

THE EVOLUTION OF THE SIBERIAN EXILE SYSTEM

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Introduction

“One death is a tragedy; a million is a statistic.” —Unknown

Siberia, stretching from the steppes of Central Asia in the south to the coast of the Arctic Ocean in the north, and from the boundary of Europe in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east, has always been a land of great cultural, environmental, and economic diversity. Its history is equally complex, spanning vast human migrations, Turkic conquests, tribal conflicts, and eventually Russian hegemony. But, since the Russian conquest of the region concluded in the early seventeenth century, several things have remained nearly constant. Among these, unique to Siberia is the use of its territory to sustain a system of institutional exile, in which hundreds of thousands of people were sent to serve out terms of banishment as punishment for crimes. American explorer George Kennan, whose remarkable study of the exile system will be more carefully scrutinized later, remarked in an 1882 essay that exiles began to be sent to Siberia almost as soon as the Russian Empire acquired it.¹ Its most recent incarnation, the Soviet GULAG (Главное управление исправительно-трудовых лагерей и колоний, or Main Administration of Correctional Labor Camps and Colonies) system, existed in one form or another until at least 1987.² The exact number of people banished to Siberia during this 350-year period is probably incalculable. However, given the enormous global changes that occurred over

¹ Kennan, George. “Siberia: the Exile’s Abode.” *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York* 14 (1882) 13-68. pg. 37

² The Perm-36 camp, located in the Ural Mountains, closed in 1987 and was among the last camps to do so. The formal Gulag authority ceased to exist much earlier, but some labour camps, including Perm-36, continued to operate. (“Perm-36" Soviet political repression camp (GULAG).” Online: *Krasnov Travel Agency*. 2008. Accessed 23 October 2018. <http://www.uraltourism.com/perm36.php>)

these three and a half centuries, the system surely must have evolved alongside new social developments, technological improvements, and the shifting winds of politics in European Russia. The question of how and why the exile system evolved, examined primarily through the writings of the Archpriest Avvakum, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, will be the focus of this inquiry.

A brief history of the Russian presence in Siberia must necessarily precede any attempt to explain the origins of the exile system. Russia's conquest of the region was remarkably swift.³ It is considered to have begun when the Cossack Yermak Timofeevich crossed the Ural Mountains with a small detachment and attacked the Khanate of Sibir in 1581. His conquests, although initially successful, were soon reversed; Tsarist forces finally finished the job in 1586.⁴ Immediately after this conquest, Russians established forts at Tyumen' (1586) and Tobol'sk (1587)³ that would later become conduits for exiles being transported to points farther to the east. The Khanate was the only significant native resistance that Cossacks and Russian settlers encountered as they moved eastward. Although eastern Siberia was home to dozens of indigenous groups, they lacked the technology and numbers to resist the Russian advance and were swiftly absorbed.³ By 1640, Russians had traversed the entirety of the continent and reached the Pacific Ocean, mostly by using Siberia's large network of navigable rivers.³

Although the Archpriest Avvakum, the spiritual founder of the Old Believers, is one of the first exiles to have written about his experience, exiles and other outcasts were often among those who pushed the eastward boundaries of the empire even before the conquest of Siberia was

³ Dmytryshyn, Basil. "Russian Expansion to the Pacific, 1580-1700: A Historiographical Review." *スラヴ研究* (Slavic Studies) 25 (1980) 1-25. pp. 1, 4, 5, 6
<https://eprints.lib.hokudai.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2115/5095/1/KJ00000113075.pdf>

⁴ Prodan, Olga. "Prominent Russians: Yermak Timofeevich." Online: *RT Russiapedia*. 2018. Accessed 25 October 2018. <https://russiapedia.rt.com/prominent-russians/exploring-russia/ermak-timofeevich/>.

complete.³ When Avvakum was sent to eastern Siberia in 1652, its consolidation was not yet finished; for example, the fort at Irkutsk, which later became one of the most important Siberian cities and another conduit for exiles, was founded that very year.³ His autobiography, *Life of Avvakum by Himself*, contains many passages that emphasize just how wild Siberia was at the time. Chapter 1, which deals with the exile of Avvakum, argues that in his time there was not yet an exile system, and that he viewed his exile as a test of his faith.

Over the next two centuries, Russia's hold on Siberia became more institutionalized, but in many respects it remained a lawless frontier—at least for those tasked with upholding the law. There was little oversight from Moscow, and corruption became endemic. “The officials bled the merchants, who in turn squeezed the peasants, and everyone robbed the natives,” George Gibson wrote in a 1972 article on Tsarist rule in Siberia.⁵ As explorer George Kennan would discover during his 1885 expedition, this corruption certainly affected the plight of the exiles who were entirely subservient to Russian officials. Among the exiles who endured the misfortune of being sent to Siberia during the nineteenth century was Fyodor Dostoevsky, at the time an up-and-coming young writer on the Saint Petersburg literary scene. His fictionalized memoir, *Notes from the House of the Dead*, provides a detailed account of the everyday workings of the exile system as it was in the nineteenth century. Chapter 2 covers Dostoevsky's exile and argues that by this time a distinct system had emerged with a purpose different from the exile tradition in the time of Avvakum.

Russia's entrance into the twentieth century, although highly disruptive to state institutions, did not mark the end of the exile system. Within twenty years of the formation of the Soviet Union, prisoners were again being exiled to Siberia in unprecedented numbers during

⁵ Gibson, James. “The Significance of Siberia to Tsarist Russia.” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 14.3 (1972) 442-453. pg. 4.

Josef Stalin's great purge. Although this period of Russian (and Siberian) history is well-documented, comparison with earlier periods is scant. Thus, joining in my analyses of *The Life of Avvakum* and *Notes from the House of the Dead* will be Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's fictionalized memoir *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. Chapter 3 discusses the shift in purpose that the exile system undertook during the transition to the Soviet Union, and argues that Solzhenitsyn saw his exile in much less philosophical terms than Dostoevsky or Avvakum.

By bringing together these three works of exile literature from three very different time periods in one frame of analysis, this essay seeks to answer several fundamental questions. Over three and a half centuries, how and why did the Siberian exile system evolve? Who was exiled, and for what reasons? What did Siberia mean to the exiles and to their governments? And finally, how did Avvakum, Dostoevsky, and Solzhenitsyn portray their struggles in their works of exile literature? By answering these questions, a continuous arc of development can be observed running through both history and literature, as the institution of exile became more formal, more bureaucratic, and more all-pervasive with every consecutive century.

Chapter 1: The Exile of Avvakum

The earliest extensively documented Siberian exile is that of the Archpriest Avvakum, who was sent to Siberia from 1653 to 1662, and again from 1667 until 1682, for being a schismatic. Born in 1621 near what is now Nizhny Novgorod, Avvakum devoted himself to God from an early age, joining the *bogolyubtsy* (“seekers after God”) and rising to the rank of archpriest despite repeated attempts on his life by his own parishioners.⁶ In 1652, Nikon became Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church and began a program of reforms to bring the church up to speed with the customs prescribed by the Patriarchate of Constantinople and unify the Russian church’s myriad of regionally divergent practices. The *theological* changes were not particularly large—the most significant was an alteration to the position of one’s fingers when signing the cross. But the core of the changes centered around the church hierarchy, as Nikon sought to centralize and standardize Orthodoxy under the authority of the patriarch. Avvakum and many other priests took serious issue with these reforms, both because of their content and because of the way Nikon implemented them. In his commentary on “The Life of Avvakum,” Sergei Zenkovsky writes:

Nikon sought the unquestioning submission of the Church to the authority of the patriarch, and received the support of Tsar Alexis and the state, since they also desired stronger controls over the Church by both central ecclesiastical offices and by the state itself. Avvakum and his followers, who represented the lower clergy and their parishioners, felt that the parish priests and local laity should have a greater voice in Church affairs. Moreover, in opposition to domination and disciplining of the Church from above, they proposed a genuine religious regeneration of the Church on the local

⁶ Avvakum. “The Life of Archpriest Avvakum By Himself” in *Medieval Russia’s Epics, Chronicles, and Tales* (Sergei Zenkovsky, Penguin Group, 1963) pp. 399-448

level.⁷

The dispute thus took on a political tone, even though the symbolic elements of the schism remained doctrinal. Avvakum refers to the number of fingers used in signing the cross as a central issue several times over the course of his autobiography, but at its core this was a dispute over Church authority, and Avvakum wished to keep his local autonomy.

