann, a leader of the student revolt in Paris in 1968. He is today one of the group known as 'The New Philosophers', who fight to free men's thinking from the tyranny of Karl Marx.

Another I met for the first time at the funeral was a little woman with an intense and intelligent face under her black hair. It was the recently-exiled Dina Kaminskaya, the courageous defence lawyer of both Sinyavski and Bukovski. She was chosen for Bukovski by his mother. When he first met her, he assumed that, like every defence lawyer he had had hitherto, she would side with the prosecution. But suddenly, he says, he perceived that a miracle had happened: his mother had found an honest Soviet lawyer.

The two Orthodox priests and the elderly bishop with his crown intoned the service in their magnificent bass voices under the vast roof. Then the coffin was carried out, but only as far as the bottom of the cathedral steps. There Victor Nekrasov gave an address.

A poet had been laid to rest, but a poet can never die. Galitch's last book of poems had been published five days beforehand, and on the final page he had said, 'Every poem and every collection of poems should be written as if it was the last. Even if, as I hope, I can continue to write poetry, the reader should think of this collection as my last.'

* * * *

The summer of 1978 was a hot one for those who think otherwise in the USSR. In a desperate attempt to stifle voices of freedom, the regime began to exert pressure through a series of court cases. The 'new Moscow trials' have gone on ever since the conclusion of the Belgrade Conference, with its tame failure even to reiterate the main points on human rights established at Helsinki.

The accused in the trials have been especially the members of the 'Helsinki Committees' in the USSR and its satellites, which monitor their countries' adherence or otherwise to the Helsinki Agreement. Over twenty people have received sentences of up to fifteen years simply because they supported an agreement signed by their government.

The leader of the USSR Committee, Dr Yuri Orlov, was the first to be sentenced. In May 1978 he was tried and condemned to hard labour and exile, in a court packed with mocking enemies, while his friends could only wait in the street outside. His courageous 33-year-old wife Irina, who was in court, shouted to him, 'Yuri, Yuri, don't give in, hold your head high. We will go out together and take the Nobel Prize.'

The next to be tried and condemned, in face of strong protests from all over the world, including some from Communist parties in the West, was Anatoli Shcharanski, the computer scientist and Jewish activist.

A little later, a veritable veteran of the dissident movement, the journalist Alexander Ginzburg, was condemned to a long term in a labour camp, which he scarcely has the health to survive, having already been twice imprisoned. Ever since the age of sixteen he had taken part in human rights demonstrations. When anti-Jewish feeling was at its height his name was changed to the Jewish Ginzburg, which was his mother's maiden name. He is an Orthodox Christian, and his special task

on the Helsinki Committee was to report on religious persecution. Solzhenitsyn named him as the administrator of his fund for political and religious prisoners and their families. The money reached him completely legally through the bank, and he distributed in all some hundred thousand pounds before the KGB struck.

The most recent, at the time of writing, to receive his sentence is the youngest of them all, the 24-year-old Alexander Podrabinek. His responsibility was to follow the abuse of psychiatry in the USSR, and he managed to send out a whole book on the subject which has now been published by Amnesty International.

As, one after another, his closest fellow-workers were condemned, Sakharov called a Press conference. At his side sat a newly enrolled member of the Helsinki Committee, a well-known scientist. This man has already been deprived of his work and his position, but the cause of truth cannot be halted.

What makes the Soviet regime acquire odium in the world's eyes by condemning innocent people? The answer is that, having lost all moral or idealistic justification for its actions, it is in mortal terror of dying.

The heart is already dead. Some time ago I had a visit from a former military technical adviser to the Politburo, Dr Igor Glagolev. He told me that only once in the history of the USSR had the regime reduced its military strength. This was in the days of Khrushchev; and it was because he believed Communism could win with ideas alone. 'We'll bury you,' he said in America. Today, east of the Iron Curtain, Communism lies buried.

And the old men in the Kremlin are afraid. For all their power, they fear a few hundred people in small flats and in camps in Siberia.

When art is dangerous

IT SEEMS on the face of it extraordinary that so many of Russia's freedom fighters are scientists and artists. It is not politicians and economists, lawyers and engineers, who have struck the blows for freedom. These practical men, one might suppose, would be more likely and able to shift a nation towards democracy than physicists or poets.

But then one remembers that what has to be fought in Russia is the Lie. And who, above all, are by their training taught to seek for truth? In their different ways, the scientist and the artist. So it is natural that these intellectuals have come forward to fight for freedom in the Soviet Union, with books not bombs in their hands.

In his Nobel Speech, Solzhenitsyn gives a second reason, as far as the artists are concerned: 'Who will create for mankind a single system of evaluation—for evil deeds and good deeds, for what is intolerable and what is tolerable?. . . Who will direct our anger against that which is truly terrible, and not that which is merely near?. . . Propaganda, compulsion, and scientific proof are powerless here. But fortunately the means to convey all this does exist in the world. It is art. It is literature.'

