

Words of Warning to the Western World

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn - 1975

Most of those present here today are workers. Creative workers. And I myself, having spent many years of my life as a stone cutter, as a foundryman, as a manual worker, in the name of all who have shared this forced labor with me, like the two Gulag prisoners whom you just saw, and on behalf of those who are doing forced labor in our country, I can start my speech today with the greeting ‘Brothers!’ “Brothers in Labor.” And not to forget, also, the many honored guests present here tonight, let me add: “Ladies and Gentlemen.”

“Workers of the world unite!” Who of us has not heard this slogan, which has been sounding through the world for 125 years? Today you can find it in any Soviet pamphlet as well as in every issue of Pravda. But never have the leaders of the Communist revolution in the Soviet Union made application of these words sincerely and in their full meaning. When many lies have accumulated over the decades, we forget the radical and basic lie which is not on the leaves of the tree, but at its very roots.

Now, it’s almost impossible to remember or to believe. For instance, I recently published —had reprinted— a pamphlet from the year 1918. This was a precise record of a meeting of all representatives of the Petrograd factories, that being the city known in our country as the “cradle of the Revolution.”

I repeat, this was March 1918 - only four months after the October Revolution - and all the representatives of the Petrograd factories were cursing the Communists, who had deceived them in all of their promises. What is more, not only had they abandoned Petrograd to cold and hunger, themselves having fled from Petrograd to Moscow, but had given orders to machine-gun the crowds of workers in the courtyards of the factories who were demanding the election of independent factory committees.

Let me remind you, this was March 1918. Scarcely anyone now can recall the crushing of the Petrograd strikes in 1921, or the shooting of workers in Kolpino in the same year. Among the leadership, the Central Committee of the Communist Party, at the beginning of the Revolution, all were emigre intellectuals who had returned, after the uprisings had already broken out in Russia, in order to carry through the Communist Revolution. One of them was a genuine worker, a highly skilled lathe operator until the last day of his life. This was Alexander Shliapnikov. Who knows that name today? Precisely because he expressed the true interests of the workers within the Communist leadership. In the years before the Revolution it was Shliapnikov who ran the whole Communist Party in Russia - not Lenin, who was an emigre. In 1921, he headed the Workers’ Opposition which was charging the Communist leadership with betraying the workers’ interests, with crushing and oppressing the proletariat and transforming itself into a bureaucracy.

Shliapnikov disappeared from sight. He was arrested somewhat later and since he firmly stood his ground he was shot in prison and his name is perhaps unknown to most people here today. But I remind you: before the Revolution the head of the Communist Party of Russia was Shliapnikov –not Lenin.

Since that time, the working class has never been able to stand up for its rights, and in distinction from all the western countries our working class only receives what they hand out to it. It only gets handouts. It cannot defend its simplest, everyday interests, and the least strike for pay or for better living conditions is viewed as counter-revolutionary. Thanks to the closed nature of the Soviet system, you have probably never heard of the textile strikes in 1930 in Ivanovo, or of the 1961 worker unrest in Murom and Alexandrovo, or of the major workers’ uprising in Novocherkassk in 1962 - this in the time of Khrushchev, after the thaw.

This story will shortly be published in detail in your country in Gulag Archipelago, volume 3. It is a story of how workers went in a peaceful demonstration to the Party City Committee, carrying portraits of Lenin, to request a change in economic conditions. They fired at them with machine guns

and dispersed the crowds with tanks. No family dared even to collect its wounded and dead, but all were taken away in secret by the authorities.

Precisely to those present here I don't have to explain that in our country, since the Revolution, there's never been such a thing as a free trade union.

The leaders of the British trade unions are free to play the unworthy game of visiting Russia's so-called trade unions and receiving visits in return. But the AFL-CIO has never given in to these illusions.

The American workers' movement has never allowed itself to be blinded and to mistake slavery for freedom. And I, today, on behalf of all of our oppressed people, thank you for this!

When liberal thinkers and wise men of the West, who had forgotten the meaning of the word "liberty," were swearing that in the Soviet Union there were no concentration camps at all, the American Federation of Labor, published in 1947, a map of our concentration camps, and on behalf of all of the prisoners of those times, I want to thank the American workers' movement for this. But just as we feel ourselves your allies here, there also exists another alliance—at first glance a strange one, a surprising one—but if you think about it, in fact, one which is well-grounded and easy to understand this is the alliance between our Communist leaders and your capitalists.

This alliance is not new. The very famous Armand Hammer, who is flourishing here today, laid the basis for this when he made the first exploratory trip into Russia, still in Lenin's time, in the very first years of the Revolution. He was extremely successful in this intelligence mission and since that time for all these 50 years, we observe continuous and steady support by the businessmen of the West of the Soviet Communist leaders.

Their clumsy and awkward economy, which could never overcome its own difficulties by itself, is continually getting material and technological assistance. The major construction projects in the initial five-year plan were built exclusively with American technology and materials. Even Stalin recognized that two-thirds of what was needed was obtained from the West. And if today the Soviet Union has powerful military and police forces—in a country which is by contemporary standards poor—they are used to crush our movement for freedom in the Soviet Union – and we have western capital to thank for this also.