Within a year of the rise of Patriarch Nikon, the stubborn and zealous Avvakum found himself on the losing side of the religious battle that had consumed the country. Those against the reform, who came to be known as the Old Believers, were systematically tracked down and forced to either convert, flee, or suffer punishment at the hands of the reformed Church. Avvakum quickly became seen as the leader of the Old Believers, and was their most active lobbyist in the tsar's court. To end his persistent agitation, in 1653 Nikon had Avvakum seized during Vespers and threw him into a dungeon, where he was kept chained in the dark without food or water for three days, set upon by fleas, mice, and beetles.⁸ After this, he was moved to a less horrible accommodation and repeatedly humiliated in an effort to convince him to accept Nikon's reforms. For four weeks, he refused to do so. Eventually Tsar Alexis personally intervened and requested that Avvakum be exiled to Siberia.⁹ It is not known exactly why the tsar chose to exile Avvakum instead of imprisoning, defrocking, or executing him, but it could have been a method of showing mercy, since Avvakum and Tsar Alexis had known each other before the schism.¹⁰ This is supported by the fact that the order to exile Avvakum came just in time to prevent his facial hair from being sheared, which would have been the utmost shame for

⁷ Zenkovsky pp. 399-400

⁸ Zenkovsky pg. 408

⁹ Zenkovsky pg. 409-410

¹⁰ Zenkovsky pg. 404

an archpriest.¹¹

The manner of his exile was not particularly formal or institutionalized. Avvakum does not describe any bureaucracy, if there was any; his narrative jumps straight from the Tsar's order to his being carried off to Tobol'sk on a sledge with his children and pregnant wife. It is notable that his exile at first did not involve any form of imprisonment. He was given a new church in Tobol'sk, where he was to live with his family and continue his work as a priest. In his 1882 essay on the exiles in Siberia, Kennan notes this tendency of the early exile system. "Exile... at that time was regarded not as a punishment in itself," he writes, "but as a means of getting criminals who had already been punished, out of the way."¹² This is supported by the supposition that the tsar's order to exile Avvakum was intended as an act of mercy.

After about a year and a half in Tobol'sk, Patriarch Nikon ordered Avvakum exiled again for the crime of having "condemned Nikon from the scriptures and pronounced him a heretic," based on the words of a scribe who had been imprisoned for covering up a case of incest.¹³ This time Avvakum was to be sent to a region he refers to as Dauria, more commonly known now as the Transbaikal. At the time this area was an untracked wilderness, located near the easternmost edge of the Russian Empire, many months journey from Moscow. Again, this was not a punishment nor was he to be imprisoned or enslaved (although he sometimes was anyway). He was granted a post as the priest serving a band of some 600 Cossacks on a tour of duty in the region.¹⁴ By simply assigning him to a new position in the Far East, the Tsar and the Patriarch were able to silence his efforts to protest with nothing more than the stroke of a pen. (However,

¹¹ Zenkovsky pg. 410

¹² Kennan, George. "Siberia: the Exile's Abode." *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York* 14 (1882) 13-68. pg. 37

¹³ Zenkovsky pg. 411-412

¹⁴ Zenkovsky pg. 412

there is plenty of evidence to suggest that this was ineffective, because Old Believers still exist today, and so does Avvakum's widely-read autobiography.)

Avvakum spent around seven years embedded in the Cossack regiment, and his autobiography provides a detailed description of what life was like in this sort of exile. He found himself at the mercy of the Cossack commander Pashkov, who hated him almost from the very beginning. Pashkov made Avvakum's life a living hell out of spite (a tendency that will crop up again among authority figures in the lives of the exiles examined here). Pashkov attempted to throw him off a raft (pg. 413); struck him with 72 lashes, beat his ribs, and chained him to the deck in the rain (pg. 414); left him in a dungeon in Bratsk through the winter without warm clothes (pg. 415); and locked his young son Ivan out in the cold overnight, causing him to get frostbite (pg. 415). This abuse eventually stopped after several incidents in which Pashkov appears to break down in the face of Avvakum's overwhelming piety, at least as Avvakum describes it.

Another characteristic of exile that Avvakum discusses in detail is the means of travel. His party rarely stayed in one place for more than a few months, but in the 1650s, there were no roads leading to the Transbaikal and none within it either. Instead, most traveling during summer, spring, and autumn was accomplished by boat on the region's network of rivers. The navigability of some of these was questionable—at multiple points, Avvakum describes rapids that capsized rafts, destroyed provisions, and sent people into the water—but rivers were still the fastest method of transportation. When it was necessary to travel during the winter, the company hauled their boats on sledges which Avvakum had to drag by hand.¹⁵ This is to be expected in Siberia during the seventeenth century, but it serves as a useful point of comparison with later

¹⁵ Zenkovsky pg. 416

exiles.

It is also notable that for Avvakum, family life continued while he was in exile. As mentioned earlier, when he was sent to Siberia, Avvakum's wife and children had little choice but to go along with him. They too stayed with the Cossack company as it traveled all over the Transbaikal. It is not clear exactly how many children Avvakum had when he was exiled, but based on those he mentions in his autobiography, he had at least six. It is also unclear how many of these were born in the Transbaikal, but one daughter is said to have been born "in the time of Pashkov,"¹⁶ and at least one was a newborn when he was first sent to Tobol'sk or was born during the journey.¹⁷ Two of his children died during the period of exile.¹⁸ This is consistent with the interpretation that his exile was more akin to a job reassignment than a punishment in and of itself, and also shows the harsh consequences of the indivisibility of the family unit at the time.

Avvakum's term of exile lasted nine years, and in 1662 he returned to Moscow. Upon his return, he was initially welcomed back into the Kremlin itself and became re-acquainted with the tsar as though nothing had happened.¹⁹ However, he eventually resumed his agitations regarding church practices, again denouncing Patriarch Nikon and imploring the tsar to remove him. By 1664 he and his family were exiled again to Mezen in the Archangel'sk region.²⁰ Avvakum was brought back to Moscow for a trial, after which he was again exiled to Pustozersk, a small settlement north of the Arctic circle, while his family remained in Mezen.²¹

Unlike his first exile, this one was clearly intended to be a punishment. Avvakum was

¹⁶ Zenkovsky pg. 427

¹⁷ Zenkovsky pg. 410

¹⁸ Zenkovsky pg. 417

¹⁹ Zenkovsky pp. 430-431

²⁰ Zenkovsky pp. 435-436

²¹ Zenkovsky pg. 443 | Note: While Pustozersk is not within the traditional boundaries of Siberia, this stage of Avvakum's exile is too important to disregard.

kept prisoner in a pit with several other Old Believers, who were variously mutilated one by one at the hands of their captors. Avvakum was not mutilated, but several of his followers had their tongues cut out or their hands chopped off (although Avvakum makes the dubious claim that they all grew back). Others were executed outright, including Avvakum's wife and two of his sons, who were buried alive despite submitting to the Patriarch's demands in an effort to avoid death.²² Avvakum remained in the pit in Pustozersk until 1682, never once wavering in his stubborn support for the old ways, until the tsar finally ordered him to be burned at the stake.²³

This second stage of Avvakum's exile marks a significant departure from the themes of the first. This seems to be because his first exile failed to fulfil its purpose, which was to *get Avvakum out of the way* where he couldn't cause trouble in the tsar's court and would hopefully give up on his struggle. Because Avvakum did not reform himself, the government resorted to outright punishment. This is not to say that Avvakum's nine-year exile in the Transbaikal was not cruel and difficult, but rather that it was (as stated earlier) a reassignment that happened to be to a cruel and difficult region. His exile to Pustozersk, on the other hand, was purposefully cruel and difficult and was clearly not a job reassignment. Avvakum was imprisoned and not allowed to perform his religious duties, whereas in the Transbaikal he was the designated priest for Pashkov's Cossack company. Additionally, in Pustozersk he was exiled as part of a group, a feature that would later become commonplace; however the infrastructure for imprisoning large numbers of people in this region did not yet exist, because Avvakum writes that the prison pit was constructed after his arrival.²⁴ This may be interpreted as part of the establishment of a "proto-system" of institutionalized exile in order to accommodate the large number of Old

²² Zenkovsky pp. 444-447

²³ Zenkovsky pg. 400

²⁴ Zenkovsky pg. 446

Believers that needed to be dealt with. Certainly they couldn't all be assigned to Cossack companies in the Far East.

