

PUTIN, PIPES, AND ALEXSANDR SOLZHENITSYN'S *ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVICH*¹

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*Putin is life; Putin is the light; love Putin and your life
will have meaning; Putin will give you happiness; Putin
will open your eyes.*²

I. Introduction

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the publication of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. The novel recounts a single day in the life of an ordinary prisoner, Ivan Denisovich Shukhov, in a Soviet labor camp during the 1950s. According to the final page of the novel, Shukhov would serve ten years for allegedly committing treason during World War II.³

While judge advocates may question the utility of reading a half-century-old historical novel exposing the evils of Soviet Communism two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, this review argues that the work has relevance for three reasons. First, as a work of art, the novel is beautifully written. Solzhenitsyn's spare prose, punctuated by vivid descriptions of the harsh conditions and tedium the prisoners endured, brings a forcefulness and truthfulness to this slim work of fiction.

Second, *Ivan Denisovich* was an immensely influential work in exposing the lie that was the Soviet Union. In this regard, the novel played a quiet, yet significant, role in the ultimate demise of that ignominious regime. Indeed, Richard Pipes, a Russian scholar and a

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¹ ALEXSANDR SOLZHENITSYN, *ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVICH* (H.T. Willetts trans., F.S.G. Classics 3d ed. 2005) (1978).

² Michael Schwartz, *Russia Allows Protest, but Tries to Discourage Attendance*, N.Y. TIMES, Dec. 10, 2011, at A8 (quoting a robocall placed by the Kremlin to organizations critical to the regime in anticipation of the March 2012 presidential elections).

³ SOLZHENITSYN, *supra* note 1, at 182.

frequent critic⁴ of Solzhenitsyn, has acknowledged that the effect of *Ivan Denisovich* and Solzhenitsyn's later work, *The Gulag Archipelago*, "was immense" and "[i]n this manner, Solzhenitsyn contributed to the Soviet Union's ultimate collapse."⁵

Finally, Solzhenitsyn himself, as well as his only work published in the Soviet Union, are critical to both an understanding of contemporary Russia and one of the United States' most important bilateral relationships.⁶ As Justice Holmes explained in a celebrated passage beginning *The Common Law*, "In order to know what it is, we must know what it has been."⁷ Today's Russia—an increasingly authoritarian⁸

⁴ See discussion *infra* Part III. Additionally, Pipes has accused Solzhenitsyn of being an ultra-nationalist and has made veiled accusations of anti-Semitism. In a review of Solzhenitsyn's novel, *August 1914*, Pipes wrote:

Every culture has its own brand of anti-Semitism. In Solzhenitsyn's case, it's not racial. It has nothing to do with blood. He's certainly not a racist; the question is fundamentally religious and cultural. He bears some resemblance to Dostoevsky, who was a fervent Christian and patriot and a rabid anti-Semite. Solzhenitsyn is unquestionably in the grip of the Russian extreme right's view of the Revolution, which is that it was the doing of the Jews.

Richard Grenier, *Solzhenitsyn and Anti-Semitism: A New Debate*, N.Y. TIMES, Nov. 13, 1985, at C21 (quoting Richard Pipes).

⁵ Richard Pipes, *Solzhenitsyn's Troubled Prophetic Mission*, ST. PETERSBURG TIMES (Aug. 8, 2008), http://www.sptimes.ru/index.php?action_id=2&story_id=26779 (the Russian scholar, Richard Pipes, describing Solzhenitsyn).

⁶ While President Obama has recently proclaimed the United States a "Pacific power" and the importance of the U.S.-Sino relationship continues to expand, the U.S.-Russian relationship remains one of the United States' most critical bilateral relationships. See, e.g., Jackie Calmes, *President Hits His Stride on Foreign, but Familiar Territory*, N.Y. TIMES, Nov. 21, 2011, at A6. In addition to possessing the ninth-largest population and the seventh largest economy, Russia's nuclear arsenal consists of more than 7,000 nuclear warheads, many of which are unsecure. See, e.g., Graham T. Allison, *How to Stop Nuclear Terror*, 83 FOREIGN AFF. 64 (Jan./Feb. 2004); CENT. INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, THE WORLD FACTBOOK, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rs.html>.

