

## INTRODUCTION

### *Anatoly Marchenko: A Life Apart*

Most Soviet dissidents known in the West—Andrei Amalrik, Pavel Litvinov, Andrei Sakharov, Alexander Solzhenitsyn—have belonged to Russia's sophisticated class of scientists and writers. Before they challenged the regime on political issues, they were already concerned with the question of intellectual freedom and censorship in their professional lives. Anatoly Marchenko had different origins.

He was born in 1938, in Barabinsk, a small town in western Siberia. His parents still live in the region, employed as railroad workers; they are both illiterate. Marchenko left school after the eighth grade, two years short of a full secondary education, and went to work on the Novosibirsk hydroelectric station, and then on similar construction projects in Siberia and Kazakhstan. One job was on the Karaganda power station. In his book, *My Testimony*, Marchenko describes what happened to him there:

We young workers lived in a hostel and went dancing at the club. In the same settlement lived some Chechens who had been exiled from the Caucasus. They were terribly embittered: after all, they'd been transported from their homes to this strange Siberia, among a strange and alien people. Between their young people and us constant brawls and punch-ups kept breaking out and sometimes there was a knife fight as well. One day there was a huge brawl in our hostel. When it had all died away of its own accord the police arrived, picked up everyone left in the hostel—the majority of those involved had already run away or gone into hiding—arrested them and put them on trial. I was one of the ones arrested, and they took us away from the settlement, where everyone knew what had happened. They sentenced us all in a single day, with no attempt at finding out who was guilty and who innocent. Thus it was

that I found my way to the terrible camps of Karaganda.

Prior to his first arrest, Marchenko had never thought about politics. Even when he worked alongside political prisoners on construction projects, he remained indifferent to their fate. "I used to get my pay, go to dances on my days off and never think a thing of it," he remarks. But his arrest and trial provoked an intense reaction. He felt insulted and degraded. Although the court originally sentenced him to five years in a labor camp the sentence was reduced to two years shortly after it began. Nonetheless, Marchenko was determined to escape not only the camp but the Soviet Union itself. He succeeded in leaving the camp. For a time he lived in Tashkent, getting by with false identity papers. But on October 29, 1960, he and a friend were caught near the Iranian border.

According to *My Testimony*, he was then kept in solitary confinement for five months with no parcels or letters from his family. The KGB accused him of high treason. They cut up his boots "in their search for the plan of a Soviet factory." In return for worthwhile evidence and a confession, they promised him more food. Marchenko refused to cooperate.

His trial began on March 2, 1961, before the Supreme Court of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Turkmenia. It lasted two days. Almost immediately, Marchenko was betrayed. His co-defendant, Anatoly Budrovsky, "had yielded under pressure from the investigator" and gave testimony damaging to Marchenko. The next day, while Budrovsky was convicted of illegally attempting to cross the border and given two years in the camps, Marchenko was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to six years in the labor colonies for political prisoners.

In *My Testimony*, he describes his reaction to the trial:



Once more I was taken back to prison, to my cell. To tell the truth, the length of my sentence made no impression on me. It was only later that each year of imprisonment stretched out into days and hours and it seemed that six years would never come to an end. Much later I also found out that the label of "traitor to the Homeland" had crippled me not for six years but for life. At the time, however, I had only one sensation, and that was that an injustice had been committed, a legalized illegality, and that I was powerless; all I could do was to gather and store my outrage and despair inside me, storing it up until it exploded like an overheated boiler.

I recalled the empty rows of seats in the chamber, the indifferent voices of the judge and prosecutor, the court secretary chewing on a roll the whole time, the silent statues of the guards. Why hadn't they let anyone into the court, not even my mother? Why had no witnesses been called? Why wasn't I given a copy of the sentence? What did they mean: "You can't have a copy of the sentence, it's secret?" A few minutes later a blue paper was pushed through the little trapdoor for food: "Sign this to say that you've been informed of your sentence." I signed it and that was that. The sentence was final, with no right of appeal.

He was then twenty-three years old.

Marchenko spent the next six years in various labor camps and prisons. He suffered irreparable damage to his health; and his contact with other prisoners, most notably with the writer Yuli Daniel, changed the direction of his life. Near the end of Marchenko's term, in 1966, Daniel and Andrei Sinyavsky were defendants in a trial that generated much attention in the West. For several years, both authors had been publishing essays and stories in the West under assumed names. Sinyavsky, especially, under the pseudonym Abram Tertz, had generated much speculation over his true identity: whether or not he was a Jew, a Polish emigre, or, in fact, a Soviet writer. Throughout their trial, the official press denounced Sinyavsky and Daniel. Seeing *Pravda* and other papers, Marchenko and his fellow prisoners at first believed the trial to be a "show trial," with a pair of contrite defendants eager to denounce themselves. Otherwise, they

figured, it would take place secretly, with no press coverage or denunciations. But the prisoners after all were experts in these matters, and they soon understood what even the Soviet press could not conceal: that Sinyavsky and Daniel behaved with dignity, that they did not confess, but insisted on their right to freedom of speech. After his conviction, Daniel was sent to the same camp in Mordovia where Marchenko was nearing the end of his six-year term.

When Daniel arrived, Marchenko's work gang arranged for him to join their crew. They knew that Daniel was unaccustomed to hard physical labor. In addition, as they soon learned, an old shoulder wound from the war had not healed properly, making it even harder for Daniel to work. Although Marchenko's crew unloaded timber, they assigned Daniel the easier tasks, like cleaning the wood shed or stacking small logs. Daniel, in turn, developed friendships with several prisoners, including Marchenko. They were both partially deaf and found it amusing to shout in each other's right ear. Daniel understood how Marchenko had matured in the camps, how he had changed from a simple, uncaring worker into a determined and well-informed individual. Daniel wrote to his wife about him and before Marchenko left the camps, Daniel suggested that he visit her—Larisa Bogoraz—in Moscow.

Marchenko went immediately to the capital where he met several of Daniel's friends at the home of Larisa Bogoraz. To them, he resembled a creature from an alien world. While they all knew people who had served terms under Stalin, they believed that under Khrushchev political prisoners had become scarce. And surely, conditions in the camps had improved! Marchenko, in fact, was the first person they had encountered from the camps of the post-Stalin era, and though as Moscow intellectuals they were conscientious seekers of news and information, they soon realized how profound their illusions were. One woman even came to the apartment with a tape recorder, hoping to collect the latest folk songs from



the camps.

