

Panin's faith kept him alive

by Daniele Gauvin /

"Anyone who is the head of the Russian political party cannot be human or moral," affirmed Dmitri Panin in his Tuesday night lecture at the Killam. Panin is a philoso-

pher, engineer, eminent physicist, and economist, but it was of his 16 years in a Soviet prison camp and of his subsequent dissident writings that he spoke.

In 1940, under Stalin's rule,

Panin was arrested by the KGB for talking against the regime and was sent to work in a northern camp. As an engineer, he was assigned to a machine shop. His day began at 4 a.m. and seldom ended before 8. He was malnourished and mistreated for 5 years before being falsely accused of having planned an armed uprising and sent to jail for another 11 years.

When there, he was kept alive by his faith in God and his constant prayer and meditation. "Those who were atheists", he said, had nowhere to turn and could not escape the extreme conditions.

Others were willing to survive at any cost, to walk over corpses.

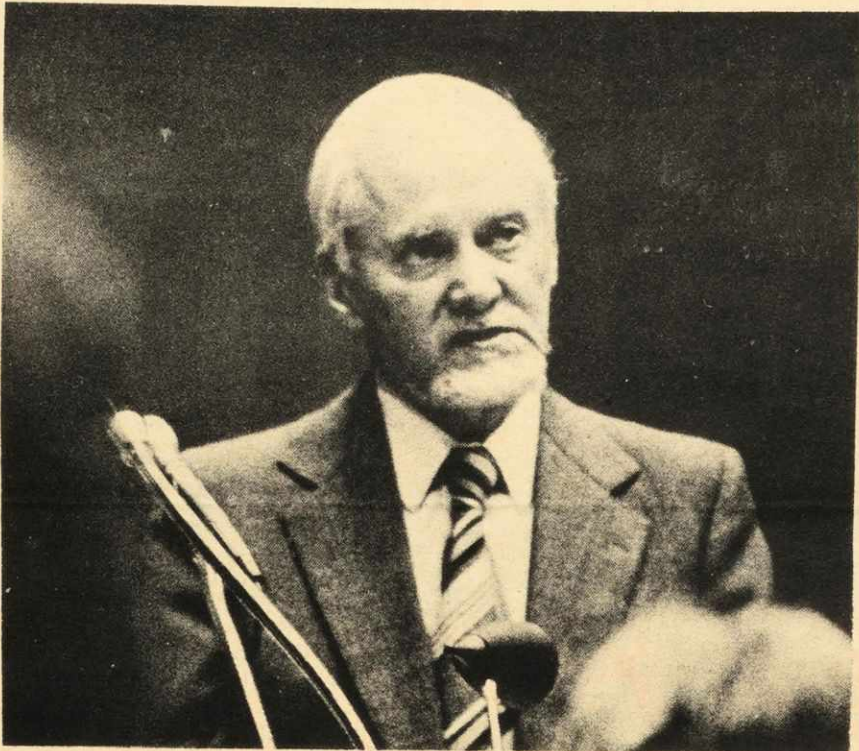
During his imprisonment, Panin met Solzhenitsyn, with whom he shares the view that only democracy can save the western world from despotism. He sees camp labor as an important part of the Soviet economy and as a worse form of worker exploitation than capitalism.

Over 60,000,000 people have been incarcerated in the camps over the last 60 years and Panin feels that there are still several million there today, although they are not officially known as political prisoners but as petty criminals. When asked whether he has seen any development in Russia over the last 60 years, Panin compared the

Soviet system to, "a huge brontosaurus that is already so well developed that it can grow no further. It can fight well, but it cannot use its tiny brain. It is at the end of its line with no place to go but into decline. Panin does not see a very active role for the west, however, he recommends that a radio station be set up to keep the Russian people in contact with the west and urges young Canadians to fight to keep their, "democracy and freedom intact."

Panin fears that apathy is again gaining the west and warns that it is just as dangerous as communism and atheism. In 1972, Panin left Russia with his wife in the hope of publishing his writings in the free world. His "Notebooks of Sologdin" recount his struggle for life in Stalin's camps. Aside from this work, he has published 4 other books, ranging from philosophy to physics.

