

War I, as an essay on Lenin, and his intention was to offer a novelist's viewpoint on Lenin's character, program, and activities. The translation is basically able, although there is one bad error. In Lenin's internal monologue while riding on the train to Cracow, he is thinking of Krupskaya's thyroid problems and not Inessa's. The translator was apparently misled by the rambling nature of the monologue.

In comparing Solzhenitsyn's portrait of Lenin with Ulam's, we come up with some interesting contrasts. Whereas Solzhenitsyn presents Lenin as only one-quarter Russian, hating Russia, and demanding Russia's defeat in war, Ulam describes him as a "passionate patriot and a fervent internationalist," proud of his Russian heritage. Ulam's Lenin is concerned with raising Russia's cultural level; Solzhenitsyn's is only scornful of it. Solzhenitsyn's Lenin considers chasing revolutionary will-o'-the-wisps around the world and is concerned with problems of the seizure of power; Ulam's Lenin seems more practical and farsighted, deeply concerned with problems of administering a revolutionary government. Solzhenitsyn attributes the worst aspects of contemporary Soviet society to policies established by Lenin; Ulam argues that "one cannot assume [Lenin's] unqualified approval of current Soviet reality."

For those concerned first of all with the least controversial interpretation of historical events, neither Ulam nor Solzhenitsyn provides comfortable reading. They are both outspoken, challenging, and even audacious. For the reader ready to accept controversy and stimulation, they are exciting.

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THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO 1918-1956: AN EXPERIMENT IN LITERARY INVESTIGATION, III-IV. By *Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn*. Translated from the Russian by *Thomas P. Whitney*. New York: Harper & Row, 1975. vi, 712 pp. \$15.00, cloth. \$2.50, paper.

Was Stalin an accident, a cruel joke of fate, or was he inevitable, historically determined by the nature and aims of the Bolshevik coup? This is surely one of the important questions which any serious student of the Soviet experience must face. The orthodox Party view, first adumbrated by Khrushchev and evidently shared by large numbers of Soviet citizens (even those who have been imprisoned and/or exiled), amounts to what one might call the "Stalin-was-a-bad-man theory." Marxism, or rather Marxism-Leninism, is held to be ideologically sound and to have survived intact the "cult of personality." The denigration of Stalin has been balanced by the official apotheosis and canonization of Lenin.

Solzhenitsyn's response is diametrically opposed to such a view. In the *Gulag Archipelago*, as the dates in the title suggest, Solzhenitsyn seeks to demonstrate that Stalin was merely a symptom of a profound ethical and spiritual sickness that began in 1917: "The Archipelago was born with the shots of the cruiser *Aurora*." He insists upon the central role of Lenin in the creation of the terror and the camp system, quoting an August 1918 telegram in which Lenin urged that "doubtful" elements should be locked up in a "concentration camp." He quotes other documents to show that Lenin took the lead in urging and implementing "merciless mass terror." Solzhenitsyn argues that Lenin set the stage for Stalin and laid the foundations for the later slave labor system. In his opinion, the role of Frenkel, a Jew from Constantinople who has been credited by some historians with the creation of the Archipelago, was simply to persuade Stalin in 1929 of the enormous economic benefits of slave labor on a massive scale.

Solzhenitsyn's attempt to set the record straight about Lenin's role in the creation of the Archipelago forms part of his larger effort to write an unauthorized history of the Soviet Union. Dictatorships and totalitarian states do not have histories, they only have regimes. Solzhenitsyn is determined to recapture the past, to tell what really happened, not only to honor the memory of all those millions who suffered and died in terrible anonymity, but also to engage the survivors in a sort of cathartic atonement for sins in which everyone must acknowledge a share of responsibility. He remarks on page 121: "No one in our country ever remembers anything, for memory is the Russians' weak spot, especially memory of the bad." Those commentators in the West who argue that *Gulag* tells us nothing we did not already know have misunderstood Solzhenitsyn's purpose. In the first place, *Gulag* is very revealing about many details, but what is more important is that the work is aimed at his own compatriots. Solzhenitsyn could hardly fail to be aware of the impact that *Gulag* would have abroad but it is clear where his chief audience lies.

Toward the end of this volume he writes: "Can we, *dare* we, describe the full loathsomeness of the state in which we lived (not so remote from that of today)? And if we do not show that loathsomeness in its entirety, then we at once have a lie. For this reason I consider that *literature did not exist* in our country in the thirties, forties, and fifties. Because without the *full* truth it is not literature. And today they show this loathsomeness according to the fashion of the moment—by inference, an inserted phrase, an afterthought, or hint—and the result is again a lie" (p. 632). Here you have in quintessential form both the message and method of *Gulag*. Solzhenitsyn refuses to compromise and his message has proved too tough for acceptance by not only Party and government officials but also by many of the relatively few Soviet citizens who have had an opportunity to read *Gulag*. They prefer to forget the "bad old days" and to concentrate their energies on material acquisition, not on spiritual rebirth. Solzhenitsyn is fully aware of the uphill struggle he faces in persuading his compatriots to face the facts. The literary artifice he employs in *Gulag* shows that he was as concerned with apathy among his readers as with the censorship. The rhetorical devices—switches in tone, the frequent use of irony, the interweaving of documentary material with his own personal story—all are designed to add force to the dramatic dialogue in which he seeks to engage his reader.

*Gulag* provides a detailed account of what it was like inside the camps, but Solzhenitsyn argues that life "on the outside" shared many of the same features, which he lists: constant fear, servitude, secrecy and mistrust, universal ignorance, squealing, betrayal as a form of existence, corruption, the lie as a form of existence, cruelty, and slave psychology. One can in fact derive an identical list from Nadezhda Mandelstam's memoirs, which are concerned almost exclusively with life outside the camps. Like these memoirs, Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag* is a major intellectual and moral achievement. Solzhenitsyn is not content with facts and figures; he goes beyond to analyze their meaning and estimate the psychological and spiritual impact they have had upon his country. As yet unfinished, *Gulag* is already a terrible indictment of the Soviet regime. Whether it will influence the future course of Soviet history is, unfortunately, very much open to doubt.

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