Let me remind you of a recent incident which some of you may have seen in the newspapers, although others might have missed it: Certain of your businessmen, on their own initiative, established an exhibition of criminological technology in Moscow. This was the most recent and elaborate technology, which here, in your country, is used to catch criminals, to bug them, to spy on them, to photograph them, to tail them, to identify criminals. This was taken to Moscow to an exhibition in order that the Soviet KGB agents could study it, as if not understanding what sort of criminals, who would be hunted by the KGB.

The Soviet government was extremely interested in this technology, and decided to purchase it. And your businessmen were quite willing to sell it. Only when a few sober voices here raised an uproar against it was this deal blocked. Only for this reason it didn't take place. But you have to realize how clever the KGB is. This technology didn't have to stay two or three weeks in a Soviet building under Soviet guard. Two or three nights were enough for the KGB there to look through it and copy it. And if today, persons are being hunted down by the best and most advanced technology, for this, I can also thank your western capitalists.

This is something which is almost incomprehensible to the human mind: that burning greed for profit which goes beyond all reason, all self-control, all conscience, only to get money.

I must say that Lenin foretold this whole process. Lenin, who spent most of his life in the West and not in Russia, who knew the West much better than Russia, always wrote and said that the western capitalists would do anything to strengthen the economy of the USSR. They will compete with each other to sell us goods cheaper and sell them quicker, so that the Soviets will buy from one rather than

from the other. He said: They will bring it themselves without thinking about their future. And, in a difficult moment, at a party meeting in Moscow, he said: “Comrades, don’t panic, when things go very hard for us, we will give a rope to the bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie will hang itself.”

Then, Karl Radek, whom you may have heard of, who was a very resourceful wit, said: “Vladimir Ilyich, but where are we going to get enough rope to hang the whole bourgeoisie?” Lenin effortlessly replied, “They’ll supply us with it.”

Through the decades of the 1920s, the 1930s, the 1940s, the 1950s, the whole Soviet press wrote: Western capitalism, your end is near. But it was as if the capitalists had not heard, could not understand, could not believe this.

Nikita Khrushchev came here and said, “We will bury you!” They didn’t believe that, either. They took it as a joke.

Now, of course, they have become more clever in our country. Now they don’t say “we are going to bury you” anymore, now they say “detente.”

Nothing has changed in Communist ideology. The goals are the same as they were, but instead of the artless Khrushchev, who couldn’t hold his tongue, now they say “detente.”

In order to understand this, I will take the liberty of making a short historic survey – the history of such relations, which in different periods have been called “trade,” “stabilization of the situation,” “recognition of realities,” and now “detente.” These relations now are at least 40 years old.

Let me remind you with what sort of system they started.

The system was installed by armed uprising.

It dispersed the Constituent Assembly.

It capitulated to Germany – the common enemy.

It introduced execution without trial.

It crushed workers’ strikes.

It plundered the villagers to such an unbelievable extent that the peasants revolted, and when this happened it crushed the peasants in the bloodiest possible way.

It shattered the Church.

It reduced 20 provinces of our country to a condition of famine.

This was in 1921, the famous Volga famine. A very typical Communist technique: To seize power without thinking of the fact that the productive forces will collapse, that the fields will not be sown, the factories will stop, that the country will decline into poverty and famine – but when poverty and hunger come, then they request the humanitarian world to help them.

We see this in North Vietnam today, perhaps Portugal is approaching this also. And the same thing happened in Russia in 1921. When the three-year civil war, started by the Communists - and “civil war” was a slogan of the Communists, civil war was Lenin’s purpose; read Lenin, this was his aim and his slogan – when they had ruined Russia by this civil war, then they asked America, “America, feed our hungry.” And indeed, generous and magnanimous America did feed our hungry.

The so-called American Relief Administration was set up, headed by your future President Hoover, and indeed many millions of Russian lives were saved by this organization of yours.

But what sort of gratitude did you receive for this? In the USSR not only did they try to erase this whole event from the popular memory — it’s almost impossible today in the Soviet press to find any reference to the American Relief Administration— but they even denounce it as a clever spy organization, a clever scheme of American imperialism to set up a spy network in Russia. I repeat, it was a system that introduced concentration camps for the first time in the history of the world.

A system that, in the 20th Century, was the first to introduce the use of hostages, that is to say, not to seize the person whom they were seeking, but rather a member of his family or someone at random, and shoot that person.

This system of hostages and persecution of the family exists to this day. It is still the most powerful weapon of persecution, because the bravest person, who is not afraid for himself, still shivers at the

threat to his family.

It is a system which was the first —long before Hitler— to employ false registration, that is, to say: “Such and such people have to come in to register.” People would comply and then they were taken away to be annihilated.

We didn’t have gas chambers in those days. We used barges. A hundred or a thousand persons were put into a barge and then it was sunk.

It was a system which deceived the workers in all of its decrees – the decree on land, the decree on peace, the decree on factories, the decree on freedom of the press.

It was a system which exterminated all additional parties, and let me make it clear to you that it not only disbanded the party itself, but destroyed its members. All members of every other party were exterminated. It was a system which carried out genocide of the peasantry; 15 million peasants were sent off to extermination.