Marchenko was almost totally deaf, the result of a severe middle ear infection that had proceeded undiagnosed and virtually untreated in the camps. They expected him to eat voraciously, but, as he explained, regardless of his constant hunger, he could eat very little food as his stomach had shrunk from lack of nourishment. Eventually, Marchenko asked for their help. He was determined to write a book about his experiences, to bear witness to the suffering he had seen and endured. They tried to dissuade him. On his first evening in Moscow it was clear to his new friends that he had not seen the last of prison. And later, when his activities brought him further reprisals, the friends who had helped him felt responsible for his fate.

The friends Marchenko made through Larisa Bogoraz were among those most deeply involved in the early stages of the democratic movement. Larisa Bogoraz herself had been a staunch defender of her husband, although by the time of his arrest their marriage had all but formally dissolved. As his wife, she was entitled to maintain personal contact with him while others, mere *friends*, were restricted from doing so. For two more years she would write widely-circulated appeals on behalf of arrested dissidents until, in August 1968, she herself would be arrested in Red Square for demonstrating against the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Marchenko also met Alexander Esenin-Volpin—for many, the father of the democratic movement. A renowned logician and mathematician, Esenin-Volpin had been incarcerated four times in mental institutions in retaliation for his poetry and philosophical essays. It was Esenin-Volpin who first encouraged his fellow dissidents to study Soviet law and it was he who helped to organize the first demonstration on Pushkin Square in support of the Soviet Constitution. (December 5 is celebrated as Constitution Day in the Soviet Union. Since 1965, a small group of people gather in Pushkin Square on that day every year. Usually, they merely stand for a few minutes with their

hats off, mutely calling attention to the written standards of law the regime prefers to ignore.)

By making their views known to the authorities, Bogoraz, Esenin-Volpin, and others effected a change in their own lives, which, in turn, transformed the moral climate of Moscow and Leningrad. For years, they had practiced double-think and double-behavior, concealing their ideas on politics and culture from neighbors and colleagues at work. But once they signed appeals to the authorities and to the West, they no longer had something to conceal. Often, their letters and names were broadcast in Russian over Western radio stations, like the Voice of America, the BBC, or Radio Liberty. They became more open—with each other, with casual friends, even with strangers. They overcame their fear and their isolation. At work, colleagues who supported them came forward. Others, who disagreed or feared contact with dissidents, broke off friendships. Even with the KGB, they learned to speak openly of their political and philosophical views. Suddenly, they had cracked the facade of unanimity totalitarian governments impose. For the first time since the early 1930s an independent, more natural social life began to evolve.

Marchenko flourished among these people. Everyone he met seemed to share his compassion and sense of outrage. His friends, though, had to restrain him. In the camps he had studied Lenin, copying passages into a notebook, then exploring their significance for Russia's present situation. Meeting sympathetic people in Moscow, he believed they ought to organize an underground party, secure mimeograph machines, conspire against the authorities.

His friends disabused him of these illusions. The labor camps contained many people who had tried to organize independent circles—study groups—to discuss Marxism and its relation to Soviet society. Invariably, the regime feared the subversive potential of such activity and always imprisoned the participants. In addition, the KGB enjoyed investigating the smallest hints of clandestine activity for they found it



psychologically easier to pursue someone who indeed had something to hide.

Marchenko's friends turned to more practical matters. Upon his release, Marchenko had been given a "minus 100," forbidding him to live within a hundred kilometers of certain major cities. He could not stay in Moscow. So his friends helped him find a room in Alexandrov, well outside the capital; he then registered with the police there as he was required to do. He was also supposed to find work but the authorities knew he was sick and did not pressure him to find employment. For long periods Marchenko simply vanished from their sight. Once his friends arranged a month long stay in a Moscow hospital where his ears could be properly treated. At other times he stayed in cottages outside the city, writing his memoir and consulting with friends.

During this time, also, Marchenko and Larisa Bogoraz became lovers. She was nearly ten years older, an intellectual, with advanced degrees in linguistics. For more than a year before they met, she had been involved in political struggle, writing appeals and circulating petitions on behalf of defendants, most notably for her estranged husband, Yuli Daniel. She must have understood, as others did, what lay in store for Marchenko and for herself. They would be married in 1971.

After Marchenko completed writing *My Testimony* in longhand, his friend, Boris Shragin, who came to the West in 1974, volunteered to type it for him. With a second-hand typewriter bought especially for the project, Shragin retreated to his mother's apartment, in a secluded area, where his typing would neither disturb anyone nor arouse suspicion. As usual for such manuscripts, he typed eight copies, pounding heavily on the keys to impress the letters through the layers of carbon. Later, the machine was passed to other dissidents to copy *samizdat* material, until finally the typewriter was confiscated during a search. But even in 1967 the machine was old and the keys worn down. Shragin

bruised and cut his fingers so badly that, in the end, he could only copy the manuscript by wearing gloves.

*My Testimony* was the first account of life in the post-Stalin era prisons and camps of the Soviet Union. It began to circulate unofficially in Moscow, and other books, most notably Valentin Moroz's *A Report from the Beria Reservation* and Edward Kuznetsov's *Prison Diaries*, have since confirmed the incredible, indeed grotesque, episodes Marchenko describes. The chapter headings themselves alert the reader: "Hunger," "Self-Mutilation," "The Man Who Hanged Himself." *My Testimony* makes us believe what we have known all along: that Soviet political prisoners endure systematic starvation, that medical care is perfunctory, that the entire procedure of corrective-labor is designed to humiliate the prisoner, to ruin his health, to break his spirit.

As Marchenko remarks, in camp "you work like an elephant, get fed like a rabbit." The prisoners work long hours, unloading timber, polishing furniture in the camp factory, handling lathes in crowded, noisy rooms. Always there are norms to fulfill, punishments exacted, beatings, weeks in solitary confinement. While Marchenko provides sordid, degrading details of prison life, the collection of human derelicts he encountered leaves the most lasting impression.

