

LIKE A CHEMIST FROM CANADA

Shostakovich, Isaiah Berlin and Oxford

Lewis Owens

This play is based on the official correspondence, published and unpublished, surrounding Shostakovich's three-day visit to Oxford in June 1958. Some events have been modified for dramatic effect and there are some deliberate omissions.

In 1958, at the height of his artistic ability and reputation, the composer Dmitri Shostakovich was invited by Oxford University to receive an Honorary Doctorate of Music, along with fellow musician Francis Poulenc and other dignitaries. What follows is the story of that visit, based on the official correspondence and telegrams.



(left to right) Shostakovich, A. P. Herbert, Arne Tiselius, Oxford, 25 June 1958, on their way from the degree ceremony to lunch in All Souls

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Characters (in order of appearance)

Sir Douglas Veale (University Registrar, Oxford)

Miss J. Watson (University Registry, Oxford)

D. M. Hawke (University Registry, Oxford)

V. G. Filatov (Soviet Embassy, London)

Y. N. Loginov (Soviet Embassy, London, and bodyguard to Shostakovich)

Isaiah Berlin (political philosopher and Shostakovich's host for the visit)

Aline Berlin (Isaiah's wife)

Dmitry Shostakovich (composer; hon. Doctor of Music, Oxford)

Public Orator (Oxford University)

Hugh Trevor-Roper (Oxford academic; historian)

Lord David Cecil (Oxford academic; historian)

Henry 'Harry' Hodson (editor of the *Sunday Times*)

Translator to Hodson

Francis Poulenc (composer; hon. Doctor of Music, Oxford)

Alexandra ('Xandra') Trevor-Roper (Hugh's wife)

Miss Margaret Ritchie (soprano)

For the first production of the play see

<http://www.edmissionuk.co.uk/like-a-chemist-from-canada/4588697018>

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ACT I

Half of the stage (Stage A) to represent the University Registry, Oxford.

Other half of the stage (Stage B) to represent the USSR Embassy, London.

Stage A: *Office scenario, with neatly positioned table and chairs; efficient.*

Characters present:

Sir Douglas Veale: a traditional, well-to-do Oxonian; old-school; ex-military; anti-Soviet; Tory; mid 60s.

D. M. Hawke: Super-efficient and enthusiastic; intellectual but rather naive; early 40s.

Miss J Watson: office secretary; mid 20s.

The action is preceded by the opening 60 bars of Shostakovich's Prelude and Fugue in D minor (no. 24) played on a piano off-stage, during which time the characters busy themselves. Hawke is looking through papers, while Veale silently dictates a letter to Miss Watson.

Music ends

Veale [sitting at his desk]: It must go out today and reach the Foreign Office tomorrow. We need a bloody answer. Is he coming or not? [Removing his glasses and rubbing his eyes wearily.] Please read it back to me, Miss Watson.

Watson [standing in front of **Veale's** desk with notepad]: Certainly, sir [reads carefully from the notepad]: 'Dear Private Secretary, The Hebdomadal Council¹ earlier this term settled the

¹ The Hebdomadal Council, chaired by the Vice Chancellor, was the chief executive body of the University of Oxford from its establishment in 1854 until its replacement, in the Michaelmas term of 2000, by the new University Council.

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list of honorary degrees which it will propose to Convocation for conferment at Encaenia.’

[**Watson** mispronounces ‘Encaenia’ as ‘Enkighnia’.]

Hawke [quickly interrupting]: Encaenia, Miss Watson. It’s Greek. It means a celebration for those receiving honorary degrees. It is pronounced ‘Enseenia’.

Watson [a little irritated and not looking at Hawke]: Thank you, Mr Hawke. I am fully aware of its meaning [Continues to read from letter]: ‘It included in this list Dmitry Dmitrievich Shostakovich, to whom an invitation was addressed on 19 February.’²

[**Watson** looks up, showing pleasure at her pronunciation with a very subtle glance of triumph to **Hawke**. **Veale** implores her to continue.]

Watson: ‘Council does not, for obvious reasons, publish the list of names until it is complete. All the other honorands have already accepted although we are still awaiting a decision from Mr Shostakovich. Would it be possible for you to have enquiries made through the Embassy in Moscow as to whether he is willing and able to come? The date of the Encaenia this year is Wednesday, 25 June.’

Veale: Splendid. [Looks over to **Hawke**]: Hopefully that will speed the Soviets up. They never hang around when it suits them. It only took them a moment to roll their tanks into Hungary two years ago, eh?³

[**Hawke** chuckles to himself; **Watson** looks somewhat embarrassed.]

² For this and all subsequent quoted correspondence, see Lewis Owens, ‘Like a Chemist from Canada’, *DSCH Journal*, no. 21, 2004.

³ The Soviet Army entered Budapest to suppress anti-communist uprisings on 4 November 1956.

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Veale [addressing **Watson**]: Are you sure we have replies from everyone else?

Watson [consulting notepad]: Yes, we have received notification from the Prime Minister's office that he will be attending. We also have received full acceptances from Sir Owen Dixon, Mr Gaitskell, Sir Alan Herbert, Mr Poulenc, Professor Tiselius and Lord Beveridge.⁴ It's just Mr Shostakovich that we are waiting to hear from.

Veale [looking past **Watson** and addressing **Hawke**]: Beveridge is definitely coming?

Hawke: Yes, I believe he received 13 out of 21 votes, sir. The same number as Shostakovich and Poulenc. Only Sir Owen Dixon scored fewer. Mr Gaitskell and The Prime Minister both scored 15 and Picasso scored 18, if I remember correctly from the note we were sent.⁵

Veale: It's most disappointing that Picasso declined. Oxford is clearly not sufficiently *avant-garde* enough for him. He certainly would have livened things up. We'll have to rely on Beveridge for entertainment now. I understand that the committee has decided not to award a degree to Gordan Craig because they already feel that there is a 'preponderance of elderly men!'⁶ They've certainly got a point: Beveridge has got to be close to eighty?

⁴ **The Rt. Hon. Maurice Harold Macmillan**, M.P., M.A., Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury, Hon. Fellow of Balliol College. Conferred Doctor of Civil Law. **The Lord Beveridge**, K.C.B., F.B.A., M.A., Fellow of Balliol and University Colleges. Conferred Doctor of Civil Law. **The Rt. Hon. Hugh Todd Naylor Gaitskell**, C.B.E., M.P., Hon. Fellow of New College. Conferred Doctor of Civil Law. **The Rt. Hon. Sir Owen Dixon**, G.C.M.G., Chief Justice of Australia. Conferred Doctor of Civil Law. **Sir Alan Patrick Herbert**, M.N., Hon. Fellow of New College. Conferred Doctor of Civil Law. **Francis Poulenc**, Conferred Doctor of Music. **Arne Wilhelm Kaurin Tiselius**, Professor of Biochemistry, University of Uppsala. Conferred Doctor of Science.

⁵ Foreign Office to the Registrar, University Registry, Oxford, 13 April 1956, FO 371/122814/1052/110, National Archives, London.

⁶ *ibid.*

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Hawke: Seventy-four, I believe, sir.

Veale: Well, let's hope the old dog lasts till the ceremony.

[Pauses and leans back on chair, thoughtful.]

I wonder why Macmillan has finally agreed to accept. He has refused the honour for three years running. Why now? Maybe he has his eye on the top prize, eh?

Hawke: You mean Chancellor, sir?

Veale: An Honorary Doctorate would certainly do the cause no harm.⁷

[**Hawke** nods silently and thoughtfully.]

Do send that letter as a matter of urgency, Miss Watson.

Watson: Of course, sir [returning to her desk continuing to work].

[The Fugue subject of Shostakovich's Prelude and Fugue is heard as **Stage B** (the Soviet Embassy in London) comes into attention featuring two Soviet officials – **Filatov** and **Loginov** – smoking and playing the popular Russian card game *Durak* (*Fool*).]⁸

Hawke: Miss Watson, could you kindly find me the number for Mr Vladimir Filatov at the Soviet Embassy?

Watson: Kensington Palace Gardens?

⁷ Macmillan did indeed become Chancellor of Oxford University in 1960, following enthusiastic support and canvassing from Hugh Trevor-Roper.

⁸ 'Durak' was one of the most popular card games in Soviet times and still remains popular today. The aim is to get rid of all one's cards, with the loser being deemed the 'Fool'. Paradoxically, in this game the lowest-ranked card – no. 6 – can in fact be a trump card that wins the game.

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Hawke: I believe so. We should have all the necessary contact details. He shares an office with a chap called Loginov, I believe.

Watson: I have it here in my file; his direct number.

[**Watson** extracts the file and hands paper over to **Hawke**, who smiles approvingly. **Watson** ignores the admiration and continues working. **Hawke** straightens his tie and then commences dialling. **Filatov** answers.]

Hawke: Good morning, may I have the pleasure of speaking with Mr Filatov?

Filatov [naturally defensive]: I am Filatov. Who is this?

Hawke: Ah, greetings to you, Mr Filatov. This is Mr David Hawke calling from the University Registry at Oxford. Do you have some minutes to talk?

[**Filatov** shrugs his shoulders and looks put out by being disturbed]: OK, but I am in the middle of something.

[**Filatov** throws his final card on the table, leaving **Loginov** with 2 remaining cards. He exclaims triumphantly to **Loginov**]: Ha! You are the Fool!

[**Loginov** laughs, collects the cards and begins dealing a new hand.]

Hawke [politely, unsure of what he heard]: I beg your pardon?

Filatov [dismissively, and studying the new hand given to him by **Loginov**]: Nothing. Go on.

Hawke: Wonderful. Much obliged. Now, we have finally received confirmation from Mr Shostakovich, via telegram from Moscow, that he is honouring us with his presence at our annual Encaenia on 25 June. How splendid. You know, Mr Filatov, I myself am a

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great admirer of Mr Shostakovich's work. His Leningrad Symphony is indeed a masterpiece.⁹

Filatov [gleefully holds up the trump no. 6 card and shows it to **Loginov**]: Six!

Hawke: I believe it was his Seventh.

Filatov [confused]: What?

Hawke [continuing rather oblivious]: I have also been fortunate enough to hear a couple of his Preludes and Fugues. Marvellous.