⁷ OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, *THE COMMON LAW* 1 (1948).

⁸ The terms "authoritarian" and "totalitarian" must be distinguished. Jean Kirkpatrick, President Reagan's first ambassador to the United Nations, provided a useful clarification in an article highly critical of the Carter administration's foreign policy in a 1979 issue of *Commentary Magazine*. Kirkpatrick argued that authoritarian regimes (El Salvador and Iran under the Shah, in the late 1970s for example), do not rule by an overarching ideology and therefore "do not disturb the habitual rhythms of work and leisure, habitual places of residence, habitual patterns of family and personal relations." In contradistinction, totalitarian regimes (the Soviet Union and China in the late 1970s, for

police state⁹ waging war on an independent media¹⁰—should be of grave concern to all. Tragically, the slide to autocracy will likely continue with the recent election of Vladimir V. Putin as Russian President in the March 2012 elections.¹¹

example) govern by ideology, thereby “claim[ing] jurisdiction over the whole life of the society. . . .” See Jean Kirkpatrick, *Dictatorships and Double Standards*, 68 COMM. MAG., 34, 41–42 (1979). By Kirkpatrick’s construct, the Soviet Union would have been a totalitarian regime, whereas Putin’s Russia is an authoritarian regime.

⁹ See, e.g., LILI’IA FEDOROVNA SHEV’TSOVA & ANTONINA W. BOUIS, PUTIN’S RUSSIA 226 (2005) (quoting Anatoly Chubais, an influential member of the Yeltsin administration, as warning, “Russia is turning into a police state.”). See also Alvaro Vargas Llosa, *Putin the Terrible*, NEW REPUBLIC (Aug. 19, 2008, 12:00 AM), <http://www.tnr.com/article/politics/putin-the-terrible> (“Putin made sure his country’s feeble democratic institutions were replaced with autocratic rule. Most checks and balances were neutered; the judiciary, political parties, local governments, the media, private corporations, separatist regions.”); Nancy Dewolf Smith, *Richard Pipes: A Cold Warrior at Peace*, WALL ST. J. ONLINE, Aug. 20, 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903596904576516652848445180.html> (“By 2000, ex-KGB strongman Vladimir Putin was in charge, and . . . he began rolling back new freedoms in Russia, eliminating the election of governors, taking over television networks, and reinstating a culture in which free-speaking journalists get murdered.”).

¹⁰ The Committee to Protect Journalists, a non-profit organization responsible for tracking deaths, imprisonments, and intimidation of journalists, ranked Russia as the fourth-most dangerous country in the world for journalists in 2010. See *The Five Most Dangerous Countries for Journalists*, CHRISTIAN SCI. MONITOR, Nov. 8, 2010, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Global-Issues/2010/1108/The-five-most-dangerous-countries-for-journalists/Russia>. The tragic and still unresolved death of Russian journalist and human rights activist Anna Politkovskaya is perhaps the best known example of the dangers journalists face in Putin’s Russia. Politkovskaya was known for her staunch opposition to the War in Chechnya and President Putin. On October 7, 2006, the day she was scheduled to deliver a revealing report to her newspaper on torture in Chechnya, she was murdered. See *Justice for Anna?*, N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 6, 2009, at A7. Two years before her death, Politkovskaya presciently wrote in an article for the *Guardian*:

We are hurtling back into a Soviet abyss, into an information vacuum that spells death from our own ignorance. All we have left is the [I]nternet, where information is still freely available. For the rest, if you want to go on working as a journalist, it’s total servility to Putin. Otherwise, it can be death, the bullet, poison, or trial—whatever our special services, Putin’s guard dogs see fit.