The exile system manifests itself in *The Life of Archpriest Avvakum* much more indirectly than in later works of exile literature. In fact, Avvakum provides nothing to suggest that an exile system had formed at all, nor that he viewed his banishment to the Transbaikal as part of any larger system. He does not mention anyone else who was also in exile until his time in Pustozersk many years later, and he makes no attempt to contrast his experience in the Transbaikal with that of contemporaries. He also makes no reference to laws, formal prisons, or any government regulation of his exile whatsoever, at least once it began. The closest thing to an institution of exile was the Siberia Office, or Сибирский Приказ, where Avvakum was sent apparently to have his deportation formally written down. However, in his article on Siberian history, Basil Dmitryshin notes that the Siberia Office had no real control over Siberia beyond “the appointment and dismissal of administrative colonial personnel.”²⁵ Considering the apparent lack of institutions governing Avvakum's banishment, and if his portrayal is to be accepted as a reflection of reality, then it would seem that there was at the time no exile *system* per se, but rather an exile *tradition*. The tsar considered exile to be an alternative to shearing Avvakum's beard, and it would be a significant stretch of the imagination to assert that he came up with the idea on the spot; certainly, Avvakum was not the first person to be relocated to Siberia by order of the tsar. But exile was not at that point standard practice in response to Avvakum's crime, as it took the tsar's personal intervention to impose exile in lieu of outright punishment²⁶. Though documentation is scarce, there is no evidence to suggest that in 1653 exile to Siberia was the default prescription for any infraction. This supports the conclusion already apparent from *The*

²⁵ Dmitryshin pg. 6

²⁶ Zenkovsky pg. 410

Life of Avvakum: that there was no formal exile system in Russian at the time, even though the concept of exile to Siberia was well-established.

What, then, did Siberia mean to Avvakum and to the tsar, in this time before institutionalized exile? For the Russian government at the time, there is one clear answer: Siberia served primarily as a source of furs; the political concerns that would later come to dominate Siberia policy were then secondary. According to James Gibson in his article on the significance of Siberia to Tsarist Russia, in the early 1600s, taxation of furs represented 10% of state income, and “by the middle of the century, perhaps as much as one third.”²⁷ Gibson refers to Siberia’s “monopoly” on sables, and on sea otter pelts once the Pacific was reached. “It was this unrelenting hunt for ever depleting resources of furs to satisfy a seemingly ungluttable market that took Russians so rapidly across northern Asia,”²⁸ he writes, attributing the initial Russian conquest of Siberia directly to the fur trade. It is not until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that Gibson suggests other government uses of Siberia, including prisons and labour camps. Due to this singular focus on furs, concerns such as the development of an institutional system of exile were not at the forefront. And indeed, at that time it would not have been possible for the Siberia Office to have much control over Siberia, since the distances involved were so large, and the transportation and communication infrastructure so primitive.

For Avvakum, Siberia was something more spiritual, his own “40 days in the desert” where God tested his zealous follower with all manner of hardships, rather than the political drama perceived by those who followed in his footsteps in later centuries. In one key moment, when Pashkov beats Avvakum half to death for preventing the forced marriage of two widows, he seemingly questions his faith. In this passage, he writes, “[N]ow, as I lay, the thought came to

²⁷ Gibson pg. 43

²⁸ Gibson pg. 43

me: “Son of God, why didst thou permit them to beat me so sorely? Look thee, Lord, I was championing the widow, consecrated to thee. Who shall judge between thee and me? When I was living as an evil man, thou didst not chastise me thus; but now I know not in what I have sinned.”²⁹ Avvakum immediately spends an entire paragraph berating himself for ever thinking this, and justifies the original beating by quoting the scripture: “We must, through much tribulation, enter into the Kingdom of God.” Later he again turns to scripture to avoid losing faith in the face of terrible hardship. After being dragged across the ground in chains, he reminded himself of the line, “My son, despise thou not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked by him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”³⁰ There is certainly an analogous relationship between Avvakum’s religious struggle and that of Jesus Christ during his 40 days in the desert resisting the temptations of Satan, in that Avvakum clearly felt that the conditions of his exile were a deliberate test of his faith. And at no point did he relent; his time in exile served only to strengthen his faith and his certainty that he was correct and Nikon was wrong, which would prove unique among the writers examined here, the rest of whom changed their views while in exile. In fact, it was Avvakum’s steadfastness that got him exiled in the first place, but he alone among the three authors was motivated by faith and considered his struggle to be an internal battle between good and evil within himself. Avvakum treated his tormentors primarily in a metaphorical sense, writing about them as though they were punishments for his sins rather than individuals with agency.

In short, although politics drove this period of history as much as any other, the perception of Siberian affairs by both the government and Avvakum did not reflect this fact as much as later governments and later authors. All of this evidence paints a picture of a time that

²⁹ Zenkovsky pg. 414

³⁰ Zenkovsky pg. 415

will stand in marked contrast to the next two authors and their respective time periods. In the mid-seventeenth century, there was an exile tradition but not yet a formal system, the government was not overly concerned with exiling people to Siberia, and Avvakum viewed his exile as a religious rather than political struggle. However, there are many aspects of Avvakum's story that will provide continuity, including but not limited to the development of the prison at Pustozersk and the needless cruelty of Pashkov. But as Russia developed rapidly over the next two centuries, much of what defined Avvakum's exile would begin to evolve into something entirely different.

Chapter 2: The Exile of Fyodor Dostoevsky

As Russia entered the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the exile system underwent a dramatic evolution, forming itself into an institution of considerable bureaucratic complexity, and becoming more explicitly political from all perspectives, along with a host of other notable but more specific alterations. Many of these changes can be seen through the eyes of Fyodor Dostoevsky in his fictionalized memoir *Notes from the House of the Dead*. Dostoevsky, who would later become one of Russia's most famous writers, was exiled to a prison colony in western Siberia from 1850 to 1854 for the crime of participating in a social circle that read and discussed banned texts. With Dostoevsky's imprisonment coming almost exactly 200 years after the exile of Avvakum, there is necessarily much that must be left unsaid about the intervening period due to limitations in the scope of this essay and the lack of major works of exile literature from that time. But, in order to avoid glossing over two centuries of history, this chapter will also touch briefly on the experience of the writer Alexander Radishchev, who was exiled to Siberia from 1790 to 1797, as a stepping stone to the more detailed analysis of the nineteenth century exile system (however, he did not write a significant work of prison literature like the other authors). Another text, as important to this chapter as *Notes from the House of the Dead*, is George Kennan's account of his survey of the Siberian exile system undertaken in the mid-1880s. This book provides an outsider's look at the system through which Dostoevsky passed, filling in factual information that was not included in Dostoevsky's more personal novel.

168 years passed between the death of Avvakum in the prison pit in Pustozersk and the beginning of Dostoevsky's exile to a stockade near the Kazakh border. This gap in the frame of analysis that this essay employs is not due to a lack of exile literature from this time, however. The most prominent writer to be sent to Siberia during the eighteenth century was Alexander

Radishchev. Born into an aristocratic family, Radishchev nevertheless found himself drawn to liberal ideas, compelling him to write works criticizing autocracy and the institution of serfdom even as he worked directly for Catherine II.³¹ In 1790 he published his most famous work, *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*, in which he called for immediate reforms to tsarist institutions to forestall revolution. Tsarina Catherine II read the work and, infuriated, sentenced Radishchev to death. This sentence was reduced to 10 years forced labour, then again to 10 years exile in the Siberian town of Ilimsk. He was not imprisoned, but was not allowed to leave Ilimsk without official permission, a form of exile seen frequently in Kennan's description of the system in the 1880s. Like Avvakum, members of his family, including two of his children, joined him in Siberia. He spent seven years in Ilimsk, continuing to write while he was there, before Catherine allowed him to return to European Russia in 1797.³²

53 years after Radishchev left Siberia, Fyodor Dostoevsky found himself in the same situation. Dostoevsky's path to Siberia began when he was still in his 20s, a marked departure from both Avvakum and Radishchev, who were both exiled while over the age of 40. After his novel *Poor Folk* brought him fame among St. Petersburg's literary elite, he began associating with a government official named Petrashevsky, who had been gathering a "circle" of like-minded individuals once a week to discuss new liberal concepts. Dostoevsky became a regular in this circle and participated in a scheme to acquire a printing press to help spread their ideas.³³ However, in 1848, an informant revealed their group to the authorities, and its members were arrested. Dostoevsky was initially sentenced to death for attending events at which banned books

³¹ Klevantseva, Tatyana. "Prominent Russians: Aleksandr Radishchev." Online: *RT Russapedia*. 2018. Accessed 31 December 2018. <https://russiapedia.rt.com/prominent-russians/literature/aleksandr-radishchev/>.