[**Filatov** looks nonplussed, carries on playing cards and smoking, briefly looking through the pile of unruly papers on his desk. **Hawke** continues, excited and animated, leaving his desk to stand behind **Watson's**, trying to impress her.]

If I may, let me tell you a little more about the ceremony that Mr Shostakovich will attend. It is called Encaenia and is one of the most elaborate of the University's ceremonies held once a year at the Sheldonian Theatre.

[**Hawke** pauses, as if waiting for approval from **Filatov**, who remains silent and looks increasingly unimpressed and confused with the pomp. **Hawke** continues:]

⁹ The German army invaded Russia in June 1941. Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony, dedicated to the city of Leningrad, was completed in Kuibyshev in December 1941 but begun before Hitler's invasion. This has led many commentators to argue that the symphony is as much about Stalin as Hitler: The Leningrad Symphony was 'planned and begun *before* Hitler's attack on Russia in 1941. The tune of the notorious march in the first movement was conceived by Shostakovich as the 'Stalin' theme (all who were close to the composer knew this). After the war had started, Shostakovich declared it to be the 'Hitler' theme. Later, when the work was published, he renamed it the 'Evil' theme – justly, since both Hitler and Stalin met the specification.' Lev Lebedinsky 'Code, Quotation, and Collage: Some Musical Allusions in the Works of Dmitry Shostakovich', quoted in *Shostakovich Reconsidered*, p. 482.

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Before the ceremony the honorands partake of a splendid gathering known as the Creweian Benefaction, which traditionally includes champagne.

[**Hawke** pauses again, once more hoping for and expecting some positive approval from **Filatov**.]

Filatov [blandly and rather uninterested]: Yes

Hawke: There will also be a large garden-party at Worcester College and in the evening the honorands are invited to the Christ Church Gaudy, a most lavish function.

Filatov [cutting in quickly, unimpressed, and with sarcasm]: Gaudy?

Hawke: Indeed. Gaudy. We will send the printed invitations to Mr Shostakovich about six weeks beforehand. We do hope that he can stay for all the functions. It will be a source of great pleasure for us.

Filatov: Yes.

Hawke: Jolly good. I shall send all this down to you at the Embassy?

Filatov: Yes.

Hawke: Splendid. Well, I am much obliged to you, Mr Filatov. A very good morning.

Filatov: Yes.

Hawke [puts down the phone, straightens his tie again and smiles somewhat uncomfortably to **Watson**]: Lovely man.

Filatov [puts the phone down and slowly removes the cigarette from his mouth, throws his final card down and once more trumps **Loginov**]: Fool!

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[**Loginov** laughs and, with his eyes, points enquiringly to the phone.]

Filatov [not giving much importance]: Oxford University inviting Shostakovich to some ceremony [shrugs shoulders]. I better check what we received [proceeds to look through pile of papers on his desk while **Loginov** packs up the cards].

[A second, different quote of the Fugue subject is heard.]

Stage A

Watson [in front of desk and addressing **Veale** with a letter in hand]: From Mr Alexander at the Foreign Office.¹⁰

Veale [with a sense of relief]: Finally, the latest communication regarding Shostakovich, I assume. We have been waiting weeks for this. Thank you, Miss Watson.

[**Veale** commences reading the letter while **Watson** returns to her desk to commence typing.]

Veale [looking more and more perplexed and irritated upon reading]: Oh, that's typical. Typical!

Watson [looking over]: A problem, sir?

Veale: These artists and their fragile egos, eh! Shostakovich thinks that Encaenia is when we actually decide the honorands. He apparently doesn't want to come all the way here in case we don't elect him. We've already chosen him, for goodness' sake, and didn't we receive a telegram from him directly saying he is coming?

[**Veale** throws letter down.]

There's a soiree arranged especially, is there not?

¹⁰ P. C. M. Alexander, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

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Hawke: The evening after the ceremony at the Trevor-Ropers.¹¹ Poulenc is staying there and Shostakovich is staying with the Berlins.

Veale [irritated]: Well, why don't they ever read what we send them? Isn't there supposed to be a thaw on? Or does it not stretch as far as Oxford?

Hawke: It is only five years since Stalin died, sir.¹²

Veale: That's long enough, Hawke.

Hawke: Indeed, sir.

Veale [to himself]: Stalin is clearly still censoring everything from his grave.

Hawke [slowly leans over towards **Watson's** desk, speaking quietly, trying to be out of ear-shot of **Veale**]: We already know what a brute Stalin was, Miss Watson. You surely know about the secret speech by Khrushchev a couple of years ago, not long before he visited here with Bulganin?¹³

Watson: I did hear about it at the time, Mr Hawke.

Hawke [looking across at **Veale** again to make sure he is not heard]: We knew exactly what was in Khrushchev's speech before it was reported in *The Observer*.¹⁴ I sat on the steps of the

¹¹ I have reversed the order of events for the purpose of the play. In 1958, the degree ceremony actually took place after the soirée.

¹² Stalin died on 5 March 1953.

¹³ On 23 February 1956 Khrushchev delivered his so-called 'secret speech' in which he denounced the cult of personality surrounding Stalin. Two months later, on 21 April 1956, Bulganin and Khrushchev visited Oxford. For further details of this visit see Report of the Committee of Honorary Degrees, 15 February 1958, UR 6/HD/7, file 3, Oxford University Archives, Oxford. I am very grateful to Antony Kalashnikov for assistance with this research.

¹⁴ The full speech was published in the *Observer* on Sunday 10 June 1956. For further details see John Rettie, 'The Secret Speech that

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Sheldonian with hundreds of others shouting ‘Stalin for Professor’ and singing ‘Old Joe is dead, Old Joe is dead’. Khrushchev found it hilarious [**Hawke** laughs to himself].¹⁵

Watson: I fail to see how it can be amusing.

Hawke: Yes, I am sure it wasn’t so for Shostakovich. Do you know that he apparently used to sleep by his front door with his suitcase packed so that if he was arrested in the middle of the night his family would not be disturbed?¹⁶ Poor man! How can the Russians do that to their own people?

Watson [remaining uninterested and trying to type]: I really wouldn’t know.

Hawke: Stalin imposed such stupid rules on artists. All art that was too experimental was completely rejected. Shostakovich was totally condemned and accused of ... what did they call it ...? [Trying to remember.] ... Formality.

Watson: Formalism,¹⁷ Mr Hawke.

Changed World History’, *Guardian*, Sunday, 26 February 26 2006. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/feb/26/russia.theobserver>

¹⁵ See ‘Boisterous Oxford Welcome for Russian Leaders: Slogans, a Firework and Cryptic Reminders of Stalin’, *The Times*, 23 April 1956, 6.

¹⁶ *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich*, ed. Solomon Volkov (Harper and Row, 1979). Much debate has surrounded the claimed authenticity of this work. See Malcolm Hamrick Brown (ed.), *A Shostakovich Casebook* (Indiana University Press, 2004), Allan B. Ho and Dmitry Feofanov (eds), *Shostakovich Reconsidered* (Toccata Press, 1998), and Ian MacDonald, *The New Shostakovich* (Pimlico, 2006).

¹⁷ In its most general sense, the term ‘formalism’ was applied to all music that was too experimental (in structure, rhythm and harmony) and therefore ‘inaccessible to the masses’. Shostakovich’s early opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* was famously described in *Pravda* in January 1936 as ‘chaos instead of music’. The criticism of the apparent ‘dissonance’ in *Lady Macbeth* forced Shostakovich to postpone the premiere of his Fourth Symphony, which was not performed in its full orchestral form until 1961, eight years after Stalin’s death. Instead, Shostakovich completed his Fifth Symphony, which was described (not

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Hawke: Formalism, that's it. Don't you think it's a ridiculous notion?

Watson: I have no opinion on this.

Hawke: You don't appreciate Russian art?

Watson: I said I have no opinion.

Hawke: Ah, but come, Miss Watson. Look at the whole picture. We are a dull lot here most of the time. We live solely on food. The Russians are different. They live on ideas. They have a soul; a corrupt, contradictory and drunken soul, maybe, but a soul nevertheless.

Watson: I don't really –

Hawke [interrupting, and still conscious of being overheard by **Veale**]: You have heard of the composer Prokofiev, of course? He was condemned alongside Shostakovich for Formality.¹⁸

Watson [without looking up and with a touch of sarcasm]: I don't believe he is on our list. And the word is 'formalism'.

Hawke: Formalism. Prokofiev is dead. He died the same day as Stalin. You know *Peter and the Wolf*, though?

Watson [concentrating on typing]: Neither intimately, sir.

Hawke: Do you think it is a coincidence that they both died on the same day?

Watson [sarcastically]: Peter and the wolf or Prokofiev and Stalin? I really wouldn't know.

by Shostakovich) as 'a Soviet artist's reply to just criticism'. The accusation of 'formalism' was also central to Zhdanov's condemnation of Shostakovich and others in 1948 (next note).

¹⁸ Prokofiev was heavily criticised in 1948, along with Shostakovich, Khachaturian, Shebalin, Myaskovsky and others by Andrey Zhdanov's anti-formalism decree.

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Hawke: Apparently all the flowers in Moscow were used for Stalin's funeral so there were none left for Prokofiev's.

Watson: [still looking down, typing]: I am afraid that I have no access to such knowledge.

Hawke [seemingly oblivious to the sarcasm, looks over at **Veale** again, who appears engaged in work]: But don't you see how confusing it is? The Russians embrace anyone who suits their own purposes and then ruthlessly discard them. But Stalin wasn't Russian – he was Georgian! Prokofiev and Khrushchev both grew up in the same Ukrainian region of Stalino.¹⁹ The Russians are happy to serve under Khrushchev now but they tried to destroy Ukraine in the thirties by starving her to death. They are also happy to claim Prokofiev as one of their own when his music is applauded here in the West but they can't spare him a single carnation at his death as they are all reserved for a Georgian! It's all rather contradictory, don't you think?

Watson [still looking down, typing]: May I ask if there is a point to all you are telling me, Mr Hawke?

Hawke: Just to say that Russian culture is just one big ensemble drawn from different ideas and nationalities. There are many ducks still alive inside that wolf's belly, Miss Watson. You must read *Peter and the Wolf*!

Watson: I rarely get the chance to concentrate on anything, Mr Hawke, and I fail to see how any of this has anything to do with Mr Shostakovich's visit.

