

The Russian World in Captivity:  
Solzhenitsyn's Political Philosophy  
Mark Mikityuk  
University of California, Berkeley

Author Note

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## Abstract

In three parts, this literary investigation will focus on direct sources, essays and public speeches written by Solzhenitsyn, to present an articulation of Solzhenitsyn's political philosophy, independent of other writers and influences. I analyze Solzhenitsyn's criticism of US withdrawal from the Vietnam War in the 1970's to determine the ad hoc political justification. The first section will demonstrate that Solzhenitsyn relies on appeals to objective morals for his political policies. The second section, an elaboration of Solzhenitsyn's 'autonomous worlds' concept, will provide foundation for continued appeals to objective morality, while defining Russian identity from its prerevolutionary, Christian, conception: a critical counterargument to confluences of Soviet and Russian legacy. To conclude, the third section will be composed of proposals and suggestions of political change in Russia, consistent with section one and two's conclusions, from the book *Rebuilding Russia* published in the U.S.S.R. in September 1990.

*Keywords:* Solzhenitsyn, Soviet, Morals, Communism, Russia, West.

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1970 Nobel Prize in Literature winner Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn positions himself to be canonized in the company of other great Russian writers like Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Pushkin. Perhaps the largest difference between the great writers and Solzhenitsyn is the Russia they were born into. Solzhenitsyn, born in 1918, was a “true believer” of Marxist-Leninism and, like the good Communist he was, fought in World War II, The Great Patriotic War. He was decorated three times for his heroic service as commander of a sound-ranging battery in the Soviet Army at the Eastern front. Yet, such heroism would be lost when he criticized Stalin in 1945, in private correspondence, and found himself in “an eight-year term in a labor camp, to be followed by permanent internal exile” (Ericson, E. E., Jr., & Klimoff, A., 2008).

Though his criticisms of Communism are adequately portrayed in *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, the significance of his less known-less popular political commentary get lost in between the lines of his fiction. However, to resurrect his explicitly *political* beliefs, I shift focus to his political writings and speeches. Likewise, to further specify the purpose of the research, I aim to determine *coherency*, or consistency, of his political philosophy, as opposed to its accuracy. All of Solzhenitsyn's historical claims will be assumed true, including the generally contested claims, e.g. total casualties in World War II, because an independent search for valid sources to prove (or disprove) each historical claim (of which there are many) would distract from answering the question of my research: *are Solzhenitsyn's criticisms of Communism, American Capitalism, and social immorality consistent and free from contradiction?*

## I. **Stopping Communism vis-à-vis Vietnam**

This section is an analysis of his argument on why the United States' decision to withdraw from the Vietnam War on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1975 is akin to abandoning them. I chose to discuss Solzhenitsyn's commentary on this specific political decision, not because Vietnam possesses special qualities relevant to his debate on preventing Communism, but rather because it comes as the logical conclusion of Solzhenitsyn's view of Communism as an ideology that must be stopped as it universally manifests mass-murder and human rights violations. Solzhenitsyn's conclusion that the United States ought to prevent the rise of Communism, notably through war in Vietnam, relies on accepting these claims:

1. The twentieth-century revolutionary experiments were a universal and international historical phenomenon of Communism (an extreme manifestation of socialism).
2. A political ideology that does not respect human life and dignity has no moral legitimacy.
3. Western countries value human life and dignity which compels intervention in countries that systemically violate it.

A notable speech demonstrating Solzhenitsyn's (2008) (2020) attitude and strategy of criticizing American withdrawal from Vietnam was the one given on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1975 for the American Federation Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) in Washington, DC. He makes it very clear in the speech that the lived experience he shared while a political prisoner, forced laborer, and an internal (and later external) exile of the Soviet Union was neither

isolated nor an individually-targeted attack by the Communist Party. Rather, the Communist experiment was murderous at the level of populations since its inception. With strategic intention, Solzhenitsyn (2009) refers to the Bolshevik Revolution as a more broad “system,” the “Communist” system, the first system in history to systematically hold people “hostage” through threat of harming an individual’s family and their inability to emigrate (a feature that remained in place the entirety of the Soviet Union, China, etc.). (p. 36) Another feature of this system: being the first to “employ false registration,” long before Hitler, where “such and such people have to get registered” as a ploy to have them comply and “be taken away for annihilation.” (p. 36-37) Communism sprouting the techniques universal to totalitarianism, which each extremely socialist country shared as they pooled their resources to continue “crushing individuality, conscience, and even life itself” prove claim one: the countries, together, embodied the universal and international historical phenomenon of Communism (an extreme manifestation of socialism)