It was a system which introduced serfdom, the so-called “passport system.”

It was a system which, in time of peace, artificially created a famine, causing 6 million persons to die in the Ukraine in 1932 and 1933. They died on the very edge of Europe. And Europe didn’t even notice it. The world didn’t even notice it – 6 million persons!

I could keep on enumerating these endlessly, but I have to stop because I have come to the year 1933 when, with all I have enumerated behind us, your President Roosevelt and your Congress recognized this system as one worthy of diplomatic recognition, of friendship and of assistance.

Let me remind you that the great Washington did not agree to recognize the French Convention because of its savagery. Let me remind you that in 1933, voices were raised in your country objecting to recognition of the Soviet Union. However, the recognition took place and this was the beginning of friendship and ultimately of a military alliance.

Let us remember that in 1904, the American press was delighted at the Japanese victories and everyone wanted Russia’s defeat because it was a conservative country. I want to remind you that in 1914 reproaches were directed at France and England for having entered into an alliance with such a conservative country as Russia.

The scope and the direction of my speech today do not permit me to say more about pre-revolutionary Russia. I will just say that information about pre-revolutionary Russia was obtained by the West from persons who were either not sufficiently competent or not sufficiently conscientious. I will just cite for the sake of comparison a number of figures which you can read for yourself in *Gulag Archipelago*, volume 1, which has been published in the United States, and perhaps many of you may have read it. These are the figures:

According to calculations by specialists, based on the most precise objective statistics, in pre-revolutionary Russia, during the 80 years before the revolution —years of the revolutionary movement when there were attempts on the Tsar’s life, assassination of a Tsar, revolution— during these years about 17 persons a year were executed. The famous Spanish Inquisition, during the decades when it was at the height of its persecution, destroyed perhaps 10 persons a month. In the Archipelago —I cite a book which was published by the Cheka in 1920, proudly reporting on its revolutionary work in 1918 and 1919 and apologizing that its data were not quite complete— in 1918 and 1919 the Cheka executed, without trial, more than a thousand persons a month! This was written by the Cheka itself, before it understood how this would look to history.

At the height of Stalin’s terror in 1937-38, if we divide the number of persons executed by the number of months, we get more than 40,000 persons shot per month! Here are the figures: 17 a year, 10 a month, more than 1,000 a month, more than 40,000 a month! Thus, that which had made it difficult for the democratic West to form an alliance with pre-revolutionary Russia had, by 1941, grown to such an extent and still did not prevent the entire united democracy of the world —England, France, the United States, Canada, Australia and small countries— from entering into a military alliance with

the Soviet Union. How is this to be explained? How can we understand it? Here we can offer a few explanations. The first, I think, is that the entire united democracy of the world was too weak to fight against Hitler's Germany alone. If this is the case, then it is a terrible sign. It is a terrible portent for the present day. If all these countries together could not defeat Hitler's little Germany, what are they going to do today, when more than half the globe is flooded with totalitarianism? I don't want to accept this explanation.

The second explanation is perhaps that there was simply an attack of panic —of fear— among the statesmen of the day. They simply didn't have sufficient confidence in themselves, they simply had no strength of spirit, and in this confused state decided to enter into an alliance with Soviet totalitarianism. This is also not flattering to the West.

Finally, the third explanation is that it was a deliberate device. Democracy did not want to defend itself. For defense it wanted to use another totalitarian system, the Soviet totalitarian system.

I'm not talking now about the moral evaluation of this, I'm going to talk about that later. But in terms of simple calculation, how shortsighted, what profound self-deception! We have a Russian proverb: "Do not call a wolf to help you against the dogs." If dogs are attacking and tearing at you, fight against the dogs, but do not call a wolf for help. Because when the wolves come, they will destroy the dogs, but they will also tear you apart.

World democracy could have defeated one totalitarian regime after another, the German, then the Soviet. Instead, it strengthened Soviet totalitarianism, helped bring into existence a third totalitarianism, that of China, and all this finally precipitated the present world situation.

Roosevelt, in Teheran, during one of his last toasts, said the following: "I do not doubt that the three of us" —meaning Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin— "lead our peoples in accordance with their desires, in accordance with their aims." How are we to explain this? Let the historians worry about that. At the time, we listened and were astonished. We thought, "when we reach Europe, we will meet the Americans, and we will tell them." I was among the troops that were marching towards the Elbe. A little bit more and I would have reached the Elbe and would have shaken the hands of your American soldiers. But just before that happened, I was taken off to prison and my meeting did not take place.

But now, after all this great delay, the same hand has thrown me out of the country and here I am, instead of the meeting at the Elbe. After a delay of 30 years, my Elbe is here today. I am here to tell you, as a friend of the United States, what, as friends, we wanted to tell you then, but which our soldiers were prevented from telling you on the Elbe.

There is another Russian proverb: "The yes-man is your enemy, but your friend will argue with you." It is precisely because I am the friend of the United States, precisely because my speech is prompted by friendship, that I have come to tell you: "My friends, I'm not going to tell you sweet words. The situation in the world is not just dangerous, it isn't just threatening, it is catastrophic."