Hawke: Well, Shostakovich is, like Prokofiev, another example of a political pawn. Now that 'Old Joe' has finally gone, though, we

¹⁹ Stalino was renamed Donetsk in 1961. Since pro-Russian rebels seized border regions of Ukraine in April 2014, more than 6,000 people have been killed and more than a million people displaced from their homes. The airport of Donetsk, named after the composer Sergey Sergeevich Prokofiev, has been completely destroyed, preventing peaceful families from leaving a war zone.

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can appreciate more of his music. Shostakovich was condemned as ‘anti-Soviet’ ten years ago – whatever that means – but last month he was awarded the Stalin Prize for his Eleventh Symphony.

Watson [uninterested]: Thank you for the information.

[Pause]

And I think you will find it was the Lenin Prize that he received.²⁰

Hawke [dismissively]: It’s all the same thing, really. His symphony is officially supposed to be in remembrance of the communist revolution of 1905 but I think it’s actually a veiled attack on the Soviet invasion of Hungary.²¹ Hundreds of people were murdered, as I am sure you know.

²⁰ Shostakovich received the Lenin Prize for his Eleventh Symphony in April 1958.

²¹ In his highly informative website, Allan B. Ho lists the following testimonies of apparent ‘dissidence’ in Shostakovich’s Eleventh Symphony: ‘Lev Lebedinsky points out: “What we heard in this music was not the police firing on the crowd in front of the Winter Palace in 1905, but the Soviet tanks roaring in the streets of Budapest. This was so clear to those ‘who had ears to listen’, that his son, with whom he wasn’t in the habit of sharing his deepest thoughts, whispered to Dmitry Dmitrievich during the dress rehearsal, ‘Papa, what if they hang you for this?’” ([Elizabeth] Wilson, [*Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* (Faber and Faber, 1994),] p. 317; [Solomon] Volkov, *St. Petersburg[: A Cultural History* (Sinclair Stevenson, 1996)], pp. 461–2.) Manashir Yakubov confirms that “*from its very earliest performances*, [some] viewed the symphony as an allegorical reflection of contemporary bloody events in Hungary (1956), where the Soviet Union had acted as ‘policeman of Europe’ and executioner of a democratic movement.” (Yakubov, op. cit. [*Shostakovich 1906–1975*, booklet for the Rostropovich/London Symphony cycle (1998)], p. 57. Emphasis added.) Igor Belsky recalls the composer saying, “Don’t forget that I wrote that symphony [the Eleventh] in the aftermath of the Hungarian Uprising.” (Wilson, p. 320.) Irina Shostakovich, the composer’s widow, confirms that Shostakovich had the events of the Hungarian Uprising in 1956 “in mind” when he wrote this work. (*DSCH Journal* 12, p. 72.)’

<http://www.siue.edu/~aho/musov/deb/dw.html>

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Watson: It always tends to be the innocent who fall victim, Mr Hawke. Now if you don't mind I really must –

Hawke [interrupting]: It's rather clever, actually. You title a symphony 'The Year 1905' so that the authorities think you are praising some revolutionary event in the past, but really what you are doing is reflecting on contemporary events. It just shows that history repeats itself. I have no doubt that the Russians will still be suppressing rebellions and invading foreign territories in 50 years' time under the leadership of another bully. Don't you think?

Watson [trying to end the conversation and continuing to type]: Mr Hawke! Please.

Hawke: Sorry. Sorry.

Watson: I really don't have the time to discuss the meaning of Mr Shostakovich's music. I have other important tasks that require my immediate attention.

Hawke: Yes, of course [leans back towards his desk].

[**Watson** continues typing, and there is an uncomfortable silence for a couple of seconds, broken by **Veale:**]

Veale [as an aside, throwing the letter on the desk in front of him]: How on earth did they manage to get a decent army together during the War?

Hawke, drop what you are doing and go directly to the Embassy, will you. We need this sorted out [looking at watch]. Leave now and you'll get there before five. Go through all the arrangements again. Do whatever you need to do. They probably don't even understand the word 'honorand', so call him a 'comrade' if you have to. For goodness' sake, watch what you say, though: the KGB plant their own people in every Embassy.

Hawke [gets up rather surprised, nervous, and prepares to leave]: Of course, sir.

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Veale [looking over to **Watson**]: Miss Watson, do you have any documents that Hawke can take with him and leave firmly in their hands?

Watson: Indeed. [She collects telegram and places documents in a sealed envelope, handing both to **Hawke**, who gathers his things and leaves rather hastily.]

Veale [to **Watson**]: Let's write a quick response to the Foreign Office reassuring the Private Secretary. Heaven knows what he must be thinking.

Watson [composing herself and going over to **Veale's** desk with notepad]: Of course, sir.

*

[Location changes to Embassy in London – **Stage B. Filatov** and **Loginov** are still at their desks as **Hawke** enters their office.]

[**Filatov** and **Loginov** immediately look defensive. **Filatov** rises.]

Hawke [going over to **Filatov**. Offers his hand, which is met rather coldly]: Mr Filatov, a pleasure to meet you. You may recall we spoke a week or so ago about Mr Shosta—

Filatov [abruptly interrupting in his broken English]: I have read your papers. Has Shostakovich not mistakably been offered this honorary degree as you call it?

Hawke [somewhat taken aback and flustered]: Oh, most definitely not mistakably.

Filatov [searching for *Notes and Proceedings at the Encaenia*, which he finds under various papers on his desk]: But your paper says: 'No public announcement of the honorary degrees being offered at Encaenia [stumbles over pronunciation] will be made until all replies have been received to all the invitations'. What does this mean? If Shostakovich comes into the country, will he be given this degree or not? Tell me clearly.

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Hawke: I can assure you that we have definitely decided to give Mr Shostakovich the degree and we assume he is coming as we have received a telegram from him personally. Indeed, I have it here.

[**Hawke** extracts it from file, clearly nervous, dropping other papers on the floor. He hastily and clumsily picks them up, apologising. **Filatov** and **Loginov** look at each other with a sense of amused frustration.]

It reads: "I may gladly accept your kind invitation visit Oxford on June 23. Stop. And stay there three or four days. Stop. Greetings Dmitry Shostakovich."

Filatov: I will check everything.

[Sits down.]

Hawke: If you would be kind enough, please confirm that Mr Shostakovich has received all the necessary details. I see you have all the documents yourself but I have some information here if you so require [handing over the sealed envelope given him by **Watson**].

Filatov: We will confirm; if you will now us excuse.

Hawke [nervously]: Certainly, I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible [goes to offer hand but recoils and leaves the office under the gaze of **Filatov** and **Loginov**].

[**Filatov** and **Loginov** look at each other with seriousness. **Filatov** hands **Loginov** the envelope.]

Filatov: I think you need to accompany Shostakovich on his visit. Oxford just produces robots that end up running the British government. Eden: Oxford. Macmillan: Oxford. Oxford, Oxford [enraged] ёѢ ТВОЮ МАТЬ²² Oxford!

²² 'Motherfucker'.

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[Tries to compose himself]: It won't change. There was a reason that Khrushchev visited that pit.

Loginov [reassuringly]: Hey, at least we have some comrades in Cambridge.²³

[Both **Filatov** and **Loginov** laugh.]

[A third, different quote of the Fugue subject is heard.]

Veale [addressing **Hawke**]: It has been over three weeks since you went to the Embassy and we have still heard nothing. [Sarcastically.] Your presence clearly spurred them into action. Let's bypass those clowns and contact Shostakovich directly in Moscow. Do we have an address for him?

Hawke: I believe so, sir [looking in the file on his desk].

Veale: Does he know yet that Isaiah Berlin will be his host? Better also make that clear in the letter.

Hawke: Yes, sir, I will be enclosing a letter personally from Professor Berlin, written in Russian.

Veale: Good, I think we are going to need Berlin's help. If anyone can make head or tail of the Soviets it will be him. What was it Churchill called them: 'a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma ...'?²⁴ Something along those lines. We need Berlin to intercede on our behalf or else we'll get nowhere.

²³ Cambridge University produced the notorious Soviet 'spy ring' as early as the 1930s and until the early 1950s; it included Kim Philby, Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess and Antony Blunt. Other names have been put forward to complete the 'Cambridge Five'.

²⁴ 'The Russian Enigma', BBC Broadcast, London, 1 October 1939. <http://www.churchill-society-london.org.uk/RusnEnig.html>

Hawke: Maybe Trevor-Roper could help, too? He is Regius Professor now, after all.²⁵

Veale: No, no, no. Trevor-Roper is just a bookworm. No political nous at all. Besides, he's still smarting from being duped by Philby when they worked together at MI6.²⁶ He's clearly not one for spotting forgeries.

Hawke: I thought the Prime Minister had officially cleared Philby of any espionage a couple of years ago, when he was Foreign Secretary?²⁷

Veale: Officially, maybe. But Philby will never be trusted again. Not even by his friends. Loyalty to one's friends is higher even than loyalty to one's government, Hawke, and Philby betrayed all. Let's just stick to Berlin.

Hawke: Of course [leans over to **Watson's** desk again, trying to speak quietly, out of ear-shot of **Veale**, but is animated and excited]: Berlin's work is extremely fascinating. I attended some of his lectures during my degree. A bit long-winded, but the man is a walking encyclopaedia of Russian political philosophy. He knows everything about everyone.

²⁵ Trevor-Roper was appointed Regius Professor by Harold Macmillan in 1957.

²⁶ Trevor-Roper and Kim Philby worked closely together during their time in the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, also known as MI6) during the war years. In his interview on BBC's *Desert Island Discs*, broadcast on 26 August 1995, Trevor-Roper claims that he initially found Philby to be very likeable, 'sophisticated', 'well-educated' and 'a good drinking companion'. When Philby was exposed as a double agent, Trevor-Roper had no further contact with him. For a comprehensive look at Trevor-Roper's life, see Adam Sisman's excellent *Hugh Trevor-Roper: The Biography* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2010).

²⁷ On 7 November 1955, Macmillan claimed to the House of Commons: 'While in Government service [Mr Philby] carried out his duties ably and conscientiously. I have no reason to conclude that Mr Philby has at any time betrayed the interests of this country.' Quoted in Ben Macintyre, *A Spy Among Friends: Philby and the Great Betrayal* (Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 189.