Operations for removing tattoos were also very common. I don't know how it is now, but from 1963 to 1965 these operations were fairly primitive: all they did was cut out the offending patch of skin, then draw the edges together and stitch them up. I remember one con who had been operated on three times that way. The first time they had cut out a strip of skin from his forehead with the usual sort of inscription in such cases: "Khrushchev's Slave." The skin was then cobbled together with rough stitches. He was released and again tattooed his forehead: "Slave of the USSR." Again he was taken to hospital and operated on. And again, for a third time, he covered his whole forehead with "Slave of the CPSU." This tattoo was also cut out at the hospital and now, after three operations, the skin was so tightly stretched across his forehead that he could no longer close his eyes. We called him "The



Stare.”

Prisoners like this one are actually criminals from the lowest stratum of Soviet society. Imprisoned in camps for violent criminals, they prefer to be transferred to political camps, for they believe the rumors that conditions for “politicals” are better than for ordinary criminals. In fact, the conditions are far worse. So the criminal con employs his own form of protest. Many disfigure their bodies with tattoos. Others rip open their stomachs, swallow sets of dominoes or chess pieces, even bits of glass and barbed wire. “If there had been a museum of objects taken out of stomachs,” Marchenko suggests, it would have been the most astonishing collection in the world.”

Living among these prisoners and genuine political prisoners, Marchenko underwent a radical, personal transformation. In contrast to other Soviet dissidents, who came to oppose the regime out of an intellectual commitment to truth and justice, Marchenko deliberately cultivated an understanding of the regime only after he sensed his opposition to it. In the camps he read Lenin and Plekhanov for the first time. At lectures he often challenged the “education officers,” exposing their false logic and inconsistencies. Provoked by human suffering, he penetrated the facade of lies and hypocrisy that camouflages the Soviet government. *My Testimony* is not an optimistic book. The moral degradation of prisoner and keeper alike is not presented in a manner designed to reinforce one’s faith in human nature. Yet Marchenko survived. He did not leave the camps defeated.

Undoubtedly, other former prisoners also wrote about their experiences. Their manuscripts either disappeared or never were completed. But Marchenko had been released at a fortunate time. He found friends who were able to help him. By 1967, there was a widespread network of *samizdat* readers extending beyond Moscow and Leningrad to provincial capitals and even to collective farms. In addition, several

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dissidents were in close contact with foreign journalists and others who could help transmit material to the West. Gradually, Marchenko became a visible part of this dissident activity. Although his friends had tried to protect him, especially until *My Testimony* was completed, he could not allow them to take all the risks.

When searches took place at the apartment of someone under investigation (or already under arrest), the presence of the KGB discouraged friends and neighbors from visiting the apartment. By law, the police could compel anyone to remain in the apartment for the duration of the search (which could take more than five or six hours), search them also, and include their names in the official protocol of the investigation. This procedure succeeded in isolating the families of dissidents. But the dissidents embarked on a new strategy to embarrass the KGB. When a search took place, friends contacted friends. Then individuals and groups of people would converge on the apartment, demonstrating their solidarity with the family involved.

On September 5, 1967, Marchenko visited the apartment of Lyudmila Ginzburg, whose son, Alexander, was awaiting trial in Moscow. Marchenko came—deliberately—during a search and stayed until its conclusion. His name and address were listed in the official report. In addition, Marchenko signed one of the innumerable appeals that were circulating before the start of Alexander Ginzburg's trial. Demanding an open process, the letter cited violations of law committed by authorities during the investigation. While the accused had been arrested in January he was not brought to trial within nine months, the period stipulated by the Code of Criminal Procedure.

By the winter of 1967-68, the KGB knew about *My Testimony*. But they did not arrest Marchenko, probably because the impending trial of Alexander Ginzburg and Yury Galanskov, who were both well-known publicists, was already generating controversy. The atmosphere was not right for the



arrest of another writer. Furthermore, Marchenko's detention would simply lend greater attention to his book. Knowing his character, the KGB realized he would provide another pretext—sooner or later—for his own arrest. They were not mistaken. Still, for nearly half a year, Marchenko endured continual harassment. In February, Larisa Bogoraz complained to the authorities “about the grossly illegal methods of persecution practised in the case of former political prisoner Anatoly Marchenko.” As she later described in an open letter to the West, Marchenko's life was growing considerably more difficult:

His book . . . aroused such hatred for him in the KGB that they began to bait him like a hare: KGB agents followed on his heels for months on end—I've spotted them so often that I know many of them by sight. And not only in Moscow, where he worked, and Aleksandrov where he lived: he went to visit relatives in Ryazan but wasn't allowed to leave the train and had to return to Moscow. He was seized on the street almost as soon as he had been discharged from hospital; and they smashed his face in and shoved him into a car when he came to Moscow for a literary evening.

Despite such conditions, Marchenko increased his activities. In March 1968, Alexander Chakovsky, the editor of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, wrote an article in reply to numerous letters from readers (none of which were published in the journal) that criticized the regime's conduct of the Ginzburg-Galanskov trial. (Ginzburg and Galanskov had been tried and convicted in January. Ginzburg received five years in the labor camps; Galanskov got seven years. Galanskov subsequently died there.) In the course of his reply, which has become a notorious example of official baiting, Chakovsky gave his own suggestion for the defendants' fate: “Instead of giving such people food and drink at the nation's expense in prisons and corrective labor colonies, the responsibility for their keep should be shifted on to the American, English, or West German taxpayers.”

On the day Chakovsky's article appeared, Marchenko prepared a reply. Citing the work prisoners do and the meager rations they receive, Marchenko berated Chakovsky for deliberately obscuring the truth:

In your article you assume the pose of a man with a civic conscience, as though you were genuinely concerned about our country's fate and prestige. A man in such a public position cannot justify himself by saying that he was unaware of something or ill-informed. If, indeed, you did not know until now, then you could have, and that means you should have known exactly how convicts in corrective labor colonies are fed, and at whose expense.

Marchenko concluded:

Maybe the lofty civic pathos of your article can be explained precisely by the fact that you get a bit more for it than just a bowl of gruel and a ration of black bread.

Several weeks later, on April 17, Marchenko wrote another letter on the camps, this time to the Chairman of the Red Cross Society, the Minister of Health, and other government and cultural figures. Expressing his frustration over his inability to "make my book known to the public," he explained that they "through their social position are among those most responsible for the state of society and its level of humanity and legality." He then detailed conditions in the camps, appealing to these gentlemen to demand a public investigation into the plight of political prisoners. "It is our civic duty," he reminded them, "the duty of our human conscience, to put a stop to crimes against humanity. For crime begins not with the smoking chimneys of crematoria, nor with the steamers packed with prisoners bound for Magadan. Crime begins with civic indifference."