From here, the speech continues implicit moral equivalencies with the universally condemned Nazi Germany, to appeal to already existing and nearly universally-shared moralism, and suggests the only differentiating factor between the ideology of Communism and Nazism, in effect, was the Communists lacked the technology in 1917 to liquidate their political enemies more efficiently. Nazis and Communists both share a motivation to sacrifice millions of human beings for their political goals. The Communists simply did not “have gas chambers in those days,” Solzhenitsyn reaffirms, so they resorted to “sinking barges” to drown “a hundred or a thousand” human beings at a time (p. 37). Communism is a system, Solzhenitsyn claims, which deceives workers in granting “decrees on land, peace, factories, and freedom of the press” only to “exterminate all additional parties” that promised freedom to peasants and, in contradiction,

reintroduce the repression via the “second” serfdom: the “passport system” (p. 36-38).

Solzhenitsyn (1980) sees to it that no one can reasonably deny Communism as an international and universal historical phenomenon (an extreme manifestation of socialism) that ends in the catastrophe of human rights violations (p. 111). These comparisons being made purposefully post-WWII, as any significant association between Hitlerism and Communism, in terms of human rights abuses, serve as evidence supporting claim two: there is no moral legitimacy for Communism due to its ideological justification for disregarding human life.

From here, Solzhenitsyn’s logic continues with those at the American Federation Labor-Congress who concede the first claim: that there was an international and universal catastrophe of human rights at the manifestation of Communism. Solzhenitsyn declares in the speech that “the American workers’ movement has never allowed itself to be blinded and to mistake slavery for freedom,” but their American press and their American statesmen post-1904 have blinded themselves to their own moral standards. One example being when the “American press considered Russia too far from American ideals to be considered in diplomatic negotiations, citing data “that accounted all eighty years up to the [Bolshevik Revolution],” when the Tsar orchestrated, on average, “seventeen persons a year to be executed” (p. 38). Solzhenitsyn illustrates by virtue of historical example a hypocrisy in Western morals; while the Russian Empire was considered “too conservative” in its government structure and executed far too many people in 1904, by 1937 the West ignored the Soviet Union’s transgressions of those same standards. “In the *Archipelago*,” Solzhenitsyn cites released government records which indicate that between 1918 and 1919, “[The] Cheka executed without trial, more than one thousand persons a month” and “at the height of Stalin’s terror in 1937-38... more than 40,000 shot per

month” which pales in comparison to the original *intolerable* seventeen persons a month. The standards once used by the United States to determine compatibility with American values “still did not prevent the entire united democracy of the world—England, France, the United States, Canada, Australia and small countries—from entering into a military alliance with the Soviet Union.” (p. 38-39) This is evidence to prove claim three since Solzhenitsyn’s audience, American workers, would naturally come to the conclusion that, if they should have acted to stop allying with the Soviet Union, then they like-wise would have maintained hostility with Communist Vietnam.

The “powerless” “Soviet people,” were dumbfounded; the United States and England won World War II and did not take advantage of the fact that victors are privileged with setting “firm conditions that fit their philosophy, their concept of liberty, and their concept of national interest.” How does granting Stalin “unlimited aid,” “unlimited concessions,” and recognition (through omission) of the seizure of “Mongolia, Moldavia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania” fit into the liberal democratic philosophy? To add insult to injury, these bastions of freedom, these democratic countries, handed over 1,500,000 human beings to be forcefully repatriated to Stalinist Russia. Solzhenitsyn reminds the Western audience that it was “English soldiers [who] killed Russians who did not want to become prisoners of Stalin” and “drove them by force to Stalin to be exterminated,” during peace time, no less, and by their own *allies* (p. 40-41). Solzhenitsyn, here, is trying to have Western readers and listeners become aware of their lack of consistent moral application. As if the defeat of Nazi Germany was the end of objectively *immoral* ideologies and the Nuremburg Trials did not establish an understanding that universal human rights laws exist, regardless of the laws of that particular polity that aims to justify them.