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Watson [looking slightly irritated]: For all his Russian roots, he is actually more supportive of America.

Hawke [surprised by **Watson**'s knowledge]: Is that so?

Watson: Yes, Mr Hawke. He was one of the first intellectuals to claim soon after the war that Britain needs to stick closer to America than to Russia. He was largely based in New York and Washington during the War.

Hawke [still taken aback]: Doubtless he had his reasons.

[**Watson** just smiles a false smile.]

Hawke [oblivious to **Watson**'s irritation and lack of interest]: I remember him claiming that, although we inherently distrust the Russians, they also find us rather irritating.

Watson: That I can certainly appreciate, Mr Hawke.

Hawke: He said the Russians see us as an 'old chronic complaint: [...] tiresome, annoying'.²⁸

Veale [overhearing]: I am sure you are giving Miss Watson excellent briefing, Hawke, although maybe your time would be better spent ascertaining whether Shostakovich is actually coming or not. The *University Gazette* published confirmation of the Convocations yesterday. There can be no changes and no omissions now. [Throws paper on desk in front of him and removes glasses.]

Hawke [embarrassed]: Of course, sir.

Veale: Goodness, what a business. How is the British Council helping in all this?

Hawke: They are looking after Shostakovich in London before and after the ceremony here.

²⁸ Berlin, Letter to Angus Malcolm, 20 February 1946, *Flourishing: Letters 1928–1946* ed. Henry Hardy (Chatto & Windus, 2004), p. 627.

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Veale: Well, that's all we can do for now. I suppose Shostakovich or someone on his behalf in Moscow will confirm receipt of these letters.

Hawke: I trust they will, sir.

Veale: "Trust"? We could certainly do with more of that, Hawke.

[A fourth and final quote of the Fugue subject is heard.]

Veale [sitting at his desk, looking through papers; frustrated]: Still nothing from Moscow. Not a damn word. What does Berlin make of all this? Has he heard from Shostakovich?

Hawke: I wrote to Professor Berlin yesterday. Unfortunately, we have no idea whether Mr Shostakovich has received either our letters or Berlin's addressed to him in Moscow, but we do understand from the Embassy that he is definitely coming.

Veale: How tall is he? What about the cap and gown? Has that been hired? Damn shame Picasso declined. We would have been guaranteed flamboyance. Instead, we need to make sure that the gown covers up any Soviet greyness.

Hawke: The Vice-Chancellor's secretary has arranged the hire of the gown and I understand that we have all of his measurements. I believe everything is now in order for the ceremony on Wednesday.

Veale: Well, let's hope so, Hawke. Let's hope so. Why we have invited a Soviet is beyond me.

[Leans back on chair, looking frustrated and exhausted.]

Good job I am bloody retiring this year.

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THE VICE-CHANCELLOR *will open a CONVOCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY.*

¶ *The persons on whom Honorary Degrees are to be conferred will be summoned, and will be presented by the Public Orator, in the following order:—*

DOCTORS OF CIVIL LAW.

The Rt. Hon. MAURICE HAROLD MACMILLAN, M.P., M.A., Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury, Hon. Fellow of Balliol College.
The LORD BEVERIDGE, K.C.B., F.B.A., M.A., Hon. Fellow of Balliol and University Colleges.
The Rt. Hon. HUGH TODD NAYLOR GAITSKELL, C.B.E., M.P., M.A., Hon. Fellow of New College.
The Rt. Hon. SIR OWEN DIXON, G.C.M.G., Chief Justice of Australia.
SIR ALAN PATRICK HERBERT, M.A., Hon. Fellow of New College.

DOCTORS OF MUSIC.

FRANCIS POULENC.
DMITRY DMITRIEVICH SHOSTAKOVICH.

DOCTOR OF SCIENCE.

ARNE WILHELM KAURIN TISELIUS, Professor of Biochemistry, University of Uppsala.

¶ THE PRIZE COMPOSITIONS *will be recited by the PRIZEMEN as follows:—*

THE STANHOPE HISTORICAL ESSAY PRIZE.
George IV as Regent and King.
ANGUS HENRY WALKER, Scholar of Balliol College.

THE GAISFORD GREEK VERSE PRIZE
Shakespeare, *King Richard the Second*, Act iii, scene ii, line i, 'Barkloughly Castle . . . ? to line 62, ' . . . heaven still guards the right?'.
PETER JOHN PARSONS, Scholar of Christ Church.

From the 1958 Encaenia programme

[The Fugue subject starts slowly and into the middle of the stage enter **Isaiah** and **Aline Berlin**, facing into the distance with a look of nervous expectation. The Fugue subject remains playing softly as a backdrop to this scene.]

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Isaiah and Aline Berlin on a cross-channel ferry, 1957

Aline: You seem nervous, Isaiah. Do try to relax. No-one is asking you to smuggle anything out of the country.

Isaiah: You know my views on that, Aline. Pasternak has entrusted me with the publication of *Zhivago*. If anything happens to him or the manuscript I will hold myself personally responsible. I have as much to lose as Pasternak, you know.²⁹

Aline: You have done all you can. You can do no more. Besides, you have nothing like that at stake with Shostakovich. Relax.

Isaiah: It's not that easy. You know about my visit to Akhmatova. Stalin called me a 'foreign spy', Akhmatova was denounced, her flat bugged and her son arrested. I cannot allow the same thing to

²⁹ For more information on Berlin, Pasternak and the manuscript of *Doctor Zhivago* see the correspondence between Frances Stonor Saunders and Henry Hardy in the *London Review of Books*, vol. 36, nos 18, 21, 22, September–November 2014.

<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v36/n18/frances-stonorsauanders/the-writer-and-the-valet>

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happen to Shostakovich because of his association with me here. My reputation in Moscow is tainted enough as it is.³⁰

Aline: We are Shostakovich's hosts for a degree ceremony. Nothing more. [She gently brushes the back of **Isaiah's** suit jacket]: You must stop trying to support all these great souls on your shoulders. Sooner or later you will buckle under their weight.

[Pause]

And take your hands out of your pockets.

Isaiah: Not now, Aline. Please.

[Pause]

What time do you make it?

Aline [looks at her watch]: A little after 3.

Isaiah: Any time now.

Aline: Are you sure the gate is open?

Isaiah: I have already told you so.

[Pause]

[A car slowly pulls into the long drive at Headington House.]

Here's the car.

[Pause]

Why are they stopping so far away? I can't see Shostakovich.

Aline: He's sitting in the back.

³⁰ For more information on the meeting between Berlin and Akhmatova see Michael Ignatieff, *Isaiah Berlin: A Life* (Vintage Books, 2000), pp. 150–64.

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Isaiah: Who is that getting out?

[Walking along the drive with a firm authoritative stride is **Loginov**. He reaches the front door, which is opened by **Isaiah** and **Aline**, and bows stiffly and formally.]

Loginov: I would like to introduce myself. My name is Loginov. The composer Dmitry Dmitrievich Shostakovich is waiting in the car. We were told to arrive at 4 p.m. It is now 3 p.m. Do you want him to remain in the car?

Isaiah [a look of surprise on his face]: Of course not, we have been expecting him from 3 p.m. Please do invite him in.

[**Loginov** bows stiffly to **Isaiah** and **Aline** and walks back towards the car.]

[**Isaiah** and **Aline** wait, looking out into the distance to where **Loginov** has departed.]

Isaiah [noticing **Shostakovich**]: Here he comes.

Aline: He's smaller than I thought.

Isaiah: He looks like a chemist from Canada.

Aline: He looks terrified; utterly terrified.

Isaiah: Wouldn't you be if your every move and word were followed by two bodyguards?

Aline: How on earth can we get rid of them? He won't be able to breathe with them around at the ceremony and party.

Isaiah: I anticipated as much and have already given it some thought. Leave it to me. I'll spin a story and tell them, forcefully, about university rules for honorands and different rules for them. They are used to taking orders. I'll send them off to New College

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to see Pryce-Jones' new play.³¹ We'll look after Shostakovich ourselves. Come on.

[The **Berlins** follow the direction of **Loginov** and leave stage. Lights dim. Bach's B minor Prelude and Fugue is played on organ.³² Stage is cleared. At the end of the recital, still with lights dimmed, the **Public Orator's** speech is read aloud to the audience in dramatic fashion.]

Public Orator:³³ Now we welcome a second musician, one who has tried his hand at almost every kind of musical composition [...]. Many of his works I must pass over, however reluctantly; but not that famous Seventh Symphony dedicated in time of war 'To the ordinary Soviet citizens who have become the heroes of the present conflict'. He holds that music 'cannot help having a political basis' and that the epoch of national history in which he and his fellow countrymen are living is 'something heroic, spirited and joyous.'

May I add this epilogue? After nineteen years as Public Orator this is the last occasion on which I address you at Encaenia; it is the first on which it has been my lot to express your appreciation of a Russian. May this be the happy omen of a dawning age! – an age in which each nation while preserving in its arts whatever is most characteristic, shall be ambitious to place the inventions of genius at the disposal of all humankind, and not assert its own ascendancy. In this swansong of mine there is nothing I pray for more earnestly.

³¹ The play was *Down, You Mad Creature!* starring Peter Levi, David Pryce-Jones himself and music by Dudley Moore. I am extremely grateful to Mr Pryce-Jones for his personal reminiscences.

³² The ceremony was preceded by an organ recital of Mendelssohn (Sonata no. 3 in A), Schumann (Fugue no. 5 on the name 'Bach'), Franck (Chorale in A Minor), Couperin (Rondeau) and Bach (Prelude and Fugue in B minor).

³³ The Public Orator was the eminent classicist T. E. Higham, who also retired in 1958 following this ceremony.

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I present to you for admission to the honorary degree of Doctor in Music Dmitry Dmitrievich Shostakovich, whose art has won for him exceptional distinctions.

[At the end of the speech, the lights rise and the stage is now set in the **Berlins'** drawing room ready for Act II. The room is rather small, with a couple of sofas, some chairs and a piano in the corner.]³⁴

³⁴ I have changed the location of the play for dramatic purposes. The soirée actually occurred at the Trevor-Ropers' residence at 8 St Aldate's, Oxford (currently an architectural practice).