Of course there is art which does not involve itself with good and evil, with freedom and tyranny, or with any of

life's great questions. Much art, most art, is pure aesthetics, seeking to impress by the beauty of the form itself. Matisse, the great master of form, once said, 'A painting should be like a comfortable armchair to sink into.' His compatriot, Bonnard, peoples his French landscapes and bourgeois interiors with sensible citizens, busying themselves with everyday activities: laying the table or reading the newspaper over a cup of coffee. They are ready to discuss the world's lesser problems for hours on end, but are unwilling to be disturbed by deep questions about the meaning of life.

There can be no greater contrast to these French artists than the icon painters of Eastern Europe. Their strange and powerful art arose in the so-called Dark Ages, in the monasteries. Their purpose was to instil faith. There is a particularly arresting icon in Norway's Trondheim Cathedral, known as *The Saviour with the Wet Beard*—soaked with sweat as He carries His cross. Conventional art criticism can never fully analyse its monumental power. All devices for achieving effect have been deliberately laid aside: the head is exactly frontal; no grimace or tension displaces the lines of the face, calmly turned towards us; the colours are simple and without contrasts—red, yellow, and a brownish purple.

Who is the artist behind the icon? We do not know. The icon is not an expression of a painter's personality. The artist vanishes behind the picture. He withdraws for something greater, the eternal and mysterious God Who is portrayed. The real artist is the One Who is depicted, Jesus Christ on His way to Calvary.

The power of the icons comes from the commitment of the men who painted them. They were not primarily artists, but monks. The greatest of them all, Rublyev, after whom the Moscow icon gallery is named, never slept lying down, so that he might better identify himself with

Christ's sufferings. At night he sat propped up with special crutches under his arms, in order not to fall forward.

That was mediaeval Russia: is there any parallel in this century? The French painter Georges Rouault has been called our age's painting monk. He once remarked, 'I do not belong to our times: I belong to the Middle Ages.' He started work as a 14-year-old in a stained-glass workshop, learning a technique which has not changed since the 12th century. Later he transferred the forms of stained glass to oil painting. His purpose was to tell his fellow men something which had long been left unsaid. He took his cue from the remark of a poet friend: 'Art is one of the forces which have perverted the imagination by saying that evil is beautiful. Art must become one of the forces which heal the imagination: it must say that evil is ugly.'

Throughout the first half of his career Rouault painted sin, the Fall, and evil; then, towards the end of his life, reconciliation, forgiveness, and peace.

He clashed with the trends of his period, and made this all the more obvious by displaying his works along with those of the most radical of his contemporaries: *Les Fauves*—the Wild Beasts. In a very different way, Munch too clashed with the trends. He painted people in the grip of desire in an age when eroticism was repressed by a hypocritical society. The fashion now is to repress the longing for faith; and we need an art like Rouault's which expresses a faith.

I have at least attempted that. I did so at the Bergen Festival that year where the programme spoke of my exhibition as 'seventy pictures concerned with the mind of Man and the powerful forces which bind or liberate the individual.'

Morgenbladet's critic commented:

'Bertolt Brecht and Victor Sparre are featured at the Bergen Festival this year. One is a playwright, the other an imaginative painter. The conjunction is interesting. The common denominator of the artists is that both burn for a cause, identify themselves with it, and fight with art as a weapon. Is there a danger in this of art becoming programmatic? Undoubtedly—it happens to them both from time to time—but it is a small price to pay for the illumination they bring.

'We will not press the comparison of the Marxist Brecht and the Christian freedom fighter Victor Sparre, but there are values in both which are eternal and above politics.'

While Brecht and I have in common that we are both committed artists, there is a decisive difference. Brecht sets before us a particular model of society. I do no such thing. I seek to defend the individual's right to be himself. That is why I so often paint a clown, whose only sin is to be different—to think otherwise—in a world that is becoming more and more regimented and bureaucratic in both East and West.

We artists are a chosen group in today's world. To us has been vouchsafed a power that can set men free. Art may be the last defence of the individual against the colossal forces that seek to make us conform.

In modern Russia it has sometimes seemed as if art alone was left to resist tyranny. Writers have been a more deadly threat to the regime than terrorists. When a weapon is smuggled into a camp to a Russian freedom fighter, it will be, not a gun, but a novel or a book of poems. The dissident movement has taken root partly because the ground had been nourished by the writings of Pasternak, Solzhenitsyn, and Mandelshtam, and lines like these of Anna Akhmatova:

They took you away at dawn,
I followed as though at your funeral.
In the dark attic the children cried.
And the candle guttered before the icon.
Your lips were cold as lips of an icon.
I shall never forget the deathly sweat on your brow.