Anna Politkovskaya, *Poisoned by Putin*, GUARDIAN, Sept. 9, 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/sep/09/russia.media>.

¹¹ Amid allegations of widespread electoral fraud, Vladimir Putin won the March 4, 2012, Russian Presidential elections with sixty-four percent of the vote. See, e.g., Anne Applebaum, *Behind Putin’s Victory*, N.Y. TIMES, Mar. 7, 2012, at A17. Vladimir Putin succeeded Boris Yeltsin as President of the Russian Federation in May 2000, and served two four-year terms in that position. As the Russian Constitution forbade Putin from

This review posits that while Solzhenitsyn's *Ivan Denisovich* was an enormously influential work, Solzhenitsyn's omissions, manifested primarily in his romanticized views of his motherland, ultimately render it an imperfect guide to the future. While this has long been a criticism of Solzhenitsyn's work,¹² contemporary events in Russia, exposed largely through the personage of Putin, have accentuated these shortcomings. Part I of this review focuses on the implausible publication of *Ivan Denisovich* and the novel's resulting influence. Part II of the review considers Solzhenitsyn's shortcomings, primarily through the lens of the Pipes-Solzhenitsyn debate—a clash of ideas over authoritarianism in Russian history and the roots of Soviet Communism.

II. *Ivan Denisovich's* Implausible Publication and Influence

*Of all the drama that Russia has lived through, the deepest was the tragedy of the Ivan Denisovichs. I wanted to set the record straight concerning the false rumors about the camps.*¹³

An understanding of *Ivan Denisovich* begins with an understanding of its remarkably complex author, the winner of the 1970 Nobel Prize for literature.¹⁴ Although not a memoir, *Ivan Denisovich* benefits greatly from Solzhenitsyn's own eight-year ordeal in Stalin's Gulag system. Like his protagonist, Ivan Denisovich, Soviet authorities arrested Solzhenitsyn during his military service in World War II and charged him with fomenting anti-Soviet propaganda.¹⁵

Solzhenitsyn served his sentence in several different work camps, to include Ekibastuz, a labor camp for political prisoners in Kazakhstan,

running for a third consecutive term, he served as Prime Minister under President Dmitry Medvedev from 2008–2012 with the agreement that Medvedev would step aside as President in 2012 and allow Putin to run. See, e.g., Ellen Barry, *Putin Once More Moves to Assume Russia's Top Job*, N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 25, 2011, at A1 (quoting President Medvedev as explaining, "I want to say directly: An agreement over what to do in the future was reached between us several years ago."). Per the agreement, Medvedev will now serve as Putin's Prime Minister.

¹² See discussion *infra* Part III.

¹³ JOSEPH PEARCE, SOLZHENITSYN: A SOUL IN EXILE 142 (2001).

¹⁴ See, e.g., Michael T. Kaufman, *Solzhenitsyn, Literary Giant Who Defied Soviets, Dies at 89*, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 4, 2008, at A1.

¹⁵ PEARCE, *supra* note 13, at 75.

where he served as a bricklayer, like his protagonist.¹⁶ As Joseph Pearce has written, it was here, “at Ekibastuz which would be the sufferings of which became the inspiration for *Ivan Denisovich*.”¹⁷ As Solzhenitsyn would later tell his biographer:

It was an ordinary camp day—hard, as usual, and I was working. I was helping to carry a hand-barrow full of mortar, and I thought that this was the way to describe the whole world of the camps. Of course, I could have described my whole eight years there, I could have done the whole history of the camps that way, but it was sufficient to gather everything into one day, all the different fragments . . . and to describe just one day in the life of an average and in no way remarkable prisoner from morning till night.¹⁸

Solzhenitsyn’s inspiration, gained at Ekibastuz, resulted in a remarkably easy book to write. As Solzhenitsyn further explained to his biographer:

One Day came out of me in one breath, in one flow. I wrote it in forty days. In fact, I was surrounded by so much material . . . that I was not in a position of a writer wondering what to put in. . . . It was like the whole life of the camps fitted into one day of one person’s life.¹⁹

Having written *Ivan Denisovich* in May and June 1959, Solzhenitsyn added it to a growing heap of unpublished manuscripts, certain the Soviet authorities would never publish such an incendiary work.²⁰ While it is true that the process of de-Stalinization was underway²¹ by the time Solzhenitsyn completed *Ivan Denisovich*, “literature [continued to] operate[] within a clearly defined framework of restrictions that curtailed any truthful discussion of the central events that had shaped Soviet history.”²² This changed, however, in the personage of Aleksandr

¹⁶ *Id.* at 110.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 112.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 141.

¹⁹ *Id.* at 142.

²⁰ *Id.* at 143.

²¹ See, e.g., ALAN BULLOCK, HITLER AND STALIN: PARALLEL LIVES 461 (1992) (describing Nikita Khrushchev’s speech at the Twentieth Party Congress denouncing Stalin).

²² Alexis Klimoff, *Foreword* to SOLZHENITSYN, *supra* note 1, at xiv.

Tvardovsky, the editor of the Soviet literary journal, *Novy Mir* (*New World*).

In 1961 Tvardovsky gave a speech to the twenty-second Congress of the Communist Party beseeching the delegates to “show the labours and ordeals of our people in a manner that is totally truthful to life.”²³ Encouraged by Tvardovsky’s speech, Solzhenitsyn sent his manuscript to the well-connected editor.²⁴ Tvardovsky, in turn, showed the manuscript to several political friends in the hopes that Khrushchev would ultimately receive it and approve of publication as a means of enervating his political enemies by sullyng them with the crimes of the past.²⁵

Khrushchev in fact began distributing copies of the novel to party members and in November 1962 announced that it was “an extremely important work.”²⁶ That month, *Ivan Denisovich* appeared in *Novy Mir*, and the daily newspaper *Izvestia* (“News”) wrote that Solzhenitsyn “has shown himself a true helper of the Party.”²⁷ Solzhenitsyn’s status as a “true helper of the Party” would be short-lived, however. With the fall of Khrushchev in a bloodless coup in 1964 and a resulting conservative backlash, Solzhenitsyn would quickly fall out of favor.

Publication in 1973 in the West of his magnum opus, *The Gulag Archipelago*,²⁸ sealed his fate. *Ivan Denisovich* had placed the blame of the gulag system on Josef Stalin. In an age of de-Stalinization, this was tolerable, even useful to Soviet apparatchiks.²⁹ *The Gulag Archipelago*, however, committed sheer blasphemy by directly criticizing Vladimir Lenin, the Soviet Union’s most revered leader.³⁰ In a 1974 Politburo meeting, General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev exclaimed, “He has tried to undermine all we hold sacred: Lenin, the Soviet system, Soviet Power,

²³ PEARCE, *supra* note 13, at 148.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ ANNE APPLEBAUM, *GULAG: A HISTORY* 520 (2003).

²⁶ PEARCE, *supra* note 13, at 154.

²⁷ *Id.* at 155.

²⁸ While *Ivan Denisovich* focused on a single day in the life of a political prisoner in Stalin’s camps, the three-volume *Gulag Archipelago* was a sprawling history of the Soviet forced labor and concentration camp system. See APPLEBAUM, *supra* note 25, at 363–63.

²⁹ A term for powerful functionaries of the Communist Party. See, e.g., JAMES BILLINGTON, *FIRE IN THE MINDS OF MEN: ORIGINS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY FAITH* 455 (1999).