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(left to right) Dmitry Shostakovich, A. P. Herbert, Hugh Gaitskell, Harold Macmillan, William Beveridge, passing Balliol College on their way from Worcester College to the Sheldonian
Courtesy of *Oxford Mail/The Oxford Times* (Newsquest Oxfordshire)

ACT II

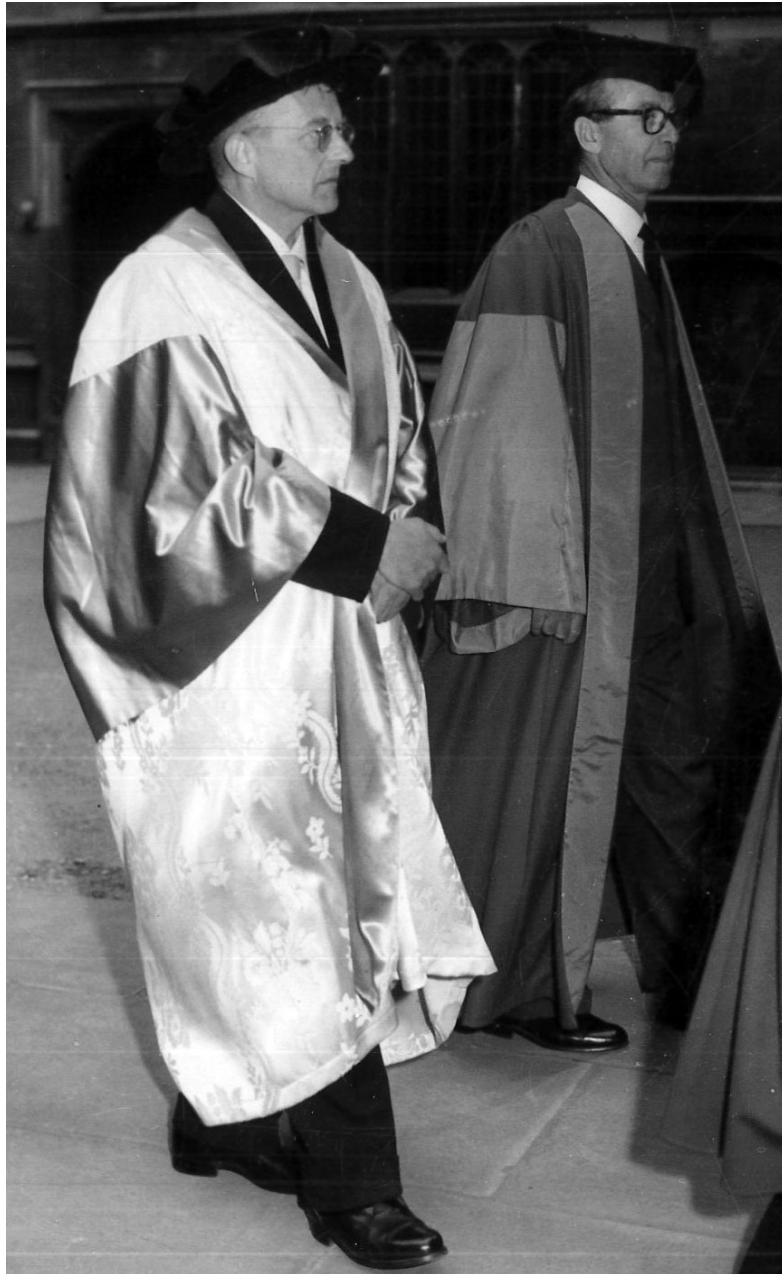
[**Hugh Trevor-Roper** enters through side-door in conversation with **Lord David Cecil**.]

Trevor-Roper: But did you see Beveridge's gesture with the flowers during lunch, my dear Cecil? Quite absurd yet rather amusing.

Cecil: Not for Shostakovich though, Hugh. He looked utterly bewildered by the whole thing.

T-R: Yes, poor man. What *is* one to do when presented with a bunch of flowers which are neither small enough for a buttonhole nor large enough for a bouquet?

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Shostakovich and Arne Tiselius approaching the Sheldonian
Oxford University Archives, VC 3/1/7

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A. P. Herbert, Shostakovich, Arne Tiselius, on their way from the degree ceremony to lunch in All Souls

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Cecil: Beveridge at his most ridiculous.

[Both laugh as they sit on one of the sofas.]

So, all is in hand for this evening?

T-R: As far as I know. There's certainly enough food and drink to satisfy most of Oxford. Isaiah and Aline will bring Shostakovich over in due course.

Cecil: Your good lady is looking after the rest of the guests?

T-R: Yes, Xandra will bring them in shortly. Poulenc is already helping himself to champagne and generally acting the dandy. He stayed with us two years ago after a performance at the Sheldonian so he feels quite at home.

Cecil [badly imitating a dandy]: Mais naturellement, mon frère.

[Slight pause]

What is happening with the music? I assume Xandra has taken care of that?

T-R: Indeed. She was still organising it last night. Margaret Ritchie will sing, some Poulenc and Shostakovich, assuming we can get her to stop talking for five minutes. The only part I played in all this was to convince Xandra that this was an evening for slightly more tuneful voices than her own.

Cecil: You know the rumours are beginning to mount that she pulled a few strings to get Poulenc the honorary doctorate?

T-R: Let them talk. I don't care. She just asked me to speak to the correct people. That's all. You know how adamant she is about the role of professors' wives in university affairs. And she does adore him and his music. If he wasn't openly queer I might feel a pang of jealousy.

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Cecil: I am not at all familiar with his recent opera.³⁵ I do love *Les Biches* though – a splendid ballet.

T-R: Personally I prefer Ravel and Bartok. And I care little for Shostakovich's work. Bombastic, inflated egotism if you ask me. Give me some Bach or Handel or Mozart any day of the week. That is where you will find the real beauty of melancholic music. I am not remotely interested in hearing any composer present his autobiographical confessions to the world. Write a diary instead.

Cecil: You think he may play this evening?

T-R: I wouldn't imagine so for one moment. He looked rather shaky during the degree ceremony, I thought.

Cecil: Yes, quite so. He's hardly the most cheerful of chaps, is he?

T-R: He's as dull as a Bodleian librarian. Blind as a bat, too, evidently. Likes a good drink, though, I'm told.

Cecil: We all do, dear Hugh [helping himself to wine and examining the label studiously]. Is this the same stuff we had after the exam board?

T-R: The very same.

Cecil: A lovely drop.

[Drinks.]

Will 'The Doctor' be joining us?³⁶

³⁵ *Les Dialogues des Carmélites*, completed by Poulenc in 1956 and premiered at La Scala on 26 January 1957.

³⁶ Patrick Trevor-Roper (1916–2004), brother of Hugh, was a highly respected eye surgeon and one of the first people openly to express his homosexuality. In addition to a distinguished medical career, he later became one of the founders of the Terence Higgins Trust, established after the AIDS epidemic appeared in the 1980s.

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T-R: You mean my brother? Good heavens, no. He would either use Shostakovich as an ophthalmological specimen or turn the entire evening into another Wolfenden Committee championing the rights of homosexual men.³⁷

Cecil: Now that would get Poulenc singing. I seem to recall, though, your brother telling the committee of the many such young men committing or attempting suicide because of their depression and isolation.

T-R: Many tragic cases.

Cecil: Has Poulenc recovered from his *own* breakdown?³⁸

T-R: It certainly seems so. He is back composing again, so I trust he lives a well-adjusted life and poses no threat to children!

Cecil: He'd pass the Wolfenden test, then!

[Both laugh and then **T-R** suddenly becomes serious.]

T-R: His breakdown is of course not a subject for discussion.

Cecil: Absolutely not.

[Pause]

³⁷ The Wolfenden Committee, which first met in September 1954, was established by the British government to assess whether male homosexuality should remain illegal. Largely because of the testimony of Patrick Trevor-Roper, male homosexuality was finally decriminalised in 1967. See *The Wolfenden Report: Report of the Committee on Homo-sexual Offences and Prostitution* (Stein and Day, 1963).

³⁸ In November 1954, largely as a result of financial worries and the illness of his partner Lucien Roubert, Poulenc suffered a nervous breakdown and, according to Carl Schmidt, was admitted to a clinic just outside Paris, heavily sedated. Carl B. Schmidt, *Entrancing Muse: A Documented Biography of Francis Poulenc* (Pendragon Press, 2001), p. 397.

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T-R: Then there's Harry Hodson from *The Sunday Times* coming, too, and he's bringing his own translator. I rather wish I hadn't invited him now.

Cecil [surprised]: Well, that will certainly ruffle Isaiah's feathers. I thought he hated Hodson.

T-R: He does. Hodson hinted at some underhand business between Isaiah and Khrushchev a couple of years back. Either when Khrushchev came here with Bulganin or something to do with a visa request. I don't remember. Isaiah even threatened to boycott the entire gathering this evening unless I gave very strict assurances they were not to come into contact with each other.³⁹

Cecil: That could be quite a challenge tonight, Hugh. I understand Hodson can be downright annoying when he wants a story.

T-R: He can be. Isaiah is hardly a shrinking violet, though.

Cecil: Absolutely. He soon forgets such animosity, too. I remember his disagreement with Rowland Burdon-Muller a few years ago. Isaiah was ridiculed about a lack of 'manliness' over something. No idea what. It all sounded rather petty. That quarrel was soon forgotten though and they quickly kissed and made up.⁴⁰

T-R [laughing]: Not literally I hope, knowing Isaiah!

Cecil [smiling and nonchalantly dusting off his suit jacket]: For all his womanising, one never knows where one stands with Isaiah, Hugh. One never knows.

T-R: Careful what you say. We don't want to excite Poulenc unnecessarily!

Cecil: I shall be the embodiment of tact, as always.

³⁹ See Berlin's letter to Rowland Burdon-Muller, 28 June 1958, in *Isaiah Berlin: Enlightening: Letters 1946–1960*, ed. Henry Hardy and Jennifer Holmes (Chatto & Windus, 2009) [hereafter *Enlightening*], p. 639, note 3.

⁴⁰ Letter to Rowland Burdon-Muller, 25 December 1952, *ibid.*, p. 345.

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Ah, here they are [both rise].