Something that is incomprehensible to the ordinary human mind has taken place. We over there, the powerless, average Soviet people, couldn't understand, year after year and decade after decade, what was happening. How were we to explain this? England, France, the United States, were victorious in World War II. Victorious states always dictate peace; they receive firm conditions; they create the sort of situation which accords with their philosophy, their concept of liberty, their concept of national interest.

Instead of this, beginning in Yalta, your statesmen of the West, for some inexplicable reason, have signed one capitulation after another. Never did the West or your President Roosevelt impose any conditions on the Soviet Union for obtaining aid. He gave unlimited aid, and then unlimited concessions. Already in Yalta, without any necessity, the occupation of Mongolia, Moldavia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania was silently recognized. Immediately after that, almost nothing was done to protect eastern Europe, and seven or eight more countries were surrendered.

Stalin demanded that the Soviet citizens who did not want to return home be handed over to him, and the western countries handed over 1.5 million human beings. How was this done? They took them by force. English soldiers killed Russians who did not want to become prisoners of Stalin, and drove them by force to Stalin to be exterminated. This has recently come to light —just a few years ago—a million and a half human beings. How could the Western democracies have done this?

And after that, for another 30 years, the constant retreat, the surrender of one country after another, to such a point that there are Soviet satellites even in Africa; almost all of Asia is taken over by them; Portugal is rolling down the precipice.

During those 30 years, more was surrendered to totalitarianism than any defeated country has ever surrendered after any war in history. There was no war, but there might as well have been.

For a long time we in the East couldn't understand this. We couldn't understand the labbiness of the truce concluded in Vietnam. Any average Soviet citizen understood that this was a sly device which made it possible for North Vietnam to take over South Vietnam when it so chose. And suddenly, this was rewarded by the Nobel Prize for Peace—a tragic and ironic prize.

A very dangerous state of mind can arise as a result of this 30 years of retreat: give in as quickly as possible, give up as quickly as possible, peace and quiet at any cost.

This is what many western papers wrote: "Let's hurry up and end the bloodshed in Vietnam and have national unity there." But at the Berlin Wall no one talked of national unity. One of your reading newspapers, after the end of Vietnam, had a full headline: "The Blessed Silence." I would not wish that kind of "blessed silence" on my worst enemy. I would not wish that kind of national unity on my worst enemy.

I spent 11 years in the Archipelago, and for half of my lifetime I have studied this question. Looking at this terrible tragedy in Vietnam from a distance, I can tell you, a million persons will be simply exterminated, while 4 to 5 million (in accordance with the scale of Vietnam) will find themselves in concentration camps and will be rebuilding Vietnam. And what is happening in Cambodia you already know. It is genocide. It is full and complete destruction but in a new form. Once again their technology is not up to building gas chambers.

So, in a few hours, the entire capital city—the guilty capital city—is emptied out: old people, women, children are driven out without belongings without food "Go and die!" This is very dangerous for one's view of the world when this feeling comes on: "Go ahead, give it up."

We already hear voices in your country and in the West "Give up Korea and we will live quietly. Give up Portugal, of course: give up Japan, give up Israel, give up Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, give up 10 more African countries. Just let us live in peace and quiet. Just let us drive our big cars on our splendid highways; just let us play tennis and golf, in peace and quiet; just let us mix our cocktails in peace and quiet as we are accustomed to doing; just let us see the beautiful toothy smile with a glass in hand on every advertisement page of our magazines."

But look how things have turned out: Now in the West this has all turned into an accusation against the United States. Now, in the West, we hear very many voices saying, "It's your fault, America." And, here, I must decisively defend the United States against these accusations.

I have to say that the United States, of all the countries of the West, is the least guilty in all this and has done the most in order to prevent it. The United States has helped Europe to win the First and the Second World Wars. It twice raised Europe from post-war destruction—twice—for 10, 20, 30 years it has stood as a shield protecting Europe while European countries were counting their nickels, to avoid paying for their armies (better yet to have none at all) to avoid paying for armaments, thinking about how to leave NATO, knowing that in any case America will protect them anyway. These countries started it all, despite their thousands of years of civilization and culture, even though they are closer and should have known better.

I came to your continent - for two months I have been travelling in its wide open spaces and I agree: here you do not feel the nearness of it all, the immediacy of it all. And here it is possible to miscalculate. Here you must make a spiritual effort to understand the acuteness of the world situation. The United States of America has long shown itself to be the most magnanimous, the most generous country in the world. Wherever there is a flood, an earthquake, a fire, a natural disaster, disease, who is the first to help? The United States. Who helps the most and unselfishly? The United States.

And what do we hear in reply? Reproaches, curses, "Yankee Go Home." American cultural centers are burned, and the representatives of the Third World jump on tables to vote against the United States.

But this does not take the load off America's shoulders. The course of history —whether you like it or not— has made you the leaders of the world. Your country can no longer think provincially. Your political leaders can no longer think only of their own states, of their parties, of petty arrangements which may or may not lead to promotion. You must think about the whole world, and when the new political crisis in the world will arise (I think we have just come to the end of a very acute crisis and the next one will come any moment) the main decisions will fall anyway on the shoulders of the United States of America.