³² Klevantseva

³³ Dostoevsky, Fyodor Mikhailovich. *Memoirs from the House of the Dead*. Vremya 1861-1862. Republished: Oxford University Press 1965 with foreword by Jessie Coulson. pg. ix.

were read. This sentence was then commuted to four years in a Siberian military prison followed by service with a Siberian army regiment.³⁴ In January 1850 he arrived in Omsk and was booked into a stockade on the edge of what Dostoevsky referred to as the “Kyrgyz steppe.” Unlike Avvakum and Radishchev, his family was not sent with him, and what little communication he was allowed had to be read by a censor.³⁵

Dostoevsky describes conditions in the prison in great detail, including official policies and the command structure, the types of prisoners, instances of cruelty and lenience, and the effects of being in Siberia, each of which helps to answer the essential questions proposed in the introduction. The first of these topics, official policies, was hardly touched on by Avvakum but rises to prominence in Dostoevsky’s account of his exile. From beginning to end, his experience was carefully structured. He was taken to Omsk by road in a convoy with other prisoners, whose identities, destinations, and sentences were carefully tracked (although not so carefully that prisoners didn’t occasionally swap identities and get away with it).³⁶ Although Dostoevsky doesn’t spend much time describing his journey, George Kennan’s description of the process in the 1880s provides some clues as to what he might have experienced. According to Kennan, prisoners were marched overland in long columns that would stop for the night at *étapes*, or waystations, which were specially built for the purpose of housing prisoners on their way to exile in Siberia.³⁷ (Note that he did not travel by river at all.) By the 1880s, these *étapes* were woefully ill-prepared to handle the number of prisoners transiting through them, and Kennan found conditions to be deplorable, a feature he noted almost everywhere he stopped on his journey across Siberia. Kennan notes that local prison authorities were aware of the poor conditions, but

³⁴ Dostoevsky pg. viii.

³⁵ Dostoevsky pg. x.

³⁶ Kennan, George. *Siberia and the Exile System Vol. 1*. The Century Co. 1891. pg. 291

³⁷ Kennan pg. 77

that petitions to the government for more supplies or more space for prisoners always failed to produce results.³⁸ Dostoevsky would have transited through this same system on his way to Omsk three decades earlier, during a time when exact statistics cannot be found regarding the number of exiles being transferred through Siberian *étapes*, but Kennan recorded a steady flow of between 16,000 and 19,000 exiles per year from 1882 to 1885.³⁹ These numbers cannot exactly reflect the system as it was in 1850 because the population of the Russian Empire increased by more than two thirds during this time. As a result, the absolute numbers in the 1850s would probably have been lower, but some general trends are unlikely to be dramatically different. Among these, the most useful for this inquiry is Kennan's data on the types of exiles being sent to Siberia. First, around 30% of the exiles sent to Siberia each year were women and children choosing to go with their exiled husbands voluntarily.⁸ This is a notable change from the time of Avvakum, where family members had no choice but to go along with an exiled husband or father (in Avvakum's time, therefore, it is probable that the majority of exiles were in fact wives and children banished because of the actions of a male relative). In contrast, political prisoners like Dostoevsky made up less than one percent of the total number of exiles.⁴⁰

Dostoevsky's descriptions of his fellow prisoners in the 1850s appear to back up some of the 1880s numbers. In *House of the Dead*, Dostoevsky does not mention large numbers of women and children, but this is probably because he was not merely an exile but a prisoner as well, and was therefore confined among convicted men only. However, his slightly fictionalized description does align with Kennan in that he does not mention the presence of a single political prisoner with him in the stockade near Omsk. (It isn't clear whether this is an accurate reflection

³⁸ Kennan pp. 92, 273, 310, 386

³⁹ Kennan pg. 80

⁴⁰ Kennan pg. 81

by Dostoevsky on the situation, or rather an attempt to make the book less controversial. The main character, who is not Dostoevsky himself, is not a political prisoner.⁴¹ However, it seems plausible that the number of political prisoners in Dostoevsky's prison would have been few or none.) Instead, the vast majority of Dostoevsky's fellow prisoners were common criminals. Although Dostoevsky does not devote any time to discussing political prisoners, Kennan observed that there were circumstances under which common criminals and so-called "politicals" were treated differently during their exile; for example, politicals were allowed to ride in carts for a larger percentage of the journey, but were subject to harsher punishments for attempted escape (after 1880 only), and to a restriction on their use of civilian hospitals while being transported to Siberia.⁴² Other than these, and a few other minor differences, common criminals and political prisoners were treated much the same and were usually housed together.

Dostoevsky's four years in the prison featured a large number of highly structured policies and rules that defined every aspect of a prisoner's life. Central to Dostoevsky's characterization of these rules was the distinction between the official line and the unofficial line. Several activities critical to the day to day lives of the prisoners were technically against the rules, but were tolerated by prison authorities as long as they were kept on the down low, including possessing money, which was difficult to survive without; selling and consuming alcohol; smoking; and possessing tools. Essentially, there was an underground, unofficially sanctioned prison economy that the exiles used to keep themselves sane.⁴³ Another major aspect of prison life was, naturally, punishment. Violations of the rules were usually punished with flogging, and more serious delinquency with solitary confinement, two punishments that Kennan

⁴¹ Dostoevsky pg. 3

⁴² Kennan pp. 251, 265, 275

⁴³ Dostoevsky pg. 19

also reported seeing in his survey of the exile system. And with punishment came needless cruelty, a phenomenon that seemed to have changed remarkably little since the seventeenth century. Dostoevsky waxes at length about this topic; on the question of why prison guards seemed to enjoy mercilessly flogging the prisoners, he writes:

Any man who has once tasted this dominion, this unlimited power, over the body, blood, and spirit of a human creature like himself, subject like himself to the law of Christ, any man who has tasted this power, this boundless opportunity to humiliate with the deepest degradation another being made in the image of God, becomes despite himself the servant instead of the master of his own emotions. Tyranny is a habit; it has the capacity to develop and it does develop, in the end, into a disease. I maintain that the best of men may become coarsened and degraded, by force of habit, to the level of a beast. Blood and power are intoxicants; callousness and perversity develop and grow; the greatest perversions become acceptable and finally sweet to the mind and heart.⁴⁴

In this passage from *House of the Dead*, Dostoevsky attempts to explain the reason for the needless abuse of the Siberian exiles. From a literary standpoint, this is a significant evolution from the work of Avvakum, who portrayed his trials and tribulations, even those at the hands of the Cossack Pashkov, as tests of his faith by God. Pashkov is one dimensional, shifting on an axis of good and evil as he moves closer or farther from the light of the creator. Dostoevsky, however, lived and wrote after the enlightenment, and therefore had a more nuanced interpretation of human psychology that gave him a different view of his plight. While Dostoevsky does not shy away from religious imagery in *House of the Dead*, it's also clear that

⁴⁴ Dostoevsky pg. 236-237

he views his imprisonment as a social, political, and judicial matter at its core, with moral lessons to be drawn from it, rather than as a moral lesson in and of itself.

In a 1966 essay on *House of the Dead*, Joseph Frank tackles the difficult task of teasing out how Dostoevsky viewed his exile and what he learned from it. He comes to the conclusion that, unlike Avvakum, whose exile only served to strengthen his convictions, Dostoevsky experienced a paradigm shift in his political views. Frank's analysis of *House of the Dead* and Dostoevsky's letters shows that Dostoevsky's exposure to what he considered to be the true face of Russia's peasantry while in prison convinced him that the pace of reform should be drastically slowed because the peasants were not truly fit to hold any power. He found that the peasants hated the gentry with such a fiery passion that any possibility of the gentry working on behalf of the peasants was a fantasy, forcing him to reconsider some of the liberal views that landed him in prison in the first place. What set him apart from his fellow prisoners, with whom he was in all other respects equal, was not that he was a political prisoner but that he was a member of gentry, and the peasants did not believe that he could ever be one of them. (It is worth noting that all political prisoners were members of the gentry, but the opposite was not true. Several noblemen in the prison in *House of the Dead* were similarly hated, even though none were political prisoners.) These realizations, that reconciliation of the classes was unlikely and that ordinary humans were inherently capable of doing terrible things, profoundly affected Dostoevsky's worldview—and his writing—for the rest of his life.⁴⁵

Dostoevsky also spends some time discussing the natural qualities of Siberia, just as Avvakum did, but again, he interprets the landscape differently. Avvakum's interaction with the Siberian wilderness was far more extensive than Dostoevsky's, and he viewed it as a source of

