

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Moral Revolutionary

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The story of Alexander Solzhenitsyn represents more than dedication, courage and honesty in his struggle under a morally bankrupt and repressive system. Solzhenitsyn's struggle is symbolic of two worlds at war with one another today. His works are an encapsulation of the ideological war between the world seeking progress through the development of the free and creative spirit of man versus the world of the totalitarian materialists who have philosophically given up on will human will and, in accordance with Marxist-Leninist doctrine, have dedicated to play God over it in order to remake it.

Solzhenitsyn is at present a victim of Soviet attempts to "suffocate me," as he describes it, for his classic exposition of Stalinism in Russia, both as it was under its infamous founder and as it is during its rebirth in the Soviet Union today. The absurdity of the attacks made against him, such as collaborating with the Gestapo using World War II and being a traitor to his country, are perfect examples of a paranoid regime's attempt to justify the lie of its "moral existence" by perpetrating lies against those who threaten its very foundation of falsehood. Solzhenitsyn poses a serious threat to the Soviet regime primarily because of his masterful attacks on its anti-human nature through such books as "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich", "Cancer Ward" and others. Since One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich was published in 1962, none of Solzhenitsyn's major works have been printed in his own country. This has been particularly frustrating for the author, since it is the Russian people, about whose predicament he is writing, that he wishes could read his works the most. Such is the fight of the Nobel Prize winner who, through his literary works, has masterfully portrayed the conscience of his own people, like himself, daily surrounded by a web of hypocrisy and contradiction.

In many articles and reviews written about Solzhenitsyn's works, particularly "First Circle" reviewers generally comment on his obvious condemnations of Stalinism but rarely discuss the roots of the author's own moral motivations. It is obvious that the basis for much of Solzhenitsyn's criticism of Soviet society is derived from concrete life experiences. However, his writings also incorporate the spiritual aspect of each man's attempt for some degree of moral self-realization. More important than his prison camp experience is his deep belief in God. The matters of soul. Its growth and expression, and the necessary existence of freedom are his chief concerns.

Through "NERZHIN," a character in "First Circle" Solzhenitsyn states:

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The people is not everyone who speaks our language, nor is it the elect, marked by the fiery stamp of genius. One joins the people not on the basis of one's birth or the work of one's hands, or on the wings of one's education. But through one's soul. Everyone forges a soul for himself, year by year. One must try to temper and fashion himself such a soul as will make him a human being. And thereby a particle of his own people.

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Solzhenitsyn's observation that "the work of one's hands" not the absolute relationship through which "one joins the people," is a great transgression from Marxism views man's "work for subsistence" as his only "life activity," and thus the only process capable of creating one's "human essence." To Solzhenitsyn, each man's spiritual development is a much more subjective problem, involving absolutes, leaving no room for relativism "about justice, as there is nothing relative about conscience."

The advocates of moral relativism, who disdain defining truth absolutes and or making value judgments about other systems, would do well to read the works of Solzhenitsyn. His writings portray more than a single man striving for a moral existence; they symbolize and encapsulate the universal human struggle of all men against the anti-human forces of materialism and totalitarianism, of which Communism is the most perfect manifestation.