The American media outlets, as Solzhenitsyn recalls a headline, refers to *détente*, or the easing of tensions, as “The Blessed Silence” (in Vietnam) (p. 41). Here, we see that the concept of *détente* is not clearly articulated. Solzhenitsyn merely speculates that perhaps we should not have left Vietnam until we could have guarantees of *true* *détente*, that the repercussions for increasing hostility are applied universally. A report, Solzhenitsyn indicates, about “North Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge violating the agreement but [the United States] looking forward to the future,” which implied that “peace” may exist between the United States and the Communists when it did not exist for the citizens. “But if these murderers, who live by violence, these executioners, offer *us* *détente* we will be happy to go along with them.” Solzhenitsyn responds in fashion of a typical media pundit; 1971 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Willy Brandt once said: “I would even be willing to have *détente* with Stalin” --at a time when Stalin was executing 40,000 a month, Solzhenitsyn questions that notion of whether “he would have been willing to have *détente* with Stalin.” Had Mr. Brandt been on the receiving end of Stalin’s repression, would one still call that *détente*? (pg. 44-45).

When considering the contemporary counterargument to his initial and foundational claim that the logical conclusion of Communism, as a doctrine, is not mass-murder and human rights abuses, Solzhenitsyn in *The Mortal Danger: How Misconceptions About Russia Imperil the West* (1980) intentionally refers to the actors of the aforementioned tactics, hostage-holding, barge-sinking, passport-serfs, as features of Communists (not *just* Bolsheviks or Russians) because the justifications for such actions didn’t manifest separate from Marxism and its “historical necessity.” He dismisses “American academics” who sincerely refer to “the ideals of



the revolution,” the “ideals” which “manifest themselves from the very first moment in the murder of millions of people”—the American academics who explain away the human rights crimes and mass murder typical of the twentieth century as something that occurred “first in Russia then in other lands,” not indicative of communism’s flaws, not as an unprecedented phenomenon with a Marxist catalyst, but only failures “derived from primordial Russian characteristics established in some distant century” (p. 8-9). Arguments founded on racism, Solzhenitsyn puts it, are what a Western academic relies on as they do not acknowledge “the crimes and vices inherent to communism,” but, instead, believe their Western, Anglo-Saxon Communists will do a “better job” in implementing a “really good communism” not beholden to the backwards, age-old Russian slave mentality they project onto Russians and other Eastern Europeans (p. 9-10). The narcissism and elitism, Solzhenitsyn implies, under the racist foundation that one particular nationality can be responsible for the blame of Communism’s crimes relies on the following cognitive dissonance: the “national peculiarities” of the inhabitants captivated by the “international phenomenon” prove that the mass murders were a result of “Russian backwards-slave mentality” and the following cases where the doctrine is employed, Cuba, Cambodia, Yugoslavia, etc., are similarly a result of the national peculiarities of the inhabitants because of their brutal, backwards nature (p. 120). Princeton University’s Professor Robert C. Tucker made a response to Solzhenitsyn’s essay that this argument was originally released in (*Foreign Affairs*), but Solzhenitsyn argues further that Western Academics constructed the term “Stalinism” to scapegoat the failures inherent to Communism by pretending the brutality began with Stalin alone.

## II. Russian Identity and Other Worlds

This section will be focusing on Solzhenitsyn's (2009) concept of autonomous worlds that he defined in his address to Harvard University on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1978 (p. 79). Through examples and supporting evidence from his other speeches and essays, we will examine what he concludes to be the Russian identity. Likewise, we will contrast that identity to the Soviet Union's occupation of Russia and to the West's perception of Russia, which he states holds the Russian identity captive.