[**Isaiah**, **Aline** and **Shostakovich** enter and are greeted by **Trevor-Roper** and **Cecil**. **Shostakovich** bows, smiles nervously and heads for the nearest corner, sitting uncomfortably, contracted. **Isaiah** and **Trevor-Roper** look at each other with a raise of the eyebrows.]

Isaiah [addressing **T-R** quietly]: He's a bundle of nerves. Let's not drag this evening on for too long. Music, food, a few drinks and that's it. You don't want to be burdened with writing *The Last Days of Shostakovich*, my dear fellow.

T-R [imitating Bartleby]:⁴¹ "I'd prefer not to."

[Pause]

He's leaving tomorrow?

Isaiah: First thing.

T-R: Will be a relief for you and Aline, I'm sure.

Isaiah: More so for him. He's like a fish out of water. He doesn't belong here, Hugh.

[Conversation interrupted by arrival of guests: **Poulenc** and **Alexandra Trevor-Roper** arrive first, champagne glasses in hand, followed shortly after by **Harry Hodson**, his translator and musicians. General hubbub of conversation and welcome. **Isaiah** greets guests while looking at **Hodson** with intense displeasure and clearly wishing to monitor his actions and questions without conversing directly with him. **Cecil** sits next to **Shostakovich**.]

Hodson [heading directly for **Poulenc** and offering his hand]: Mr Poulenc, a pleasure. I trust you are feeling better?

⁴¹ The oft-repeated declaration of Hermann Melville's eponymous character Bartleby the Scrivener.

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[**Trevor-Roper** intercedes and leads the embarrassed **Poulenc** away to **Alexandra** before he can reply. **Hodson** then notices **Shostakovich** sitting in the corner next to **Cecil** and immediately signals to his translator to follow him over.]

Hodson: Mr Shostakovich, what a great pleasure. A warm welcome to Oxford.

[**Shostakovich** half-rises, unsure how to greet **Hodson**.]

How nice that such an evening has been arranged to celebrate your music. Tell me though, what *has* happened to your early symphonies? We simply don't hear them anymore.

[**Translator** translates quietly to **Shostakovich**, who grimaces.]

[**Hodson** turns to translator with a rather supercilious smile.]

Translator: Mr Shostakovich says they were not a great success.⁴²

Hodson: I see. In contrast to your hugely successful Seventh Symphony of course, dedicated to the city of Leningrad, so I understand.

[**Translator** translates. **Shostakovich** smiles painfully and increasingly uncomfortably. **Hodson** continues.]

How ironic that this symphony condemns the *German* invasion of the Soviet Union when Budapest is still reeling from a *Soviet* invasion. Surely the current situation must alarm you, Mr Shostakovich?

[**Shostakovich** remains silent and so **Hodson** turns to **Cecil**.]

Hodson: You know a dog has just returned from space? Well, rather the remains of a dog? Laika. She came down 2 months ago, poor thing. Not much left of her.⁴³

⁴² Shostakovich's early symphonies were rarely performed in England before 1958.

Cecil [perplexed at the sudden change of subject]: I am not really aware of the details.

Hodson: I have been getting titbits, excuse the pun, as much as one can get from the Soviets. [Moving closer to **Cecil** and lowering voice]: You have to dilute everything by half of course. Born exaggerators.

[Turns to **Shostakovich**.]

You must be aware of this, Mr Shostakovich. The stray dog used in the recent Sputnik II mission?

[**Translator** translates. **Hodson** continues regardless.]

I wonder why they chose a stray dog? Familiarity with extreme conditions is the official reason. So typical of the Soviets to pluck something from obscurity and use it as a tool for political aims, don't you think? God help the poor chap who will be chosen to replace the dog in due course.⁴⁴

[**Translator** quietly translates as **Hodson** speaks. **Shostakovich** grimaces but remains silent. **Hodson** continues.]

A pedigree dog would never do. Use the dross, douse it in alcohol and let it suffer out of duty. No-one's conscience is pricked over a stray, mongrel dog. It's rather like a Bulgakov novel!
[Pause]

⁴³ Laika was the dog on board the Sputnik II mission that was launched on 3 November 1957. Although her remains came down much later, on 14 April 1958, it emerged in 2002 that she had survived for only around six hours after launch before succumbing to overheating.

⁴⁴ Yuri Gagarin orbited the earth on 12 April 1961, where he whistled Shostakovich's song 'The Motherland Hears'. The flight lasted 108 minutes. Gagarin later died in a plane crash (some say suspiciously) in March 1968, aged 34.

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The reports I have heard suggest that the poor mongrel was harnessed, tied and left with virtually no room to move. Could you imagine that, Mr Shostakovich? Maybe you can. A slow, painful death, all in the name of progress. I believe they were to finish the mutt off with poisoned food if she wasn't cooked to a cinder first.

[**Translator** translates while **Hodson** speaks.]

Translator: Mr Shostakovich says he prefers to concentrate on his music.

Hodson: As of course you must. But you also have a voice, Mr Shostakovich. You are not a dog. You can protest. People will listen to you. I believe even your host Professor Berlin [looking over to **Isaiah**] has signed several petitions *condemning* the Soviet crushing of the Hungarian uprising.⁴⁵

[**Translator** translates. **Shostakovich** squirms and looks pained, with a spasm of anxiety on his face.]

Translator: Mr Shostakovich respectfully reminds you that at precisely the same time that Soviet forces were entering Budapest, British forces were invading Egypt.⁴⁶

Hodson: But the Suez affair was in the name of freedom, not oppression.

⁴⁵ In a letter to Arthur Schlesinger in early November 1956, Berlin writes: 'I have just signed a violent document about Hungary, which will deprive me of a Soviet visa for ever and put an end to my scholarly career': *Enlightening*, p. 559. According to the editors of the volume, this document may have been drawn up by undergraduates of Lincoln College, who were actively canvassing supporting against the Soviet invasion: *ibid.*, note 1. Writing to his stepson Michel Strauss around the same time (8 November) Berlin hints at student unrest, albeit futile: 'Hungary is a very romantic cause; all sorts of young men want to go there and die for liberty, although plainly they cannot be of any use now that the Russians have crushed the resistance': *ibid.*, p. 552.

⁴⁶ Under the leadership of Prime Minister Anthony Eden, Britain invaded Suez on 5 November 1956, the day after Soviet forces entered Budapest.

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Translator: Mr Shostakovich politely suggests that freedom means different things to different people and that history will always bear out the truth.

Hodson [laughing]: Oh quite, history will always come out trumps.

[Leaning over and addressing **Cecil**.]

We all celebrated a national holiday when our hostess's father Earl Haig died [looks over to **Alexandra Trevor-Roper**]. National Day of Mourning for a war hero.⁴⁷ I was fresh out of university. Still remember it well. Thousands watched the procession through London. A war hero at the time but what do we now call him? A butcher, a donkey and a dunderhead.⁴⁸ Sounds rather like a chronicle of Narnia, don't you think?

Cecil [sharply]: Show some respect, please. Whatever is the matter with you?

Hodson: I am merely agreeing with Mr Shostakovich's point [looks over to **Shostakovich**]. History will always bear out the truth, now and in the future.

[**Shostakovich** sits back with a closed posture, clearly not wishing to converse any further with **Hodson**. Conversation switches to **Isaiah, Trevor-Roper** and **Aline**. **Hodson** leaves his chair and hovers behind the conversation, eavesdropping.]

Isaiah: ... All I am saying, Hugh, is that the probability of the Russians genuinely disarming is too low to be worth calculating. Let's face it: it's not going to happen.

T-R: And the implications are?

⁴⁷ Field Marshal Douglas Haig died on 29 January 1928. Xandra was born Alexandra Henrietta Louisa Haig.

⁴⁸ Both Lloyd George and Churchill later criticised Haig in their war memoirs for his apparently irresponsible actions during WWI.

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Isaiah: Simple: whether the Americans disarm or not, the Russians mean to advance.

T-R: And if we resist?

Isaiah: If we resist they will accumulate a striking power greater than that of their enemies. It's pure armed natural selection.

Aline: And if we don't resist?

Isaiah: Simple again: if they are not resisted, they will laugh at us and quickly smother us.

T-R: It is a dangerous world in which to live if we all arm ourselves to the hilt with atomic weapons. Goodness, this world is dark enough as it is.

Isaiah: There comes a certain point when you are allowed – indeed, have the right – to defend your way of living against enemy forces. There must be a point at which you resist or fight back. Even when the odds are completely against you.

T-R: Fight back? At any cost?

Isaiah [fiercely]: Yes. At any cost.

T-R: It was certainly a grim, prison-like country when I was there recently, but I thought things were supposed to be getting a little easier?

Isaiah: Not really. Don't be fooled by this idea of a thaw. It's nonsense. The current Politburo is just a thuggish bunch of Oxford porters. No more than that.

T-R: Hardly encouraging. But at least they are trying to forge links with the young intelligentsia, so I understand?

Isaiah: The new 'intelligentsia' are nothing of the sort. They are purely naive. Unlike Akhmatova and Pasternak, they simply dance whichever way the wind blows.

[Dramatically]

Я шатаюсь в толкучке столичной
над веселой апрельской водой,
возмутительно нелогичный,
непростительно молодой.
Занимаю трамваи с бою,
увлеченно кому-то лгу,
и бегу я сам за собою,
и догнать себя не могу.

By a young lad called Yevtushenko. Supposed to be the new beacon of literary genius. Hardly. How to translate it? [Isaiah searches for the words in his mind.]

“Through the crowded streets of the capital
I wonder above the sprightly April waters,
revoltingly illogical
inexcusably young.
I take tramcars by storm,
tell effervescent lies,
and run in my own footsteps
and can never catch up.”⁴⁹

It goes on in the same banal way but fortunately I cannot remember the rest of it.

T-R: Well, we all know that Marxists are no better than Catholics: they cannot think for themselves.

Hodson [interjecting from behind the group]: Do forgive me for interrupting the poetry recitation, but it seems from what you were saying that you see a nuclear confrontation as inevitable. Universal

⁴⁹ Yevtushenko’s poem ‘Through the Crowded Streets’ was written in 1955, when the poet was only 22 years old. It is published in Russian and English in *Yevgeny Yevtushenko: Early Poems*, ed. and trans. George Reavey (Marion Boyars, 1989), p. 14.

