

of the ceiling where a dim light entered. My cell was separated from the long corridor by an iron door which had a small door in it with a glass peephole. That was for the guard to check on the prisoner and wake him up with a roar of curses and insults if he dared to sleep during the day. The iron door was opened once in the morning and once at night to let the prisoner out to use the toilet. It was also opened to take the prisoner to interrogation, and that usually occurred after 10:00 o'clock at night. Meals were handed in through the small door.

Two guards took turns watching my cell, occasionally shouting a sentence or two at me. One was an Alexandrapoltsi, always cross and gloomy. The other was a Karsetsi, serious, gentle and more humane.

I wasn't taken to the Minister's office again. I remained in solitary confinement in that cell for sixteen months, enduring endless nightly interrogations, waiting for the bill of indictment that would not come.

How unbearable is loneliness! How sad it is to live one's life in solitude, punishment within punishment. My only interlocutor was the tough and unyielding interrogator, not counting the three stool pigeons at different times, each one for a week or ten days, thrown into my narrow cell with pronounced boorishness. The Cheka had a group of these informers in its service and planted them in cells to spy on detainees. These lowly creatures were given a piece of *chorni khleb* [the lowest quality of dark bread] and some *makhorka* (*tabacum rustica*, the lowest-quality cigarettes) while performing their service. There were some of these types in the labor camps as well, but the