Solzhenitsyn (2009) states that "any ancient, deeply rooted autonomous culture, especially if it is spread over a wide part of the earth's surface, constitutes an autonomous world, full of riddles and surprises." (p. 79) The importance of such an identity cannot be overstated as ethnic, religious, cultural conflicts reach deeper than mere claims to material conditions. Solzhenitsyn (1991) writes of human resilience and stubbornness to external challenges, but one recurring challenge that exists outside of material conditions like hunger, poverty, and mortality is that of our *nationality*, or our *identity*, and how we respond to those who seek to crush that identity (p. 5). Examples of other worlds that Solzhenitsyn (2009) acknowledges are the Muslim world, the Russian world, the Western world, the Polish world, the Chinese world, and many more (p. 79). The significance of characterizing these worlds as independent of one another is because, definitionally, the worlds are autonomous and thus communication and trade are not predictable interactions and possess inherent danger as interests between worlds may be competing.

For example, in understanding the Russian world we can look at the following essay: “Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Vasily Grossman: Slavophile and Westernizer Against the Totalitarian Soviet State”; cultural elites still debate over what the *Russian* national identity is and how it responds to or conforms to historical events like the reign of Stalin. When considering the identity of the Russian nation, victimization, particularly by the state, plays directly into the identity that Solzhenitsyn shares with Akhmatova, renown Russian poet of the twentieth century. She, too, refers to a Russian identity that precedes the westernizing Tsars. “It is not Peter the Great’s territorial designation of the imperial state as Rossiia, and all of his subjects as rossiane (regardless of confessional or ethnic background),” but rather the older term Rus’, which referred to the ancient land of Muscovy and carried connotations of a community of Holy Orthodox Christian believers who could seek salvation independently of the state (Pffifer, T., & Zubok, V., 2017).

We begin to see that the world Solzhenitsyn refers to as the unique Russian world stems from a shared ancestral land, a Christian orthodox root, and a common enemy. The peoples native to the Kievan Rus would bond in their shared experience resisting the Mongol invasions, and Polish colonization. Russians like Belarusians (Belarus) and Malorussians (Ukrainians) all sprang from precious Kyiv, from which “the Russian land took its beginning” and we received the “light of Christianity.” The same princes ruled over all of us: Yaroslav the Wise apportioned Kyiv, Novgorod, and the entire expanse stretching from Chernigov to Ryazan, Murom, and Beloozero among his sons; Vladimir Monomakh was simultaneously Prince of Kiev and Prince of Rostov and Suzdal; the administration of the Church exhibited the same kind of unity. The Muscovite state was of course created by the same people who made up Kievan Rus. And the

Ukrainians and Belorussians in Poland and Lithuania considered themselves Russian and resisted Polonization and conversion to Catholicism. The return of these lands to Russia was at the same time universally perceived as an act of *reunification*.

The following presentations of evidence stand-alone free from my commentary for the purpose of developing a direct connection between the reader and Solzhenitsyn.

It is indeed painful and humiliating to recall the directives issued during the reign of Alexander II (in 1863 and 1876), when the use of the Ukrainian language was banned, first in journalism and then in belles-letters as well. But this prohibition did not remain in force for long, and it was an example of the unenlightened rigidity in questions of administrative and Church policy that prepared the ground for the collapse of the Russian state structure.

However, it is also true that the fussily socialistic Ukrainian Rada of 1917 was created by an agreement among politicians and was not elected by popular vote. And when the Rada broke with the federation, declaring the Ukraine's secession from Russia, it did so without soliciting the opinion of the population at large" (*Rebuilding Russia*, p. 14-15)

“It is really the Russians who are seeking world domination, not the communists’... Communism is the kind of *myth* of which both Russians and Ukrainians got a firsthand taste in the torture chambers of the Cheka from 1918 onward. The kind of *myth* that confiscated even seed grain in the Volga region and brought twenty-nine drought ridden Russian provinces to the murderous famine of 1921-22. The same *myth* that later thrust the Ukraine into the similarly pitiless famine of 1932-33. As common victims of the communist-imposed collectivization forced upon us by all whip and bullet, have we not bonded by this common bloody suffering?” (*Rebuilding Russia*, p. 18)