And while already here, I have heard some explanations of the situation. Let me quote some of them: "It is impossible to protect those who do not have the will to defend themselves." I agree with that, but this was said about South Vietnam. In one-half of today's Europe and in three-quarters of today's world the will to defend oneself is even less than it was in South Vietnam.

We are told: "We cannot defend those who are unable to defend themselves with their own human resources." But against the overwhelming powers of totalitarianism, when all of this power is thrown against a country – no country can defend itself with its own resources. For instance, Japan doesn't have a standing army.

We are told, "We should not protect those who do not have full democracy." This is the most remarkable argument of the lot. This is the Leitmotif I hear in your newspapers and in the speeches of some of your political leaders. Who in the world, ever, on the front line of defense against totalitarianism has been able to sustain full democracy? You, the united democracies of the world, were not able to sustain it. America, England, France, Canada, Australia together did not sustain it. At the first threat of Hitlerism, you stretched out your hands to Stalin. You call that sustaining democracy?

And there is more of the same (there were many of these speeches in a row): "If the Soviet Union is going to use detente for its own ends, then we. ..." But what will happen then? The Soviet Union has used detente in its own interests, is using it now and will continue to use it in its own interests! For example. China and the Soviet Union, both actively participating in detente, have quietly grabbed three countries of Indochina. True, perhaps as a consolation, China will send you a ping-pong team. And just as the Soviet Union once sent you the pilots who once crossed the North Pole, in a few days you're flying into space together.

A typical diversion. I remember very well the year, this was June of 1937, when Chkalov, Baidukov and Beliakov heroically flew over the North Pole and landed in the state of Washington. This was the very year when Stalin was executing more than 40,000 persons a month. And Stalin knew what he was doing. He sent those pilots and aroused in you a naive delight – the friendship of two countries across the North Pole. The pilots were heroic, nobody will say anything against them. But this was a show – a show to divert you from the real events of 1937. And what is the occasion now? Is it an anniversary – 38 years? Is 38 years some kind of an anniversary? No, it is simply necessary to cover up Vietnam. And, once again, those pilots were sent here. The Chkalov Memorial was unveiled in the State of Washington. Chkalov was a hero and is worthy of a memorial. But, to present the true picture, behind the memorial there should have been a wall and on it there should have been a bas relief showing the executions, showing the skulls and bones.

We are also told (I apologize for so many quotes, but there are many more in your press and radio):

“We cannot ignore the fact that North Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge have violated the agreement, but we’re ready to look into the future.” What does that mean? It means: let them exterminate people. But if these murderers, who live by violence, these executioners, offer us detente we will be happy to go along with them. As Willy Brandt once said: “I would even be willing to have detente with Stalin.” At a time when Stalin was executing 40,000 a month he would have been willing to have detente with Stalin?

Look into the future. This is how they looked into the future in 1933 and 1941, but it was a shortsighted look into the future. This is how they looked into the future two years ago when a senseless, incomprehensible, non-guaranteed truce in Vietnam was arranged, and it was a shortsighted view. There was such a hurry to make this truce that they forgot to liberate your own Americans from captivity. They were in such a hurry to sign this document that some 1,300 Americans, “Well, they have vanished; we can get by without them.” How is that done? How can this be? Part of them, indeed, can be missing in action, but the leaders of North Vietnam themselves have admitted that some of them are still being kept in prison. And do they give you back your countrymen?

No, they are not giving them back, and they are always raising new conditions. At first they said, “Remove them from power.” Now, they say, “Have the United States restore Vietnam, otherwise it’s very difficult for us to find these people.” If the government of North Vietnam has difficulty explaining to you what happened with your brothers, with your American POWs who have not yet returned, I, on the basis of my experience in the Archipelago, can explain this quite clearly. There is a law in the Archipelago that those who have been treated the most harshly and who have withstood the most bravely, the most honest, the most courageous, the most unbending, never again come out into the world. They are never again shown to the world because they will tell such tales as the human mind cannot accept. A part of your returned POWs told you that they were tortured. This means that those who have remained were tortured even more, but did not yield an inch.

These are your best people. These are your first heroes, who, in a solitary combat, have stood the test. And today, unfortunately, they cannot take courage from our applause. They can’t heat it from their solitary cells where they may either die or sit 30 years, like Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who was seized in 1945 in the Soviet Union. He has been imprisoned for 30 years and they will not yield him up.

And you have some hysterical public figure who said: “I will go to North Vietnam I will stand on my knees and beg them to release our prisoners of war.” This isn’t a political act – this is masochism.

To understand properly what detente has meant all these 40 years – friendships, stabilization of the situation, trade, etc. I would have to tell you something, which you have never seen or heard, of how it looked from the other side. Let me tell you how it looked.

Mere acquaintance with an American, and God forbid that you should sit with him in a cafe or restaurant, meant a 10-year term for suspicion of espionage.

In the first volume of Archipelago I tell of an event which was not told me by some arrested person, but by all of the members of the Supreme Court of the USSR during those short days when I was in the limelight under Khrushchev. One Soviet citizen was in the United States and on his return said that in the United States they have wonderful automobile roads. The KGB arrested him and demanded a term of 10 years. But the judge said “I don’t object, but there is not enough evidence. Couldn’t you find something else against him?” So the judge was exiled to Sakhalin because he dared to argue and they gave the other man 10 years. Can you imagine what a lie he told? And what sort of praise this was of American imperialism – in America there are good roads? Ten years.