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annihilation. How cheery! [Laughs and looks around to others, who remain serious.]

Isaiah: That is not what I am saying.

Hodson [abruptly and sharply]: Then what exactly are you saying? It is not entirely clear to me and perhaps not to your other guests, either.

Isaiah [sarcastically]: Then let me simplify for you if you are having trouble following.

Hodson [equally sarcastic]: How thoughtful of you.

Isaiah: The Russians will not disarm. They plan to advance and they *will* advance. And we, as a free, democratic society, must resist by whatever means are to hand. I see no reason for yielding to the Russians.

Hodson: And how do you propose we resist? Lob over an H-bomb to Moscow and hit them first? 'Tit for tat? Or do we politely wait for them to hit us?

Isaiah: I see it as a choice of two evils: either we passively allow the spread of a distorted Communist idea that is no better than Fascism, or we arm ourselves with dangerous and odious means to deter the Russians.

T-R [interjecting]: You think the chances of deterring the Russians are high enough?

Isaiah: High enough to justify the continuing existence of NATO, Hugh, yes.

Hodson: And so, let me get this clear: you see the risk of universal extermination from the H-bomb as less great than Soviet world domination?

Isaiah: I do. It gets my vote. [**Isaiah** is keen to conclude the discussion and moves away from **Hodson**.]⁵⁰

Hodson [trying to get a final word]: We started testing barely two years ago. We hardly have an impressive arsenal of weapons that we can parade down Whitehall as the Soviets do in Red Square. Or are you hoping that we will hide behind the Americans if the rumours of a Mutual Defence Agreement are accurate?⁵¹

Isaiah [without looking at **Hodson**]: As the title of the agreement suggests, Mr Hodson, it will be a *mutual* agreement.

[**Isaiah** moves towards **Shostakovich** and **Cecil** and sits on the chair vacated by **Hodson**. Conversation switches to **Alexandra Trevor-Roper** and **Poulenc**.]

Alexandra Trevor-Roper: ... It's hard to get any sense of what he's like, particularly as he doesn't speak a word of English.

Poulenc: It must be extremely difficult for him. I don't think we can quite appreciate the different world in which he lives.

A T-R: I suppose not.

[Pause]

Do you like his music though?

Poulenc: Very much. He is one of our most important composers.

A T-R: I find it all rather noisy, to be honest. A little painful on the ears. Unlike your own lovely songs, of course. Maybe I just have a Romantic ear.

⁵⁰ See Berlin's letter to Philip Toynbee of 24 January 1958 for his views on nuclear deterrence in response to a tract written by Toynbee on the subject: *Enlightening*, pp. 606–9.

⁵¹ The Mutual Defence Agreement between Britain and the US was signed in August 1958 and most recently renewed in 2014.

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[Starts to sing **Poulenc**'s 'Voyage à Paris', poorly pronounced and out of tune]:

*Ab! La charmante chose
Quitter un pays morose
Pour Paris
Paris joli
Qu'un jour dût créer l'Amour.*

Simply charming!

[**Poulenc** looks very embarrassed and looks delighted to be rescued by an announcement by **Trevor-Roper**.]

T-R [standing and addressing all]: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you all for coming. We have provided some refreshments but first we wish to honour our eminent guests, *Dr* Shostakovich and *Dr* Poulenc.

[Guests applaud. **Poulenc** enjoys the attention; **Shostakovich** looks highly uncomfortable but manages a pained smile.]

T-R [now addressing **Margaret Ritchie**]: Miss Ritchie, I believe you will do us the honour of singing.

Ritchie [a little flamboyant]: Indeed. And may I say what a delight and pleasure it is to perform such wonderfully lyrical and melodic songs and in such august company. Mr Poulenc, I simply *must* sing one of your *Banalités*.⁵² Gorgeous.

[Guests glance at each other as if used to **Ritchie's** extravagance. **Ritchie** composes herself, arranges music and looks towards accompanist to commence.]

[**Miss Ritchie** sings **Poulenc's** song *Hôte*]:

*Ma chambre a la forme d'une cage,
Le soleil passe son bras par la fenêtre.*

⁵² Poulenc's *Banalités* were a song cycle for voice and piano, composed in 1940.

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*Mais moi qui veux fumer pour faire des mirages
J'allume au feu du jour ma cigarette.
Je ne veux pas travailler – je veux fumer.*⁵³

[During the song **Shostakovich** writhes a little. At the end the audience applaud and **Poulenc** politely congratulates **Miss Ritchie** but grimaces to others behind her back.]

Miss Ritchie [clearly enjoying the limelight]: You're so kind. Thank you. Thank you.

[Pause]

And now a song of Mr Shostakovich's – *The Motherland Hears*.⁵⁴ I do adore singing in Russian. As you may know, I recorded Medtner's *Sonata-Vocalise*, which was in fact a premiere recording back in 1947 – his opus 41 – and I vividly remember –

Isaiah [interrupting]: Whenever you are ready, Miss Ritchie.

Miss Ritchie [a little put out]: Thank you.

[**Miss Ritchie** turns to her pianist to commence and sings *The Motherland Hears*]:

Родина слышит, Родина знает,
Где в облаках её сын пролетает.
С дружеской лаской, нежной любовью
Алыми звёздами башен московских,
Башен кремлёвских, смотрит она за тобою,
Смотрит она за тобою.

⁵³ 'My room has the form of a cage. / The sun reaches its arm in through the window. / But I want to smoke and make shapes in the air, / and so I light my cigarette on the sun's fire. / I don't want to work, I want to smoke.' Francis Poulenc, *Hôtel* (words by Guillaume Apollinaire).

⁵⁴ *The Motherland Hears* was one of four songs that Shostakovich composed in 1951 to the words of Evgeny Dolmatovsky.

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Родина слышит, Родина знает,
Как нелегко её сын побеждает,
Но не сдаётся, правый и смелый!
Всею судьбою своей ты утверждаешь,
Ты защищаешь мира великое дело,
Мира великое дело!

Родина слышит, Родина знает,
Что её сын на дороге встречает,
Как ты сквозь тучи путь пробиваешь.
Сколько бы чёрная буря ни злилась,
Что б ни случилось, будь непреклонным, товарищ,
Будь непреклонным, товарищ!⁵⁵

[Polite applause. There is a silence for a few seconds before **Isaiah** addresses **Shostakovich** in Russian]:

Isaiah: Дмитрий Дмитриевич, было бы замечательно, если Вы тоже смогли бы для нас что-нибудь исполнить! [Dmitry Dmitrievich, it would be remarkable for us if you also could play something.]

[**Shostakovich** initially hesitates and refuses. **Isaiah** implores and **Shostakovich** slowly rises. Immediately, several party officials stand from within the audience with their eyes fixed on **Shostakovich**. **Shostakovich** freezes and looks terrified. Only he can see these party officials. **Isaiah** continues to implore **Shostakovich** to perform. There is a murmur of anticipation from the guests as **Shostakovich** nervously approaches the piano. **Shostakovich** stands next to the piano, his eyes fixed upon the

⁵⁵ 'The Motherland hears, the Motherland knows / Where her son flies through the clouds. / With friendly embrace, / with tender love, / she watches over you. / With the scarlet stars of Moscow's towers, / of the Kremlin's lowers. / The Motherland hears, the Motherland knows / How hard it is for her son to win, / but he who is brave and who is right / never gives up. / With all your fate you maintain, / you defend / The great cause of peace. / The Motherland hears, the Motherland knows / What her son has to face on his way, / how you thread your way / through thunder-clouds. / However fierce the black storm may be, / whatever may happen – / remain staunch, Comrade!'

party officials who remain standing. He sits. The D minor fugue is played off-stage to its completion. As soon as the music starts, the party officials sit and Shostakovich leaves his place by the piano. He removes his Oxford gown and slowly starts to relax, feeling free for the first time. He listens intently to his own music, smiles and smokes. The soiree guests remain frozen, not part of this timeless moment.

As **Shostakovich** becomes aware of the imminent end of the fugue he quickly puts his gown back on and sits back at the piano, the familiar nervousness and anxiety returning. At the end there is a silence which is broken by **Hodson**.]⁵⁶

Hodson [to **Cecil**]: Well, it got going towards the end, I suppose.

[**Cecil** ignores **Hodson** and stands in admiration. Guests gravitate towards **Shostakovich**; **Poulenc** is rather forgotten and degraded, seated on his own. **Isaiah** notices this relegation of **Poulenc** and the swamping of **Shostakovich**.]

⁵⁶ Berlin writes that Shostakovich ‘played a prelude and fugue – one of the twenty-four he has composed like Bach – with such magnificence, such depth and passion, the work itself was so marvellous, so serious and so original and unforgettable, that everything by Poulenc flew through the window and could not be recaptured’ (letter to Rowland Burdon-Muller, 28 June 1958: *Enlightening*, pp. 638–9). The truth, however, may have been slightly different. According to others present at the soirée, Shostakovich did not perform as majestically as Berlin suggests, and lost his place a couple of times. This was no doubt due to increasing problems with his right hand, which largely prevented him from performing in public thereafter. He entered hospital for tests in September and from there wrote to his friend Isaak Glikman: ‘My right hand has weakened. I often experience pins and needles in it. I cannot lift anything heavy with it. Although I can pick up any suitcase now with my fingers, hanging my coat up on a coat rack is very difficult. It is also hard to brush my teeth. When I write, my hand gets very tired. I can play only very slowly and *pianissimo*. I noticed this while in Paris. I could scarcely play in the concerts there [27 and 28 May].’ Letter to Glikman, quoted in Sofia Moshevich, *Dmitri Shostakovich, Pianist* (McGill–Queen’s University Press, 2004), pp. 159–60.

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Trevor-Roper [looking at **Isaiah** before addressing guests]: I think it's time to enjoy some refreshments. Please do follow Isaiah and me to the dining room.

[**Isaiah** tries to usher guests through side-door as they surround **Shostakovich**. **Shostakovich** constantly looks over his shoulder to where the party officials stood. No-one seems particularly interested in **Poulenc**, who stands alone. Guests leave by the side door. **Poulenc** quickly and discreetly tops up his champagne glass, drains it and follows the guests.]