* * * *

Beside the gentle Don
The moon enters a house.
His cap is askew.
He sees a shadow.
It is a woman alone and ill,
Her husband in the grave, her son in prison.
Pray for me.

* * * *

Sentence

The word fell like a stone
On my living breast.
At least I was prepared.
Somehow I'll bear up.

Today I have much to do,
Killing the last of my memories,
Steeling my heart,
Learning to live again.

The hot summer day outside
Is like a festival.
I had long foreseen it:
The glorious day, the empty house.

* * * *

I have learnt how faces fall away,
When fear peers out between narrowed eyelids,
How suffering carves on the face
Its hieroglyphs;
How black or greying curls
Turn suddenly white.

A smile fades on submissive lips,
Terror trembles in dry laughter.
I pray not for myself alone,
But for all who stood with me,
In biting frost, in savage heat,
Beneath the blank brick wall.

* * * *

If in this land there is ever a thought
To erect a memorial to me,
I give it my solemn consent.
But let it not be by the shore
In the place where I was born—
I have broken all links with the sea.
Nor shall it be in the imperial park,
By the tree stump where a sad ghost seeks me:
It shall be here, where I have stood three hundred hours
And the door was kept locked in my face.

* * * *

During the Winter War in Finland, in 1939–40, when the Finns fought against Soviet invasion like men inspired, my colleague, the Finnish artist Lennart Segerstraale, painted great frescoes in Finland's National Bank in Helsinki, depicting the price that must be paid if tyranny is to be resisted.

A painter on the monumental scale, big in stature and

big in heart, Segerstraale won a high place in the regard of his countrymen. When more than eighty years old, he exhibited forty-two large oil paintings which he had completed in the previous eighteen months. His theme, said *Helsingin Sanomat,* was 'two revolutions—that of materialism, which permeates every nation, and that of the spirit'. *Uusi Suomi's* youthful reporter wrote, 'Segerstraale's exhibition is not retrospective but forward looking. He takes a definite ideological stand, for light against darkness, for good against evil.' When he was laid to rest a few years ago in Borgaa Cathedral, close to the cemetery of the fallen in the Winter War, the huge ancient building was crammed to the doors.

Segerstraale's name was eminently suitable, for it means 'rays of victory'. It was typical of him that he always wore a heraldic tie-pin, the badge of a militant patriotic organisation forbidden after 1945. 'However much it is forbidden,' he once told me, 'I shall wear this badge.'

But another saying of Lennart Segerstraale's is written in my mind as if graven on stone: 'We must create an art which is dangerous for evil.'

Revolution of the mind and heart

WHEN, AS I HAVE RELATED, Solzhenitsyn asked me what made me work so persistently for the freedom of his country. I answered, 'Because I believe that the rebirth of faith will come from those who have suffered most.'

Later I wrote him a fuller answer to his question, for though what I said was the truth, it was not the whole truth. To tell that involves telling something of my life's story: my struggles to achieve independence as an artist and as a man, my experience during the brief Norwegian war and longer occupation, and not least the imprint left on me by my father and mother. For all these brought me to the conclusions which I later found to be held by so many of the Russian dissidents: that inner freedom comes from following your inner conviction, wherever it leads—and that, when you do that, revolutionary things happen.

I came swimmingly into the world, floundering like a fish. I had a caul, and as this is known in Norwegian as 'victory skin', I was christened Victor. Mother prayed that my victories in life should not come easily. Her prayer has been answered.

Mother often spoke of a National Day at the turn of the century when she and her brothers marched at the head of the town's parade, carrying the illegal Norwegian

flag in place of the one which symbolised Norway's forced bond with Sweden. She wanted to hold the tassel of the flag in order to demonstrate her devotion to the independence of Norway. But being only a tiny child she could not reach up to it. So she tied a string on the tassel and held that.

She was a lifelong enthusiast for our great freedom poet, Wergeland. One day I came home from school to find the house empty. But no: was there not a rising and falling mumbling sound somewhere upstairs? I went towards it, and there, among unmade beds, stood Mother weeping as she recited Wergeland.

Her father was MP for Bergen, and a progressive at a time when it took courage to bear that label. In 1880 he thundered forth in Parliament that he was a Darwinist and free-thinker. But if he rebelled against society's religion, Mother rebelled against his irreligion: she soon began an almost desperate search for God that went on for decades.

My father was a librarian by profession; a broad-minded democrat and man of culture by nature. He was equable, but fearless. Once the waterside-workers held a strike meeting in his library. The Communist faction arrived first and locked out the rest. The caretaker, who tried to re-open the doors, was knocked down.

Father resolutely entered the hall and ascended the rostrum. He bade the men welcome and launched into a talk on the significance of literature for the workers. After three-quarters of an hour, he concluded, 'Gentlemen, I hope I shall be able to welcome you all back as borrowers. Now, I am afraid, my wife is waiting for me for dinner and I would like to go home.'

