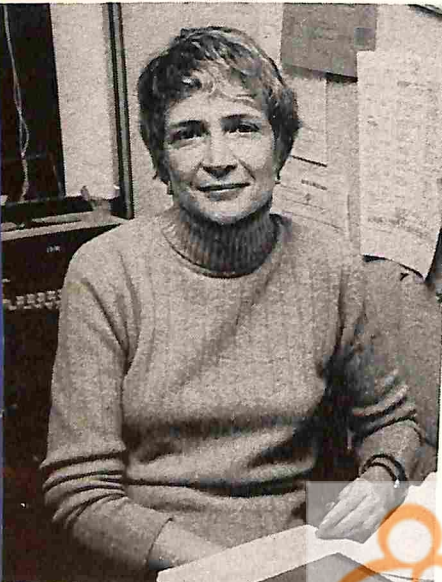


A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

The events chronicled in this week's cover story come as no surprise to TIME readers, thanks in part to its author, Contributing Editor Patricia Blake, who predicted them in a story in the Feb. 11 issue. An avid daily reader of Soviet newspapers, she early assessed the direction of the campaign that was being waged against Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Since Blake for the past three years has also been writing a book about Solzhenitsyn, she is able to describe both the man and his dilemma with authority.

Blake has been a serious student of Russian literature since, at the age of 14, she got hooked on Leo Tolstoy. She was a senior fellow at Columbia University's Russian Institute, has edited four collections of modern Russian literature in translation and visited the U.S.S.R. three times as a LIFE correspondent; she joined TIME in 1968 as consultant on the Soviet Union and East Europe.

BETTY STATLER



PATRICIA BLAKE

For the cover story, Blake read *The Gulag Archipelago* in Russian and selected the excerpts of it that appear in this issue. "The study of Solzhenitsyn," she notes, "is tremendously broad, covering virtually the whole of Soviet society from World War I to the present. For me, Solzhenitsyn exemplifies the purest and finest spirit of Russia, and it is that essence that I have always loved."

This week's Press section carries a story on the increase in postal rates, which concerns not only your own use of the mail but also your continued access to the information and enjoyment provided by magazines like ours. For, as the story explains, the increase in postal rates creates a critical challenge to magazine publishing. The story does not explain what Time Inc. has done in the past to help the post office speed delivery of your magazines, and what we

continue to do with most of the 750 million pieces we mail each year.

Decades back we were among the first companies to label, sort and bundle our products by postal areas. Today, our new computerized process of getting your magazines from the press to you is the fastest operation of its kind in the world, with perhaps the least demand on U.S. postal employees and equipment. Despite high costs we incur for performing services ordinarily handled by the Postal Service, we pay the same second-class rates as publications that must be handled individually at every step. Time Inc. does not want to discontinue these services, from which both the post office and our readers benefit, but we feel that we should not bear any further increases in rates. We believe that continued cooperation and improved efficiency are a better solution to the post office's rising costs.

Ralph P. Davidson

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The Cover: Photograph by Chris Bennett; text from a 1969 Solzhenitsyn letter to the Soviet Writers' Union.

TIME is published weekly, \$14.00 per year, by Time Inc., 541 N. Fairbanks Court, Chicago, Ill. 60611. Principal office: Rockefeller Center, New York, N.Y. 10020. James R. Shepley, President; Clifford J. Grum, Treasurer; Charles B. Bear, Secretary. Second class postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices. Vol. 103, No. 8 © 1974 Time Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited.

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