ACT III

[Final morning. Drawing room of the Berlins'. Shostakovich is standing by the front door, looking out, smoking and extremely anxious. **Isaiah** and **Aline** are in the drawing room looking towards **Shostakovich**.]

Aline: He looks in an awful state. Tell him to sit down.

Isaiah: It's best to leave him. The diplomats were due to collect him at 10 a.m. It's only 10:30 but he has made me call their hotel three times already.⁵⁷ He seems terrified that he has either been abandoned by them or that the Embassy will somehow blame him for any lateness. It's painful to watch a man like him suffer, Aline. Too painful. Even our Peter⁵⁸ looks scared by him.

Aline: Peter is only twelve, Isaiah. He's hardly likely to understand anything that is going on.

[Pause]

Isaiah: You need to relax, too. You are both wearing profound expressions of angst. [Looking back and forth from **Aline** to **Shostakovich**.] Identical.

Aline: I am more worried by the smoke. He hasn't stopped lighting one cigarette after another.

Isaiah: Just leave him.

Aline: At least your pipe has European tobacco and some kind of *arôme*. I feel as though we are in a Soviet crematorium.

[**Isaiah** ignores the comment and walks towards the front door, where **Loginov** and his colleague have just arrived. **Aline** follows. **Isaiah** opens the door and **Shostakovich** bows and nods fitfully]

⁵⁷ The Mitre Hotel, 17 High Street, Oxford.

⁵⁸ Peter Halban, Aline's son, Isaiah's stepson.

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at the two diplomats. **Loginov** enters the porch holding a paper bag, seemingly very content with himself.]

Loginov [removing a book 'Guide to Oxfordshire' from his bag and showing **Aline**]: We wanted something to remember our visit here in Oxford. We are now ready to take Dmitry Dmitrievich back to the Embassy in London.

[**Shostakovich** nervously gets ready to leave. Formally shakes hand of **Aline**, bowing. **Isaiah** and **Shostakovich** embrace and we hear a barely audible 'spasibo' from **Shostakovich**. **Loginov** collects **Shostakovich**'s suitcase and a bag containing his Oxford degree robes. They leave to the car. **Isaiah** and **Aline** slowly watch them depart from the window.]

Isaiah: It seems that those diplomats turned out to be rather nice in the end. I understand that they partied long and hard at New College.

Aline: For all their bravado they are just young men – they have a mother somewhere.

Isaiah: They have their young hands dripping with Hungarian blood.

Aline: Not them personally, Isaiah!

Isaiah: No. They are innocent, just puppets controlled from above. Yet I am sure they wouldn't hesitate to shoot one dead if ordered.

Aline: Don't exaggerate. That Loginov is not the murderous type at all. Just look at him. His build is so slight that his jacket is virtually falling off his shoulders.

Isaiah: Don't be fooled by those soft, delicate features. Mark my words: he is already being primed for much more sinister roles in the future.

[Pause as they watch the car drive off.]

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Aline: Are you sure the gate is open?

Isaiah [exasperated]: Yes!

[Pause]

[**Isaiah** and **Aline** slowly return to the drawing room sofa and sit.]

Isaiah: I could base my entire inaugural lecture in October on these three days alone.⁵⁹ I cannot get Shostakovich's expression out of my mind. I have never seen anyone so frightened and crushed in all my life by a political regime, yet at the same time he seems completely vulnerable outside of such tyranny. It's almost as though he needs it.

[**Aline** nods thoughtfully. Both sit, silent. Sombre. After a period **Aline** rises slowly.]

Aline: We have Peter and some school friends of his coming shortly. I must check that lunch is served properly. Are you coming?

Isaiah: No, not yet. I want to write to Rowland first and exorcise this feeling of evil I have about the whole affair.

[**Aline** leaves stage. **Isaiah** moves to desk, sits and prepares paper and ink. Just **Isaiah** left on stage, composing a letter. Softly, from one side of the wings, a deep, mournful voice starts singing 'You Fell Victims',⁶⁰ the song quoted by **Shostakovich** in the second movement of his Eleventh Symphony. **Voice of Isaiah** is heard by the audience as he writes.]

⁵⁹ Berlin delivered his inaugural lecture, entitled 'Two Concepts of Liberty', on 31 October 1958, during which he set out in their fullest form his ideas of positive and negative liberty.

⁶⁰ «Вы жертвою пали в борьбе роковой / Любви беззаветной к народу. / Вы отдали все, что могли за него, / За жизнь его, честь, и свободу.» ('You fell victims in the deadly struggle / Of unselfish love towards your people / You gave whatever you had for it / For life, for honour, for freedom.')

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Voice of Isaiah: *Dearest Rowland ... Poulenc and Shostakovich have come and gone ... This whole episode has left me with a curious sensation of what it is to live in an artificial nineteenth century – for that is what Shostakovich does – and what an extraordinary effect censorship and prison can have on creative genius. It limits it, but deepens it.*

[**Aline**, from the wings]: Isaiah, they're here.

Voice of Isaiah: *I must stop ... but Shostakovich's face will always haunt me somewhat, it is terrible to see a man of genius victimised by a regime, crushed by it into accepting his fate as something normal, terrified almost of being plunged into some other life, with all powers of indignation, resistance, protest removed like a sting from a bee, thinking that unhappiness is happiness and torture is normal life. On this sombre note I must go down to lunch.⁶¹*

[**Isaiah** slowly puts the lid on his pen. Remains seated for five seconds and then sombrely, with head down, leaves the stage.]

Public Orator [rising]:

Dmitri Shostakovich was forced to join the Communist Party two years later, in 1960. He wrote a further four symphonies, nine string quartets, various concerti and numerous chamber and vocal works. In 1962 he set the poetry of Yevtushenko, whom he greatly admired, to his Thirteenth Symphony. He died in August 1975, widely regarded as one of the finest composers of the twentieth century.

[As the **Public Orator** reads the other biographies, the characters enter to take their original settings, forming a final tapestry on stage.]

Sir Douglas Veale retired from his post of Registrar at the University of Oxford in 1958. He died in 1973.

David Martin Hawke became Senior Assistant Registrar at the University of Oxford. He died in 1999.

⁶¹ Letter to Rowland Burdon-Muller, 28 June 1958, *Enlightening*, pp. 640–1.

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Miss J Watson married two years later and remained in secretarial work for the rest of her career.

Vladimir Filatov later worked in the Soviet UN delegation in New York, West Germany and Paris. In October 1971, Prime Minister Edward Heath ordered the expulsion of 90 Soviet diplomats from the Embassy, including Filatov, who was charged with espionage for the KGB.

Yury Nikolaevich Loginov went on to become one of the twentieth century's most notorious double-agents, working for both the KGB and the CIA. His fate is unclear but it appears likely that he was court-martialled and executed for treason by the KGB.

Hugh Trevor-Roper was granted Life Peerage by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1979, taking the title Lord Dacre of Glanton. In 1983, his reputation suffered when he erroneously authenticated diaries purporting to be written by Hitler. He died in 2003 in Oxford, aged 89.

Alexandra Trevor-Roper loyally supported her husband and became a great Patron of the Arts. She died in 1997.

Lord David Cecil retired in 1969, but kept writing until his death in 1984, including editing a collection of Tennyson's verse as well as studies of Jane Austen and Charles Lamb.

Isaiah Berlin was elected a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1959. In 1966 he was instrumental in the founding of Wolfson College, Oxford, becoming its inaugural President. He died in Oxford in 1997, aged 88.

Aline Berlin became an Honorary Fellow of Wolfson College and, after her husband's death, supported the Isaiah Berlin Literary Trust. She died in London on 25 August, 2014, at the age of 99.

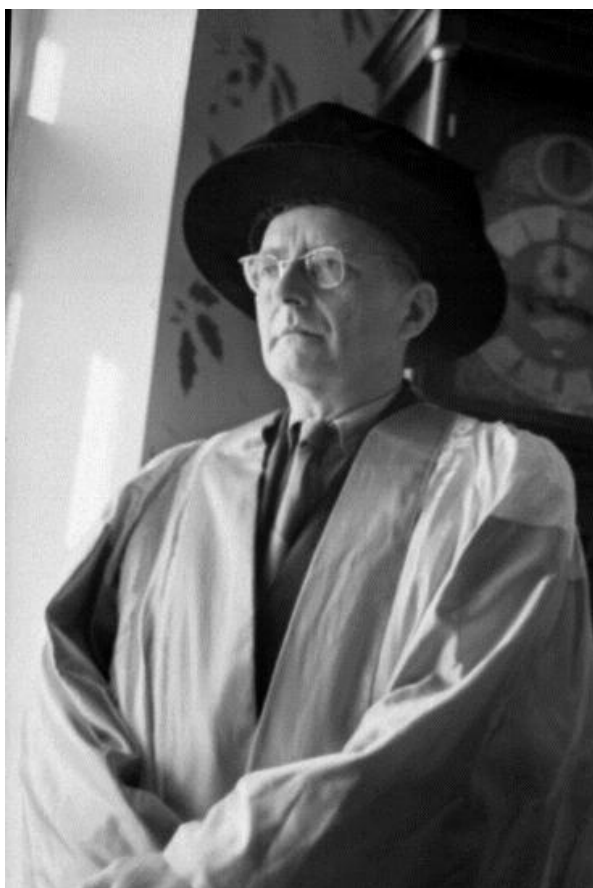
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Henry 'Harry' Hodson remained editor of the *Sunday Times* until 1961, after which he became involved in founding and presiding over the Ditchley Foundation dedicated to furthering Anglo-American relations. He died in 1999.

Francis Poulenc continued to compose and write, including works for soprano, chorus and orchestra and sonatas for oboe and clarinet. He died in Paris on 30 January 1963, only five years after his visit to Oxford.

Margaret Ritchie continued to sing internationally as part of the English Opera Group until her death in 1969.

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(left and next page)
Shostakovich
wearing his
Oxford robes in
his flat on
Kutuzovsky
Prospekt in
Moscow
(photos by Oleg
Tsesarsky, courtesy
of Oksana
Dvornichenko)



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Sisman, Sam and Deborah Laidlaw, Rohan de Saram, Simon McGill and Anna Wagstaff. This play is for Daniil Owens, Sofia Owens, Ilya Ursov and Anya Ursova, with the hope of a brighter future and 'the happy omen of a dawning age'.



Lewis Owens

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