The leader of the Red faction proposed that the meeting should be adjourned, and all left quietly.

Father loved young people, and he trained them to

think, discuss, and study. Some of his young friends became politicians, among them the Socialist Aase Lionaes.

Father collected old Bergen ballads and sang them to his own accompaniment on the guitar. He published thousands and Mother illustrated some of them. For a lament about unfaithfulness and desertion, she used reproductions of mediaeval portrayals of hell. These fascinated me and led me to make my first drawings, which were violent and terrible. I made great numbers of them on big sheets of paper, with which I was freely supplied, mostly with a copying pencil which one could spit on so that it slithered around with the most frightful effect. The drawings were carefully put away in the bottom of an enormous renaissance chest. My sisters still have it but the lock on the drawer got stuck when the last picture went in. No one has since broken it open to reach the inferno within.

To foster my interest in art, Father brought home a big, beautifully-bound book and, without a word, put it on the shelves. It was the first major work on the art of the Norwegian painter, Edvard Munch, who then shocked a great many people. I flung myself on it and studied the pictures again and again. If I was to be a painter, it must be in the same way as Munch—nothing less.

Coming from such a home I had to put up with a lot from the boys around, who were mostly sons of labourers or craftsmen. I joined them in building tree huts, scrumping apples, and exploring sewers, but when they said Father was a Rightist, I used my fists to disprove it. Actually, he voted Liberal.

When I was fourteen, something remarkable happened to Mother. At the age of fifty, she went to a meeting of the Oxford Group, now Moral Re-Armament, and found a faith so strong that she never afterwards faltered. Her

long search for God had ended. Soon afterwards, she summoned my elder brother Waldemar, who was studying to be a pianist, to a meeting up in the mountains. Not wanting to waste time he went loaded with music. He did not open any of it.

When he came home, he said to me, 'I want to talk to you.' I opened my mouth in amazement. According to written agreement we had not spoken to each other for two years, though we shared a room. Earlier, he had called himself emperor and me slave, and regularly beaten me with a stick. Now he not only wanted to talk, but to ask forgiveness: unusual for an emperor. We became and have remained real brothers.

Many Norwegian families had similar experiences. It suddenly became almost fashionable to 'change', a fashion, however, with a price tag, because it meant breaking with evil. Every kind of mistake was made out of naivety and enthusiasm, but there were always things going on around the newly changed which gave hope of the world becoming a better place.

The most striking thing was the simplicity. If we wished the world to be better, first people must be better. God had a plan whereby we should order our lives. Clean up everything that was wrong in our own lives, so that God could take residence in us and guide us.

In my own life there came a decisive moment at the age of seventeen. In a little place thirty miles from Oslo, in a small hall for barely a hundred people, I stood up and said, 'I give my life to God.' I little realised that those words would ultimately take me to Moscow.

Meanwhile they gave me a rough time at the Academy of Art in Oslo, where the done thing was to call oneself a Marxist. My fellow-students thought it was 'beautiful' to see the Hammer and Sickle outside the Artists' House. The star pupil of my first year, whom I had looked up to

in awe, spat at me one day and hissed, 'You Christian devil!' It was good training. No one can be a significant artist until he has learnt to stand alone for what he believes. Nor can he effectively fight evil.

Our family at this time carried on every sort of odd activity. For a year we conducted a regular street mission with our little apartment as headquarters. We picked up alcoholics and tramps in the streets and offered them food and a bed for the night. A student who worked with us is today leader of our biggest institution for curing alcoholism and drug abuse.

It was Carl J. Hambro, the Speaker of the Norwegian Parliament and President of the General Assembly of the League of Nations, who had set all this in train. He invited 120 of his friends to meet the Oxford Group in 1934, including leading politicians, authors, and intellectuals. He expected that thirty or forty might come. Twelve hundred people actually arrived, and hardly anyone remained unmoved. The impact on some of Norway's leading personalities was to prove of decisive significance in the war years.

One of our foremost poets, Alf Larsen, told me many years later how hopelessly naive he found the Oxford Group. He himself believed in Anthroposophy. But one thing had made an ineradicable impression on him: the change in the novelist, Ronald Fangen. Larsen said that Fangen had been the most unpleasant man in Norway, but was transformed. Fangen wrote the first book on the Oxford Group in Norwegian: *A Christian World Revolution.*

In the years that followed Fangen was one of those who tried to awaken our pacifistic country to the menace of the Nazis. In 1938 he went up and down the land like a Christian Demosthenes, warning us against the new paganism that was on the march. He paid a prophet's

penalty: soon after the Germans came, he was arrested. This was the first time I saw what we see in Russia today: artists leading the fight against tyranny and even using their art to do so. Överland was another writer who did this. The poet who a few years before had written,

> Wipe the cross from off your flag
> And raise it pure and red,

now directed his poetry against the hooked cross of the Nazis. In a key phrase which rang through the country at this time, he warned us: 'You must not sleep'; and in words which we might apply today to our attitude to the persecuted in Russia, he reproached us for non-involvement in the struggle against the Nazis:

> Yes, I so tolerant can be,
> When evil does not strike at me.

