

Delegitimizing the Beast: Solzhenitsyn's Condemnation of Materialism and Its Western Origins

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Human beings are social. The human infant is helpless and totally dependent. Thus, no one is “born free.” We are born into a fragile state of dependency. This implies that societies and groups have to exist before any individual can. It implies a division of labor so the necessities of life can be had with minimal effort. It then implies that societies have to be unified in language so it can have the consensus necessary to function. Civic life exists only to the extent that all participants speak the same language and exist in the same universe of meaning.

We have been hearing all this talk about “human rights” ever since the Enlightenment era; they have been secured in a number of countries, but not always within the bounds of moral values and principles. Yet for some reason no one has ever urged us to defend “human obligations”. Even calling for self-restraint is considered to be ludicrous and absurd. Meanwhile, only self-restraint, self-denial can guarantee a moral and reliable resolution of any conflicts.

This is the same argument as condemning feminism because of its suspicious timing. There were no riots so that women can go down into the mines. There were no ballot initiatives when a long day in the fields was a requirement of all males. There might be no atheists in foxholes, but it is certain there are no feminists when the military draft is in place.

What this means is that such abstract claims exist as parasites. Solzhenitsyn is stating here that abstractions such as the “right to assembly” can only exist because many millions of highly disciplined workers of all sorts created an advanced society that can afford such luxuries.

But human obligations, human duties, people forget. You cannot have rights without obligations. They must be in balance, if indeed obligations are not to be greater. Just as it is impossible to say to myself that I will breathe with my left lung, but I will not breathe with my right—they both need to work together—in such a way, duty and . . . right must go together. Our situation has become so twisted that we now even have the expression that there is an ideology of human rights. And what is that? That is anarchism, known for a long time, and so we are moving toward this anarchism (Solzhenitsyn's Address to the International Academy of Philosophy, Moscow 1993, from Pearce 1999: 83).

Asking a modern nominalist or empiricist to define and describe a “right” is a frustrating experience. None of these modern ideologies can make sense out of a “right” since it is inherently a non-material, universal property inherent to human nature. If it is not this, than the word is useless. Abstractions are almost always a cover for a more fully expressible agenda. Most importantly, rights are entirely quantitative entities: they do not specify, of themselves,

what is to be done. He writes elsewhere:

Our life consists not in the pursuit of material success but in the quest of worthy spiritual growth. Our entire earthly existence is but a transitional stage in the movement toward something higher. . . . Material laws alone do not explain our life or give it direction. The laws of physics and physiology will never reveal the indisputable manner in which the Creator constantly, day in and day out, participates in the life of each of us, unfailingly granting us the energy of existence; when this assistance leaves us, we die. In the life of our entire planet, the divine spirit moves with no less force: this we must grasp in our dark and terrible hour (The Times, Nov. 20, 1982).

One cannot be a positivist and a materialist at the same time. This is because materialism is a) a universal; b) a pre-scientific and precognitive notion and c) imply laws that are both a) and b). Materialism is a rejection; it is a negative. Spirit is freedom since only matter is determined. Those calling themselves materialists blame others for their actions, maintain some kind of moral standards and constantly make reference to universals in their speech and thought. It is not a serious school of thought but is rather a protest against something else. One of the most outrageous sins of the vulgar scientific mind is the claim that all the scientific establishment cannot have dominion over is non-existent. Materialism cannot deal with freedom or any universal, including “utility” or “rights.” The laws of matter must either have been created along with it or were later added to it. In both cases, it implies God; and a God with the power to create entire worlds with a purpose.

Not a return to religion but an elevation toward religion. The thing is that religion itself cannot but be dynamic which is why “return” is an incorrect term. A return to the forms of religion which perhaps existed a couple of centuries ago is absolutely impossible. On the contrary, in order to combat modern materialistic mores, as religion must, to fight nihilism and egotism, religion must also develop, must be flexible in its forms, and it must have a correlation with the cultural forms of the epoch. Religion always remains higher than everyday life. In order to make the elevation towards religion easier for people, religion must be able to alter its forms in relation to the consciousness of modern man. Of course, one cannot declare that only my faith is correct and all other faiths are not. Of course God is endlessly multi-dimensional so every religion that exists on earth represents some face, some side of God. One must not have any negative attitude to any religion but nonetheless the depth of understanding God and the depth of applying God’s commandments is different in different religions (Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Russia in Collapse (Moscow: Russkii put’, 2006).