Among the leadership, the Central Committee of the Communist Party, at the beginning of the Revolution, all were émigré intellectuals who had returned, after the uprisings had already broken out in Russia in order to carry through the Communist Revolution. One of them was a genuine worker a highly skilled lathe operator until the last day of his life. This was Alexander Shlyapnikov... he expressed the true interests of the workers within the Communist leadership. In the years before the Revolution it was Shlyapnikov who ran the whole Communist Party in Russia—not Lenin, who was an émigré. In 1921, he headed the Workers' Opposition which was charging the Communist leadership with betraying the workers' interests with crushing and oppressing the proletariat and transforming itself into a bureaucracy. Shlyapnikov disappeared from sight. He was arrested somewhat later and since he firmly stood his ground he was shot in prison and his name is perhaps unknown to most people here today. But I remind you: before the Revolution the head of the Communist Party was Shlyapnikov—not Lenin. Since that time, the working class has never been able to stand up for its rights... [defending] its simplest, everyday interests, and the least strike for pay and for better living conditions is viewed as counter-revolutionary" (*Détente*, p. 32)

“Even after all the separations, our state will inevitably remain a multicultural one, despite the fact that this is not a goal we wish to pursue. For substantial groups like the Tatar, Baskir, Udmurt, Komi, Chuvash, Mordva, Mari, and Yakut peoples, there would seem to be virtually no choice, because it is simply impractical for one state to exist when it is surrounded on all sides by a second one. Other national territories will have an external border, and if they wish to separate, no impediment can be placed in their way. (There will be added difficulty that in some Autonomous Republics the indigenous population constitutes a minority.) But on the

condition that all their unique national characteristics-culture, religion, and economic structure - are preserved, it may make sense for them to remain in the union. (*Rebuilding Russia*, p. 20)

“The Crimean Tatars must obviously be permitted to return to the Crimean peninsula. But given the expected population of the density of the next century, the Crimea can accommodate some eight to ten million inhabitants, and the hundred-thousand-strong Tatar people cannot then demand control of the entire territory.

There are, finally, the smallest national groups: the Nenets, Permyak, Evenki, Mansi, Khakas, Chukchi, Koryak, and other peoples I cannot enumerate here. They all lived well in the Tsarist “prison of peoples” and it is we, the communist Soviet Union, who have dragged them toward extinction. There is no calculating the wrongs they have suffered from our infamous administration and from our mindless and rapacious industry, which has brought pollution and ruin into their lands, destroying support systems vital for the survival of critically small groups. We must lose no time in offering our help in restoring them to life and vigor. It is not yet too late.

Every people, even the very smallest, represents a unique facet of God’s design. As Vladimir Solovyov has written, paraphrasing the Christian commandment: You must love all other people as you love your own” (*Rebuilding Russia*, p. 21)

“We must stop reciting like parrots: ‘We are proud to be Russian...’ It is time we understood *after* all the things of which we are so justifiably proud our people gave in to the spiritual catastrophe of 1917 (and, more broadly, of 1915-1932). Since then, we have become almost pathetically unlike our former selves. Nor can we take pride in the Soviet-German war in which we lost over thirty million men, ten times more than the enemy, while at the same time strengthening the despotism over us. We must, rather, grasp the reality of the acute and

debilitating illness that is affecting our people, and pray to God that He grant us recovery, along with the wisdom to achieve it.” (*Rebuilding Russia*, p. 13)

Serious readers of the Gulag Archipelago will already be familiar with the broad outlines of Solzhenitsyn’s remarkable odyssey from Marxism to what might fittingly be called “philosophical Christianity”... Paradoxically, it was only as a result of his time in prison and the camps that the scales completely fell from Solzhenitsyn’s eyes concerning the crimes of Communism. Before his arrest in February 1945 he had been a ‘true believer’ in Marxism-Leninism. In an unfinished semi-autobiographical novel, *Love the Revolution!*, dating from the late 1940s, Solzhenitsyn’s alter ego Gleb Nerzhin hears an account of the horrific conditions in slave-labor camps and copper mines of the Russian northeast. A momentary chill comes over Nerzhin/Solzhenitsyn as he is confronted by the ‘icy wind’ of this ‘incomprehensible world.’ ‘But thanks to a sort of internal flexibility’ his convictions are never definitively shaken by these revelations. He is still able to shunt to the side discomfiting truths that reveal the Marxist appeal to ‘historical necessity’ to be the monstrous chimera that it is” (*Détente*, p. 24)

### III. Reforming Russia

This section will be composed of proposals and speculated policies to implement in Post-Soviet Russia as suggested by Solzhenitsyn in his book *Rebuilding Russia* published in the U.S.S.R. in September 1990. They, too, stand alone free from my construction of their meaning and will be presented directly to you, the reader, for the purpose of developing a direct interpretation.