Our family were pacifists. I was due to begin my military service before long: I applied for civilian duties. The Government, in the tradition of European Socialists, had likewise strong pacifist leanings and neglected our defences. But in Labour's ranks there was at least one exception: Haakon Lie. He had returned from the Spanish Civil War convinced that it was only a prelude to Hitler's plan for the conquest of Europe. He now brought to light the fact that there was not a single anti-aircraft weapon to defend Oslo. He headed a private fund to purchase a Bofors cannon from Sweden. But the war came before the gun.

When the blow fell, and the Germans swooped on the almost defenceless nation, in the early hours of 9 April 1940, there was one clear-thinking brain at least. In the confusion of that morning, while Parliament continued

an all-night debate on our unpreparedness, Carl Hambro rang the railway and ordered a special train. He got the Royal Family on to it. Then he sent the MPs home to collect their bags and got them on the train too, just ahead of the invading forces.

Finally, at a last meeting of Parliament in the little town of Elverum to which the train brought them, Hambro insisted on the Government being given authority to lead the nation in war from outside Norway's frontiers; a measure that was to prove of the greatest importance in the years that followed, since it legalised both the Government and the Resistance.

My own reaction to the invasion was spontaneous and entirely divorced from theory. Brutal assault had been made on my country, and a traitor, Vidkun Quisling, had proclaimed himself head of an illegal government. I enlisted as a private soldier with our troops in central Norway.

My war service, on a hospital ship near Aandalsnes, was short and bloody. Our first corpse lay naked on a lorry late one night, ready to be carried on board: a fair-haired boy, washed and pale, with a cut from side to side of his chest, neatly closed with a plaster.

Next day, wounded Englishmen streamed aboard: battle-hardened Cockneys scrambling over the rails in bandages and rags. Where legs were missing they heaved themselves up the gangway with their arms. A bundle of bandages that was a head reclined gently against my ear, as I carried the remains of a man on my back.

When the ship, despite its Red Cross markings, was bombed, four pieces of metal from Krupps became a permanent part of my body.

The Nazi conquerors quickly showed what they were out for, and the line between patriot and collaborator was soon drawn. We called it the 'ice front'. We would look

through a Norwegian Nazi or a German as if he was not there.

Although we Norwegians think of ourselves as incurable individualists, we lived through the occupation on a basis of complete solidarity. When word came from the Resistance leadership, we obeyed, though nobody knew their names. When it was whispered, 'Don't go to the cinema,' we did not go. When a Quisling priest preached he would have a congregation of two or three, while churches nearby were full to the doors. And when new professors were installed at the Academy of Art, the students banded together to form a secret, illegal academy.

I became a member of the Resistance. My group was given the task of sticking up posters, printed in Britain, warning Quislings not to turn their weapons against fellow-Norwegians. One night, two of us in a fit of bravado decided to stick a poster on the glass doors of the headquarters of the Quisling Youth League. Neither of us noticed a guard just inside. Suddenly, a blinding light shone into our faces. We fled in opposite directions and the guard opened fire on my back. Bullets whistled past me, so close and in such rapid succession that they seemed to carve out my shape in the air. Was he missing me deliberately?

At that moment a tram came round the corner and I leapt aboard and escaped. For hours afterwards, my body was a quivering jelly. I could not control my knees, or oddly enough my tongue.

At one point during the occupation I was summoned to the Department of Justice. They told me they had definite evidence that my father had been half-Jewish. It was up to me to prove that my family were innocent. The use of the word 'innocent' infuriated me. I told the old witch with a huge Quisling badge who was questioning

me, 'I am *guilty!* I am guilty of being a Jew. I am guilty of being an Arab. I am guilty of being Black. I am guilty of being White. I am guilty of being a human being.'

She stared at me astonished and let me go. We heard no more of being Jewish. The incident convinced me of what I confirmed later in Russia: that officials of dictatorships can often be browbeaten, and that this is usually the safest thing to do.

The evil nature of Nazism was probably better understood in Norway than in any other occupied country. Hitler was recognised as having been a psychopath, but the dark side of him went deeper. In his early years in Vienna he experimented with cactus poisons to acquire occult insight, and he attended Black Masses. The forty foundation members of the political party which first brought him to prominence were all drawn from the secret and powerful occult society, the Thule Gesellschaft, to which many leading Germans belonged. Hitler believed himself to be guided by demonic forces and saw himself as the Anti-Christ.

Akershus, the citadel of Oslo, was taken from the Germans without a fight by ninety men on the day before the war ended in Europe. I was one of the ninety. With our Mausers, a comrade and I stood guard before the Kommandant's house. The Kommandant, who had just surrendered the castle, a friendly little Austrian who had been a music critic, stepped forward politely and handed us the keys to his former residence.