In 1945-46 through our prison cells passed a lot of persons – and these were not ones who were cooperating with Hitler, although there were some of those, too. These were not guilty of anything, but rather persons who had just been in the West and had been liberated from German prison camps by the Americans. This was considered a criminal act – liberated by the Americans. That means he has seen the good life. If he comes back he will talk about it. The most terrible thing is not what he

did but what he would talk about. And all such persons got 10-year terms. During Nixon's last visit to Moscow your American correspondents were reporting in the western way from the streets of Moscow. I am going down a Russian street with a microphone and asking the ordinary Soviet citizen "Tell me please, what do you think about the meeting between Nixon and Brezhnev?" And, amazingly, every last person answered: "Wonderful. I'm delighted I'm absolutely overjoyed!"

What does this mean? If I'm going down a street in Moscow and some American comes up to me with a microphone and asks me something, then I know that on the other side of him is a member of the state security, also with a microphone who is recording everything I say. You think that I'm going to say something that is going to put me in prison immediately? Of course I say: "It's wonderful; I'm overjoyed." But what is the value of such correspondents if they simply transfer western techniques over there without thinking things through?

You helped us for many years with Lend Lease, but we've now done everything to forget this, to erase it from our minds, not to remember it if at all possible. And now, before I came into this hall, I delayed my visit to Washington a little in order to first take a look at some ordinary parts of America, going to various states and simply talking with people. I was told, and I learned this for the first time, that in every state during the war years there were Soviet-American friendship societies which collected assistance for Soviet people – warm clothes, canned food, gifts and sent them to the Soviet Union. But we not only never saw these; we not only never received them (they were distributed somewhere among the privileged circles) no one ever even told us that this was being done I only learned about it for the first time here, this month, in the United States.

Everything poisonous which could be said about the United States was said in Stalin's days. And all of this is a heavy sediment which can be stirred up anytime. Any day the newspapers can come out with the headlines "Bloodthirsty American imperialism wants to seize control of the world," and this poison will rise up from the sediment and many people in our country will believe this, and will be poisoned by it, and will consider you as aggressors. This is how detente has been managed on our side.

The Soviet system is so closed that it is almost impossible for you to understand from here. Your theoreticians and scholars write works trying to understand and explain how things occur there. Here are some naive explanations which are simply funny to Soviet citizens. Some say that the Soviet leaders have now given up their inhumane ideology. Not at all. They haven't given it up one bit.

Some say that in the Kremlin there are some on the left, some on the right. And they are fighting with each other, and we've got to behave in such a way as not to interfere with those on the left side. This is all fantasy, left...right. There is some sort of a struggle for power, but they all agree on the essentials. There also exists the following theory, that now, thanks to the growth of technology, there is a technocracy in the Soviet Union, a growing number of engineers and the engineers are now running the economy and will soon determine the fate of the country, rather than the party. I will tell you, though, that the engineers determine the fate of the economy just as much as our generals determine the fate of the Army. That means zero. Everything is done the way the party demands. That's our system. Judge it for yourself.

It's a system where for 40 years there haven't been genuine elections but simply a comedy, a farce. Thus a system which has no legislative organs. It's a system without an independent press; a system without an independent judiciary; where the people have no influence either on external or internal policy; where any thought which is different from what the state thinks is crushed.

And let me tell you that electronic bugging in our country is such a simple thing that it's a matter of everyday life. You had an instance in the United States where a bugging caused an uproar which lasted for a year and a half. For us it's an everyday matter. Almost every apartment, every institution has got its bug and it doesn't surprise us in the least – we are used to it.

It's a system where unmasked butchers of millions like Molotov and others smaller than him have never been tried in the courts but retire on tremendous pensions in the greatest comfort. It's a system

where the show still goes on today and to which every foreigner is introduced surrounded by a couple of planted agents working according to a set scenario. It's a system where the very constitution has never been carried out for one single day; where all the decisions mature in secrecy, high up in a small irresponsible group and then are released on us and on you like a bolt of lightning.

And what are the signatures of such persons worth? How could one rely on their signatures to documents of detente? You yourselves might ask your specialists now and they'll tell you that precisely in recent years the Soviet Union has succeeded in creating wonderful chemical weapons, missiles, which are even better than those used by the United States.

So what are we to conclude from that? Is detente needed or not? Not only is it needed, it's as necessary as air. It's the only way of saving the earth – instead of a world war, to have detente, but a true detente, and if it has already been ruined by the bad word which we use for it —“detente”— then we should find another word for it.

I would say that there are very few, only three, main characteristics of such a true detente. In the first place, there would be disarmament – not only disarmament from the use of war but also from the use of violence. We must stop using not only the sort of arms which are used to destroy one's neighbors, but the sort of arms which are used to oppress one's fellow countrymen. It is not detente if we here with you today can spend our time agreeably while over there people are groaning and dying and in psychiatric hospitals. Doctors are making their evening rounds, for the third time injecting people with drugs which destroy their brain cells.