⁴⁵ Frank, Joseph. "Dostoevsky: The House of the Dead." *The Sewanee Review* 74.4 (1966) 779-803. pp. 782-783.

trial and hardship in his religious odyssey. Dostoevsky, on the other hand, was imprisoned in stifling conditions, forced to spend every second of his existence in close proximity to other conflicts, wearing chains, with only the small courtyard of the prison to wander in. As a result, at numerous points in *House of the Dead* he portrays the nearby wilderness as a beckoning force, a symbol of freedom tormenting the imprisoned convicts and inspiring some to attempt escape.⁴⁶ Kennan describes this same phenomenon in his survey of the mines of Kara, where he observed that prisoners would frequently run off into the wilderness after feeling some sort of irresistible pull, despite the fact that surviving in the Siberian wilderness, except in summer, was much harder than surviving in the mines, and almost all escaped convicts were soon recaptured or forced to turn themselves in at the onset of winter.⁴⁷ Kennan and Dostoevsky both attribute this phenomenon to a simple desire to be in control of one's own life, possible for a convict only in the vast, trackless forests, where they could experience freedom at the cost of steady food and shelter. Kennan estimates that up to 30,000 prisoners in Siberia chose this trade-off and attempted to escape at the beginning of summer every year.¹⁶ This is a remarkable turnaround from the story of Avvakum, in which Pashkov threatened to abandon the archpriest in the mountains of the Transbaikal—certainly, most exiles in the nineteenth century would have seen this as an opportunity rather than a threat!

In addition to the differences between the ways these two exiled writers viewed their place in exile system, the government that sent them there also changed its view of the exile system in the intervening years. In Avvakum's time the purpose of exile was to "get criminals who had already been punished out of the way," but by the 1850s exile was itself a legal punishment. On this topic, Kennan writes:

⁴⁶ Dostoevsky pp. 235, 268, 269

⁴⁷ Kennan (vol. 2) pp. 152-153

The amelioration... of the Russian criminal code, which began in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and the progressive development of Siberia itself gradually brought about a change in the view taken of Siberian exile. Instead of regarding it, as before, as a means of getting rid of disabled criminals, the Government began to look upon it as a means of populating and developing a new and promising part of its Asiatic territory. Toward the close of the seventeenth century, therefore, we find a number of ukazes [edicts] abolishing personal mutilation as a method of punishment, and substituting for it, and in a large number of cases even for the death penalty, the banishment of the criminal to Siberia....⁴⁸

At this point, a brief explanation of different types of exile is required. Some exiles were confined in prisons in Siberia, while others were forced to live there under special supervision, but were not imprisoned. Avvakum was subjected to both of these types: imprisonment and banishment. Radishchev was banished but was not imprisoned, and Dostoevsky was imprisoned but not banished. However, by the time of Dostoevsky and Kennan, the legal structure had become complex. When Kennan made his survey of the exile system, he found that most exiles were sent to Siberia by “administrative process,” whereby local authorities could banish an individual who was “prejudicial to the public order” without a trial, a hearing, or any opportunity for the accused to defend himself or herself; and often without the accused or his or her family members knowing the reason for the deportation. The “exile by administrative process” law was routinely used to punish people who were out of favour with the authorities without them having ever committed a crime.⁴⁹ Although Avvakum lived well before the introduction of exile by administrative process, he too was exiled for opposing the authorities rather than committing a

⁴⁸ Kennan pg. 75

⁴⁹ Kennan pg. 242

crime. Over time, as norms shifted and punishments began to be assigned to specific crimes in a formal manner, this arbitrary ability to exile undesirables was kept by writing it into law.

Furthermore, by the nineteenth century the volume of people being sentenced to exile in Siberia was so great that the tsar or his ministers rarely became involved, with many cases of exile by administrative process never rising above the level of local constabularies and governors.⁵⁰ This evolution, then, was primarily a matter of scale; the criteria by which one might be exiled to Siberia do not appear to have changed significantly. However, it is worth noting that by the 1800s the conflict between the New and Old Believers was long since over, and Dostoevsky does not make reference to anyone who was in prison for religious reasons. (He does mention one Old Believer in the prison, but explains that he is there for setting fire to a church, not for being an Old Believer.)⁵¹

Bringing together all of the textual and historical evidence from the work of Dostoevsky, Radishchev, and Kennan and comparing it to the work of Avvakum reveals significant evolution in the exile system and in the way it is portrayed in literature, while only a few elements remained the same.

The largest changes to the system came as a result of the same forces of industrialization, mechanization, and bureaucratic centralization that drastically changed most other aspects of life in Europe between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. With more laws and with states more capable of enforcing them, the number of criminals necessarily increased, but at the same time, cultural changes associated with the enlightenment decreased tolerance of punishments like execution and physical mutilation.⁵² In addition to both of these factors, the fur industry declined

⁵⁰ Kennan pg. 248

⁵¹ Dostoevsky pg. 44

⁵² Kennan pg. 75

while the mining industry exploded, to the point that by the 1850s Siberian mines were producing almost all of the Russian Empire's gold as well as significant amounts of silver, copper, and other minerals, all of which required more manpower and infrastructure than could be found in Siberia previously.⁵³ The question of what to do with criminals and agitators found its answer in the need to settle Siberia to facilitate resource extraction. The result was not only an exponential increase in the number of exiles, but also the appearance of labor camps in which prisoners were put to work extracting Siberia's wealth. Dostoevsky and his fellow prisoners were subjected to forced labor, typically menial tasks like moving dirt or breaking up old barges, but in eastern Siberia, huge prison colonies employed thousands of exiles in gold and silver mines doing heavy and dangerous work at very little cost to the government. Alongside this shift in the purpose of exile was a similar shift in who was exiled, how, and why. Religious belief, once a common reason for being exiled, disappeared entirely. Petty and capital crimes largely replaced it, while political reasons, always present, became more explicitly acknowledged. The system by which people were sentenced to exile was standardized and decentralized. And finally, there were significant differences between Avvakum and Dostoevsky in how they portrayed their exile in writing. Avvakum viewed his experience as a test of his faith that served to solidify his beliefs, while for Dostoevsky it was an exploration of the character of mankind, as well as a personal journey that changed his political convictions.

Despite all of these changes, a couple similarities persisted. Dostoevsky and Avvakum both observed that people with power over the exiles often resorted to needless cruelty. Political prisoners remained relatively scarce, while the families of convicts continued to make up the largest group of exiles. But for the most part, the system was completely transformed, retaining

⁵³ Gibson pg. 443

only the basic concept of institutional exile to Siberia. In the 168 years that separated the exile of Avvakum and Dostoevsky, Russia went from having an exile tradition to truly having an exile system. However, the passage of another century would soon reveal yet another iteration of the concept that would once again undo many of the assumptions of the previous era.

Глава 3: Ссылка Александра Солженицына

Во время первых десятилетий двадцатого века, сибирская ссыльная система продолжала расти, поглощая все больше людей из всех сфер жизни. Самое главное среди ужасов этого периода—ссылка миллионов, из которых многие погибли, в систему «ГУЛАГ» между годами 1936-1953. Естественно, такая огромная трагедия производила широкий спектр литературы. Из авторов, которые писали о своих опытах в ссылке в этом периоде, самый известный может быть Александр Солженицын—капитан Красной армии, критик Сталина, заключенный в ГУЛАГе на восемь лет, и «свободный» изгнанник в Казахстане ещё на три года. Его главные книги, «Архипелаг ГУЛАГ» и «Один день Ивана Денисовича», рассказывают его личную историю, и истории людей, с которыми он познакомился в ГУЛАГе. Это эссе фокусируется на книге «Один день Ивана Денисовича», повести о вымышленном герое Иване Денисовиче Шухове, который живёт в тюремном лагере в Сибири. Мною также была использована биография Солженицына, написанная Майклом Скаммеллом, чтобы анализировать эту последнюю форму ссыльной системы.