#### Retiring the Soviet Superpower:

**Stopping Regime changes:** “All things cry out for help in our present-day economy, and we simply cannot go on without pointing them in the right direction... must we now prepare to resettle those compatriots who are losing their places of residence? Yes unavoidably so. Wherever shall we find the money? But, then, how long shall we continue supplying and propping up the tyrannical regimes we have implanted the world over, regimes which are incapable of supporting themselves and which are nothing if not insatiable squanderers of our wealth: Cuba, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Angola, North Korea. We mind everyone’s business, after all, and the above list is far from complete, with thousands of our ‘advisers’ roaming about in all sorts of unlikely places. And after all the blood spilled in Afghanistan, isn’t it a shame to let that country go? So, should we not dole out money there as well?... All this adds up to tens of billions each year. He who cuts off *all this* at one fell stroke will deserve to be called a patriot and a true statesmen” (*Rebuilding Russia*, p. 26-27)

**Reducing Military Spending:** “How long and for what purpose must we keep producing ever more types of offensive weapons? And why the naval presence in all the world’s oceans? Do we



wish to seize the planet? The cost of all this escalates to hundreds of billions yearly. This, too, must be cut off without delay. The space program can also wait” (*Rebuilding Russia*, p. 27)

**Reducing Subsidies:** “There is, furthermore, the preferential supplying of Eastern Europe with our ever-more exploited raw materials. But we’ve had our stint of living together as a ‘socialist camp,’ and enough is enough. We rejoice for the countries of Eastern Europe, may they thrive in freedom, but let them pay for everything at world prices. But what if this is not enough? Then we must stop reckless capital investment (*my note: subsidization*) in industries that do not show signs of recovery” (*Rebuilding Russia*, p. 27)

### **Political Institutions:**

**Federalism:** Soviet [i.e. Council] of Nationalities, a forum in which even the smallest of national groups can have its voice heard. The present hierarchical structure is also justified: ‘Union Republics’ first, followed by ‘Autonomous Republics,’ then “‘Autonomous Oblasts,’ and National Okrugs.’ The numerical weight of a people must not be ignored; disregarding this factor is the road to chaos” (*Rebuilding Russia*, p. 20)

“It decidedly does not depend on Moscow, Petrograd, Kiev, and Minsk whether our country will flourish economically; that depends on the provinces. The key to the viability of the country and its culture lies in liberating the provinces from the pressure of the capitals and at the same time freeing those unhealthy giants of the unnatural way in which they have become overburdened by their size and the multitude of their functions-factors that deprive them of a normal life. Nor do

the possess the moral grounds for seeing the birth of the country in terms of their own needs, not after six decades during which the provinces had been abandoned.”

### *Why?*

“The twentieth century continues to be convulsed and warped by a politics that has liberated itself from all moral criteria. States and statesmen are routinely exempted from what would be expected of any decent individual. It is high time to seek loftier forms of state-hood, based not only on self-interest but also on compassion. (*Rebuilding Russia*, p. 21-22)

“Every people, even the very smallest, represents a unique facet of God’s design. As Vladimir Solovyov has written, paraphrasing the Christian commandment: You must love all other people as you love your own” (*Rebuilding Russia*, p. 21)

“Whatever we undertake, whatever aspect of contemporary political life we choose to reflect upon, none of us can expect any positive results as long as our cruel will pursues only our *self-interest*, overlooking even the humblest kind of morality, to say nothing of absolute justice” (*Rebuilding Russia*, p. 24-25)

**Environmental Preservation:** “We have forfeited our [prerevolutionary] abundance, destroyed the peasant class together with its settlements, depriving the raising of crops of its whole purpose and the soil of its ability to yield a harvest, while flooding the land with man-made seas and swamps. The environs of our cities are befouled by the effluents of our primitive industry, we have poisoned our rivers, lakes, and fish, and today we are obliterating our last resources of clean water, air, and soil, speeding the process by addition of nuclear death, further

supplemented by the storage of Western radioactive wastes for money. Depleting our natural wealth for the sake of grandiose future conquests under a crazed leadership, we have cut down our luxuriant forests and plundered our earth of its incomparable riches-the irreplaceable inheritance of our great-grandchildren-in order to sell them off abroad with uncaring hand. We have saddled our women with backbreaking, impossibly burden some labor, torn them from their children, and have abandoned the children themselves to disease, brutishness, and a semblance of education” (*Rebuilding Russia*, p. 4)