Soon afterwards I thankfully laid down my arms and resumed my career as a painter. Success at first came astonishingly easily. By September of 1945 I had made my début with an exhibition in Oslo in which the erotic and the religious alternated. Sometimes there were both things in the same picture. On the opening day the legendary art collector and financier, Rolf Stenersen, a

friend of Edvard Munch, stood in the middle of the floor and said, 'I'll take that—that—that.' The three largest paintings went to his collection, since donated to the City of Oslo.

It was meteoric. People began to recognise me in the street. I started to frequent the fashionable Theatre Café and got on familiar terms with the waiters. One afternoon I swung in through the glass door and strolled towards the artists' table. Then disaster.

A heavy sculptor got up, pointed at me with an unsteady finger and thundered over the whole restaurant, 'Here comes the greasy painter who f——s Jesus in his pictures. Come over here, and I'll ram my head into you.'

At first I was inclined to shrug it off as drunken nonsense. But the words worked their way right into me. And there they stuck. I had to admit that the drunkard was right.

I sat down to think things through, and I came to a firm decision: never mind what it might involve, the most important thing for me must be to serve God, not to become a great artist.

It was a costly decision. As I later told Solzhenitsyn I did not touch a paintbrush for two years. They were years in which I learnt something of the art of creating in people, in their lives and character, instead of on canvas, an art without which I would have been of much less use later to my Russian friends.

First I went to Switzerland, where there was a big Moral Re-Armament conference. In the atmosphere of such an assembly, among people on a like quest to my own, I hoped to discover what my particular service to the world should be. It led to my making a series of journeys to near and distant lands—Germany, India, South America—always as one of a team, always with

the idea not of putting across one's own personality but of helping others to co-operate with the divine hand.

A bohemian friend once envied me my travels abroad. 'Can't you get me a job like that?' I explained that on such journeys you lived very much like a mediaeval begging monk: owning nothing, living on what you were given, staying where you were offered a bed, totally abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, and womanising. In those days, too, it was *de rigueur* to dress neatly like an Englishman in every detail down to the polished shoes. My friend's interest cooled off.

None of my artist colleagues could make head or tail of what I was doing. A friend overheard a remark, 'It's a pity. We had two really talented artists in Norway. One is drinking himself to death, and the other has joined MRA.'

But I had not joined a movement or organisation. I had found a new life, as an artist and as a man; basically it was an anarchistic way of life, since rules are superfluous when people live openly and care totally for one another. It was a free life led by an invisible mysterious force, the Holy Spirit; each and all followed the inner voice, with no fixed jobs, no salaries, no chains of command.

Idealistic movements have a typical pattern of development. What begins as something liberatingly new and alive becomes rigid and dead behind the prison bars of theory and organisation. Frank Buchman, who initiated MRA, used to shake his head when anyone wanted to state too definitely what it was. Let it be a lake where the elephant can swim and the lamb can wade, he said.

Of course, there were always a few would-be sergeant-majors around who wanted to drill us in what they took to be MRA's ideology, but even they helped the individual to find his own way, through learning to withstand

them. For me MRA was always a school for standing on one's own feet; for not leaning on other people, but reaching out to the firm reality that transcends us all.

The years 'on the road' were a very good time of training. We were usually up at five o'clock of a morning for an hour's quiet time of prayer and meditation, and seldom in bed before twelve. At all times we must be ready to meet people or to make a short speech, dealing with world situations and what God is calling people to do. One's thoughts must move as fast as lightning, and one must choose words which the audience understood, whether they were politicians or dock workers. I was not an easy pupil, I often grumbled, but then there came the joy of working in an unselfish collective.

One of my journeys was to America. While I was there, the Catholic theologian Fulton Sheen, later an archbishop, gave a series of television talks on faith. He presented what was to me then a quite novel view of the future of Russia, saying something like this: 'Here in the West we have a Christ without suffering and without a Cross. In the East they have suffering and sacrifice without the right to a faith. In the future those who have suffered will find it easier to return to the real faith.' He was farsighted. Since then we have seen the amazing flowering of the Christian faith in Russia.

Frank Buchman was another who often spoke about the Communist countries, especially to his close fellowworkers. He had the same notion as Fulton Sheen, continually coming back to the theme that it was among the suffering in Russia that faith would in the future find its most fertile soil.

In 1949 he encouraged three of us to attend a Communist youth festival in Budapest. It was a shattering experience. We encountered what seemed to us an insane

enthusiasm for brutal dictatorship. Was it real or stage-managed?