Marchenko received only one reply to this letter. On April 29, the Deputy Chairman of the Union of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies answered:



The committee . . . considers it necessary to point out briefly that our legislation and our Soviet conception of law look upon people who have attacked the conquests of the October Revolution as having committed a most serious offence against their people and as deserving severe punishment rather than any kind of indulgence or forbearance.

In the light of the foregoing the entirely groundless nature of all of your other assertions becomes obvious.

While Marchenko became increasingly involved with the defense of political prisoners, other events in the spring of 1968 also absorbed his attention. In Czechoslovakia, a group of liberal Communists was attempting to establish "socialism with a human face." And in the Soviet Union, several Moscow dissidents established the *Chronicle of Current Events*, an unofficial and uncensored journal designed to carry news of human rights violations. (The dissidents discourage use of the phrase "underground press" to refer to their publications for it suggests something illegal. No provision of Soviet law directly prohibits this material. Still, dissidents are discreet about their writings.)

Marchenko, along with other dissidents, followed events in Czechoslovakia as best as he could. But the Soviet press distorted the significance of the Prague Spring, alluding to "internal forces of reaction" and an "imperialist intrigue." Marchenko understood the warnings. On July 22, he wrote a letter to several newspapers in Prague and to Communist journals in Western Europe. As in *My Testimony* and his previous letters, he revealed an acute understanding of his government's behavior. He did not believe Alexander Dubcek's experiment would be allowed to continue, especially because the Czech liberals seemed determined to expose the crimes of their own country's Stalinists. Marchenko concluded:

It is understandable why our leaders hasten to intercede for the likes of Urvalek and Novotny: the precedent of making party and government leaders personally responsible before the people is a dangerous

and contagious one. What if our own leaders should suddenly be required to account for deeds that have shamefully been termed "errors" and "excesses" or, even more weakly and obscurely, "difficulties experienced in the heroic past" (when it was a matter of millions of people being unjustly condemned and murdered, of torture in the KGB's dungeons, of entire peoples being declared enemies, of the collapse of the nation's agriculture, and similar trivia)?

For the KGB, this was the last straw.

On July 28, Marchenko was arrested on the street and taken to Butyrka prison, charged with infringement of identity card regulations. His friends tried to help him. Appeals were circulated, petitions drawn up. One woman, Irina Belogorodskaya, was arrested on August 8 for spreading information which "defames the Soviet social system." She had been gathering signatures in defense of Marchenko. (Later she was sentenced to a year in a labor camp.)

On August 21, 1968, the same day Warsaw Pact troops invaded Czechoslovakia, Marchenko was tried and convicted for violating internal passport regulations. The trial held no surprises except one—all of Marchenko's friends were permitted to enter the court. Probably the authorities were afraid that if his friends were not admitted but forced to stand outside the courthouse, they would become exceedingly outraged, since the trial coincided with the invasion of Prague. So about seventy of Marchenko's supporters witnessed his one-day trial. At one point, according to the *Chronicle of Current Events*, the Judge's two assistants were given the following instructions: "They were told they were dealing with a criminal so cunning and insidious that he had not broken the law, and this article of the Criminal Code was the only way of getting him into jail."

Marchenko was still a sick man. In the camps of Moravia he had contracted meningitis, which led to the recurring infection in his middle ear. After he arrived in Moscow he had a trephining operation on his skull. He also suffered



from severe internal bleeding in the stomach, and a dangerous loss of hemoglobin. Only a series of blood transfusions saved him. The court had access to his medical reports. Nonetheless, the judge sentenced him to a year in the camps, the maximum penalty for the crime he allegedly committed.

His friends had little chance to react. Four days later, seven people, among them Larisa Bogoraz and Pavel Litvinov, staged a demonstration in Red Square against the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Six of them were immediately arrested. (The seventh, a mother of two small children, was sent home.) They were tried and convicted in October. Litvinov received five years of internal exile near the Chinese border; Bogoraz—four. By December, Larisa Bogoraz reached Chuna, her place of exile, a small town in Siberia, nearly four thousand kilometers from Moscow.

During Marchenko's first year at a labor camp in Perm, *My Testimony* was published in the West. This further infuriated the authorities. While he was still serving his sentence, they were planning to convict him again.

Issue number ten of the *Chronicle*—in October 1969—gives details of Marchenko's trial in the camp. Although the report is long, it is worth being quoted in full in order to appreciate the incompetency of the regime and the precise, factual approach of the *Chronicle of Current Events*.

The *Chronicle* has already reported that Anatoly Marchenko has been sentenced again, to two years' imprisonment in strict-regime camps, under article 190-1 of the Russian Criminal Code. Marchenko's trial was held on August 22nd in the reading room of the camp zone at Nyrob, a settlement in Perm Region, and was formally considered open, although of course no one except prisoners and administrative personnel is ever allowed into the zone.

Anatoly Marchenko was charged with uttering these statements: "the Soviet Union is violating the sovereignty of other countries, and Soviet troops were sent into Czechoslovakia to suppress freedom with tanks"; "there is no democracy in the USSR, freedom of expression, of the press, of creativity does not exist"; "it is the Soviet Union who is to

blame" for the events on the Sino-Soviet border. Apart from these statements, Marchenko was charged with refusing to report for work, and with declaring while in the punishment cell: "The communists have drunk all my blood." This charge was based on the testimony of two observers, i.e. punishment-cell warders, Lopanitsyn and Sobinin. Since they contradicted each other in their evidence as to the date on which Marchenko had uttered this statement, it was stated in the indictment, and later in the sentence, that he had uttered it twice—on May 14th and 15th. After the overseers had reported, KGB security officer Antonov, to whom the overseers are subordinate in their job, began to collect further material on Marchenko, and on May 31st he instituted criminal proceedings.

The charge was corroborated at the pre-trial investigation by duty warders Sedov and Dmitriyenko, as well as by the overseers' testimonies. Sedov was not summoned to appear at the trial, but his testimony was read out, in violation of the law, and also incorporated in the verdict. Dmitriyenko declared at the trial that he had not known Marchenko before, and had "decided" that the statement attributed to him in the charge had been uttered by him, but now that he had seen Marchenko at the trial and heard his voice, he was firmly convinced that Marchenko had not spoken these words. Moreover, Dmitriyenko declared that he knew who had spoken the words; and he could name the man and summon him to court. The court did not react to this declaration, and ignored Dmitriyenko's testimony in the verdict, although a court is obliged by law to explain why it had rejected any testimony which contradicts the conclusions reached in the verdict. Fellow-prisoners of Marchenko in the punishment cell, summoned to court at his request, stated that they had not heard the sentence he was charged with uttering.