Going to an earlier time is “absolutely impossible” because there is no current frame of reference. The agrarian village is a memory. Words have lost their original meanings even in the 20th century alone. Media manipulation has reduced man to a ADD patient. These institutions – such as the village, extended family or the monarchy – were not just brute givens. They altered out perception and changed the way man interpreted events. Social institutions do that. Without them, much reality is gone. For each step made in “progress,” many more things are forgotten.

The understandings that were required to absorb the faith many centuries ago do not exist any longer. Orthodoxy is being asked in the US to co-exist with and bless the vapid, bourgeois order. The Antiochian Orthodox Church in the USA is the expression of this identity-less and culture-less insipidity.¹ Like it or not, he says, the church needs to accommodate itself to this sort of vulgarity for a time. In his “Rebuilding Russia,” he goes into more detail:

The Iron Curtain of yesterday gave our country superb protection against all the positive features of the West: against the West’s civil liberties, its respect for the individual, its freedom of personal activity, its high level of general welfare, its spontaneous charitable movements. But the Curtain did not reach all the way to the bottom, permitting the continuous seepage of liquid manure—the self-indulgent and squalid “popular mass culture,” the utterly vulgar fashions, and the by-products of immoderate publicity—all of which our deprived young people have greedily absorbed. Western youth runs wild from a feeling of surfeit, while ours mindlessly apes these antics despite its poverty. And today’s television obligingly distributes these streams of filth throughout the land (Rebuilding, 1991: 34-35).

The Stalinist system was not entirely bad. It protected Russians from the anti-cultural tripe of the west. Russians were cynical towards the ugly “realism” of their ruling class and equally dismissive of the decadent nonsense from the US. By the time the system collapsed in the early 1990s, Russians were uninfected by either Leninism or liberalism.

The west exported a dangerous object: the philosophically indefensible, bourgeois “individual.” This dissociated ego, merely quantitative and “content-less”, inevitably becomes the plaything of corporate capital. Markets require mass society since its “equilibrium” is the same as mediocrity: the lowest common denominator. Mediocrity is built right in.

The only good news is that the sufferings of Russia in the 1990s, worse than anything under Stalin, mean that Russia will forever be at war with liberalism. Russia is the leader against the forces of globalization for this reason. Similarly in his “Russia in Collapse” we read:

Having left religion, man has forgotten that he is part of a unified creation. He has stopped thinking of himself as part of nature, and so we move to a destruction of the environment to such an extent that perhaps we will destroy the environment before we destroy society. As we can see by the number of international conferences where the United States and other leading countries are refusing to take measures to stem the destruction of the environment. This is a direct path toward the destruction of the world (From *Russkii Put*, 2006).

By “unified creation” Solzhenitsyn is referring to the notion that human beings are part of the Created order and hence intrinsically contain mental structures to faithfully reproduce and understand Creation as a whole. Modern industrialization is prefaced on the bizarre notion that man is god. This means that man's “reason” is “above” nature and exists to give it meaning. It is as close to granting man divine power as the Enlightenment dared to do. In John Locke's

1 Nothing is more vapid than the AOC pious and historically ignorant condemnations of “phyletism.” Not only is this not a real heresy, but if it were, it is being wildly misinterpreted and distorted for the sake of their agenda. Today, it is a pseudo-intellectual, pseudo-theological weapon to use against any form of national identity that threatens the egocentric world of the liberal, middle class American order.

ontology, the external world was non-existent until man's "reason" needed something out of it. Once labor was "mixed" with this flux – this meaningless raw material – property, and hence meaning, was created.

Now, "reason" is in quotes because this is not the function of the rational faculty. Rather, "reason" in this case is merely the handmaiden of the passions. Industry and its consequent destruction exist exclusively for the sake of satisfying the demands and appetites of the elite. It is the exploitation of the created order in such a violent and natural way that the very nature of humanity has been changed. The "default" epistemology of western man is that "reason" is not a part of creation but superior to it. It is merely a stage upon which the will measures which image excites the passions the most. Solzhenitsyn is a tad less polemical in this respect:

The humanistic way of thinking, which has proclaimed itself our guide, did not admit the existence of intrinsic evil in man, nor did it see any task higher than the attainment of happiness on earth. It started modern Western civilization on the dangerous trend of worshiping man and his material needs. Everything beyond physical well-being and the accumulation of material goods, all other human requirements and characteristics of a subtler and higher nature, were left outside the area of attention of state and social systems, as if human life did not have any higher meaning. Thus gaps were left open for evil, and its drafts blow freely today (Solzhenitsyn, 1980: 10).

