

Eden faced and the absence of any easy solution. Where Epstein, with some reason, arouses the reader's indignation, Bethell imparts a fuller understanding coupled with deep sympathy for the victims.

Bethell's admirable book may be considered definitive on the role of the British in the repatriation from southern Austria, but it is sketchy on some other aspects of the story, especially those concerning the Americans. Fortunately, the above-mentioned Elliott article, which evidently appeared too late for either Bethell or Epstein to use, helps to fill that gap—bringing out, for instance, the ignorance and poor judgment displayed on this issue by President Roosevelt and our joint chiefs of staff as compared with knowledgeable State Department figures like Dean Acheson and Joseph Grew, whose protests were disregarded. Further clarification of the American role must await the publication of archival material incorporated in Elliott's dissertation of 1974 and the release of the remaining American documents.

In combination these works, revealing among other things the extraordinary lengths to which American and British leaders went in order to placate Stalin, should advance the continuing debate over the origins of the cold war, and should much improve the general public's awareness of one of the great tragedies of this century.

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THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO, 1918–1956: AN EXPERIMENT IN LITERARY INVESTIGATION, I–II. By *Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn*. Translated from the Russian by *Thomas P. Whitney*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974. xii, 660 pp. \$12.50, cloth. \$1.95, paper.

THE STALINIST TERROR IN THE THIRTIES: DOCUMENTATION FROM THE SOVIET PRESS. Compiled with an introduction by *Borys Levvitsky*. Hoover Institution Publications, 126. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1974. xxvii, 521 pp. \$14.50.

The subtitle of Solzhenitsyn's book should warn the reader that this is no ordinary memoir, historical study, or political analysis, and it points to the difficulty of defining the work in terms of genre. Based not only on the author's own experience and the reports and memoirs of 227 former prisoners but on many types of published materials—Lenin's writings, Soviet laws, trial transcripts, jurists' studies, and more—the first volume of *The Gulag Archipelago* describes the process of incarceration in Soviet labor camps through the stages of arrest, interrogation, trial and sentencing, and transportation to transit camps, from which prisoners were convoyed to their final destination—the "corrective-labor" camps. Here the first volume ends. (The recently translated second volume deals mainly with the camps themselves.)

One aspect of Solzhenitsyn's method of "literary investigation" is a skillful fusing of diverse materials into a narrative that combines immediacy and concreteness of presentation with analysis and generalization and gives a sweeping picture of a larger whole. Using the story of his own arrest and imprisonment as a means of unifying his narration, Solzhenitsyn describes in vivid detail the experience of scores of others, rendering unforgettable as individuals many of those whose fates

are recounted in these pages, and in a sense re-creating what must have been the experience of hundreds of thousands. Solzhenitsyn's method forces the reader to relive the gruesome realities of the Archipelago and to share the lives of its victims; yet the powerful portrayal of events and persons is subordinated to the book's total plan, which is dictated not only by the nature of the Gulag itself but also by the author's broader aims.

Although the book can be read—indeed, demands to be read—on several levels, it will undoubtedly attract attention first of all as an interpretation of Soviet history and politics. Critical of what he believes to be an undue emphasis on Stalin and the period of the Great Purge, Solzhenitsyn presents massive evidence to demonstrate that the origins of the labor camp system go back to the October Revolution itself, to Lenin and to the institutions and practices that developed between 1917 and the 1920s. Solzhenitsyn sees the political trials of 1918 and the 1920s as forerunners of the purge trials of the late 1930s; the policies urged by Lenin in 1917–18, and the arrests of those years, as the beginning of the influx of millions into the camps. The wide-sweeping arrests of 1929–30, 1937–38, and 1944–46 were only high points in what was essentially one continuous process. Stalin, in Solzhenitsyn's view, merely followed the path already laid out and himself contributed only “dismal stupidity, petty tyranny, self-glorification” (p. 613). But it is principally in Marxist ideology that Solzhenitsyn finds the source of the camp system and all that it entailed.