Concerning the other statements he was charged with, Marchenko said that he had held conversations with prisoners on these subjects, but that his statements had been distorted beyond recognition in the witnesses' testimony. Marchenko said he had been annoyed by the words of witness Burtsev to the effect that "Czechoslovakia ought to be crushed once and for all," since he considered the idea of crushing a man, a nation or a people to reveal hatred of mankind. During conversations about freedom of expression, the press and creativity, Marchenko had in fact replied to prisoners that no ideal freedom of expression,



press or creativity existed anywhere, nor did pure democracy, including the Soviet Union: every country had its limitations.

The prosecution witnesses recounted Marchenko's views in a primitive and arbitrary form; not one of them reproduced them accurately, and their testimony was contradictory. According to Marchenko, the case against him was a fabrication of Antonov, the camp KGB officer, who had pressurized the witnesses—all dependent on him—into giving suitable testimony. The court declared that "there was no reason not to believe the witnesses questioned at the trial, all the more so since many of them had given explanations even before proceedings began—some in their own handwriting—which confirmed the facts brought to light in court and which had led to criminal proceedings being instituted." It was precisely these "explanations," on the basis of which criminal proceedings had been instituted, which were given at interrogations conducted by the KGB chief Antonov.

The court's second argument, which it considered proof of the reliability of the witnesses' testimony, was the fact that the investigation had been headed by the Deputy-Procurator of the Perm Region and "the court has no reason to doubt his objectivity."

The composition of the court was as follows: Khrenovsky, Chairman; Rzhevin and Biryukova, People's Assessors; Baiborodina, Procurator. Marchenko conducted his own defence.

On September 30th the Russian Supreme Court considered Marchenko's appeal, and an additional appeal by the lawyer Monakov, who spoke at the hearing. The composition of the court was: Ostroukhova, Chairman; Lukanov and Timofeyev, Members of the Court; Sorokina, Procurator. The verdict of the Perm Regional Court was upheld.

Marchenko has never elaborated on these years he spent in the camps, at least not in any writings that have reached the West. However, issue number sixteen of the *Chronicle* reported on his initial months in a new camp in the Perm district.

In spite of the medical certificates attached to Marchenko's case about the grave state of his health, and of his assignment to light work, in February and March in a temperature of 45-50 degrees centigrade of frost he was made to live in a tent and detailed to work on the unloading

of firewood for trains. He was subsequently transferred to construction work—digging foundations on the territory of the camp. As a result of this Marchenko (suffering from deafness and headaches caused by meningitis, which he had contracted in previous camps) developed a hypertonic disease.

By decision of the camp administration Marchenko has been deprived of visits from his mother. His defence counsel, who had travelled to the camp to draw up a complaint for review (by the Supreme Court), was refused a meeting with his client.

Marchenko is not being given letters from his family and friends. Parcels of books (the works of Plekhanov and Pisarev, works on the history of the USSR), despatched by "Books by Post," were returned to the shop. Marchenko has been deprived of pen, paper, and a physics textbook "as having no political-educational significance"—so it is stated in the "deed of confiscation."

Marchenko was not expected to survive this term in the camps. Even Dutton, his American publishers, had little hope. On the back cover of a copy of *My Testimony*—printed in 1971—we are told that "the author is reported to be still a prisoner, but it is thought unlikely that he will be heard from again." Marchenko, however, proved them wrong.

A short time before his release, the authorities required him to choose his next place of residence, where, they told him, he would live for a year under administrative supervision. Marchenko knew he would never be allowed to live in Moscow. He submitted the names of three cities, including Chuna, where Larisa Bogoraz had several months remaining to her own term of exile. Knowing she would stay with him if he joined her there, the KGB gave Marchenko permission to live in Chuna. He went there in August 1971. He and Larisa Bogoraz were married later that year.

This was the happiest period of Marchenko's life. In September 1972, he and his wife moved to Tarusa, a city barely a hundred kilometers from Moscow. They found an old dilapidated house that Marchenko, with the skills he had learned as a young man, completely rebuilt. That winter,



also, their son Pavel was born.

In Tarusa, Marchenko worked as a furnace stoker in a factory. His health, however, was precarious. During his time in camps he seemed to feel better. At home he was frequently ill; he still endured suppurating infections from his ear. Marchenko tried to find easier work. He took driving lessons, thinking he could become a truck driver. Nothing came of the idea because of his deafness. But these problems, like health and work, were normal, human difficulties; they could be tolerated.

Although Marchenko could not live in Moscow, he and his wife maintained contact with dissidents in the capital. The democratic movement, however, had changed from the time they had last lived in Moscow, five years before. The movement had achieved considerable success. Two leading dissidents—Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Andrei Sakharov—had become world figures. (Solzhenitsyn had won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970. Sakharov would win the Nobel Prize for Peace five years later.) And nationality groups, most notably the Crimean Tatars and Soviet Jews—with much help from Soviet liberals—managed to wring concessions from the regime. During World War II, the Tatars had been forcibly removed from their homeland in the Crimea and taken to Central Asia. The entire people had been accused of collaborating with the Nazis. By 1967, however, after many protests and appeals, they were cleared of the charge of treason, although the regime refused to permit their return to the Crimea. Soviet Jews had greater success, in part because they elicited world attention to their problems. In response, the regime was allowing thousands of Jews to leave for Israel. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the democratic movement had transformed the moral climate among large sections of the intelligentsia.

The authorities were not left helpless. With the onset of detente, in 1972, the dissidents suffered increased repression. Although twenty-seven issues of the *Chronicle of Current*

*Events* had appeared regularly in Moscow for four years, the KGB managed to prevent its appearance from October 1972 until May 1974. More ominously, according to Andrei Sakharov, the regime warned that for every new appearance of the *Chronicle* "appropriate persons would be arrested and those already under arrest would be sentenced to long terms."