The second sign of detente, I would say, is the following: that it be not one based on smiles, not on verbal concessions, but it has to be based on a firm foundation. You know the words from the Bible: “Build not on sand, but on rock.” There has to be a guarantee that this will not be broken overnight and for this the other side —the other party to the agreement—must have its acts subject to public opinion, to the press, and to a freely elected parliament. And until such control exists there is absolutely no guarantee. The third simple condition – what sort of detente is it when they employ the sort of inhumane propaganda which is proudly called in the Soviet Union “ideological warfare.” Let us not have that. If we're going to be friends, let's be friends, if we're going to have detente, then let's have detente, and an end to ideological warfare.

The Soviet Union and the Communist countries can conduct negotiations. They know how to do this. For a long time they don't make any concessions and then they give in a little bit. Then everyone says triumphantly, “Look, they've made a concession; it's time to sign.” The European negotiators of the 35 countries for two years now have painfully been negotiating and their nerves were stretched to the breaking point and they finally gave in. A few women from the Communist countries can now marry foreigners. And a few newspapermen are now going to be permitted to travel a little more than before. They give 1/1,000th of what natural law should provide. Matters which people should be able to do even before such negotiations are undertaken. And already there is joy. And here in the West we hear many voices, saying: “Look, they're making concessions; it's time to sign.”

During these two years of negotiations, in all the countries of eastern Europe, the pressure has increased, the oppression intensified, even in Yugoslavia and Romania, leaving aside the other countries. And it is precisely now that the Austrian chancellor says, “We've got to sign this agreement as rapidly as possible.”

What sort of an agreement would this be? The proposed agreement is the funeral of eastern Europe. It means that western Europe would finally, once and for all, sign away eastern Europe, stating that it is perfectly willing to see eastern Europe be crushed and overwhelmed once and for all, but please don't bother us. And the Austrian chancellor thinks that if all these countries are pushed into a mass grave, Austria at the very edge of this grave will survive and not fall into it also.

And we, from our lives there, have concluded that violence can only be withstood by firmness.

You have to understand the nature of communism. The very ideology of communism, all of Lenin's

teachings, are that anyone is considered to be a fool who doesn't take what's lying in front of him. If you can take it, take it. If you can attack, attack. But if there's a wall, then go back. And the Communist leaders respect only firmness and have contempt and laugh at persons who continually give in to them. Your people are now saying —and this is the last quotation I am going to give you from the statements of your leaders— "Power, without any attempt at conciliation, will lead to a world conflict." But I would say that power with continual subservience is no power at all.

But from our experience I can tell you that only firmness will make it possible to withstand the assaults of Communist totalitarianism. We see many historic examples, and let me give you some of them. Look at little Finland in 1939, which by its own forces withstood the attack. You, in 1948, defended Berlin only by your firmness of spirit, and there was no world conflict. In Korea in 1950 you stood up against the Communists, only by your firmness, and there was no world conflict. In 1962 you compelled the rockets to be removed from Cuba. Again it was only firmness, and there was no world conflict. And the late Konrad Adenauer conducted firm negotiations with Khrushchev and thus started a genuine detente with Khrushchev. Khrushchev started to make concessions and if he hadn't been removed, that winter he was planning to go to Germany and to continue the genuine detente.

Let me remind you of the weakness of a man whose name is rarely associated with weakness — the weakness of Lenin. Lenin, when he came to power, in panic gave up to Germany everything Germany wanted. Just what it wanted. Germany took as much as it wanted and said, "Give Armenia to Turkey." And Lenin said, "Fine." It's almost an unknown fact but Lenin petitioned the Kaiser to act as intermediary to persuade the Ukraine and, thus, to make possible a boundary between the Communist part of Russia and the Ukraine. It wasn't a question of seizing the Ukraine but rather of making a boundary with the Ukraine. We, we the dissidents of the USSR, don't have any tanks, we don't have any weapons, we have no organization. We don't have anything. Our hands are empty. We have only a heart and what we have lived through in the half century of this system. And when we have found the firmness within ourselves to stand up for our rights, we have done so. It's only by firmness of spirit that we have withstood. And if I am standing here before you, it's not because of the kindness or the good will of communism, not thanks to detente, but thanks to my own firmness and your firm support. They knew that I would not yield one inch, not one hair. And when they couldn't do more they themselves fell back.

This is not easy. In our conditions this was taught to me by the difficulties of my own life. And if you yourselves —any one of you— were in the same difficult situation, you would have learned the same thing. Take Vladimir Bukovsky, whose name is now almost forgotten. Now, I don't want to mention a lot of names because however many I might mention there are more still. And when we resolve the question with two or three names it is as if we forget and betray the others. We should rather remember figures. There are tens of thousands of political prisoners in our country and —by the calculation of English specialists— 7,000 persons are now under compulsory psychiatric treatment. Let's take Vladimir Bukovsky as an example. It was proposed to him, "All right, we'll free you. Go to the West and shut up." And this young man, a youth today on the verge of death said: "No, I won't go this way. I have written about the persons whom you have put in insane asylums. You release them and then I'll go West." This is what I mean by that firmness of spirit to stand up against granite and tanks.