Александр Исаевич Солженицын родился в 1918 году среди хаоса Гражданской войны, через тридцать семь лет после смерти Достоевского. Он пришёл в мир во время огромных перемен. Октябрьская революция 1917 года и Гражданская война разрушили русский уклад, существовавший тысячу лет, заменяя старую систему новым порядком коммунизма. Солженицын был представителем первого поколения, которое родилось и выросло полностью в Советском Союзе, и с детства до университета, он совершенно верил в справедливость советской системы. Однако, пока он был капитаном Красной армии, он видел как сталинизм противоречил либеральным целям революции, как советская армия жестоко обращалась с теми, кто жили в завоеванных регионах, и как

государство наказывало тех, кто старались препятствовать мародерству имущества немецких граждан.⁵⁴ Он решил, что источником жестокости и неэффективности системы является Сталин. Со своим другом Николаем Виткевичем, он долго разговаривал о политике, развивая идею, что нужно какое-то движение чтобы вернуть Россию в русло ленинизма. Они изложили эти идеи в документе, который был назван «Резолюция номер один». Однако этим документом вскоре завладело НКВД, и Солженицын был арестован на фронте в 1945 году.⁵⁵ Именно тогда он переступил через порог тайного мира ссыльной системы. Он позже описывал сеть ГУЛАГа как «архипелаг», где заключенные живут на островах, связанных друг с другом, но абсолютно без контакта с внешним миром. Когда он приехал первый раз на «архипелаг», он начинал понимать, что ссыльная система царской России не исчезла—на самом деле, она продолжала расти, и стала чем-то более страшным и ужасным, чем то, что существовало в любом периоде истории.

Солженицын жил на «архипелаге», и в «свободной» ссылке (на самом деле, была совсем не свободная), в течение одиннадцати лет. Но во время его тюремного заключения, он не жил только в одном месте, как Достоевский. Сначала он был задержан в тюрьме Лубянка в Москве на несколько месяцев, пока власти расследовали его дело. Это «расследование», на самом деле, не совсем было расследование. В биографии Солженицына Скаммелл написал: “The purpose of the investigation was not to ascertain whether or not the alleged crime had been committed or, if committed, whether or not by the accused, but simply to build a plausible case for finding the accused guilty.”⁵⁶ Для сравнения, в девятнадцатом веке, такой процедуры не было, но главная идея не поменялась. Целью

⁵⁴ Скаммелл, Майкл. *Solzhenitsyn*. W. W. Norton & Company. 1984. стр. 107-109.

⁵⁵ Скаммелл стр. 142

⁵⁶ Скаммелл стр. 154

«административного процесса» в царском периоде являлось то, что власти могли ссылать «опасных» людей без сложностей для суда. Солженицын скоро осознал, что после революции, до сих пор главной целью было лёгкое признание виновным; только метод изменился. В ранние годы Советского Союза, большевики провели несколько либеральных реформ, включая право честного суда, но эти законы скоро стали формальностями: прав не было, но законы оставались.⁵⁷ Поэтому государство собирало доказательства (но только доказательства против Солженицына), организовало тайный суд, и приговорило его к восьми годам заключения в ГУЛАГе, хотя результат был предопределен с начала.

Как Солженицын, многие из тех, кто были арестованы в этот период, не были преступниками. Около 20% тех, кто сидели в ГУЛАГе в 1941 году, были политзаключёнными⁵⁸—большинство приговорено по «статье 58», статья уголовного кодекса о политических преступлениях, включающая антикоммунистические дела и шпионаж. Среди политзаключённых после Великой Отечественной войны также были бывшие военные заключенные, которые сбежали от немцев или были освобождены Красной армией. Государство вскоре их обвинило в предательстве и приговорило их по статье 58.⁵⁹ Солженицын познакомился с многими такими людьми, и главного героя повести «Один день Ивана Денисовича» он создал по их образу.⁶⁰ Кроме этого, несколько других изменений произошли с 19-ого века, по вопросу того, кого ссылали в Сибирь. Во-первых, процент политзаключённых увеличивался с одного процента в 1880 году до

⁵⁷ Скаммелл стр. 170, 177

⁵⁸ Алексопулос, Голфо. "Amnesty 1945: The Revolving Door of Stalin's Gulag." *Slavic Review* vol. 64.2 (Лето 2005) 274-306. стр. 276

⁵⁹ Скаммелл стр. 170-171

⁶⁰ Солженицын, Александр. «Один день Ивана Денисовича.» *Новый Мир*. Ноябрь 1962. стр. 71

двадцати процентов в 1941 году. Во время большого террора (1936-1937) правительство Сталина арестовало тысячи инженеров, профессоров, докторов и других «буржуазных специалистов». До начала Отечественной войны, большая часть интеллигенции Советского Союза сидела в ГУЛАГе, вследствие того, что у них было лучшее образование, немного больше денег, и реалистические взгляды о пределах советской индустрии.⁶¹ Ещё одно изменение произошло с семьями заключенных. Во время Достоевского семьи могли сопровождать осуждённых в ссылку если они хотели; но при Сталине, система вернулась к тому, что было во время Аввакума: по статье 58, было возможно, что семья подозреваемого могла быть арестована просто вследствие того, что у них была родственная связь с подозреваемым. Поэтому много родственников заключенных тоже сидели в тюрьме (хотя они не были сосланы вместе, как Аввакум и его семья).⁶² Этот советский ответ на ранние обычаи представляет одну часть темы ссыльной системы двадцатого века: она просто развивала новые советские версии основных идей прошлых веков.

Во время Достоевского политзаключённые и обычные уголовники сидели в тюрьме вместе, без больших разниц в глазах властей, и во время Аввакума не ссылались преступники вообще. Но в 1945 году, Солженицын скоро узнал, что отношение к политзаключённым отличалось от отношения к обычным зекам. Во-первых, политзаключённые почти всегда получали более долгие сроки, чем преступники. По словам Голфо Алексопулоса в журнале *Slavic Review*, обычные преступники в ГУЛАГе часто приходили и уходили, но политзаключённые остались в ГУЛАГе почти

⁶¹ Скаммелл стр. 70-71

⁶² Скаммелл стр. 170-171

бесконечно.⁶³ В повести *Один день Ивана Денисовича* Иван Шухов сомневался, что он был бы освобожден в конце его срока десяти лет, потому что политзаключённые часто получали новые приговоры после старых. Персонаж «Кильдигс», друг Шухова, получил приговор на 25 лет—стандартный срок для политзаключённых после 1949 года.⁶⁴ Преступники обычно получали приговоры на пять лет или меньше, так что 20%-40% всех заключенных в ГУЛАГе были освобождены каждый год.⁶⁵ Сначала политзаключённые и преступники сидели вместе, но в 1948 году, Сталин реорганизовал систему ГУЛАГ, чтобы политзаключённые сидели в «специальных лагерях», отдельно от обычных преступников.⁶⁶ И ещё один уникальный опыт политзаключённых был «шарашка», тюрьма, где бывшие учёные, инженеры, и прочая интеллигенция работали на секретные технологические проекты для государства. Правительство создало «шарашки» после того, как большинство советских интеллигенций было сослано в ГУЛАГ, потому что советская индустрия бы развалилась без специалистов.⁶⁷ Политзаключённые в ГУЛАГе почти всегда были интеллигенцией; поэтому преступники совсем не сидели в шарашках.

К 1950 году, появился полный образ тех, кто ссылались в Сибирь. С времени Достоевского много новых типов людей были сосланы: кроме обычных преступников и антиправительственных аристократов (как в девятнадцатом веке), Сталин начал ссылать все, кто противились коллективизации;⁶⁸ много учёных, профессоров, инженеров, авторов, и студентов; кулаки; родственники заключённых; и даже те, кто не доносил на своих друзей и семью. Это представляло большое изменение с девятнадцатого века, но это также

⁶³ Алексопулос стр. 275

⁶⁴ Солженицын стр. 70

⁶⁵ Алексопулос стр. 275

⁶⁶ Скаммелл стр. 278

⁶⁷ Скаммелл стр. 224

⁶⁸ Скаммелл стр. 74

представляло логичное продолжение системы в царской России, которая рассуждала похожим образом, но не следовала это рассуждение в экстремальный конец.