³⁰ *Literary Giant Solzhenitsyn Dies at 89*, MOSCOW TIMES, Aug. 5, 2008, 2008 WLNR 20894995.

everything dear to us. This hooligan Solzhenitsyn is out of control.”³¹ From there, events spiraled out of control at a dizzying pace. Within a year the State-run newspaper, *Pravda* (“Truth”), had labeled Solzhenitsyn a “traitor,” and the State had charged him with treason, stripped him of his citizenship, and deported him to the West.³² *Ivan Denisovich* would be his first and last published work in the Soviet Union, and until Gorbachev’s policy of *Glasnost* (“Openness”) would be the only one of his major works to appear in the Soviet Union.³³

While the scope of *Ivan Denisovich* is modest, this short novel serves a majestic indictment of the Soviet Union. Its importance cannot be overstated. As one scholar of the gulag system explains, it represented a stark departure from the prevailing discourse of the time:

Instead of speaking vaguely about “returnees” and “repressions” as some other books did at the time, *Ivan Denisovich* directly described life in the camps, a subject which had not, until then been discussed in public. . . . The official Soviet literary creed of that time, “socialist realism” was not realism at all, but rather the literary version of Stalinist political doctrine *Ivan Denisovich*, by contrast, was genuinely realistic. . . .³⁴

As another scholar aptly explained, “Solzhenitsyn’s message can be summarized. . . . There is something worse than poverty and repression and that something is the Lie. . . .”³⁵ In exposing “the Lie,” Solzhenitsyn’s work of fiction is transformed into “one of the most influential books ever written in terms of its socio-political impact on the world.”³⁶ Thus, although *Ivan Denisovich* is arguably not the most powerful work to emerge from the bewildering inhumanity of the

³¹ *Id.*

³² *Id.* Solzhenitsyn would spend the next twenty years in exile. In 1990, a year before the Soviet Union collapsed, the state restored his citizenship and Solzhenitsyn returned to Russia in 1994 to a hero’s welcome. A year before his death in 2008, President Putin personally visited Solzhenitsyn in his home to award him Russia’s highest honor, the State Prize. *Id.*

³³ APPLEBAUM, *supra* note 25, at 525; WAYNE ALLENSWORTH, THE RUSSIAN QUESTION: NATIONALISM, MODERNIZATION, AND POST-COMMUNIST RUSSIA 66 (1998).

³⁴ APPLEBAUM, *supra* note 25, at 522–23.

³⁵ DANIEL J. MAHONE, ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN: THE ASCENT FROM IDEOLOGY 2 (2001).

³⁶ PEARCE, *supra* note 13, at 141.

Gulag,³⁷ it is undoubtedly the most influential as it was the first work published in the Soviet Union to expose “the Lie.”

Nonetheless, despite *Ivan Denisovich's* extraordinary impact, the novel, along with Solzhenitsyn's abundant corpus of work, incorrectly delineates the sources of Soviet Communism, leaving contemporary readers with a false sense of security vis-à-vis present-day Russia. It is to this subject that the review now turns.

III. The Pipes-Solzhenitsyn Debate

*Although Solzhenitsyn vehemently rejected communism, in many ways he retained a Soviet mind-set. Anyone who disagreed with him was not merely wrong but evil. He was constitutionally incapable of tolerating dissent.*³⁸

The Pipes-Solzhenitsyn debate provides a useful paradigm for examining Solzhenitsyn's views of the origins of Soviet Communism. The first salvos in the debate were fired by the Russian scholar Richard Pipes of Harvard University. Pipes was born in 1923 in Polish Silesia to an upper-middle class Jewish family.³⁹ He became a naturalized U.S. citizen during World War II while serving in the Army Air Corps.⁴⁰ Professor Pipes's lifetime scholarship has focused on the question of why Marxism first gained an intractable foothold in Russia while other nations of Europe embraced the Enlightenment and the rights of man.

Pipes's primary thesis—the roots of Soviet Communism can be found in Russia's past—rests upon two related theories. First, the history of serfdom in Russia allowed for a totalitarian ideology to take hold. As serfs, Russians carried a “patrimonial mentality” manifested in complete subservience to the Tsar and a failure to develop civil society.⁴¹ As Pipes explained in an interview in 2011:

First of all, not only were the Russians peasants, which there were in Europe too, but they were serfs, which is

³⁷ See, e.g., EUGENIA SEMYONOVA GINZBURG, *JOURNEY INTO THE WHIRLWIND* (1967) (recounting in haunting detail the author's eighteen-year ordeal in Stalin's Gulag).