The crackdown on dissent was highlighted by the trial and public confessions of Pyotr Yakir and Viktor Krasin in September 1973. Innumerable others, like Bukovsky, Plyusch, Gluzman, Chornovil, and Superfin were shipped to labor camps, prisons, or the confines of mental hospitals. Other dissident and cultural figures were allowed (or virtually compelled) to emigrate. As a result, the loose coalition of non-conformists that had composed the early stages of the democratic movement had deteriorated.

The KGB had not forgotten Marchenko either. Anxious that he might be writing a new book, they often searched his house and harassed him at work. Alexander Ginzburg was also living in Tarusa at this time and the KGB, faced with Ginzburg, Marchenko, and Larisa Bogoraz in the same city, opened a special branch.

Marchenko and his wife were affected by this new pressure from the regime. They, too, began considering emigration, especially for the sake of their son. They talked of moving to Canada, living on a farm, working with their hands. In the camps Marchenko became interested in economics. Now he thought about completing his education. He was also starting to write fictional accounts of labor camp life.

But as repression continued Marchenko felt compelled to resume the struggle. On August 23, 1973, he wrote United Nations General Secretary Kurt Waldheim to inform him that the writer Andrei Amalrik might not survive his new prison term. In his letter Marchenko recalled the death of Yury Galanskov and noted that during Amalrik's previous term he had contracted meningitis and had been declared an invalid. That same month he also wrote to Willy Brandt concerning



the dangers of East-West detente.

The KGB responded to this activity. On November 3, KGB agents searched his house "in connection with Case 24," the case involving the *Chronicle*. Marchenko, though, understood this was merely a pretext for examining his papers. The agents, in fact, confiscated everything written on a typewriter or by hand, although they found nothing relating to the *Chronicle*. Marchenko wrote the Procurator General, demanding his papers. Instead, on New Year's Day he received a summons to appear for interrogation by the KGB. Two agents questioned him. The first, Kharitonov, asked about his notes, warning Marchenko that they contained anti-Soviet material. Marchenko refused to cooperate. He himself could not say how they would be used. Now, however, nothing would come of them; they were not to be returned. The second agent, Major Zhernov, chose an altogether different approach. Marchenko has reproduced the gist of their remarkable discussion:

Zhernov: "You have been tried more than once, but you have not reformed and continue to engage in anti-social activity. In conformity with the Decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet dated December 25, 1972, I am giving you warning."

I: "What Decree is that?"

Zhernov showed me a document. So far as I understood it, the Decree stated the following: organs of police inquiry may warn persons who have committed anti-social acts not entailing criminal liability that if they continue to commit such acts, they will be held criminally liable. I was completely unable to understand the logic of the decree, and therefore asked whether it had been published anywhere—for example, in the *Vedomosti of the Supreme Soviet* (the official bulletin) or in the newspapers.

"No, Zhernov answered, "it has not been published. We are informing you about it. It exists, and has juridical force."

I: "So it's a *samizdat* document!"

Zhernov was furious: "Who are you raising your hand against? What kind of Soviet man are you?"

I: "A Soviet man should live according to written laws. But this document was slipped to you and me on the sly."

They continued:

Incidentally, during the argument with Zhernov, when I tried to show that however you looked at it the acts attributed to me did not come under the Decree, he said: "They (the acts) are not criminally punishable now, since you were already punished for them in 1968, and you can't be tried twice for the same act."

I: "So you are confirming that I was convicted for *My Testimony* and the letters? But I was tried under Article 198 for violating passport regulations..."

Zhernov: "Yes, but surely you understand that essentially it was for your activity."

Marchenko was not intimidated. A month later, in February, Alexander Solzhenitsyn was arrested and expelled from the Soviet Union. In response, a group of dissidents, including Marchenko, circulated the Moscow Appeal in his support. Soon after the KGB found a pretext to harass Marchenko further.

On April 10, Marchenko was released from his work for a short time, between the winter and summer seasons. With more free time, he worked on his house rather than simply take a vacation. The KGB, however, saw their opportunity. On May 24, he was placed under administrative supervision. Under terms set by the Tarusa police, he was required to be at home from eight in the evening to six in the morning. In addition, he was forbidden to go to bars, restaurants, or the cinema. If he wished to leave Tarusa, he first would need the permission of the police. And finally, he would have to report to the police every Monday at six p.m.

Marchenko barely tolerated such interference in his life. But out of concern for his family he tried to fulfill the provisions set by the authorities. At the same time, he continued his non-conformist activity. In July, Andrei Sakharov announced



a hunger strike in support of Soviet political prisoners. Marchenko responded to his appeal, declaring a hunger strike of his own; he fasted for five days. Then, in August, the supervision became more severe. Several times Marchenko asked for permission to visit Moscow, once to bring his son to a doctor, another time to meet his mother at the train station. His requests were denied. A doctor examined Marchenko during this time, just before her own departure for the United States. She found him very weak; one ear was infected with pus.

Nonetheless, as pressure from the KGB increased, Marchenko became more obstinate. On October 11, after being refused permission to bring his sick son back to Tarusa from Moscow, he declared that he considered himself free of the supervision. In November and again in December, he was fined by the courts for violating terms of the supervision. He knew the risks he faced. By law, "malicious violation" of administrative supervision constitutes a crime, punishable by up to two years in a labor camp. Still, he did not relent. On December 10, in a letter to Nikolai Podgorny, Marchenko renounced his Soviet citizenship and declared his intention to go to the United States. At the end of December he was called to the Visa Office and encouraged to accept a visa for Israel. "If you insist on going to the U.S.," they warned him, "you'll end up being convicted for violation of supervision."

By demanding that dissidents apply for visas to Israel, the authorities seek to humiliate them and discredit both the Zionist and the democratic movements. The regime and the dissidents understand that once Soviet emigrants reach Vienna or Rome, they can arrange to stay in Europe or travel to America, regardless of the destination indicated by their exit visas. But the regime has its own motives for insisting on Israel. For years, it has tried to discredit the democratic movement by identifying its non-Jewish supporters as Jews in disguise. Even Solzhenitsyn has been dubbed "Solzhenitsker" in some of the party's propaganda. In addition, the regime is

anxious to use the issue of emigration to Israel as a means of increasing the resentment of Ukrainians, Russians, and other nationalities against Jews and dissidents alike. Many Ukrainians, after all, would like to emigrate or at least visit relatives in the West, but only Jews and some dissidents appear to have this privilege.