Солженицын остался в обычных лагерях и в шарашке на несколько лет, перед тем как его сослали в специальный лагерь, который находился в казахских степях. Хотя он жил в ГУЛАГах уже пять лет, его настоящая ссылка начиналась здесь, и многие его взгляды и литературные идеи развивались в этом лагере. Трудовой лагерь «Экибастуз» пытался, с каждым возможным методом, лишить заключенных человечности. Такая ненужная жестокость принимала много форм, и многие появлялись в повести «Один день...». Во-первых, несколько примеров жестокости похожи на те, которые существовали во время Достоевского. Целая система была произвольной: большинство заключённых не были ни в чём виновны, не обратились в суд, и получили стандартные приговоры без учета того, что именно они сделали или не сделали. У них было право петиции, но петиции никто не читал. В книге Шухов сравнил петиции с молитвами: «Потому, Алешка, что молитвы те, как заявления, или не доходят, или «в жалобе отказать»».⁶⁹ По мнению Солженицына, это была пытка; он надеялся на протяжении нескольких лет, что его оправдают. Но он в итоге понял, что целая судебная система, включая петиции, находилась только на бумаге, и выхода не было. Это было возможным из-за «специального правления», государственное учреждение было вне обычной судебной системы. Об этом Скаммелл написал следующее:

In part 1 of the Gulag Archipelago, for which Solzhenitsyn drew extensively on his first months in prison, he traces the concept of such a special board all the way back to Catherine the Great, and points out that there was a regular tradition in Russia of

⁶⁹ Солженицын стр. 154

condemning individuals to exile or imprisonment on the whim of the tsar or powerful officials. Like many tsarist injustices, these instances of extra-judicial repression were random and capricious, affecting numerous individuals in an arbitrary way, but they had not been organized into a system affecting millions.⁷⁰

Здесь он сравнил дела специального правления с «административным процессом» ссылки, который описывал Джордж Кеннан. Самое главное, Скаммелл утверждал, что во время Достоевского и Радищева полной системы ещё не было. Как и упоминалось ранее, советская система продолжала, развивала, и совершенствовала методы царской эпохи. Он также написал, что, на самом деле, советские власти обещали, что они закروют ссылную систему, и потом сделали совсем наоборот: “After the Revolution the new Soviet leaders promised that exile, like all other repugnant features of the tsarist regime, would be abolished; but, like all other repugnant features, it was not abolished—it was adapted and intensified a hundredfold.”⁷¹ Действительно, количество заключенных в системе увеличивалось по меньше мере в десять раз.

Жестокость не ограничивалась лишь произволом. В Лубянке Солженицын испытал различные ужасные пытки и унижения; например, было запрещено спать почти весь день и ночь.⁷² В Экибастузе заключенные носили цифры на одеждах, и власти использовали эти цифры вместо имени, чтобы не считать заключенных людьми.⁷³ Оригинальное название повести «Один День Ивана Денисовича» было «Щ-854», цифры на шубе Ивана Денисовича Шухова. В повести есть ещё другие примеры жестокости: ели ужасную еду,

⁷⁰ Скаммелл стр. 176

⁷¹ Скаммелл стр. 318

⁷² Скаммелл стр. 151-152

⁷³ Скаммелл стр. 280

практически несъедобную;⁷⁴ больным надо было работать, когда они были в больнице;⁷⁵ караулы заставляли заключенных снимать одежду в 20 градусов мороза;⁷⁶ и заключенных избивали если они входили в столовую слишком быстро,⁷⁷ среди многих других нарушений. Но самой расхожей жестокостью было то, что власти лагеря всегда создавали рабочие квоты, которые было невозможно выполнить, и наказывали заключенных, когда им не удавалось это сделать.

Этот факт был один из самых важных изменений с времён Достоевского, потому что он представлял новый взгляд государства на цель ссыльной системы. Пока расширялась система, заключенные использовались на массовых проектах, вместо обычных работников. В биографии Солженицына Скаммелл написал: "...[T]he very fact of a conscious orientation towards the camps as a *normal* source of labour for every conceivable kind of project, which had begun in 1929, indicated a fundamental shift in the government's attitude..."⁷⁸ Конечно, уже устанавливались трудовые лагеря и при Достоевском, особенно в рудниках у Кары и в других местах в Дальнем Востоке. Однако, в Советском Союзе трудовые лагеря стали встроенными частями целой экономической системы страны. Об этом также написал Алексопулос: "By the late 1930s, the NKVD [Народный комиссариат внутренних дел] had grown into an enormous economic institution, with vital sectors of the national economy dependent on penal labor."⁷⁹ Поэтому, когда Солженицын был сослан, властям не был важен честный суд, доказательство, и гражданские права, из-за того, что цель системы—принудительный труд, а не наказание. Им было всё равно, были ли

⁷⁴ Солженицын стр. 29

⁷⁵ Солженицын стр. 33

⁷⁶ Солженицын стр. 41

⁷⁷ Солженицын стр. 131

⁷⁸ Скаммелл стр. 224

⁷⁹ Алексопулос стр. 295

виноваты заключенные или нет. Это было правдой также во время Достоевского, но в девятнадцатом веке, у системы была цель наказывать преступников, политических или нет; система просто позволила местным властям ссылать людей, которые им не нравились, и было невозможно знать, были ли они преступниками. Интерес к освоению Сибири в царскую эпоху, в Советском Союзе превратился в основную философию ссыльной системы. Заключенные строили всё, и об этом Скаммелл написал, “Barrack huts, kitchens, canteens, factories, mills, mines, railway tracks, roads—all were built by that same slave labour, which in Stalin’s grand design was the key both to the construction of the Gulag system and to the development of Siberia itself.”⁸⁰

В последние годы перед смертью Сталина, в Экибастузе Солженицын впервые увидел, что ссыльная система начинала улучшаться. Заключенные, без надежды на освобождение, решили что им нечего терять. Они организовывали бунты, убивали информантов, и отказывались работать. Наконец, власти уступили требованиям.⁸¹ Раньше, этого никогда бы не произошло, и это был первый знак того, что система приближалась к какому-то концу. Однако, его ссылка ещё не закончилась. В 1953 году он был освобожден, но его срок включил «бесконечную ссылку» в деревне «Бирлик» в Казахстане. Это был ещё один вид заключения, который испытали Радищев и Аввакум. Было запрещено покидать область без официального разрешения, и ему было надо встречаться с местным сотрудником КГБ каждый месяц. Он мог работать (если кто-то его нанял), и жить один, но он совсем не был свободен. Его ситуация походила на ситуацию изгнанников, которых видел Джордж Кеннан в 1885 году в Сибири.

⁸⁰ Скаммелл стр. 281

⁸¹ Скаммелл стр. 293-297

Во время его ссылки Солженицын часто думал о прошлых заключенных, и он наконец решил, что в ссыльной системе очень мало изменилось с времени Достоевского.⁸² Вообще, это было правда; как уже упоминалось, система продолжала и усиливала царистские методы после революции. Однако, Солженицын и Достоевский по-разному реагировали на ссылку. Достоевский сначала критиковал государство, но в тюрьме он решил что царство—нужное зло. Солженицын, с другой стороны, сначала поддерживал государство и коммунистические идеи; он только не одобрял Сталина. Но в тюрьме он стал критиком целой советской системы. Он написал несколько неопубликованных стихов и историй о несправедливости ГУЛАГа и против Сталина и потерял своё восхищение Лениным. По сравнению с Достоевским, его взгляды развивались полностью наоборот. Причина этой разницы не очевидна, но, может быть, заключается в том, что заключенные у Достоевского считали его частью царистской системы и, поэтому, частью проблемы. Солженицын сидел в тюрьме с людьми похожими на него, кто были против государства, когда государство (которое он поддерживал) работало против него. И Достоевский, и Солженицын просто решили принять сторону тех, кто меньше ненавидели его. Только Аввакум, из-за его сильной веры, не изменил свои взгляды.

Но самым интересным изменением во взглядах Солженицына было его обращение в христианство. Он не верил в Бога с детства, но в Экибастузе, заключенный Борис Корнфелд сказал ему о страдании и жестокости жизни в лагере, “Superficially, it may seem to have nothing to do with what we are really guilty of. But if we examine our lives and think deeply about ourselves, we will always track down the crime for which were are now being punished.”⁸³ Корнфелд был осведомителем, и другие заключенные вскоре его убили. После

⁸² Скаммелл стр. 276

⁸³ Скаммелл стр. 302-303

этого, Солженицын решил, что православные идеи страдания и наказания могли быть единственным объяснением его ситуации. И после того, как он решил верить в Бога, доктора с успехом лечили его рак, что усилило его веру.⁸⁴ В этом случае, его опыт был похож на опыт Аввакума.