In the majestic opera house, the Bolshoi Ballet performed a piece based on Delacroix's painting *On the Barricades*. In the final scene, the whole troupe advanced step by step across the stage from backdrop to footlights. Suddenly the woman in the lead raised the Red Flag and shouted with the full force of her lungs, 'Stalin!' The whole audience leapt to their feet and yelled back, 'Stalin! Stalin!' They followed it with 'Rakosi! Rakosi!' And the Hungarian dictator in the box of honour stood and acknowledged the cheers. In a building close by—we now know—Cardinal Mindszenty was at that very time being tortured.

There was a giant parade through the streets. The ten thousand 'peace delegates' who took part included four hundred Chinese soldiers in full uniform, Greek guerillas of both sexes, and East German youth with massed flags, hardly to be distinguished from the Hitler Youth of a few years before. I had not seen marching like it since 1939 in Munich.

In the lovely city by the Danube we asked ourselves how people could voluntarily applaud brute force and dictatorship. How could they acquiesce in uniform thinking? For a time after I arrived back, I was in a state of shock. I told Buchman, 'What's going on there is too powerful to resist. They will win the world.' People in the room gasped. A smile lit up Frank's face. He obviously did not agree. But not until the Hungarian uprising of 1956, when those same young people who had shouted 'Stalin' and 'Rakosi' fought for freedom, did I fully recover my faith in the future.

Meanwhile I had returned to my old attic studio in a dilapidated house in Oslo and tried to stage a come-back

as a painter. Lonely and half-forgotten, I worked desperately to find my feet.

One day I saw a girl across the street. On an impulse I went over and asked permission to paint her. Two days later Aase Marie came into my studio. She was nineteen and had had a difficult childhood. As she told her story she broke into uncontrollable sobbing, and confessed to a terrible bitterness against those who had brought her up. I got her to write a letter that very day asking for forgiveness for her resentment. She became free from her burden, but the feeling took root in me that I would never be free from this girl.

I tried to be sensible. I was twelve years older than she, with no money and doubtful prospects. I had held out my hand and a little bird had landed on my finger. It could not be right to capture it. So we broke it off. But a year later, when Aase Marie was in California, we began to write to one another again.

In 1955, a national competition was announced for stained-glass windows for the venerable mediaeval cathedral in Stavanger, to replace windows which were modern copies. I threw myself into the task, even though stained glass was a new medium for me. When, amazingly, I heard over the radio that my designs had won first prize, I cabled California, 'Aase Marie, come home.' Five days after she landed in Norway, we were married.

Stavanger gave my life new purpose. It enabled me to bring together the two main currents of my life: faith and art. It was the first of a series of some twenty sacred art commissions.

In the late Sixties I was asked if I would entertain a party of ten Russian artists touring Western Europe. They had expressed a desire to see the home of a Norwegian artist. They numbered both painters and sculptors, and

had been specially selected, coming from all regions of the Soviet Union.

The KGB men travelling with them saw no harm in the visit to my home, and stayed back in their hotel. I gave the Russians a lecture on my work and my faith, and I spoke of Solzhenitsyn, whose *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch* I had read. They made few comments, but at the end of my talk presented me with a book on Russian art, and when I spoke of my latest stained-glass window, at Hinna, in West Norway, were at once eager to go there and see it.

The window at Hinna depicts Good Friday evening, after Jesus had been taken down from the Cross. The Cross is empty, but the presence of Jesus is still felt. After the visit of the Russians, the pastor at Hinna told me that they had spent the entire day at the church, and spoke of the window making a deeper impression than anything else they had seen in the West.

Shortly afterwards, I received my most important sacred art commission; for the window at the east end of the 'Arctic Cathedral' at Tromsö, 250 miles north of the polar circle—the window whose picture I was later to take to Moscow.

The church consists of a series of huge concrete triangles, one behind the other, pointing skywards. The east window, in the final triangle, is like an enormous arrowhead penetrating into heaven. At the foot, Adam and Eve stand out against the light as concrete silhouettes. At the top, in the tip of the arrow, is a mighty hand, open towards the earth: God's hand reaching down into history again. Three rays of golden light stream from it. Amid them is Jesus, the Light of the World, with outstretched arms. Smaller figures show what we inflict on Him and on each other: grief, misery, death. As I worked, I had

the sense that we are not living in the time after Christ, but in the time before His return to earth.

Not far away, in the Kola Peninsula, Russia has one of the strongest naval bases in the world. A fleet of landing-craft of limited range is stationed here. They are suitable only for an attack on North Norway. As I planned my window, I thought not only of speaking to Norwegians, but to Russians. If ever Russian soldiers are quartered in the building, the message of the window will shine down on them.

Inner freedom

IN 1977, I RECEIVED A COMMISSION to make fifteen large stained-glass windows for a church in Tel Aviv. On the occasion of my initial visit there, I walked on the beach, musing that this was where, according to the Old Testament, Jonah was cast up by the whale.

In Jaffa, the one-time Joppa, which is the old part of Tel Aviv, I sought out the house which is supposed to be the one where Simon the Tanner lived, and where, according to the New Testament, an even more famous Simon, Peter, stayed for some weeks as his guest.