In view of the heavy political content of this volume, the reader may be startled by the author's admonition (p. 168) to shut the book if he expects it to be a political exposé. Yet the warning indicates that Solzhenitsyn's intention, and what he achieves, is something more than a re-creation of the everyday realities of the Archipelago and an incisive historical and political analysis. More than that, he attempts to reveal truths or realities that lie behind the facts and events described and analyzed. In attacking Marxist-Leninist ideology as the source of much of the evil that he condemns in the Soviet system, Solzhenitsyn is attacking not only that doctrine but ideology as such. For it is ideology, he writes, that “gives evil doing its long-sought justification” (p. 174); and what he finally condemns is the subordination of human values and life to false abstractions. If he regards the creators and agents of the camp system as perpetrators of evil, he knows also that “the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being” (p. 168). On this level, Solzhenitsyn's work takes on a significance that transcends the Soviet experience and speaks to all.

However harsh and unrelenting Solzhenitsyn's denunciatory tone, however horrifying the tales of human suffering and destruction, the effect of the book is not to produce a sense of hopelessness, and its message is not one of despair but of hope. This is partly because the book is an account not only of how people are dehumanized and destroyed but of how they survive. And it is also because the book is a story of discovery—discovery of self. It is this discovery, the attaining of self-knowledge, the developing of an independent “point of view,” that Solzhenitsyn offers as the alternative to “ideology”; it is this that makes spiritual resistance possible and that is the condition for survival as a human being. If *The Gulag Archipelago* is filled with stories of those who were destroyed, it also tells of those who maintained their dignity as human beings, and even survived physically, because they had their own “point of view.” Although the book is not primarily autobiographical, it contains a fascinating account of the author's own liberation

from the shackles of ideology, a process that occurred during and because of his imprisonment.

Borys Levytsky's book is essentially a reference work. It contains mainly biographies of 234 "rehabilitated" victims of the purges of the late 1930s. The biographies, arranged according to the subjects' occupations, are translations of materials published in the Soviet press between the mid-1950s and the late 1960s. In his introduction, the author briefly summarizes the story of the politics of rehabilitation and attempts to explain the significance of the documents included in the volume. Levytsky asserts that his documents correct two mistaken interpretations of the *Ezhovshchina*: that "Stalin liquidated only those bureaucracies which no longer fitted into his industrialization plans," and that "the events of the 1930s were nothing more than intra-Party squabbles not unlike those known from the 1920s" (pp. 25–26). He argues that the purges of the late thirties stemmed from Stalin's efforts to destroy those among his own followers who had become discontented with the dictator's policies in many areas—particularly with the expansion of the terror, collectivization policies, nationalities policies, and the treatment of the military. Although Levytsky claims that the documents "clearly reveal for the first time Stalin's motive for the bloody purge in 1937" (p. 16), his own analysis does not appear to diverge markedly from widely accepted interpretations.

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RUSSIA AND BLACK AFRICA BEFORE WORLD WAR II. By *Edward T. Wilson*. New York and London: Holmes & Meier, 1974. xvi, 397 pp. \$26.00.

Most Western analysts of Soviet policy toward Africa have stressed the significance of the absence of contacts between Russia and sub-Saharan Africa prior to Khrushchev's forays into that area. They attribute to this dearth of contacts both the initial Soviet successes in Africa and their ultimate failure, because the Kremlin simply did not understand Africans as well as the former colonial countries. Wilson, however, disputes this conventional wisdom. In a detailed and lively pioneering analysis, he examines three centuries of active Russian contacts with Africa prior to 1939, which laid the foundations for the postwar Soviet expansion of influence in that continent.

Wilson's main theme is the continuity between tsarist and Soviet motivations for involvement in Africa. In both cases, "calculations of realpolitik had taken precedence over considerations of friendship or ideological affinity" (p. 71), and in both cases security considerations were predominant. During tsarist times, the need to safeguard maritime communications with the Far East was of prime concern. For the young Soviet state—fearing another attack by the combined forces of the imperialist powers—the main security motive was to weaken the military positions of Britain and France by persuading African troops not to fight for the metropolitan powers. The second aspect of Russian realpolitik was preventative. Both tsarist and Soviet regimes hoped to weaken imperial competitors in Africa (for both regimes, Britain was the main enemy). Wilson also demonstrates that ideology—Slavophilism and Marxism-Leninism—was a mere smokescreen for the pursuit of essentially pragmatic political purposes.