³⁸ Pipes, *supra* note 5.

³⁹ See RICHARD PIPES, *VIXI: MEMOIRS OF A NON-BELONGER* 14–15 (2003).

⁴⁰ *Id.* at 48–51.

⁴¹ See, e.g., RICHARD PIPES, *RUSSIA UNDER THE OLD REGIME* 71, 79 (1974).

not exactly slaves but close to it. They had no rights. They had no civil rights, no legal rights, no property rights. They were chattel. So that meant they did not develop any sense of belonging to a community.⁴²

Solzhenitsyn has taken great offense to Pipes's "patrimonial mentality" theory and equated it with the proposition that Russians have a "slave mentality."⁴³

Second, Pipes contends that a history of Russian authoritarianism allowed totalitarianism Marxism to germinate there. By contrast, according to Pipes, "Marxism in other European countries led not to the gulag but to the welfare state."⁴⁴ But Stalinism was merely a reversion to Tsarism.⁴⁵ Pipes's view helps to explain the paradox of why a brutally repressive regime such as Putin's United Russia party continues to enjoy widespread support among average Russians. As Pipes has explained, "Russians like strong leaders, autocratic leaders: Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Stalin. They have contempt for weak leaders, leaders who don't impose their will but who listen to the people."⁴⁶

Largely in response to Pipes, Solzhenitsyn penned an article in *Foreign Affairs* in 1980. At times, Solzhenitsyn's article is polemical and petty with personal attacks on Pipes. Solzhenitsyn first argues that Western academics and policy-makers have perverted Russia's image by equating the terms "Russian" and "Soviet."⁴⁷ Taking direct aim at Pipes, Solzhenitsyn writes:

Richard Pipes' book *Russia Under the Old Regime* may stand as typical of a long series of such pronouncements

⁴² Smith, *supra* note 9.

⁴³ See, e.g., Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Mortal Danger*, in *THE SOVIET POLITY IN THE MODERN ERA* 8 (Erik P. Hoffmann & Robbin F. Laird eds., 1984) ("But ever since communism has had to be condemned, it has been ingeniously ascribed to the age-old Russian slave mentality.").

⁴⁴ Pipes, *supra* note 5.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., JAMES F. PONTUSO, *ASSAULT ON IDEOLOGY: ALEXSANDR SOLZHENITSYN'S POLITICAL THOUGHT* 33 (2004).

⁴⁶ Smith, *supra* note 9.

⁴⁷ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Misconceptions about Russia Are a Threat to America*, 26 *FOREIGN AFF.* 798 (Spring 1980) ("A certain American diplomat recently exclaimed, 'Let Brezhnev's Russian heart be run by an American pacemaker!' Quite wrong! He should have said 'Soviet heart.' Nationality is determined not by one's origins alone but also by the direction of one's loyalties and affections.").

that distort the image of Russia. . . . The author willfully ignores those events, persons or aspects of Russian life which would not prove conducive to his thesis, which is that the entire history of Russia has had but a single purpose—the creation of a police state. He selects only that which contributes to his derisive and openly hostile description of Russian history and the Russian people. The book allows only one possible conclusion to be drawn: that the Russian nation is anti-human in its essence, that it has been good for nothing throughout its thousand years of history, and that as far as any future is concerned it is obviously a hopeless case.⁴⁸

Not surprisingly, Solzhenitsyn takes a starkly different view from Pipes of Russian history. In subsequent writings, Solzhenitsyn has argued that the evils of Communism were not confined to Russia and therefore Russian tendencies toward authoritarianism could not account for the horrors experienced in countries such as Cambodia, China, or North Korea under Communist regimes.⁴⁹ In his *Foreign Affairs* article, Solzhenitsyn emphasizes this point and attempts to dismiss the history of authoritarianism in Russia:

There are two names, which are repeated from book to book and article to article with a mindless persistence by all the scholars and essayists of this tendency: Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great, to whom implicitly or explicitly—they reduce the whole sense of Russian history. But one could just as easily find two or three kings no whit less cruel in the histories of England, France or Spain, or indeed of any country, and yet no one thinks of reducing the complexity of historical meaning to such figures alone.⁵⁰

In particular, Solzhenitsyn criticizes Pipes's theory of the legacy of Russian autocracy:

Pipes even bestows upon Emperor Nicholas I the distinction of having invented totalitarianism. Leaving

⁴⁸ *Id.* at 801–02.

⁴⁹ PONTUSO, *supra* note 45, at 148.

⁵⁰ Solzhenitsyn, *supra* note 47, at 802.

aside the fact that it was not until Lenin that totalitarianism was ever actually implemented, Mr. Pipes, with all his erudition, should have been able to indicate that the idea of the totalitarian state was first proposed by Hobbes in *Leviathan*. . . .

Finally, Solzhenitsyn takes offense to Pipes's argument that Stalinism was a reversion to Tsarism. Solzhenitsyn argues that the roots of Stalinism were imposed upon Russia by foreign (Jewish) entities. He writes:

Just what "model" could Stalin have seen in the former, tsarist Russia. . . . Camps there were none; the very concept was unknown. Long-stay prisons were very few in number, and hence political prisoners—with the exception of terrorists extremists . . . were sent off to exile, where they were well fed and cared for at the expense of the State, where no one forced them to work, and from whence any who so wished could flee abroad without difficulty.⁵¹

In response to these assertions, Pipes has argued that Solzhenitsyn's "knowledge of Russian history was very superficial and laced with a romantic sentimentalism."⁵² Moreover, according to Pipes, Solzhenitsyn's denial that tsarist Russia "condemned political prisoners to hard labor . . . was absurd."⁵³

IV. Conclusion

Until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Pipes-Solzhenitsyn debate was a largely academic disputation with no clear winner. With the hopeful transformation of a totalitarian Soviet Union to a liberal Russia, however, the debate took on a new prominence as policymakers sought to reconceptualize the complicated bilateral relationship. With the hindsight of the past twenty years—twelve of which have been under the leadership of Vladimir Putin—clearly Pipes's

⁵¹ *Id.* at 804.

⁵² Smith, *supra* note 9.

⁵³ Pipes, *supra* note 5.

position has prevailed. What's past is prologue⁵⁴ and while there is no denying the horrors of Soviet Communism, Russia's complicated past has clearly influenced the post-Soviet slide toward autocracy. It is no coincidence, for example, that in naming Putin its person of the year in 2007, *Time* magazine titled its cover story "A Tsar is Born."⁵⁵

None of this should discredit Solzhenitsyn's extraordinary contributions. As the first published work to expose the lie that was the Soviet Union, the simple story of a day in the life of an ordinary political prisoner helped to defeat a monstrous regime and change the world. In this regard, Solzhenitsyn rightly stands alongside others, such as Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II, whose contributions helped hasten the demise of Soviet Communism. Indeed, as Pipes stated three years after Solzhenitsyn's death, "No one can deprive Solzhenitsyn of this honor."⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Solzhenitsyn's and *Ivan Denisovich's* failure to honestly reconcile the past with the present ultimately renders the novel a hazardous guide to the future.

⁵⁴ WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *THE TEMPEST* act 2, sc. 1.

⁵⁵ Adi Ignatius, *Person of the Year: A Tsar is Born*, *TIME*, Dec. 19, 2007, http://www.time.com/time/specials/2007/personoftheyear/article/0,28804,1690753_1690757_1690766,00.html.

⁵⁶ Pipes, *supra* note 5.