As a matter of principle, Marchenko refused to cooperate. Again in February, he was encouraged to submit documents for his emigration. And, once more in the Visa Office, he stood by his right to emigrate to the United States. Marchenko had received invitations to come to the United States from Albert Shanker, the President of the American Federation of Teachers; PEN International, the organization of writers, had invited him to New York, as did Edward Kline, a prominent businessman involved in human rights affairs. Nonetheless, the regime proceeded against him. On the next day, February 26, his house in Tarusa was searched. The police seized rough drafts and other notes, together with manuscripts belonging to his wife. In violation of legal procedures, they refused to leave a protocol of the search. That night, Marchenko was arrested and taken to Kaluga Investigation Prison. At the time of his arrest, he declared an indefinite hunger strike and refused to cooperate with the investigation of his case.

Marchenko's behavior during this period—his appeals to the West, his refusals to accept a visa to Israel—reflect more than his obstinacy. Since the publication of *My Testimony*, he knew that his case was known in the West. His letters, also, addressed to Western statesmen or Soviet leaders, were often broadcast in Russian over stations like the BBC or Radio Liberty. In his isolation, however, without genuine access to information, he could not properly judge how closely his activities were followed in the West. The radio condenses information coming from the Soviet Union, making it seem as if the Western public actually knows and cares about internal repression. The regime, in turn, reinforces this



impression by making it difficult for dissenters to maintain contact with the West. Ironically, both the regime and its critics share an identical illusion, for the West, in general, is not thirsting for news from the Soviet Union. Marchenko made a tragic miscalculation. He believed that his appeals, his renunciation of Soviet citizenship, his insistence on emigrating to America, would compel the regime to relent. But he overestimated Western interest in internal Soviet developments.

A decade ago, at the outset of the democratic movement, the Western press exaggerated the influence of this small group of people, oversold them, as it were, as if several thousand people could reverse the drift of Russian history. In recent years newspapers have not paid consistent attention to dissident activity in the Soviet Union. Now, when an equal number of appeals still circulates, when dissenters are still removed to prisons and mental hospitals, the press seems less anxious to cover the ongoing repression.

Furthermore, Marchenko's character increased his willingness to challenge the regime. After years of opposition and suffering he had come to believe firmly in the need to place himself in danger, as if only the reprisals he faced could confirm the legitimacy and justice of his behavior. One incident, in particular, illustrates his readiness to suffer. In 1972, after Marchenko had rejoined Larisa Bogoraz in China, they traveled to a small village near the Manchurian border to visit Pavel Litvinov. One evening together they listened to a Russian broadcast of the Voice of Israel: an Israeli professor discussing the difference between Judasim and Christianity, specifically over the issue of martyrdom. Listening to the program, Litvinov and his wife, Maya, agreed with the Jewish point of view, that life has the highest priority and that martyrdom should be avoided, except under the most compelling circumstances. Marchenko, however, took the Christian position, believing in the need to seek martyrdom, regardless of the consequences. Few of his fellow dissenters

would accept this attitude.

Marchenko's stubbornness, his allegiance to truth and opposition to injustice make him a genuine Russian hero; but not, necessarily, a simple or particularly likable one. Other dissidents, too, oppose the regime, run needless risks, suffer arbitrary punishments. At the same time, most of them, most notably those who are intellectuals, reserve a part of their energy and some of their time for personal or professional pursuits. They resist becoming full-time revolutionaries and hesitate to relinquish their creative ambitions and personal loyalties.

From the time of his arrival in Moscow in 1966, Marchenko transformed his life into a virtual crusade on behalf of Soviet political prisoners. As his involvement deepened, so, too, did his anger and intolerance. Friends who knew him in Moscow remember how his opinions hardened, how he came to view issues in starker, more simple terms. His life became synonymous with his cause. He grew impatient with those who hesitated to sign an appeal. The restraints others experienced, like the potential loss of employment, or the responsibility to one's family, did not move him. Even his love for his infant son did not deter him from refusing a visa to Israel. Principle alone dictated his behavior.

In part, Marchenko's attitude reflects his origins and the vicissitudes of his life. In contrast to virtually all of his fellow dissidents, he never completed his formal education. Since 1958, except for occasional periods, he has lived in labor camps, prison, or exile. Yet he also came to regard himself as a writer and a spokesman. The authorities ironically resented his social and intellectual pretensions. For the police, themselves members of the lower classes, Marchenko's familiarity with Jews and intellectuals was offensive; they knew how to remind him of his proper place. Marchenko, in turn, never learned to mitigate reprisals by the regime. His own defiance invited the harsh treatment that other dissidents learned to avoid.



Marchenko was prepared for prison. He kept mittens, warm socks, a toothbrush, and soap near the door. His wife had agreed to go to Moscow if he were arrested in order to be with family and friends. In jail he refused to answer questions, give fingerprints, sign documents. The warders beat him—with keys, their boots and their fists. The investigation itself was perfunctory; the officer in charge did not even know what material had been confiscated. Still, Marchenko waited five weeks for his trial to begin.

The whole time he continued his hunger strike. After eight days without food, he was dragged from his cell to be force fed. He refused to walk by himself, to sit down, to open his mouth. They manacled his hands behind his back so tightly that his shoulders ached for weeks. When he resisted the spreader, they fed him through his nostrils. When the doctors came to inject glucose, he distorted his skin and muscles in order to impede the needle.

Marchenko's *From Tarusa to Siberia* (1976) is now appearing for the first time in English. Written in Siberian exile, it is a short memoir of his hunger strike and trial. "My protest was a reaction to coercion, and the more brutal that coercion became, the more extreme became the form of my protest." His own conduct surprised, even repelled him. "Do I sit down on the stool voluntarily or allow strange hands to pin me down?" . . . "Each time the entire scene provoked in me an idiotic feeling. I could not define for myself at what point my refusal to submit voluntarily stopped being a protest and became simply asinine stubbornness." Once before he had attempted a hunger strike—in 1961, after his conviction for treason. He was force fed and next day gave in. This time he was more determined.