The western academic and political elite turned on Solzhenitsyn due to this speech. Rather, they created their own "dissident" the Jewish, urban liberal Josef Brodsky as a substitute for him. This is nothing against Brodsky, but he was given a status he did not deserve due to the perception that he was more ideologically comforting to the western elites. Solzhenitsyn's solution ensured their suspicion. While too extraordinary to be anything other than respected, it became increasingly common to attack him.² Among other sins, he stated the following in his *Russia in Collapse*:

In today's devastated, crushed, dazed and corruption-susceptible Russia, it is even more evident that we will not recover without the spiritual defense of the Orthodox faith. If we are not an irrational herd, we need a dignified foundation for our unity. We, Russians, must hold the spiritual gift of the Orthodox faith with great devotion and persistence, for it is one of our last gifts, a gift we are already losing.

It was precisely the Orthodox faith, not the imperial power, that created the Russian cultural model. It is the Orthodoxy preserved in our hearts, traditions and deeds that will strengthen the spiritual meaning that unites the Russians above all tribal considerations. And even if we happen to lose our population numbers, territory, and even statehood in the upcoming decade, we will still be left with the only imperishable thing, the Orthodox faith and the noble perceptions of reality ensuing from it.

2 One of the most poorly written attempts to smear him can be found here: Confino, M. (1991) Solzhenitsyn, the West, and the New Russian Nationalism. *Journal of Contemporary History* 26(4): 611-636. That this sophomoric critique passed "peer review" shows the corruption of present academic writing. Of course, Confino supports Jewish nationalism, using his Sephardic name to disguise his Jewish background.

One of the more disturbing things occurring in that most depressing decade of the 1990s was how American elites welcomed not only the fall of the USSR, but the total disintegration of Russia. The annihilation of the Russian ethnos was a matter of minor import. Western academics at Harvard are partly responsible for the deaths of millions through their authoring of the privatization schemes that were soon to destroy an entire country. These academics, including the execrable Andrei Shleifer, retained their jobs despite their murderous incompetence. As this author has written elsewhere, Shleifer is so incompetent and corrupt that he lost a suit brought by the US Department of Justice showing that his policies in Russia led to the deaths of millions. He was charged and found guilty of the misuse of American federal funds in the process. He retains his job and Harvard paid all his fines and legal bills. This vile creature is still touted as an “expert” on economic science.

The disintegration of Russia is the direct responsibility of several factors: western elites such as the hacks at Harvard University, liberal ideology, western financing of Russian oligarchs and the organized Jewish drive to yet again expropriate the work of millions of Russians. When Shleifer was found guilty of incompetence, his reaction was to compare the articles written against him to the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion.” Why would he do this? Solely to admit – despite himself – that this was, in fact, a Jewish cabal that destroyed Russia until Vladimir Putin sent the almost exclusively Jewish oligarchs packing.

The facts are undeniable. In 2016, Jews make up 0.16% of the Russian population, yet the overwhelming majority of the oligarchs are Jewish, proving that it is a Jewish nationalist movement. Some of the wealthiest include: Mikhail Friedman at \$17.6 billion, Viktor Vekselberg with a net worth of \$17.2 billion, Leonid Michelson who has a net worth of \$15.6 billion, German Khan who is worth of \$11.3 billion, Mikhail Prokhorov who is worth \$11 billion, and Roman Abramovich who sits at \$9.1 billion. Even better known are Boris Berzhovsky, Vladimir Gusinsky, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, and Alexander Smolensky who are so wealthy that accurate estimates are difficult to come by. All the above are very low estimates since they do not declare most of their income.