“the smallest national groups: the Nenets, Permyak, Evenki, Mansi, Khakas, Chukchi, Koryak, and other peoples I cannot enumerate here. There is no calculating the wrongs they have suffered from our infamous administration and from our mindless and rapacious industry, which has brought pollution and ruin into their lands, destroying support systems vital for the survival of critically small groups” (*Rebuilding Russia*, p. 21).

**Territorial integrity and the nationality problem: historical claims to nations will be respected, but not our contemporary arbitrary border produced by irresponsible statesmen. A polity’s interests will be determined at the local level (thus acknowledging Eastern Ukraine and Crimea as Russia)**

“As for Kazakhstan, its present huge territory was stitched together by the communists in a completely haphazard fashion: wherever migrating herds made a yearly passage would be called Kazakhstan. But then drawing boundaries was not considered important in those years, since we were supposedly but a short moment away from the time when all nationalities would

merge into one... Today [in 1991] the Kazakhs constitute noticeably less than half the population of the entire inflated territory of Kazakhstan. They are concentrated in their long-standing ancestral domains along a long arc of lands in the south, sweeping from the extreme east westward almost to the Caspian Sea; the population here is indeed predominantly Kazakh. And if it should prove to be their wish to separate [from the U.S.S.R.] within such boundaries, I say Godspeed” (*Rebuilding Russia*, p.7-8).

“And so, after subtracting these twelve republics, there will remain nothing but an entity that might be called Rus, as it was designed in olden times (the word ‘Russian’ had for centuries embraced Little Russians [Malorusski or Ukrainians], Great Russians, and Belorussians), or else ‘Russia,’ a name used since the eighteenth century, or-for an accurate reflection of the new circumstances-the ‘Russian [*Rossiiskii*] Union’” as *rossiiskii* suggests a broader definition of Russian that permits the inclusion of other ethnic groups.

“But even then such an entity would contain a hundred different nationalities and ethnic groups ranging in size from the tiny to the very considerable. And this is the very threshold from which we can and must manifest great wisdom and understanding. Only from that moment on must we marshal all the resources of our hearts and minds to the task of consolidating a fruitful commonwealth of nations, affirming the integrity of each culture and the preservation of each language” (*Rebuilding Russia*, p.9).

Former U.S. National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski disagrees. He argues that the U.S. must defend the independence of Ukraine. In 1919, when he imposed his regime on Ukraine, Lenin gave her several Russian provinces to assuage her feelings. These provinces have never historically belonged to Ukraine. I am talking about the eastern and southern territories of today's Ukraine. Then, in 1954, Khrushchev, with the arbitrary capriciousness of a satrap, made a "gift" of the Crimea to Ukraine. But even he did not manage to make Ukraine a "gift" of Sevastopol, which remained a separate city under the jurisdiction of the U.S.S.R. central government. This was accomplished by the American State Department, first verbally through Ambassador Popadiuk in Kiev and later in a more official manner. Why does the State Department decide who should get Sevastopol? If one recalls the tactless declaration of President Bush about supporting Ukrainian sovereignty even before the referendum on that matter, one must conclude that all this stems from a common aim: to use all means possible, no matter what the consequences, to weaken Russia.

### **Conclusion.**

This chiefly served as a literary investigation on the research of Solzhenitsyn's political philosophy which, very evidently, is aligned with his moral philosophy. While I may read this and find sympathy with the characterizations of Communism as an international phenomenon whose national failures derive explicitly from the doctrine, and similarly align with Christian framing of identity and human rights, I leave it to the reader to determine the more abstract concepts ranging from Solzhenitsyn's "Worlds" contrast and his political reform aims. This

serves to stimulate further reading and provoke the reader to question Solzhenitsyn and their own understandings of these events.

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