In the maze of small streets, I lost my way. At length I was conscious that I was being watched by an elderly man dressed in a goat-skin coat done up with wooden buttons, who was standing in a doorway. I went up to him. 'You couldn't tell me where Peter stayed?'

'Couldn't I?' he answered brusquely. 'It was there.' He indicated a blue door a few yards down the street. But I was now interested in him. He turned out to be a third Simon and a Russian. I therefore pulled from my pocket a picture of Solzhenitsyn in Norway. 'Do you know who that fellow is?' I said. He looked as though he could hardly believe his eyes. 'Sasha!' he exclaimed. And it came out that he had spent fifteen years in prison camps in Siberia, some of them in company with Solzhenitsyn.

'When you see him again,' he said, 'remind him that he owes me five rubles.'

This Simon was, like myself, a painter, and we talked for two hours. But in the end I turned my attention back to the house that was reputed to have belonged to the Simon who was a tanner.

If it is indeed the house, and if *Acts* tells true, its roof was the birthplace of the idea of universal human rights and respect for the individual. For the account says that it was there that Peter had the vision which led him to accept the idea that all men, and not only Jews, were fit receptacles for God's grace.

Therewith Christianity became the possession of all mankind, and Christians began to say that all men are of infinite worth. Hitherto, even the enlightened Jews had only thought of Jews in this way, and even enlightened Greeks only the upper class. Simon Peter brought to the world the first declaration of universal human rights.

From it issued the French Revolution's 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity', and the American Revolution's 'We hold this truth to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.' And this is the theme of the great underground ferment in Russia at the present time.

In 1975, a woman called Nijole Sadunaite was condemned to six years' loss of freedom for working in a secret press printing religious literature in Lithuania. At her trial she addressed the court:

'I want to tell everybody here that I love you as if you were my own brothers and sisters, and that nothing would stop me from giving my own life for you. But today you don't need my offer; what you need today is to hear the truth spoken straight up into your face. There is a saying that only the man who loves has the right to exhort. I claim this right as I now turn to you.

'We Christians are not afraid of your concentration

camps or jails, and we see it as our duty to condemn your discrimination and humiliating oppression of the people. To fight for human rights is for all of us a holy duty.'

Those who fight for human rights in the USSR, whether Church members or the intellectuals of the dissident movement, seldom see it as their purpose to overthrow the Soviet regime. They eschew violence. In his letter to the Soviet leaders of 1974, Solzhenitsyn said, 'I am an opponent of all political upheavals, whether abroad (which you want) or at home (which you fear). Bloody revolution is always to the disadvantage of the peoples among whom it takes place.'

Russia's human rights campaigners see themselves as preparing men for the day when a free and democratic society will be possible. But none of them can say, and they do not think anyone can say, just how that society will come about. They see their task as moral; a revolution of the mind and heart.

'We want to alter the way people think,' says the dissident author, Andrei Amalrik; 'to give people the sense of their own human worth and an inner conviction which will make them stand up for their rights. Only then will the system change.'

When Sakharov was asked in a television interview in 1977 whether the human rights campaign had any hope of succeeding, he replied, 'I would not evaluate the activity of those who fight for human rights in practical terms. We just cannot do otherwise than engage in this fight. But I believe that open action in defence of human rights, made known to the millions by foreign radio stations, is creating the psychological basis for the inner liberation of our people and thereby for vitally necessary democratic innovations in the future.'

But they see their battle as immediate and world-wide, quite apart from whether it results in freedom for their

nation or not. The basic battle is for the inner freedom which is necessary for every one of us, whether in East or West, if we are ever to live a full, creative life and discover the right goal for a free society. For this unhappy world's problems must, in the end, find their resolution in the individual.

The individual is a world to himself. Physiologically we consist of minute cells, each with its individual form. But, driven by an inexplicable consciousness, these myriads of cells unite to form a body. Whence does a cell acquire the knowledge that it must function as a liver cell, and how do just the right number of cells divide to be blood cells?

Can we not conceive a world as a spiritual body consisting of individual souls, which of their own free will allow themselves to be led by a superior spiritual force, to find their characteristic inner freedom, so that the individual, when fully developed, can act as an independent cell in a harmonious, spiritual unit?

I believe that the Russian dissidents' lesson to mankind is that we must all be ourselves first and so gain the freedom to create beyond ourselves. No one of us—neither they nor I—has found the answer to every question, but we have set our feet on the path because, each in our own way, we have become dissidents to the outdated doctrines of society, have allowed ourselves to be stripped of materialist values and are free, if we will, to be guided by our consciences and the Holy Spirit within us.

He who has found inner freedom and become a flame in the darkness has won the greatest victory a man can win, not only for himself but for all humanity. Wherever it happens it brings joy and power.

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