None of these Jews created anything. None assisted Russia in any way and are the most hated people in that country. Obviously, it is a Jewish nationalist movement. That the Ivy league cabal in the US are also Jewish and the Russia government was headed by Anatoly Chubais (rather than Yeltsin) who is also a Jew prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the annihilation of Russia was the result of an organized Jewish nationalist camarilla. Given these facts, the western press, academic establishment and politicians of both parties openly equated oligarchy with democracy.³

Solzhenitsyn confronted this open conspiracy:

We are exiting from communism in the most unfortunate and awkward way. It would have been difficult to design a path out of communism worse than the one that has been followed. Our government declared that it is conducting some kind of great reform. In reality, no real reforms were begun, and no one at any point has declared a coherent program. The name of “reform” simply covers what is blatantly a process of the theft of the national heritage. In other words, many former communists, very flexible, very agile, and others who are basically almost confidence tricksters, petty thieves coming in from the sides, have together in

3 Cf the author's paper on this subject for further detail: From Yeltsin to Putin: Chubais, Liberal Pathology, and Harvard's Criminal Record. Paoli, IN: TOMed, New Series, Edited by M. Parrot and MK Heinbach, TWP

unison begun to thief everything there is from the national resources. It used to belong to the state, but now under the guise of privatization, all of this has been pocketed.

For massive enterprises, for large factories, large firms, sometimes only one to two percent of its value is paid when they are privatized. The top, the oligarchy, are really so preoccupied with this fever of thieving that they really did not stop to think of the future of Russia. They didn't even think of trying to maintain the government treasury, to think of the government finances; it is simply a frenzy of thieving. Suddenly they realize that as the government they have to rule the country, but there's no money left. So now in a very humiliating way, they have to bend the knee and ask the West for money—not just now, but there has been an ongoing process. . . . And all these loans from abroad are merely stopgap measures designed to keep the oligarchy in power (Solzhenitsyn, 1996).

This is quoted at length to show the context and importance of his views. Solzhenitsyn's work on the Jews in Russian history remains blacklisted in the American academy, but they are identical to the above. His argument (among many other things) is that both the Bolshevik coup and the rape of the 1990s were both Jewish ethnic movements. A mere listing of the names of offenders is sufficient to prove this. Academics have to make a choice to either a) bury this information in the interests of maintaining their careers or b) risk everything by stating these simple facts. The choice they made is well known.

The problem is that, given the abdication of responsibility of academics and journalists, the truth is put in the unsteady hands of amateurs who are well meaning, but ultimately incompetent. Regardless, the Jewish response to Solzhenitsyn's writings on the Jews was as laughable as it was predictable.

Solzhenitsyn's commitment to Russian Orthodox Christianity and his Slavophile rhetoric marred his heroism in standing up to the Stalinists and their successors. Solzhenitsyn was a religious fundamentalist who yearned to overthrow the gains humanity made in modernity in the Renaissance, the Reformation and the French Revolution. If he did not specifically want to return Russia to the rule of the Czars, he did yearn for a pre-Bolshevik golden age in which the anti-Jewish, conservative Russian Orthodox Church would dominate politics, theology and morality (Kavon, Jerusalem Post, 12/30/2013).

The author here is Rabbi Eli Kavon. He is well aware of the Jewish nature of both Bolshevism and the oligarchy. This is a very tame version of what officially Jewish publications say about Solzhenitsyn. The initial Bolshevik ruling class was almost exclusively Jewish while the oligarchs in Russia in the 1990s equally so. Can this be a coincidence? Add to this the fact that they acted identically: they created an ideological mechanism that served as the verbal cover for the mechanistic transmission system that conveyed the wealth created by the Russian worker into the hands of those who refuse to work, the Jewish elites themselves.

On the question of property, he writes:

It is impossible to create a state governed by laws without first having an independent citizen. . . . But there can be no independent citizen without private

property. After seventy years of propaganda, our brains have been instilled with the notion that one must fear private property and avoid hired labor as though they were the work of the devil: that represents a major victory of ideology over human essence. . . The truth is that ownership of modest amounts of property which does not oppress others must be seen as an integral component of personality, and as a factor contributing to stability, while conscientiously performed, fairly compensated hired labor is a form of mutual assistance and a source of goodwill among people (Solzhenitsyn, 1991: 36).

There is some confusion about the term “property.” Marx used it to refer to capital rather than personal property. This comment above seems to be about a little of both: capital that is productive but small scale, or even personal possessions that have economic and other forms of value. On commerce, he states:

We must learn to respect healthy, honest and intelligent private commerce (and to distinguish it from predatory dealings built on bribes and swindling of inept management): such commerce stimulates and unifies society. . . it is clear that in addition to strict environmental controls, and substantial fines for despoiling the environment, financial incentives should be in place for efforts aimed at restoring or protecting nature, as well as bringing back traditional crafts (Solzhenitsyn, 1991: 39).