В повести «Один день Ивана Денисовича» главный герой нечасто думал об изменениях в своих взглядах. На самом деле, он стал равнодушным: он забыл о том, каково это быть с женой, жить в доме, и есть настоящую еду.⁸⁵ Он вообще не говорил о политике, кроме того, как арестовали его сотрудников в лагере. Не было ясно, что именно он думал о политике перед тем, как он сидел в тюрьме, и также не было ясно, изменились ли его взгляды. Хотя Солженицын использовал событие и персонажи из своей жизни везде в повести, он хотел написать историю обычного крестьянина, и такой человек, безусловно, мало думал о политике. Это также помогало ему опубликовать книгу в Советском Союзе. В том случае, «Один день Ивана Денисовича» похож на «Записки из мертвого дома» в том, что настоящие политические взгляды автора не проявились в тексте. Среди рассмотренных произведений, только в Житии Аввакума автор написал о своем мнении. Вместо этого, Солженицын написал о психологических последствиях тюрьмы, как ни Достоевский, ни Аввакум не писали в своих произведениях. Это было уникально в двадцатом веке, и стало главной темой ссыльной системы: психологическая пытка. Самая главная тема в повести—то, как заключенным надо постоянно бороться друг против друга. «Кто арестанту главный враг?» написал Солженицын в «Одном дне». «Другой арестант. Если б эки друг с другом не сучились, не имело б над ними силы

⁸⁴ Скаммелл стр. 303

⁸⁵ Солженицын стр. 26

начальство.»⁸⁶ Он также написал: «И здесь воруют, и в зоне воруют, и еще раньше на складе воруют. И все те, кто воруют, киркой сами не вкалывают.»⁸⁷ Результат этого— постоянная паранойя. Это ещё одна особенность советской системы и большой террор, который ранние писатели даже не представляли.

В конце, эти примеры рисуют ясную картину того, как ссыльная система развивалась в двадцатом веке. Самое главное, революция 1917 года не разрушила систему, как обещали большевики. Вместо этого, Советский Союз продолжал и расширял систему. Задержали больше людей, сослали их на дольше, и создали формальные институции, чтобы делать то, что в царском периоде делали неформально. Государство вскоре стало зависимым от трудовых лагерей, чтобы развивать экономику, и это привело к ужасной жестокости в ГУЛАГах, из которого политзаключённые не могли выбраться. Солженицын написал, что ничего не изменилось с времён Достоевского, но на самом деле, Советский Союз ухудшал систему, которая уже была ужасна. Наверное, Солженицын имел в виду, что ничего не улучшилось, и в этом он был прав. Наконец, его повесть «Один День Ивана Денисовича» рисовал картину жизни в ссылке в трудовой лагере, которая стала самым популярным повестем в жанре тюремной литературы в России—наверное, из-за того, что его опыт в ссылке разделили люди из всех сфер жизни. Однако, эта последняя форма ссыльной системы не продолжалась всегда. Одна короткая глава остаётся: конец ссылки в Сибири.

⁸⁶ Солженицын стр. 119

⁸⁷ Солженицын стр. 76

Conclusion

Perhaps the most remarkable moment in the history of the Siberian exile system is its end. After 350 years, despite surviving a transformation of social norms in much of the world as well as a radical change of government, the exile system simply withered and died. As the Soviet Union entered its great “thaw” after the death of Stalin in 1953, sentences were cut short, camps were closed, and restrictions on exiles were lifted. Alexander Solzhenitsyn was able to return to his family just three years into his “perpetual exile,” and amnesty was introduced on a scale never seen before in the history of the system. The process of dismantling the system was not fast: the last labor camp finally shut its doors in 1987, 34 years after Stalin’s death brought about the beginning of the end. The 32 years since have marked the only period since Siberia’s colonization in which it has not hosted thousands of prisoners from European Russia, sent there to keep them in perpetual captivity far from civilization, usually without the due process of law. The end of the exile system can most likely be attributed to two factors. First, this past century has seen enormous changes in what societies around the world view as acceptable, thanks mainly to a saturation of information that was never present before. In the time of Avvakum or Dostoevsky, the average Russian would not have known anything about the exile system, but by the 20th century, such information was no longer possible to hide, and the result has been a worldwide rollback of abusive institutions and practices, many of which had existed for centuries. The second factor is that under Stalin, the system grew so large that it collapsed under its own weight. The number of people exiled to Siberia under Stalin was as much as 100 times greater than the amount sent during the period of equivalent length preceding George Kennan’s survey in the 1880s. Whereas previous generations might not have had to think much about the exile system, or considered it irrelevant to their concerns, the Great Terror suddenly brought it

into the homes of tens of millions of everyday Russians. It was no longer possible to write off the exile system as something small and far away that only affected criminals, when thousands upon thousands of normal people, men and women, rich and poor, were being plucked from their communities and whisked away, often never to be seen again. When Nikita Khrushchev came to power and gave his secret speech to the Politburo denouncing the crimes of Stalin, it marked the first time that a Russian leader had moved to undo the horrors of exile rather than intensify them, and around the time the Soviet Union began to open up in the late 1980s, it finally disappeared.

With its arc of history at an end, it is at last possible to look at the progression of the exile system, both in reality and in literature, as a single institution. The beginning of exile in Siberia came hand in hand with Siberia's conquest by the Russian Empire, when the ruling class found it to be a convenient place to send troublemakers to get them out of the way. Exile was not seen as a punishment, but rather a method of putting offenders out of sight and out of mind. No prison infrastructure existed there, and regardless, the goal was not imprisonment anyway. The archpriest Avvakum found that in exile, his role was the same as it had been in European Russia, only now he carried out his duties in Siberia and was not allowed to return. In writing about his time in exile, he portrayed his experience as a test of his faith by God, even as he denounced the authorities who had imposed it upon him. The battles he fought were with himself, his own perceived sinfulness, and with the temptation to abandon his faith in the face of unrelenting hardship. He stood steadfastly by his values to the very end, even as the government invested in creating prison infrastructure where none previously existed, just to contain him and his followers.

Over the next two centuries, a fundamental shift occurred in the purpose of the exile system. As justice systems became more institutionalized, so did exile, and with the decline in

the prominence of the death penalty, exile took its place as the go-to punishment for major crimes. Exile to Siberia became about punishment for the first time. Now, most exiles were imprisoned upon arriving in Siberia, rather than given new jobs (although exile without imprisonment, as experienced by Radishchev in the late 1700s, continued to exist). At the same time, the government created a legal infrastructure that first began to formalize the practice of exiling political undesirables without due process of law. The great writer Fyodor Dostoevsky, when putting pen to paper to describe his time in exile in the 1850s, chose to portray his experience as a struggle to peer into the soul of mankind and understand, from a detached perspective, why humans are capable of horrible atrocities. Unlike Avvakum, Dostoevsky found that exile in Siberia shook the foundations of his political viewpoints, turning him from an opponent of the tsar to a reluctant supporter after discovering that the peasants he once idealized in fact hated him for his aristocratic background.

The next 100 years oversaw another dramatic change in the exile system, but it was one that built on previous ideas rather than overturning them. The revolution of 1917 upended Russian society, and the new communist government promised liberal rights and reforms, including fair trials and the end of the exile system. These new rights were written into the law books but in practice never existed, as the Soviet Union under Stalin instead chose to dramatically expand the exile system. People from all walks of life were swept up in a great purge and exiled without trial in numbers ten times greater than ever before. The purpose of the exile system once again changed: while still nominally about punishment, the widespread use of forced labor by millions of prisoners to complete infrastructure projects and extract resources made the economy dependent on exiles working without pay. More and more people were sent to Siberia not because anyone really believed that they had committed crimes, but because the

system encouraged (and in fact depended on) the mass imprisonment of Soviet citizens to develop the country. Alexander Solzhenitsyn was exiled and pressed into forced labor by the very government he thought he supported. Taking a path different from both previous authors, exile turned him from a supporter of the system into a steadfast opponent. But at the same time, he took after Avvakum in his discovery of the Christian faith and his conclusion that it alone could explain his suffering. In his writing, he sought to demonstrate how the exile system swept up every kind of person, from peasants to engineers, and portrayed his struggle as a battle with a vast and inconsiderate system rather than with the nature of humankind or between good and evil.

It is here that the historical arc of the exile system abruptly ends. Over 350 years, it evolved from an amorphous and relatively uncommon exile tradition, into an enormous all-consuming system that grew until it defined Russian society, consuming it in the process. It grew like a tumor, never receding, always growing wider and deeper and more bureaucratic. In the end, however, it collapsed under its own weight.

The story of the exile system is one of great injustices and of the almost mechanical condemnation of millions of people by a state that overstepped its bounds. But it is also the story of the growth of a unique literary tradition, and of the evolution of our own understanding of the world around us. It is through the work of these authors that we are able to comprehend the terrible suffering that occurred—they are the ones who make it personal, who bring that suffering into our homes and into our lives, into spaces whose security we take for granted. It can only be hoped that through the window of understanding they have given us, we may see deeper truths that will ensure the horrors of the Siberian exile system are never repeated.

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