The trial took place in Kaluga on the thirty-third day of his hunger strike. The courtroom was open. Twenty of Marchenko's friends and relatives, including Andrei Sakharov, attended. Marchenko was led in by several guards. He looked bad. His wrists were handcuffed behind his back. At the

defendant's bench he almost collapsed; the guards held him up. He told the court that his copy of the indictment had been taken from him on the way to the courthouse, in violation of judicial procedure. In fact, he had not been informed that his trial was about to begin. The court disregarded this. Then Marchenko asked that his wife be allowed to defend him. The court denied his request, appointing a lawyer whom Marchenko had never seen. In response to these abuses, Marchenko refused to take part in the proceedings, reserving only his right to a final plea.

The trial then continued over the predicted charge—violation of administrative supervision. Several policemen were called. No one cross-examined them. During a recess, his wife and friends, claiming that they could refute the accusations, asked the defense lawyer to call them as witnesses. At first, he refused. Later, though, he asked the court to allow them to testify. But the judge refused, claiming that they had been in the courtroom during the testimony of other witnesses.

Marchenko presented no defense; he spoke only to make his final plea.

... Neither the investigator nor the court has shown any interest in the fact that until October 11 I complied with the conditions of the supervision, and that I ceased to comply with them only when I was finally convinced of their humiliating character. After the summer, all my requests prompted by a concern for my family had been denied. I asked for permission to meet my mother—who is not only aged but illiterate—at the station in Moscow. I was refused. To visit my sick child in Moscow: refused. To see my aged mother off: refused. When my son got sick, it was thought he might have scarlet fever, I asked permission to take him to Moscow, since there was no pediatrician in Tarusa. For four days, Volodin, the police chief, gave me the run-around: "Come back tomorrow; come back after lunch." Finally, on the fourth day, he told me bluntly that he had not received an answer. Who, I wonder, was supposed to answer that kind of request? After all, the law states that supervision is carried out by the regular police. I went back once more.



The deputy chief told me my request had been denied. Then I told him I would refuse to comply with the supervision, and took my wife and sick child to Moscow. After that outrageous incident I considered myself free from supervision. I issued a statement saying that I had been outlawed in my own country. I addressed that statement to the world public. It is hard enough for one person to oppose a gang of bandits, but it is even harder to defend oneself against gangsters calling themselves the state. I do not repent of what I did. I love freedom. But if I am living in a state where concern for one's family and relatives, or love for and devotion to one's child, are criminal, I prefer a prison cell. Where else would I be tried for such acts? I was put in a situation where I had to choose: to renounce my family, or to become a criminal.

Marchenko was convicted. Surprisingly, the court sentenced him to four years of exile in Chuna, a punishment not included in the Code for violation of administrative supervision. His wife and child could join him. His fellow prisoners in Kaluga were amazed; hunger strikes are not supposed to count. "You're going to be free," they told him.

Another twelve days passed before he began his journey to Chuna. The officers on the train did not know of his hunger strike. He had to tell them himself, refusing his rations. His dossier contained no word of his hunger strike, although across the front was printed in bold type: INCLINED TO SUICIDE. He was not held separately, no doctor accompanied him—conditions required for hunger strikers. They refused to recognize his condition, so he was not force fed. In crowded trains, at switching-points, in halls full of convicts, Marchenko was treated like the other prisoners, forced to drag his mattress, to stand long hours. He was in the eighth week of his hunger strike. His last reserves of strength abated. After eight days in transit, he could no longer move. In the corridor, a warder argued with his boss, refusing to answer for a prisoner's impending death. Marchenko realized it was time to relent. He broke his strike the next morning, chewing slowly on a spoonful of gruel.

His deportation lasted another month. Arriving in

Chuna, Marchenko issued a statement through his friends in Moscow. He thanked all those who spoke out in his defense.

After all he has endured, Anatoly Marchenko has not relinquished his dignity or his determination. Living in Siberian exile, he managed to write *From Tarusa to Siberia*. In 1975, he suffered an attack of neuritis and was rushed to a hospital in Irkutsk. Although he recovered, the authorities forced him to leave the hospital well before he regained his strength. Marchenko persists. In the spring of 1976 he joined a small group of activists that seeks to monitor Soviet compliance with the Helsinki accords.

Marchenko's term of exile ended in September 1978, but not before the authorities tried to detain him again. In July, a local investigator asked two former criminals living in Chuna to plant a small bag of gold in Marchenko's house. They refused and one of the men then warned Marchenko of the plot. The investigator had assured them that someone would be found to cooperate. Word of this new threat reached Moscow and was passed to the West. Articles and protests immediately appeared. The authorities backed down. In September, Marchenko was allowed to leave Chuna. With his family he traveled to the Caucasus to visit his mother and to rest. Later that fall, they reached a place not far from Moscow where they are living today.

A century ago a Russian nobleman named Peter Chaadaev published a "Philosophical Letter" critical of Russian culture and society. The government ordered confiscation of the journal in which the letter had appeared. The editor was sent to Siberia, the censor dismissed, and the daily press forbidden to mention the author's name. Anticipating his latter-day successors, the Emperor Nicholas I proclaimed Chaadaev officially insane. He was ordered to remain at home, and, for a time, forced to endure the periodic visits of a doctor. Naturally, the essay became the valued possession of every Russian intellectual. Book dealers sold clandestine copies while hundreds of manuscripts passed from hand to hand in



the salons of Moscow and Petersburg.

Chaadaev's notoriety, the details of his treatment by the Emperor, only confirmed the pessimism and shame his essay expressed over the backward condition of Russian life. "One of the most deplorable things in our unique civilization," he wrote, "is that we are still just beginning to discover truths which are trite elsewhere. . . . What has long since constituted the very basis of social life in other lands is still only theory and speculation for us."

Today, Anatoly Marchenko and his fellow dissidents face an even harsher silence than that which restrained Chaadaev. Marchenko writes in *My Testimony*, "Clean and honest actions are not done in the dark." Yet in a land of silence, the truth, too, provides its own isolation. Once a nurse from the camp hospital left for a holiday. She did not reveal to the friends she met that she worked in a labor camp. But, as she later told the prisoners, she happened to mention incidents from her work, that one patient had a spoon in his stomach, another had swallowed nails, or chessmen, or glass. Her friends at the resort decided that she was abnormal and avoided her company. "She told us this on one of the evenings when we gathered in the treatment room. And all of a sudden," Marchenko remembers, "we seemed to see properly for the first time everything that surrounded us, the whole savagery and fantastic incredibility of the situation we were in, of these ordinary stories of ours, and of this hospital behind barbed wire under the armed guard of tommy gunners in their watch towers."