It is always darkly humorous when apologists for the conglomerate and monopoly use metaphors drawn from a farmer's market to justify their domination of continents. Modern capital is the dominant actor in all societies today: it is far more pervasive than the state and far more totalitarian than any party. Parties and “worker's states” were crude and clumsy; private capital, concentrated in a few hands with deep connections to Washington, can redefine terms like “tyranny” and convince people they are progressive and unable to be fooled. Capital is nuanced and sophisticated while secret police forces are unsteady and always short on manpower.

In a recent article by Mikhail Bernstam, he makes the idiosyncratic case that Solzhenitsyn was a “libertarian.” Given that labels can mean anything and quotations can be multiplied selectively, this might not be impossible to suggest. Within the article is a strongly profound passage that is an excellent preface to Solzhenitsyn's worry about Russian life after 1991:

The process of socioeconomic implementation of the ideological model requires not only oppression of individual political opponents but, first and foremost, the mass destruction of whole social classes and ethnic groups who do not fit the new system. The older despotisms imposed additional constraints on human activities, but they did not try to impose a new model that would require fundamental changes in behavior itself. Behavior is determined by individual preferences rooted in human nature. Lenin's error, corrected later by an unappreciated economic whiz of the century, Joseph Stalin, lay in the fact that one cannot change basic modes of human behavior without making a so-called Cultural Revolution that would change human minds and human nature. Until this is done, ideological

experiments on human guinea pigs are limited to negative selection, to the mass slaughter of the unfit groups of human raw material. From Lenin's and Pol Pot's experience we know that the more ideologues hurry, the more they kill. The era of détente, when the USSR, Romania, Poland, and East Germany began to exchange their undesirable subjects for Western subsidies (instead of murdering them), resulted in an implicit consensus that the slave-trade is a progressive improvement upon uncorrupted, idealistic communism (Bernstam, 2001: 120).

When Solzhenitsyn speaks of early 1990s Russia as traumatized and tortured, this is why. The problem for this author is that advanced capitalism does the same, except without camps and drug experiments. It does so by free trade, social sanction and the monopoly control over media. Beyond this, the profundity is that ideological movements, once in power, cannot subject their rule to a vote of the citizens. When coming across a “democratic socialist,” this writer enjoys pointing out the pandering that takes place when they stress the “democratic” part of that phrase. Treating the listener like a target for advertising, they drop a vague, meaningless but positively charged word before something more controversial like “socialist.” The implication is that socialism can and should be dismantled if voters demand it. The quote above shows the absurdity of “democratic socialism.” Once in power, it cannot do anything other than continuing to transfer capital to the party clique. If, in fact, Marx was correct that socialism is the key to history and is the goal to which all technological and ethical envelopment tends, then what relevance does the ballot box have? Or public opinion for that matter?

No system has been so dedicated to destroying any vestige of “human nature” than postmodern capitalism. The ideology must always be that the human person is border-less, endlessly fluid and constantly mobile: there is no self, soul or destiny. There is only credit and interest. Consumer capitalism far more than industrial socialism has to provoke the nerve endings and manipulate the stimulus response of consumers constantly. In *Cancer Ward*, Oleg says “how easy it was to stir human desires and how difficult to satisfy them, once aroused.” the context is the discussion of the mundane nature of most people's lives and what they consider important. Capitalism functions largely by arousing desire and once aroused, channeling and controlling towards ideas and eventually, product and commitments. Oleg heard someone while standing in line at a department ask for a shirt with a specific collar size. Oleg stares in disbelief that something so minor could ever occur to someone. He says “If you had to remember your collar size, you'd have to forget something. Something more important!” (quoted from Emerson, 180).

Solzhenitsyn did not specifically condemn Marxism. That was just the system he had the misfortune of being born under. He attacked materialism, atheism and the nihilism that must come from it. Moreover, he was ever more concerned about the nature of those forces that fill the vacuum left by religion and tradition. Capitalism came into being at a fight to the death with monarchy, agrarianism and the church. It is every bit as revolutionary as Marxism, but differs radically in its ability to be subtle about it. Superficial people think they are “free” if there are no proverbial “guns to their heads.” They have not the introspection or desire to understand the origin of their alleged “preferences” or who actually decides what is “fashionable,” “mainstream” or ‘real.’ it is probably a good thing for them they do not.

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