Finally, to evaluate everything that I have said to you, I would say we need not have had our conversation on the level of business calculations. Why did such and such a country act in such and such a way? What were they counting on? We should rather rise above this to the moral level and say "In 1933 and in 1941 your leaders and the whole western world, in an unprincipled way, made a deal with totalitarianism." We will have to pay for this, some day this deal will come back to haunt us. For 30 years we have been paying for it and we're still paying for it. And we're going to pay for it in a worse way.

One cannot think only in the low level of political calculations. It's necessary to think also of what

is noble, and what is honorable – not only what is profitable. Resourceful western legal scholars have now introduced the term “legal realism.” By legal realism, they want to push aside any moral evaluation of affairs. They say, “Recognize realities; if such and such laws have been established in such and such countries by violence, these laws still must be recognized and respected.”

At the present time it is widely accepted among lawyers that law is higher than morality – law is something which is worked out and developed, whereas morality is something inchoate and amorphous. That isn’t the case. The opposite is rather true! Morality is higher than law! While law is our human attempt to embody in rules a part of that moral sphere which is above us. We try to understand this morality, bring it down to earth and present it in a form of laws. Sometimes we are more successful, sometimes less. Sometimes you actually have a caricature of morality, but morality is always higher than law. This view must never be abandoned. We must accept it with heart and soul.

It is almost a joke now in the western world, in the 20th century, to use words like “good” and “evil.” They have become almost old-fashioned concepts, but they are very real and genuine concepts. These are concepts from a sphere which is higher than us. And instead of getting involved in base, petty, shortsighted political calculations and games we have to recognize that the concentration of World Evil and the tremendous force of hatred is there and it’s flowing from there throughout the world. And we have to stand up against it and not hasten to give to it, give to it, give to it, everything that it wants to swallow.

Today there are two major processes occurring in the world. One is the one which I have just described to you, which has been in progress more than 30 years. It is a process of shortsighted concessions; a process of giving up, and giving up and giving up and hoping that perhaps at some point the wolf will have eaten enough.

The second process is one which I consider the key to everything and which, I will say now, will bring all of us our future; under the cast-iron shell of communism—for 20 years in the Soviet Union and a shorter time in other Communist countries— there is occurring a liberation of the human spirit. New generations are growing up which are steadfast in their struggle with evil; which are not willing to accept unprincipled compromises; which prefer to lose everything—salary, conditions of existence and life itself— but are not willing to sacrifice conscience; not willing to make deals with evil.

This process has now gone so far that in the Soviet Union today, Marxism has fallen so low that it has become an anecdote, it’s simply an object of contempt. No serious person in our country today, not even university and high school students, can talk about Marxism without smiling, without laughing.

But this whole process of our liberation, which obviously will entail social transformations, is slower than the first one – the process of concessions. Over there, when we see these concessions, we are frightened. Why so quickly? Why so precipitously? Why yield several countries a year?

I started by saying that you are the allies of our liberation movement in the Communist countries. And I call upon you: let us think together and try to see how we can adjust the relationship between these two processes. Whenever you help the persons persecuted in the Soviet Union, you not only display magnanimity and nobility, you’re defending not only them but yourselves as well. You’re defending your own future.

So let us try and see how far we can go to stop this senseless and immoral process of endless concessions to the aggressor – these clever legal arguments for why we should give up one country after another. Why must we hand over to Communist totalitarianism more and more technology – complex, delicate, developed technology which it needs for armaments and for crushing its own citizens? If we can at least slow down that process of concessions, if not stop it all together—and make it possible for the process of liberation to continue in the Communist countries— ultimately these two processes will yield us our future.

On our crowded planet there are no longer any internal affairs. The Communist leaders say, “Don’t interfere in our internal affairs. Let us strangle our citizens in peace and quiet.” But I tell you: Interfere more and more. Interfere as much as you can. We beg you to come and interfere. Understanding my

own task in the same way I have perhaps interfered today in your internal affairs, or at least touched upon them, and I apologize for it. I have traveled a lot around the United States and this has been added to my earlier understanding of it; what I have heard from listening to the radio, from talking to experienced persons.

America—in me and among my friends and among people who think the way I do over there, among all ordinary Soviet citizens— evokes a sort of mixture of feelings of admiration and of compassion. Admiration at the fact of your own tremendous forces which you perhaps don't even recognize yourselves. You're a country of the future; a young country; a country of still untapped possibilities; a country of tremendous geographical distances; a country of tremendous breadth of spirit; a country of generosity; a country of magnanimity. But these qualities—strength, generosity and magnanimity—usually make a man and even a whole country trusting, and this already several times has done you a disservice.

I would like to call upon America to be more careful with its trust and prevent those wise persons who are attempting to establish even finer degrees of justice and even finer legal shades of equality—some because of their distorted outlook, others because of short-sightedness and still others out of self interest— from falsely using the struggle for peace and for social justice to lead you down a false road. Because they are trying to weaken you; they are trying to disarm your strong and magnificent country in the face of this fearful threat – one which has never been seen before in the history of the world.

Not only in the history of your country, but in the history of the world. And I call upon you: ordinary working men of America—as represented here by your trade union movement— do not let yourselves become weak. Do not let yourselves be taken in the wrong direction. Let us try to slow down the process of concessions and help the process of liberation!