Dmitri Panin will continue to lecture and publish his writings in an effort to keep the west aware of the "yoke under which 2/3 of humanity is held," for Dmitri Panin is a determined man. In his "Notebook", he wrote, "I never had a low point in the camp... I always believed that God would fulfill my vow. I always believed that God would give me the strength to overcome my difficulties."



Dal Photo / Conrad

Dmitry Panin speaking out about his experiences in Soviet Prison Camps Tuesday at the Killam Library.

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executive, where the attitudes are counterbalanced, and the larger part of council is not aligned with any party, preferring to judge each case individually. In this unjust accusation the **Gazette** does not appear to reflect well against the reputation of responsible journalism which the **Gazette** has built in past.

Peter D. Mack
Member for Science
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Ismail Zayid inaccurate

To the Gazette:

I would like to reply to comments made by Dr. Ismail Zayid in a Dalhousie Gazette article, November 24, 1977. I sympathize with his plight as a Palestinian. His people have suffered immensely during the last several decades. They have been displaced; they have been downtrodden; they have been ignored. I have visited a Palestinian refugee camp and it is truly a horrid place.

I must take exception, however, with some of his statements because they are historically inaccurate. Firstly, he implies that Britain and the U.S. established Israel for their own politically expedient reasons. On the contrary, Israel was established by Jews who went there to escape persecution in their countries of origin, to preserve their own cultural identity and to basically live normal lives like other people. Jewish contact with Israel is not a resurrection of a 2000 year old legacy, but throughout the centuries was a constant living tie both spiritually and physically. Large scale immigration to Israel (small scale immigration was never absent!) began in 1882. This was many years before Britain or the U.S. had any contact with the country. Thus to ascribe Zionist achievement in Israel to Britain's "abandoning its responsibility" and to Truman's "Jewish electors"

is not an accurate historical assessment.

Secondly, Dr. Zayid says that Israelis were not satisfied with the Palestine partition plan and began to occupy territory assigned to the Arabs. If Dr. Zayid will look at the facts, he will see that Israel was the only Middle-East party to agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state in 1947-1948. The Palestinian people would not agree to the partition of Palestine into two equal parts. They wanted the whole country to themselves and would not accept "the legitimate right of the Jewish people" to a country of their own. The Arab countries who are continually berating Israel for not allowing the Palestinian state to be established, seem to have forgotten that they took over the proposed Palestinian state when fighting Israel in 1948 and subjugated the needs of the Palestinians to their own territorial claims.

The Arab countries have continu-

ously cried out regarding Israel's treatment of Palestinians. It is fine to mouth words of blame; it is another thing to attempt to correct the problem. The Arab countries forced Palestinians to remain in squalid refugee camps; Israel integrated them into her society. There were hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees from Arab countries whom Israel treated with respect and dignity. If the Arab countries were concerned with the welfare of the Palestinians, they would have done the same instead of forcing these poor people to live their lives in poverty-ridden refugee camps.

Let Dr. Zayid look at the present situation of Gaza. For 20 years, Gaza was, in part, a large refugee camp which fostered hatred and subsisted on U.N. handouts. In several years of Israeli control, people there have begun to live in houses rather than shacks; they are now employed by the Israeli govern-

ment and make money far exceeding U.N. handouts.

I do not agree with many of Prime Minister Begin's policies and there is no doubt that the massacre at Deir Yassin was a terrible affair. But let Dr. Zayid look at the violence perpetrated by his own people against Israelis in innumerable massacres and not just present one side. For example, 70 Jews in Hebron were mercilessly slaughtered in 1929 by the Arabs of the town; 94 members of the Hadassah Hospital Medical Staff were brutally murdered in Jerusalem in 1948.

While the Palestinian people have certainly suffered and have certain just claims, statements such as those of Dr. Zayid serve only to cloud the issue. If he and others like him are willing to examine the situation more objectively, perhaps steps toward a peaceful settlement will be undertaken.

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